R. Johnston, “Party Identification: Unmoved Mover or Sum of Preferences?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006)

**Overview**

Reviews Party ID – the concept, some of the data, and the arguments of its conceptualization.

**Background**

* Canonical view of party ID congealed in the 1960s – but had weak empirical basis for core claims – why do we care about the ensuing debate?
* Party ID can serve as a social indicator:
  + As an “unmoved mover,” party ID should be intrinsically sticky – if it is really like this, movement in its values should speak to something historically important, diagnostic of a new order of things
  + As the “sum of preferences” – this model captures partisanship as exhibited by many voters, though also draining the original concept of its real significance.
* The idea of identification with a party as a social group in its own right took hold after 1960 – identification was characterized as simple loyalty, learned early and largely unimpaired by subsequent learning
* Allowed academics to speak about “normal vote” – and interpret outcomes according to a departure from this baseline position
* Ds
* If party ID is a mover (unmoved or otherwise), mover of what? The ultimate target is the vote, independent of and potentially in contradiction to other forces. But Party ID, it is claimed, also moves with substantive opinion. Most contentious is the proposition that party ID warps political cognition

**Conclusion**

Party ID, at least in the US, is a mover but not entirely unmoved. Strong evidence indicates an impact of partisan predispositions on opinions and values, on perceptions of performance and of candidates, on issue-position imputations for candidates, and on the vote itself.