

Online Appendix to “Altruism and Turnout” by James H. Fowler

One difficulty with the test of the altruism theory of turnout is the appearance of a negative coefficient on the altruism term in a model that interacts altruism with partisan strength and regresses it on turnout. While the positive coefficient on the interaction supports the altruism theory, the negative coefficient means that nonpartisan altruists might actually vote less than nonpartisan egoists. In this appendix I explore this problem in some detail.

To provide a rough feel for the raw data, Table A-1 shows turnout rates by partisanship for individuals who shared more than average in the dictator game (altruists) and those who shared less than average (egoists). Consistent with the altruism theory of turnout, partisan altruists vote at a higher rate (27% for Democrats and 31% for Republicans) than their egoist (19%) and nonpartisan (15%) peers. Moreover, the data suggest that we need not worry about partisan imbalance in the sample since Democrats and Republicans vote at about the same rate, even when we divide them up by altruism.

The altruism theory of turnout also suggests that altruism should play no role in the turnout decision of nonpartisans since they do not care about the outcome of the election. Thus, it is somewhat puzzling that nonpartisan egoists actually vote more (27%) than partisan egoists (15% for Democrats and 19% for Republicans) and nonpartisan altruists (6%). We should be cautious to interpret this result, however, because the small number of nonpartisan egoists

Table A-1. Raw Turnout Rates Among Egoists and Altruists, by Partisanship

	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>Republicans</i>	<i>Nonpartisans</i>	<i>Total</i>
	Mean (S.E.)	Mean (S.E.)	Mean (S.E.)	Mean (S.E.)
<i>Egoists</i> (<35% shared)	15% (5%)	19% (8%)	27% (10%)	19% (4%)
<i>Altruists</i> (>35% shared)	27% (5%)	31% (8%)	6% (4%)	23% (4%)
<i>Total</i>	23% (4%)	26% (6%)	15% (5%)	22% (3%)

Table A-2. The Effect of Altruism and Partisanship on Turnout

	<i>Dependent Variable: Did Subject Vote?</i>			
	Coef.	S.E.	95% C.I.	
<i>Altruism</i>	-3.6	(2.2)	-8.0	0.7
<i>Strength of Party ID</i>	1.0	(1.1)	-1.1	3.2
<i>Altruism*Str. Party ID</i>	5.6	(2.7)	0.2	10.9
<i>Green</i>	1.4	(0.4)	0.6	2.2
<i>Constant</i>	-2.5	(0.9)	-4.3	-0.9
<i>Deviance</i> (null = 245.9)		216.6		
<i>Wald test</i> (<i>df</i> =1)		4.2, <i>p</i> =0.04		

Note: *N*=235. Model estimated using GLM with logit link function. Standard errors in parentheses, 95% confidence intervals are from profile likelihood. All variables are rescaled to [0,1] for ease of interpretation. Wald test shows change in residual when each model is compared to a model without *Altruism* Strength of Party ID*.

observed in the sample (*n*=22) causes the standard error of the mean to be quite high (10%)—changing just one of these individuals who voted to abstention would drop turnout by 5%, bringing it more in line with the turnout rate of partisan egoists and nonpartisan altruists. Moreover, nonpartisans may come in two different varieties, those who do not identify with either of the two major parties and those who do not identify with any party. Although subjects were not allowed to express identification with parties other than the Democratic and Republican, we did ask them whether they felt favorable or unfavorable towards different Presidential candidates, including the Green Party candidate Ralph Nader.¹ Those who felt favorable towards Nader voted at a much higher rate than the rest of the sample (34% vs. 17%) and were less altruistic (31% vs. 36%) which may help to explain the increased turnout rate for nonpartisan egoists. When we remove these individuals from the nonpartisan category, the turnout rate of nonpartisan egoists is 0% (0 out of 12) and the turnout rate of nonpartisan altruists

¹ About 92% of those who felt favorable towards John Kerry were Democratic identifiers and 95% of those who felt favorable towards George W. Bush were Republican identifiers.

is 6% (1 out of 16). As we see in Tables 2 and 3 of the main text, the negative effect of altruism on nonpartisan turnout is only significant in the simple interaction model without controls. Table A-2 shows results from the simple logit model of turnout that controls for the fact that some nonpartisans may actually identify with the Green party. Note that the confidence intervals from the profile likelihood for the coefficient on altruism cross zero (in fact, they do this for 90% confidence intervals as well).

I should emphasize that the altruism theory predicts that altruism will have *no effect* on nonpartisans. While it is difficult to prove the null, this analysis suggests that we cannot reject it here. Nonetheless, in future studies, especially at colleges and universities where subjects may have stronger third party preferences than the general population, scholars should be certain to allow respondents to express a preference for third parties when they measure strength of party identification.