# A Swing and a Miss: A Study in Distributive Electoral Politics

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*This study focuses on the distributive politics of presidential elections. Specifically, I research whether there is an economic advantage to being a swing state. Current literature on the subject supports the idea that money flows into swing states during presidential election years because of the Electoral College. My findings proved inconclusive; most likely because of limitations in the data available. The study found no correlation between a state's level of competitiveness and its economic performance during an election year. Variables could be included to improve the robustness, particularly a focus on the advantage associated with primary election importance.*

The campaigns for President of the United States are massive spending machines. In the 2008 election season Barack Obama and John McCain raised and spent just over a billion dollars. All of this money has to go somewhere, and not every state is guaranteed a piece of the campaign pie. Political science literature is familiar with the fact that modern day presidential candidates do not focus on every state equally. In fact Richard Nixon, in 1960, was the last presidential candidate to visit every state during campaign season. It is no secret that some states have more value in an election than others. Swing states receive attention from candidates in the form of campaign visits and advertising. Campaigns hire local staff to run events and they spend money on food and lodging whenever they're visiting. Campaigns have caravans of reporters following them, who also must spend money on food, lodging, and other traveling costs. A single presidential visit requires a venue to be booked, a crew to set up the stage and run the event; police and security to work the event; local staff to make residents aware of the event; flyers and signs printed for the event; and lodging and food for all the reporters and staff coming in from out of town. If just a single speech can bring so much money to an area, there must be a significant impact to a state economy throughout a campaign season. It follows that states that are electorally significant, like swing states, should have noticeable economic growth during election season.

Presidents and their parties can also try to win over swing states through favorable policies and presidential pork. There are billions of dollars available in federal pork that could be used to win over a state. For a president hoping to win reelection there is plenty of incentive to make sure that citizens in certain states are happy. Presidential pandering may help to explain policies that greatly benefit certain states. For instance, the Midwest has some of the most competitive states as well as some of the largest corn producing states, like Iowa. Competitiveness may explain why the government is so focused on corn as an energy alternative, despite strong criticism about its impracticality. Regardless of the specific case for corn, it does seem very plausible that administrations would favor certain states for electoral gain.

This research paper investigates the economic benefits associated with being a swing state. I tested whether there is a positive relationship between electoral significance and economic growth in each state during the 2008 election year. I ran regressions with changes in unemployment as the dependent variable as well as the percent change in per capita GDP. Both models found that competitiveness had no significant affect on economic growth in a state.

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However the study is not thorough enough to discourage new attempts on this subject, especially considering the possible implications if further studies prove more conclusive.

The effect of electoral significance on a state's economy has become very relevant today. States may not be able to control the margin of victory in their elections, but they can control the distribution of their electoral votes. Currently, Maine and Nebraska are the only two states that divide their electoral votes proportionally between candidates. Every other state gives all their votes to the majority candidate. The winner-take-all practice of the Electoral College has received harsh criticism about the fairness of presidential elections. The issue is usually over voter representation. It is clear that some voters do not matter in Presidential elections, like the 2000 contest between Bush and Gore. Many people were upset that Bush could win the presidency despite losing the popular vote. That is why Pennsylvania lawmakers are considering holding a vote over switching from the winner-take-all to proportional vote distribution in elections. In 2004 Colorado actually voted over splitting their electoral votes proportionally between candidates. Despite the measure failing, it does show that lawmakers have recently begun seriously considering a return to proportional vote awarding in elections. If votes are eventually split proportionally there is little incentive for candidates to focus on a swing state more than any other state. Therefore the move to proportional representation could have negative economic effects on certain states. Citizens and legislators alike would not want to neutralize their significance in an election if there was a measureable economic benefit involved.

I will begin by reviewing the existing literature, which makes a strong case for this study. After reviewing the literature I will discuss the design of the study in greater detail, followed by the empirical results. Finally, I will discuss my conclusions of the study and the implications of the results.

**Literature Review**

"Where Ohio goes, so goes the nation". Ohio is known for being a swing state. Accordingly every election finds Ohio as the topic of conversation at some point or another. News stations dote on the importance of swing states to a presidential campaign. In every election news channels obsess over polls and map out the red, blue, and purple states for the upcoming months. The purple states then receive most of the attention for the rest of the election. News stations are not wrong; after all, no one would focus on battleground states if candidates were indiscriminant. Competitive states are more likely to receive attention than other states, since gaining only a handful of voters in a swing state will net a candidate the entire state's electoral vote share. Gelman, Katz, and Tuerlinckx (2002) explain candidate behavior with the idea of voting power, which proves theoretically that competitive state voters are more likely to decide the winner of an election. Gelman et al. use several models based on two tier voting systems and find that voters in states with close races are more likely to determine the entire election. This makes each voter in a competitive state more valuable to a campaign than voters in a safe state. This makes sense, since a close national election can be decided by only a few states; and if those states are close as well then 1,000 people could basically decide the election. One equally important finding in the study is that living in large states does not necessarily make voters more attractive to campaigns. Gelman et al. show that large states tend to be more competitive in general, but that state size is not a direct determinant of a voter's importance.

Electoral importance is largely determined by how competitive a state is. If a state is competitive then other factors, such as size, become more important. Of course electoral significance is not a set formula. Different studies of empirical data have arrived at conclusions with different emphases on factors that make a state important to a presidential candidate. In 1999 Shaw analyzed the campaign strategies of 1988, 1992, and 1996 to find the factors most

important to presidential campaigns. Based on these campaigns Shaw identified competitiveness as the primary factor as expected. After competitiveness was established state size and advertising costs also came into play. Of course Shaw was only analyzing campaign strategies that had been determined in the early stages of the election. Campaigns can change quickly to account for recent developments between candidates or the country as a whole. Stromberg (2008) is able to account for changing elections and also finds that the most important aspect to campaigns is competitiveness with state size as a secondary factor. Stromberg's research is based on presidential visits, which supports the idea that benefits to swing states go beyond campaign spending. Benefits that extend beyond campaign spending are also visible in some aspects of federal spending and policy as well. McCarty (2000) found that presidential vetoes steer federal spending towards states that are considered competitive. Like Shaw and Stromberg, McCarty identified a state's competitiveness as the most important characteristic of electorally significant states. McCarty's research also shows that presidents can attempt to win states through federal appropriations as well. So we see that candidates and incumbents alike divert additional resources to states that are competitive, with large competitive states being the most attractive. Shaw, Stromberg and McCarty all make it apparent that competitiveness is the driving factor for presidents when deciding which states to pay attention to in a campaign. Unfortunately there are as many competitive measures as there are studies when looking at distributive politics.

There are several different ways that state competitiveness has been identified in current literature. Electoral significance hinges on a state's competitiveness so it is beneficial to consider the different possible measures of competitiveness available. Stromberg (2008) uses August poll numbers in his study, which is even more impressive considering the strength of his final regression model.[1] Some problems with using poll data are discussed later in the section. One popular measure is the cook index, which gauges the ideological leanings of a state or congressional district. The index equation is:

$$= \frac{(S1 - N1) + (S2 - N2)}{2}$$

Where S1 is the vote percentage for the winning party in the state for the last election and N1 is the national vote percentage for that party in the last election. S2 and N2 are the same measures but for one election prior to S1 and N1. This measure returns a number that shows the party a state favors and the expected percentage points over the national vote that the party could garner in an election. Taylor (2007) uses a similar method, but only looks back to the previous election and subtracts the total from 25 to give a higher number to more competitive states. Not all measures need to be as complicated though. Authors like Lacy (2009) just use the margin of victory from the last election in a state.

State size has consistently shown to be an important factor, but only after competitiveness has been established. It makes sense that large states would not be immediately attractive to candidates unless they are competitive. For example, while Texas will have 38 electoral votes in the 2012 election it is already likely to vote Republican. It would be a waste of precious time and money for a Democrat to try and win over the state, and a Republican would not need to put much effort into keeping Texas. A state like Ohio, which will have sixteen votes for 2012 but could go either way in the election, is a much better use of candidate time and energy. Disagreement in political literature focuses on whether large states receive a greater benefit because they tend to be competitive and are more likely to be electorally significant. However, small states benefit on a per capita basis because each voter represents a larger proportion of

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[1] Stromberg achieved a model with a predicted value that had a .9 correlation with actual campaign behavior.

the state's electoral vote. Garrett and Sobel (2002) as well as Taylor (2007), Lacy (2009) Shaw and Stromberg all discuss the possible advantage of state size.[2] Lacy found no importance in state size while Shaw and Stromberg found state size to be very important. None of these studies have proved definitive as of yet.

The existence of presidential favoritism while in office is disagreed upon as often as state size. Since presidents possess a variety of tools for reaching their constituents, it is possible that favoritism is prevalent in one area but not another. One important distinction made by Cox and McCubbins (1986) is that while swing states receive more attention than safe states, individual swing voters are not the main target of candidates. Within swing states core voters are still the main focus of candidates, since only a handful of additional votes are needed to win the state. Therefore a president can increase the number of base supporters in a state through preferential treatment. The most popular attempt to motivate core voters in states is by visiting the state. I have already discussed the benefits that visits may bring to states, but the gesture itself supports the importance of swing states to candidates. Visits highlight not only which states are more important to candidates, they also serve as an approximation of other resource distributions besides candidate time. In 2007 Doherty analyzed presidential visits instead of campaign visits and found a significant presidential favoritism towards swing states. Doherty also found that small states benefitted on a per capita basis; which should not be surprising considering that three visits to Iowa would be equivalent to almost eighteen visits to Ohio on a per capita scale. One very telling finding from Doherty's research was that election years spur presidential activity. Doherty's study found that there was a significant increase in the number of presidential visits during their reelection year. Substantial spikes in visitation during election years show that the president is motivated by the upcoming election.[3] There is no reason that a president would not utilize every resource available for reelection that they possess. Presidential pork would also help to serve reelection purposes.

Presidents do not have the power to write legislation but they can influence legislation with the veto power and with party leadership. The veto serves as a presidential tool since a president may kill, or threaten to kill bills that would not re-pass congress with a 2/3 majority. A presidential veto could then act as an incentive for legislators to include favorable pork with the president, or focus on policies that would benefit states important in the next presidential election. McCarty (2000) finds that the veto power can have a positive effect on legislative distribution in theoretical models. Presidents are also party leaders and are able to influence legislators in their party. Lacy (2009) follows up on legislative influence by looking at the total federal spending per state compared to electoral significance. The benefit of Lacy's study is that it looks at the entirety of Federal spending. While most federal spending is determined by preset equations there is still a lot of money available for discretionary distribution. By encompassing all of spending Lacy allows for any possible legislative influence to show up in his study.[4] Other studies have looked at sources of pork that are under the complete discretion of the president.

There are many agencies under the authority of the president which award grants and contracts directly. The programs under the president's direct authority range in type and by the level of control; but they provide more evidence of presidential favoritism despite mixed results. For instance, Taylor (2007) found that there is no connection between federal procurement dollars and state competitiveness. Procurement grants, which are granted by the department of defense,

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[2] Most authors disagree over whether size is an advantage or not though. Presidential visits benefit small states on a per capita basis, but Federal spending has been shown to still favor larger states perhaps because of the number of legislators from that state.

[3] The visits counted were official presidential visits as opposed to candidate visits.

[4] Lacy's study shows no correlation between spending and competitiveness; however the benefit of including all spending is also a weak point because so much spending is non-discretionary.

do however speed up as elections near. The quickened pace of awards suggest that while the distribution may not be manipulated, timing is affected by elections. On a similar note, Shor (2006) found that federal grants are heavily affected by presidents and favor large competitive states as well as small uncompetitive states. While large competitive states would follow the logic of electoral distribution, it is difficult to say why small safe states would benefit more than small swing states. In 1995 Mayer found no significant connection between contract awards but he did find that contract awards increase in frequency during election years. Like Taylor, Mayer's findings are still evidence of presidential efforts to affect the electorate as a whole by speeding up grant and contract awards before elections. It is still debatable how much effort a president would put into determining the placement of individual grants which come from all parts and levels of his administration. Garrett and Sobel (20002) get around this issue by looking at FEMA disaster declarations. FEMA disaster declarations allow for the provision of federal aid to states and declarations must come directly from the president. Garrett and Sobel found that electorally significant states have a higher rate of disaster declarations than unimportant states. Like visits, disaster declarations are a direct choice of the president, and when controlling for legitimate natural disasters still show presidential favoritism. If a bias in disaster declarations seems odd, there are still other unlikely places where presidential favoritism has been found. The IRS, with a reputation for unabashed debt collection, has been shown to work for incumbent presidents. In 2001 Young et al. found that more electorally significant states had a substantially lower audit rate than other states. Considering that an audit would negatively impact a voter's opinion of the current administration, this is a significant finding. With both FEMA disaster declarations and IRS audit rates under considerable influence by sitting presidents, it would not be surprising to find that any and all possible tools available are utilized by incumbents seeking reelection.

Presidents have narrowed the number of states they target since Nixon, to as low as a focus of 18 states for Dukakis in 1988. The amount of money campaigns are able to spend in this small group of states makes it very plausible that there are economic benefits to being a swing state. Brams and Davis in 1974 released an influential paper describing the distribution of campaign resources. The paper suggests that states receive an amount proportional to their number of electoral votes to the 3/2 power. If this study is true then, in the context of the handful of states chosen by candidates, large competitive states would receive a great deal more resources than any other state during elections. The most convenient aspect of campaign spending is that it is mostly spent in a small one to two year time frame, which is easier to measure. This funneling effect of campaigns, along with increased activity during campaign years by presidential administrations, supports the idea that tangible economic effects should be found in competitive states.

**Research Design**

The literature review makes it clear that the field would benefit from the continuation of this research. My question is whether presidential campaigns produce positive economic impacts on electorally significant states. In order to properly gauge an economic impact on a state I intend to run two different sets of regression models. The first regression will have the *Change in Annual Unemployment Rates* for each state as my dependent variable, and the second regression will have % change in *Annual Real Per Capita Gross Domestic Product* for each state. Both measures are seasonally adjusted. By looking at both measures of economic change I will be able to capture any affect presidential election may have on state economies.

My hypotheses are as follows:

> H1: State competitiveness has a positive effect on the change in unemployment rates during the election year.

> H2: State competitiveness has a positive effect on the change in per capita gdp during the election year.

*Data Description*

My data set will pertain to the 2008 election and cover 48 of the fifty states. Nebraska and Maine have been left out because they split their electoral votes. Since splitting electoral votes would make competitiveness unimportant they would construe any relationship the regression might find. While Washington D.C. also receives electoral votes, the economy is based almost entirely on the federal government, which will skew any results about how other states economies are impacted by competitiveness.

My independent variables will attempt to capture the variety of factors which differentiate movement in the state economic indicators. My main variable will be the competitiveness of the state. Competitiveness is the most important factor in every study of electoral significance. Averaging the Democratic margin of victory for the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections will give a better estimate of which states would be considered swing states for the 2008 election. I have chosen the Democratic margin of victory so that states switching parties between elections show higher competition.[5] While I had many different competitive measures to choose from, most were not reliable for the purposes of this study. The cook index is helpful for showing a state's partisan leanings, but since the numbers indicate the level above the national average, states that chose the winning candidate would appear relatively more competitive. Polls worked very well for Stromberg; however, he also only looked at visits during the general election. I am hoping to look at the entire year's change, and the difference between general election polls and primary polls is fairly stark. Below is a graph of the relationship between the competitive variable and the percent change in per capita real GDP:

**Figure 1: Competition vs. Per Capita GDP**



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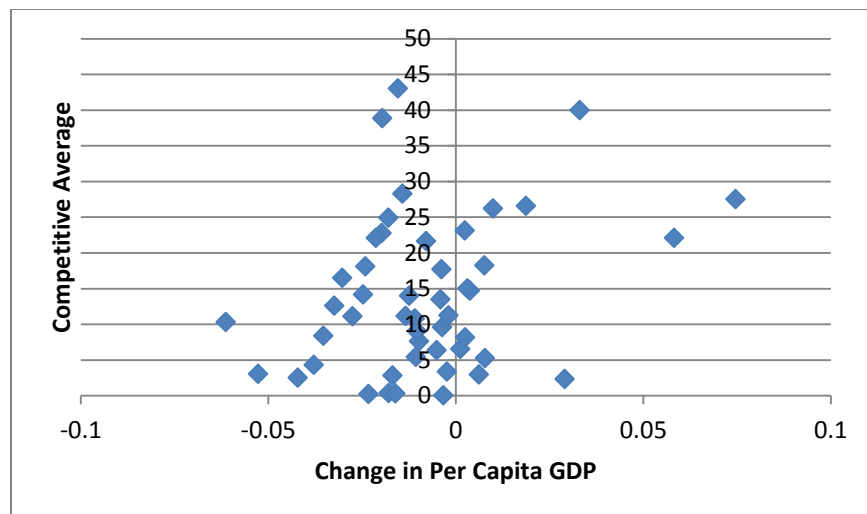
[5] An important note is that a low competitive score is equivalent to competitiveness. Therefore I expect to find a negative relationship between competitiveness and per capita GDP growth, and a positive relationship between competitiveness and change in unemployment rates.

One of the first noticeable trends is that the less competitive states have better growth in per capita GDP. There may be confounding variables affecting the relationship, however it is not promising in regards to the original hypothesis. A clear relationship between the unemployment rate and competitiveness is not as clear as figure 2 below shows:

**Figure 2: Competitiveness vs. change in unemployment**
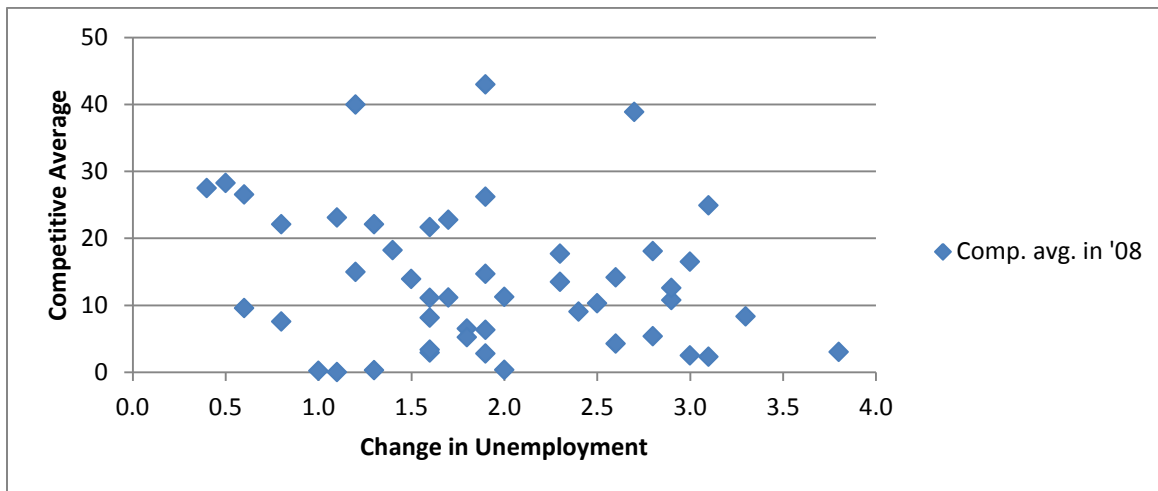


At first glance the relationship looks negative and weak. Like GDP per capita, there may be a variable which both hurts state economic growth and also makes the state more likely to be competitive. After all it would seem plausible that a state with poor economic growth would have a stronger inclination to switch between party lines in an attempt to fix the problem.

The rest of the independent variables differentiate the direction and extent of shifts in state economies. State population is based on the intercensal estimates for population by the U.S. Census. Median age by state data has been collected from the 2008 American Community Survey performed by the Census Bureau. Median age is included because states with higher median age could expect to have lower economic growth due to slowing population and labor growth. Another demographic variable included is the percent of the population over 25 that has obtained a bachelors degree or higher.[6] Better education translates to lower unemployment and greater job stability so there should be notable significance attributable to degrees held. The percent of the population that is urban in a state is also included to account for benefits that high population density might infer on job and production growth.

Income disparity is another differentiating feature of state economies that could factor into growth rates. Therefore I have also included the Gini coefficient in the model. The Gini index is available from the Census bureau in the *American Community Survey*. The Gini coefficient is lower for areas with lower income disparity as a frame of reference.

Industry is also important within a state since some industries will shift more than others in any given time. To account for industry shifts I have included the percent of state GDP that is comprised of the manufacturing sector and the percent of state GDP that is comprised of the service sector. This data is available from the Bureau Economic Analysis.

Finally I have included a geographic element to my list of independent variables. A dummy variable for coastal and land locked countries is included in the regression. Coastal areas are more prosperous historically so it makes sense that there is still a tangible difference in most

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[6] Census *Current population report*

coastal states compared to interior states. Therefore states with coastline along either ocean receive a value of 1 and interior states receive a value of 0. The descriptive statistics for these variables are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

| Variable | Mean | Standard Error | Maximum | Minimum | Kurtosis | Skewness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competitiveness | 14.187 | 10.65 | 43.0 | 0.3 | 3.39 | 0.856 |
| Population (100,000s) | 62.58 | 6.8 | 366.04 | 5.46 | 11.33 | 2.57 |
| % urban | 72.39 | 14.49 | 94.4 | 38.2 | 2.20 | -0.276 |
| Prop. Manufacturing | 0.1171 | 0.052 | 0.27 | 0.02 | 3.32 | 0.455 |
| Proportion Services | 0.7922 | 0.069 | 0.91 | 0.59 | 3.44 | -0.565 |
| Gini index | 0.4529 | 0.02 | 0.51 | 0.41 | 3.43 | 0.093 |
| % Union | 11.458 | 5.87 | 24.9 | 3.5 | 2.37 | 0.508 |
| Coastal Dummy | 0.4583 | 0.503 | 1 | 0 | 0.94 | 0.173 |
| Median Age | 37.18 | 2.18 | 41.5 | 28.7 | 6.98 | -1.24 |
| % College Degree | 26.97 | 4.86 | 38.1 | 17.1 | 2.62 | 0.27 |

The resulting equation is:

$$Y_i = \beta_1 + \beta_2 State\ Competitiveness + \beta_3 Population + \beta_4 Percentage\ Urban \\ + \beta_5 Percent\ Manufacturing + \beta_6 Percent\ Services + \beta_7 Gini\ Coefficient \\ + \beta_8 Percent\ Union + \beta_9 Coastal\ Dummy + \beta_{10} Median\ Age \\ + \beta_{11} Percent\ College\ Degree + \varepsilon_i$$

I expect that there will be a negative relationship between the competitiveness of a state and changes in per capita GDP. I also expect a positive relationship between the change in unemployment rates and state competitiveness.

**Empirical Results**

The initial regressions for both per capita GDP and unemployment rates required a good deal of alteration because of multi-collinearity as well as insignificant variables. After running several different combinations I achieved my reduced models. The parameters in the reduced models were all significant at the ten percent level. The results are shown in table 2.

For all four models, residuals were independently and identically distributed. The histograms of the residuals appeared to follow a normal curve as well. To be sure I performed the Jarque-Bera test for normality; in all four models I accepted the null that the residuals were from a normal distribution at a 95% significance level. My confirmation of the classical assumptions might be the most successful aspect of the study in terms of hypotheses.

**Table 2: Regression Results**

| Variable | Unemployment Original | Unemployment Reduced | Per Capita GDP Original | Per Capita GDP Reduced |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Intercept** | 0.1022 | 0.5490 | -0.0811 | -0.0185 |
| | (0.3832) | (0.2933) | (0.0994) | (0.0748) |
| **Competitiveness** | 0.0016 | - | 0.0003 | - |
| | (0.0014) | | (0.0003) | |
| **Population (100,000s)** | -0.0001 | - | -0.00001 | - |
| | (0.0002) | | (0.00005) | |
| **% Urban** | 0.0052* | 0.0039 | -0.0006* | -0.0007* |
| | (0.0013) | (0.0010) | (0.0003) | (0.0002) |
| **Proportion Manufacturing** | 0.3787 | - | -0.1079 | -0.1350* |
| | (0.2912) | | (0.0755) | (0.0665) |
| **Proportion Services** | 0.4859* | 0.3669* | -0.1845* | -0.1979* |
| | (0.2649) | (0.2102) | (0.0687) | (0.0584) |
| **Gini Coefficient** | -1.5754* | -1.380* | 0.3349* | 0.3293* |
| | (0.7418) | (0.6167) | (0.1924) | (0.1557)) |
| **% Union** | -0.0064* | -0.0057* | 0.0002 | - |
| | (0.0025) | (0.0022) | (0.0006) | |
| **Coastal Dummy** | 0.0377 | 0.0383 | -0.011* | -0.0109* |
| | (0.0261) | (0.0259) | (0.0068) | (0.0065) |
| **Median Age** | 0.0090 | - | 0.0011 | - |
| | (0.0079) | | (0.0020) | |
| **% College Degree** | -0.0072* | -0.0059* | 0.0031* | 0.0033* |
| | (0.0033) | (0.0031) | (0.0008) | (0.0008) |
| $R^2$ | 0.4522 | 0.3972 | 0.4535 | 0.4346 |
| **Adj.- $R^2$** | 0.3041 | 0.3090 | 0.3058 | 0.3518 |
| **σ hat** | 0.0775 | 0.0772 | 0.0201 | 0.0194 |
| **Skewness** | 0.2135 | 0.1282 | 0.5941 | 0..6415 |
| **Kurtosis** | 2.5502 | 3.1074 | 3.4762 | 3.3634 |

* Significant at α=0.1

It is important to note that the final models do not include competitiveness. In the original model for change in unemployment rates, competitiveness had a p-value of 0.26, which only increased as the model parameters were reduced. In the model for change in Per Capita GDP competitiveness had a p-value of 0.35, which also became less significant as the model was reduced. Despite my wish to test variables at 35% significance, I chose to keep any variables which tested at 15% significance. Since competitiveness did not show any significance to either model, I took it out of the final regression for both dependent variables.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Despite the insignificance of competition I continued to test my hypotheses that there would be a positive economic impact as state competitiveness increased. In both of the models that included competitiveness I accepted the null hypothesis that the competition parameter was less than or equal to zero at 10% significance. I then tested again with a null hypothesis of the competitive parameter equal to zero, and accepted the null for both models. In short, I found that the competition parameter was not significant in either model; and that on average it would have no affect on a state economy anyway.

My adjusted R squared values topped out in my reduced GDP model. The model was able to explain 35% of the variability in percent changes in per capita GDP. My reduced unemployment model had an adjusted R squared value of 30.9%. While the reduced model's adjusted R squared is not much higher than the original, it is closer to the unadjusted R squared than before I reduced the model. Considering the number of factors which affect changes in state economies these numbers are fairly strong. Considering that the 2008 election year was also a recessionary year, it is understandable that variability would be hard to describe. Finally the goal of the regression was never to accurately measure variables that affect economic changes, so an adjusted R squared value in the 30% range is not disappointing.

*Multi-Collinearity*
During the regression analysis, I found several characteristics of multi-collinearity among the explanatory variables. The parameter estimates for every model had large standard errors and I was getting condition indexes well over thirty. However, there was little covariance between variables which left me unable to determine where the multi-collinearity was coming from. My reduced models were able to reduce some of the problem, but in the end I had to accept that my model required more data in order to fix the issue.

**Conclusions**

A rejected hypothesis is almost as good as an accepted hypothesis. For example, as far as this study is concerned there is no correlation between a state's competitiveness in the presidential elections and economic growth. If there really is no economic benefit to being a swing state, then it would seem that states have less to lose by leaving the winner take all electoral system. This is not to say that there is not a benefit for states that garner the attention of candidates. When a state is the focus of presidential efforts its citizens' have the chance to bring the issues important to them to the forefront. In many ways states might prefer the perk of national attention over the modest economic bump brought in by election activities. There are actually many reasons that states would want to be competitive during a presidential election. It is no surprise then that state legislatures would be wary of removing any chance of relevance in an election.

There are a number of limitations the study faces, which might affect the outcome. The first would be the limitations of the data set. Adding more presidential election years would greatly enhance the quality of the data. Some variables were not available for the 2004 election, but including that year would be beneficial because it involved an incumbent candidate. Any form of presidential pork would probably be more prevalent if the incumbent president were running for reelection. While the Literature over presidential pork found limited results, I think looking at 2004 would help to clear the air over whether presidents attempt to affect voters in certain states while in office. 2008 was also a year in recession, which will hit some states more than others and presents a unique situation that skews the results. More data would also help to solve problems

with multi-collinearity in the study as well. Certain variables would change more dynamically than others over time, removing the correlation between the two variables.

Realistically, state economies could be too large for campaign spending to register noticeable economic change. Cities offer a promising difference since candidates will likely visit the major cities in swing states on multiple occasions. There would be a whole new set of problems to deal with in such a study. The results might come out more clearly if this study was attempted instead.

New variables would also help to improve the overall model as well as my study specifically. I was originally concerned that population was a factor in economic growth on its own, which would mask any affect of presidential favoritism if I used electoral votes. However, since population came out to be the least significant variable I included the number of electoral votes to see if there is a significance that is not as apparent in raw population numbers. There was no noticeable difference when electoral votes were accounted for so I decided not to include the results with this paper.

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