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# Can I play too? A look at minor party entrance and success in U.S. gubernatorial elections

Jay Douglas Ducote

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, [jducot2@lsu.edu](mailto:jducot2@lsu.edu)*

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CAN I PLAY TOO?  
A LOOK AT MINOR PARTY ENTRANCE AND SUCCESS IN  
U.S. GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

New minor political parties and their candidates face many challenges. Most of challenges have been examined on the national level in the previous literature. By examining ballot access laws and campaign finance regulations in all 50 U.S. states, this thesis argues that differences in the restriction to ballot access and campaign finance laws account for some of the variation in the number of new minor party candidates who run for governor in each state as well as the percentage of the vote they receive. Using a coding for ballot access laws and campaign finance stringency, as well as several control variables, this thesis finds that both ballot access laws and campaign finance regulations play a role in determining the number of new minor political party candidates who appear on the ballot for governor across the states. At the same time, however, the analysis finds no support that either variable has any impact on the percentage of the vote cast for all new minor party candidates.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Since very early in its political history, the United States has been dominated by a two-party political system.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the years, the two major parties have enacted laws and rules to keep the American election system that way. It started at the very beginning with the single-member district plurality election laws that were adopted in almost every state for electing governors and other representatives for political offices. While George Washington, the father of our country, was against the United States developing a political party system, it was just a matter of time after he left office before the two-party system emerged. Over time, election laws were reformed, but the laws usually only helped the two major parties which wrote the laws, not the minor parties that had very little voice in policy decisions. In 1974, the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) was enacted in order to reduce the influence of money on campaigns and voting after Watergate.<sup>2</sup> FECA allocated large sums of money on a prorated basis to any political party or candidate which received at least five percent of the national vote in the previous presidential election.<sup>3</sup> However, due to the five percent rule the reform ended up being a “major party protection act” as it further marginalized challenges from minor parties in presidential elections by keeping any public funds away from minor party candidates.<sup>4</sup> When minor party candidates manage to surpass the five percent of the vote threshold placed on federal campaign dollars, their allocation is prorated based on the percentage of the vote they got, which is always far less than the money the two major parties receive. Recently, however, there has been a slight movement toward making it easier for minor party candidates to be successful on the state level. Some states have relaxed their ballot access laws to allow for easier entry by

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<sup>1</sup> Ranney and Kendall 1956

<sup>2</sup> Gillespie 1993, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Gillespie 1993, 32.

<sup>4</sup> Rosenstone 1996, 26.

minor candidates onto the ballot. In 2004, Louisiana changed its laws to allow any party with 1,000 signatures of registered voters and \$1,000 to become an official party and appear on the ballot. Maryland has changed their ballot access laws twice in recent history. Before 1998, minor party candidates in Maryland had to collect signatures totaling 3% of the voter turnout from the previous gubernatorial election. For the 1998 and 2002 election, the law was changed to require only 1% of voter's signature. Maryland again amended their ballot access laws before the 2006 election to require a flat rate of 10,000 signatures to appear on the ballot. Under the 1% requirements, minor party candidates would have had to collect 14,210 signatures in 1998 and 15,360 signatures in 2002. Other states, such as Arizona and Minnesota, have changed their campaign finance laws to level the playing field for candidates and parties that do not have high levels of donations and contributions to their campaigns.

Ballot access restrictions and campaign finance laws vary tremendously between states. My project intends to determine if this variation can help explain and predict new minor party emergence and success in those state's highest executive office, governor. Do ballot access laws actually influence the number of new minor party candidates on the ballot or the percentage of vote won by minor candidates? Do more stringent campaign finance laws, by creating a more level playing field, allow new minor party candidates to become more competitive with the major party candidates for governor? What other factors out there play a role in determining the electoral fate of minor party candidates?

It is important to look at election laws on a state level for many reasons. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis acknowledged that states can serve as a laboratory setting for trying out new policies and observing what impact those policies might have. These "laboratories of democracy" suggest that policy innovation can come from states much easier than from the

national government since the policies they enact do not impact the entire nation. Political parties vary across states, and so are the laws that govern them. This variation is critical in order to study the impact of ballot access laws, campaign finance reform, and many other factors that influence our political system.

Ballot access laws to some degree restrict the level of democracy by limiting the number of people who are allowed to run for public office. If more restrictive laws have a negative impact on the number of candidates who run for office, then those laws also restrict the voices of people who do not believe that either of the two major parties offers a platform with which they agree. It is very possible that people will eventually demand more than two choices; in fact, as can be seen by past votes for minor party candidates, many people already do. Minor parties have many hurdles to overcome to be successful, and it is important to know how large of an impact ballot access laws have in determining their emergence and success. Likewise, it is important to study the impact of different campaign finance laws in order to determine if those policies actually have the desired effects or any unintended consequences.

Minor parties themselves offer new and innovative ways of looking at government. Many times they are very specific in what their policy goals are, such as the “Legalize Marijuana Party”. Other prominent minor parties such as the Libertarian Party, Reform Party, and Green Party have broad platforms and goals that could potentially offer viable alternatives to the Republican and Democratic parties. By examining factors which will help us better explain and predict minor party development in gubernatorial races across the states, we can further our knowledge of the impact of election laws and regulations, as well as know how to change the system in order to allow for more or less competition from these candidates in our political arenas.

## B. REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

There is an abundant literature on minor parties in the United States, however most of this literature focuses on minor parties at the national level. Most previous studies about the difficulties of minor party candidates look at campaign finance, ballot access laws, or other possible influences on presidential elections. These laws are generally different than the laws in each state that apply to candidates for governor. One thing that does remain constant is the presence of the single-member district plurality election system in almost every state. Louisiana is an exception, which uses the French Ballot system that frequently creates a runoff between the top two vote getters in the first election, guaranteeing a winner with the support of a majority of the voters. Still, there are no governors that win office through parliamentary-style systems, nor are there proportional representation systems that cause the formation of coalition governments. Duverger's Principle asserts that the "simple majority single ballot system favors the two party system" whereas "both the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favor multi-partyism."<sup>5</sup> Most of the states use a single-member district plurality system, and for this reason it is not entirely realistic to believe that multiple parties will exist for any appreciable amount of time. As an exception to this rule, Louisiana employs a majority system with a second "runoff" ballot. However, I will argue that state ballot access laws have created an environment where minor parties have found it difficult to flourish.

For a first look at minor parties in the states I turned to *Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure* by Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus as well as *Politics at the Periphery: Third Parties in Two-Party America* by Gillespie. Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus argue that third parties emerge with economic or social problems that are seen as being handled

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<sup>5</sup> Duverger 1954, 217-239.

ineffectively by the two major parties. From there they go on to explain many of the problems that third party candidates face when running for office. The first of these is access to the ballot. If a minor party candidate cannot get listed on the ballot, then they have no chance of winning. According to Rosenstone et al., getting on the ballot is usually “an arduous task for third party contenders, even well-financed ones.”<sup>6</sup> Certainly a candidate for President has a much greater task since they have to overcome these barriers in all fifty states, but the fact remains that even for gubernatorial candidates there is a hurdle to jump over. Stratmann studied the impact of ballot access laws on the number of candidates who ran in state lower house elections in 1998 and 2000. He suggested that incumbents have incentives to use ballot access restrictions to shield themselves from competition and to reduce the entry of challengers. His findings show that both increased filing fees as well as larger signature requirements both negatively impacted the number of candidates who ran in lower house elections in the American states.<sup>7</sup>

The second major setback that minor party candidates face is that of financial barriers. Gillespie mentions that “most third parties lack the resources to purchase access to the public via expensive newspaper, radio, and television advertising.”<sup>8</sup> Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus note that minor parties on average are able to afford one-twentieth the television and radio air time that major parties can afford.<sup>9</sup> Money typically does not roll into the coffers of minor parties like it does for the major parties because they have smaller resource bases without the fundraising networks to raise money like the major parties do. The “wasted vote” problem, which says that many potential contributors do not make donations because they see the campaign as a losing cause, is another challenge to minor parties. Minor parties also lack the

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<sup>6</sup> Rosenstone et al. 1996, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Stratmann 2004, 12-14.

<sup>8</sup> Gillespie 1993. 32-33.

<sup>9</sup> Rosenstone et al. 1996, 30.

sponsorship of major interest groups like business and labor which are already tied to the major parties.<sup>10</sup>

While minor parties suffer from “fundraising” barriers that certainly put major party candidates at an advantage, campaign finance reform laws may actually work in favor of minor parties. Laws that regulate the amount of money political campaigns can raise and spend will, in theory, negatively affect major parties but have little to no impact on minor party candidates. Malbin and Gais state that “public financing and expenditure limits are intended to keep election spending down, and thereby, make elections more competitive and equitable.”<sup>11</sup> Gross and Goidel argue that “reformers want spending limits and public financing for more offices and races, with a more equal distribution of public funds among candidates.”<sup>12</sup> Witko coded state public financing and expenditure limit laws for seven items. His measure is what I use for the campaign finance stringency variable and will be explained in more detail later in this paper. Witko’s work comes after looking at campaign finance regulation literature by other scholars who studied both the causes (Pippen, Bowler, and Donovan, 2002) and the effects (Gierzynski, 2002; Gross and Goidel, 2003) of these laws. Witko uses twenty-two dummy variables in three different categories (contribution limits, disclosure requirements, and public financing of campaigns combined with spending limits) that indicate whether a state’s regulations contain certain provisions.<sup>13</sup>

There is extensive literature analyzing the impact of campaign spending in congressional elections, state legislative elections, and statewide initiatives and referenda, however there have

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<sup>10</sup> Lentz 2002, 81.

<sup>11</sup> Malbin and Gais 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Gross and Goidel 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Witko 2005, 302.

been very few studies looking at money in elections for state governors.<sup>14</sup> Partin executed one of the few studies to tackle this issue head on and finds that “spending by gubernatorial contestants dramatically influences the outcomes of these races, matching or even out-performing previous studied predictors of gubernatorial election outcomes.”<sup>15</sup> For this reason I believe that it is important to look at the stringency of campaign finance laws when trying to analyze minor party vote share in gubernatorial races. There is a void in previous literature relating minor party candidate success or failure to campaign finance laws. Since money has a large effect on the outcome of elections, laws that limit campaign expenditures and level the public financing playing field should have a positive impact on the success of minor party candidates.

#### VENTURA’S ELECTION

One of the only true success stories of minor parties in gubernatorial elections was the 1998 election for the governor of Minnesota in which Jesse Ventura, a candidate for the Reform Party, won with 37 percent of the vote. Lentz told the story of the election from filing to election day and then followed that up with lessons for political science. He explained who voted for Ventura and why in eight unique theories, many of which could be applied to other minor party candidates as well. Put together, these theories paint an accurate picture of who voted for Ventura, which Lentz argues was not just a celebrity success.<sup>16</sup> Lentz explores the roles of new voters, the youth vote, the theory of dudes, disaffected democrats, suburbanites, anger, candidate-based votes, and issue-based votes.<sup>17</sup>

Most importantly, Lentz finds that Ventura’s success as a minor party candidate for governor was due to the reduction of third-party barriers in the state of Minnesota. Ballot access

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<sup>14</sup> Partin 2002, 213-214.

<sup>15</sup> Partin 2002, 213.

<sup>16</sup> Lentz 2002, 103-107.

<sup>17</sup> Lentz 2002, 65-78.

was not a factor for Ventura. As the nominee of the Reform Party, Ventura was automatically placed on the ballot due to success of Ross Perot in the 1992 presidential election and Dean Barkley's Senate campaigns in 1994 and 1996.<sup>18</sup> In all three of these races, the Reform Party candidate received over five percent (5%) of the vote, which qualified the party for automatic ballot access in the next election. Financial barriers were also reduced in Minnesota.

Minnesota's campaign financing system, compared to most states or national rules, does not put minor parties at nearly as bad of a disadvantage with the major parties. This system qualified the Reform Party and Ventura for over \$326,000 in public money, which allowed Ventura's campaign to purchase air time to run four effective television advertisements during the last week of the campaign.<sup>19</sup> In addition to these public financing measures, Minnesota also placed spending limits on campaigns for any candidate who accepts public funds. In the 1998 election, the spending limit for every candidate ended up being between \$2.1 and \$2.3 million. Coleman and Humphrey, the Republican and Democrat in the race, each spent their maximum of \$2.1 million while Ventura was able to spend slightly more than \$626,000.<sup>20</sup> Compared proportionally to other minor party candidates in any kind of election, this was a huge amount.

Lentz also explains some other very relevant barriers that face minor party candidates at almost every level of government. These factors almost certainly have an impact on success in gubernatorial elections and would be great topics to look at for future research. According to Lentz, the biggest barrier other than ballot access and financial structures is debate participation.<sup>21</sup> Debates allow minor candidates to add legitimacy and credibility to their campaigns as well as to be seen by the public and perhaps come across as smarter, more

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<sup>18</sup> Lentz 2002, 81.

<sup>19</sup> Lentz 2002, 82.

<sup>20</sup> Lentz 2002, 84.

<sup>21</sup> Lentz 2002, 86.

charismatic, and better candidates than their major party counterparts. Media coverage is also typically a major barrier to minor parties as it is hard to come by for minor candidates but adds legitimacy and recognition to any campaign, especially when the media coverage is positive as it usually was in Ventura's case.<sup>22</sup>

Lentz's book served as both a case study for one of the more intriguing elections in recent history as well as an analysis of minor party barriers in gubernatorial elections. He made points which reinforced my theories that barriers to ballot access and campaign finance laws have significant impacts on new minor party candidate emergence and development in the American states' races for governor. However, as interesting and useful as this case was, it will not be used as a data point in my analysis. Because the Reform Party was already qualified for the representation on the ballot, Ventura did not have to overcome the same hurdles as new political parties must overcome to appear on the ballot for the first time.

#### LEM AND DOWLING

There is one study that has examined a remarkably similar topic to that of the research I present in this paper. Lem and Dowling acknowledge the instrumental bias against minor parties in the U.S. and attempt to analyze why minor party candidates run for office.<sup>23</sup> They attempt to analyze the impact of ballot access laws on minor party candidacy in gubernatorial election, and do so with significant results. By looking at the political opportunity that is available by running for office and at the barriers minor parties must face to run, Lem and Dowling provide an analysis of all candidates other than Democrats and Republicans who run for governor from

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<sup>22</sup> Lentz 2002, 87-96.

<sup>23</sup> Lem and Dowling 2006, 471.

1982 to 2000. They find that ballot access restrictions and political competition level are what matter most in determining minor candidate entrance into gubernatorial elections.<sup>24</sup>

Despite these findings, Lem and Dowling's study leaves a lot to be desired. First, they claim to be looking at why minor party candidates choose to run for office, yet their analysis also includes independent candidates. The nature of minor party candidates and independent candidates is completely different, and in most states, so are the laws that govern their access to the ballot. For example, in Tennessee an independent candidate for governor only has to collect 25 signatures to qualify for the ballot whereas in order to get a party label on the ballot as well, signatures of 2.5% of the number of people who voted in the previous gubernatorial election are required (41,329 signatures in 2006). While this is the most extreme case, it provides a remarkable account of how minor party candidates and independent candidates are not treated the same. Due to these laws, Tennessee has had as many as 13 independent candidates on their ballot for governor between 1995 and 2006 while during the same time period they have had no minor party gubernatorial candidates. Since Lem and Dowling count all minor party and independent candidate appearances on the ballot in their model while only using minor party ballot access laws, their data is significantly thrown off in states such as Tennessee, Maine, and Louisiana.<sup>25</sup> To correct for this, my analysis does not include any independent candidates. I am not looking at why candidates run for office against the two major parties, but rather why people make the effort to see that a new minor political party emerges on the state level.

While their study is an excellent contribution to the literature about why minor party candidates choose to run for office, Lem and Dowling fail to get specific when it comes to analyzing each state's unique ballot access laws. Without providing the detailed discussion of

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<sup>24</sup> Lem and Dowling 2006, 471.

<sup>25</sup> Lem and Dowling 2006, 474.

the requirements for new party emergence, their paper has still left a void in the literature that my study intends to fill. Rather than looking at candidates running for governor, I am looking at new party emergence and development in gubernatorial elections. This paper tackles the topic from the party perspective rather than focusing on the individual deciding to “throw their hat in the ring.”

## **C. HYPOTHESES**

This paper explores factors that might contribute to new minor party emergence and success in gubernatorial races, and can be related to other elections throughout the fifty states as well. There are many factors that influence why people vote and the way in which they vote, but this paper does examine those. The main focus of this paper weighs heavily on the main barrier to new minor party candidates: ballot access laws that must be overcome to emerge as a new political party. The paper will also examine the role of several other factors in determining the emergence of minor parties in the American states, as well as look at how campaign finance laws, among other factors, influence the percentage of the vote cast for all new minor party candidates. Ballot access laws regulate the steps and processes that a candidate and party must go through to get their name on the ballot and have a chance at running for governor.

### **HYPOTHESIS 1: BALLOT ACCESS**

States in which the laws make it more difficult for minor parties to gain access to the ballot will have fewer minor party candidates running for governor.

Ballot access laws play a large role in regulating a candidate's entry into political campaigns. It makes sense for states with considerably stricter and more difficult ballot access laws to have fewer candidates run for the office of governor than states with less restrictive laws. If it takes considerably more effort, money, and time to collect signatures on a petition in one state than another, my hypothesis is that the state in which it is more difficult will have fewer new minor parties emerge.

## HYPOTHESIS 2: CAMPAIGN FINANCE STRINGENCY

New minor party candidates in states which have more stringent campaign expenditure and public finance laws will receive a greater share of the votes than will minor party candidates in states with no campaign finance restrictions.

Limiting campaign expenditures and regulating public financing of gubernatorial campaigns will help level the playing field between all candidates, which works to the benefit of minor party candidates, at least compared to no regulation at all. Minor parties benefit from caps on expenditures because the cap will usually reduce the amount of money spent by Republicans and Democrats without changing the total spent in the minor candidate's campaigns.<sup>26</sup> Public financing laws will also tend to benefit minor party candidates as they will increase the amount of funds given to smaller candidates in proportion to the major candidates as well as regulate the spending of candidates who accept these public funds, which will have much more of an impact on major parties. Campaign finance stringency will make the candidates have more equal financial bases, thus allowing minor party candidates to be able to receive a greater share of the votes.

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<sup>26</sup> Bardwell 2003.

## **D. INDEPENDENT, CONTROL, AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

There are many factors that could be used to analyze minor party emergence, entrance, development, and success in gubernatorial races. This paper looks at two key independent variables that could help explain this success. Ballot access laws and campaign finance stringency are looked at for all fifty U.S. states to help predict the two main dependent variables of the study, (1) the number of new minor party candidates to appear on the ballot and (2) the percentage of votes cast for all new minor party candidates in gubernatorial elections. Each state is researched over all regular gubernatorial elections from 1995 to 2006 giving my project 156 elections to conduct research. California's recall election in 2003 was not included in my analysis as there were far too many candidates and the rules for candidate entry were not the same. Control variables are used to analyze the data by presidential election year, election cycle, political competition, gubernatorial approval, and state ideology. In addition, Elazar's classification of states into three unique cultural categories is used to look at the differences in minor party emergence and barriers to success based on the cultural characteristics of the states in a path model analysis.

### **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

#### **BALLOT ACCESS LAWS**

The independent variable of ballot access laws was the most difficult, yet also the most interesting, variable for me to obtain. My research consisted of searching website archives and state election statutes, e-mailing election officials, and telephone calls to secretary of state offices. The ballot access variable began by taking a look at the different barriers to ballot access that exist in each state. This was a two step process. First, I tried to find out what it takes for a

new political party to be listed on the ballot for governor. Then I looked at what the laws and statutes said about how a political party could retain ballot access in the state.

Ballot access laws vary considerably across states. Most states have a requirement for some number of signatures on a petition. This ranges from Hawaii, which requires signatures totaling one tenth of one percent (0.1%) of registered voters in the previous election to the state of Illinois which requires signatures equal to five percent (5.0%) of the number of people that voted in the previous gubernatorial election. Some states, like North Dakota and Virginia, require a fixed number of signatures on a petition rather than a percentage of registered voters or previous voter turnout (7,000, and 10,000 respectively). Petitions are not the only ways states decide which political parties can be listed on the ballot. For example, Delaware requires that one twentieth of one percent (0.05%) of the previous year's registered voters be registered for that party. Vermont simply requires that the party be "organized" in ten towns with the appropriate paperwork filed. There are also filing fees associated with the petitions that in some cases could deter a candidate from running for office.

There is also variation in the rules governing what it takes to stay on the ballot in future elections. The most difficult states to achieve ballot retention are Alabama, which requires twenty percent (20.0%) of the vote in the gubernatorial election, and Kentucky, which requires twenty percent (20.0%) of the vote in the previous presidential election. Other states range anywhere from one percent (1.0%) to ten percent (10.0%) of the vote total, or they reflect the original ballot access laws of registered party members or party organization. A common occurrence is for a state to differentiate between a major and minor political party. When this classification is made, it regulates the way in which parties nominate their candidates. Major party status, which is harder to attain, requires that the political party nominate their candidates

through a primary election. On the other hand, a party classified as a minor party may nominate their candidates in any way they see fit, such as a nominating convention, primary, or the party leaders just choosing the candidate (depending on the state). The state of Washington's election code states that a minor party can be formed by holding a nomination convention and attaining 1,000 signatures. Major parties should also nominate their candidate through this convention process. If a party receives five percent (5.0%) of the vote in the election they can then be recognized as a major party, however, if they receive less than ten percent (10.0%) of the vote, they have the right to choose whether they want to be a major party and nominate by primary or a minor party and nominate at a convention.

Another state with a unique way of electing officials is New York. New York elections operate under a "fusion ballot" system whereby a candidate can be on the ballot for the same office under multiple party labels. This multi-party nomination system provides a unique tactic to minor parties as the votes a candidate gets under the minor party label also go to the same candidate under a different party label.<sup>27</sup> The fusion ballot allows a minor party to be the decisive factor in a close election between the Republican and Democratic candidates thereby taking away from the thought of minor party voting being a waste of a vote and adding to the potential spoiler effect. While this system is certainly different from that of other states, the minor parties are still required to collect 15,000 signatures to appear on the ballot, so there are certainly still barriers to ballot access under the fusion ballot rules.

Finally, there are also other election rules that must be taken into account. For example, in Indiana, the Libertarian Party is always automatically qualified for the ballot and they are free to nominate a candidate at a convention for every election. While the Libertarian Party for all practical purposes is a "third" or "minor" party, they will not be counted in any of my analyses

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<sup>27</sup> The New Majority Education Fund: [http://www.nmef.org/cobble\\_siskind.htm](http://www.nmef.org/cobble_siskind.htm)

for this project due to the fact that they will not be a *new* minor political party. The same is the case for any party which qualified due to thresholds from the previous election, such as Jesse Ventura in Minnesota in 1998 under the Reform Party.

The largest contribution to the research on minor political parties from my study is my research and coding of ballot access laws for all fifty states. I have sorted the states into five categories based on their ballot access laws and coded them as such for minor parties:

“1” – Easy - Represents a state that has no signature requirement, a signature requirement with a percentage of previous voters that is half a percent (.5%) or less or a signature requirement that is set at 1,000 signatures or less.

“2” – Medium Easy - Stands for a state with signature requirements set over half a percent (.5%) but equal to or less than one percent (1%). States that have set limits at 15,000 or less also fall into category two.

“3” - Medium - Used when the signature requirements mandate the number of signatures based on previous elections to be more than one percent (1%) but equal to or less than two percent (2%). Also, a state that mandates that a new party must collect 1% or less of *registered voters*' signatures will fall into this category.

“4” – Medium Hard - Represents a state which has laws that require new political parties to petition from two percent (2%) to anything fewer than three percent (3%) of the signatures based on previous election turnout.

“5” – Hard - Signifies a state that requires potential candidates to collect the signatures of over three percent (3%) or more of the previous election's vote totals.

Of the 156 elections that were examined, there are 32 coded as “1” for easy, 75 coded as “2”, 18 coded as “3”, 18 coded as “4”, and 13 coded as “5”. During the period of 1995 to 2006,

only one state changed its coding, and that was Florida. Florida was coded as a “5” during the election of 1998 but changed their laws in 2000 and Florida was coded as a “1” for 2002 and 2006. Maryland’s laws changed as well, but they have remained in category “2” since 1998. In 2007, Louisiana’s law change will take effect and its coding will change from a “5” to “1”. From 1995 to 2006, Louisiana’s laws were the most restrictive in the nation to new minor parties, requiring signatures of five percent (5%) of the registered voters in the state to get the party label on the ballot. Table D.1 shows the rankings of the fifty states in each of the election cycles that have been examined. As can be seen, Louisiana stays consistent during these cycles at 50<sup>th</sup> while Mississippi, as odd as it may seem, ranks 1<sup>st</sup> due to the fact that their only criteria for forming a new political party is just to be organized. Vermont comes in second with a law that states that the party must be organized in 10 different towns throughout the state. Florida makes the largest change in the rankings, moving from 49<sup>th</sup> in the first election cycle to 4<sup>th</sup> in the second and third cycles.

The percentage of signatures required for ballot access is the most commonly used data item to separate the states into the variable categories. The percentage is used instead of the raw numbers of signature requirements partly as a control for the population of the state. Even though one percent in California is far greater than 1% in Rhode Island, it makes theoretical sense to group them close to each other. Larger states, in addition to having more people to sign petitions, also have larger interests and more like-minded people that will be supportive of the causes of various minor parties. In order to use the raw number of signatures required it would have to be done within the context of each state. Collecting the volume of signatures is not always the problem facing minor parties, rather it could also be finding people to support their cause a year before an election in order to collect signatures. For these reasons, I predict that the

**Table D.1: Ranking of State New Minor Party Ballot Access Laws from 1 to 50**

	<b>Election Cycle 1 1995-1998</b>	<b>Election Cycle 2 1999-2002</b>	<b>Election Cycle 3 2003-2006</b>
1	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi
2	Vermont	Vermont	Vermont
3	Delaware	Delaware	Delaware
4	Hawaii	Florida	Florida
5	Rhode Island	Hawaii	Hawaii
6	New Jersey	Rhode Island	Rhode Island
7	Colorado	New Jersey	New Jersey
8	Washington	Colorado	Colorado
9	Idaho	Washington	Washington
10	Iowa	Idaho	Idaho
11	Minnesota	Iowa	Iowa
12	Utah	Minnesota	Minnesota
13	New Hampshire	Utah	Utah
14	New York	New Hampshire	New Hampshire
15	Maine	New York	New York
16	Connecticut	Maine	Maine
17	Kentucky	Connecticut	Connecticut
18	Montana	Kentucky	Kentucky
19	North Dakota	Montana	Montana
20	Massachusetts	North Dakota	North Dakota
21	Missouri	Massachusetts	Massachusetts
22	South Carolina	Missouri	Missouri
23	Wisconsin	South Carolina	South Carolina
24	Virginia	Wisconsin	Wisconsin
25	South Dakota	Virginia	Virginia
26	Nevada	South Dakota	South Dakota
27	Alaska	Nevada	Nevada
28	Nebraska	Alaska	Alaska
29	Ohio	Nebraska	Maryland
30	Michigan	Ohio	Nebraska
31	Maryland	Michigan	Ohio
32	Texas	Maryland	Michigan
33	California	Texas	Texas
34	Arizona	California	California
35	Oregon	Arizona	Arizona
36	New Mexico	Oregon	Oregon
37	Illinois	New Mexico	New Mexico
38	Pennsylvania	Illinois	Illinois
39	Georgia	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania
40	Kansas	Georgia	Georgia
41	Wyoming	Kansas	Kansas
42	West Virginia	Wyoming	Wyoming
43	Indiana	West Virginia	West Virginia
44	North Carolina	Indiana	Indiana
45	Tennessee	North Carolina	North Carolina
46	Arkansas	Tennessee	Tennessee
47	Oklahoma	Arkansas	Arkansas
48	Alabama	Oklahoma	Oklahoma
49	Florida	Alabama	Alabama
50	Louisiana	Louisiana	Louisiana

Rankings start with 1 as the easiest state to qualify as a minor party on a gubernatorial ballot and 50 is the most difficult state to gain access to the ballot as a new minor party. Florida is the only state to move significantly on these rankings due to a change in ballot access laws between 1995 and 2006. Maryland also changed their ballot access laws but did not see much of a change in ranking. Louisiana's laws have changed and it will be much easier for a minor party to get on the ballot in 2007.

percentages of signatures required will be more closely related to new minor party emergence than the raw number of signatures.

If my hypothesis is correct, the data will show that as this variable moves from “1” to “5”, the number of new minor party candidates running will go down due to election laws increasing in difficulty. States that are coded “1” and “2” should see significantly more new minor parties emerge than states coded “4” and “5”.

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE STRINGENCY

The second independent variable that I am looking at is the stringency of the state’s campaign finance laws. This measure is coming from a paper by Christopher Witko titled *Measuring the Stringency of State Campaign Finance Regulation*. I am using the part of his index about public financing and expenditure limits. Since fundraising is one of the biggest hurdles a minor party gubernatorial candidate has to overcome compared to Republican and Democratic candidates, it makes sense to look at how much each state uses public financing and expenditure limits to keep election spending down and make elections more competitive and equitable.<sup>28</sup> Witko’s index has seven items, each one representing a level of stringency that will help level the playing field. The seven laws that Witko coded are:

- 1) Total expenditure limit
- 2) Check-off on tax return form for contribution to public funding
- 3) Independent revenue source for public funding
- 4) Public financing of statewide campaigns
- 5) Public financing of state legislative campaigns
- 6) Public financing of political parties
- 7) Equal distribution of public funds between candidates and/or parties

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<sup>28</sup> Malbin and Gais 1998.

The main laws that should influence minor party candidate success are the total expenditure limit and the equal distribution of public funds between candidates and/or parties. Still, every one of these laws should have implications for the overall level of campaign finance stringency that exists in a state and should give insight into the nature of a state's campaign finance laws.

The independent variable for campaign finance stringency is measured by a dummy variable where "0" is used to code when none of the seven laws are in place and "1" is used if any of the seven laws exist in that state. If my hypothesis is correct, the data will show a positive correlation between the existence of campaign finance restrictions in each state and the percentage of votes won by new minor party candidates. There is a large portion of states which have none of these laws in effect. With no limits on campaign expenditures and no assistance through public financing, minor party candidates should be at a significant disadvantage. On the other end of the spectrum Arizona was the only state where all seven regulations exist and Minnesota is the only state with a six. The minor party candidates in these two states as well as the rest of the states coded with a "1" should have a more level financial playing field than those in other states, possibly leading to a greater share of the votes.

It should also be noted that there are other ways that this variable could have been measured. One way would be to use all seven regulations to make a scale from zero to seven as the measurement for campaign finance laws. However, with seventy cases where no laws exist at all and eighty-six cases where there is at least one, it makes sense to look simply at the existence or non-existence of any campaign finance regulations. This is especially so since there is only one state that could be coded with a six and one that could be coded with a seven. Another way to code the variable would be to only use the two laws that should matter the most

to minor parties. These laws are theorized to be the total expenditure limit and the equal distribution of public funds between candidates and/or parties. The problem I ran into when looking at this coding was that the data from Witko did not reveal which regulations each state has in place. In the end, it made the most sense to code the variable as a dummy variable revealing whether or not any campaign finance regulations exist in each state.

## CONTROL VARIABLES

### PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEAR

The presidential election year term is a dummy variable that is coded “0” for an election that was not in a presidential election year (1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2006) and coded “1” when the election was in a presidential election year (1996, 2000, and 2004). This dummy variable is going to be used to determine if there is a difference in minor party candidate emergence and vote share on the state level when people are going to the polls to vote for presidential candidates as well. It may be the case that people who are going to the polls to vote for a major party for president will vote for that same party for governor and for other offices rather than switch to a minor party candidate on the state level. Also, having the circus of presidential campaigns going on might dissuade some minor party candidates from attempting to run because their election will get no media attention compared to the presidential election and their voice will not be heard.

### POLITICAL COMPETITION

Political competition could work in two different ways. One thought is that a state which has lower party competition between Democrats and Republicans could create a better environment for minor parties than a state in which the Democrats and Republicans are very

competitive with each other. If one party consistently dominates the other party, perhaps there could be a void in policy or a gap in ideology that a minor party could jump in and fill.

There is probably a better way to think about party competition. It is possible that in a state with high party competition between the two major parties, minor party candidates could play the role of “spoiler” for the major parties. The concept of the “spoiler vote” comes into play when the two major parties are neck and neck. A liberal or conservative minor party could take enough votes away from the respective Republican or Democratic candidate to allow the candidate of the opposite ideology to win. This has happened several times in Presidential elections, most recently Ralph Nader as a Green Party candidate is said to have received “spoiler votes” that would have otherwise gone to Al Gore and that is one of the reasons why George W. Bush won the presidential election in 2000.

The political competition variable is a dummy variable that is coded “0” if the previous gubernatorial election was close and “1” if the election was won easily by one major party or the other. The threshold for this is 55%, which is consistent with Holbrook and Van Dunk’s measure of political competition.<sup>29</sup> If the winning candidate received over 55% of the vote, political competition variable would be coded “1”. If the winning candidate received 55% or less of the vote, the variable was coded “0”. Due to this, I expect a negative relationship between minor party emergence and political competition because I think there are more reasons for minor candidates to get into tight races rather than races where everyone knows who will win.

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<sup>29</sup> Holbrook and Van Dunk 1993.

## STATE IDEOLOGY

State ideology is a key variable that will be in my model for both hypotheses. Taken from Erikson, Wright and McIver<sup>30</sup>, the state ideology variable measures the aggregated ideological leaning of the citizens of each state. Erikson, Wright, and McIver have collected state ideology and partisanship data from CBS/New York Times national polls from 1977 to 1999.<sup>31</sup> In all, they collected 1,114 observations on state ideology and came up with a mean ideology score for each state in each year. Unlike party ID, which has gone through significant changes over the past twenty to thirty years, especially in the south, state ideology has remained relatively constant. Poll takers were asked to identify themselves as liberal, conservative, or moderate, and then the responses were aggregated to come up with state ideology variable. A negative score implies a more conservative leaning from the state electorate while a positive score means the state aggregates out to be on the liberal side. A score of zero would mean perfect balance and a completely moderate electorate when the citizens' ideologies were aggregated.

The five most conservative states in 1999 were North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, South Carolina, and Tennessee while the five most liberal states from 1999 were Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, and Rhode Island. I have used the mean state ideology score from 1999 for all of my data points because the Erikson, Wright, and McIver data only goes up to 1999. Since 1999 falls in between 1995 and 2006, and since there is not much fluctuation over time in state ideology scores like there is with partisanship, using the 1999 figures should be theoretically sound and a useful instrument for analysis. I am expected a positive relationship between state ideology and the number of new minor party candidates that emerge in

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<sup>30</sup> Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993.

<sup>31</sup> Erikson, Wright, and McIver 2001.

gubernatorial elections. The hypothesized relationship is positive because I expect more liberal states and more liberal citizens to think it would be good to break away from the traditional two-party mold and allow other options to be presented via new minor political parties. I expect that more conservative states and citizens would be happy with the current two-party system and would prefer to keep things the way they are. This effect should be present in both the number of new minor party candidates and the percentage of votes they receive.

### GUBERNATORIAL APPROVAL

The control variable on gubernatorial approval was taken from the U.S. Officials Job Approval Ratings (JAR) data set compiled by Thad Beyle, Richard G. Niemi, and Lee Sigelman. There were 10 out of the 156 elections in the study where no gubernatorial approval data was available. For the other 146 cases where data was available, this paper uses the percent positive figure from the dataset for the previous governor in the poll as close as possible to one year before the election for governor that is being examined. I took the poll one year away from the election because that is when minor party candidates would need to begin the qualifying and signature collecting processes in order to run for governor. Since I wanted to use the gubernatorial approval data to model why candidates run rather than who the public votes for, I use ratings closer to the time of filing for office rather than closest to the election. Because of this, the gubernatorial approval data will only be used to explain minor party emergence.

Since the percent positive and percent negative are inverses of each other, it did not matter which percentage I looked at, as long as I was consistent. Since I am looking at the positive percentage of approval ratings, I am expecting a negative relationship between the gubernatorial approval variable and the number of new minor party candidates on the ballot.

## ELECTION CYCLES

The election cycle variables are broken up into two dummy variables. Election cycle one is coded with a “1” for the elections from 1995 to 1998. Election cycle three is coded with a “1” for the elections from 2003 to 2006. All elections not coded as “1”, including all of election cycle two from 1999 to 2002, are coded as a “0”. My analysis is conducted for gubernatorial elections in all fifty states from 1995 to 2006. Most states hold their gubernatorial elections in the midterm between presidential elections. For these states, I have data from the 1998, 2002, and 2006 elections. There are several states that hold their elections on presidential election years, which will have three elections in my study: 1996, 2000, and 2004. Louisiana, Kentucky, and Mississippi have their elections the year before presidential elections; therefore I have cases for them in 1995, 1999, and 2003. New Jersey and Virginia hold their election in the year following presidential election years (1997, 2001, and 2005). There are two out of the fifty states that elect their governors every two years. For these states, New Hampshire and Vermont, I have data for 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006. The purpose of the election cycle variable is to be able to test for differences between time periods, basically seeing if there was a difference in minor party emergence or minor party vote totals based on something else going on at a specific time. By using two dummy variables for election cycles one and three, if there are any significant differences in the election cycles, the regression will show those differences in relation to election cycle two.

## OTHER KEY VARIABLE: ELAZAR’S POLITICAL CULTURE

Political scientist Daniel Elazar grouped the states into three categories based on their political cultures. These categories, individualistic, traditionalistic, and moralistic (coded 1, 2, and 3 respectively), give a simple label to the cultural background of the states. Moralistic states

are often marked by positive, active government and citizen involvement. Moralistic cultures tend to believe in the greater good and that government can solve social problems.

Individualistic cultures are those marked more by capitalistic states in which people try to advance themselves on their own and do not turn to government to solve the social problems of the day. Traditionalistic cultures represent states which prefer to keep on doing things they way they have always been done. They rarely see a need for change in society and government is run more by elites whose families ran the government before them than by caring citizens or professional politicians.<sup>32</sup>

Elazar's classification of moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic states could be very closely related to the ballot access and campaign finance laws that states enact. Moralistic cultures might prefer to see change in government and support parties which stand for ideals in society. On the other hand, a traditionalistic culture may reject the idea of having minor parties and perhaps would argue that two is all there has ever been and two parties are all that is needed. Not only could this be reflected in the restrictiveness of ballot access laws to keep minor parties off the ballot and less stringent campaign finance policies to keep all the money and power in the hands of the two major parties, but it could also be seen in the percentage of vote for minor party candidates as even when they do manage to get on the ballot, the people in traditionalistic cultures will not support them anyway. This idea will be interesting as I start to analyze the data to see if the variations in laws between states are related to their cultures as defined by Elazar.

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<sup>32</sup> Elazar 1966.

## DEPENDENT VARIABLES

### NUMBER OF NEW MINOR PARTY CANDIDATES

The main dependent variable of this study is the number of new minor party candidates who appear on the ballot for governor in each state. There are 42 cases out of 156 in which there are no new minor party candidates on the ballot at all. This represents 26.9% of all gubernatorial elections from 1995 to 2006. There is one minor party candidate in 54 cases and two minor party candidates in 30 cases. All together, 80.8% of gubernatorial elections had two or fewer new minor party candidates appear on the ballot. On the other end, there were two times that eight minor party candidates showed up, and in 1998, New York had nine minor party candidates.

The number of new minor party candidates is used as the dependent variable to test the hypothesis of ballot access laws influencing new party emergence and candidate entrance into elections. Since less restrictive ballot access laws should make it easier to get on the ballot, it would make sense to see more new minor party candidates when this is the case. By contrast, when the ballot access laws create a difficult barrier to minor party candidates, there will probably be very few candidates from new political parties that run.

### PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE

The second dependent variable in my analysis is the percentage of the vote that was won by all newly emerged minor party candidates in each of the 156 gubernatorial elections that I have examined from 1995 to 2006. This data was collected from each state's Election Division or Department/Secretary of State website or through emails and phone calls to those offices. Again, there are 42 elections in which there were no partisan candidates other than the Republican and Democrat, which equates to zero percent of the vote cast for minor party

candidates in those elections. The percentages range from the 42 zeros to 22.9% for New York in 2002. The mean for all 156 elections was 2.642% of the vote cast for new minor political party candidates.

I use the percentage of the votes cast for minor party candidates as my measurement of success because it allows me to analyze many different election outcomes. There are not many other ways to gauge success of minor party candidates since it is rare that they actually win. In fact, there was only one case since 1995 in which there was a true success if successes were measured by victory alone, and that election is not even counted in my analysis because the minor party was already eligible to be placed on the ballot without meeting other requirements. It seems fair to say that a candidate who received sixteen percent of the vote was more successful than a candidate who collected two percent of the vote. The variable I use for percentage of vote is a cumulative percentage of all votes cast for any new minor political party candidate in each election. The figures only represent a single candidate when only one new minor party candidate was on the ballot. Thus, I am really measuring the support for minor parties as a whole, or as opposition to the major parties, rather than the success of individual candidates.

## **E. ANALYSES CONDUCTED AND FINDINGS**

Predicting and evaluating new minor party emergence and success in gubernatorial races is a complicated and complex puzzle. I am studying of the variation of this electoral development and success by examining two key barriers which might facilitate or depress new minor party candidates. Do more minor party candidates run more when laws make it easier to get their name and party affiliation on the ballot? Do more stringent campaign expenditure and public financing laws influence the way people vote due to a leveling out the monetary playing field of political campaigns? These questions are certainly not the only questions to ask when assessing minor party entrance and success, but they should provide a quality starting ground for more extensive research on the subject.

### **WHAT INFLUENCES THE NUMBER OF MINOR PARTY CANDIDATES WHO PUT THEIR NAME ON THE BALLOT?**

Table E.1 shows the regression model for estimating the number of new minor party candidates that enter the race for governor. As can be seen from the table, easier ballot access laws have a significant and positive effect on the number of candidates appearing the ballot. This finding supports hypothesis 1 and shows that ballot access laws should actually make a difference in the number of new minor party candidates that appear on the ballot for governor in each state.

The implications of this are quite simple. If states want more minor parties to gain access to the ballot and run for office, they can do so by reducing the barriers to ballot access. Likewise, if states prefer the two-party system and do not want any outside threats, they can accomplish that mission by making access to the ballot increasingly difficult.

**Table E.1: Minor Party Candidates in Gubernatorial Elections 1995-2006, All Elections**

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**OLS Regression Estimates:  
Dependent Variable, Number of New  
Minor Party Candidates**

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Ballot Access Laws	-.284** (.12)
Equitable Campaign Finance Reform Laws	.603** (.27)
State Ideology	5.26*** (1.36)
Gubernatorial Approval	.002 (.01)
Political Competition	-.392 (.27)
Election Cycle One	-.206 (.33)
Election Cycle Three	-.097 (.32)
Presidential Election Year	-.554 (.35)
Constant	3.521*** (.66)
N	140
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.189

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P>.1=insignificant .1\*, .05\*\*, .01\*\*\*  
Regression Coefficient  
(Standard Error)

Campaign finance stringency is also significantly related to the minor party emergence in each state. When any campaign finance regulations are in place in a state, more new minor party candidates can be encouraged to seek the office of governor because they will know that they can receive some public funding or that at least the major parties will be somewhat limited in the amounts they can raise or spend.

Table E.1 also shows that the state ideology variable has a significant relationship with the number of new minor party candidates that enter into gubernatorial elections. This is a very interesting finding as it points to the possibility that minor parties are a product of more liberal

citizens. Although many of the more popular minor parties such as the Libertarian Party and the Reform Party seem to be moderate to conservative in nature, they, along with the more liberal Green Party and others emerge more often in states with more liberal citizens.

None of the other independent or control variables are shown to be statistically significant in predicting the number of new minor party candidates that run for governor. The adjusted r-square for the regression was .189, which means the model explains roughly nineteen percent of the total variance. This leaves room for many other factors to play a role in the decision making of potential candidates when they decide to run for governor as a minor party candidate. The model here does not take into account the partisanship of the state on an individual level. It is certainly a possibility that more minor party candidates will emerge in states where there are fewer registered Republicans and Democrats and more self-proclaimed independents. Another reason why people could try to run for governor is because of distrust or disgust of the current government and feeling the need to do something about it. The model attempts to capture this process, but the gubernatorial approval variable does not show up as significant. It should also be noted that the regression was also run using the raw number or signatures required to gain access to the ballot in place of the one to five coding. When run this way, the signature requirements did not show up to be a significant factor in explaining the emergence of new minor parties, further justifying the coding of the ballot access law variable.

#### **WHICH FACTORS IMPACT THE PERCENTAGE OF VOTE CAST FOR MINOR PARTY GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES?**

The regression model analyzing the percentage of votes cast for new minor party candidates can be seen in second column of Table E.2. The adjusted r-square for this regression is .103, so it is explaining right at 10% of the variance. This regression shows the state ideology variable to once again be significant at the .01 level, and the political competition variable is also

significant at the .05 level. However, the model also shows that campaign finance regulations have little to no impact on the number of votes cast for new minor political party candidates.

Hypothesis 2 stated that campaign finance stringency would be significant and positively related to the percentage of votes cast for minor candidates. The findings in Table E.2 do not support this hypothesis. This is a sign that campaign spending and the role of money, even in states that have campaign finance regulations, still heavily favors the two major political parties. Campaign expenditure limits place caps on the amount of money each candidate can spend on the election. These restrictions generally only limit the amount of money that Republicans and Democrats are able to spend as most minor party candidates cannot raise enough money to reach that spending limit.<sup>33</sup> Still, it is difficult for a new minor party candidate, who has no shot of winning, to raise any amount of funds that would be enough of a war chest to battle the two major parties. Jesse Ventura was able to raise enough money to put up a fight, but he was not representing a newly emerged political party. Public financing laws regulate the amount of dollars that the government gives to candidates to finance their campaigns. The more of these regulations there are, one would think, the stronger the chances are that a minor party candidate could receive these funds. However, it is more likely that these funds are given only to established parties and new minor parties do not see any benefit from public financing at all.

Looking again at Table E.2, there is one extremely significant variable at the .01 level and one variable at the point .05 level. Political Competition shows to be as significant in my analysis as it was for Lem and Dowling when looking at the percentage of the vote cast in favor of the new minor parties. There is reason to believe that closer elections could help explain why some minor parties mobilize and emerge to run in gubernatorial elections. State ideology seems to have a highly significant influence on the results of gubernatorial elections for new minor

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<sup>33</sup> Bardwell 2003.

**Table E.2: Minor Party Candidates in Gubernatorial Elections 1995-2006, All Elections**

OLS Regression Estimates: Dependent Variable, Percentage of Votes Cast for New Minor Party Candidates	
Ballot Access Laws	-.001 (.00)
Equitable Campaign Finance Reform Laws	-.007 (.01)
State Ideology	.108*** (.04)
Political Competition	-.016** (.01)
Election Cycle One	-.000 (.01)
Election Cycle Three	-.011 (.01)
Presidential Election Year	-.014 (.01)
Constant	.065*** (.01)
N	140
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.103

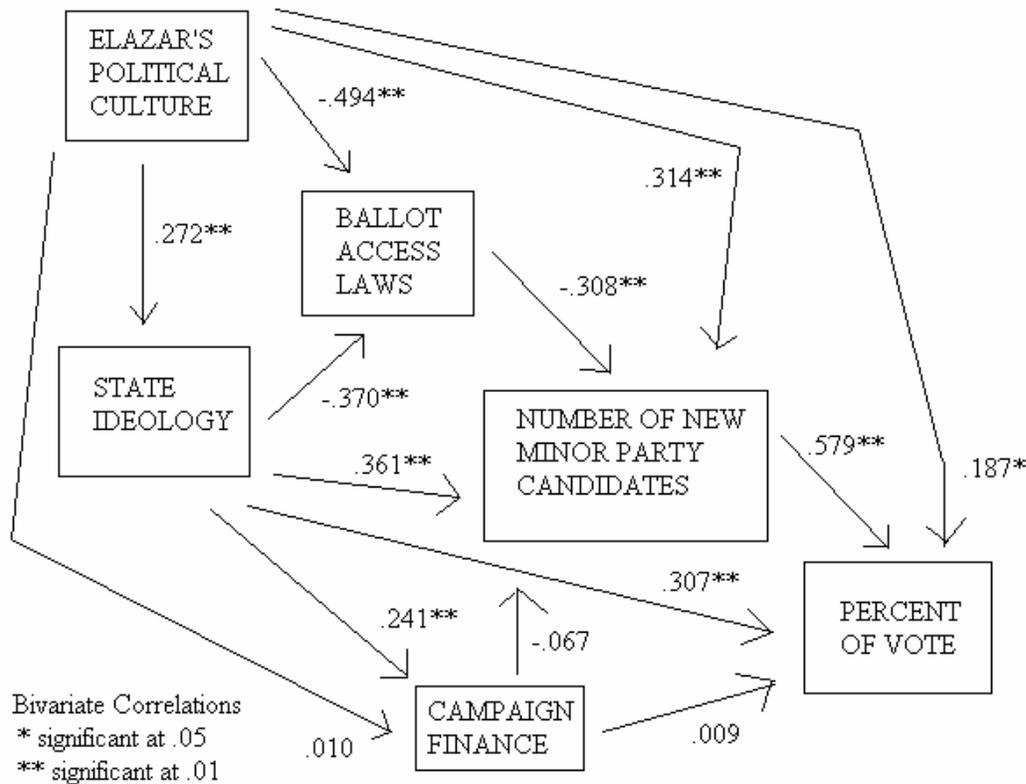
P>.1=insignificant .1\*, .05\*\*, .01\*\*\*  
Regression Coefficient  
(Standard Error)

party candidates. Just as in explaining the emergence of new minor political parties, the more liberal states also cast more votes for the minor parties. This association with liberals being pro-minor parties and conservatives being anti-minor party can also be seen when looking at how political culture of the states can play a role in all of this.

#### PATH ANALYSIS OF CAUSAL PROCESS

Figure E.1 presents a path analysis of the causal process explaining the linkages between the key variables in the study. Elazar's political culture temporally precedes all other variables so the path analysis starts there. The measure of political culture, coded 1 for traditionalistic, 2 for individualistic, and 3 for moralistic, is negatively correlated with the coded ballot access

variable where 1 is easy to get on the ballot and 5 is difficult. Therefore, it could be argued that the political culture of a state has a large influence on the type of ballot access laws the state will enact. According to the correlation, moralistic states are more likely to have easy, less restrictive



**Figure E.1: Path Analysis of Causal Process**

ballot access laws and traditionalistic states tend to have difficult, more restrictive laws.

Individualistic states are apt to fall somewhere in the middle. Elazar's political culture variable is also positively correlated at the .01 level with state ideology, the number of new minor party candidates to run for governor, and the percentage of votes cast for new minor party candidates. Culture's influence on state ideology is an important linkage in the causal process. If moralistic states tend to be more liberal, this could cause less restrictive ballot access laws to be adopted and more individual voting for minor party candidates. It has already been shown that state

ideology is a very significant variable in explaining the emergence of new minor parties as well as the percentage of the vote cast for those candidates.

From there, the path analysis links ballot access laws to the number of new minor party candidates on the ballot. This relationship was seen as being significant when the first regression was run as can be seen in Table E.1. The ballot access laws are positively correlated to the number of candidates on the ballot. Therefore, a traditionalistic state will tend to be more conservative, have more restrictive ballot access laws, which in turn tends to lead to fewer minor party candidates on the ballot.

There is also a positive correlation between the number of new minor party candidates running for governor and the percentage of votes those candidates collectively receive. This makes a tremendous amount of sense and is a factor that had not been looked at closely yet. This shows an indirect effect on the percentage of votes that minor party candidates receive because the ballot access laws influence the vote percent through the number of candidates on the ballot. While state ideology is significantly correlated with campaign finance regulations, there are no significant correlations between those campaign finance restrictions and the number of minor parties on the ballot or the percentage of vote they receive. Still, there may be something behind more liberal states having campaign finance regulations while more conservative states do not.

Political culture is also correlated directly to the percent of votes that minor party candidates receive. This gives the impression that not only does culture influence the laws that a state enacts, but it also plays a role in determining which candidates the citizens are willing to cast their votes for, which also occurs through the ideology of the state. This means that a moralistic culture, being inherently more liberal, will tend to have less restrictive ballot access laws which will allow for more candidates on the ballot, thus increasing the percentage of votes

for minor party candidates directly through the votes of its citizens and indirectly through the number of candidates that are listed on the ballots. Alternatively, a traditionalistic state will by nature be more conservative, have more restrictive ballot access laws which will reduce the number of candidates running for governor, and thereby reduce the percentage of votes cast for minor party candidates indirectly as well as have a direct influence on the vote because the citizens of a traditionalistic state are not as willing to vote for minor party candidates as those of moralistic or individualistic states.

## F. LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The journey to minor party emergence and success in gubernatorial races leads down a long and winding road. The barriers I have examined in this paper, although somewhat significant, only scratch the surface of being able to explain and predict the parties' emergence and candidates' successes. Ballot access laws were shown to have an impact on the number of new minor party candidates that enter into gubernatorial elections. On the other hand, expenditure limits and public financing regulations were not shown to be very influential in explaining the variance in the percentage of votes that minor party candidates receive. The role of political culture, political competition, and especially state ideology all play their own roles in minor party development as well.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

There are numerous limitations that this study has come across. It has examined the role that barriers to ballot access and campaign finance stringency play; however there are many other factors which put minor parties at a disadvantage that were not looked at in this paper. Access to debates and media coverage is a severe hurdle that minor party candidates must overcome.<sup>34</sup> Being allowed to participate in a debate with the Democratic and Republican opposition adds a level of legitimacy and recognition to a candidate that they probably could not get in any other way. Many states do not include candidates in debates who are not from major parties. Likewise, the lack of media coverage for minor candidates digs them a hole they can seldom get out of. Typically a minor candidate will either get no press, or, when they get do get it, bad press. Very seldom do they get support from media outlets.<sup>35</sup> Bad press, however, is often better than no press at all because it could be a free way to get a candidate's name and

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<sup>34</sup> Lentz 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Lentz 2002.

platform out to the public for a campaign that is strapped for financial backing from the beginning. This paper also fails to cover the partisanship of the state. The partisanship of the electorate, as well as major party strength at the institutional level (rather than the electoral level as measured by political competition), could be another variable that adds to this research topic. States which have a higher percentage of independent citizens compared to registered Democrats and Republicans could see a greater share of the votes go to minor party candidates. Also, if the two major parties are weakly organized in a state, there may be more opportunity for a minor candidate to jump in and take some of the votes.

The final variable that I would like to mention is the concept of personality and charisma and a measure of candidate quality. When trying to model why people vote for certain candidates, it is important to think about the traits of the actual candidate. This is a difficult measure to place in any model; however it is still a ghost in the story of explaining minor party success that is certainly out there. The way a candidate handles him or herself, speaks about the hot issues of the day, and is seen as being able to lead the state are things that people will consider when voting regardless of party affiliation. It takes money, time, energy, and dedication to win a gubernatorial campaign, but it also takes a candidate that can connect with the voters and offer them a reason to pick them in the voting booth. There is certainly a “likability” factor that is extremely difficult to capture with statistics but is a huge part of elections at every level.

The variables which I have examined are limited as well. Ballot access laws are difficult to code because of the extreme variation across states. It is impossible to say how much more difficult it is to get on the ballot in a state coded with a “1” than it is in a state coded “2” or “5”. It may be better to have more than five options. Perhaps a seven point scale would be even more significant but that would be incredibly difficult to code as it is hard to fit enough states in each

slot. I tried running the regression with two other measurements of ballot access laws and neither were significant. Neither using a one to fifty coding of the states in terms of ballot access difficulty nor using the raw number of signatures required for ballot access was significant in the model. This makes me think that the one to five coding is a more accurate representation of how difficult ballot access is. There are also states which could be coded differently for each aspect of ballot access, getting on the ballot and staying on the ballot. Since this paper only looks at new parties getting on the ballot, it was the most important aspect of ballot access laws.

Witko's campaign finance law index and Elazar's political culture classifications have limitations of their own. These limitations are similar in nature to the problems I had in coding ballot access laws. It can be difficult to take any descriptive analysis and transform that into numbers with perfect accuracy. No state is 100% moralistic, individualistic, or traditionalistic; in fact, every state has some aspect of all three. Overall, however, I feel that the limitations of any of my independent variables are not enough to warrant throwing them out. They are probably about the best that we can do right now when trying to make something such ballot access laws, campaign finance stringency, or political cultures quantifiable measures for statistical analysis.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The major conclusion to get out of this study is that ballot access laws do influence the number of new minor party candidates that run for governor in each state. This finding is of key importance in understanding the emergence of political parties in a two-party dominated system. The most important implication of this could come in the form of the spoiler vote that minor party candidates can present. If the elections between Republicans and Democrats are close, then the role of minor parties can make a difference in the outcome of elections. Still, this study seems to barely skim the surface of the story of minor party development on the state level.

There are many other variables that need to be discussed, plenty of other topics which need to be considered, and a lot of further research options, data, and ideas that need to be discovered.

The path analysis of the causal process may be the best summary of this research paper. It shows how political culture ties in directly to the vote share of minor party candidates as well as how, through an indirect path through ballot access laws and the number of minor candidates running, it can influence the vote share in a different way. The same can be said about state ideology. The regression model shows state ideology to have a significant relationship with the number of candidates as well as with the percentage of votes. Also in the path analysis, ballot access laws play a role in determining the number of new minor candidates to put their name on the ballot, and that in turn influences the collective vote share of minor party candidates.

In closing, if states want to move away from the old two-party system and allow for more freedom of choice in elections, they could start by freeing up access to the ballot to allow new minor political parties with fresh ideas to emerge. But perhaps the most important thing they could do would also be the nearly impossible one: in order to really see change, the state's culture and ideology would need to change first. A state may also want to think about changing its election system away from a "first-past-the-post" "winner-take-all" system to one of proportional representation or at least a majority system with a run off. Changing the ballot access laws would only be the beginning of the story of the emergence of new minor political parties, but every good journey has to start somewhere.

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## APPENDIX: VARIABLE CODING AND HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIP

**Hypothesis:** States with less stringent ballot access laws will see more new minor party gubernatorial candidates emerge. More stringent ballot access laws will decrease minor party activity.

Variable	Coding	Data Source	Hypothesized Relationship
Number of Minor Party Candidates	Actual number of new minor party candidates to appear on ballot	State Election Result Archives	Dependent Variable
Percentage of Vote Share Won by All Minor Party Candidates	0% to 22.9%	State Election Results Archives	Dependent Variable
Ballot Access Laws	“1” for easy “2” for medium-easy “3” for medium “4” for medium-hard “5” for hard	State Election Code Statutes	(-)
Equitable Campaign Finance Reform Laws	“0” if no campaign finance regulations exist “1” if at least one of the seven regulations are present	Christopher Witko	(+)
Presidential Election Year	“1” if gubernatorial election is during a presidential election year “0” if gubernatorial election is any other year	1 for 1996, 2000, 2004 0 for all other years	(-)
Gubernatorial Approval	Percentage of positive opinions about the previous governor	JARS Database	(-)
Political Competition	“1” if previous election had winning candidate with over 55% of the vote  “0” if previous winner had 55% or less of the vote	State Election Results Archives	(-)
Election Cycle One	Dummy Variable 1995-1998	Election Cycle	none
Election Cycle Three	Dummy Variable 2003-2006	Election Cycle	none
State Ideology	1999 mean state ideology score, higher is more liberal, lower is more conservative	Erikson, Wright, and McIver	(+)

## **VITA**

Jay D. Ducote was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on August 20, 1981. He is a graduate of William P. Clements High School in Sugar Land, Texas. Jay also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in economics and political science with a minor in business administration. He was a member of the Leadership LSU class of 2003 and is a founding member of the Third Row Tailgaters.