Mass Opinion and Elite Action in Political Campaigns

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines two aspects of political campaigns: candidate strategy and its effect on voters. Although the study of American elections has long ignored campaigns, recent scholarship suggests that campaigns do matter. One notable campaign effect is to shape the considerations voters bring to bear in deciding on a candidate.. Similarly, the literature on candidate strategy suggests that candidates should make the issues most favorable to them prominent in voters' minds. This constitutes a different imperative within the spatial model of elections, which has traditionally urged candidates to "converge" on the ideological center, shifting their own issues positions rather than the importance of issues.

I draw upon both campaign advertising and public opinion data to investigate candidate strategy and its consequences. First, I analyze advertising from the 1998 House and Senate elections to identify the issues candidates emphasize and the positions they take on these issues. I find that candidates stick to relatively uncontroversial "valence" issues and talk about these issues in largely non-ideological terms. The basic spatial framework thus does not apply neatly to candidate behavior. Moreover, opposing candidates rarely use similar rhetoric even when discussing issues in vague terms. There is not convergence even in this weak sense.

Second, I consider how campaigns affect voters, focusing on three races in particular: the 1998 California and Illinois gubernatorial races, and the 2000 presidential race. To analyze the gubernatorial races, I combine daily measures of advertising and survey data to demonstrate how

these campaigns affected voters in "real time." In both campaigns, advertising by the underdog rallied his respective partisans, and advertising on gun control made it a salient issue in voters' minds. To analyze the 2000 presidential race, I examine both temporal and spatial variation in campaign activity, leveraging the vast differences between "battleground" and "safe" states. The results demonstrate that voters exposed to more campaign activity draw more on sophisticated cues such as issue positions and less on simpler cues such as economic evaluations and presidential approval. This is arguably troubling for Gore, since the robust economy was one of his biggest assets.

Henry E. Brady — August 4, 2003

Chair — Date

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CHAPTER 1
Rediscovering Campaigns

I. Introduction

Scarcely a moment passes in American political life when a campaign is not underway. Even when an election seems distant, candidates are typically already out on the hustings, brandishing their stump speech and pressing the flesh. And this is probably a good thing. Americans are notoriously inattentive of politicians while they are off governing. Following legislation as it passes through subcommittees and committees is tedious and demands quite a lot from most ordinary folk. What politicians do and say in their respective capitals usually becomes prominent only in extraordinary circumstances—a scandal or a war, for example. Campaigns thereby provide first and foremost an arena for interaction: presidents and senators and governors and members of Congress confront the people who elect them, and vice versa. Candidates communicate their ideas, goals, and experiences. Citizens observe, learn, and choose.

And yet, in many scholarly accounts, the campaign is a strangely ineffectual process. In these accounts, voters appear largely insulated from the blitz of media coverage and advertising, guided as they are by partisan predilections. The ultimate outcome of the election is thought to depend more on the fundamentals—the nation's economic health, for example—than on the twists and turns of war-room strategy, on who said what, and where, and when. There is a soothing stability and predictability to what, from the front page or the nightly news, might seem chaotic. It is not that campaigns are inherently pointless or unnecessary, but nevertheless, evidence that they affect voters in some notable way proves scarce. The exertions of candidates and the scribblings of reporters and the musings of the punditry are considered ephemera.

Or are they? There is growing evidence to the contrary, evidence suggesting that campaigns do affect voters. This dissertation is in part an effort to demonstrate how. The argument, in brief, is

this. While most voters come to a campaign with a predisposition toward a given party that is difficult to shake, they are not immune from influence. Even partisans can be drawn more closely to their party's candidate. Swing voters must be lured into someone's camp. If you are the candidate, shoring up your partisans and enticing swing voters are your primary imperatives, each of which can be accomplished through various means: by simply providing information to voters; by adopting positions that reflect the views of the electorate; by persuading voters to adopt your positions; by improving voters' evaluations of your character; or by emphasizing the issues that will benefit you the most.

The results herein suggest that candidates have particular influence through the issues they choose to emphasize. It is not always easy for you the candidate to shift your own positions or to shift those of voters. Changing your own positions may require denying or obscuring your prior positions. Shifting voters' positions could prove equally difficult. If most voters are pro-choice, for example, then little that any pro-life candidate can say will probably change their mind on this issue. However, you as a candidate can still make headway by encouraging voters to concentrate on issues where you all share common ground. This entails altering the election-year agenda, making the issues that benefit you the important issues of the campaign. As a consequence, even though campaigns may not make many voters switch completely to some other party—Democrats will usually gravitate to the Democratic candidate, and Republicans to the Republican—they can change why Democrats like the Democrat, and likewise for Republicans. This is to say, campaigns make certain considerations salient to voters by the time they arrive at the ballot box, considerations that they had not previously, well, considered. This process of *priming* is a crucial part of campaigns, one that scholars are just coming to recognize and explore.

Campaign processes can affect not only voters but also election outcomes. As voters come to weight certain issues more heavily, they will gravitate towards the candidate who better represents their own views. In uncompetitive elections, none of this may make a difference. But in close elections, this could provide the margin of victory. Priming can produce a winner without actual

persuasion: voters' preferences may remain fixed, but if the weights they attach to certain issues do change, then so will their likelihood of supporting the candidates. Thus campaigns can have consequences not simply for how voters decide, but for who gets elected.

The existence of real campaign effects begs another question: what constitutes the substance of the campaign? What kinds of ideas are put before the electorate? How do candidates and parties select messages and themes? Is there a method to the apparent madness, the mish-mash of advertising and so forth, which confronts voters? Thus far, there has been more attention paid to the outputs of campaign discourse—that is, to their impact on voters—than to the inputs of this discourse—that is, to the content contributed by candidates. This dissertation thus seeks to uncover systematic regularities in campaign messages. Such regularities may derive from "history," as candidates emphasize issues traditionally associated with their parties, or from experience, as candidates emphasize issues on which they have built a record of achievement. Regularities may also derive from current events, as candidates are forced to respond to some hot-button issue. Finally, regularities may arise within the course of the campaign itself, as candidates respond strategically to the messages of their opponent. Candidates cannot always afford to pursue their own agenda exclusively; at times they must answer an opponent's charge or match their attention to a particular issue. Thus, we might think of campaign discourse as a product both of preconditions, such as a candidate's biography or front-page news, and of the continuous give-and-take that occurs during the weeks leading up to an election.

This chapter has three parts. It is first an excursion into extant scholarship on campaigns. For many years a "minimal effects" paradigm characterized the study of campaigns, portraying them (implicitly and explicitly) as largely irrelevant to electoral choices and outcomes. But of late this has begun to change. Scholars examining different levels of elections with innovative research designs and a more nuanced definition of campaign effects have found that campaigns matter. Their findings can be organized into a concise typology of campaign effects. Among these effects, priming has garnered particular scholarly attention. This is in reality a rediscovery, as the earliest studies of

campaign effects documented this phenomenon fifty years ago, though without much immediate effect on subsequent scholarship. While reference to priming in recent work is sometimes only implicit, and while new empirical evidence is just now emerging, there is an impressive convergence on this idea, suggesting the need for further investigation.

This chapter is secondly a discussion of candidate strategy. The extant theoretical literature on this subject consists mostly of variations on the traditional spatial model of elections and its prediction that candidates should converge to the ideological center. Interestingly, though, there is a growing literature that emphasizes the strategic benefits of priming and in which candidates are encouraged to shape how citizens weight the notions they bring to bear in the voting booth. There is also reason to believe that priming is a more realistic strategy for most candidates, since altering your own views in some attempt to appear centrist may prove thoroughly unconvincing if your record says otherwise. Much of the theoretical work is concerned with modeling candidate strategy and not with examining its empirical manifestations. Interestingly, much of the empirical work suggests that candidates do not necessarily converge to a centrist ideology and that candidates of different parties usually remain quite distinct. This is true in their issue positions as well as in their issue emphasis, as candidates stick to those issues that their party is thought to "own." The result, some scholars argue, is that opposing candidates "talk past" each other and fail to dialogue on a common set of issues.

Finally, this chapter critically evaluates the current literature on campaign strategy and effects, delineates remaining questions, and lays out an empirical strategy for answering them. I describe the data that serve as the empirical basis for this project, including both surveys and contextual measures of campaign content. The chapters that follow use these data to illuminate the nature of campaign messages and to demonstrate the impact those messages have on voters.

II. The Minimal Effects Paradigm

Someone skeptical of campaign effects might begin by citing the earliest systematic, empirical studies of presidential campaigns: Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1948), who examined the 1940

presidential race, and Berelson *et al.* (1954), who examined the 1948 presidential race. Both studies relied on panel surveys of residents in particular communities—Erie County, Ohio, in 1940 and Elmira, New York, in 1948—conducted intermittently during the year before the election. These authors, known colloquially as the "Columbia School" because of their affiliation with Columbia University, have been interpreted as demonstrating few campaign effects, primarily because they uncovered considerable stability in voters' candidate preferences throughout the spring, summer, and fall. For example, Lazarsfeld and his colleagues found that during the 1940 campaign, over half of their sample had decided on a candidate by June, and only eight percent actually switched allegiances from one candidate to the other during the campaign itself. Such stability arises because most people bring to the voting booth predispositions—in these studies, such characteristics as religion and class—that condition their response to campaign information and events. If I were a working-class Catholic in Elmira in 1948, little that Thomas Dewey could have said would have convinced me to defect from Harry Truman.[1]

While outright defection is uncommon, a more prevalent process is "activation." Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1948: 73) write of voters: "Knowing a few of their personal characteristics, we can tell with fair certainty how they will finally vote; they join the fold to which they belong. What the campaign does is activate their political predispositions." In other words, those with Democratic predispositions eventually gravitated to Roosevelt or Truman. The opposite is true for Republican constituencies.[2]

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[1] That said, the Columbia School believed that stability could itself be a kind of campaign effect: "...political communications served the important purposes of preserving prior decisions instead of initiating new decisions. It kept the partisans 'in line' by reassuring them in their vote decision; it reduced defection from the ranks. It had the effect of reinforcing the original vote decision" (Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1948: 87). In general, these authors tend to interpret their findings as suggesting a greater role for campaigns than subsequent literature has recognized—though Shaw (2001b) is an exception.

[2] There is a sense in which the Columbia School's sociological model of the vote limits their search for campaign effects. Attributes like religion and class are themselves largely stable and unlikely to change during a campaign. (Norris *et al.* (1999) make a similar point about Butler and Stokes' (1974) early work on British electoral behavior.) Later research would draw attention to such factors as evaluations of the incumbent administration and perceptions of the candidates that are more susceptible to electioneering. Moreover, Stokes (1966: 19) points out that the 1940 election was fairly humdrum in that "the dominant personality and principal issues differed little form those of preceding elections." He continues, "I have often wondered whether the static social determinism of *The People's Choice* would have emerged from a campaign in which the tides of short-term change were more nearly at flood."

In sum, though the Columbia School authors were themselves quite enthusiastic about campaign-driven processes like reinforcement and activation, it is easy to see why some interpret their work as providing evidence of "minimal effects." An electorate full of early deciders and otherwise predictable movement suggests that campaigns do very little. At the very least, campaign effects seem mild given the considerable time and money invested by candidates and parties.

In the wake of these studies, a different and by now familiar paradigm in the study of American presidential elections gradually took hold. As developed by a group of scholars at the University of Michigan and elucidated most notably in *The American Voter* (Campbell *et al.* 1960), the study of elections and vote choice centered on long-standing and fairly immutable proclivities, such as party identification, that, like the sociological attributes emphasized by the Columbia School, are largely unruffled by campaign breezes. However, the accompanying research design was not centered on individual communities nor did it typically draw on panel data. Instead it featured large cross-sectional surveys, chiefly the National Election Studies, which probe the political mind with unsurpassed depth but are not typically designed to capture change that takes place during the campaign.[3]

Since then, much contemporary research draws upon surveys like the NES to determine why voters voted as they did and what the election was "about." Most often scholars focus on the important factors in vote choice: voters' party identification (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Bartels 2000a), perceptions of the national economy (Kinder and Kiewiet 1981), retrospective evaluations of the incumbent's performance (Fiorina 1981), issue agendas and positions (Abramowitz 1995; Petrocik 1996; Alvarez 1998), political ideology (Hinich and Munger 1994); perceptions of candidate traits (Kinder *et al.* 1980; Kinder 1986), social environment (*e.g.*, Beck *et al.* 2002); and so forth. Then there

[3] A series of cross-sections like the NES could be leveraged to study campaigns if they were employed in time-series fashion—as in Markus (1992) and Bartels (2000a)—to examine, say, the relative weight of various factors in vote choice and how these weights corresponded to campaign themes. As Kelley and Mirer (1974: 573) write, "Of course, if they values of the assigned weights [of the "components of the electoral decision"] remained constant from election to election, the regression equation that accounted well for the results of one election would predict votes well in later ones. But this is not so..." Unfortunately, much extant literature treats elections as one-shot phenomena.

are debates about the best statistical model of vote choice: a unidirectional "funnel" of variables (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Miller and Shanks 1996); a more complex recursive process capturing endogeneity and reciprocal causality (Markus and Converse 1979; Fiorina 1981; Franklin and Jackson 1983); a model designed to accommodate prominent third-party candidates (Alvarez and Nagler 1995, 1998); a model that takes account of abstention as well as vote choice (Lacy and Burden 1999). This paradigm and its associated literature do not devote much explicit attention to the campaign and how it might shape voters' attitudes towards the candidates. The occasional exceptions continue to argue that campaigns change few minds (Finkel 1993; Bartels 1993).

A concomitant strain of literature focused at the aggregate level complements the minimal-effects tenor of many individual-level analyses. Here scholars attempt to explain or forecast congressional and presidential election outcomes with a handful of variables typically measured well before the campaign begins (*e.g.*, Tufte 1978; Fair 1978; Rosenstone 1983; Forsythe *et al.* 1991, Lewis-Beck 1992; Campbell and Garand 2000; Hibbs 2000; see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000 for a review). These usually include the nation's economic health, approval of the incumbent president, and perhaps an early tracking poll from the current race. A number of scholars are engaged in this cottage industry, but one consistent finding emerges from all of their models: these indicators predict most of the variation in election outcomes, suggesting that campaigns affect only the meager residual.[4]

On the whole, the minimal effects paradigm in the study of elections emphasizes their stability and predictability. Through the campaign season, most voters rely on psychological

[4] Of course, these models do not always correctly predict the winner, as was the case in 1992 and in 2000. Interestingly, the consternation that this produces (*e.g.*, Fair 1996; Lewis-Beck and Tien 2001; Wlezien 2001; Campbell 2001; Holbrook 2001) leads only to calls for refinements to the equation—or to a statistical aggregation of these equations (Bartels and Zaller 2001)—rather than attention to the specific factors, and to campaign-specific factors in particular, that led these equations astray. In a related study, Bartels (1998a) examines state-level historical dynamics in presidential elections and concludes that there is a great deal more electoral continuity than volatility. Like predictability, continuity seems to imply a lesser role for campaigns. However, Nardulli (1994) finds much less continuity within states. Other subnational dynamics (*e.g.*, regions within states) may be less stable and predictable over time. Moreover, Shively (1992) argues that electoral change since the 1950s is due more to voters' switching parties ("conversion") than to partisan differences in turnout ("differential abstention"). Conversion implies a greater degree of electoral volatility. Shively speculates that changes in modern campaigning, such as the rise of television, could be driving this shift.

bedrocks like partisanship. Thus when they arrive at the ballot box in November, they are likely to vote as they would have in June. In the aggregate, fundamental economic and political conditions structure electoral outcomes. Perturbations can occur but are minor hiccups at best. Obviously, scholars working within this paradigm are not utterly unappreciative of campaigns. There is a realization that campaigns usually generate enough hullabaloo to get voters' attention. In the phrase of Shaw (2001a), they "mobilize stimuli." Furthermore, virtually everyone acknowledges that in a close race, campaigns can be consequential; the 2000 presidential race is an obvious example. Thus one must be careful not to make "minimal effects" into a straw man.

But yet it is not a straw man. This is not so much a matter of deliberate and concerted ignorance of campaigns as it is a by-product of the dominant electoral studies paradigm. In other words, it is an act of omission rather than commission. Until recently, there has been no concerted attempt to gather attitudinal and contextual data well-suited to the study of campaigns. The typical NES cross-section and the typical forecasting model do not uncover campaign effects because they are not designed to do so. But naturally, once these paradigms are established and prove empirically fruitful, scholars want to get them right. Alternatives languish.

III. Rediscovering Campaign Effects

Of course, alternative questions and data could produce different conclusions. This is precisely what has happened in the study of campaign effects. Recent research suggests that campaigns shape voters' attitudes in key ways. When viewing this literature in its totality, certain features accompany its innovative findings: attention to campaigns besides the general election campaign for president, novel research designs, and a broader understanding of campaign effects.

Beyond the Presidential General Election

First and foremost, renewed respect for campaigns derives from attention to elected offices besides the presidency and from elections besides the general election. On the whole, the

presidential general election campaign is a "least likely" case. Predispositions like party identification provide clear cues; the candidates are largely matched in both notoriety and resources. (Of course, this is not to say that campaign effects in presidential elections are impossible to uncover.) But in other settings these conditions do not hold. In primary elections, for example, voters often confront a bewildering array of unfamiliar candidates. Party identification provides no guidance. Candidate fortunes are decidedly more volatile, deriving from the elusive quality of viability, the perceived likelihood that a candidate can win (Bartels 1988; see also Aldrich 1980). Viability itself depends crucially on campaign events and media coverage, particularly in a media environment dominated by "horse race" coverage (Johnston and Brady 1987; Patterson 1994). Moreover, primaries make candidates mix and mingle with voters in key states like Iowa and New Hampshire. An effective campaign organization and visits to the state help win votes in Iowa caucuses (Trish 1999). Personal contact with candidates makes New Hampshire voters more favorable towards them (Vavreck 2001; Vavreck, Spiliotes, and Fowler 2002).

Congressional elections are another example. In both House and Senate elections, the candidates do not necessarily have equal resources. Typically, a well-heeled and well-known incumbent squares off against a relatively under-funded and unknown challenger.[5] Thus, it is no surprise that candidate spending in House elections powerfully conditions the outcome (Jacobson 1975, 1983), even more so when spending on communication is isolated as a causal variable (Ansolabehere and Gerber 1994). And a great deal of campaign spending in House races (76 percent in 1992, by Herrnson's (1998) estimate) goes towards communicating with voters. As such, it is not surprising that the likelihood of defecting to the opposition candidate depends on the balance of information flow emanating from the two candidates (Zaller 1989), or that having one's district or state boundaries coincide with media market boundaries advantages House and Senate candidates (Stewart and Reynolds 1990; Levy and Squire 2000). Herrnson (1998: 2) writes, "...campaigns

[5] This is the conventional wisdom in House elections. The lack of competitiveness in Senate elections goes less noticed. But of the 104 Senate elections in 1994, 1996, and 1998, for example, only 33 (32%) were decided by a 55-45 margin or less.

matter a great deal to the outcome of congressional elections. National conditions are significant, but their impact on elections is secondary to the decisions and actions of candidates, campaign organizations, party committees, organized interests, and other individuals and groups." Recent studies of Senate elections isolate campaign intensity—in short, a measure of how competitive a race is and how vigorously the candidates contest it—as critical in conditioning how candidates behave, how the media covers them, and how the voters respond (Stewart and Reynolds 1990; Franklin 1991; Westlye 1991; Krasno 1994, ch. 6; Kahn 1996, ch. 9; Kahn and Kenney 1998).

Other state-level campaigns have begun to garner attention. Carsey (2000) provides the first substantial evidence of how gubernatorial campaigns structure voters' decision-making through issue priming. Joslyn and Haider-Markel (2000) argue that campaign information shapes preferences about ballot initiatives as well.

Ultimately, basing an understanding of campaign effects only on presidential elections, as early literature largely did, is incomplete. In such a competitive environment, the net effects of a campaign may be small and therefore difficult to detect. Other kinds of elections present interesting variation in competitiveness, as manifested in candidate quality and resources.[6] Even more importantly, moving beyond the presidency allows researchers to examine more races, simply because there are a hundred senators, fifty governors, and 435 representatives, but only one president. Presidential elections garner the most attention and interest but do not monopolize the insights we can gain into the hearts and minds of voters during campaign season.

Innovation in Research Design

The second important factor in this "renaissance" is distinctive research designs and data collections. The National Election Studies deserves credit here. Several of its innovative survey designs facilitated the explorations of primary and congressional elections mentioned above. The 1980 Panel Survey interviewed a sample of respondents four times during the primary and general

election seasons. The 1984 Rolling Cross-Section Study interviewed repeated weekly cross-sections for most of that calendar year. The 1988 Super Tuesday Study interviewed respondents in all sixteen states holding their primaries on Super Tuesday. Both the 1978 Congressional Election Study and the 1988-90-92 Senate Election Studies were designed to capture accurately the variation in House and Senate races, respectively. Because a sample drawn solely to ensure national representativeness will not necessarily contain a representative sample of any subnational geographic unit, such as congressional districts or states, the typical NES cross-section could misrepresent, for example, the distribution of congressional races with and without incumbents running.[7] These two NES projects yielded a representative sample of districts or states and consequently much insight into cross-sectional variation across congressional campaigns and its effects on voters.

Scholars employing another type of research design have uncovered interesting campaign effects even in presidential races (Holbrook 1996; Shaw 1999a, 1999b; Wlezien and Erikson 2002). These authors examine the relationship between aggregated opinion—*i.e.*, the percentage supporting each of the candidates in successive tracking polls—and new measures of campaign events and activities. In so doing, they help answer the question posed by Gelman and King (1993): why are tracking polls in presidential campaigns so variable when election outcomes themselves are so predictable? Holbrook (1996) demonstrates that events such as party conventions and debates shifted opinion during the 1984, 1988, and 1992 presidential races.[8] Shaw (1999a) elaborates the effects of events, focusing on both their existence and duration. Both scholars find that events matter most when the candidate in question is doing worse than expected. Shaw (1999b) operationalizes two specific measures of campaign activity, television advertising and candidate appearances, in the 1988, 1992, and 1996 presidential races. The incorporation of these measures is itself an outstanding innovation; to that point, quantification of these very prominent campaign

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[6] One can actually find such variation in presidential elections, but only by looking at presidential campaigns in the fifty states. This is the approach I adopt in Chapter 5's analysis of the 2000 Presidential race.
[7] For elaboration, see Westlye (1983) on Senate races and Stoker and Bowers (2001) on House races.

activities was largely non-existent.[9] Moreover, by examining presidential voting at the state level, Shaw incorporates a well-known reality that has been slow to seep into scholarly work on campaigns: that presidential campaign activity varies dramatically across states, depending on the competitiveness of the state. Shaw demonstrates first that advertising and appearances had a significant effect on the candidates' vote share at the state level (see also Holbrook 2002). These same effects emerge in a dynamic analysis of tracking polls conducted throughout the fall of each election year. Using time-series models, Wlezien and Erikson (2002) examine the longest extant series of tracking polls, the Gallup Poll from 1944-2000. They conclude that early in the campaign, "shocks" to the candidates' fortunes are largely temporary. However, late in the campaign, such shocks have a permanent effect on the tracking polls—suggesting that campaigns do matter, though in a fashion that Wlezien and Erikson find "elusive."

A potentially even more promising design is a specific kind of rolling cross-section that interviews cross-sections of respondents daily. The main advantage of this design, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, is its sensitivity. A rolling cross-section can register individual-level opinion changes with unprecedented temporal specificity, thereby allowing scholars to pinpoint more exactly what caused the change.[10] Johnston *et al.* (1992) were among the first to employ this design (see also Jenkins 2002; Henry and Gordon 2001; Gidengil 2002). Their exploration of the 1988 Canadian campaign is one of the seminal studies of campaign effects. Daily individual-level data enabled Johnston and his colleagues to identify trends not only in the number of voters supporting each party, but also in important secondary variables, such as attention to and interest in the campaign, expectations about the outcome, opinions on key issues, and evaluations of

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[8] Holbrook's findings build on other work that examines a more limited set of events, such as conventions or debates (*e.g.*, Sigelman and Sigelman 1984; Geer 1988; Lanoue 1991; Campbell, Cherry, and Wink 1992; Druckman 2003).

[9] See Althaus, Nardulli, and Shaw (2002) for an analysis of presidential campaign appearances, their incidence, and location. See Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt (1998) for a similar effort regarding newspaper coverage of the campaign. They code a systematic sample of newspapers from around the country, with more attention to the partisan content of campaign coverage.

[10] The rolling cross-section is perhaps uniquely suited to test Weisberg's (1998) proposition: "More electoral change will be found when measuring changes across shorter time period" (373). The empirical results in chapters 3 and 4 bear out this notion.

the leaders. Moreover, they link shifts in these trends to campaign events, in particular to a crucial debate that occurred about four weeks before the election. They also examine effects that are conditional on voter attention; for example, voters who watched the debate registered a shift towards the perceived "winner" first, with voters who did not watch debate following soon thereafter as news about the debate reached the broader population. Rolling cross-sections can thus illuminate both aggregate trends and individual-level mechanisms.

A final methodological innovation establishes more clearly the causal effect of campaign activity through experimental manipulation. That is, campaign treatments of some kind are randomized across respondents, such that any observed change in opinion can be attributed only to this treatment. Three strands of research deserve special mention. The first is a series of studies by Ansolabehere, Iyengar, and others that examines the potentially harmful consequences of negative television advertising during campaigns (Ansolabehere *et al.* 1994; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). They argue that negative advertising alienates voters, who come to dislike the candidates and therefore stay home on Election Day. Their empirical evidence derives mainly from a series of experiments exposing subjects to political advertisements in the context of news broadcasts. In one such experiment, the number of subjects who said they intended to vote was 4.6 percentage points lower among those who witnessed negative advertisements (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995: 104).[11]

The second strand of literature is different in two respects. First, it focuses on how campaigns can mobilize, rather than "de-mobilize," voters. Second, it carries out experimental manipulation in the field, not in the laboratory. In a series of studies, Green and Gerber (2000a, 2000b, 2001) demonstrate how different get-out-the-vote (GOTV) strategies can increase turnout.

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[11] Empirical evidence of this effect outside of the laboratory has been mixed—see Bartels (1996a), Finkel and Geer (1998), Norris *et al.* (1999), Freedman and Goldstein (1999), Ansolabehere *et al.* (1999), Kahn and Kenney (1999), Wattenberg and Brians (1999), Lau *et al.* (1999), Jamieson (2000, ch. 10-13), Geer (2000), Vavreck (2000), Lau and Pomper (2002), and Goldstein and Freedman (2002). Other aspects of negative advertising have also garnered attention. Gronbeck (1994) and Richardson (2001) analyze negative advertising's rhetorical styles and functions. Pfau and Kenski (1990) argue that negative advertising can be counteracted through inoculation, bringing up damaging content while giving viewers information needed to refute it. Sigelman and Kugler (2003) argue that citizens' perceptions of negativity do not necessarily correspond to social scientific definitions of negative campaigns, which may explain the inconsistent results in the research cited above. This

Voters in New Haven, Connecticut, were randomly assigned to receive GOTV enticements, ranging from mail to phone calls to a face-to-face encounter, or to receive no such enticement. The results were quite striking: people contacted face-to-face were 8.7 percentage points more likely to vote than were people who received no GOTV material or contact (Gerber and Green 2000b: 657).

The third strand of literature focuses on the effects of advertising on attitudes. In these experiments, voters are exposed to particular advertising messages while watching another program. Mendelberg (2001) demonstrates that implicit racial cues in candidate advertising—the Willie Horton ads of the 1988 presidential campaign are archetypal—activate white voters' racial resentments. Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) arrive a similar conclusion. Simon (2002) finds that candidate advertising simultaneously informs voters about candidate issue positions and makes voters' own positions on those issues more salient predictors of vote choice—both of which can help the candidate's win votes provided that the candidate's discussion of a given issue is credible.

The research designs discussed here no doubt fail to exhaust those employed by scholars moving beyond the one-shot cross-sectional survey conducted during a presidential election. But in each case, these designs have demonstrated how campaigns influenced voters. More generally, they draw attention to two key dimensions of campaign dynamics: time and space. A single cross-section cannot capture the ebbs and flows of campaign activity, nor the fluctuations in candidate fortunes. Panel studies, compilations of tracking polls, and rolling cross-sections can. When married with contextual data like events and advertising, these kinds of data can tell more compelling stories about how the money and time candidates and parties spend actually shape people's ideas and intentions. But even if data are not ordered over time, spatial variation can provide explanatory leverage. Examining subnational campaigns allows one to compare lopsided races where a heavily favored incumbent ran roughshod over some poor challenger with hard-fought races where two equally matched candidates slugged it out, or races where the campaign turned on the performance of the

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literature on negative advertising probably constitutes the most concerted scholarly attention to campaigns in decades.

incumbent with races where it turned on a hot-button social issue. And so on. The potential of expanding both time and space in campaign studies has only barely been explored.

Redefining a Campaign "Effect"

Much earlier work defined campaign effects as simple discrete shifts in candidate preference—*e.g.*, "yesterday I preferred Jones, but today I prefer Smith." This is what proved so rare in presidential elections, according to the early Columbia School studies. More recently, despite new and potent research designs, this has proven elusive even in the "renaissance" literature, particularly at the presidential level. For example, Holbrook (1996) finds that fundamental economic and political conditions dwarf the effect of campaign events. Shaw (1999b: 357) writes, "Too much should not be made of the campaign effects discovered here—no elections would have been reversed without implausible changes in the distribution of campaigning in several key states." Campbell (2000)—who estimates that of the 33 presidential elections since 1868, 4 to 6 were decided by the campaign itself—summarizes the point thus: "Perhaps the best characterization of campaign effects is that they are neither large nor minimal in an absolute sense, but sometimes large enough to be politically important" (188).[12]

However, such a narrow definition obscures important campaign processes. For one, in the months leading up to a campaign, the underlying likelihood of preferring a candidate can shift even if the stated preference does not. There is a substantial difference between supporting a candidate with a probability of .55 and a probability of .95. Moreover, for voters on the fence, such a shift will imply actual conversion as the probability crosses the .50 threshold. A second problem is that this

[12] Similarly, the effects of newspaper coverage on candidate preference in 1992 were quite mild: the partisan leaning of editorials had an effect roughly one-fifth that of party identification (Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998). Norris *et al.* (1999) come to similar conclusions about newspaper and television coverage during the 1997 British election—*e.g.*, "Our aggregate results show clearly that the changes in party support during the course of the short campaign bear little relation to the pattern of positive and negative news about parties presented on television" (150), and "the ability of the press to switch their readers' political leanings are [*sic*] extremely limited" (184)—but see Pattie and Johnston (2002). Scholars of political advertising tend to agree that the electorate is not easily manipulable (see Patterson and McClure 1976; Meadow and Sigelman 1982; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). As pollster William Hamilton writes, "Although we live in an instant-

narrow definition obscures the *mechanisms* that drive shifts in preferences. There are many such mechanisms by which candidates can augment their fan club.

At one level, a campaign simply conveys information. Voters often begin with little knowledge of the candidates, and the campaign helps to educate them. Thus, campaigns *inform* voters. This may mean nothing more than helping voters recognize a candidate's name—an imperative for relatively unknown candidates, such as challengers in congressional races (see, *e.g.*, Stokes and Miller 1967; Mann and Wolfinger 1980; Clarke and Evans 1983; Goldenberg and Traugott 1987; Prinz 1995; Herrnson 1998), many presidential primary candidates (Keeter and Zukin 1983), and even for incumbents (Krasno 1994). Campaigns can also convey more detailed information; in particular, they help voters understand where the candidates stand on issues (Markus 1982; Conover and Feldman 1989; Franklin 1991; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Dalager 1996; Holbrook 1999; Simon 2002). Alvarez (1998) finds further that presidential campaigns reduce voters' uncertainty about the candidates' issue positions. Greater certainty about a candidate makes one more likely to vote for him. In other words, voters are risk-averse and not wont to take a chance on an enigma (see also Weisberg and Fiorina 1980; Bartels 1986; Brady and Ansolabehere 1989). They instead reward candidates who eschew obfuscation (in Franklin's (1991) felicitous phrase)—thereby calling into question the advice of Downs (1957), Shepsle (1972), Page (1976), and Glazer (1990), all of whom emphasize the rationality of ambiguous stances.

These findings about the "informing" function of campaigns are all the more striking given omnipresent concerns about the quality of campaign discourse. Kelley (1960: 3) writes, "contemporary campaign discussion falls far short of meeting a number of the requirements of a discussion that would encourage rational voting." Similarly, Page (1978: 153) describes candidates themselves as "skilled at appearing to say much while actually saying little." Both Kelley and Page may be partly right; certainly most every campaign has its ignoble moments; as Hart (2000: 72) puts

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information world, it is difficult to think of American voters as being so enthralled with politics that they are changing and responding to every little media modification a campaign or opponent makes" (1990: 178).

it, "If necessary, information can be sacrificed to attitude." Even still, voters may learn something worthwhile.[13]

A good deal of any campaign concerns not only issues but also the candidates themselves, who typically exert considerable effort to accentuate their positive qualities and experiences and downplay shortcomings and pratfalls.[14] And with good reason: perceptions of candidate traits, primarily their competence and integrity, play a major role in candidate evaluation (Rahn *et al.* 1990; Funk 1996, 1999) as well as voter choice in presidential primaries (Stoker 1993), presidential general elections (Kinder 1986, Miller and Shanks 1996), and House elections (McCurley and Mondak 1995).[15] As Page (1978: 232) writes, "Electoral choices involve not only what candidates stand for, but also what they *are* or seem to be." Criteria such as personality are not, as often thought, the refuge of the ignorant; several studies demonstrate that well-educated respondents rely on traits more heavily than the less-educated (Glass 1985; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuck 1986).

"The cognitive process underlying the evaluation of candidates…is clearly a dynamic one involving an interaction between the individual and the political environment" (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuck 1986: 535). Popkin (1991: 62) cites the campaign itself: "the campaign exposes the candidate to voters in complex and fast-breaking situations. As they watch the candidate handle crowds, speeches, press conferences, reporters, and squabbles, they can obtain information with which they imagine how he or she would be likely to behave in office." This information has become even more attainable as television has come to dominate campaign politics (Keeter 1987). How then does the campaign affect evaluations of candidates? First, the campaign serves merely to inform voters about who the candidates are. Thus, as the campaign progresses, voters are better able

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[13] That campaigns inform voters has even more significance given that simulated "fully informed" electorates often have distinctly different preferences (Bartels 1996b; Althaus 1998, 2001; Gilens 2001; Berinsky 1999, 2002; Luskin and Globetti 2002). The potential for deliberation among politicians and citizens to sway public opinion is also relevant here (see Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002).

[14] This is not to say that issue appeals and personality appeals are entirely independent. For example, appeals based on health care, education, and job training may suggest an empathetic candidate. As Salmore and Salmore (1989: 112-113) write, "candidates use issues not just to appeal to voters who agree with them on policy but to convey messages about their personal qualities." Rapoport, Metcalf, and Johnson (1989) find that voters make (often idiosyncratic) inferences from issues to traits and vice versa.

[15] See also Stewart and Clarke (1992) for similar findings in British elections.

simply to evaluate the candidates (Keeter and Zukin 1983); this is to say, campaigns create impressions of candidates, as Kahn and Kenney (1994) show is true of televised political advertisements in particular (see also Meadow and Sigelman 1982). Second, the campaign can also persuade voters by changing the specific content of these evaluations. Johnston *et al.* (1992) document an increase in positive perceptions of John Turner's competence during the 1988 Canadian election; in particular, his unexpectedly good performance in a key debate was the cause (though the effect proved temporary). Similarly, Stewart and Clarke show that during the 1987 British election, positive evaluations of Labor candidate Neil Kinnock also increased. Stewart and Clarke argue that instability in evaluations of candidate traits were largely responsible for volatility in party support overall. McCann (1990) reports on evaluations of Reagan and Mondale during the 1984 campaign. He demonstrates that as the campaign progressed through the primary season, the party conventions, and the fall campaign, partisans grow more polarized in their evaluations. In particular, this reflected growing negativity of partisans towards their opposition: Democrats came to view Reagan more negatively, while Republicans experienced a growing distaste for Mondale. Taken as a whole, these studies show that voters do update their perceptions of the candidates in response to the campaign.

Campaigns can also *mobilize* voters (Wolfinger 1963; Caldeira *et al.* 1985; Gilliam 1985; Cox and Munger 1989; Rosenstone and Hansen 1991; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Jackson 1996, 1997; Green and Gerber 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Denver and Hands 2002). Large numbers of eligible voters do not vote, but many will if encouraged in some fashion. Thus campaigns are not only about winning hearts and minds but also about getting bodies to the polls.[16] Though extant studies have been concerned primarily with turnout in a non-partisan sense, it is equally clear that turnout can have partisan consequences (see, *e.g.*, Denver and Hands 2002). Simply put, candidates want their supporters to vote and their opponents' supporters to stay home. It may prove easier to mobilize your own partisans than to convert the enemy to your side.

Finally, campaigns shape the election's agenda by choosing and defining certain issues and then by making them important to vote choice. Campaigns are thus arenas for *framing, agenda-setting,* and *priming.* These distinct but inter-related processes derive from the following intuition. There are a lot of issues floating around in the political environment. Candidates want to seize on those that reflect their strengths and good qualities. Candidates will frame these issues to cast themselves in the most positive light and will then emphasize those same issues to make them rise to the top of the public's agenda (*i.e.*, agenda-setting) and become important considerations in vote choice (*i.e.*, priming).[17]

Agenda-setting and priming during campaigns are actually not new phenomena, though empirical evidence has thus far languished in relative obscurity. It was in fact the Columbia School that provided initial evidence, in two senses. First, what they describe as "activation" is in a sense the same as priming. As activation occurs, voters make a choice consonant with their predispositions. This should be manifest in a stronger relationship between these predispositions and the vote. The second part of the story concerns specific issues. Berelson *et al.* (1954) found that during the 1948 campaign uncertain voters in traditionally Democratic groups, like Catholics and the working class, came to support Truman precisely because he emphasized working-class economic concerns. That is, the campaign made these issues salient and, as a result, these voters' ultimate candidate preference shifted to Truman. Truman was therefore able to lure voters without actually changing their minds on key issues. He merely highlighted the issues where he and these uncertain working-class voters had common ground. Berelson *et al.* (1954: 206) write, "It is difficult to change people's preferences;

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[16] Bartels (1998b) finds that rational candidates should target not only centrist voters who are susceptible to conversion, but also strongly partisan voters who are susceptible to mobilization (or demobilization).
[17] The term "priming" originated in political science with Iyengar and Kinder (1987). They define it thus: "Priming refers to changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations" (63). Framing occurs when "a source defines the essential problem underlying a particular social or particular issue and outlines a set of considerations purportedly relevant to an issue" (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997: 222; see also Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Iyengar 1991; Simon 2001). Research that demonstrates agenda-setting includes McCombs and Shaw (1972), Erbring and Goldenberg (1980), MacKuen and Coombs (1981), Iyengar and Kinder 1987), Bosso (1989), Baumgartner and Jones (1993), and Henry and Gordon (2001)—but *cf.* Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) and Dalton *et al.* (1998).

it is easier to affect the priorities and weights they give to subpreferences bearing on the central decision."[18]

In the wake of these studies, few scholars followed up on this finding.[19] Priming and agenda-setting as campaign phenomena emerged again only thirty years later with Johnston *et al.*'s (1992) study of the 1988 Canadian election. In this election, the Liberal candidate John Turner decided he would stake his candidacy on opposition to the Free Trade Agreement (or FTA, the precursor to NAFTA). His chief opponent, the Conservative Brian Mulroney, emphasized his strong support for the FTA. Because of their efforts, the FTA came to the fore while another issue, the Meech Lake Accords (which addressed the sovereignty of Quebec), receded. As the campaign progressed, the FTA became voters' most important issue; voters grew more polarized on it, following the hardening positions of their respective parties; arguments intended to change voters' minds on this issue became less effective; and voters' positions on this issue became more important predictors of their vote preference. This is to say, the 1988 Canadian campaign primed the FTA. Johnston *et al.* write, "Political parties face a fundamental problem each election: they must give citizens reasons for supporting them...By providing reasons, parties 'prime' voters to consider the deep-seated values which motivate their choice of party" (4).

What is striking about the campaign literature in recent years is how many others have seized on priming as a, if not the, salient role of campaigns:

> The political environment "primes" voters to use certain schemata in their perceptions of candidates. (Conover and Feldman 1986: 133)
>
> Moreover, campaigns provide politically relevant information and help citizens structure their personal political agendas, even when they do not convert many voters. (Markus 1992: 833)
>
> The function of the campaign, then, is to inform voters about the fundamental variables and their appropriate weight. (Gelman and King 1993: 433-34)

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[18] Kelley (1960: 31) echoes this sentiment: "Other things being equal, it is less costly in time, effort, and money to conform to existing opinion than it is to change it, cheaper to mobilize existing sentiment than it is to build new sentiment."

[19] To my knowledge, only Popkin (1994: 108-110) and Johnston (1992: 313) have noted explicitly that the Columbia School's results constitute priming.

> Advertising can influence how much weight voters give to certain factors. (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995: 70)
>
> We argue that the campaign is not merely a program of political reinforcement, but that concerns are "primed" by the campaign and used by voters in making decisions. (Just *et al.* 1996: 5)
>
> People adjust the criteria they use to evaluate candidates in accordance with the context of the campaign. (Kahn and Kenney 1997: 1200)
>
> I argue that the short-term salience of issues among voters is volatile and that volatility results from a shift in attention given by voters to different issues. Thus, candidates can create a short-term influence on voting behavior if they can alter the salience of particular dimensions at the time of the election by shifting voters' attention to different issues. (Carsey 2000: 15)
>
> The theory of the predictable campaign...argues that many of the effects of the fundamentals are funneled through the campaign, that they become politicized and relevant to vote decisions when they have been processed by the candidates, the media, and voters during the campaign. (Campbell 2000: 247)
>
> The task of the rational candidate is to create the most effective campaign message by selecting of themes to discuss, which will bend public opinion most advantageously given the facts and existing predispositions. (Simon 2002: 37)
>
> Campaigns emphasize certain topics with the intention of altering the criteria that voters use for candidate evaluation. (Medvic 2002: 51)

Though the terminology varies, all of these scholars are talking about essentially the same thing: how certain considerations come to matter—gain "weight," or become salient, or are "politicized"—during the campaign.[20]

There is also burgeoning empirical evidence of this phenomenon.[21] Looking cross-nationally, Stevenson and Vavreck (2000) show that economic variables are more strongly related to election outcomes when the campaign is longer. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) demonstrate through experiments that prominent issues in campaign advertising become more important predictors of vote choice, though only when the sponsoring party "owns" the issue and only among

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[20] A related project, which is about party competition and not campaigns *per se*, is that of Budge and Farlie (1983), who write: "Parties therefore do not compete by arguing directly with each other, but by trying to render their own areas of concern most prominent" (23). Page's (1978) "emphasis allocation theory" has elements consonant with a priming strategy: "Because voters' attention, the transmission capacity of media, and the time and energy of candidates are all limited, candidates must allocate their communication efforts among policy stands and other sorts of appeals" (178).

that party's supporters. Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) and Mendelberg (2001) demonstrate experimentally that implicit racial cues in campaign advertising can prime racial attitudes in overall candidate evaluations. Valentino, Traugott, and Hutchings (2002) show that racial cues also prime a more general ideological orientation. Kahn and Kenney (1997, 2001) demonstrate that citizens do register the policy priorities of candidates and that in competitive Senate races nearly every factor motivating vote choice has a stronger effect than in uncompetitive races. Simon (2002) finds that among experimental subjects exposed to campaign advertisements about an issue, their opinions about that issue more strongly predict their vote. Using survey data from the 1988 Canadian election, Mendelsohn (1996) finds that media coverage primed evaluations of leaders, while Jenkins (2002) finds that the 1993 Canadian campaign primed "cultural" issues.[22] Finally, Carsey (2000) connects priming directly to campaign themes, finding that issues such as abortion more strongly predict vote choice when candidates emphasize them.

These results evoke a related literature that demonstrates how issues become prominent when the candidates take clear stands and enunciate them repeatedly (Page and Brody 1972; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1979; Wright and Berkman 1986; Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989). Curiously, this related literature has not been recognized as demonstrating campaign effects. But with campaigns in mind, the coincidental terminology of the Columbia School and, for example, Aldrich *et al.* (1989: 135) stands out: "Campaigns may temporarily *activate* foreign policy attitudes, although they may not change many minds" (my italics).

That campaigns function this way is, in another sense, less surprising. In the modern era, campaigns are largely media events, as voters learn about and experience candidates primarily through the news and through television advertising. Thus we might expect campaigns to influence voters as the media does, meaning that what are traditionally considered "media effects" might also be campaign effects. A central finding of the "renewed respect" school of media effects that has

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[21] Gelman and King (1993) and Campbell (2000) deal only with aggregate-level data and thus do not investigate individual-level phenomena like "enlightenment" or "politicization" directly.
[22] See Gidengil *et al.* (2002) for a summary of priming in the 1988, 1993, and 1997 Canadian elections.

developed in the last decade or two—perhaps beginning, in political science at least, with Iyengar and Kinder's (1987) *News That Matters*—is that the media often tell us what to think about (agenda-setting and priming) and how to think about it (framing).

Priming occurs when the media directs voters' attention to certain considerations, such as a political issue, before a moment of evaluation or choice. For example, Iyengar and Kinder find that showing people news stories that emphasized a particular national problem, like unemployment or inflation, made perceptions of then-President Carter's performance on that issue a stronger predictor of overall evaluations of him.[23] Subsequent research has shown how events—such as the Iran-*contra* scandal and the Gulf War—and news coverage can prime factors in presidential evaluations (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Krosnick and Brannan 1993; Iyengar and Simon 1993; Pan and Kosicki 1997). The content of television news can also prime factors such as identification with racial groups (Valentino 2001). Priming is thus a useful piece of terminology: it serves to unify diverse references in the campaign effects literature, and to connect priming as a campaign effect to its other manifestations and their attendant literatures.[24]

When we define campaign effects as more than simple shifts in actual candidate preference, the extant literature reveals substantial evidence of those effects. In some fundamental sense, elections are obviously about whom you vote for. But they are also about whether you vote at all, and about why you vote for a given candidate. The latter notion has gained particular currency in the last ten years—a finding that should not be surprising given both the Columbia School's early evidence and the importance of priming as a media effect. That scholars of elections have increasingly emphasized campaign processes suggests that further inquiry would be productive.

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[23] News coverage also has a direct effect on overall aggregate support for the president (Brody 1991).
[24] Johnston *et al.* (1992, 1993), West (2001), and Just *et al.* (1996) are, to my knowledge, the only scholars of campaign effects who both demonstrate that campaigns prime and actually call this process "priming." Johnston (1992: 314) links priming as a campaign phenomenon to priming by the media.

IV. Making Sense of Campaign Strategy

A quote from Franklin (1991: 1201-11) suggests something about campaigns that is crucial, but yet crucially under-explored:

> The political nature of elections lies in the choices candidates make about strategy. How to present oneself and one's opponent to the voters is the critical electoral heresthetic. At present, the spatial model is the closest thing we have to an explanation for candidate behavior. Yet we have very little empirical work on campaign behavior with which to test the predictions from this or any other model. As we have become adept at studying voters, it is ironic that we have virtually ignored the study of candidates. Yet it is in candidate behavior that politics intrudes into voting behavior. Without the candidates, there is only the psychology of vote choice and none of the politics. I have demonstrated that we can learn about the impact of politics, but only if we stop ignoring the politicians.

Franklin's point is well-taken. Elections are fundamentally about candidates, but yet there have been relatively few attempts to catalogue and explicate what they do and say. Below I describe the extant literature, both theoretical and empirical, which constitutes a starting point for this project. In particular, I examine two areas: candidate positioning and issue emphasis, or "heresthetics."[25]

Candidate Positioning

As Franklin mentions above, the most venerable theory of candidate strategy is simply the spatial model, as explicated most famously by Downs (1957), who draws on Hotelling (1929) and Smithies (1941). The emphasis here is on candidate positioning: to win an election, candidates must converge to the median voter, which in practical terms means espousing centrist views of some sort. However, as a formal, mathematical result, convergence to the median voter proves rather fragile. While it works well in a simple world where there is but one issue dimension, in a multi-dimensional world, with more than one issue at play, candidate strategy becomes nebulous. Convergence is no longer inevitable (Plott 1967), though candidates may "cycle" in a small policy space near the median

[25] By focusing on candidates here, I am leaving aside media coverage of campaigns. This is not because the media is unimportant—it can be an important source of information, particularly in high-salience elections—but because I am interested in theorizing about and analyzing candidate decision-making. Scholarly work on campaigns that incorporates media content is voluminous, much more so that scholarly work on candidate communications such as advertising. Thus the latter deserves particular attention.

voter (McKelvey 1986; Feld, Grofman, and Miller 1988). Furthermore, elections that occur in stages—such as in the United States, with its primaries and general elections—produce heterogeneous dynamics, with a candidate straying from the "center" to win primaries (Aldrich 1980).

A variety of other contingencies also complicate the spatial model. First, if people vote using a "directional" rather than a "proximity" strategy (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989)—that is, if they vote for the candidate on the right side of the issue rather than the one that is ideologically closest—candidates may be able to maintain divergent or "extreme" positions and still win votes. Second, candidates with imperfect information about voters' preferences may again fail to converge on the median voter's preference (Calvert 1985; Morton 1993). Third, divergence can result as candidates locate themselves to attract party identifiers who may support them in part for non-policy reasons, and who, if sufficiently unattracted, may choose to abstain (Adams and Merrill 2003). Candidates may also act to appease party activists who have more extreme preferences (Aldrich 1983; Miller and Schofield 2003). Fourth, if candidates possess other, "valence" advantages—*e.g.*, the "personal vote" that incumbents accrue, or perceived superiority on a "valence" issue like crime—then they may move towards the center on policy, but the disadvantaged candidate has the opposite incentive (Macdonald and Rabinowitz 1998; Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000; Groseclose 2001; see also Berger, Munger, and Potthoff 2000). Finally, if candidates themselves have motivations besides reelection—ideological commitments to certain policies, for example—they may also maintain divergent stances (Wittman 1983; see also Calvert 1985 and Alesina 1988). Indeed, divergence in this case might even be sensible, as there is some risk for candidates who change their issue positions to attract voters. They could easily appear craven instead of responsive. As Riker (1990: 55) writes: "because of their commitment to an ideology, parties and even individual politicians are confined to a restricted range on a dimension, at least in the short run. Too sharp or great a shift along a

dimension exposes them to a loss of credibility."[26] Campaign consultant Joel Bradshaw makes this same point: "consultants and managers do not create an image for a candidate out of whole cloth. This does not work for two reasons: The voters are hard to fool, and the opponent will enumerate to the voters all the ways your candidate is trying to be something he or she is not" (1995: 40).

As one might expect, there is very mixed evidence that politicians inexorably seek the position of the median voter. On the one hand, Kollman, Miller, and Page (1992) use a computational simulation to model the behavior of parties across repeated elections and find strong convergent tendencies. Wright and Berkman (1986) find that senators running for reelection tend to be more ideologically moderate than those not running, suggesting that electoral politics exerts a centripetal pull. On the other hand, Grofman, Griffin, and Glazer (1990) find that senators from the same state (and therefore with the same constituency) but of opposite parties tend to vote very differently, suggesting a key role for ideological or partisan commitments. Adams and Merrill (1999) find that in multiparty systems, parties take positions more extreme than their rank-and-file members because those members rely on both proximity and directional voting strategies. Schofield *et al.* (1998) argue that convergence is not necessarily a rational strategy in proportional representation systems. Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) find that Democratic and Republican House candidates almost always assume the ideology espoused by the national parties, though competitive races have some moderating effect. Surveys of congressional candidates also find that candidates diverge more than they converge (Burden 2001; Erikson and Wright 2001). Drawing on such a survey of that interviewed the Democratic and Republican House candidate in a large number of congressional districts, Erikson and Wright (2001: 83) write, "Indeed among the 228 districts in our 1998 data set, the Republican scores more conservative in every single instance."

[26] A ready example is British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was greatly embarrassed when a critical internal memo by one of his advisors that took him to task for spinelessness leaked into public view. William Hague, then leader of the Conservative Party, gleefully read this quote in parliamentary session: "Once again T.B. is pandering, lacking conviction, unable to hold to a position for more than a few weeks and lacking the guts to be able to tough it out" (*New York Times*, 20 June 2000).

At heart, the strategy of convergence is both a powerful and intuitive result. Deploying far from mainstream public opinion will not be a winning strategy for most candidates; Barry Goldwater in 1964 is one notable example. However, despite the ironclad logic of convergence, meaningful differences between competing candidates appear exist in most elections. The question is, why? Moreover, the median voter theory does not help us understand what any given campaign is "about." It does not suggest any specific issue content. One could conceivably converge to the median voter on any given issue, be it abortion or the flat tax or what have you. The question remains, why do certain issues become salient features of campaign discourse, while others languish?

Issue Emphasis, or Heresthetics

Another kind of candidate strategy is consistent with the notion that candidates take their ideological commitments seriously or fear shifting their issue positions, but still want to win. Moreover, this strategy begins to illuminate where campaign agendas originate. Riker's (1983) calls this strategy "heresthetics."[27] He defines the term thus: "Heresthetics merely involves displaying the relevance of a dimension, recalling it from latent storage to the center of psychic attention" (Riker 1990: 54). Heresthetics contrasts with rhetoric. Whereas, in Riker's terminology, rhetoric is the art of persuasion, heresthetics is the art of agenda manipulation, of rearranging the alternatives considered so that your position wins. "The point of an heresthetical act is to structure the situation so that the actor wins, regardless of whether or not the other participants are persuaded" (Riker 1983: 60).[28] Candidates can structure the election's agenda such that the issues where their views are popular come to the fore. Voters will then support them in greater numbers. (And thus the logic of the median voter comes into play in this theory as well.)

Hammond and Humes (1993) apply this notion more formally to campaign strategy (see also Jones 1994, ch. 4; Glazer and Lohmann 1999; Carsey 2000). They argue that a candidate can win

[27] For an intellectual history of Riker's work and particularly his work on heresthetics, see McLean (2002).
[28] See Riker (1986) for a series of examples from legislative settings. See Plott and Levine (1978) for experimental evidence of agenda-setting's influence in a committee setting.

elections not by persuading voters to support her but by shifting the agenda to issues that benefit her. They write, "Instead of the candidates trying to figure out what positions to take, then, political campaigns are turned into contests about what the issue dimensions of the campaign will be" (142).[29] Hinich, Munger, and De Marchi (1998) argue for a similar heresthetical dynamic in spatial models of elections: "fundamental changes in political conflict...can result from strategic action by political elites, holding mass preferences constant" (416). Geer (1998: 189-190) voices a comparable idea: "politicians do not want to offer similar views on issues; rather, they want to differentiate themselves from the opposition—but only when that differentiation puts them in a favorable light...in the weeks prior to the actual voting, contenders fight to get their issues on center stage. This argument gives the agenda a more prominent role in the campaign, which has been increasingly viewed as critical to understanding political competition." Simon (2002) formalizes the logic of differentiation. He constructs a model where voters' utility is the weighted sum of their distance from the candidates on two dimensions. Given this model, candidates maximize their vote share by emphasizing the issues where they are closest to voters (as a heresthetician would do) and ignoring entirely those where the other candidate is closer to voters. This model predicts the complete absence of "dialogue" in campaigns and seems to confirm what James Bryce wrote over a hundred years ago in *The American Commonwealth* (1888): "the aim of each party is to force on its antagonist certain issues which the antagonist rarely accepts, so that although there is a vast deal of discussion and declamation on political topics, there are few on which either party directly traverses to doctrines of the other" (quoted in Kelley 1960: 61). Finally, Medvic (2002) argues that the role of campaign consultants in particular is to facilitate "deliberate priming": "Campaign consultants are brought in to determine which issues their candidates should emphasize and how those issues should be framed" (62).

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[29] Krosnick (1990: 95) makes a similar point: "A strategy available to candidates is to manipulate the importance of voters' policy attitudes. By increasing the importance of attitudes regarding a policy debate on which a candidate's position is favored by a majority of the public, inconsequential attitudes may be called into action. And by reducing the importance of attitudes on an issue that is a candidate's liability, losing votes may be avoided."

That a heresthetic logic matters to candidates is evident anecdotally. For example, campaign consultant John Cooper, talking about the race he ran for his brother, Jim, a former Democratic member of Congress from Tennessee, says:

> The other thing that the playmaker, the consultant, the manager, has to decide about a campaign is, What is the question? Every election asks and answers a question. And everybody who's running tries to make it his or her question, an election about the question that could be answered in no other way but that it would be favorable to yourself. (quoted in Shorris 1994: 45-46)

Another anecdote comes from the 1994 California governor's race. Dick Dresner, the pollster for then-incumbent governor Pete Wilson, who came from well behind his Democratic opponent to win, describes a strategy of agenda control:

> Our concept of how to approach an issue is not to ask if 10 people are concerned about the issue, can I go from seven of those people to eight, and increase my vote? The more important question is, can I expand the number of people interested in an issue? If I can control the agenda and expand the number of people who are concerned about immigration or crime [Wilson's big issues in that campaign], then I can change their focus from something else, whether it's the environment or education or whatever. We developed techniques to expand our audience. They worked, and the number of people concerned about these issues just kept growing. (Lubenow 1995: 79)

Jacobs and Shapiro (1994) provide evidence of priming as a campaign strategy by delving into archives from Kennedy's 1960 campaign. Kennedy sought through private polling to identify the issues most important to the public. He then crafted his public remarks to emphasize these issues. Moreover, Kennedy did not simply echo the majority view of the public on every single issue. For example, he expressed support for racial integration, though did his best to downplay the issue. That is, he did not converge to the median voter's position on integration, but chose instead to de-emphasize, or "de-prime," the issue—precisely as a heresthetician might do.

Another strand of literature nicely illustrates Simon's (2002) model, in which "dialogue" between candidates is rare. By analyzing a variety of campaign content—from party platforms in Western Europe (Budge and Farlie 1983; Budge 1993) to the public statements of presidential candidates (Kelley 1960; Page 1978) to presidential television advertisements (Geer 1998; Just *et al.* 1996) to advertising in House, Senate, and/or gubernatorial races (Raymond 1987; Kahn and Kenney

1999; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002)—these authors find that candidates from different parties "talk past" each other during campaigns, rarely speaking to the same issues. The parties largely pursue their own agendas.

So there is evidence that candidates want to control the agenda, and that, in doing so, competing candidates typically emphasize very different themes. But what in particular might we expect candidates to talk about? Two hypotheses emerge from work based on a more systematic reading of campaign discourse. The first emphasizes the individual records of candidates. Sellers (1998: 159) argues "a simple premise: when choosing campaign themes, candidates tend to emphasize issues on which they have built a record that appears favorable to voters." His examination of Senate candidates in 1998 shows that candidates tend to emphasize positive messages about themselves when they and the voters have a "common interest" on an issue and when they have an extensive background on this issue. (Here again, the notion of a "common interest" suggests something akin to the median voter logic.) Conversely, candidates will attack opponents when opponents are out-of-step with voters and have a record on that unpalatable issue. Spiliotes and Vavreck (2000) also find that "constituency leaning" affects the choice of campaign themes.

Another hypothesis focuses on parties. Petrocik (1996) presents a theory of "issue ownership" in which candidates devote attention to issues that their party "owns" or is considered better qualified to deal with—*e.g.*, for Democrats, education and health care, and for Republicans, crime and taxes. He finds that voters with a partisan issue agenda are more likely to vote for that party's candidate. Several studies of campaign content provide evidence of issue ownership and the effectiveness of emphasizing your party's issues. Kahn and Kenney (1999) find that in the Senate races from 1988-92, Republican candidates were more likely to discuss economic issues, and Democratic candidates to discuss issues like education and health care. Spiliotes and Vavreck (2000) examine candidate advertising from the 1998 election and find that "party is clearly a constraining factor on the kinds of commitments candidates make" (258). Norpoth and Buchanan (1992) argue that "issue trespassing" will prove difficult because voters rely too much on partisan stereotypes to

notice when a candidate raids his enemy's traditional arsenal of issues. Simon (2002) provides what is perhaps the most direct causal evidence of issue ownership's effect. In an experiment, he exposed subjects to advertisements from the 1994 California governor's race. He found that the two candidates, Democrat Kathleen Brown and Republican Pete Wilson, tended to do best when they aired ads on issues they "owned." But when, for example, subjects saw Brown crime ads, her predicted vote share dropped significantly.[30]

Besides the characteristics of candidates and parties, the circumstances of particular races might influence the content of campaign communication. Kahn and Kenney (1999) find that candidates are more likely to mention issues, to take clear positions on those issues, and to discuss conflictual "position" issues when the race is close. More intense campaigns might thus feature more divisive content.

The nature of a candidate's constituency also matters. For example, Glaser (1996) argues that in the South the strategic imperatives for candidates vary with the racial composition of their district. Republican candidates have an incentive to emphasize racial issues in districts with a large black population; this will serve to help unify the white vote. By contrast, Democrats in districts with large black populations can pay less attention to whites and inject issues with racial significance, whereas in majority-white districts they will need to build biracial coalitions. He concludes that "the interplay of political campaigns in heavily black areas of the South is still predictably different from what it is in areas of smaller black concentrations" (176).

This literature provides a theoretical motivation for issue emphasis as one of the key strategic possibilities in campaigns. It also provides empirical evidence for what kinds of issues get emphasized—*e.g.*, those on which a candidate or her party has built up a record of accomplishment. As noted above, there is a growing consensus that one of the most notable campaign effects is

[30] Brown's predicament may also derive from her gender. Hernson, Lay, and Stokes (2003) find that women do better when they run as women, emphasizing issues traditionally associated with women—of which crime is certainly not one.

priming, or making certain considerations salient in vote choice. This combination of strategy and effect, of heresthetic and priming, will prove a major campaign dynamic in the chapters that follow.[31]

V. Where To? Remaining Questions and Empirical Investigations

The scholarly work outlined above provides fertile soil for new ideas and evidence about campaigns. This dissertation approaches the subject by looking both at the logic of campaign strategy and the effects it has on voters. Below I identify ways in which the extant literature can be expanded and improved, and how the research herein will attempt to do so.

Campaign Strategy

The first task is to examine the content of campaigns, including which issues candidates emphasize and what positions they take on those issues. Arguably the chief challenge in investigating candidate strategy is finding useful and appropriate data. Ideally, such data should speak directly to the kinds of messages candidates put before voters. After all, the ultimate goal of candidates is to get elected. Regardless of what they may believe in their hearts, what they say to voters is paramount.

The most important medium of candidate discourse in contemporary elections is arguably television advertising. A large proportion of candidate resources at many levels of office—presidential, congressional, senatorial, gubernatorial—goes to crafting commercials and buying airtime. Indeed, in an era where news coverage of campaigns is often superficial, advertising provides most of the substance, despite its noxious reputation. Thus, the prominence of issues in advertising is an excellent indicator of candidates' heresthetical decision-making. And the specific rhetoric attending each issue suggests what position candidates will take.

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[31] I do not investigate in this dissertation the tone of campaign discourse, and in particular with the circumstances that lead candidates to air negative advertisements. Negativity is an increasingly common feature of political advertising (West 2001), and, as discussed earlier, this is an especially hot topic in the campaign effects literature. Various scholars have examined what leads candidates to "go negative" (Skaperdas and Grofman 1995; Harrington and Hess 1996; Theilmann and Wilhite 1998; Kahn and Kenney 1999; Sigelman and Buell 2003). While the tone of a campaign ad is no doubt important, not least because it may affect voters' response, this is not the focus of my analysis.

Fortunately, truly systematic data about candidate advertising is now available. As I discuss further in the next chapter, satellite tracking technology can capture the content of campaign advertising and identify when and where it aired. Thus we know what the candidates said, and how often they said it. This constitutes very nuanced data about both issue emphasis and issue position-taking. It is a significant improvement over previously available advertising data, which were comprised mostly of those ads deposited in the University of Oklahoma's archive of television advertising or those ads discussed in the campaign coverage of a publication like the *National Journal*. These collections of advertisements, while serviceable, are neither systematic—and, indeed, there is no way to know how unsystematic they are—nor do they contain information about how often any particular ad aired. These data are also a significant improvement over other means of determining the candidate's issues stances in particular, including surveys of candidates or their roll call record. Both of these do not speak to how candidates actually describe themselves and their views to voters.

In chapter 2, I draw upon a database of advertisements from the 1998 House and Senate races. Congressional races are a particularly fruitful subject for study because they provide so much variation, both in the key dependent variables (amount of advertising on an issue, the position taken on that issue) and in the key independent variables (candidates' party and personal record, the competitiveness of the race, *etc.*). Why is this variation important? Reading the theoretical literature, one is struck by how often theoretical predictions about candidate strategy are stated as universals. For example, various models predict that rational candidates should always converge to the middle and should always talk only about those issues that their party owns.[32] In reality, such predictions do not hold absolutely; they are almost certainly probabilistic. The nature of these data, however, enables us to determine the true strength of these probabilistic relationships and, in so doing, suggest whether candidates truly pursue the pure strategies of theoretical models, or instead draw on a more heterogeneous set of mixed strategies.

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[32] This is not an exaggeration. Simon's (2002) model of issue emphasis predicts that, in equilibrium, candidates should never "issue trespass." They should devote all their attention to their own party's issues and never to the opposing party's issues.

With regards to issue emphasis in particular, the crucial question is, why do candidates select certain issues to run on? Extant literature suggests that candidates gravitate to issues where either they or their party has an established record. One consequence of this is that candidates rarely dialogue and choose instead to focus on very different issues. But surely issue ownership is not deterministic. It is easy to call to mind campaigns where candidates have raided the other party's arsenal of issues and, to cite two current examples, emerged as a "New Democrat" or a "compassionate conservative." These 1998 data can provide a very systematic and robust test of issue ownership's power. As I show in chapter 2, issue ownership does affect issue emphasis, but not consistently across all issue domains. As such, it is not necessarily true that candidates always "talk past" each other. In many races, and in particular in competitive races, candidates do engage the same issues.

The second question concerns the issue positions candidates take. By coding these advertisements for their specific rhetorical content, I identify how candidate talk about issues. A crucial first question is whether their rhetoric can be said to constitute a "position," in the Downsian sense. As I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, one fundamental problem with applying the Downsian framework to candidate speech in particular is that often candidates do not take clear-cut positions on issues, positions that could conceivably map onto some sort of underlying ideological dimension. Donald Stokes, with whom this criticism originated, points out that many political issues, termed "valence" issues, merely involve the endorsement of some consensual goal, such as economic prosperity. Valence issues are of course very familiar to any casual observer of politics, but thus far political scientists have not systematically documented the prevalence of these issues. These 1998 advertising data provide an opportunity to do so. By and large, these data show that valence issues dominate the political landscape. Candidates are much more ready to endorse goals like better education than to do battle on a fractious issue like abortion.

Beyond that, the important question is whether candidates do take similar positions, or at the least whether they adopt similar kinds of rhetoric. The particular advantage of these data is that one

can compare the behavior of opposing candidates directly to see whether there is apparent convergence on a similar centrist position or whether the candidates take different, and perhaps more strongly ideological, positions. In general, advertising in 1998 suggests that candidates very often do discuss issues in bland, consensual terms. If there is ideology in candidate advertising, it is subtle, relying more on code words than anything else. That said, however, there are differences between candidates in terms of the particular themes they emphasize; Democrats and Republican are not entirely alike. Moreover, opposing candidates rarely speak on the same issues in exactly the same way. There is, in a sense, "divergence," but it is of an entirely different species than what Downs might have envisioned.

Campaign Effects

To understand better the effects of campaign strategy and activity, the first task is simply to generate more evidence of these effects. A full account of any campaign requires attention to multiple processes—priming, persuasion, and so on. There is also a particular need for *dynamic* stories of such processes (*e.g.*, Johnston *et al.* 1992), which is to say, documentation of how they transpire in "real time," as the campaign unfolds. This means identifying, for example, when and why the salience of a particular issue increases, or a candidate's favorability plummets.

Second, the "why" of campaign effects will become clearer once closer links between campaign activity and effect are forged. Take priming as one example. It is one thing to observe that the factors associated with vote choice vary depending on how competitive a campaign is in some generic sense, as Kahn and Kenney (1999) show. It is another thing to link priming with specific changes in the information environment that stem from the conscious choices of candidates, such as the themes they emphasize in their advertising. Candidates have an incentive to emphasize "their" issues. Thus we might expect priming to be more than just a by-product of campaign intensity. This validates the time and effort candidates put into electioneering, which otherwise seems superfluous if campaigns are truly ephemeral.

Extant studies that link strategy and effect do so only in fairly general ways. There are, for example, those analyses tracing how tracking polls move around in response to campaign events (*e.g.*, Holbrook 1996, Shaw 1999a). There is evidence that candidate spending affects electorate fortunes (Jacobson 1983). And there is evidence that candidate advertising shifts tracking polls (Shaw 1999b, 2001) and affects vote choice (Goldstein and Freedman 2000). Much of this work deals only with the aggregate level, and thus cannot locate individual-level effects. Furthermore, much of this work treats campaign activity solely in terms of quantity—dollars spent, commercials aired—and not in terms of content. But it is precisely the content of activity that matters, particularly for phenomena like priming. For example, we need to know when, how, and how often a candidate discussed abortion, for example, in order to tell a nuanced story of how abortion did or did not become a salient issue in the campaign.[33] We need to know when a candidate began accusing his opponent of scandalous behavior in order to tell a similar story of why voters came to believe that this opponent was unethical.

A third empirical task is to locate *whom* campaigns affect most. It is doubtful that any of the effects described here occur with equal magnitude among all kinds of voters. There is good reason to think that effects might be evident sooner and ultimately prove stronger among the more attentive members of the electorate. A good deal of transpires in campaigns and in politics generally will pass under the radar of less attentive voters, among whom campaign effects may appear mild or nonexistent. Similarly, party identification may also condition how voters perceive campaign messages (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Simon 2002). Democrats may be more likely to believe messages from Al Gore than from George W. Bush, for example, and vice versa for Republicans.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is no consistent evidence that individual-level campaign effects have consequences for candidate fortunes. This can only be addressed by examining voters and determining how their candidate preference changes over the course of the

[33] Carsey (2000) does identify content by examining media coverage and then constructing a simple dichotomous measure of whether a given issue was a salient part of the campaign. This is a good first cut, though obviously something more than dichotomous measures of strategy are desirable.

campaign as different issues become salient. Do partisans move systematically towards their party's candidate? More importantly, do key groups of swing voters switch sides once the issue dimensionality changes? The answers to these questions speak to whether heresthetical maneuvers can affect an election's outcome.

To get at these questions, chapters 3, 4, and 5 look in detail at three campaigns. The first two campaigns are the 1998 California and Illinois gubernatorial races. The analyses of these races rely upon a unique combination of campaign advertising and survey data. The campaign advertising data are structured the same as those in chapter 2, with daily measures of advertising content and volume in these two races. The survey data are rolling cross-sections conducted during each race. Marrying these two data sources illuminates both candidate strategy and its effects on voters. Moreover, it allows for dynamic stories about campaign effects as they actually unfolded in "real time."

Because the California race was quite uncompetitive—the winner, Democrat Gray Davis, trounced the Republican, Dan Lungren, by a 60-40 margin—it would seem that few campaign effects would have occurred. However, even in such an uncompetitive race, this was not the case. Republican voters came to support Lungren more strongly, and Lungren's advertising played a key role in "activating" these partisans. One particular issue, gun control, came to the fore when it became a more prominent theme in Davis' advertising. This is to say, Davis succeeded in priming this issue.

Similar processes were evident in the Illinois race, even though it was different in many respects. In particular, the Republican candidate, Secretary of State George Ryan, took more liberal positions than the Democrat, Congressman Glenn Poshard, on several issues, including gun control. Unlike the California race, this contest also featured a lurid and attention-grabbing scandal that damaged Ryan's candidacy. Poshard did his best to exploit this scandal, while Ryan hammered away at Poshard's conservatism. The results mirror those in California in two respects. First, Poshard's advertising made Democrats support him more strongly. Second, gun control became more salient

in voters' minds, except that in this case it was the Ryan's advertising that produced this effect. This is to say, Ryan was able to promote an issue that is traditionally associated with the Democratic party. This is even stronger evidence of how campaigns can prime issues.

The next case study is the 2000 presidential election. In this chapter I again draw on a combination of advertising and survey data to document temporal and spatial variation in campaign activity and its effects. A set of CBS-*New York Times* polls from July through November illustrate several trends in opinion. First, there is evidence that perceptions of the candidates' character shifted; in particular, more people came to doubt Gore's honesty, an intuitive change given Gore's penchant for half-truths and the Bush campaign's willingness to exploit them. Second, there is also evidence of priming, and especially the growing salience of specific issues, such as abortion and the budget surplus. This finding dovetails nicely with the evidence of priming in the two gubernatorial races.

Spatial variation in presidential campaigns emerges only if these campaigns are understood as fundamentally subnational. Candidates focus on only a limited number of states, ignoring those they will easily win or cannot win. It is notable that in 2000 neither of the candidates aired a single nationally televised advertisement; they were all targeted to specific states. Thus, voters who live in these "battleground" states experience a very different campaign than do voters who live in states considered "safe" for one of the candidates.

I draw on 2000 National Election Study to document the effects of spatial variation. These findings derive from a traditional data source, the 2000 National Election Study, but take advantage of an innovation in survey mode that it contains. A subset of the respondents in this survey was interviewed by phone and not in person, as is usually the case. The different sampling technique that underlies the phone survey generates a more representative distribution of the states and thus of campaign activity across the states. The 2000 NES therefore provides the best opportunity scholars have had to explore how campaign activity conditions presidential vote choice, the implications this has for the candidates, and the individual-level mechanisms that underlie this phenomenon.

I examine the effects of campaign activity in two ways. First, I simply compare respondents who lived in battleground with those who lived in non-battleground states. Second, by identifying each respondent's location and date of interview, I merge advertising data with the survey data, thereby specifying whether the respondent was theoretically exposed to at least some advertising given the media market in which she lived and the date on which she was interviewed. Allowing the structure of vote choice to vary based on these two measures of campaign activity in the states produces two striking differences. First, in this election, several key issues, including abortion and beliefs about the size of government, do not predict vote choice in safe states, but strongly predict vote choice in battleground states. This makes sense: voters who experience an intense campaign will see and hear the candidates express their own views quite often. This should in turn allow them to associate their own issue positions more closely with their vote choice. Second, evaluations of the economy and the Clinton administration—both of which were largely positive—matter much less in battleground states. The implications for Gore are grim: in the states where it mattered the most, he benefited much less from a reasonably robust economy and a relatively popular incumbent president.

VI. Conclusion

Campaigns are the seasons in our political life when representatives and represented interact with the greatest intensity. It would thus be disturbing if campaigns were largely inconsequential, if voters learned little throughout the fall and always voted in routine and ritualistic ways. This dissertation demonstrates that campaigns are in fact consequential, both for voters and for candidates.

These empirical truths have salutary normative implications. Hart (2000: 11) writes, "Hosannas are rarely sung at the end of a campaign and that is a democratic shame." When voters learn about the candidates, when what they learn affects how they vote, and when how they vote affect which candidate wins, there is indeed cause for celebration. The democratic process has worked. This is not to say that campaigns are full of sweetness and sunshine, that candidates always

behave themselves, or that voters are always model citizens. But the process leading up to this seminal democratic moment, Election Day, is both necessary and helpful to voters and candidates alike.

If campaigns matter as they should matter, the imperative for political scientists is to bring the politics back to elections. That elections manifest stability and predictability does not obviate understanding how candidates behave on the campaign trail and how voters respond in the weeks leading up to that first Tuesday in November. This dissertation attempts to move towards such an understanding.

CHAPTER 2
Choosing Issues, Taking Positions

I. Introduction

This chapter seeks an answer to two questions: how do candidates decide which issues to run on, and what positions they take on these issues? The former speaks to Riker's notion of heresthetics, and the latter to the Downsian logic of convergence to the median voter. Both of these theories have shaped our understanding of elections, but good empirical tests are so far relatively rare. To provide such a test, I examine candidate advertising in the 1998 House and Senate races, drawing on a dataset that enables me to pinpoint the content and volume of advertising. I am able to examine in detail two important aspects: *how*, and *how often* candidates discussed specific issues.

"*How often*" speaks to heresthetics, or issue emphasis. As discussed in chapter 1, scholars have argued that candidates emphasize issues that their party is considered to "own" (Petrocik 1996) and on which they themselves have a record of achievement (Sellers 1998). Thus, "history" structures candidate strategy. What candidates and their parties have done, and done well, in the past helps determine what they discuss at present. Parties and candidates tend to remain in safe and familiar territory where they can credibly claim to be effective advocates. But history may not entirely explain issue emphasis. Indeed, it is easy to call to mind candidates who, for example, traffic in issues that their party does not own. "New Democrats" and "compassionate conservatives" both attempt to traverse the bounds of issue ownership and talk a new game. Similarly, a candidate does not necessarily need an extensive legislative record merely to articulate a particular position on an issue. I demonstrate that in 1998 Republican and Democratic candidates had largely the same issue agenda, but that the degree of emphasis did vary based on both candidate and party records. However, this variation was not necessarily consistent or substantively meaningful across issue domains. Party ownership and candidate record are important, but by no means sufficient,

explanations. I also examine factors such as district ideology and the competitiveness of the race, and in particular how they both influence issue emphasis directly and condition the influence of party and record. Of these, competition proves particularly effective in provoking the discussion of most any issue.

"*How*" speaks to the positions that candidates take on issues. An important initial question is whether in discussing an issue the candidates take any kind of well-defined position. The Downsian model describes candidates' locating themselves on an underlying dimension presumably ordered from liberal to conservative. The ensuing prediction—that candidates should, given certain conditions, converge to the median voter's position on this dimension—is exceedingly elegant and its durability as a theoretical starting point suggests its abiding power. Moreover, it has an appealing relevance to actual politics, in which politicians frequently appear to steer a middle course. Notable losses by perceived ideological extremists like Barry Goldwater and George McGovern constitute anecdotal evidence of what might happen when a candidate fails to converge. Zaller (1998) provides more systematic evidence that extremism lowers a presidential candidate's vote share.

But as critics of this model, notably Donald Stokes (1963, 1992), have pointed out, candidate positions do not always map onto neat ordinal dimensions. Position-taking may instead be part of what Stokes calls "valence politics." Stokes differentiates Downsian "position" issues—the examples he gives include the question of whether in the antebellum period new states should be slave or free, or traditional New Deal debates about the role of government—from "valence" issues, "on which parties or leaders are differentiated not by what they advocate but by the degree to which they are linked in the public's mind with conditions or goals or symbols of which almost everyone approves or disapproves" (Stokes 1992: 143). For example, such goals might include peace, economic prosperity, and a good education for children. Valence issues thus do not divide politicians into alternative camps. Stokes notes that a valence issue can become a position issue if politicians disagree on how a consensual end will be attained. For example, conservatives tend to argue that vouchers would improve education, while liberals tend to argue that they would have the opposite

effect. But in its purest form, valence politics is quite different than position politics. The goal is not to locate oneself at the electorate's central tendency, but to choose "from a larger set of potential valence issues those on which their identification with positive symbols and their opponents' with negative symbols" (Stokes 1992: 146).

Examining the incidence of certain issues in candidate advertising, *i.e.*, issue emphasis, speaks to the relative prominence of position and valence politics. But even more important is not whether candidates talk about ostensibly position or valence issues, but what they say when talking about these issues. Education can be either kind of issue, depending on the claims being made. Do they merely affirm their support for a consensual goal, saying such things as "All our children deserve a good education"? Do they stake out a position on a divisive issue like vouchers? Or do they use more subtle rhetoric that retains an ideological tone but that does not clearly suggest valence or position politics?

A more precise description of positions in candidate advertising should suggest whether convergence is in fact a relevant concept and, if so, whether parties and candidates do take distinctive positions. Such an exercise will also illuminate what "distinctive" means—whether it signifies different ideological positions or different usage of ideological rhetoric that does not necessarily imply an underlying ordinal continuum. Moreover, how candidates discuss issues may help explain instances where party ownership fails to hold true, suggesting where there are rhetorical footholds for candidates in the other party's territory. Such a foothold may be nothing more than a purely valence position, as when a Republican discusses a Democratic issue like education by merely advocating "better schools." Or it may be a valence position imbued with only a vague ideology.

This chapter proceeds by first examining issue emphasis, identifying the issues most prominent in this election and then investigating how party and candidate record shape decisions about which issues to focus on. The second section examines position-taking and elaborates how candidates talk about different issues, the kinds of positions that are prominent and how those vary

across the two parties and whether there is apparent convergence within individual races. I conclude by discussing what these findings suggest about existing theories of candidate strategy.

II. Data

To investigate candidate strategy, I draw on an extensive database of candidate advertisements from the 1998 House and Senate elections. These data were originally collected by the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG), based in Arlington, VA. Their technology tracks satellite transmissions from the major national networks and recognizes the digital "fingerprint" of various television programs and advertisements. With that fingerprint, CMAG then records when and where each advertisement ran, and which candidate (or party or interest group) was its sponsor.[1] After the 1998 elections, the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University purchased and compiled the House and Senate advertisements into a publicly available database. Though CMAG did not capture every single advertisement because it tracked only those that aired in the top seventy-five media markets, this dataset represents the closest thing to a universe of advertisements that exists for these races.

In 1998, there were 34 contested Senate races. The CMAG data contain advertising from 29 (or 85 percent) of them.[2] Of the 393 contested House races, CMAG identified advertising in 135 (the CMAG data contain no ads for any of the 42 uncontested races). In 103 races (83 House races and 20 Senate races), there was advertising from both of the candidates.[3]

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[1] This technology was first utilized by campaign organizations themselves in 1996, when the Clinton, Dole, and Perot campaigns monitored each other's advertising in real time (Devlin 1997: 1082). Freedman and Goldstein (1999) were the first to demonstrate the power of this data source for political science, using it to argue that negative advertising does not depress turnout (see also Goldstein and Freedman 2002a). Goldstein and Freedman (2000) show further that in Senate elections advertising increases the probability that voters will choose the candidate so advertised (especially when voters themselves watch relatively more television).

[2] CMAG did not capture any ads for Senate races in five states—Alaska, Hawaii, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Vermont—because these states do not contain a media market in the top 75.

[3] It may seem surprising that a Senate candidate would not air advertisements. Eight of the nine Senate races with only one candidate advertising featured incumbents, such as John McCain, Arlen Specter, and Don Nickles, all of whom won by a large margin—an average of 35 points, as compared to 15 points in the other contested races. The remaining race was that between Republican Michael Crapo and Democrat Bill Mauk in Idaho. Crapo won 71 percent of the two-party vote and spent over a $1.5 million, while Mauk spent only

For this analysis, I narrowed the dataset by eliminating ads sponsored by the parties and by interest groups. I also narrowed the dataset by eliminating ads that occurred before the primary date in each state. This was done for purely theoretical reasons. I am interested here in explaining the decision-making of candidates, not that of parties or interest groups, who may have different motives for advertising. Second, I am interested in explaining candidate strategy in general elections, not in primary elections, where the dynamics are obviously much different. Thus the resulting dataset contains only advertisements aired by the major-party candidates after the primary. In total, there are 1,260 unique advertisements. They aired a combined total of 188,428 times during the general election period.

The Brennan Center first coded these ads for a wide range of attributes related to content and tone. (The actual coding was performed by undergraduates under the direction of Professor Ken Goldstein, now of the University of Wisconsin). I obtained original copies of nearly all of these advertisements from Professor Goldstein and augmented the original coding in two ways. First, I re-coded the issues that the ads mentioned, using mostly the same categories as the Brennan Center (see Appendix A). While the original dataset coded up to four separate issues in each advertisement, I coded as many as were mentioned (a maximum of eight in these data). Second, within a given issue I coded specific positions taken—*e.g.*, for education, whether the candidate advocated smaller classrooms or safer schools (or both); or for abortion, whether the candidate advocated a pro-choice position or some kind of restriction on abortion (such as a ban on "partial-birth" abortions). This two-fold scheme provides information necessary to investigate both issue emphasis and issue positions.

The resulting dataset is particularly well-suited to answering the theoretical questions outlined above. First, it provides a direct way to operationalize and test the notion of convergence. Much extant scholarship gauges through various means—direct and indirect—the ideological

about $240,000, according to FEC data. Thus it seems that the Senate candidates who failed to advertise were simply not competitive in comparison to their well-established and better-funded opposition.

positions of opposing candidates and finds that they are very distinct.[4] But while this may in fact be true, a better test is how candidates actually present themselves to voters. While candidates may have strongly ideological preferences, they may mask those in moderate campaign rhetoric. Candidates would then appear to converge, if only disingenuously.

Second, the dataset includes a very large collection of ads. Most other published analyses of advertisements rely on those publicly archived or on those that a source like the *National Journal* discusses on its website (*e.g.*, Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002). There is, however, no guarantee that either source actually gathers a representative sample of advertisements. The CMAG data, though certainly not a census, come close.

Third, the CMAG data track not only which ads were aired, but also how often they aired. Knowing how often a candidate aired an advertisement is crucial. As Prior (2001) shows, to characterize the information environment accurately, one must account for advertising volume; the characteristics of the ads produced may differ significantly from those of the ads aired.

Finally, the CMAG data allow one to examine races where both candidates advertised. This is important to tests of convergence. Democrats and Republicans might manifest different preferences in the aggregate, while Democratic and Republican candidates in individual races might actually take very similar positions.

III. Issue Emphasis

What were the most prominent issues in the 1998 election? Table 2.1 presents the total volume of advertising—the number of airings of the various ads—that mentioned an issue.[5] The first column of Table 2.1 presents the number of ads aired by all House and Senate candidates in the

[4] For example, Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2001) draw on a survey of congressional candidates in the 1996 elections and on ideology scores derived from roll-call data.

[5] The various issues correspond in most cases to a single code in Appendix A. In a few cases, I combined several codes under a single issue heading. "Crime" includes the codes for crime, drugs, the death penalty, and any other reference to law and order. "Defense" includes all codes under "foreign policy, defense." "Clinton" includes all references to Clinton, Ken Starr, Whitewater, impeachment, or Paula Jones. By coding whether an

dataset. The most prominent issues are more or less the mainstays of domestic politics in the United States: taxes, education, Social Security, health care, crime, and Medicare. The category including the deficit, surplus, and budget is also in the "top ten," mostly because of references to the successfully balanced budget and promises to use the surplus for Social Security. The category of "ideology," which consists of references to terms like "liberal," "conservative," "moderate," and "independent," is also somewhat popular. References to Bill Clinton are surprisingly few. This suggests that, *contra* some conventional wisdom of that time, that the 1998 elections were not necessarily a referendum on Monica Lewinsky or impeachment. The economy and foreign policy are also minor themes, as one might expect given that the country was relatively prosperous and peaceful at that point in time.

[insert Table 2.1 about here]

The second and third columns present this same distribution broken down by Republican and Democratic candidates. This reveals some differences in priorities between the two parties. For example, taxes are clearly the dominant issue in Republican advertising: 41,012 airings were devoted at least in part to this issue. The next most popular issue, Social Security, nets only about two-thirds as much attention (27,677 airings). Education, ideology, health care, crime, and Medicare are also prominent. The Democratic agenda, perhaps unsurprisingly, prioritizes education, Social Security, and health care.[6]

Perhaps most striking about the results in Table 2.1 is that, while differences in the two parties' priorities do exist, their issue agendas are actually quite similar. They devote most of their attention to taxes, Social Security, education, health care, crime, and Medicare. In particular, this suggests that both parties are quite willing to trespass on each other's territory. Republicans talk about Social Security, education, and health care. Democrats talk about taxes and crime.

This does not imply, however, that party ownership has no influence on candidate strategy. To determine more thoroughly the role of party ownership, as well as candidate record, I investigate

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ad mentioned an issue, I did not determine how much time an ad devoted to that issue. As such, this coding scheme elides some nuance, but it seems reasonable to think that it does not skew the results.

the decision-making of the 269 candidates in this dataset, treating the candidate as the unit of analysis. These data obviously offer other modes of empirical purchase; one could, for example, make the individual advertisement the unit of analysis. However, given that the goal of this chapter is to explore candidate strategy, candidates seem the appropriate place to start.

Party Ownership

The first question is, do candidates advertise more frequently on issues that their party "owns"? Table 2.2 presents two sets of percentages that speak to this question: the percentage of candidates in a given party whose advertisements mention an issue, and within each party the average percentage of the candidates' total advertising that mentions an issue. The former simply tells us the proportion of Democrats and Republicans that discusses an issue, leaving aside how much attention they devote to it. The latter tells us on average how prominent the issue is in the advertising of candidates from each party.

[insert Table 2.2 about here]

Table 2.2 presents these two sets of percentages for the 18 issues listed in Table 2.1. The cells shaded gray indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the parties ($p<.05$ or better). The first three issues—abortion, campaign finance, and Clinton—garner no attention from the vast majority of candidates. Roughly 10 percent or less of candidates ran any advertisements that mentioned these themes. Moreover, differences between Republicans and Democrats appear slight. The next three issues are arguably Republican issues: crime, defense, and the deficit (see Petrocik 1996). However, both measures of issue emphasis reveal little differences between the parties. Roughly equal proportions of Republicans and Democrats mentioned these issues in their advertising—*e.g.*, 35 percent of Republicans and 38.5 percent of Democrats mentioned crime. Similarly, 36 percent of Republicans mentioned the deficit, the budget, or the surplus in some fashion. So did 35 percent of Democrats. Furthermore, a number of traditionally Democratic issues

[6] Ideology is not a prominent theme among Democrats. Most ideological references identify the ad's sponsor

in this list also do not conform to expectations. Democrats are not significantly more likely to talk about the environment, Medicare, jobs, or Social Security, nor do they devote a significantly greater proportion of their advertising to these issues.

Other issues do accord with the party ownership theory. A larger fraction of Democratic candidates mentions education (72 versus 58 percent); there is a similar difference in the average proportion of total advertising devoted to education (38.5 percent versus 27 percent). Democrats are similarly more likely to mention gun control, health care, and poverty. Republicans are more likely to mention and to focus on ideology, welfare, and in particular taxes, which three-fourths of Republican candidates mention as compared to 41.5 percent of Democrats. This disparity is even more apparent when considering the proportion of total ad volume devoted to taxes: on average, almost half (47.7%) of Republican advertising mentions taxes, while only 16 percent of Democratic advertising does so.

A second way to evaluate issue ownership is to compare actual advertising volume, or the number of airings of ads, to see whether candidates air more advertisements on issues that their party owns. Figure 2.1 takes seven of the most prominent issues, three of which are arguably owned by Republicans and four of which by Democrats, and compares the median number of ads aired by those Republican and Democratic candidates who had at least some advertising on a particular issue.[7] There are separate graphs for House and Senate candidates because the latter will have a chronically higher volume of advertising.

[insert Figure 2.1 about here]

The graph for House candidates demonstrates that on two of the Republican issues, taxes and the deficit, Republican candidates did advertise more often than Democratic candidates. For example, the median number of Republican ads aired on taxes was 165, much greater than the median of 99 among Democrats. The median number of Republican airings about the deficit, budget, and surplus was 145, versus 100 for Democrats. On crime, however, there is virtual parity

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as "conservative" and/or her opponent as "liberal."

between the parties. On the Democratic issues, Democratic candidates did advertise more often than Republican about education and Medicare, but not about health care or Social Security.

The graph for Senate candidates presents somewhat different results. Here, Republican candidates advertise more often about crime (382 ads vs. 234 ads) but, surprisingly, not about taxes. There is virtual parity between the parties in terms of advertising about the deficit, budget, and surplus. In terms of Democratic issues, education, Medicare, and Social Security all conform to theory. Democrats advertise more frequently on all three, although the difference between the parties on education is not large (only 50 ads). On health care, by contrast, Republican candidates who advertise on this issue air more ads than do Democrats (335 vs. 291).

A third way to evaluate party ownership is to look at those races where both the Republican and Democratic candidate aired advertisements (N=103) and see how often the two candidates engaged the same issues. This indicates whether the average race featured ostensible dialogue, with both candidates discussing the issue in question, or whether only one of the candidates engaged the issue, and, in that case, whether the candidate's party owns the issue in question. As before, I focus only on cases where there was at least some advertising on the issue, such that the valid sample size is less than 103.

[insert Table 2.3 about here]

Table 2.3 shows that of these three "Republican" issues, only taxes begins to exemplify party ownership. In the 91 races with advertising about taxes, a majority (51.6%) featured advertising only from the Republican candidate. A very small proportion featured only Democratic advertising (8.8%). However, a sizable plurality, nearly 40 percent, featured advertising by both candidates, indicating a willingness among some Democrats to talk about this issue. The two remaining issues, crime and the deficit, display no clear pattern. Roughly equal proportions of races appear in each of the three categories. It is notable that approximately in a third of races where there was advertising on these two issues, only the Democrat was talking.

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[7] Fully 75 percent of the 1,260 ads mentioned one or more of these issues.

Two of the Democratic issues, health care and Medicare, display a skew consonant with party ownership. In a plurality or majority of races, only the Democrat advertised on these themes, though certainly it was not uncommon for Republicans to advertise as well. Education and especially Social Security were, more often than not, discussed by both candidates. It thus appears that Republicans are at least somewhat comfortable on traditionally Democratic ground.

Taken together, these results provide mixed evidence for the party ownership hypothesis. On some issues, Republicans and Democrats display the expected results—*e.g.*, Democrats are more likely to talk about education, and Republicans about taxes. But this is not true for other issues, such as crime and Social Security, which are considered strongly linked to one of the two parties. Moreover, even when empirical patterns conform to expectations, this does not imply that parties are unwilling to "issue trespass" (Norpoth and Buchanan 1992). Though Democrats are more likely than Republicans to advertise on education, 58 percent of the Republicans in this sample did so. Whereas a formal model like that of Simon (2002) predicts the absence of "dialogue" in equilibrium, the empirical record in candidate advertising suggests that dialogue is not uncommon. Republicans and Democrats pursue what are in essence "mixed strategies," drawing on a varied repertoire of issues in constructing their campaign appeals.

Candidate Record

A second question is, do candidates advertise more frequently about issues on which they have a record of accomplishment? Such a record could come about in various ways. Candidates could have been instrumental in sponsoring and shepherding legislation, either in the Congress or in a previous political office, such as a state legislature. For example, Senators John McCain and Russ Feingold would be considered to have a record on campaign finance reform, thanks to their eponymous legislation. Candidates could also have a record simply through a lifetime's work on a particular issue on which they were therefore acknowledged experts. The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's work on poverty and welfare issues is one example. A relevant record could also derive

from a prior career that provided direct experience with an issue, as a judge or prosecutor would have with crime.

I coded candidate records in a manner similar to Sellers (1994), drawing on the description of each race found in the *Almanac of American Politics*. I constructed a simple dichotomous indicator of whether the candidate had a record on a given issue, based on whether the *Almanac* mentioned a candidate's accomplishments in a given issue area.[8] This is undoubtedly an imperfect indicator; most likely it underestimates the accomplishments of candidates, simply because the *Almanac* is not intended to be comprehensive in this respect. But it is nevertheless a reasonable first cut at measuring this concept.

[insert Table 2.4 about here]

Table 2.4 presents the same quantities as Table 2.2: the percentage of candidates who advertise about an issue, as well as the average percentage of their total advertising about that issue. The question is whether candidates with a record on an issue emphasize that issue more strongly than do candidates with no record. In many if not most cases, the answer is yes. The percentage of candidates whose advertising mentions an issue is often much higher among those with a record than those without. For example, 72 percent of those with a record on crime (not to be confused with a criminal record) mention crime in their advertising, compared to 33 percent of those without such a record. There are statistically significant differences between those with and without a record on a number of other issues, including defense, education, the environment, gun control, health care, Medicare, poverty, and welfare. For the most party, these differences are manifest in the percentage of total advertising as well—*e.g.*, health care is mentioned in 32 percent of total advertising among those with a record on the issue, but in 16 percent of total advertising among those without a record.

[insert Figure 2.2 about here]

[8] Initially, following Sellers, I complied a trichotomous indicator that also captured whether the candidate's record was relatively meager or extensive. There were, in total, a paucity of candidates with only a meager record and so I combined these two categories.

Figure 2.2 presents the median level of advertising among candidates who aired at least some advertising on seven of the most prominent issues. The question is whether candidates with a record aired more advertising than those without a record. Among House candidates, this proved true on four issues (education, health care, Social Security, and taxes), though not on the other three (crime, the deficit, and Medicare). Among Senate candidates, nearly all of the differences are in the expected direction.

Thus, candidates who have developed a record on an issue are in general more likely to advertise on that issue and devote more of their advertising to that issue. Legislative and other experience often provides a foundation for campaign appeals.

Interactions: Party, Record, Constituency, and Competition

The next empirical task is to specify more precisely the impact of party and record, first by examining their respective effects when controlling for the other, second by examining whether their effects interact, and third by examining whether their effects are contingent on the ideological orientation of a candidate's constituency or on the competitiveness of the race.

The interaction of party and record is plausible because the effect of record may be present only within one of the parties. For example, Democrats may emphasize a Democratic issue like health care primarily for reasons of party ownership; Republicans who advertise on health care may do so only when they have a record on the issue. In other words, having a record could be an incentive to advertise on an issue that one's party does not own.

The second key interaction is between party and the ideological orientation of the candidate's constituency. The behavior of Democrats and Republicans may hinge on how strongly liberal or conservative are their districts. A Democrat running in a very liberal district—say, Nancy Pelosi's district in San Francisco, or Barbara Lee's in Berkeley—may behave differently from a Democrat in a more conservative district—like Mary Catherine Smotherman's in Oklahoma, where Clinton won only 31 percent of the vote in 1996. Republicans must be similarly sensitive. One

specific hypothesis is that Democrats will be less likely to emphasize Democratic issues and more likely to emphasize Republican issues in conservative districts, and conversely for Republicans. Spiliotes and Vavreck (2002) find this effect in regards to several issues, including taxes and crime. As such, candidates whose party affiliation is in some tension with their district's ideology will act more like members of the opposite party. To measure constituency preferences, I rely on Clinton's percentage of the two-party vote in 1996, a measure that is approximate at best but is readily available for all states and congressional districts (I relied on the number reported in the *Almanac of American Politics*).

The last interaction involves the competitiveness of the race. Competitiveness has shown to strongly condition a variety of candidate behaviors. For example, Kahn and Kenney (1999a) find that Senate candidates in competitive elections are more likely to mention an issue and take a position on an issue. Thus one expectation is that competitiveness may have a direct effect on issue emphasis: candidates in competitive races will be more likely to mention a particular issue in their advertising, regardless of the nature of that issue or the candidate. Competitiveness may also condition the effects of party or candidate record, though the direction of this effect is theoretically unclear. One hypothesis is that competition encourages candidates to be risk-averse. Because the race is tight and the margin for "error" slim, candidates tend to fall back on their strengths: the issues their party owns and where they have built up a record. But the opposite could also be true: in competitive races, candidates may be forced to act in "un-partisan" ways or to engage an issue on which they have few accomplishments, simply because in the heat of a campaign, it is better to say something than nothing. To get at competitiveness, I drew on the *Cook Political Report*'s rating of each race and created a dichotomous measure, coding races as safe or unsafe seats.[9]

[9] "Unsafe seats" combines two of Cook's classifications, "leaning" and "toss-up." Empirically, these two categories were not very distinct: the average margin of victory in leaning races was 12 points and in toss-up races 8 points. By contrast, the average margin of victory in safe seats was 27 points.

Table 2.5 presents a series of logit models where the dependent variable is simply whether a candidate mentioned a particular issue in her advertising.[10] These models focus on the same seven issues: taxes, crime, the deficit/surplus/budget, education, Social Security, health care, and Medicare. There are four different specifications: a basic model with party and record, a second that adds an interaction between the two, a third that interacts party with constituency preferences, and a fourth that interacts both party and record with competitiveness.

[insert Table 2.5 about here]

The first model's results tend to recapitulate the bivariate results presented in Tables 2.2 and 2.4. Party ownership is associated with emphasis of taxes, education, health care, and, more weakly, Medicare. Candidate record is associated with crime, education, health care, and, again more weakly, Medicare. Again, it is apparent that both of these variables have some explanatory power, but their effects vary quite a bit across issues. The second model reveals little apparent interaction between party and record. The multiplicative term is never statistically significant and changes only minimally the results of the more basic specification in Model 1.[11]

Likewise, the interaction between party and constituency preferences in Model 3 is rarely significant. Only in the case of the deficit and health care does it appear important. Figure 2.3 provides a substantive illustration of this interaction, plotting the probability of a Democrat's and Republican's mentioning the deficit or health care as the Clinton vote in her district or state varies.[12] The predicted probability of a Republican candidate's mentioning the deficit tends to decline as the district grows more liberal—a result that supports the hypothesis laid out above, *i.e.*, that candidates will shy away from traditional party reputations when their district is mostly composed of opposing partisans. But by contrast, the probability of a Democrat's discussing the deficit increases, from

[10] Because these data contain opposing candidates within the same race as separate observations, these logit models were estimated with robust standard errors that allowed for this sort of clustering. I also estimated models of the percentage of a candidate's total advertising devoted to each issue. By and large, these results are similar to the models I present here, in terms of the relative importance of party and record and the interaction terms. I did not estimate models of raw ad volume, since the sheer quantity of ads depends on many other factors, such as the amount of money a candidate has to spend. It is thus not the cleanest test of theories related to issue emphasis.

about .30 to about .50, as the district becomes more liberal. The contrary direction of these results may have something to do with exactly how Democrats and Republicans discuss this issue. If Republicans are keen on emphasizing balanced budgets, then this might play better in conservative districts; if Democrats are discussing ways to use the budget surplus, and in particular using it to "save" Social Security, then this might play better in liberal districts.

For health care, the interaction between party and constituency has implications only for the behavior of Democrats. Figure 2.3 shows that Democrats are more likely to emphasize this issue in conservative districts than in liberal districts. This result is perhaps surprising, as one might think Democrats would be *less* willing to talk about this traditionally Democratic issue amidst a conservative constituency. It may be that health care, as an issue that is important to voters regardless of partisan stripe, constitutes an effective message for Democrats running in ostensible hostile districts.

[insert Figure 2.3 about here]

Finally, Model 4 presents the interactions with competitiveness. By and large, these are also rather anemic. Only for education is one of these interactions, that between party and competitiveness, statistically significant.[13] The meaning of this interaction is apparent in the bivariate relationship as well. In safe seats, 52 percent of Republican candidates and 61 percent of Democratic candidates mentioned education in their advertising. In unsafe seats, 66 percent of Republicans and 90 percent of Democrats did so. Thus, while competition appears to make more candidates of both parties discuss education, its effect is particularly pronounced among Democrats.

Though competitiveness has little interactive effect, its direct effect on issue emphasis is fairly strong and robust. Candidates in competitive races are more likely than candidates in safe seats to mention nearly every single one of these issues. This echoes the finding of Kahn and Kenney (1999a), who found issue themes more prevalent in competitive Senate races. Table 2.6 provides a

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[11] Because of perfect predictions, Model 2 could not be estimated for Medicare.
[12] I assume for this illustration that the candidate did not have a record on either of these issues.

substantive illustration of this result, looking again at the 103 races where both candidates aired advertisements. I present the percentage of safe and unsafe seats where none, one, or both of the candidates mentioned the issue in her advertising. For every issue, the percentage of races where neither candidate aired advertising is lower in competitive seats than in safe seats. At times the difference is dramatic. For example, in 56 percent of safe seats, neither candidate mentioned the deficit, surplus, or budget. In competitive races, this drops to 33 percent. Also quite conspicuous is how competitiveness encourages *both* candidates to discuss an issue. Here again, the effect of competitiveness can be substantial. The percentage of races where both candidates mentioned crime increases nearly four-fold (from 9 to 33 percent). These two results obtain for all of these issues. Even when the differences between safe and unsafe seats are not statistically significant, they are substantively in the same direction.

[insert Table 2.6 about here]

Taken as a whole, these results suggest the party and record both influence issue emphasis. Candidates decide which issues to run on in part based on what they have done and on what their party is trusted to do. However, party and record are not influential in every issue domain. Some, such as crime, the deficit, and Social Security, do not manifest any partisan differences. Candidate record also has inconsistent effects. Thus, it appears that candidates do not feel entirely beholden to history.

These results also demonstrate that competitiveness tends to encourage discussion of nearly any issue. Competitive races thus appear to demand more substance from candidates. Moreover, in competitive races it is more common for both the Democrat and Republican to discuss a particular issues. An implication is that competition tends to increase not only the discussion of issues generally, but also an ostensible dialogue between the candidates on these issues.

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[13] Again, the model for Medicare generated perfect predictions and could not be estimated. Thus, I present a model including competitiveness but not interaction terms.

IV. Taking Positions: Valence and Position Politics

The second set of questions concerns how candidates discuss the issues that they choose to run on. In particular, I ask two questions. First, does candidate discourse about these issues exemplify valence or position politics? As noted earlier, the most prominent issues in this race—such as education, Social Security, crime, and taxes—are largely valence issues, in that they involve consensual policy ends. If candidates talk about these issues in terms of agreeable notions such as "better education" and "less crime," then Stokes' critique of the Downsian framework has empirical traction. In the next section, I will investigate a second question: do candidates tend to "converge" towards a similar position on these issues? I will examine in particular the 103 House and Senate races where there is advertising data for both candidates. In some respects, this question is interesting regardless of whether convergence implies location at the median voter's position, or whether it merely entails similar rhetoric, even "valence"-style rhetoric. Candidates will appear similar to voters if they take the same position (*e.g.*, pro-voucher) or if they merely articulate identical consensual goals (*e.g.*, "safer schools").

In coding these 1,260 advertisements, I simply documented the specific positions candidates took on each issue, coding as many such positions as existed in the advertisement (sometimes as many as six or seven within a single issue). The coding scheme erred on the side of inclusiveness, adding a separate code for even esoteric positions that appeared in only one advertisement. However, advertisements that talked about an issue in nothing but the vaguest terms—merely stating support for the consensual policy goal in question, such as better health care—were coded only as "non-specific support." That is to say, an ad was either specific or non-specific. If the former, I coded further the claims made. If the latter, I coded the ad as "non-specific support" and nothing else. In addition to recording the candidate's own positions and goals, I also recorded in separate codes her claims about her opponent, since it is one thing to state support for "protecting" Social Security and another thing to accuse the opponent of inadequate support.[14]

[14] Non-specific ads were also coded for any references made to the opponent's position.

To present a full and thorough accounting of candidate rhetoric in these races, and to document fully the prevalence of both position and valence themes, Tables 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9 present the coding scheme for the seven issues that have been the focus of the analysis thus far: education, health care, Social Security, Medicare, taxes, crime, and the deficit. These tables present the number of ads that mentioned a particular theme and the corresponding percentage of total advertising on that issue. There are separate distributions for Republican and Democrat advertisements to provide initial purchase on rhetorical and perhaps ideological differences between the parties. Individual advertisements could mention more than one theme, so these percentages do not sum to 100.

Education

[insert Table 2.7 about here]

The most rhetorically complex of these seven issues was education. Candidates mentioned 25 separate positions within this issue. Table 2.7 lists these positions, including both affirmative claims about one's positions and characterizations of the opponent's positions. The horizontal dividing line separates the positions according to whether they are essentially valence or whether they arguably have some ideological content. The first category, "Improve education (non-specific)," captures ads that talked about education in the most imprecise way. For example, Congressman Bob Riley (R-AL) aired an ad entitled "Alabama Values" in which, accompanied by a picture of young children in a classroom, he said, "I want to see an educational system in Alabama second to none. These kids deserve the best we can give them." Senator Bob Graham (D-FL) aired an ad in which he touted "a solid record of working to improve education." These sorts of ads articulated no specific plans for improving education but endorsed this general goal. For both parties, non-specific ads constitute a significant fraction of total advertising about education: 25 percent of Democratic ads and 35 percent of Republican ads. That Republican ads more often discuss education solely in these terms suggests that one way a party can address an issue that the other party "owns" is to be a little fuzzy about it.

The list of more specific positions with a consensual nature is quite long. Some of the most prominent proposals include safer schools, smaller classes, high standards, more teachers, and new buildings or facilities. For example, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL) takes two of these positions at once when she says in one advertisement, "I've worked to rebuild our schools and make them safe for our children." In Colorado, Democratic Senate candidate Dottie Lamm said she would work "for smaller classes and safer schools to give our children a strong start." Senator John Breaux (D-LA) cites a series of goals: "Our children. If you give them the opportunity, they'll make us proud...That's why I've worked for safe schools, smaller classes, and higher standards. Internet access for all our children. And tax credits that help make education affordable for any student who's willing to put in the hard work."

What is notable about most of these positions is that they are more prominent in Democratic than Republican advertising. About 24 percent of Democratic ads mentioned safer schools, compared to 16 percent of Republican ads. There are comparable differences for smaller classes (24% vs. 9%), higher standards (9% vs. 2%), more teachers (9% vs. 2%), new buildings or schools (9% vs. 2%) and so on. The chief exception to this pattern is teacher salaries, a position that appears in almost 9 percent of Republican ads but less than 1 percent of Democratic ads. However, this arises because Republicans discuss this subject not in terms of increasing teacher's salaries but in terms of "merit pay for good teachers," or something similar.[15] This notion is anathema to teachers' unions, who are typically loyal Democrats.

Another finding is that characterizations of the opponent's views are more common among Democrats. No Republican ad accused a Democrat of failing to support safer schools, smaller classes, or higher standards. However, at least some Democratic ads made these and other accusations about Republicans. This may be a consequence of party ownership: a party is more

[15] One example comes from Senator Al D'Amato (R-NY), who aired an ad entitled "Merit Pay" in which the woman on screen said, "Senator D'Amato wants my children to get the very best education. That's why he's leading the fight for good teachers in our classrooms with merit pay and competency testing. And most important, Senator D'Amato wants parents more involved in schools. Merit pay for good teachers,

comfortable making negative statements about an opponent's views on issues that the party itself owns.

The lower portion of the table includes positions that have a more ideological cast. Most prominent among these is the notion that education funding should be spent in the classroom and not on the education bureaucracy. Among Republicans, this is the most prominent specific position related to education, one that is almost entirely absent among Democrats. For example, Republican J.D. Hayworth of Arizona said in one advertisement, "I want 95 cents of every education dollar spent in our classrooms." Republican Heather Wilson of New Mexico aired an ad in which she said, "We need to make sure that money gets to the classroom where it really matters and isn't sucked up in administration and bureaucrats in Washington. I'm working on a bill. It's called the Dollars to the Classroom Act and it puts $425 in every single classroom for bricks and books and teacher salaries and curriculums and paper and pencils. I want to see that passed."

This antagonism towards the bureaucracy and emphasis on the classroom goes hand-in-hand with another position prominent in Republican advertising: local control of schools. One example of this message comes from Sue Myrick (R-NC), who stated in her ad entitled "Schools," "We know better than Washington bureaucrats how to best educate our children. That's just common sense, right? Well, there's not much of that in Washington DC...It's the same old equation. Get the money, power, and influence back home." An ad of Republican James Walker of Texas stages a scene in the classroom where the teacher is repeatedly interrupted by a voice saying things like, "Excuse me, the approved curriculum is on your desk" and "No need to think. Just do as we say" and "We know what is best for students." Walker then appears on screen and says, "Washington DC doesn't know what's best for our students. Parents do. I'll fight to let our teachers teach and for our children to learn." Meanwhile, some Democratic advertising seizes on the antagonism for

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competency testing for all teachers, and more parental involvement: that's Senator D'Amato's plan for education."

bureaucracy to accuse the Republican of wanting to abolish the Department of Education—an attempt to portray these candidates as extremist opponents of education.[16]

Somewhat surprisingly, however, positions related to schools vouchers and parent choice are surprisingly absent in these advertisements. This constitutes perhaps one of the most well-defined partisan disagreements about education, but only a handful of ads bring it up. No Republican ad is an explicit endorsement of vouchers, although 4 ads do mention school choice. Though there are a few pro-voucher Democratic ads, there are more that accuse the Republican opponent of supporting vouchers.

Overall, several findings stand out with regards to advertising about education. Democrats are not only more likely to air advertisements related to education, as the previous section discussed, but also to mention more specific ideas related to improving education.[17] This is clearly a difference between the parties, though it is not a difference along some ideological spectrum but instead a difference in how much each party emphasizes consensual goals. Moreover, the chief "position issue" within the current politics of education, school vouchers, enters into the campaign discourse rarely if ever in these 1998 races. If education advertising has any kind of ideological tenor, it is mostly implicit, involving sarcastic references to bureaucracy or codewords like "local control." Thus education is not an issue completely lacking partisan disagreement or differences—some of which even tap into philosophical cleavages about the role of government—but by and large the advertising discourse centers on fairly innocuous proposals that few would find objectionable. Valence politics is the norm.

Social Security

[insert Table 2.8 about here]

[16] Republican advertising is also more likely to discuss competency testing for teachers, a notion, like merit pay, that teachers' unions do not support.

[17] One could, of course, also question how specific even these ideas are, in that typically they are articulated without mention of how such things as smaller classes would come about or be funded.

Table 2.8 present similar results for Social Security, Medicare, and health care, which are the remaining three "Democratic" issues. Social Security has only a handful of positions, and one of these predominates: the non-specific commitment to preserving or protecting Social Security. Roughly 70 percent of Republican ads and 60 percent of Democratic ads articulate only this position; a small number of ads also accuse the opponent of less than due diligence. A few examples of the statements candidates make in their advertising include:

> "Whether it's taking on the big states like New York when they were taking advantage of Medicare rules or pledging to save Social Security first, Chuck Grassley fights for Iowa seniors." – Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA)
> "A national leader fighting for Social Security … 'What we ought to do is secure our Social Security system'" – Senate candidate Jim Bunning (R-KY)
> "And now he's working hard…to protect Social Security." – House candidate Jim McGovern (D-MA)

While the parties do not differ a great deal in the prevalence of either the non-specific affirmative or accusatory position, it is interesting that, as was the case with education, Republican advertising about Social Security more often reverts to a vague commitment. Clearly Republicans feel they can talk about this issue credibly if not with much specificity.

When it comes to more specific plans, the most popular is using the budget surplus to "save" or preserve Social Security. An ad by Representative Todd Tiahrt (R-KS) is illustrative:

> "Social Security. For generations working Americans have trusted that when they needed it, Social Security would be there. Todd Tiahrt has worked to strengthen Social Security, voting to commit 90 percent of our federal budget surplus to the Social Security trust fund. Saving Social Security. Todd Tiahrt knows it's not only for the election, it's for the next generation."

However, Tiahrt is something of the exception to the rule, in that this position is far more prevalent in Democratic advertising about Social Security (24.1%) than in Republican advertising (9.4%). The only other policy proposal related to Social Security was individual investment accounts, which comprised but a small fraction of both parties' advertising.

The remaining positions involve accusations and denials. Approximately 17 percent of Republican ads accuse the Democratic opponent of supporting higher taxes on Social Security

incomes (versus 1% of Democratic ads). Democratic advertising accuses Republicans of raiding the trust fund (8.6%), supporting privatization (8.0%), and either raising the minimum age or reducing cost-of-living adjustments (1.6%). All of these accusations comport with party images, in particular Republicans' opposition to higher taxes and Democrats' opposition to actions that would, in their view, weaken Social Security.

There are several parallels between these findings and those regarding education. First and foremost, candidates of both parties most frequently discuss Social Security purely in valence terms. They express a desire to preserve or protect this program, but offer few suggestions as to how this might be accomplished. This position again appears to offer Republicans leverage on an otherwise Democratic issue. Second, Democratic ads are more likely than Republicans ads to proffer more specific proposals, in this case using the budget surplus to shore up the Social Security trust fund. However, while one can find differences in the two parties' rhetoric, the central tendency, perhaps unsurprisingly, is a non-specific endorsement of a popular entitlement program.

Medicare

The other popular entitlement program prominent in advertising, Medicare, was dealt with in a far more cursory fashion than even Social Security and education. The candidates in these ads often pledged to preserve or protect or sustain Medicare but did not propose detailed plans. Fully 95 percent of Republican advertising made such a pledge, as did 70 percent of Democratic advertising. Some examples:

> "We've made big changes since I was elected to Congress...We've saved Medicare." – Senate candidate Michael Crapo (R-ID)
>
> "Costello's kept his promise to protect Social Security and Medicare." – Representative Jerry Costello (D-IL)
>
> "Tom Allen has fought efforts to cut Social Security and Medicare." – Representative Tom Allen (D-ME)
>
> "Since Republicans took control of Congress, we've cut your taxes, reformed welfare, strengthened Medicare and Social Security, and balanced the budget." – Representative Pete Hoekstra (R-MI)
>
> "I want to make sure we protect Social Security and Medicare." – Senator Kit Bond (R-MO)

The other prominent tactic was to accuse the opponent of failing to support Medicare, wanting to cut Medicare funding, etc. As before, it is Democrats who are more likely to make such an accusation (42 percent of Democratic advertising does so, versus 15 percent of Republican advertising). Advertising on Medicare thus fits two empirical patterns: partisans discussing an issue they do not own, Republicans in this case, are more likely to invoke a purely valence position, while partisans who do own the issue are more likely to characterize the opposition as unsupportive or hostile.

Health Care

Health care, another Democratic issue, is somewhat distinct in that the pure valence position accounts for less of the total advertising: 14 percent of Democratic ads and 21 percent of Republican ads simply advocated "better" health care, making claims like that of Senator Don Nickles (R-OK), one of whose ads said, "Whether it's improving health care or keeping Social Security safe and secure, he's there everyday fighting for Oklahoma." More prevalent were a series of positions that advocated for the rights of individual patients and doctors at the expense of insurance companies and HMOs. One such position simply stressed the need for patients and doctors to make important medical decisions. For example, Democratic House candidate Pat Casey of Pennsylvania advocated "health care reform so people can choose their own doctor." An ad for Tennessee Democrat Bart Gordon said that, "doctors and patients should make important medical decisions, not bookkeepers at an HMO." Another position emphasized the need to reform HMOs or hold them accountable in some fashion. House candidate Margaret Camnermeyer (D-WA) pledged "to stand up to the HMOs to make sure we get the healthcare we deserve." The final and related position was an explicit endorsement of a patients' bill of rights that would ostensibly protect them against malfeasance by HMOs or insurance companies. At times this notion is mentioned without explication, as when an ad for Representative Mel Watt (D-NC) simply said, "He's fought for working families, for child care, and a patients' bill of rights." At times it is coupled with one of these related positions: House

candidate Tom Sawyer (D-OH) said in one ad, "We need to pass a tough patients' bill of rights so doctors make medical decisions and not HMOs." Or, as an ad for Pennsylvania Democrat Ron Klink stated, "He led the fight in Congress for a real patients' bill of rights to stand up to insurance companies and protect people from the abuses of HMOs."

These three positions were the most prominent messages in Democratic advertising about health care. Each was mentioned in 25-30 percent of these ads. Accusations about the opponent's lack of support for these ideas were also more prominent in Democratic advertising. Meanwhile, these positions were less prevalent in Republican advertising, particularly mention of HMO accountability or reform.

The remaining positions are a hodge-podge of general goals—better access to insurance or coverage, increased funding for research—and specific proposals about particular aspects of care, such as home healthcare, prescription drugs, and mammograms. Some of these, access to insurance or coverage and increased funding for search, are more prominent in Republican than Democratic advertising—though, the raw number of Republican ads is not large, just because Republicans aired so many fewer ads about this issue.

Health care advertising therefore conforms to several observed empirical patterns. Purely valence advertising is more common among the party that does not "own" the issue, Republicans, while substantive proposals are more common among the party that does own the issue, Democrats, though such proposals are not entirely absent among Republicans. Democratic advertising is also more likely to go on the attack. More generally, the differences between Republican and Democrats suggest not so much competing positions—since it is not as if Democrats express support for HMO reform and Republicans express opposition—as different degrees of emphasis.

Taxes

[insert Table 2.9 about here]

Table 2.9 presents similar statistics for the remaining three issues, all of which are typically thought to be "owned" by the Republican party. The first of these is taxes. A large proportion of Republican advertising took a fairly standard position, expressing support for tax cuts (56.5%) and/or accusing the opponent of supporting tax increases (30.9%). An ad by Illinois Republican Senate candidate Peter Fitzgerald exemplifies the former:

> There is only one fiscal conservative running for Senate with the record to prove it. Peter Fitzgerald. Only Fitzgerald stood up to the politicians who tried to raise our income tax. His vote stopped a 25 percent tax hike we would paying today. Only Fitzgerald has the best anti-tax record in the Illinois State Senate. And only Fitzgerald will fight higher taxes in Washington, so we can keep more of what we earn.

Arkansas Senate candidate and Republican Fay Boozman provides an illustration of the latter, saying this of his opponent, Senator Blanche Lincoln: "There are two Blanche Lincolns. Arksansas Blanche tells us one thing here. Washington Blanche does another there. Arksansas Blanche says let's cut takes. Washington Blanche voted for one of the largest tax increases in history." The other most prominent positions in Republican advertising were reforming the IRS (11.8%), repealing the "marriage penalty" (9.8%), and reforming the tax code (7.3%). An example of an ad calling for IRS reform is one entitled "Stop the IRS," from Senator Paul Coverdell (R-GA). It features a Georgia couple detailing a run-in with the IRS, after which Coverdell appears on screen and says, "When the IRS began targeting Georgians, I new we had to take them on." The announcer continues, "Paul Coverdell got the IRS off the backs of Patty and Bill Williamson. And when they started targeting Georgians with random audits, our Senator went face-to-face to stop them cold."

As with Republican advertising, the largest proportion of Democratic advertising (45.4%) articulates support for tax cuts. It is far less common, however, for Democratic advertising to accuse the Republican opponent of support for tax increases; less than 10 percent of Democratic advertising does so. Other positions, such as IRS reform and repealing the marriage, are also less prominent, though only slightly, in Democratic advertising. Democratic advertising does emphasize two positions that are not much part of the Republican discourse on taxes: the accusation that the Republican opponent supports tax cuts for the wealthy (29.6%) and support for targeted tax cuts of

various kinds, particularly for tuition (16.7%). For example, an ad of Arizona Democrat Steve Owens said this of his Republican opponent: "J.D. Hayworth voted for a tax loophole that allows billionaires to avoid paying taxes." An ad for Representative Jim Maloney (D-CT) said, "Maloney cut taxes to help families afford college."

Thus, it is clear that in their advertising about taxes both parties frequently endorse what is obviously a politically expedient (even necessary) valence position: support for lower taxes. Republicans, however, are more likely than Democrats to criticize their opponent for their failure to lower taxes. Party ownership of an issue seems to provide an impetus to criticize. Democrats and Republicans do emphasize some different positions, with Democrats focusing on targeted tax cuts for such purposes as tuition (while accusing their opponents of supporting tax cuts for the rich), and Republicans focusing more on repeating the marriage penalty, reforming the IRS, and simplifying the tax code. Again, these are not so much opposite positions, where one candidate is pro and the other con, as distinct emphases.

Crime

As discussed above, crime is an ostensibly Republican issue on which there are few partisan differences in terms of issue emphasis. How Democrats discuss crime may shed some light on why they feel they can poach on Republican land. Table 2.9 shows that for Republicans, the most prominent crime-related position is the non-specific goal of reducing crime, which is mentioned in about 37 percent of Republican advertising. This position is also mentioned in nearly a third of Democratic advertising (30.1%). A variety of rhetoric fits under this heading: "tough on crime," "crack down on crime," "safer streets," and so on.

For Republicans, a variety of other positions are about equally prominent: increasing the number of police or supporting them in some way, various measures for juvenile crime (*e.g.*, boot camps), and longer and/or tougher sentences all come up in about 10-15 percent of advertisements. These are also the most popular positions in Democratic advertising. One interesting difference

between the parties is the salience of police in Democratic ads: fully 36.6 percent advocate more police or measures designed to help police. For example, an ad for Cal Dooley (D-CA) cites "450 more police patrolling the valley because of his leadership" and one for Corrine Brown (D-FL) cites "200 new police Corrine helped put on the streets." An ad for Jim Maloney (D-CT) focuses on a measure designed to protect police: "Bulletproof vests are the most important tool our policy officers could have. Congresman Jim Maloney passed a law to provide every police officer the Kevlar vest that may one day save their lives."

In general, these findings suggest that Democrats are willing to campaign on law-and-order issues, even though these have traditionally been the property of Republicans. Indeed, in contrast to the previous issues, the party owning this issue, Republicans, is not more likely to offer specific ideas about reducing crime. Democrats' focus on augmenting and protecting police forces is the best example. But overall, in terms of both the positions articulated and the emphasis these are given, the parties are not notably distinct. They both put forward similar means designed towards the same basic end.

The Deficit, Surplus, and Budget

The last issue includes references to the deficit, budget, or the budget surplus that existed at that point in time. In Republican advertising, the balanced budget was the most prominent position, mentioned in 64 percent of advertising on this subject. The balanced budget was also mentioned in a much smaller fraction of Democratic advertising (37.7%). In large part, references to the balanced budget were stated as the achievement that it was in 1998. An advertisement for Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) said, "He's been at the center of the battle to produce the nation's first balanced budget." Senate candidate Michael Crapo (R-ID) said, "We've made big changes since I was elected to Congress. We balanced the federal budget." An ad for Senate candidate Evan Bayh (D-IN) said, "He's a fiscal conservative who'll preserve the balanced budget."

Democratic advertising was much more focused on uses of the surplus. Over half (58.4%) of these ads mentioned the need to use the surplus for Social Security, and 14 percent accused Republicans of opposing this plan or wanting to spend the surplus on tax cuts for the rich. Jerry Inslee, a Democratic House candidate from Washington, said in an ad entitled "Save Social Security": "I look at my Dad, and I look at my son, and I wonder: 'Will Social Security be there when they need it?' I'm Jerry Inslee. My opponent, Rick White, is against using the budget surplus to protect Social Security. He wants an election-year tax cut instead. But I disagree. We should use the budget surplus to save Social Security." By contrast, only about 21 percent of Republican advertising endorsed this plan for the surplus.

Thus, the rough parity between Democrats' and Republicans' emphasis of deficit-related positions stems from quite different ways of talking about the issue. Republicans tend to celebrate the balanced budget and Democrats to advocate uses for the surplus. This subject area thus offers another example of an ongoing pattern. If there is differentiation between the parties, it comes not from conflicting positions, but contrasting goals and emphases.

As a whole, the vast majority of "positions" in candidate advertising reflect a consensual valence politics and not a contentious position politics. One finds calls for safer schools, for lower taxes, for better health care, for balanced budgets—all of which are safe and relatively popular goals. And while Democratic and Republican advertising often emphasizes different positions, rarely is there ostensible convergence on an issue whereby the candidates could in theory line up on opposite sides. Moderation in campaigns appears to result not from espousing a centrist ideology but from unobjectionable campaign rhetoric.

V. Taking Positions: Convergence and Divergence

Even if the Downsian spatial model seems a poor empirical fit to campaign advertising, and thus to how the candidates present themselves to voters, there may still be a kind of "convergence" if competing candidates articulate similar positions when discussing various issues. The findings presented thus far suggest that the two parties' rhetoric contains both similarities and differences in the aggregate, but a more precise test is necessary, one that considers only those individual races where both candidates aired at least some advertising. The question is whether in such the candidates seem to parrot each other—such that by the campaign's end both candidates have endorsed similar goals.

To do so, I examine the most prominent positions related to these same seven issues. The question is, in races where both candidates aired advertising on a given issue, was a particular position articulated by both of the candidates? Tables 2.10 and 2.11 present the percentages of races in which neither, one, or both of the candidates took each position. Table 2.10 presents the four "Democratic" issues. There were 48 races (out of 103 in total) in which both candidates discussed education, and in these races it was rare that both candidates struck the same note. Only 17 percent of races saw both candidates promise to improve education in some non-specific way. Only 8 percent of these races saw both candidates promise smaller classes. In fact, for many of these positions, there were no races in which both candidates "converged" on the same position.

[insert Table 2.10 about here]

By contrast, the two major entitlement programs provide examples of rhetorical convergence. In 57 percent of the 56 races where both the Democrat and Republican discussed the issue, the candidates made a promise to protect or preserve Social Security. This "third rail" of politics seems to inspire bipartisan support. Similarly, two-thirds of races with two flows of advertising about Medicare featured both candidates' promising to protect this popular program. However, most of the other major positions related to Social Security garnered attention from only one of the candidates. The final issue, health care, features few coincidental messages. In only 18

percent of the 22 relevant races did both candidates express a generic desire for better health care. In 14 percent of these races both candidates advocated doctor and patient decision-making. In no race did both the Democrat and Republican discuss HMO reform.

Table 2.11 presents the three Republican issues. The first of these, taxes, features some similar partisan rhetoric on one position: support for tax cuts. In a plurality of races (43.2%) both candidates promised a lower tax burden. But the remaining positions drew attention from only one of the candidates, and in most races the Republican. Crime also evinces dissensus. In less than 10 percent of the 21 relevant races did both candidates articulate the same message, even one as bland as "reducing crime." The deficit is no different. In only about one fifth of these 15 races did the Republican and Democrat mention the balanced budget. Even fewer races (13.3%) saw both candidates pledge the surplus to the Social Security trust fund.

If one defines convergence as articulating similar positions, competing House and Senate candidates seems mostly divergent. With only a few exceptions—a generalized pledge to protect Social Security and Medicare—is quite uncommon for opposing candidates to espouse similar goals or policies. Candidates thus do appear to differentiate themselves from their opponent, but not necessarily in a spatial or ideological fashion.

VI. Conclusion

From these data emerges a picture of elections and candidate strategy that differs from Downsian convergence, but also from a valence model. Moreover, these findings suggest a reality different than described in other empirical research that argues that because of issue ownership the parties "talk past" each other and that Republican and Democratic candidate are, *contra* Downs, ideologically distinct. I have examined candidate advertising, the primary means by which candidates convey their ideas to voters, because the essence of the spatial model is that candidate strategy seeks to enlist voters' support. Advertising thus provides a window into how candidates go about that task.

A first important point, one that I have thus far elided here, is that in many races, particularly those at the House level, there is little to no advertising, and if there is, it comes from only one candidate. In these uncompetitive races, there is little need for the advantaged candidate, likely an incumbent, to expend significant resources even making his or her positions known. Most models of elections assume that at least two parties are vying for office. The reality of American elections is that this may not be the case.

Second, these advertising data demonstrate that while candidates select certain issues in part because they or their party has a record on those issues, these two criteria are not perfect predictors. Candidates often engage an issue even if their party does not "own" that issue. As a result, many races feature both candidates' discussing the same issues—a reality much different than the lack of dialogue found in other research. As a race becomes more competitive, this tendency increases.

Third, the actual content of candidate messages reveals something unlike either the pure "positional" politics implicit in Downs or Stokes' valence politics. It is true that the most popular issues in the 1998 elections were issues where there is little disagreement as to the ultimate goal. And it is true that a vague endorsement of these goals was a common and even the dominant mode of discourse about these issues. All of this looks very much like the world of valence politics. However, this is not to say that candidate rhetoric lacks every trace of ideology, or, more broadly, that the parties talk about these issues in exact same way. At times, the campaign discourse includes notions that belie conventional ideological positions, such as when Republicans call for education dollars to be spent in the classroom and not on the "bureaucracy." Thus ideology enters into campaign advertising, but only implicitly, and perhaps too implicitly for the average voter to perceive it as such.

Even if advertising is not particularly ideological, this does not mean that the parties discuss issues in precisely the same way. For example, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to endorse a patients' bill of rights, while Republican are more likely to call for reform to the IRS or the tax code. Democrats are more likely to accuse Republicans of seeking tax cuts for the rich, and

Republicans are more likely to accuse Democrats of opposing tax cuts in general. As a result, it is rare that candidates in the same race take the same positions. Though these partisan differences suggest that campaign advertising is not consensual, they do not begin to approximate "position politics." Candidates rarely espouse opposite positions—where, for example, the Democrat is for some policy and the Republican against. Instead, they simply tend to emphasize different positions within a given issue domain, and in doing so to differentiate themselves from their opponent, if only by portraying their opponent in a negative light.

All of this adds up to a politics that is not unfamiliar, to be sure, but one that does not sit comfortably in the longstanding theoretical camps within political science. It is a politics where candidates do not universally obey the dictates of their own record or their party's; a politics that features consensual issues, but at least some ideological language; a politics where parties often draw upon different rhetorical positions, but not ones that present voters with sharply discordant positions. To understand the choices that candidates make, we must make better sense of this complex reality.

Table 2.1. Advertising Volume on Various Issues, by Party

All Candidates (N=269)		Republicans (N=139)		Democrats (N=130)	
Taxes	57,020	Taxes	41,012	Education	29,984
Education	53,647	Social Security	27,677	Social Security	21,493
Social Security	49,170	Education	23,663	Health care	18,153
Health care	30,823	Ideology	15,723	Taxes	16,008
Crime	24,795	Health care	12,670	Crime	13,511
Medicare	24,351	Crime	11,284	Medicare	13,262
Deficit etc.	19,302	Medicare	11,089	Deficit etc.	8,549
Ideology	18,254	Deficit etc.	10,753	Environment	7,285
Environment	10,680	Gov. spending	7,750	Gun control	5,288
Gov. spending	10,292	Welfare	7,457	Jobs	3,803
Welfare	8,322	Defense	5,081	Poverty	2,976
Jobs	8,252	Jobs	4,449	Defense	2,701
Defense	7,782	Clinton	3,575	Gov. spending	2,542
Clinton	5,549	Environment	3,395	Ideology	2,531
Gun control	5,372	Abortion	2,559	Abortion	2,302
Abortion	4,861	Poverty	1,759	Clinton	1,974
Poverty	4,735	Campaign finance	90	Campaign finance	1,059
Campaign finance	1,149	Gun control	84	Welfare	865

Table 2.2. Issue Emphasis and Party Ownership

	Percent of Candidates Advertising on Issue		Percent of Advertising Mentioning Issue	
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Abortion	11.5%	10.8%	4.4%	3.0%
Campaign finance	0.7	2.3	0.1	0.2
Clinton	10.8	9.2	4.2	3.5
Crime	35.3	38.5	14.5	14.5
Defense	15.8	10.8	5.0	4.2
Deficit, budget, surplus	36.0	35.4	15.7	10.6
Education	57.6	72.3	27.2	38.5
Environment	12.9	19.2	5.9	6.0
Government spending	18.0	12.3	7.2	4.5
Gun control	1.4	12.3	0.2	4.8
Health care	28.8	57.7	11.0	25.6
Ideology	25.9	11.5	13.4	4.0
Jobs	18.0	16.2	8.2	6.8
Medicare	30.9	39.2	12.9	15.9
Poverty	2.2	10.0	0.3	2.0
Social Security	64.0	68.5	33.8	31.6
Taxes	75.5	41.5	47.7	16.4
Welfare	23.0	3.8	9.1	0.6

Shaded cells indicate that the difference between the parties is significant at p<.05 or better (one-tailed).

Table 2.3. Coincidence of Issues within Races

	N of races	Advertising Aired by		
		Democrat only	Republican only	Both candidates
Republican Issues				
Taxes	91	8.8%	51.6	39.6
Crime	61	34.4%	31.1	34.4
Deficit, Surplus, Budget	57	36.4%	33.3	30.3
Democratic Issues				
Education	92	32.6%	15.2	52.2
Health care	76	55.3%	15.8	28.9
Medicare	90	44.1%	25.4	30.5
Social Security	59	18.9%	18.9	62.2

Table 2.4. Issue Emphasis and Candidate Record

	Percent of Candidates Advertising on Issue		Percent of Advertising Mentioning Issue	
	no record	record	no record	record
Abortion	11.2	10.0	3.9	0.9
Campaign finance	1.6	0.0	0.1	0.0
Clinton	10.2	7.7	4.0	0.5
Crime	33.2	72.0	12.8	31.2
Defense	11.9	35.3	4.2	10.4
Deficit, budget, surplus	35.1	44.4	13.1	14.2
Education	62.4	87.5	31.6	43.9
Environment	13.3	37.9	5.3	10.9
Government spending	15.3	12.5	5.9	5.1
Gun Control	6.0	50.0	2.3	13.6
Health care	38.3	69.2	15.6	32.4
Jobs	16.9	50.0	7.2	50.0
Medicare	34.1	62.5	13.8	31.3
Poverty	5.6	33.3	1.1	6.3
Social Security	65.9	75.0	32.4	42.6
Taxes	57.4	71.9	31.8	38.4
Welfare	12.9	30.8	4.3	19.8

Shaded cells indicate that the difference between candidates with and without a record is significant at p<.05 or better (one-tailed).

Table 2.5. Logit Models of Issue Emphasis

	Taxes	Crime	Deficit	Education	Social Security	Health care	Medicare
Model 1							
Democrat	-1.44***	.08	-.02	.63**	.20	1.21***	.35#
	(.27)	(.24)	(.25)	(.26)	(.24)	(.26)	(.24)
Record	.41	1.80***	.39	1.39*	.44	1.29***	1.13#
	(.47)	(.50)	(.50)	(.64)	(.83)	(.41)	(.69)
χ^2	31.7	13.6	.63	9.0	1.0	26.9	5.2
Pseduo-R^2	.09	.05	.002	.04	.003	.10	.01
Model 2							
Democrat	-1.52***	.05	-.12	.68**	.20	1.35***	-[1]
	(.27)	(.25)	(.25)	(.27)	(.24)	(.28)	
Record	.11	1.58*	-.29	1.99*	.54	1.77***	-
	(.55)	(.72)	(.72)	(1.07)	(1.17)	(.55)	
Democrat × Record	.70	.40	1.48#	-1.08	-.20	-.98#	-
	(.85)	(.98)	(1.04)	(1.36)	(1.67)	(.76)	
χ^2	34.2	13.3	2.64	10.5	1.01	31.6	-
Pseduo-R^2	.09	.05	.008	.04	.003	.10	-
Model 3							
Democrat	-1.51	1.27	-5.18**	1.40	-.99	6.35***	-.80
	(2.05)	(1.72)	(1.84)	(2.01)	(2.07)	(1.89)	(1.72)
Democrat × Clinton Pct	.002	-.03	.11**	-.02	.02	-.11**	.02
	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Record	.35	1.83***	.27	1.39*	.44	1.42***	1.11#
	(.47)	(.50)	(.52)	(.64)	(.82)	(.40)	(.70)
Clinton Pct	-.02	.03	-.10***	.02	-.02	.04#	-.01
	(.04)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
χ^2	32.1	14.3	10.9	9.2	1.38	34.0	5.7
Pseduo-R^2	.10	.05	.04	.04	.004	.12	.01
Model 4							
Democrat	-1.60***	.32	-.14	.30	.09	1.35***	.34#
	(.33)	(.34)	(.32)	(.33)	(.30)	(.36)	(.24)
Democrat × Competitiveness	.21	-.60	.16	1.17*	.27	-.32	-
	(.61)	(.53)	(.52)	(.64)	(.53)	(.54)	
Record	.48	2.04***	.15	1.80**	1.26	1.57***	.61*
	(.57)	(.59)	(.60)	(.76)	(1.10)	(.49)	(.37)
Record × Competitiveness	-.28	.002	1.34	-1.09	-2.52	-.43	-
	(.99)	(1.24)	(1.34)	(1.50)	(1.90)	(1.01)	
Competitiveness	.84*	1.75***	.29	.74*	.77*	1.04**	.29*
	(.47)	(.41)	(.37)	(.39)	(.39)	(.41)	(.17)
χ^2	40.8	35.7	3.92	24.3	10.6	31.6	7.4
Pseduo-R^2	.12	.13	.01	.09	.04	.12	.02

*Table entries are logit coefficients, with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variables are coded 0 if a candidate's advertising never mentioned an issue, and 1 if it did. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; #p<.10 (one-tailed).*

[1] *Model generated perfect predictions and could not be estimated.*

Table 2.6. Competition and the Coincidence of Issues within Races

	Type of race	Advertising Aired by: Neither candidate	Democrat only	Republican only	Both candidates	Statistical significance
Republican Issues						
Crime	Safe	59.3%	18.5	13.0	9.3	χ^2=18.5 p<.001
	Not safe	20.4%	22.4	24.5	32.7	
Taxes	Safe	18.5%	3.7	51.9	25.9	χ^2=10.6 p=.01
	Not safe	4.1%	12.2	38.8	44.9	
Deficit, Surplus, etc.	Safe	55.6%	18.5	14.8	11.1	χ^2=5.7 p=.13
	Not safe	32.7%	24.5	22.4	20.4	
Democratic Issues						
Education	Safe	16.7%	29.6	22.2	31.5	χ^2=15.7 p=.001
	Not safe	4.1%	28.6	4.1	63.3	
Health care	Safe	29.6%	44.4	11.1	14.8	χ^2=3.2 p=.36
	Not safe	22.4%	36.7	12.2	28.6	
Medicare	Safe	50.0%	22.2	16.7	11.1	χ^2=4.8 p=.19
	Not safe	34.7%	28.6	12.2	24.5	
Social Security	Safe	16.7%	16.7	22.2	44.4	χ^2=5.8 p=.12
	Not safe	8.2%	16.3	10.2	65.3	

Table 2.7. Advertising Positions Related to Education, by Party

	Republicans		Democrats	
	# ads	% of ads	# ads	% of ads
Improve education (non-specific)	49	35.3%	57	25.6%
opponent against	0	0.0	10	4.5
Safe schools	22	15.8	54	24.2
opponent against	0	0.0	10	4.5
Smaller classes	13	9.4	53	23.8
opponent against	0	0.0	9	4.0
Higher standards	1	0.7	18	8.1
opponent against	0	0.0	8	3.6
More teachers	3	2.2	20	9.0
opponent against	1	0.7	5	2.2
New buildings or schools	3	2.2	21	9.4
opponent against	0	0.0	2	0.9
Student loans, scholarships	7	5.0	16	7.2
opponent against	1	0.7	22	9.9
Internet, computers	2	1.4	13	5.8
opponent against	0	0.0	2	0.9
More money for schools	7	5.0	3	1.3
opponent against	1	0.7	10	4.5
Teacher salaries	12	8.6	2	0.9
Discipline	3	2.2	10	4.5
Support school lunch programs	0	0.0	3	1.3
opponent against	0	0.0	7	3.1
Tax-free savings for college	7	5.0	4	1.8
opponent against	2	1.4	0	0.0
Literacy, reading	5	3.6	2	0.9
opponent against	0	0.0	5	2.2
Mandatory testing of students	2	1.4	1	0.4
opponent against	1	0.7	0	0.0
Lead or asbestos in schools	0	0.0	0	0.0
opponent against	0	0.0	1	0.4
After-school programs	0	0.0	6	2.7
opponent against	0	0.0	1	0.4
Money into classrooms, not bureaucrats	31	22.3	2	0.9
opponent against	3	2.2	0	0.0
Local control of schools	19	13.7	0	0.0
opponent against	6	4.3	0	0.0
Opponent wants to abolish Dept. of Education	0	0.0	16	7.2
does not want to abolish Dept. of Education	1	0.7	1	0.4
Competency testing for teachers	11	7.9	1	0.4
opponent against	2	1.4	0	0.0
Vouchers supporter	0	0.0	3	1.3
opponent against vouchers	1	0.7	0	0.0
Vouchers opponent	0	0.0	1	0.4
opponent is pro-vouchers	0	0.0	4	1.8
Parents should choose schools	4	2.9	0	0.0
Anti-teachers union	2	1.4	0	0.0

Table 2.8. Advertising Positions Related to Social Security, Medicare, and Health Care, by Party

	Republicans		Democrats	
	# ads	% of ads	# ads	% of ads
Social Security				
Protect, preserve Social Security (non-specific)	112	70.0%	112	59.9%
opponent against	21	13.1	20	10.7
Use budget surplus for Social Security	15	9.4	45	24.1
Individual investment accounts	4	2.5	4	2.1
Opponent supports higher taxes on Social Security income	27	16.9	2	1.1
denial: does not support higher taxes	7	4.4	0	0.0
Opponent raided Social Security trust fund	6	3.8	16	8.6
denial: did not raid trust fund	2	1.3	0	0.0
Opponent supports privatization	2	1.3	15	8.0
denial: does not support privatization	0	0.0	1	0.5
Opponent supports raising minimum age, reducing COLAs	0	0.0	3	1.6
Medicare				
Preserve, protect Medicare (non-specific)	57	95.0%	69	69.7%
opponent against	9	15.0	42	42.4
Health care				
Better health care (non-specific)	12	20.7%	20	13.9%
opponent against	3	5.2	5	3.5
Doctors & patients make decisions, not insurance companies	9	15.5	43	29.9
opponent against	0	0.0	8	5.6
Patients Bill of Rights	11	19.0	37	25.7
opponent against	0	0.0	8	5.6
HMOs accountable, HMO reform	2	3.4	35	24.3
opponent against	1	1.7	9	6.3
Access to insurance or coverage	7	12.1	4	2.8
opponent against	3	5.2	1	0.7
Increase funding for research	7	12.1	5	3.5
opponent against	0	0.0	1	0.7
Family Medical Leave Act	1	1.7	4	2.8
opponent against	1	1.7	1	0.7
Prescription drug benefits for senior citizens	0	0.0	5	3.5
opponent against	0	0.0	1	0.7
Home healthcare for seniors	3	5.2	4	2.8
opponent against	1	1.7	1	0.7
Access to mammograms	3	5.2	0	0.0
opponent against	4	6.9	0	0.0
Keep medical information private	1	1.7	1	0.7
opponent against	0	0.0	2	1.4
Enhance affordability	1	1.7	1	0.7
Opponent supports giving birth control to adolescents	2	3.4	0	0.0
Better prenatal care	1	1.7	0	0.0

Table 2.9. Advertising Positions Related to Crime, Taxes, and the Deficit, by Party

	Republicans		Democrats	
	# ads	% of ads	# ads	% of ads
Taxes				
Supports tax cuts (non-specific)	139	56.5%	49	45.4%
opponent opposes tax cuts	17	6.9	1	0.9
opponent supports tax increases	76	30.9	9	8.3
Repeal marriage penalty	24	9.8	8	7.4
opponent against	6	2.4	0	0.0
IRS reform	29	11.8	8	7.4
opponent against	3	1.2	0	0.0
Reform tax code	18	7.3	2	1.9
opponent against	3	1.2	0	0.0
Opponent wants tax cuts for the wealthy	0	0.0	32	29.6
denial: does not want tax cuts for wealthy	1	0.4	1	0.9
Targeted tax cut for tuition	5	2.0	18	16.7
opponent against	1	0.4	0	0.0
Hope scholarship	0	0.0	1	0.9
opponent against	0	0.0	1	0.9
Tax credit for children, seniors	7	2.8	8	7.4
opponent against	2	0.8	0	0.0
End inheritance tax	2	0.8	5	4.6
"Targeted" tax cuts	0	0.0	1	0.9
Abolish IRS	1	0.4	3	2.8
opponent against	1	0.4	0	0.0
State doesn't keep enough tax money, goes to DC	2	0.8	0	0.0
Taxpayer rights	0	0.0	1	0.9
Crime				
Reduce crime (non-specific)	28	36.8%	28	30.1%
opponent against	7	9.2	2	2.2
More police, support police	9	11.8	34	36.6
opponent against	0	0.0	9	9.7
Juvenile crime measures	11	14.5	13	14.0
opponent against	4	5.3	0	0.0
Longer or tougher sentences	10	13.2	16	17.2
opponent against	11	14.5	2	2.2
Tougher judges	1	1.3	0	0.0
More prisons	1	1.3	3	3.2
Tougher conditions for prisoners	3	3.9	2	2.2
Value victims	1	1.3	2	2.2
opponent against	3	3.9	0	0.0
Opponent supports free needles	2	2.6	0	0.0
Deficit, Surplus, Budget				
Balanced budget	46	63.9%	29	37.7%
opponent against	7	9.7	0	0.0
Reduce deficit or debt	12	16.7	5	6.5
Use surplus for Social Security	15	20.8	45	58.4
opponent against	1	1.4	11	14.3

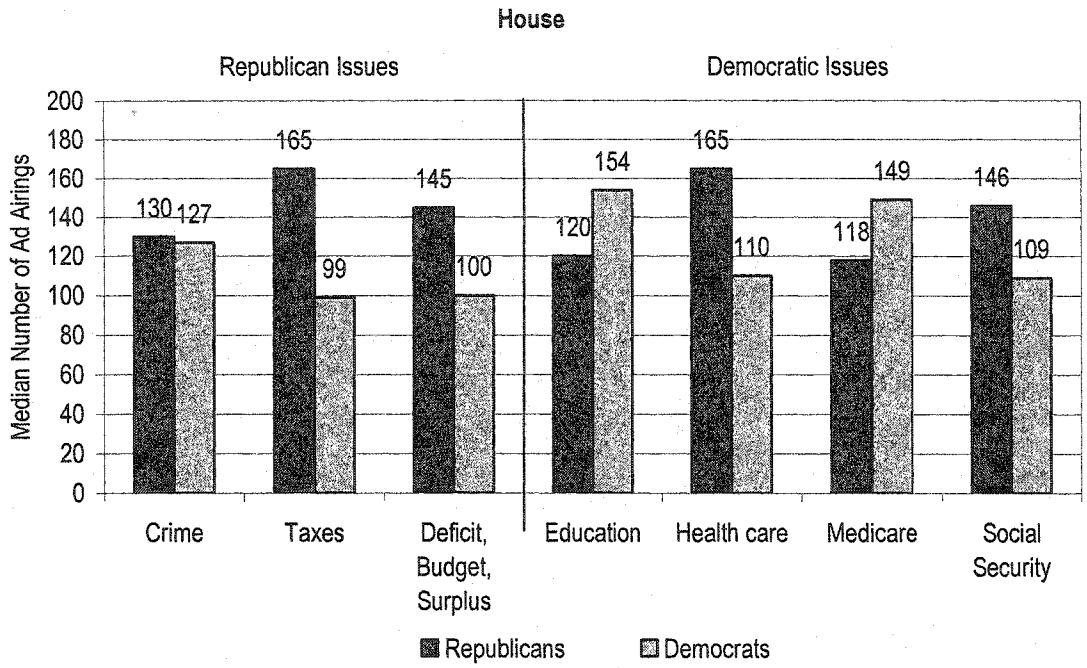
Table 2.10. Coincidence of Positions Related to "Democratic" Issues

	N of races	Advertising Aired by: Neither candidate	Democrat only	Republican only	Both candidates
Education					
Improve education	48	29.2%	31.3	22.9	16.7
Smaller classes	48	56.3%	29.2	6.3	8.3
Higher standards	48	81.3%	18.8	0.0	0.0
More teachers	48	75.0%	18.8	2.1	4.2
Safe schools	48	54.2%	20.8	18.8	6.3
New buildings, schools	48	77.1%	18.8	4.2	0.0
Internet, computers	48	87.5%	8.3	4.2	0.0
Teacher salaries	48	81.3%	2.1	16.7	0.0
Local control	48	77.1%	0.0	22.9	0.0
Money to classrooms, not bureaucrats	48	75.0%	0.0	22.9	2.1
Opponent would abolish DOE	48	81.3%	18.8	0.0	0.0
Social Security					
Protect, preserve Social Security	56	3.6%	19.6	19.6	57.1
Opponent supports higher SS taxes	56	67.9%	1.8	28.6	1.8
Opponent raided trust fund	56	75.0%	19.6	5.4	0.0
Opponent supports privatization	56	80.4%	17.9	1.8	0.0
Use budget surplus for SS	56	55.4%	30.4	10.7	3.6
Medicare					
Preserve, protect Medicare	18	0.0%	5.6	27.8	66.7
Health Care					
Better health care	22	45.5%	31.8	4.5	18.2
Doctors and patients make decisions	22	36.4%	36.4	13.6	13.6
HMOs accountable, HMO reform	22	50.0%	45.0	4.5	0.0
Patients' bill of rights	22	36.4%	31.8	22.7	9.1
Increase funding for research	22	68.2%	13.6	18.2	0.0

Table 2.11. Coincidence of Positions Related to "Republican" Issues

	N of races	Advertising Aired by: Neither candidate	Democrat only	Republican only	Both candidates
Taxes					
Supports tax cuts	37	8.1%	8.1	40.8	43.2
Opponent opposes tax cuts	37	78.4%	2.7	18.9	0.0
Opponent supports tax increases	37	37.8%	5.4	45.9	10.8
Repeal marriage penalty	37	70.3%	5.4	24.3	0.0
IRS reform	37	78.4%	5.4	13.5	2.7
Reform tax code	37	81.1%	5.4	13.5	0.0
Opponent wants tax cuts for wealthy	37	59.5%	40.5	0.0	0.0
Targeted tax cut for tuition	37	78.4%	18.9	2.7	0.0
Crime					
Reduce crime	21	23.8%	38.1	28.6	9.5
More police, support police	21	47.6%	33.3	14.3	4.8
Juvenile crime	21	66.7%	14.3	9.5	9.5
Longer and/or tougher sentences	21	61.9%	23.8	9.5	4.8
Deficit, Budget, Surplus					
Balanced budget	15	13.3%	20.0	46.7	20.0
Reduce deficit, debt	15	73.3%	6.7	13.3	6.7
Surplus for Social Security	15	33.3%	46.7	6.7	13.3

Figure 2.1. Median Advertising Volume on Most Prominent Issues, by Party



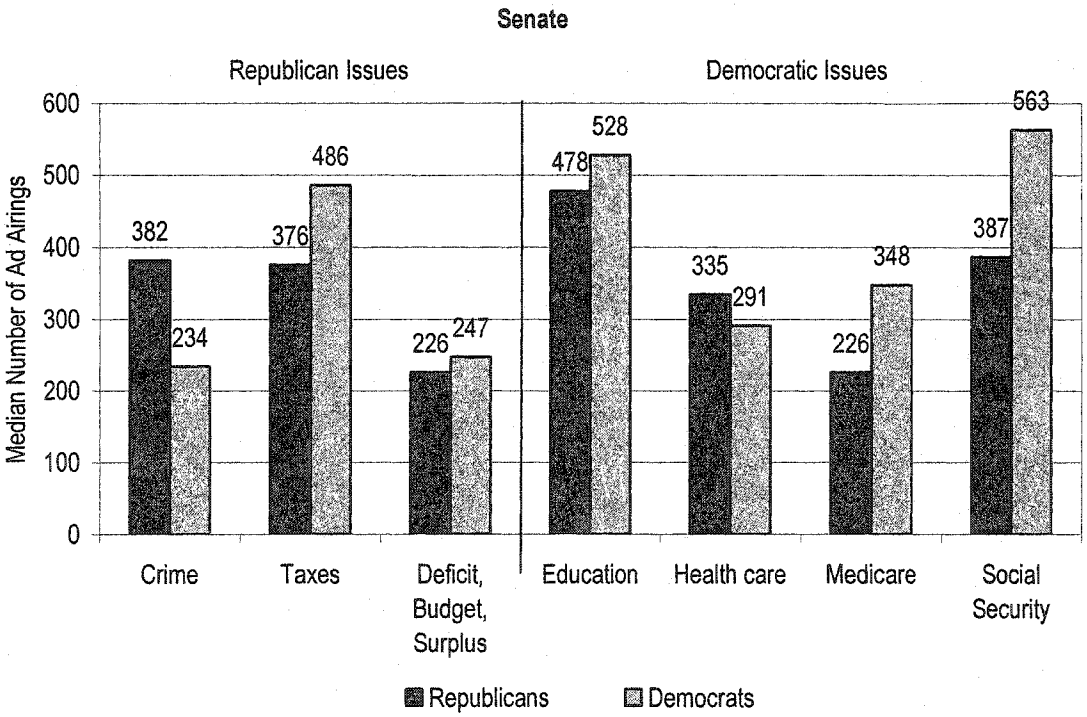
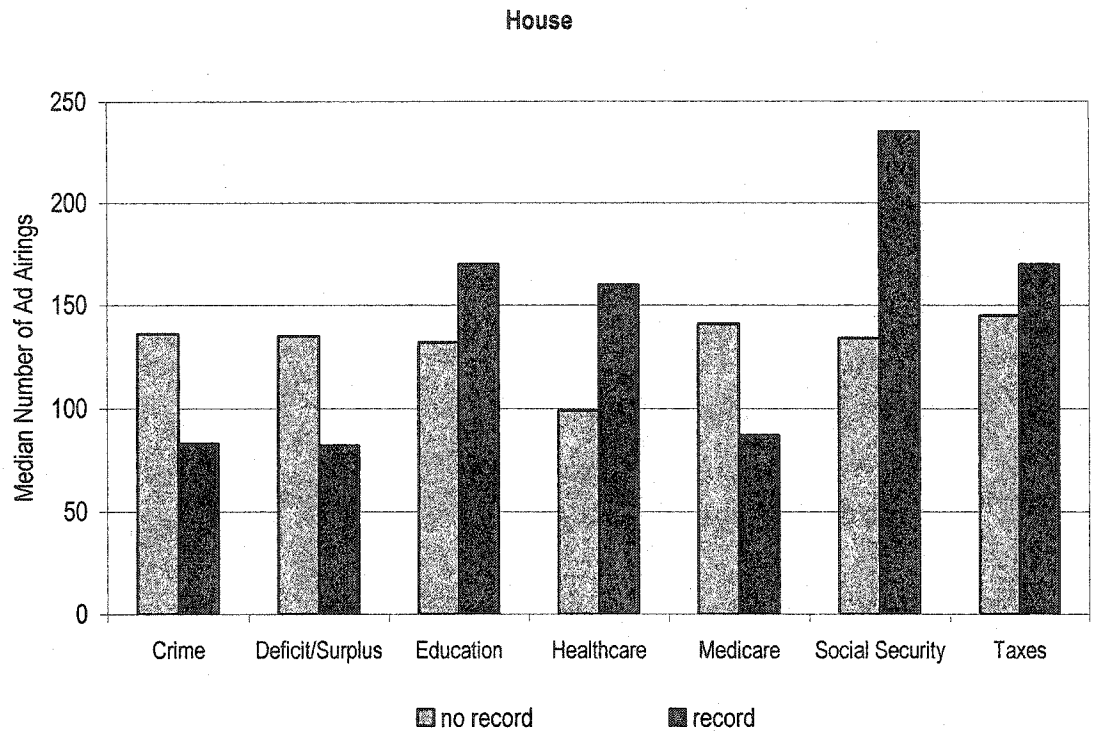


Figure 2.2. Median Advertising Volume on Most Prominent Issues, by Candidate Record



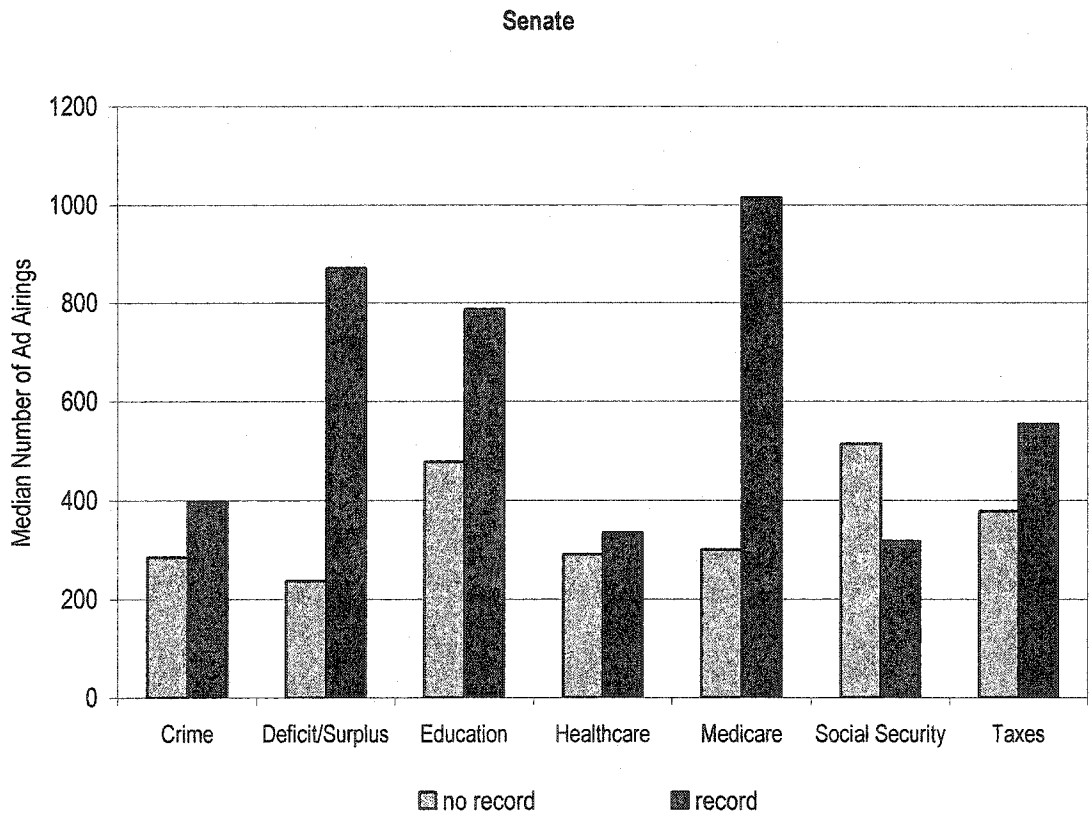
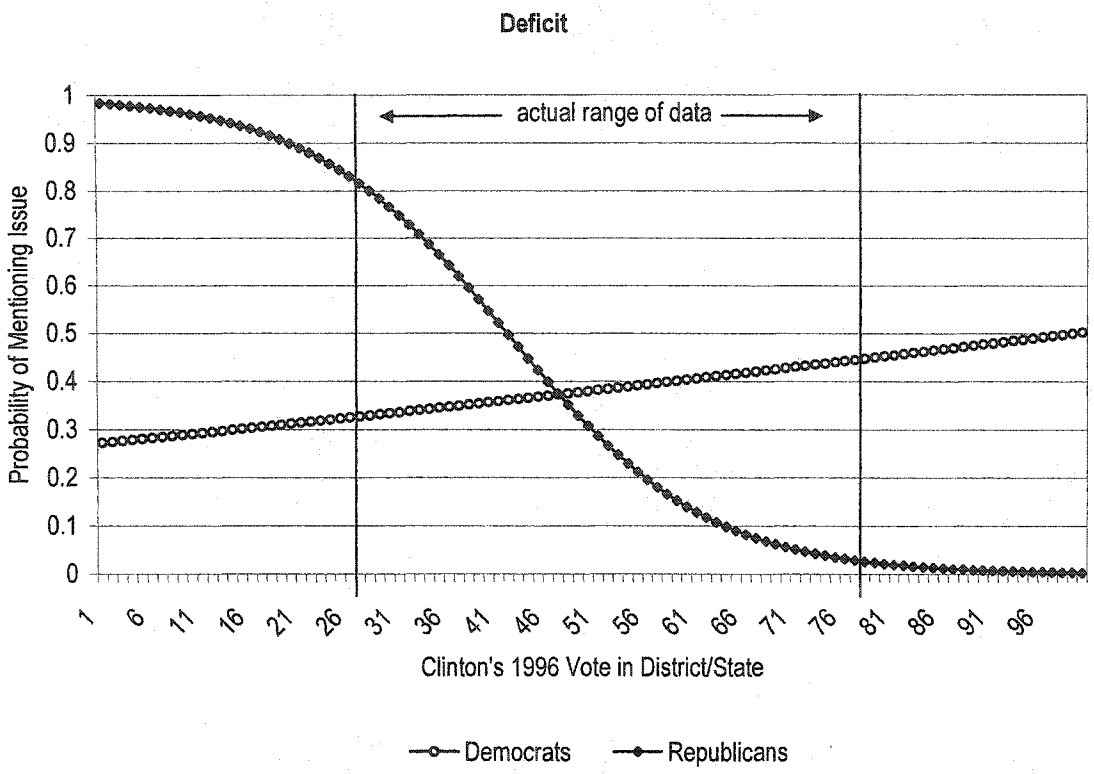
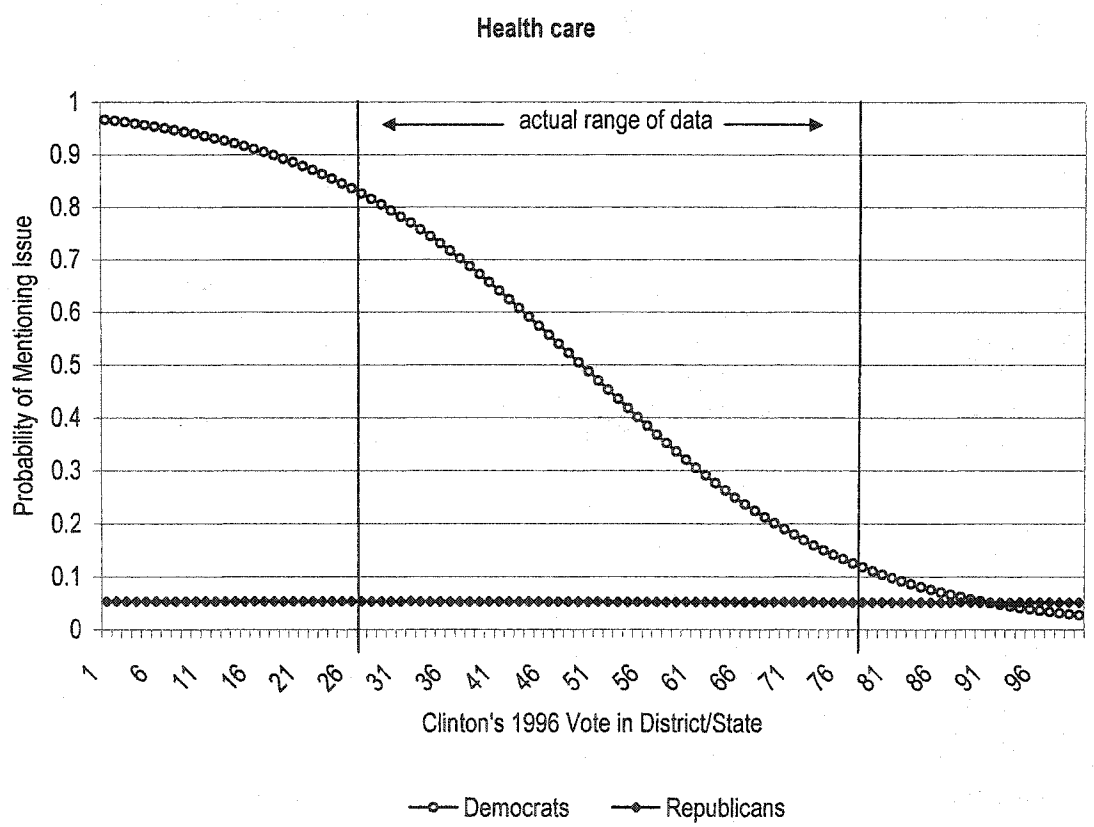


Figure 2.3. Interaction of Party and Constituency Preference





CHAPTER 3
What Lies Beneath: The 1998 California Governor's Race

I. Introduction

The 1998 California governor's race was, by most accounts, boring, and surprisingly so. California is a state where Ronald Reagan and Jerry Brown were both elected governor, where in 1990 Pete Wilson barely edged Dianne Feinstein for the position, and where in 1994 Wilson came storming back to win reelection despite the lowest job performance rating of any incumbent California governor in recent history. In 1998, however, Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis, the Democrat, verily waltzed to a victory over Republican Attorney General Dan Lungren. His winning margin was more than 1.6 million votes out of the 8 million cast.[1] In the first post-primary poll in June, Davis led Lungren by 12 points; the final two-party vote was 60-40. Davis was a moderate described by those who knew him as "reserved," "disciplined," "controlled," and "strait-laced," (*LA Weekly*, 16 October 1998). Some analysts described him as having a "campaign strategy of remaining absolutely still" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 15 October 1998). He inoculated himself against attacks like "soft on crime," asserting in one debate that "Singapore is a good starting point in terms of law and order" and earning endorsements from such organizations as the California Correctional Peace Officers Association. Lungren, by contrast, was "free-wheeling and gregarious" (*New Times Los Angeles*, 22 October 1998), a pro-life conservative who candidly expressed his views and engaged in broad disquisitions on morality and ethics.[2] Davis' handlers were seemingly always confident. During an election post-mortem (see Lubenow 1999), Lungren pollster Dick Dresner queried Davis

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[1] Indeed, the 1998 election was an all-around massacre for Republicans in California. They lost the U.S. Senate race, five State Assembly seats, and a State Senate seat as well. The incoming chair of the California Republican Party referred to the election as "getting our butts kicked" (*Los Angeles Times*, 9 November 1998).

[2] These differences in personality notwithstanding, Davis and Lungren were strikingly similar in other ways. Both were fiftyish white Catholic men with considerable experience in state office. Davis was chief of staff for Governor Jerry Brown, a member of the State Assembly, State Controller, and then Lieutenant Governor. Lungren was a member of Congress for ten years, and then Attorney General.

campaign manager Garry South: "Was there ever any point during the campaign when you thought we might win?" South replied, "No."

It would appear that the campaign mattered little. Davis had a healthy lead throughout the summer and fall. The outcome was never in doubt. This election thus looks like yet another illustration of the "minimal effects" of campaigns. In this chapter, I demonstrate empirically that the humdrum 1998 California governor's campaign was actually the setting of several interesting campaign effects—notably, rallying Republicans behind Lungren and priming certain issues. That this campaign, a "least likely" case by any definition, manifests such effects suggests that in close races campaigns could have even more impact.

This chapter proceeds by first outlining the design and data employed. The central feature of these data is their temporal component: I am able to track public opinion as well as candidate advertising on a day-by-day basis for the two months leading up to the election. This dynamic approach provides a unique window into campaign effects as they occurred in "real time" and traces such effects to specific changes in the information environment that advertising provides. I then demonstrate that trends in campaign advertising affected public opinion in several ways. First, while substantial numbers of Republicans defected from Lungren and supported Davis, this fraction of defectors declined as the campaign progressed. I demonstrate that this decline arose in response to Lungren's advertising, which thus served to persuade potentially wayward Republicans that Lungren was a worthy candidate. Second, advertising affected the considerations that voters drew on when arriving at a decision, priming the issue of gun control in particular. There is also evidence that abortion became more salient as well, though here the evidence is more indirect. Throughout this analysis, I allow these effects to vary across voters based on important individual-level factors, such as political awareness. The analysis thus attends not only to how campaigns affect voters but also to which voters are affected.

On the whole, this California election demonstrates that campaigns can have a congeries of effects. Campaign advertising was the prime mover for these effects, proving its importance as a

medium for communication between candidates and voters. Its importance may even be heightened in a rather humdrum race where the news media admittedly paid relatively little attention. I conclude this chapter by discussing the broader significance of these findings.

II. A Research Design for Campaign Effects

Individual-level data suitable for a nuanced, dynamic understanding of campaign effects are hard to come by. Purely cross-sectional surveys are not ordered over time; the best one can hope to do with the typical NES study is to capture change from the pre- to post-election waves. (State-level cross-sectional surveys can capture spatial variation—as Carsey (2000) demonstrates—but not temporal variation.) Panel surveys do incorporate a temporal component and allow one to track individual trajectories, but usually have too few waves to capture what happens during a campaign and when it happens. Only if one knows in advance the periods to cover, *e.g.*, a debate and a specific time thereafter, can the panel be structured to measure event-induced change. However, a typical panel's "granularity" is too coarse. One can interview respondents monthly and still miss weeks of campaign events and activity in between. Moreover, attempts to correct this through additional waves could artificially "educate" voters.[3]

The "rolling cross-section" addresses many of these concerns (see Johnston *et al.* 1992; Johnston and Brady 2002). It is composed of small daily cross-sections, typically with fifty to one hundred respondents in each. Because it relies on daily interviews, its granularity is fine enough to capture the impact, whether immediate or delayed, of campaign events and activity. Rolling cross-sections make the date of interview a random event and thus allow one to identify more precisely temporal effects. In this chapter, I rely on a rolling cross-section commissioned by the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and conducted during the 1998

[3] Given enough waves, the panel does allow one to separate instability from unreliability. Bartels (1993) shows that measurement error in indicators such as media exposure attenuates their impact on political preferences and thus understates the potential effect of the campaign. Extant empirical studies using panels include, *inter alia*, Lazarsfeld *et al.* (1948), Berelson *et al.* (1954), Patterson (1980), Markus (1982), Bartels (1993), Finkel (1993), Regenwetter, Falmagne, and Grofman (1999).

California governor's race. It sampled respondents in the San Francisco-Bay Area media market from September 22, 1998 to November 2, 1998.[4] The total sample size was 2,902.[5]

Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar (1991) argue that the "information production" undertaken by campaigns must be studied alongside voter responses to that information. The rolling cross-section's sensitivity enables the researcher to exploit similarly nuanced data about the campaign's information environment. I will focus primarily on candidate television advertising, "arguably the most important forum of discourse in contemporary American elections" (Ansolabehere, Behr, and Iyengar 1991: 116). Candidates rely on advertising to communicate directly with voters, thereby bypassing intermediaries like newspapers and television news, both of which candidates often regard with considerable suspicion. As Bill Clinton said during the 1992 campaign: "Anyone who lets himself be interpreted to the American people through these intermediaries alone is nuts" (quoted in Kendall 1993: 251). Interestingly, Davis himself similarly recognized the importance of advertising long before he ever ran for governor. As then-Governor Jerry Brown's chief of staff in the late 1970s, he said:

> I remember meeting New Hampshire governor Hugh Gallen's campaign manager. He told me the key to his campaign was television. That's like telling me the key to life is the sun. We've long since accepted that. Television is the glue that binds California together. (quoted in Blumenthal 1980: 168)

Still, advertising is not the only component of the information environment during a campaign. News coverage on television and in newspapers also furnishes information about events such as debates, campaign appearances, and news conferences, and about the candidates' experience, positions, and proposals. Some of this coverage may center on candidate actions, such as a speech, and some of it may center on a new poll or the reporter's own investigation of a particular topic.

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[4] The Bay Area media market includes San Francisco and all communities to the south, up to and including San Jose (*e.g.*, Palo Alto). On the east side of the Bay, it includes Berkeley and Oakland, as well as other communities to the north (Richmond), south (San Leandro, Hayward, and Fremont), and east (Orinda, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek). North of San Francisco, it includes communities in Marin County, such as Sausalito and San Rafael, as well as Napa and Sonoma Counties. It does not extend as far north as Sacramento.
[5] The Annenberg Survey also re-interviewed a subset of respondents (N=1,090) after the election. Johnston and Brady (2002) present an estimator for rolling cross-sections that draws on both the pre- and post-election

Candidates exert some but far from complete influence on news coverage. Some scholars thus argue that the information environment is the product of both politicians and journalists (see Semetko *et al.* 1991; Brandenburg 2001).

But in 1998, California newspapers and television news paid little attention to the gubernatorial race. Kaplan and Hale (1999) report that, of the 7,668 hours of local news coverage that aired in five of California's largest media markets from 10 August 1998 to 2 November 1998, less than half of one percent was devoted to the gubernatorial race (34 out of 7,668 hours).[6] Some California television executives even admitted to ignoring this campaign and campaigns generally. In 1998, William Rosendahl of Century Cable in Los Angeles said, "In most democracies, the principal television channels give extensive coverage to the campaign for the two weeks before the election. Here, local television has abandoned that responsibility" (*California Journal*, July 1998, 9). A news producer at a Los Angeles station echoed this sentiment: "Anyone with access to a helicopter can point a camera at a car chase. It takes some thought to cover politics in an interesting way. We have decided that politics isn't interesting, and it's become a self-fulfilling prophecy" (*California Journal*, July 1998, 10).

Collett and Gordon (1999) report that newspaper coverage also declined during this race. The number of articles in the four largest California newspapers—the *Sacramento Bee*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Diego Union-Tribune*—fell by 37 percent compared to the 1994 gubernatorial race. Moreover, looking specifically at the *San Francisco Chronicle*—the leading newspaper for those in the Annenberg sample—nearly half of campaign coverage came not from news stories but from editorial-page opinionating.[7]

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interviews. In Appendix C I present this estimator and discuss its utility for the analysis here. In general, I prefer to rely on a simpler estimation strategy that employs the full pre-election cross-section.

[6] This is apparently something of a pattern: Ansolabehere *et al.* (1991: 113) found that during the 1988 California Senate race, each of the Los Angeles television stations aired less than five stories about the campaign. Local television news coverage of the 1996 presidential race was also quite modest (Just *et al.* 1996).

[7] This kind of impoverished coverage in local newspapers may help explain why Mondak (1995) found that a newspaper strike in Pittsburgh during the 1992 campaign did not render residents less informed. Hale's (1987) account of newspaper coverage from the 1984 Texas Senate race also emphasizes its spottiness. Furthermore, the quotes from some newspaper reporters in Clarke and Evans (1983) indicate a certain malaise—*e.g.*, "The

Certainly these data do not bode well for the educational potential of the nightly news or the newspaper. Advertising should thus be crucial, especially in "boring" races largely ignored by the broadcast and print media.[8] In this chapter, I therefore rely on candidate television advertising to characterize the information available to voters as the fall campaign progressed. In Appendix B I discuss the results when the analysis is replicated with newspaper advertising.[9] To measure advertising volume and content, I again draw on data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group.[10]

[insert Figure 3.1 about here]

For the 1998 California governor's race, the CMAG data span the period from September 7 to November 3. Because the Annenberg Survey's sample is drawn from the Bay Area, I focus only on television advertising in the San Francisco media market. During this period, Davis and Lungren aired a total of 3,609 advertisements in this market.[11] Davis aired the majority of these (1,847 vs.

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nature of elections invites sloppy, uncaring journalism," and "I would rather have a tornado. It's over in a day, and you can get a prize for covering it" (112).

[8] There were also two candidate debates during the fall (September 23 and October 15). These debates, as well as two earlier ones (July 30 and August 18), were mostly ignored by the public: less than 15 percent of the Annenberg sample reported watching any one of these debates. None of these debates contained any real surprises, at least as judged by journalists and political *cognoscenti*. Unsurprisingly, then, few dynamics in opinion appear linked to these debates, especially when compared to the notable shifts documented by Johnston *et al.* (1992) in the 1988 Canadian election.

[9] The analysis does not draw upon local television news, which is obviously difficult to come by. Although most people identify television as the medium from which they learn during for presidential campaigns, newspapers play a larger role in state-level campaigns (Mayer 1993: 597), making this omission less consequential.

[10] CMAG is obviously not the only potential provider of advertising data. Just *et al.* (1996) and West *et al.* (1995) rely on a combination of local television station logs and data obtained from the candidate's advertising firms to track advertising in Los Angeles, Boston, Winston-Salem, NC, and Moorhead, MN, during the 1996 presidential campaign. Likewise, Shaw (1999b) relies on information obtained from the candidates' campaign operation. The advantage of the CMAG data is that they are centralized and comprehensive. They cover the vast majority of races at all levels—national, state, congressional—and include not just candidate but also third-party advertising.

[11] Davis aired eleven different ads. Lungren aired twelve. (See Prior (2001) and Goldstein and Freedman (2002b) for a discussion of why it is important to study the actual ads aired in a given market rather than the ones produced overall.) A few further details about the CMAG data are in order here. Initially, CMAG's data from October and November had only vague labels for the advertisements, making it nearly impossible to determine which advertisements they were. After further labor on CMAG's part, they were able to provide information that enabled me to identify almost all of these advertisements. In the San Francisco market, some 186 specific incidences of advertisements had no identification at all—not even an indication of whether they were Davis' or Lungren's—and had to be excluded from the dataset. Three of Lungren's advertisements could not be identified and coded for their content (in San Francisco they aired a total of 375 times). One of Davis' advertisements, which aired 209 times in this market and in which former Speaker of the State Assembly Antonio Villaraigosa endorsed Davis, was in Spanish and so CMAG did not record its content. However, given that relatively few voters watch Spanish-language television, my inability to code its content is not critical. All in all, the vast majority of advertisements (83%) could be identified and coded for their issue content.

1,762), though Lungren was not far behind, reflecting, perhaps, his hope that he could woo voters in the less reflexively liberal parts of the Bay Area, such as some of the suburban communities.[12] Figure 3.1 displays the number of advertisements aired daily by Davis, Lungren, and the two combined. This figure shows first that there is considerable variation over time. Television advertising increased through September to an initial peak in the beginning of October; thereafter, it ebbed somewhat but rose again during the final two weeks as the candidates undertook a last push. In the San Francisco market Davis' ads were for the most part more numerous than Lungren's, but the campaign discourse was by and large evenly contested. Finally, the fourth line on this graph—which captures the percent of Annenberg respondents who, when asked "Have you seen or heard any ads on TV, radio, or in newspapers for the governor's race?" reported seeing "a great deal" or "some" ads—demonstrates that advertising was noticed: this percent increased substantially during the campaign, from approximately 40 percent to over 70 percent.[13] Treating the day of interview as the unit of analysis, the correlation between the raw number of ads aired by both candidates and the percent of people who report having seen them is r=.53. The correlation between the *cumulated* number of ads—which is not reported in Figure 1 but peaks at over 3600 ads at the end of the campaign—and ad exposure is much higher, r=.98. This is initial evidence that advertising reached the viewing public, even though the outcome of the race was not really in question.

To investigate campaign effects, I combined the public opinion and advertising data so that advertising content in essence becomes another variable in the survey. The advantages of this merged dataset are several. First, it is ordered by time, so that one can observe campaign effects as they occurred dynamically. Second, there is precise information available about the information environment surrounding the individual; indeed, one can characterize the actual advertising that was

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[12] CMAG's system also picks up television advertisements aired on behalf of the candidates by third parties. However, in this race their data show very few such advertisements, and none in the San Francisco market in particular. There were advertisements of this sort (*e.g.*, by the Sierra Club) in that year's Senate race between incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer and her opponent Matt Fong.

[13] Because rolling cross-sections typically have small daily samples, it is necessary to smooth over-time trends and thereby separate true attitude change from sampling fluctuation. In all graphs, the survey data were

aired on and around the day on which the respondent was interviewed. Finally, one can look for campaign effects while both controlling for and conditioning on important individual-level factors, such as partisanship and political attentiveness.

III. The Direct Effects of Advertising on Vote Intention

When considering the topic of campaign effects, two of the most salient questions are: what kinds of effects, and for whom? Arguably, the strongest kind of campaign effect is the most direct: campaign communication leads to a shift in vote intention. In this particular race, there were such shifts, though they were apparent only among certain partisan subgroups.

[insert Figure 3.2 about here]

Figure 3.2 presents vote intention during the six weeks prior to the election—expressed as the percentage of respondents who intended to vote for Davis—broken down by three partisan groups: Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.[14] Democrats in this sample are, not surprisingly, strongly behind Davis; over 90 percent of Democrats express an intention to vote for him and this fluctuates very little during the campaign. Independents display more a bit more movement, as the percentage of Davis supporters varies between roughly 70 and 80 percent. From about the middle of October on, there is a largely monotonic decrease in the Davis vote among this group, and as such Lungren does better among Independents in the closing weeks of the race. Republicans display perhaps the most notable movement. Initially, as many as 35 percent of Republicans "defect" and intend to vote for Davis. But as the campaign goes on, this percentage declines to 22 percent by Election Day. Republicans thus grow more and more favorable to Lungren, as one might expect, and begin to return home. The picture that emerges is thus one of partisan polarization, with Republicans and Democrats "separating" from each other, and the "activation" of Republicans (a familiar effect; see, *e.g.*, Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1948).

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aggregated by day of interview and then smoothed using kernel smoothing (the ksm function in Stata 7) with a bandwidth=.3.

The question that follows is, did campaign advertising have anything to do with these trends in vote intention, and for which voters in particular? To test for such an effect at the individual level, one needs measures both of advertising volume and of relevant voter attitudes.

Measuring Advertising Volume

How should one measure advertising volume? This gets at the more fundamental question: what is the functional form of the relationship between campaign communication and opinion? Unfortunately, there is no strong theory to guide coding and to suggest the shape and duration of effects that may result from certain kinds of campaign information and events.[15] One possible measure is the simple number of ads aired on the day the respondent was interviewed. This measure assumes that the effect of advertising is essentially instantaneous and ephemeral: voters are affected by what they see today but that is gone by tomorrow. Or one could lag this measure by some period of time—one day, two days, *etc.*—if one believes advertising's effect is not instantaneous (though still ephemeral).

A problem with such a measure, however, is that ephemerality is an undesirable assumption. It seems likely that advertising's impact would persist for some period of time. If one assumes that this impact is essentially endless, then a second possible measure is the cumulative number of ads—calculated such that the value of the measure on any given day is the sum of that day plus all previous days. Fan (1988) argues that, while individual media messages have mostly minimal effects, a series of messages can have a substantial cumulative effect. Campaign advertising is just such a series of messages: a small number of themes repeated over and over for the weeks and months leading up to an election.

However, there is also reason to suspect that advertising's impact is not endless. A barrage of advertising in September may not be as potent one month later, especially when compared to

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[14] I count so-called "leaners" as partisans. In these data, they are no less partisan in their voting behavior than "weak" partisans—confirming the findings in Keith *et al.* (1992).

more recent advertising. This intuition points the way to a measure of advertising volume that is cumulative but also takes into account the likely decay of information. The measure is cumulative in that the amount of advertising on any given day is a function of that day's advertising plus the advertising that has come before. The measure takes into account decay by weighting previous coverage by a factor less than 1, such that over time the value of old information dwindles relative to the value of new information. The actual formula employed is:

$$(\text{Cumulative Advertising})_t = \text{Advertising}_t + [(\text{Cumulative Advertising})_{t-1} \times 0.7]$$

The weighting factor of 0.7 means that the value of information decays to essentially 0 after about two weeks—*i.e.*, information with a value of 1 will have a value of .01 thirteen days later.[16] This measure will thus register large shocks to the information environment, such as a glut of advertising on a particular day, as well as capture the history of information flow to that point. I use this measure, lagged one day, as the primary measure in the analyses below, though I will discuss the results of alternative measures in footnotes.

Who Should Advertising Affect?

The second question is, for whom should advertising matter? Figure 2 suggests a story of Republican activation, and thus we might expect campaign advertising to affect Republicans more than Independents or especially Democrats, who were vastly and steadily supportive of Davis. Should we also expect further differences *among* Republicans in their sensitivity to advertising? One possibility is that those most prone to activation would be those most notably affected by campaign advertising. This is to say, campaign advertising should have its greatest impact among Republicans with stronger partisan proclivities. In essence, these Republicans have more prior attitudes to activate and would naturally respond "more" quickly to campaign advertising. Another possibility is the precise opposite: those with weaker partisanship should respond most strongly, since they are

[15] Exceptions include Brady and Johnston (1987) and Shaw (1999a). See Henry and Gordon (2001) for an analysis of the "functional form" of issue attention.

likely less certain in their vote intention and are precisely the kind of potential defector that campaign advertising might convince to remain loyal. In either case, the crucial test will be the interaction between the volume of advertising and voters' party identification.

A second possible conditioning factor is what Zaller (1992) refers to as political awareness. He argues that the effects of media communication are highest among those who are moderately aware. Those who are relatively "unaware" are not likely to "receive" media communications because they fail to tune in. Those who are highly aware are likely to receive communications, but because of their storehouse of preexisting opinions, unlikely to be persuaded. Though Zaller does not test his model with data such as these—daily measures of advertising and opinion—his theory suggests that the largest effect of ads will occur for those in the middle of the awareness scale.

Zaller's theory gels in part with other research that emphasizes the importance of exposure to advertising. Obviously, although it is not always difficult to encounter advertising since it occurs amidst other, more popular television programming, voters do vary in their exposure to ads.[17] Freedman and Goldstein (1999) argue that the effects of advertising emerge only when one accounts for people's television habits. This research essentially specifies a monotonic effect for exposure—the effectiveness of ads increases linearly with awareness—whereas Zaller's model predicts a curvilinear effect. Again, the crucial test of either theory is to interaction advertising volume with political awareness.

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[16] This specific weight value is essentially arbitrary. The results reported below are robust to different plausible values.

[17] A variety of sources discuss the inadvertent reception of political information. Berelson *et al.* (1954: 244) found that one need not explicitly tune into campaign news to hear it: "people who pay *general*, nonpolitical attention to newspapers, radio, and magazines tend to see and hear more *political* material, along with everything else." Atkin and Heald (1976: 227) write: "It appears unlikely that selective seeking of advertising messages could fully account for the relationships, since reception of broadcast commercials is often due to chance opportunity or to entertainment seeking." Fiorina (1990: 338) makes a similar point: "Citizens often receive information in the course of doing other things." Baum's (2002) "incidental attention" model is founded on this insight: "political information might thus become a free bonus, or *incidental by-product*, of paying attention to entertainment-oriented information" (96). Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995: 52) write, "the 'audience' for political advertising is primarily inadvertent—people who happen to be watching their preferred television programs." A similar process could easily have taken place in the 1998 California campaign, given that, for example, Gray Davis aired ads in the San Francisco media market during such programs as "Montel Williams" and "Xena: Warrior Princess."

It is also important examine the role of party identification and political awareness in conjunction. The effectiveness of advertising might depend simultaneously on one's partisanship and awareness. This is to say, one might observe heterogeneity within levels of awareness that depend on partisanship and also variation within levels of partisanship that depend on awareness. The test of this hypothesis is a three-way interaction between advertising, partisanship, and identification.

Results

To test for the effect of advertising, I estimated simple logit models of vote intention—coded 1 for a Davis vote and 0 for a Lungren vote—that included the volume of Davis' and Lungren's advertising (measured as discussed above), two well-known individual-level covariates, party identification and self-reported ideology on the liberal-conservative spectrum, and a variety of interaction terms. The measurement of partisanship and ideology is straightforward: I employed the traditional seven-point scale for partisanship, where higher values indicate a Democratic identification, and a five-point scale for ideology, where higher values indicate liberalism. (See Appendix D for more information about variable coding.) To measure political awareness, I computed an index that combines interest in politics, self-reported exposure to candidate advertising, frequency of reading the newspaper, and recollection of the gubernatorial candidates' names. I will refer to this index, *pace* Zaller (1992), as "political awareness."[18]

The model's interaction terms include two-way interactions between awareness, partisanship, and advertising, as well as a three-way interaction involving all three. I also interact ideology with

[18] The index is a factor score from an exploratory factor analysis. This analysis turned up a single dimension on which each of the indicators loaded strongly (model χ^2=3.74; p=.154). Unfortunately, though Price and Zaller (1993) argue that measures of political information best capture awareness, the Annenberg survey's information measures are problematic. The survey includes no measures of general political information. It does have measures of information about the gubernatorial candidates, such as which office they hold and their positions on various issues. However, with the exception of name recall, these questions were asked of only a random one-fifth of the sample for the first 10 days of the survey, producing a great deal of missing data in a period where there were arguably some key campaign dynamics. Thus, I rely on the combination of indicators described above. The index does correlate nicely with education and with knowledge about the candidates.

awareness, to capture the possibility that "sophisticated" voters rely more heavily on ideological considerations (*e.g.*, Sniderman, Griffin, and Glaser 1990; Luskin and Globetti 2002). I estimated models including Davis' and Lungren's advertising separately, as well as a single combined model including both candidates' advertising.

[insert Table 3.1 about here]

Table 3.1 presents the results of these models. Model 1 displays, first, that partisanship and ideology both affect vote intention, and furthermore that the effect of ideology is stronger at higher levels of political awareness (hence the positive and statistically significant interaction between ideology and awareness). This model also includes the set of interactions involving Davis' advertising. Davis' advertising has no direct of main effect (b=.002; se=.003), but does interact significantly with awareness (b=-.006; s.e.=002). Moreover, the three-way interaction term is also significant. Model 2 includes measure of Lungren's advertising. The effect of both partisanship and ideology are similar here, as is that of the ideology-awareness interaction. Lungren's advertising has a mild direct effect on vote choice, unlike Davis', but like Davis' it does interact significantly with the combination of partisanship and awareness.[19]

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[19] A few comments about robustness are appropriate here. First, the results of these models are robust in more elaborate specifications including additional variables that influence gubernatorial vote choice, including evaluations of the national economy (Chubb 1988; *cf.* Stein 1990) and presidential approval (Simon 1989; Simon, Ostrom, and Marra 1991; Carsey and Wright 1998). (Atkeson and Partin (1995) argue that state economic conditions matter more than national conditions, while King (2001) argues that the popularity of the incumbent governor influences support for the candidate of that person's party. Unfortunately, the Annenberg Survey contains no questions about state economic conditions or evaluations of then-Governor Pete Wilson.) Second, I estimated these models using various measures of advertising volume, including the raw number of ads and a cumulated measure of ads that incorporated no weight value and thus no decay of information. I also experimented with various kinds of lags, including a one-day lag, the sum of the previous four days' advertising, and the sum of the previous week's advertising. In most of these specifications, the results were robust. The specifications with the raw number of ads generally produced more comparable results than the specifications with unweighted, cumulated ads. Finally, another possible specification is to replace the measures of advertising with a generic indicator of time, such as the day of interview. This specification implies that a process such as Republican activation may have no real relationship with advertising *per se* and instead reflects some other, perhaps inexorable, process whereby partisans return home as Election Day approaches. I estimated such a model and found, again, that the major dynamic was a reduction in the probability of a Davis vote among Republicans as the campaign wore on. However, this specification suffers from a key shortcoming: it presupposes a linear functional form, whereas the trend in vote intention among Republicans was not in fact linear (see Figure 3.2). Moreover, this specification lacks a clearly specified mechanism for opinion change. It is difficult to imagine that a process like activation occurs except as a response to the information provided by the campaign. Campaign advertising constitutes such information and thus provides a mechanism for opinion change, one whose predicted dynamics better accord with observed trends.

Model 3 combines these two sets of interaction terms into a single model—a desirable specification in that voters were experiencing both candidates' advertising simultaneously during the campaign though an undesirable on in that it introduces a substantial amount of collinearity in the equation.[20] By and large, this model generates similar results to Models 1 and 2. The key exception is that the signs on both three-way interaction terms switch. Ultimately, however, it is difficult to extrapolate the substantive implications given the complexities of interpreting these multiple interaction terms.

To do so, I generated a predicted probability of a Davis vote for each level of partisanship (from strong Republican to strong Democrat) and for three levels of information, which I will call "low," "medium," and "high."[21] I then calculated how those predicted probabilities would change over the course of the campaign, given the levels of advertising by both Davis and Lungren. This simulation thus takes advantage of the temporal nature of the Annenberg and CMAG data to generate insight into the dynamics of vote intention over the course of the campaign.

An initial finding is that advertising exerted little impact among Democrats, regardless of how strong their partisanship or how high their awareness. The strong effects of both party identification and ideology mean that the predicted probability of a Davis vote among Democrats is above. 90, and this changes little during the campaign despite the ebbs and flows of advertising. Independents evince a similar pattern. However, there are dynamics to observe among Republicans, which I present in Figures 3.3a, 3.3b, and 3.3c.

The quantity presented in these figures is the relative change in the probability of a Davis vote, which I calculated vis-à-vis the predicted probability on the first day of the survey (September 22). I present separate graphs for each level of awareness. Within each graph there is a separate line for leaning Republicans, weak Republicans, and strong Republicans. These graphs thus allow one to

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[20] The collinearity does not derive from a strong relationship between the level of Davis' and Lungren's advertising. The correlation between those two variables from September 22 to November 2 is only .22. However, the large number of interaction terms does introduce collinearity.

[21] These levels were obtained by setting the value of awareness to the 25rd percentile, the average, and the 75th percentile, respectively. Ideology is set to its midpoint.

track how advertising shifted the probability of a Davis vote over time, and whether these shifts varied by partisanship and awareness.

[insert Figures 3.3a, 3.3b, and 3.3c about here]

In all three graphs, a general pattern is apparent. The probability of a Davis vote drops significantly at the beginning of the survey and then tends to edge upward through the rest of the campaign. This initial drop corresponds to a rise in Lungren's advertising during the period from roughly September 23 to October 1 (see Figure 3.1) and also corresponds to the actual drop in partisan defection among Republicans displayed in Figure 3.2. Thus the model would predict that this barrage had a positive effect from Lungren's point of view: solidifying his base. That these gains ebb somewhat as the campaign goes on reflects the fact that Lungren could not sustain this level of advertising and that Davis himself also began advertising in earnest, particularly in the last two weeks of the race.

Despite this general pattern, there are some interesting variations among different levels of awareness. Figure 3.3a shows that Republicans low in awareness had more labile preferences than did those of middling or high awareness. The initial decline in the probability of a Davis vote is largest among this group. However, this group proves fickle, as the probability shifts back in Davis favor at the campaign's end, when Davis' advertising began to outpace Lungren's. These fluctuations are sensible in that respondents low in awareness are less likely to have strong preferences about the candidates—because of their relative inattention to politics—and so would be predicted to respond most strongly to messages in advertising. By contrast, as Figures 3.3b shows, Republicans of "medium" awareness are predicted to respond less strongly to advertising. These Republicans follow the same pattern as that in Figure 3.3a—and initial decline in the probability of a Davis vote followed by an increase—but the magnitude of these shifts is smaller. The dynamic among Republicans high in awareness is somewhat different. As Figure 3.3c shows, the probability of a Davis vote declines among these Republicans in a much more steady fashion. In particular, at the campaign's end, this decline continues, whereas among Republicans at lower levels of awareness, the decline reverses.

Compared to these differences across levels of awareness, differences by levels of partisanship are more muted. Strong and weak Republicans generally track each other quite closely. "Leaners" are somewhat different in that they are less affected by trends in advertising. Among highly aware Republicans, there is some evidence that at the campaign's end, Republicans with stronger partisanship were more strongly swayed towards Lungren.

Putting these findings together generates a sensible story. The probability of a Davis vote among all Republicans, regardless of partisanship and awareness, declined initially when Lungren began to advertise in earnest. However, only among those Republicans highly aware and more strongly partisans was there a trajectory consistently in Lungren's favor, as the probability of a Davis vote declines virtually through the campaign, particularly at the end. These Republicans are arguably those most attitudinally predisposed to activation—those who already possess a partisan identification and who are politically engaged enough both to "receive" the message in Lungren's advertising and to take that message to heart.

The conditioning effect of political awareness apparent in these data does not conform to Zaller's (1992) theory, which postulates a nonlinear relationship between awareness and opinion change, or to other research that postulates a positive linear relationship between awareness and the effect of campaign communication. There were notable effects at all levels of awareness, but the substantive meaning of those effects varied—*i.e.*, a move both toward and away from Lungren among those of low and medium awareness, and a move consistently toward Lungren among those of high awareness. One reason why Zaller's theory does not hold here is that his analysis on electoral politics is primarily focus on partisan defection—what leads partisans to defect from their candidate—and not on partisan activation, which is precisely the opposite process. The role of political awareness in conditioning the activation process may be somewhat different.

III. Advertising Themes and Issue Priming

Thus far, the volume of candidate advertising has proven to help explain a key dynamic in vote intention during this race. But this begs a question: does the content of that advertising also matter? In other words, did the particular themes in advertising prime certain issues, making them more salient to voters?

The Content of Campaign Advertising

One key function of campaigns, and this 1998 California race in particular, was to introduce or re-introduce specific issues to the electorate (see, *e.g.*, Johnston *et al.* 1992; Alvarez 1998; Carsey 2000). A cursory perusal of the candidates' advertising reveals their commitment to issue-oriented debate. Of the twenty-one separate codable ads aired by the candidates in the San Francisco market, only one had no issue content whatsoever (a Lungren ad that focused on his leadership style and "character").[22] Table 3.2 presents a breakdown of the specific issue themes in this market.

[insert Table 3.2 about here]

The most prominent theme in Davis' advertising was abortion. Over three-fourths (77.2%) of his advertising mentioned this issue in some fashion. The abortion issue's prominence derived mainly from Lungren's personal opposition to the procedure except in cases of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's life. Lungren's commitment to even these exceptions was questionable: as a member of Congress, he cosponsored the Human Life Amendment, which would have banned abortion under any circumstance. Davis did not hesitate to dwell on these facts, knowing that Lungren was out-of-step with the majority of Californians. In one commercial, which featured him speaking directly to the camera, he said:

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[22] West (1994: 1058) finds that during the 1992 California Senate races, the candidates also tended to emphasize issues in their advertising. This results also appear to confirm Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995: 38), who write that, "the candidate's television advertisements are often more substantive and serious than news reports about the campaign" (see also Joslyn 1980).

> I'm Gray Davis. One of the most important differences in this election is about a woman's right to choose. I'm pro-choice. My opponent is not. In Congress he sponsored legislation to outlaw abortion even in cases of rape and incest. I think a decision this personal is best made by a woman in concert with her doctor and her own conscience. And I trust a woman to make that decision. As governor, I'll fight to make sure women have that choice.

Instead of avoiding the issue altogether, Lungren sought to inoculate himself against his own unpopular position. Twelve percent of his advertising discussed abortion. He ran an ad referring to his religious background (a "lifelong Catholic") and stating his position quite clearly: "I believe that abortion is wrong, but I understand the need to make exceptions in the case of rape, incest, and when the mother's life is in danger." He also attacked Davis for his alleged opposition to parental consent laws and support of taxpayer-funded abortions—a point he would repeat in debates and elsewhere. Lungren's wife Bobby appeared in one commercial, contending that while both she and her husband were "against abortion," they did believe in exceptions for rape, incest, and the life of the mother. Moreover, she argued, "the fact is no governor can change the law regarding a woman's right to choose because that's a federal law." Abortion is thus an issue where the candidates both had very different positions and devoted significant resources to discussing them.

Another issue where Davis criticized Lungren was gun control. Just under a third (31.6%) of Davis' ads in this market discussed gun control, while none of Lungren's advertising mentioned it. Davis' primary line of attack was that Lungren, who as Attorney General was responsible for enforcing a state ban on assault weapons, had been derelict. In a televised debate in September, Davis said, Davis charged that Lungren had not enforced the ban adequately: "You are continuing to put illegal assault weapons on the street. I think you should be ashamed of yourself for that." Lungren retorted: "As you know, since March of 1991, I have been defending the assault weapons bill." Later in the campaign, Davis made similar charges: "He has been more than AWOL; he has aided and abetted the enemy by putting 16,000 weapons on the street after the legal deadline," referring to Lungren's alleged failure to enforce the 1992 deadline for registering assault weapons

(*Los Angeles Times*, 21 October 1998).[23] Lungren retorted: "Unless he apprehended a criminal last night, Gray Davis has done nothing to remove weapons from the streets." Davis' attacks appeared to have some traction: in its post-election wrap-up, the *San Francisco Chronicle* referred to Lungren's "hesitant approach to gun control" (4 November 1998).

Three different ads mentioned Davis' position on this issue. The first was an ad that contrasted the candidates on education, abortion, offshore oil drilling, and finally assault weapons: "As Attorney General, Lungren refused to enforce the ban on assault weapons. Gray Davis will strongly enforce the ban." A second ad contained essentially this same statement. The third featured Davis facing the camera and offering various pledges, including "[I'll] keep assault weapons off the street." Because Lungren never talked about this issue in his advertising, Davis could portray both his and Lungren's positions as he saw fit.

The remaining most prominent issues, education, crime, and gun control, featured largely similar rhetoric from the candidates. Both Davis and Lungren devoted significant attention to education—which was voters' "most important" issue—but expressed, for example, fairly benign and boilerplate sentiments about education. Two examples:

> Our schools used to be the best in the nation. Now they're holding us back. We need to get California moving again. That begins in the classroom. I believe in a high expectation approach. I'll raise standards and hold students, teachers, and parents accountable. I'll end social promotion and have mandatory summer school for kids who don't pass. I'll reward teachers when their students excel. Finally, I'll audit the lottery to make sure the money is really being spent on education.
>
> I'm working to make class size reduction permanent...Accountability and local control are the building blocks of any meaningful school reform. It's not so much that our kids are failing in school. It's that our schools are failing our kids. That's why we need to give parents a greater role.

[23] Lungren had also been stung in March of 1998 when two courts rejected his office's argument that a popular high-powered rifle was legal to own under the 1989 law—an outcome that seemed to give Davis' accusation some credence. Moreover, Lungren had initially opposed a 1998 bill, eventually vetoed by then-Governor Pete Wilson in late September 1998, which was designed to address deficiencies in the original ban.

It is difficult to tell from these advertisements whose is whose, illustrating how comparable the candidates' messages were.[24] (For the record, the first ad is from Davis and the second from Lungren.) Similarly, both candidates opposed the death penalty and took positions that could be defined as "tough on crime." One of Davis' advertisements said: "A hundred thousand California cops support Gray Davis for Governor. Make no mistake: Gray Davis supports the death penalty and three strikes. He'll enforce both as governor." One of Lungren's advertisements said: "As Attorney General, Dan Lungren enforced the death penalty. He championed three strikes, Megan's Law, and the 10-20-Life...Endorsed by thousands of police chiefs, sheriffs, and cops on the beat. Dan Lungren, a governor we can trust." As with education, there is little apparent difference between the two candidates.

Formulating a Test for Priming Effects

If this advertising made certain issues salient to voters necessitates, one should observe an increasing effect of an issue on vote intention as advertising on that issue increased. That is, the crucial test for priming effects is the *interaction* between an issue position and advertising on that issue.

The Annenberg Survey data included questions about a number of different issues: abortion, government regulation of HMOs, school vouchers, a ban on assault weapons, farming on environmentally endangered land, lawsuits against tobacco companies, Indian casinos, and immigration quotas. Unfortunately, many of these issues proved largely irrelevant to the 1998 campaign because Davis and Lungren either devoted little attention to them or did not take appreciably different positions on them. These include vouchers, HMO regulation, farming on environmentally endangered land, tobacco suits, Indian casinos, and immigration quotas.[25] But the

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[24] Davis and Lungren did take opposite and traditionally partisan stances on vouchers—with Davis pro and Lungren con—but, as Table 2 illustrates—devoted very little attention to this particular issue in their advertising.

[25] Environment issues like pollution enforcement and a ban on offshore oil drilling in particular did come up, but not that often. Davis ran one full commercial on the environment and mentioned in passing his opposition to offshore drilling in several others. Lungren's television advertising never mentioned this issue at all. Unfortunately, the Annenberg's question on this subject also introduces the confounding consideration of

Annenberg's questions about abortion and the ban on assault weapons do provide an opportunity to examine dynamics on these issues, both of which figured prominently in this race, as discussed above.

[insert Figure 3.4 about here]

Figure 3.4 tracks advertising on these issues over time.[26] On both issues, Davis' advertising predominates. He is the only candidate to discuss the assault weapons ban and gun control. His advertising on abortion outpaces Lungren's throughout the campaign. By and large, though, at least one of these candidates if not both aired advertising about abortion throughout the campaign. Only for a brief period in the middle of October was abortion "off the air." By contrast, Davis' advertising on gun control did not begin in earnest until the end of October (the 22nd). Prior to October 22, only 92 ads aired; from October 22 until Election Day, 492 ads were aired. Initially, Davis talked about both gun control and abortion in a single ad, but for the last five days of the campaign, gun control received additional emphasis.

Ultimately then, while both gun control and abortion proved notable themes in the campaign, their temporal dynamics were quite different. Abortion was a "chronic" part of this campaign from its outset. In particular, because it was a central theme in advertising even before the survey went into the field, abortion's effects on opinion might prove muted. Zaller (1996) emphasizes the need for variation in communication if one wants to observe its effects. In some sense, there was not a great deal of over-time variation in advertising about abortion. But this is not

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farming, making it a less-than-clear-cut measure. Davis mentioned in one ad that he would "fight tobacco companies," but that was it. Neither candidate devoted much attention to HMO reform or health care. Indian casinos were relevant because of several propositions on the ballot in 1998, but they were not a factor in the gubernatorial election. Finally, Davis and Lungren did not discuss immigration, though Lungren did try to portray Davis as out-of-step on this issue by noting that Davis did not support Proposition 187, a ballot initiative passed by California voters in 1994 that included several new and somewhat punitive measures against illegal immigrants. This suggests that Lungren was himself more conservative on this issue than Davis. Nevertheless, neither candidate spent much time debating immigration.

[26] I code an advertisement as "about" an issue if it mentions that issue in some fashion. Obviously, coding only whether an advertisement mentions an issue fails to capture how much emphasis that issue was given. But since such judgments are difficult and subjective, I thought it best to stick with a simple dichotomy. Both Carsey (2000) and Kahn and Kenney (2001) employ similar sorts of dichotomous indicators at a more aggregate level—capturing whether an issue was prominent in a campaign rather than trying to quantify any degree of prominence.

true of gun control, which came to the fore only at the end. One initial expectation is that gun control's impact should be more notable because of this rapid shift.

Priming for Whom

While past research (*e.g.*, Johnston *et al.* 1992; Carsey 2000) shows that voters can draw more effectively on their own issue positions when those issues are prominent in the campaign's discourse, this may not prove true for all voters. There is evidence that processes like priming are moderated by certain individual-level attributes.

The most prominent moderator in the extant literature is political awareness. This concept has been operationalized in a variety of ways—as the ability to recall information from news broadcasts (Iyengar and Kinder 1987), as media exposure and whether one talks about politics (Mendelsohn 1996; Gidengil *et al.* 2002), as whether one knows the candidates' positions on the issues (Jenkins 2002), and generalized information about politics (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Krosnick and Brannon 1993). By and large, these studies show that priming is more prevalent among those who are more informed, exposed, involved, and so forth (but see Krosnick and Kinder 1990). This finding could arise from several different factors. First, those who are more exposed to communication would naturally be more susceptible to its effects. Second, as Miller and Krosnick (2000) argue, priming occurs most significantly when citizens possess the expertise to understand the information they encounter.

Thus the empirical challenge is to capture not only whether priming occurs, but also for whom it occurs. The analysis below focuses on the conditioning effects of respondents' beliefs about the candidate's positions on the issues of abortion and gun control. This sort of information is particularly crucial in that it is often considered a prerequisite to "issue voting," *i.e.*, drawing upon one's own issue positions when making a vote decision (Campbell *et al.* 1960, ch. 8).[27] One would expect the effect of these issues on the vote to be strongest among those with information about the

candidates' positions. More importantly, priming should also be stronger among the politically aware, who are both more likely to be exposed to campaign messages in the media (see Price and Zaller 1993) and more likely to possess the cognitive expertise to incorporate these messages into their decision-making. Respondents were asked whether Davis and Lungren would favor "making it harder for women to obtain abortions" and "banning assault weapons." Responses were coded into one of four categories: Lungren favors and Davis opposes; Davis opposes and Lungren favors; both or neither favors; and do not know their positions.[28]

[insert Table 3.3 about here]

Table 3.3 presents a distribution of responses for both issues. The largest proportion of respondents (59.6%) believes that Lungren supports limits on abortion, while Davis opposes such limits. Only 7.4% hold the arguably mistaken view that Davis is more supportive of these limits. About a fifth of the sample (20.5%) could not identify the position of either candidate. On average, respondents knew less about the candidates' views on gun control, as indicated by the larger percentage of "don't knows" (26.7%). The largest group of respondents (47.2%) believes that Davis supports the assault weapons ban whereas Lungren does not—a belief that would no doubt please Davis but chagrin Lungren.[29]

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[27] See Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox (1994) and Howell and Sims (1993) for evidence of issue voting in gubernatorial elections.

[28] The Annenberg Survey measured knowledge of the candidates' positions in two separate ways that were administered to a random half-sample of respondents. The first half of the sample was asked the following (using abortion as the example): "Next, I am going to read you some current issues. For each one, please tell me if you think Dan Lungren, the Republican candidate, favors it, if Gray Davis, the Democratic candidate, favors it, if both favor it, or if neither favors it: *making it harder for women to obtain abortions*." This measure is easily codable into the version presented in Table 3. The other half of the sample was asked separate questions for Lungren and for Davis after they were asked their own positions on these issues. The series read like this: "As far as you know, does Dan Lungren, the Republican candidate, favor or oppose *making it harder for women to obtain abortions*? As far as you know, does Gray Davis, the Democratic candidate, favor or oppose making it harder for women to obtain abortions?" To code responses to these questions into the four-category measure in Table 3, I assumed that if a respondent did not know a candidate's position, then that was functionally equivalent to believing that candidate opposed the statement in question. For example, if a respondent said that Davis was for the assault weapons ban but didn't know Lungren's position, then I considered this the same as if the respondent had said Lungren opposed the ban. Though in theory this is not ideal, the consequences are minor, because only a small percentage of the sample (about 10 percent) identified one candidate's position and not the other's.

[29] An obvious question is whether the campaign induced learning, such that more and more people could identify the candidates' positions on these issues. By and large this was not the case. The proportion of people who said Davis was for gun control and Lungren against increased from only about 40 percent to 50 percent;

Results

To test for campaign priming, I estimated a model of vote intention that included the respondent's position on an issue, the amount of advertising on that issue (measured as before, *i.e.*, as a weighted and cumulated sum), and the interaction between those two, which is the crucial test of priming.[30] Party identification and ideology serve as controls. To test for the conditioning effect of political information, I estimated separate models for different levels of political information.

[insert Tables 3.4a and 3.4b about here]

Table 3.4a presents models testing whether campaign advertising primed abortion. A first observation is that the effect of abortion does vary widely depending on what respondents believed about the two candidates' positions. Among those who saw Lungren as pro-life, a more liberal position on abortion (that is, opposition to the statement "It should be harder for women to obtain an abortion") is associated with a Davis vote intention (b=.75; s.e.=.21). By contrast, among those who mistakenly saw Davis as pro-life, the effect is, as it should be, the opposite: a negatively signed coefficient (b=-.63; s.e.=.37). Among those who didn't know the candidates' positions, the effect is insignificant. Without any knowledge of where the candidates stand, one's own position is obviously of little use. It is perhaps curious that among those who think that both or neither candidate favors abortion, it is still significantly related to vote intention (b=.86; s.e.=.36). This could reflect a partisan stereotype. For example, a pro-choice voter who didn't see a difference between Davis and

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similarly, the proportion who identified Davis as pro-choice and Lungren as pro-life hovered just above 60 percent for the first few weeks of the survey, decreased slightly (to 55 percent), and then edged back up to 60 percent. Furthermore, there is no relationship between the volume of advertising on these issues and knowledge about the candidates' positions (though self-reported advertising exposure is related to knowledge, even when controlling for other key variables like interest in politics, news media exposure, and strength of partisanship). Thus there are few concerns that the priming effects discussed below are actually learning effects (see Jenkins 2002).

[30] The survey randomized respondents into two conditions: half the sample were asked their issue positions after they were asked if they knew the candidates' positions, and half were asked their issues positions before. There were not any notable differences in the distribution of respondents' issue positions across the two conditions, so I pooled them into one variable. Attitudes towards these two issues were quite stable over the course of the campaign.

Lungren on this issue might still vote for Davis because the Democratic Party is traditionally known to protect abortion rights.

The interaction between one's position on an issue and the amount of advertising on that issue is the test of priming. In these models, there is little evidence of any priming of abortion. Only among this latter group—those who see no difference between the candidates—is the interaction term significant, and even then the sign on this interaction is strangely negative, suggesting that the effect of this issue on vote intention actually declined somewhat as abortion advertising increased.

Table 3.4b displays a similar set of models that examine whether gun control was primed. Again, respondents' beliefs about the candidates' positions are crucial: only among the group who believes Davis supports the ban is this issue associated with vote intention (b=.35; s.e.=.15). Moreover, only among this group is there any evidence of priming. The interaction term is statistically significant and in the anticipated direction: the effect of this issue on vote intention increases as advertising on this issue increases.

[insert Figure 3.5 about here]

To facilitate interpretation of this interaction, Figure 3.5 illustrates how the effect of attitudes towards assault weapons varied over the course of the campaign with the volume of advertising. Drawing on the model in Table 3.4b—specifically, that among who those who believed Davis supported the assault weapons ban—I plot the effect of attitudes towards the assault weapons ban on the probability of a Davis vote as one moves from somewhat liberal to very liberal on the scale (which essentially entails moving from the mean position to one standard deviation above the mean). I compute this change in predicted probability for each day of the survey.[31] The trendline reflects the interaction of respondent's position on this issue and the daily mean of cumulated assault weapons advertising.

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[31] In so doing, I essentially held all other components of the model constant. Thus, the trendlines in Figure 3.5 should be thought of with the usual *ceteris paribus* caveats attached. To generate the predicted probability, I set ideology and party identification at their midpoints (*i.e.*, moderates and independents) and attitudes towards abortion at the moderately pro-choice position (at 3 on the 4-point scale).

Figure 3.5 demonstrates that the effect of this issue is predicted to increase in response to advertising. Early in the campaign, this shift in one's attitude towards the assault weapons ban was associated with a .06 shift in the probability of a Davis vote. This increased slightly in early October as Davis aired a few ads that mentioned gun control. However, it is not until the end of the campaign, when Davis launched a barrage of ads discussing gun control (see Figure 3.4), that opinions on this issue became particularly potent. By Election Day, this shift in one's attitude about gun control is associated with a .15 shift in vote intention—more than double its effect in September. Campaign-induced priming made this issue a much more significant factor in respondents' calculation—though only among those respondents who believed Davis supported the ban and Lungren opposed it.[32]

Abortion Priming Redux

That campaign advertising did not prime abortion seems odd since it figured so prominently in advertising. One possibility, however, is that priming did take place, but before the Annenberg Survey went into the field. This seems all the more possible Davis began advertising on this issue in early September (see Figure 3.4) and indeed the vast majority of his total advertising at that point

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[32] Again, the results with different measures of advertising are very similar to those reported in Tables 3.4a and 3.4b. Moreover, the results are generally robust in more elaborate model specifications employing economic evaluations and presidential approval. The only difference is that the significance of the interaction for gun control among those who believe Davis supports the assault weapons ban is slightly weaker ($p=.14$). I also estimated models substituting the volume of advertising on crime instead of advertising on assault weapons. It could be that advertising about these general issue areas would prime attitudes about specific policies within these areas. However, I found no evidence of that. I also found no evidence of abortion priming using separate measures of Davis' and Lungren's advertising on the subject.

Iyengar and Kinder (1987, ch. 10) and Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) find that partisanship also conditions priming effects, in that Democrats were primed on Democratic issues and Republicans on Republican issues. However, in this sample, there were no differences between Republicans and Democrats in terms of priming on gun control, arguably an issue that Democrats "own." Theoretical expectations about an abortion—an issue conflictual enough that issue ownership arguably does not apply—are less clear. Miller and Krosnick (2000) argue that priming is also conditioned by trust in the source of the information. I attempted to test this proposition by first constructing an index measuring how respondents' evaluations of how Davis and Lungren were campaigning—*i.e.*, whether they were conducting a campaign that was "negative," "responsible," providing voters "useful information," and "encouraging people to vote and participate in politics." This served as a measure of how much respondents "trusted" the candidates. However, there was no evidence that this measure conditioned campaign priming, and in particular, priming induced by advertising.

dealt with abortion. Thus it seems possible that priming could have taken place earlier, before the Annenberg Survey began on September 22.

Another data source, the Field Poll, provides an opportunity to test for this possibility. The Field Poll is a statewide survey that has been conducted several times annually in California since 1956. There were three such polls during the 1998 general election campaign, one in August, one in early October, and another in late October. These three polls do not systematically cover the entire campaign, as does the Annenberg Survey, and thus do not permit any truly dynamic analysis. Nevertheless, as "snapshots" of the campaign, they can at least provide a reasonable, if indirect, test of campaign effects. Moreover, the August poll constitutes an early window into the campaign that is unavailable in the Annenberg Survey. To test for priming, I estimated a simple model in each survey drawing on respondents' view of abortion, party identificaion, and ideology.[33]

[insert Table 3.5 about here]

Table 3.5 presents this series of logit models. As expected, party identification and ideology have a consistent impact on vote intention. More notable, however, is that the effect of abortion, initially quite small and statistically insignificant, grows substantially by the second poll and retains its significance in the third poll as well. In August, it appears that voters were unable link their views on abortion with their vote intention. However, by the second poll in late September, abortion is associated with vote choice, suggesting that Davis' early advertising on this issue successfully primed the issue in voters' minds. This effect is also evident and of similar magnitude in the October poll, suggesting that priming had a durable impact on abortion's salience. Ultimately, though the Field Polls do not allow a day-by-day account of the impact of abortion, they do indicate, albeit more indirectly, the campaign's influence.

[33] One further issue about the Field Poll samples deserves mention. The second and third surveys actually sampled only self-identified registered voters, while the first sampled the entire adult population. Thus, I limited the first survey's sample to registered voters as well.

Priming did take place in the 1998 California governor's race, but it varied significantly depending on the dynamics of each issue and on the characteristics of the voters themselves, particularly their beliefs about the candidates' positions. These findings suggest the campaign priming is a complex and nuanced phenomenon. Whereas previous research (*e.g.*, Carsey 2000) has determined that issues become salient when they are important to a given race, these findings demonstrate that salience can very *within* a given race, depending on the flow of information emanating from the candidates and the media. Though the salience of abortion evinces no notable dynamics in the Annenberg Survey, the Field Polls suggest that the campaign did indeed prime abortion at an earlier point in the campaign. By contrast, gun control came to the fore late in the campaign courtesy of a barrage of television advertising. The information environment changed dramatically at that point. Voters who believed Davis supported the assault weapons ban registered this change and their attitudes on this issue became stronger predictors of their vote. Assault weapons' impact on vote choice was thus contingent, coming to the fore after a significant shift in candidate advertising. Dynamic stories about priming will likely be all the more eventful when such shifts occur.

VII. Conclusion

This chapter takes as a case study an uninspiring campaign, one that on its face seems to offer little to scholars of campaign effects. But though the election's outcome was never really in doubt, the campaign did influence voters. Republican voters tended to become more likely to vote for Lungren, a process of partisan "activation" that was tied to the volume of television advertising in particular. Furthermore, attention to both abortion and gun control made voters' own positions on those issues more potent predictors of vote choice. In particular, there is evidence that Davis' advertising on gun control primed that issue.

But one might still reasonably ask: if the 1998 California gubernatorial campaign did not affect the election's outcome in any real way, why does any of this matter? For one, not all elections are as uncompetitive as this one. In a tight race, dynamics involving processes like partisan activation and priming can change the outcome. Second, these findings, particularly those regarding priming, have consequences for how we interpret elections. Typically, scholars and pundits look back at an election and try to say what it was "about," which generally means, "What was on voters' minds when they went to the ballot box?" Any interpretation depends on the factors that ultimately motivate vote choice. The priming that took place during the 1998 California campaign demonstrates that this election in part reflected voters' concerns about Dan Lungren's positions on prominent issues, such as abortion and gun control.

Table 3.1. The Effects of Candidate Advertising on Vote Intention

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Party Identification	.86***	.75***	.80***
	(.11)	(.20)	(.21)
Ideology	.64***	.65***	.64***
	(.09)	(.09)	(.09)
Ideology × Awareness	.36**	.36***	.38***
	(.10)	(.10)	(.10)
Davis Ad Volume	.002	–	.003
	(.003)		(.003)
Party ID × Davis Ad Volume	-.0002	–	-.0003
	(.001)		(.001)
Awareness × Davis Ad Volume	-.006**	–	-.009**
	(.002)		(.003)
Party ID × Awareness × Davis Ad Volume	-.001***	–	.003**
	(.0004)		(.001)
Lungren Ad Volume	–	-.007#	-.007#
		(.005)	(.005)
Party ID × Lungren Ad Volume	–	.001	.001
		(.002)	(.002)
Awareness × Lungren Ad Volume	–	-.005	.003
		(.004)	(.005)
Party ID × Awareness × Lungren Ad Volume	–	.001***	-.001#
		(.0004)	(.001)
Awareness	-.60	-.68	-1.16
	(.37)	(.54)	(.90)
Constant	-3.52	-2.59	-2.80
Log-likelihood	1512.9	1516.7	1508.0
χ^2	1259.2***	1255.4***	1264.2***
Percent correctly predicted	87.0	87.3	87.1
Lungren vote	72.2	72.8	72.9
Davis vote	92.2	92.4	92.1
Pseudo-R^2	.60	.60	.60
N	2408	2408	2408

*Table entries are logit coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1 for a Davis vote and 0 for a Lungren vote. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; #p<.10 (one-tailed).*

Table 3.2. Issue Themes in Candidate Advertising in the San Francisco Media Market

Issue	Davis		Lungren	
	N of ad airings mentioning issue	% of ad airings mentioning issue	N of ad airings mentioning issue	% of ad airings mentioning issue
Abortion	1425	77.2%	212	12.0%
Education	1025	55.5%	658	37.3%
Gun Control	584	31.6%	0	0.0%
Crime	425	23.0%	727	41.3%
Death Penalty	340	18.4%	356	20.2%
Vouchers	93	5.0%	28	1.6%
Total Ads	**1847**		**1762**	

Table 3.3. Beliefs about the Candidates' Positions on Abortion and Gun Control

	"Making it harder for women to obtain abortions"	"Banning assault weapons"
Lungren favors & Davis opposes	59.6%	8.4%
Davis favors & Lungren opposes	7.4	47.2
Both or neither favor	12.5	17.7
Don't know	20.5	26.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 3.4a. The Priming Effects of Campaign Advertising: Abortion

	All	Beliefs about Candidates' Position (who supports limits on abortion)			
		Lungren	Davis	both or neither	don't know
Abortion Position	.41**	.75***	-.63*	.86**	-.10
	(.14)	(.21)	(.37)	(.36)	(.30)
Abortion Advertising	.001	.0004	-.002	.02*	-.005
	(.004)	(.006)	(.01)	(.01)	(.009)
Position × Advertising	.0001	-.0001	.002	-.006*	.002
	(.001)	(.002)	(.004)	(.004)	(.003)
Gun Control Position	.28***	.29***	.08	.65***	-.008
	(.07)	(.10)	(.19)	(.19)	(.15)
Party Identification	.82***	.84***	.69***	.89***	.85***
	(.04)	(.05)	(.12)	(.11)	(.10)
Liberalism	.40***	.50***	-.01	.67**	.14
	(.09)	(.13)	(.22)	(.25)	(.18)
Constant	-4.97	-6.18	-.16	-8.76	-2.02
Log-likelihood	1404.0	749.9	151.1	171.9	254.0
χ^2	1231.0	888.7	65.2	191.9	143.6
Pseudo-R^2	.61	.67	.44	.68	.51
N	2316	1526	175	288	327

*Table entries are logit coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1 for a Davis vote and 0 for a Lungren vote. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; #p<.10 (one-tailed).*

Table 3.4b. The Priming Effects of Campaign Advertising: Gun Control

	All	Beliefs about Candidates' Position (who supports assault weapons ban)			
		Lungren	Davis	both or neither	don't know
Gun Control Position	.23**	-.24	.35**	.13	.22
	(.09)	(.30)	(.15)	(.19)	(.19)
Gun Control Advertising	-.002	.003	-.01#	-.006	.01
	(.004)	(.014)	(.007)	(.009)	(.009)
Position × Advertising	.001	-.001	.003*	.002	-.002
	(.001)	(.004)	(.002)	(.002)	(.003)
Abortion Position	.43***	.55***	.53***	.30**	.30**
	(.06)	(.18)	(.10)	(.13)	(.12)
Party Identification	.82***	.73***	.92***	.72***	.81***
	(.04)	(.11)	(.07)	(.08)	(.08)
Liberalism	.40***	.36#	.35**	.57**	.26#
	(.09)	(.24)	(.14)	(.19)	(.17)
Constant	-4.75	-3.29	-5.40	-4.24	-4.09
Log-likelihood	1406.8	160.3	558.2	301.0	352.0
χ^2	1231.3	93.5	732.3	205.9	218.5
Pseudo-R^2	.61	.52	.69	.55	.52
N	2316	202	1207	421	486

*Table entries are logit coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1 for a Davis vote and 0 for a Lungren vote. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; #p<.10 (one-tailed).*

Table 3.5. Models of Gubernatorial Vote in the Field Poll

	Field Poll		
	August 18-24	September 27-October 5	October 22-November 1
View of Abortion	.14	.88***	.72***
	(.24)	(.21)	(.17)
Democrat dummy	1.35*	1.46***	1.32***
	(.70)	(.37)	(.35)
Republican dummy	-2.13***	-1.15**	-1.55***
	(.66)	(.37)	(.35)
Liberalism	.54***	.82***	.59***
	(.15)	(.11)	(.09)
Constant	-.67	-3.96	-2.38
Log-likelihood	-83.9	-182.3	-246.1
χ^2	182.3***	432.9***	482.4***
Pseudo-R^2	.52	.54	.50
N	261	577	713

*Table entries are logit coefficients with estimated standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1 for a Davis vote and 0 for a Lungren vote. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; #p<.10 (one-tailed). Source: Field Polls 9805, 9806, 9807.*

Figure 3.1. Amount of and Exposure to Television Advertising

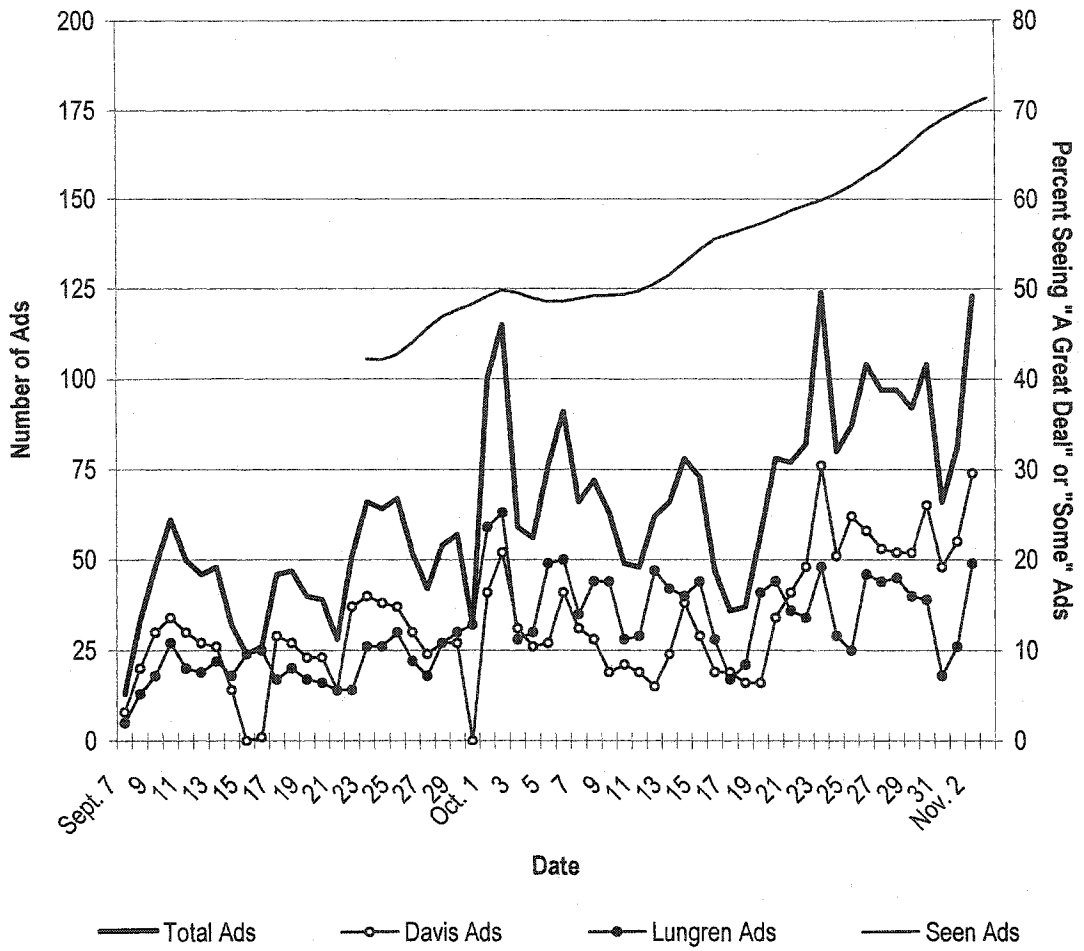


Figure 3.2. Vote Intention, by Party Identification

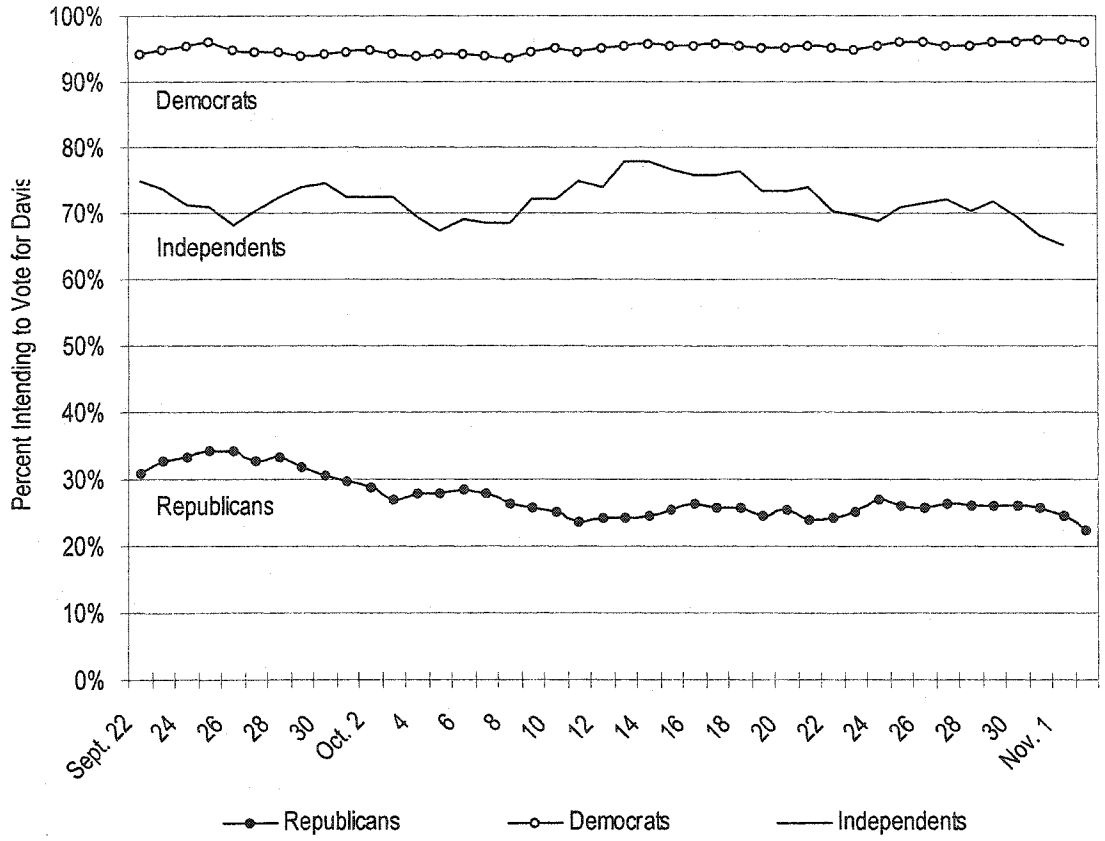


Figure 3.3a. Changes in Predicted Probability of Davis Vote, Low Awareness

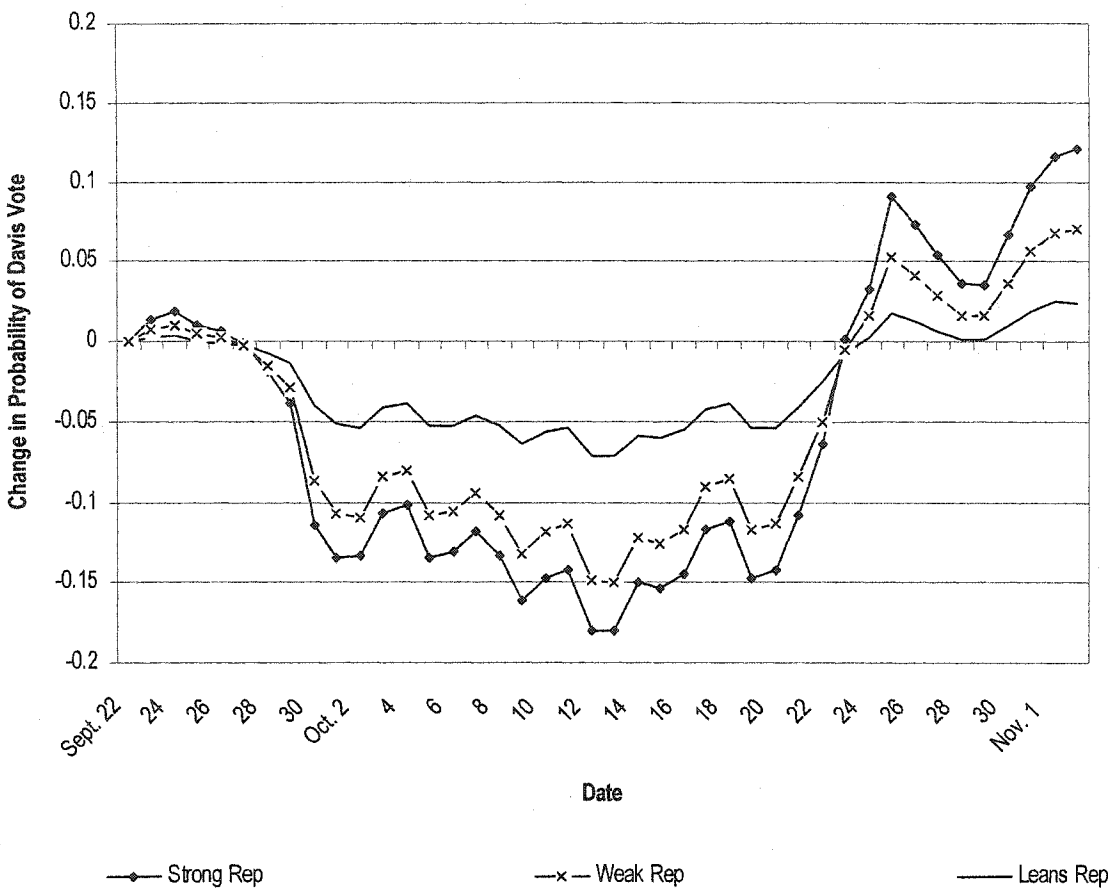


Figure 3.3b. Changes in Predicted Probability of Davis Vote, Medium Awareness

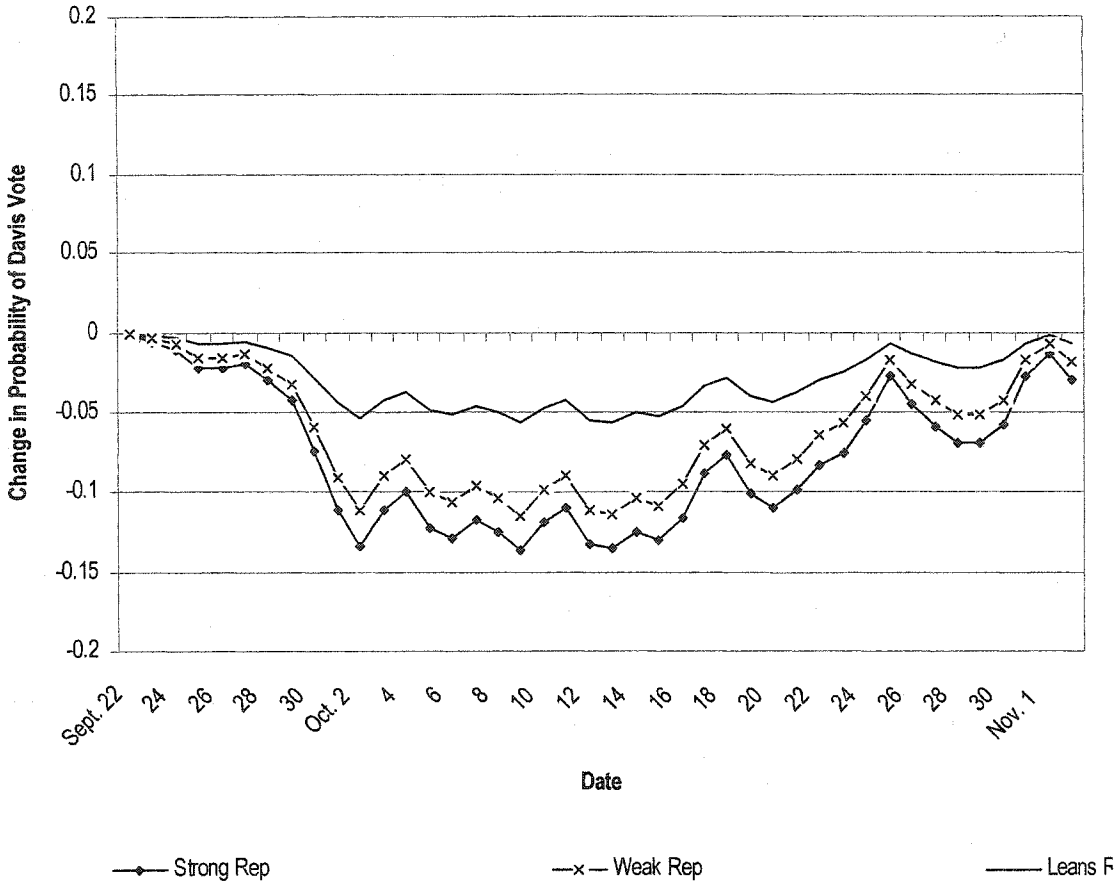


Figure 3.3c. Changes in Predicted Probability of Davis Vote, High Awareness

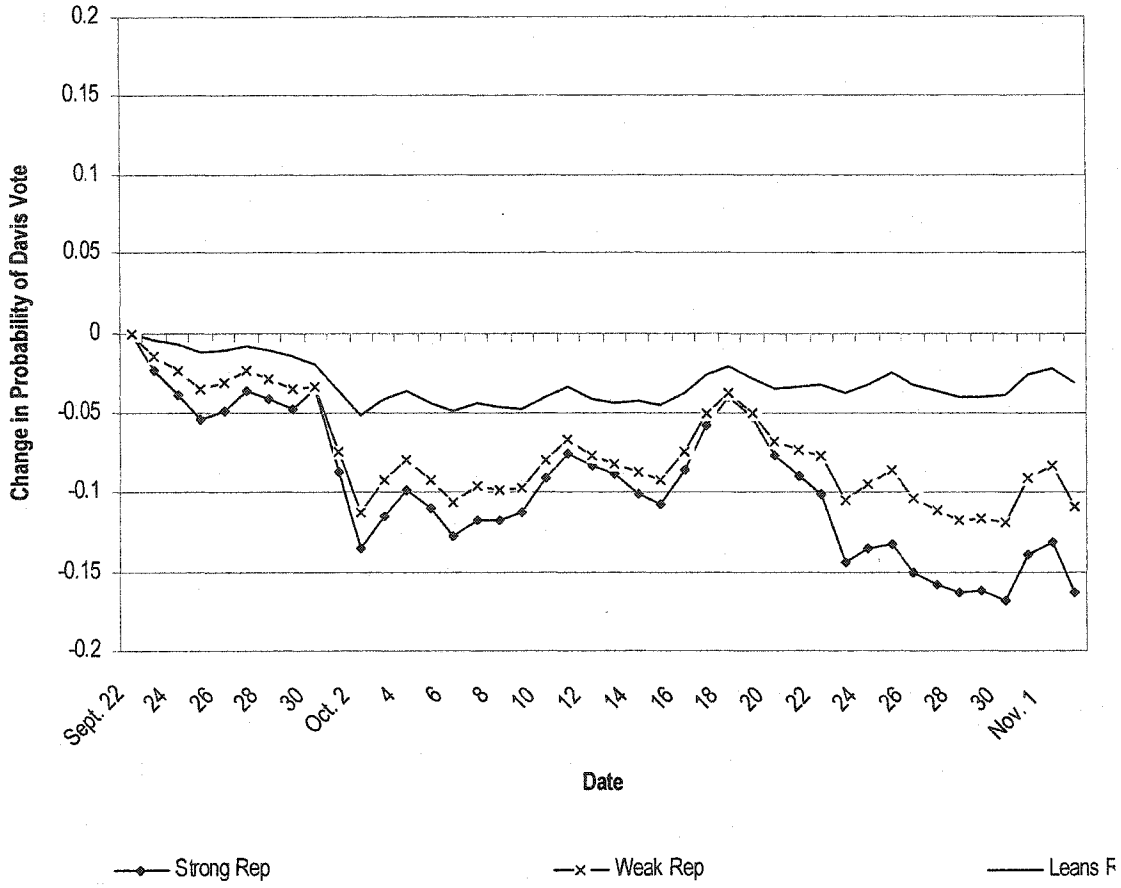


Figure 3.4. Trends in Advertising on Abortion and Gun Control

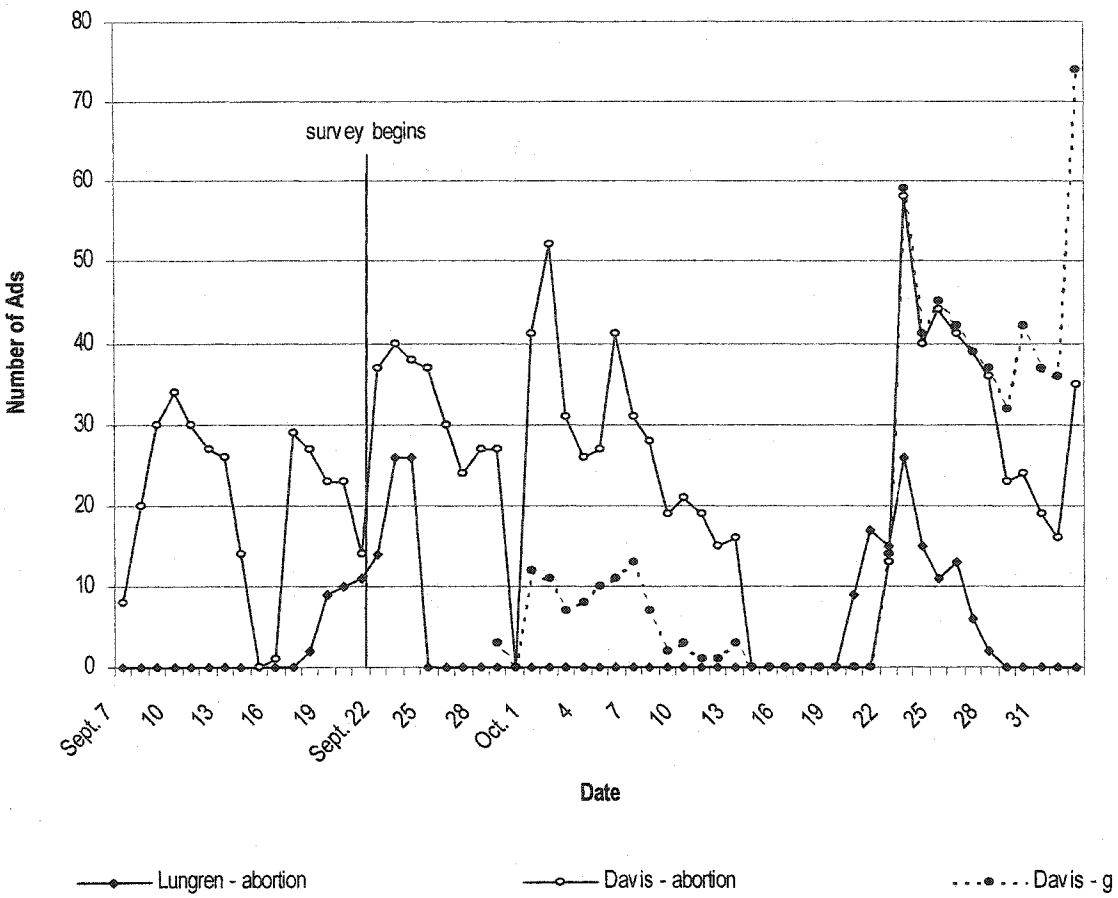
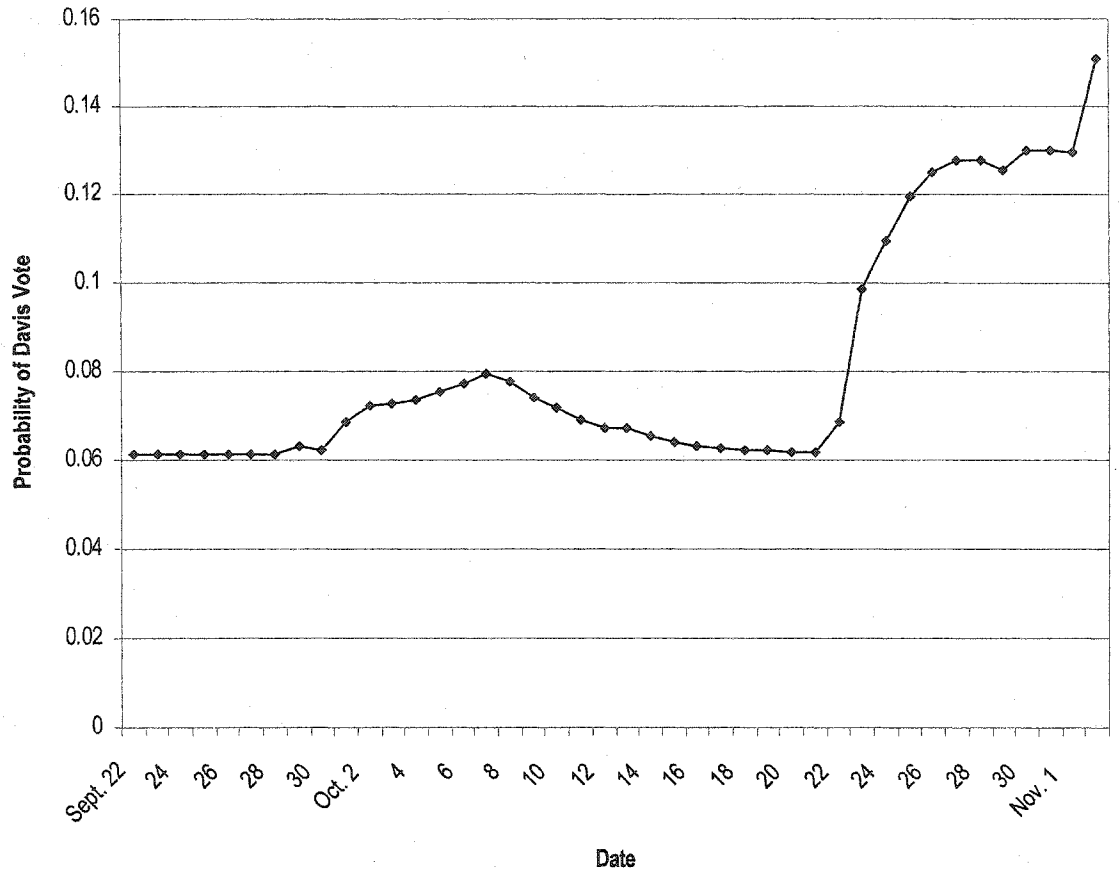


Figure 3.5. Effect of Gun Control Position on Vote Intention



CHAPTER 4
Left is Right and Right is Left: The 1998 Illinois Governor's Race

> I know you! I saw you on television.
> –Kathleen Skelton, homemaker, upon encountering George Ryan at a campaign stop in a Chicago grocery store

I. Introduction

"Left is right and right is left in Illinois politics these days," said one Bloomington editorial columnist the day before the 1998 Illinois gubernatorial election. The topsy-turvy world to which he referred was created by Republican George Ryan and Democrat Glenn Poshard. Ryan, then the Secretary of State, was widely perceived as the more liberal (or less conservative) of the two candidates. Even though he cut his teeth in Illinois politics by leading the fight against the Equal Rights Amendment, he had since "softened his image, to the irritation of right-wingers," said one irritated right-winger in the *National Review* (Miller 1998). Jack Roeser, president of the Family Taxpayers Network, said "It's like an alien from another planet has invaded George Ryan" (25 August 1998). Ryan, himself opposed to abortion except in cases of rape, incest, and danger to the mother's life, picked a pro-choice woman, state representative Corinne Wood, as his running mate and candidate for lieutenant governor. Once no friend to gun control, Ryan pledged full support for an assault weapons ban and attacked Poshard for his pro-gun votes as a state senator, earning the endorsement of gun control advocates like James Brady and the opprobrium of gun control opponents like the Illinois State Rifle Association, who gave Ryan a grade of "F-." Ryan also made overtures to gay and lesbian groups, going so far as to sponsor a float in the Chicago's Gay Pride Parade and to support liberalizing Cook County's gay rights ordinance. Small wonder, then, that even as early as March, Ryan was deemed "as popular among Democratic voters as he is among the GOP faithful" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 1 March 1998).

By contrast, Poshard, a former state senator and five-term member of Congress, was, in the words of the *National Review*, a "Buchanan Democrat." Miller (1998) catalogues Poshard's credentials:

> He is arguably to the right of his Republican opponent...on a range of issues. Poshard is pro-life, pro-gun, and a deficit hawk. He has alienated the Sierra Club by putting the interest of his district's coal mines ahead of the Greens. Gay activists in Chicago hate him. His anti-NAFTA protectionism wins praise in blue-collar bungalows. A fiery stump speaker who mixes cultural conservatism and economic populism, Poshard is Pat Buchanan without the personal baggage. He is what Dick Gephardt or David Bonior would be if they hadn't bartered away their principles to the feminist Left.

Poshard's specific position on abortion allowed exceptions only in cases of danger to the mother's life, not in cases of rape and incest—a more stringent stance than even Ryan's and one he attributed to his Southern Baptist upbringing. His pro-gun votes as a state senator included votes against a ban on sawed-off shotguns and a ban on plastic weapons. At least one prominent gay politician, state Representative Larry McKeon, declared that he could not endorse Poshard and was "deeply troubled" about his failure to support gay issues (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 23 July 1998). No less a Democrat kingmaker than the Reverend Jesse Jackson came around only grudgingly to endorse Poshard ten days before the election, while the largest black newspaper in Chicago, the *Chicago Defender*, actually endorsed Ryan. Poshard picked up the endorsements of the reliably conservative Libertarian and U.S. Taxpayers parties, but struggled to unify his own party as Ryan worked to court prominent Chicago Democrats like Dan Rostenkowski. This congeries of strange bedfellows led one *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist to write, "What have we here? A puzzling new trend in which some of our most prominent political office seekers seem to be taking turns offending some of their strongest and most reliable supporters?" (31 August 1998).

Ryan was generally considered the favorite in the race. The economy was doing well, President Clinton was in the thick of the impeachment scandal, and the current governor, Republican Jim Edgar, was popular. He had better name recognition as a statewide official than did Poshard as a congressman from "downstate." As Secretary of State, he had already appeared in statewide advertising campaigns for the state's organ donor program and in public safety ads for the Illinois

Sheriffs' Association. He ran essentially alone in the primary, facing only token opposition from a retired airline pilot. By contrast, Poshard staged a come-from-behind win in a four-way race featuring a former state attorney general and a well-heeled former member of the Clinton Justice Department. In the general election campaign, Poshard was forced to split his time between Illinois and Washington DC, leading one commentator to refer to his "commuter candidacy" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 7 August 1998).

Perhaps most importantly, Ryan was much better funded throughout the campaign. Poshard refused, as a matter of principle, to accept donations from political action committees, corporations, and labor unions. Subsisting on smaller individual contributions, he raised only about $6 million to Ryan's $15 million. Though Poshard did benefit on occasion from radio and television commercials aired on his behalf by the AFL-CIO and the state Democratic Party—which Ryan would in turn criticize as hypocritical—he was vastly outgunned, especially on the airwaves.

However, Poshard did have one advantage: a scandal within the Secretary of State's office wherein employees allegedly accepted bribes in exchange for issuing commercial drivers' licenses to unqualified candidates. (In Illinois, the Secretary of State oversees drivers' licenses.) These allegations emerged from a lawsuit filed after a 1994 Wisconsin highway accident. Rev. Duane and Janet Willis were driving with their six children outside of Milwaukee when their van hit a metal fragment laying on the highway and burst into flames. All six Willis children died. The parents survived and brought suit against the truck driver, Ricardo Guzman, from whose truck the metal fragment had fallen. Guzman had received his license in Illinois. In a deposition from this trial, an employee in the Secretary of State's office alleged that her supervisor took bribes and allowed applicants, including Guzman, to take oral tests if they were not proficient in English.

Poshard seized upon this controversy early on, declaring in April, "These are very serious allegations. They may directly affect the safety of the driving public."[1] Poshard kept up the

[1] This scandal only mushroomed after the election, eventually forcing Ryan to forego a reelection bid even though he has not yet been charged with a crime. A *New York Times* article of 3 April 2002 summed up the current state of the scandal thus: "Federal prosecutors contend that from 1992 to 1999, while Mr. Ryan was

drumbeat into the fall—*e.g.*, "If he doesn't know what was going on, what does that say about his ability to be governor? If he does, what does that say about the ethics of all this?" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 4 September 1998); and "Ryan is accountable for what is taking place and now [he] has additional questions to answer for the people of Illinois" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 15 September 1998). Ryan even faced criticism within his own party, as the GOP candidate to replace Ryan as Secretary of State, Al Salvi, said: "I think George Ryan has done a great job ferreting out corruption. But this is a widespread problem. We can't just bury our heads in the sand. We have to recognize it and have to deal with it in a very aggressive manner" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 25 September 1998).

On October 6, the Illinois Democratic Party began airing a controversial television advertisement about the scandal that blamed Ryan's office for the 1994 accident. Ryan was outraged, declaring "I'm being accused of committing murder." Former GOP Governor James Thompson said, "It's about the lowest form of accusation I have ever seen in a statewide race in all time I have been in politics in Illinois" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 8 October 1998). But Rev. and Mrs. Willis not only allowed the Poshard campaign to use photos from accident, but also said that they did not think that the ad "went too far, nor that we have been exploited... The real exploitation is that there are unsafe trucks on the roads" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 8 October 1998).

In early October, the scandal deepened, as federal investigators also charged that the bribes given in exchange for licenses found their way into Ryan's campaign coffers. While Ryan himself was not the subject of the investigation, he was more or less forced to respond; in one television advertisement, he said, "I have never compromised road safety to further my political career and I never will." This inquiry was not the only ethical question surrounding Ryan's campaign fundraising. Ryan also raised a lot of money from state employees that worked in departments or bureaus that fell under his jurisdiction as Secretary of State. More than $735,000 of the $8 million he had raised since

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secretary of state, his aides illegally used state employees and other resources for political activities; traded government services, salaries and promotions for campaign donations and work; funneled money to themselves and the campaign through kickbacks from companies; and, as the scheme began to unwind, shredded documents and otherwise tried to cover it up. All in all, the prosecutors say, some $170,000 in illegal donations wound up with the campaign committee, largely in exchange for illicitly issued drivers' licenses."

1994 came from 824 state employees workers, about one fifth of his workforce (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 6 September 1998). Ryan responded, "I've never pressured anybody to sell a ticket [for a fundraising event] or buy a ticket in my life, OK?" But an anonymous employee at the Illinois State Library in Springfield told a different story: "It's a sore subject with me. It's something always in the back of our minds, that they know who's buying tickets and who's not. I work my butt off and get nowhere for it. Then you've got other people, and you're wondering, 'Why are they getting promoted?'" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 8 October 1998).

Despite all of these nagging controversies, Ryan maintained a healthy double-digit lead throughout the campaign, according to most pre-election polls. Only once, in a *Chicago Sun-Times-Times* poll from the third week of October, did his lead shrink noticeably. In the end, however, Ryan won the election with only 52 percent of the two-party vote. This suggests that the license scandal and other ethical questions may have taken their toll on his popularity. Despite his many advantages—favorable "fundamental" conditions, more money, Poshard's unpopular positions on issues like gun control—Ryan seems to have underachieved.

Thus, the Illinois race was in many respects quite different than California's. One could cheekily summarize California's as a boring race between a moderate Democrat and a conservative Republican. The Illinois race was, by contrast, an interesting race between a conservative Democrat and a liberal Republican. In the analysis below, I use very similar survey and advertising data to examine dynamics in Illinois. The results are both a replication and extension of the previous chapter. They are a replication in that a key dynamic was partisan activation—in this case, Democrats rallying to Poshard—and that candidate advertising was again an important mechanism for producing this dynamic. Furthermore, the results again demonstrate that the connection between advertising and activation was strongest among the politically aware.

These results are an extension because the ideological "confusion" in this race provides additional explanatory leverage. Whereas in California the issue of gun control conformed to traditional partisan stereotypes—the Democrat supported gun control more strongly than the

Republican—in Illinois the opposite was true. Thus we are afforded the opportunity to see if a Republican can buck these stereotypes and effectively promote an issue that his party does not "own." I show below that priming on this issue in Illinois produced dynamics different than a partisan activation or polarization story because it was Democrats who responded to Ryan's pro-gun control advertising. A skeptic might respond to evidence of a campaign effect like partisan activation by asking whether it was really an effect of the campaign, or just a process that would happen anyway because partisans will inevitably or inexorably come around to their candidate. But in Illinois, Ryan's liberalism on gun control produced the opposite dynamic—pulling Democrats away from Poshard—which is more clearly a product of the campaign itself.

II. Research Design Redux

As in the previous chapter, the analysis here relies on two datasets, a rolling cross-sectional survey conducted by the Annenberg School as well as campaign data advertising collected by CMAG. With a virtually identical survey instrument and comparable data on advertising, one can make fruitful comparisons between these two races. For the Illinois race, the Annenberg Survey was conducted in the Chicago media market—just as before it was conducted the San Francisco market—and so I draw only on advertising from that market as well. (Illinois is mostly comprised of the Chicago market, with the exception of the southern part of the state, which is part of the St. Louis market.) Unfortunately, in Illinois the survey sample was much smaller, consisting of 10-15 daily interviews for a total sample size of 613. This smaller sample necessitates some different modeling strategies, which I discuss in more detail below.

[insert Figure 4.1 about here]

Figure 4.1 presents trends in the television advertising of Ryan and Poshard throughout the campaign, measured as the number of ads aired each day beginning September 7, along with an indicator of exposure to that advertising from the Annenberg Study, the percent of respondents who

said they had seen "a great deal of" or "some" ads.[2] Throughout this entire period, Ryan's advantage is clear. His advantage disappears only in the few days before the election itself, when Poshard was able to muster comparable numbers of ads. In total, Ryan aired 1735 television ads in the Chicago market, while Poshard aired only 811.[3] Interestingly, however, they each aired about the same number of different ads—14 for Ryan and 13 for Poshard. But given Poshard's limited funds, most of his advertisements aired in fairly small doses.

In terms of public exposure, the topmost trendline suggests that voters took notice of advertising: the percent who reported seeing "a great deal of" or "some" advertising increased from 45 percent on September 22 to just over 70 percent by Election Day. This increase is quite similar to that which occurred in the California gubernatorial race. Treating the day of interview as the unit of analysis, the correlation between the raw number of ads aired by both candidates and the percent of people who report having seen them is r=.32. The correlation between the *cumulated* number of ads—which is not reported in Figure 1 but peaks at over 1535 ads at the end of the campaign—and ad exposure is higher, r=.75. Here, as in California, there is some evidence that the public took notice of candidate advertising.

III. The Direct Effects of Advertising on Vote Intention

In the California race, advertising by the Republican Dan Lungren was crucial in rallying Republicans to his side and thus served as a mechanism for partisan activation. What were the dynamics of vote intention in this race, and did advertising play any role in driving those dynamics?

[insert Figure 4.2 about here]

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[2] There was some advertising earlier than September 7 that I do not display simply so that the figures for the California and Illinois races are comparable. Both Ryan and Poshard aired ads in July and the beginning of August, though there was a lull at the end of August until the second week of September, after which both candidates began airing ads in earnest until Election Day.

[3] The total for Poshard includes the 235 ads aired on his behalf by the Illinois Democratic Party. These ads are also counted as "Poshard" ads on Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.2 displays the vote intention of both Democrats and Republicans, presented as the percent intending to vote for Poshard.[4] This figure reveals a situation similar to that in California, merely with the party labels reversed. Whereas in California, it was Democrats who were solidly behind their party's candidate, here Republicans are the more loyal partisans. Only 10 percent or so express an intention to cross party lines and vote for Poshard, though this edges up slightly at the campaign's end to about 20 percent. By contrast, Democrats in this sample mimic Republicans in California: they are much less enthused about their party's candidate, who again was arguably too conservative for the party's mainstream. In fact, at the survey's outset, only about 50 percent of Democrats intend to vote for Poshard, and this dips even lower (to about 40 percent) by the middle of October. But, as in California, the campaign eventually brings about an apparent activation: the percent of Democrats intending to vote for Poshard climbs steadily through the last few weeks of October and early November to approximately 60 percent. Did campaign advertising have any role in bringing Democrats into the fold and thereby helping Poshard solidify his base?

[insert Table 4.1 about here]

In Table 4.1, I present a model of vote intention—coded 1 for a Poshard vote and 0 for a Ryan vote—that draws on measures of each candidate's advertising volume, as well as partisanship and ideology to serve as control variables. As before, I measure advertising volume as a cumulated and weighted sum, lagged one day. Because smaller sample size renders the highly interactive models of the previous chapter less feasible, I simply split the sample into Republicans and Democrats as a first step in pinpointing advertising's effects.

The results demonstrate that neither candidate's advertising had any effect on vote intention among Republicans—an unsurprising finding given that Republicans exhibited little fluctuation in their intentions over time. However, among Democrats Poshard's advertising did have a statistically significant impact; the positive sign on the coefficient indicates that, *ceteris paribus*, a respondent who

[4] I do not present Independents in this graph because there are simply too few of them in the sample (N=89) to get a clear reading on their opinion over time. As before, all graphs of Annenberg data have been smoothed.

was interviewed amidst a greater volume of Poshard advertising had a higher probability of supporting Poshard. Or, in other words, Poshard's ads seem to have helped bring potentially wayward Democrats over to his side.[5]

However, as discussed in Chapter 3, a crucial conditioning variable in any analysis of campaign effects is political awareness. Indeed, in the California race, the "activation" effects of Lungren's advertising were most apparent not only among strong partisans but among those who were highly politically aware. Table 4.1 thus presents additional models that look at the effects of Poshard's advertising on Democrats within three groups divided by their level of awareness.[6] (Here I do not include Ryan's advertising so as better to isolate the effects of Poshard's, but the findings are robust in either case.)

[insert Figure 4.3 about here]

The results confirm those in the previous chapter: highly politically aware Democrats are most likely to register the effects of advertising. The coefficient for Poshard's advertising is three times as strong in this group as in those with "low" or "medium" awareness, and only in this group does it attain statistical significance.[7] The conditioning role of awareness is all the more apparent in Figure 4.3, which charts the substantive effect of Poshard's advertising as predicted by the models in Table 4.1—here calculated as the change in the probability of voting for Poshard relative to the first day of the survey. The trendlines for Democrats of low or middling awareness are largely flat: at most Poshard's advertising would be predict to shift the probability of a Poshard vote by about .10. However, those high in awareness are more sensitive to shifts in advertising. The model predicts that

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[5] It is worth noting that ideology's lack of impact comports with the "left is right, right is left" theme discussed at the outset. Clearly, Ryan and Poshard were much more difficult to disentangle ideologically.

[6] Here, as before, political awareness is a factor score from a model that includes four indicators: interest in politics, frequency of newspaper consumption, self-reported advertising exposure, and ability to recall the candidates' names. This model generated one factor and appears to fit the data quite well (χ^2=.23; p=.89).

[7] The results here—namely, the significant effect of Poshard's advertising among highly politically aware Democrats—is somewhat robust to different measures of advertising. The raw number of ads, both contemporaneous and lagged one day, produces similar results. However, cumulated measures of ads (without weighting) produce no significant results at any level of awareness. This suggests that a cumulated measure may not accurately capture the true functional form of the relationship between advertising and opinion. It worth noting here as well that the non-linear trends in vote intention mean that day of interview would again be a poor substitute for advertising.

the probability of a Poshard vote increases by about .3 in late September when Poshard went on the air. This ebbs as Poshard's advertising disappears but then spikes again twice in the last three weeks of the campaign when Poshard's ads hit the airwaves again. This late barrage of ads has an effect striking in magnitude. A Democratic respondent interviewed, say, on October 30 has a probability of voting for Poshard that is .50 higher than a Democrat interviewed on, say, October 14. Note also that this trend in the probability of voting for Poshard is similar to the actual trend in vote intention among Democrats that is presented in Figure 4.2: an early increase in support for Poshard, followed by a decline, followed by another increase leading into Election Day itself.

In many respects, these results parallel those in the California race. There, Lungren's advertising helped improve his standing among fellow Republicans, a trend that was most pronounced among those high in political awareness. This Illinois race produced a very similar finding: Poshard's advertising helped improve his standing among fellow Democrats, a trend that again was most pronounced among the very politically aware. This interaction between advertising, party identification, and awareness seems to underlie the process of partisan activation in both races.

IV. Advertising Themes and Issue Priming

Having documented again a linkage between advertising volume and vote intention, the next question is whether the specific content of advertising made any difference. In the California race, Davis' advertising made gun control more consequential to vote choice. Did a similar process unfold in Illinois, in particular with regard to gun control?

The Content of Campaign Advertising

[insert Table 4.1 about here]

What were the predominant themes in candidate advertising? Table 4.1 presents the major issues that were present in one or both of the candidate's television ads. For Ryan, the two most important themes were part of his insistent criticism of Poshard's alleged conservatism. Thirty-five

percent of his advertising criticized Poshard's inadequate shade of green, saying things like, "On the environment, he voted against the Clean Air Act and against the Clean Water Act" and "Every worry about the air you breathe? You should. As a congressman, Glenn Poshard voted against the Clean Air Act, protecting coal companies, not you." But gun control was the most prevalent theme. Over half of Ryan's advertising criticized Poshard's record on gun control. Two commercials exemplify the general tenor of the critique:

> "The Right Choice on Guns": Illinois still has a deadly problem: guns. But Glenn Poshard has opposed gun control. Poshard sponsored a bill to stop criminal background checks so anyone could get a gun. In Congress he voted to let anyone own assault weapons. Anyone. George Ryan led the fight against assault weapons. Ryan will defend the rights of law-abiding gun owners, but strictly enforce criminal record checks. On guns, George Ryan has made the right choice for Illinois.
>
> "Anyone Can Own a Gun": Glenn Poshard says that he is one of us. But he actually advertised that he is opposed to any form of gun control. True to his word, Poshard sponsored a bill to stop criminal background checks. So even people with a violent history could get guns. And in Congress, Poshard voted to let anyone own an assault weapon. That would give gangs easy access to heavy firepower. There are enough dangerous people around. We don't need a governor that lets them have guns.

Meanwhile, Poshard concentrated his attention on the license scandal. About 35 percent of his advertisements dealt with this subject. One such ad, entitled "The Facts," said the following:

> George Ryan tries to change the issues but he can't change these facts. Fact: George Ryan's employees were arrested for selling truck licenses for bribes. Fact: prosecutors allege that tens of thousands in bribe money went to fund Ryan's campaign for Governor. Fact: George Ryan didn't stop the corruption so the FBI moved in because unsafe truck drivers are on our roads. Fact: while George Ryan collected campaign cash, the safety of our families was put at risk.

Poshard also dwelt on Ryan's other ethical issues. One advertisement, entitled "Had Enough," alleged that Ryan "bills taxpayers for his Springfield home, furniture, car, and lawn care" and "takes tens of thousands of dollars a year from his political account for personal use." All in all, 10.5 percent of Poshard's advertising dealt with themes such as this.

Curiously, however, while Poshard did speak about his refusal to accept PAC contributions and his education plan, he aired no advertisement that responded to Ryan's attacks on the environment and only one ad that dealt in any way with gun control. It said:

> "I'm Glenn Poshard. My opponent wants you to believe that I want to raise your taxes and put guns in the hands of people to harm your children. That's not true and my record proves that. I'm a father, a grandfather, and a teacher. I've devoted my whole life to helping children. My education plan calls for smaller, safer classrooms. And by ending corporate welfare, I'll lower your property taxes by half a billion dollars."

This is not exactly a thorough rebuttal to Ryan's charges.[8]

In terms of candidate advertising, then, it is clear that while Ryan maintained an overall advantage thanks to his fuller campaign coffers and could more or less criticize with impunity Poshard's record on issues like gun control, he chose not to contest the license scandal through this medium. This suggests a foothold for even the poorly funded Poshard. The Annenberg Survey included an open-ended question about whether respondents could remember any specific advertisement and, if so, to describe what they remembered of it. Just over half of the sample (54%) gave a response to this question. Of those who did, the plurality (41%) mentioned an ad related to the license scandal; most of these people referred to one of Poshard's or the Illinois Democratic Party's ads. (The next most memorable ad theme, gun control, was cited by only 17 percent of respondents.) Thus, the vivid imagery surrounding the license scandal, which the IL Democrats' ad capitalized on by showing pictures of the wreck itself, seems to have stuck in viewers' minds. Moreover, respondents' descriptions of these ads suggest an understanding of the license scandal quite unfavorable to Ryan. Some representative comments:

> Poshard was talking about [how] Ryan allowed an unqualified driver to obtain a license and how that driver went on to kill six children.
> Ryan was responsible for giving out fraudulent truck drivers' licenses directly resulting in the death of a family. [The ad showed:] a burnt car and surviving parents.
> Children got killed because of corruption in Ryan's office.
> Ryan killed six children in Wisconsin.

This is striking evidence that, despite his handicap in fundraising, Poshard's advertising was able to capture the public's attention and present a very damaging portrait of Ryan's conduct.

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[8] Ryan and Poshard both devoted significant advertising to taxes and education. However, here their messages were fairly similar. Each accused the other of supporting higher taxes and each promised various

Testing for Priming Effects

As it did for the California race, the Annenberg Survey again provides a useful test of campaign priming in the Illinois race. The issue again is gun control. But, as noted before, the Illinois race was precisely the opposite of California's in that Ryan, the Republican, was arguably the stronger proponent of gun control. Thus, we would expect this variable to have the opposite effect on vote intention: *ceteris paribus*, supporters of gun control should be more likely to vote for Ryan, not Poshard. Gun control is an issue that benefits the Republican not the Democrat.[9]

[insert Figure 4.4 about here]

Figure 4.4 presents the volume of candidate advertising on gun control. Clearly, Ryan's advertising dominates on this issue. Beginning on October 3, he airs about 20-25 ads per day that emphasize his support for gun control and criticize Poshard's record as recklessly pro-gun. Poshard, for his part, musters a handful of ads in the third week of October but that is all. Thus, just as Davis did in California, Ryan was able to monopolize the discourse about gun control.

And the plurality of respondents in the Annenberg Survey did perceive Ryan as the gun control proponent. About a third of respondents (33 percent) believed that Ryan supported an assault weapons ban, whereas only 20 percent though Poshard did so. The remainder thought that either both or neither supported the ban (19 percent) or did not know either candidate's position (28 percent).[10]

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improvements to education that would be tough to fault—*e.g.*, Ryan's pledge that "every third grader read at the third grade level."

[9] The Annenberg Study included several other issue questions: abortion, greater government regulation of HMOs, not accepting money from corporations or PACs, building a third airport in the Chicago area, and closing tax loopholes. As one would expect given the similarly pro-life positions of Poshard and Ryan, attitudes towards abortion have little traction in this race, unlike in the California race. There is no significant relationship between one's position on abortion and one's vote intention. This comports with the candidates' statements on this issue. Poshard said at one point, "I have no agenda on this issue. I've said that to both sides," while Ryan said, "Certainly abortion and pro-life [sic] are important issues to the voters of Illinois, but I don't think they're consumed with it" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 21 October 1998). Though some of the other issues figured in the campaign—in that Poshard aired a few commercials about regulating HMOs and refused to accept PAC money, and in that the third airport was the subject of discussion—none of these issues attained real salience. Even at the bivariate level, there is no correlation between respondents' position on these issues and their vote choice.

[10] This variable was coded as in Chapter 3. As in California, there was not much evidence of voter "learning" in this race. There is a little evidence that as the campaign progressed, more voters came to believe that Ryan

Results

To test for priming, I estimated a model of vote intention (coded 1 for Poshard and 0 for Ryan) that contains respondents' position on the assault weapons ban, the level of advertising on this issue, the interaction between the two, and party identification as a control.[11] As in the previous chapter, one conditioning variable is respondents' beliefs about the candidates' positions on this issue. Here, I also test for variation based on party identification itself, since some scholars have found that priming on an issue that one party owns is more potent among like-minded partisans (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). In this case, because the Democratic Party arguably "owns" gun control, one would expect Democrats to respond most favorably to advertising on this issue. However, the twist in this particular race is that the Republican candidate was peddling a traditional Democratic message. If this hypothesis hold nonetheless, and Ryan's advertising does prime this issue among Democrats, then this would suggest a means by which Ryan was able to lure Democrats to his side.[12]

[insert Table 4.3 about here]

Table 4.3 presents a series of models that test for campaign priming of gun control. The first model is estimated using the total sample. It provides initial evidence of priming: the relationship between one's position and gun control is insignificant when there is not advertising present on the issue (b=.16; s.e.=.25), but there is a significant interaction (b=-.01; s.e.=.005). This interaction implies that, as Ryan's advertising on gun control increases relative to Poshard's, support

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supported the assault weapons ban and that Poshard did not support it, but these changes were not dramatic—on the order of 5-10 percentage points at best. There was no relationship between advertising on gun control and these trends.

[11] A few comments about these variables and about model specification are in order. The question wording in the Illinois survey is slightly different than in the California survey: it describes the issue positions as "banning assault weapons *even if it infringes on the rights of responsible gun owners*" (italics added). The measure of gun control advertising is also slightly different. One would expect advertising to prime this issue when it communicates a clear message about which candidate is in favor and which opposed. Since both candidates aired advertising claiming to support gun control, I subtracted Poshard's advertising from Ryan's to make a new measure. This measure takes on larger values when Ryan's message dominates Poshard's, which is when one would expect the issue to be most salient.

for the assault weapons ban becomes associated with a vote for Ryan. Thus, Ryan's advertising appears to make this issue more salient to voters.

However, this effect was not uniform across voters. First, it is much more strong among Democrats than Republicans. This makes sense in that gun control is a traditionally Democratic issue, but it is surprising in that a Republican candidate was able to appropriate a Democratic issue and use it to woo Democrats. I discuss these implications further below. Second, respondents' beliefs about the candidates' positions also matter. Gun control plays no statistically significant role among those who believe that both or neither Poshard or Ryan supports the ban, or among those who simply do not know the candidates' positions. However, among those who do believe that there is a difference between the candidates' positions, there is evidence that attitudes towards gun control do matter and, more importantly, that the role of gun control advertising is crucial in mediating its influence on vote intention.

Among those who believe that Poshard supports the ban but Ryan does not—an incorrect belief, to be sure—there is evidence that, while gun control advertising is absent, attitudes towards gun control are associated with a Poshard vote (b=.80; s.e.=.53). However, the effect of this issue on vote choice declines as Ryan's advertising on this issue dominates (b=-.02; s.e.=.009). This is a very interesting result, suggesting that among voters who believed Poshard supported gun control, the effect of Ryan's advertising on the subject was to "de-prime" this issue, rendering a less potent predictor of vote choice. In essence, Ryan's advertising, by introducing information that conflicted with these respondents' understanding of whether the candidates stood, made this issue less potent in their own decision-making.[13]

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[12] In Appendix E I discuss the results of analysis using newspaper coverage instead of ads. As was the case in the California race, newspaper coverage appears to have no priming effects.

[13] The results are mostly robust to different measures of gun control advertising—raw numbers of ads, cumulated but unweighted ads, *etc.* The effects within Democrats and within those who believed Poshard supported the assault weapons ban are most robust; the effect within those who believed Ryan supported the assault weapons ban is less robust. This could, however, merely indicate that these alternative measures of advertising fail to capture accurately the relationship between advertising and issue salience.

Among those who believe that Ryan supports the ban, the results of the model suggest an insignificant positive effect when there is no advertising on this issue (b=.07; s.e.=.43), but a significant and negative interaction (b=-.013; s.e.=.009). Again, this means that as Ryan advertises more and more on this issue, support for the assault weapons ban becomes more strongly associated with a vote for Ryan.

[insert Figure 4.5 about here]

Figure 4.5 demonstrates the substantive magnitude of this interaction for Democrats, and for those who believe that Ryan or Poshard alone supports the ban. Here, as in the previous chapter, the effect of this issue on vote intention is calculated as a one-unit shift from moderate to strong support for the assault weapons ban. The figure plots the effect of this shift on the probability of a Poshard vote, conditional on the level of advertising about gun control. The results demonstrate that as Ryan increasingly devotes advertising time to this issue, its effect on vote intention becomes more strongly in his favor. Among those who believe Poshard supports the ban, this value shifts rather dramatically. When Ryan's advertising advantage is low at the end of September, the effect of this variable is to *increase* the likelihood of a Poshard vote by .10. However, as Ryan begins to advertise again in earnest, this value drops, switches sign, and winds up at -.20 by the campaign's end. Similar trends are apparent for those who believe Ryan supports the ban and for Democrats. For these groups, the effect of gun control is close to 0 in the early going but approximately -.15 by Election Day. This is to say, in late September, a pro-gun control shift in respondents' attitudes would have, the model predicts, little relationship with vote intention. But by early November, this same shift would increase the probability of voting for Ryan by .20.

V. Conclusions

Though there were notable differences between the 1998 Illinois and California gubernatorial races in terms of the candidates and the salient events, they exhibited some very similar dynamics that point towards a broader theoretical understanding of campaign effects. In both race, a

subset of wayward partisans desisted in disloyalty. This process of partisan activation has been a longstanding part of the campaign effects literature, dating back to the work of the Columbia School. But here we are afforded the opportunity to observe this process unfold on a day-by-day basis during the campaign and, more importantly, to link this process to the information provided by campaign advertising. Advertising appears the crucial mechanism for activation partisan proclivities.

Similarly, priming was another apparent campaign effect in both races. And again, while other scholars of campaign effects have found evidence of priming, the analysis here is novel in several respects. It specifies a linkage between advertising and issue salience in "real time," as the campaign actually unfolded. Effects that have been evident in laboratory studies or in studies that leverage cross-section variation across races are similarly evident within a single race over time. Second, the dynamics of priming in Illinois produce some counterintuitive results. Traditional partisan stereotypes did not apply here, as George Ryan was able to promote an issue, gun control, typically seen as Democratic property. Moreover, other things equal, his success in priming this issue helped lure Democrats to his side. At the end of the day, this dynamic was not sufficient to overcome the toll of the license scandal, but it nevertheless constitutes a potent and interesting campaign effect.

Table 4.1. The Effects of Candidate Advertising on Vote Intention

	Party Identification		Democrats only		
	Republicans	Democrats	low awareness	medium awareness	high awareness
Strength of partisanship	.26 (.27)	.79*** (.18)	1.20** (.40)	.84** (.30)	.65* (.31)
Ideology	.11 (.29)	-.10 (.15)	.18 (.29)	-.14 (.28)	-.32 (.27)
Poshard Ad Volume	.002 (.01)	.02* (.009)	.009 (.01)	.005 (.01)	.03* (.02)
Ryan Ad Volume	-.002 (.008)	-.0002 (.005)	–	–	–
Constant	-2.24	-3.77	-6.00	-4.00	-2.89
-2 × Log-likelihood	161.4	290.8	87.2	98.4	89.7
χ^2	1.51	28.0***	11.7**	9.67*	13.8**
Pseudo-R^2	.01	.15	.20	.16	.22
% correctly predicted	86.2	67.9	67.1	65.4	67.1
Ryan	100.0	51.5	44.4	72.5	59.4
Poshard	0.0	80.0	79.6	57.9	72.7
N	203	234	76	78	76

*Table entries are logit coefficients, with estimated standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 0-Ryan and 1-Poshard. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (one-tailed).*

Table 4.2. Themes in Candidate Advertising

Ryan			Poshard	
Issue	% of ads mentioning issue		Issue	% of ads mentioning issue
Gun control	57.4%		License scandal	35.3%
Environment	34.6%		Education	16.6%
Taxes	30.8%		PAC contributions	14.2%
Education	30.3%		Taxes	12.0%
Ethics	7.6%		Ethics	10.5%
Crime	4.1%		HMOs	6.9%
License scandal	3.3%		Guns	6.0%
PAC contributions	0.0%		Crime	5.2%
HMOs	0.0%		Environment	0.0%

Table 4.3. The Priming Effects of Campaign Advertising: Gun Control

		Party Identification		Beliefs about Candidates' Position (who supports assault weapons ban)			
	Total Sample	Reps	Dems	Poshard	Ryan	Both or neither	Don't know
Gun Control Position	.16	-.20	.54#	.90*	.07	-.12	-.77
	(.25)	(.36)	(.39)	(.53)	(.44)	(.59)	(.57)
Position × Ads	-.01*	-.007	-.02*	-.02*	-.01#	-.008	.01
	(.005)	(.007)	(.008)	(.01)	(.009)	(.01)	(.01)
Gun Control Ads	.04*	.03	.06*	.09*	.04#	.03	-.06
(Ryan–Poshard)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)
Party identification	.58***	.43#	.88***	.65***	.46***	.73***	.68***
	(.06)	(.26)	(.18)	(.14)	(.10)	(.15)	(.15)
Constant	-2.81	-1.78	-6.25	-6.12	-2.39	-2.71	-.23
-2 × Log-likelihood	506.4	152.6	285.6	103.0	175.0	92.5	119.6
χ^2	128.3***	9.3*	29.3***	38.1***	33.7***	37.2***	31.4***
Pseudo-R^2	.32	.08	.16	.41	.26	.43	.33
% correctly predicted	74.1	86.0	65.8	72.1	74.6	80.2	75.4
Ryan	80.1	99.4	41.8	73.8	89.7	82.5	80.3
Poshard	63.8	3.6	83.5	69.8	40.4	76.9	67.4
N	483	200	231	104	169	96	114

*Table entries are logit coefficients, with estimated standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 0-Ryan and 1-Poshard. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (one-tailed).*

Figure 4.1. Amount of and Exposure to Television Advertising

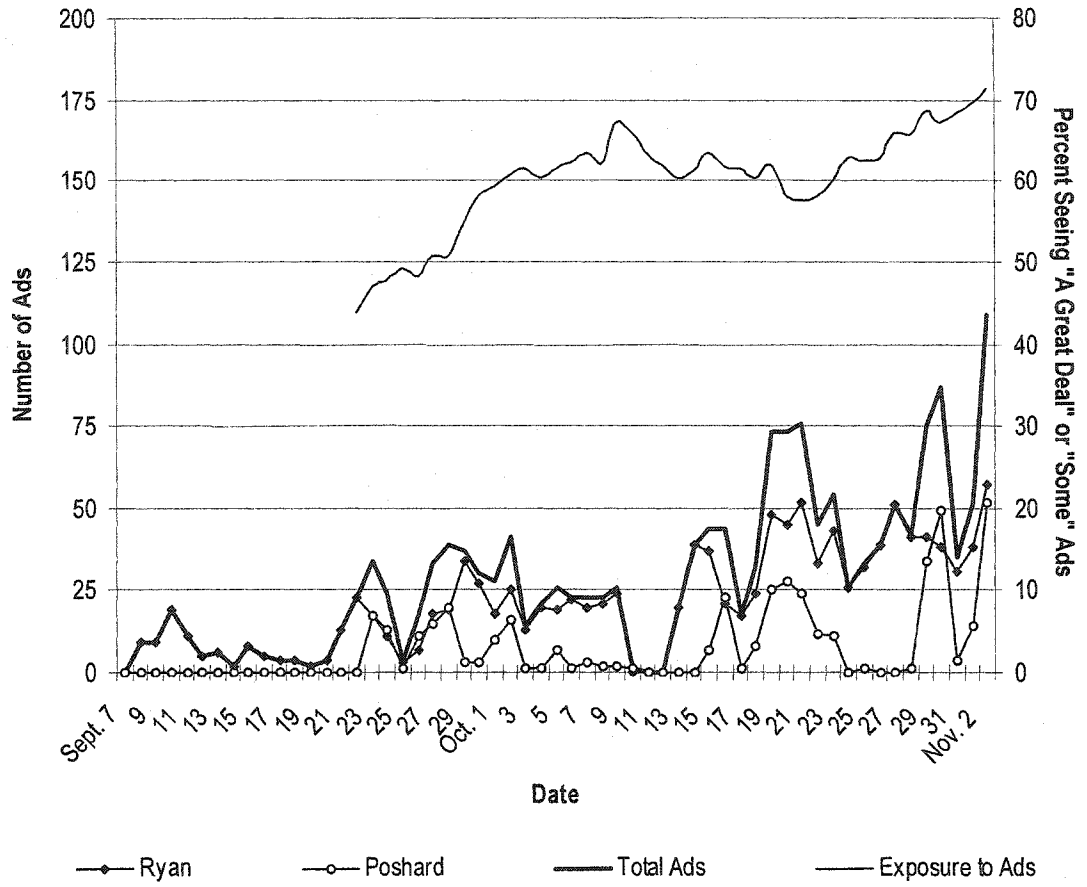


Figure 4.2. Vote Intention, by Party Identification

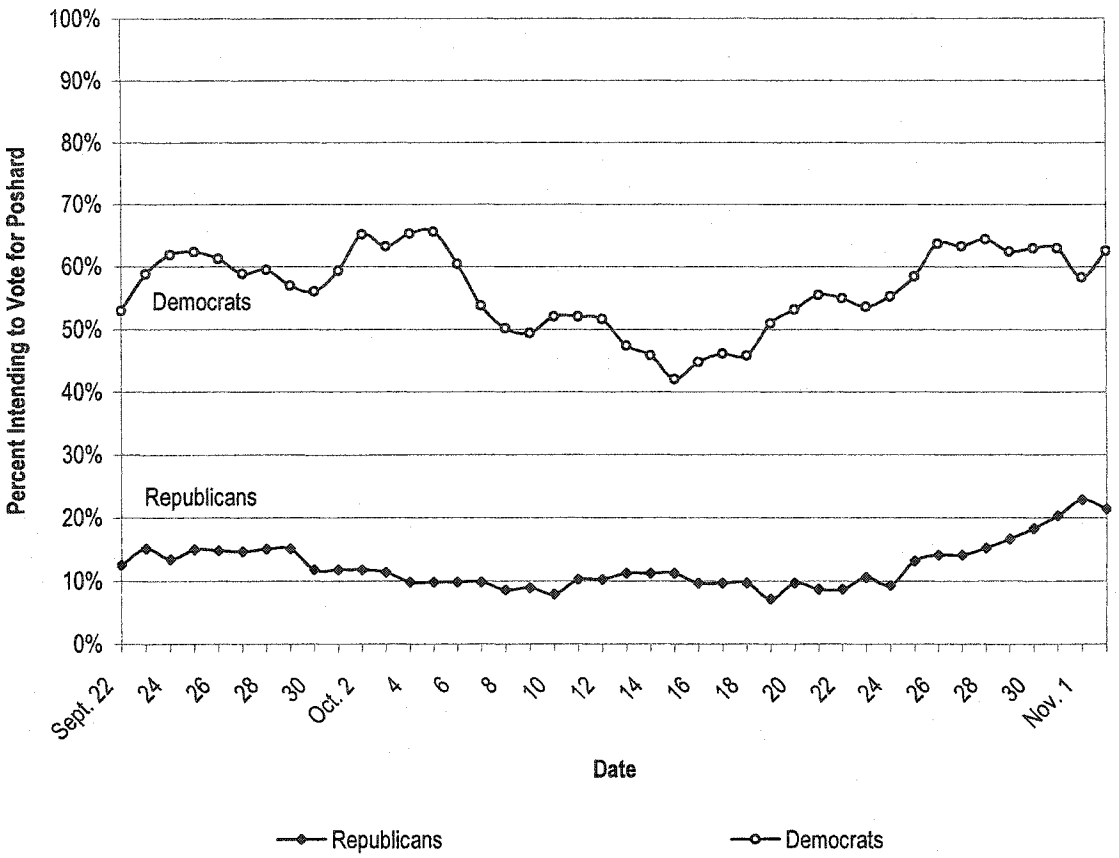


Figure 4.3. Effects of Poshard Advertising among Democrats, by Political Awareness

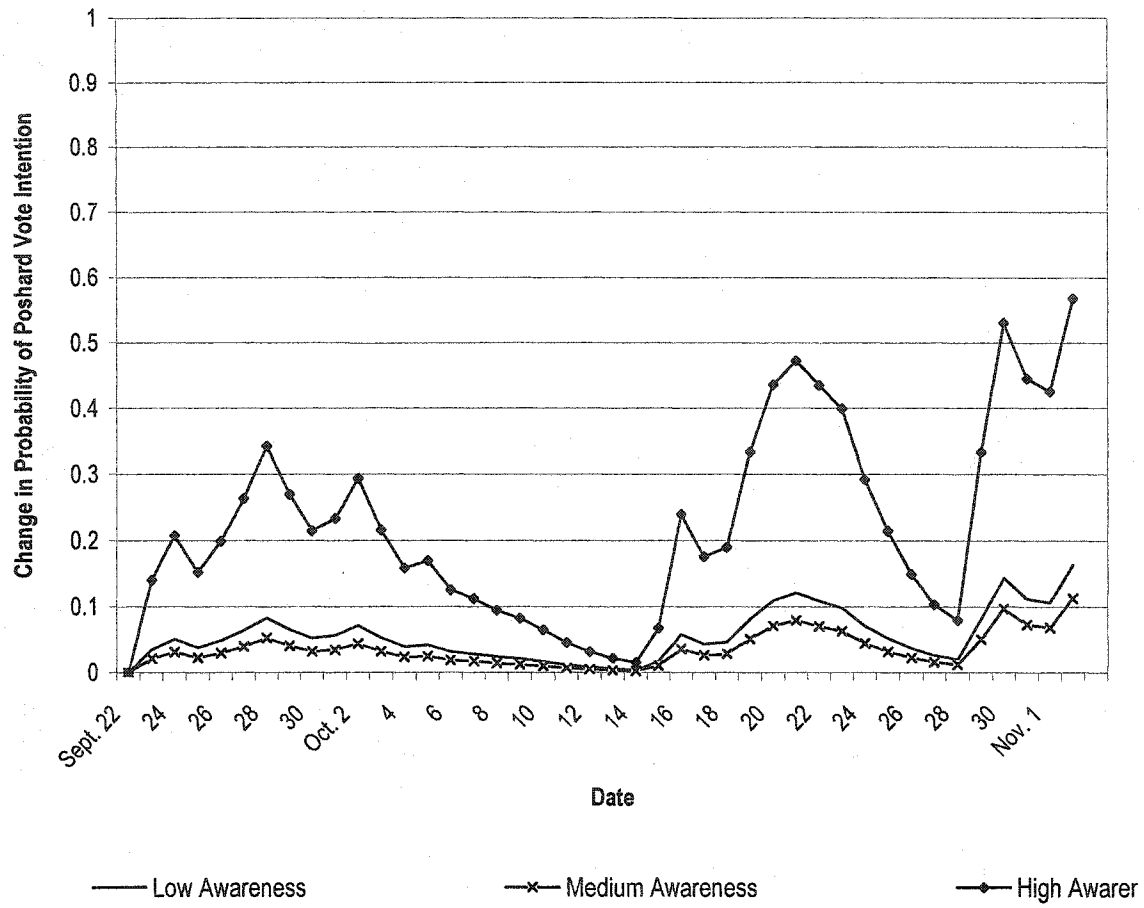


Figure 4.4. Trends in Candiate Advertising on Gun Control

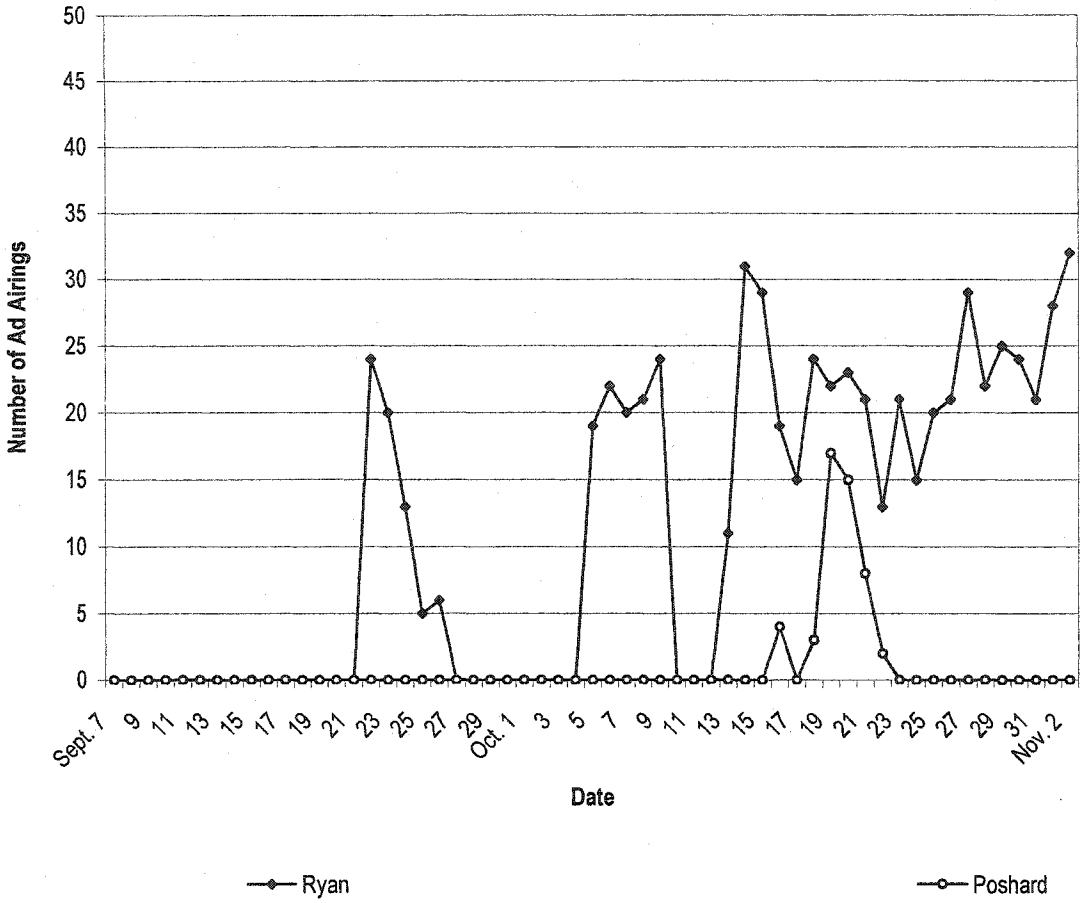
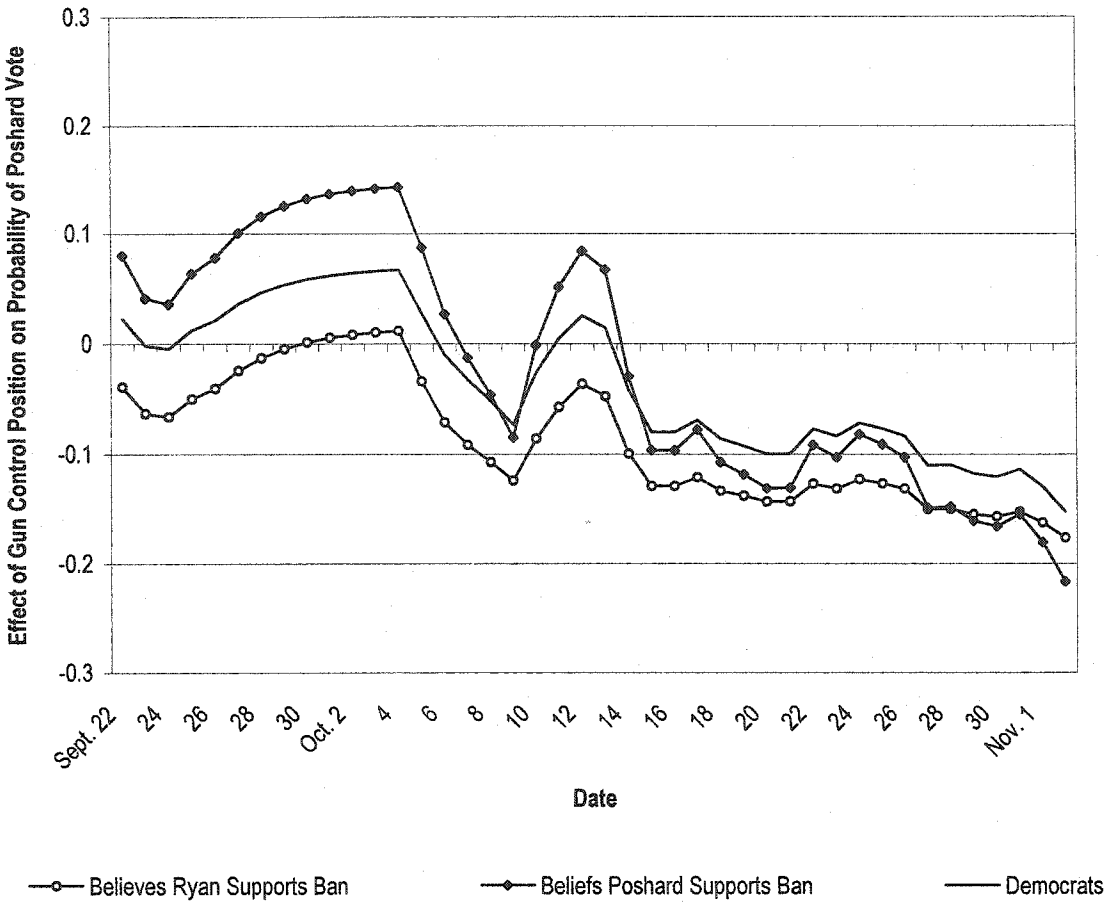


Figure 4.5. Effect of Gun Control Position on Vote Intention



CHAPTER 5
The Presidential Campaigns of 2000

I. Introduction

Presidential campaigns vary across time. The lazy days of summer give way to the hullabaloo of the party conventions and then to a hectic autumn when the candidates will travel ceaselessly, eat a lot of bad food, and usually talking themselves hoarse in the process. Presidential campaigns also vary across space. The relative calm in so-called "safe" states contrasts with the maelstrom of candidate appearances and advertising in "battleground" states. Here I examine the 2000 election in particular. The chief questions are: did campaign activity demonstrate meaningful temporal and spatial variation, and, moreover, what consequences did this have for voters? What do these findings imply about how we interpret elections generally—the perennial question, "what was this election about?"—and about how we explain this election in particular, especially Vice-President Gore's loss in the face of such favorable economic and political conditions?

I focus in particular on how the campaign shaped the reasons motivating vote choice. While most voters bring to any election season a partisan preference that is often difficult to shake, there are many more components of the vote calculus than just party identification. As was true in both the California and Illinois gubernatorial races, campaigns can make certain considerations more consequential to vote choice. In these two races, this process unfolded over time. The same should be true in the presidential campaign. The presidential campaign also offers the opportunity to determine whether the ingredients of voter decision-making also depend on whether voters live in a place hotly contested by the candidates.

I argue further that different sorts of considerations advantage each of the candidates, such that campaigns can shift the underlying probability of that a voter will prefer their candidate by strengthening the relationship between these favorable considerations and the vote decision. The

logic of heresthetics means that candidates possess incentives to control the election-year agenda and make "their" issues important to the citizenry. Priming is thus a process with consequences for both voters and candidates.

The chapter proceeds by first describing the various data sources used herein, including another collection of CMAG advertising data, the Gallup tracking poll, the CBS-*New York Times* polls from July through November, and the 2000 National Election Study. Each of these surveys has unique advantages and disadvantages for the study of campaign processes. I then examine campaign variation across both time and space. In general, the findings suggest that specific campaign issues, such as abortion and school vouchers, had a stronger impact as the campaign progressed, as well as a stronger impact in battleground states. By and large, Gore benefited from the growing salience of these issues because his position is more in line with public opinion. However, Gore suffered because of several factors: first, the increasing perception that he was less-than-honest; and second, in battleground states, the relatively low salience of the nation's economy, which most people viewed positively. I conclude by discussing what these results suggest about campaign processes and the 2000 election in particular.

II. Campaign Activity and Voter Decision-Making

The previous two chapters examine specific advertising themes and how exposure to those themes primed related issues, notably gun control. In this chapter, the analysis is not so fine-grained, in part because it is much more difficult to characterize the complex information environment that a presidential campaign creates. Instead I investigate a more general connection between the level of campaign activity and voter decision-making. How might overall campaign activity prime certain considerations in vote choice? Three possibilities suggest themselves.

First, campaign activity could have a general "hydraulic" effect on a variety of factors. This is to say, campaign activity, with its bevy of diverse messages and images, encourages voters to bring to bear a larger constellation of considerations when they vote. Kahn and Kenney (1999) illustrate

such a process in Senate elections. Voters undergoing more "intense" campaigns rely more strongly on ideology, issue positions, party identification, presidential approval, as well as their contact and familiarity with the candidates. Campaigns, in this telling, prime most everything.

A second idea is that campaign priming should enhance the accessibility of only certain kinds of factors, and in particular more nuanced information about the candidates, as opposed to simple cues. Most people begin the campaign with some predisposition towards one or the other candidate. This is why, generally speaking, anyone interviewed during July or August of 2000 could probably provide a vote choice based on their party identification: most people possess this identification and it points directly towards Bush or Gore. But most people do not begin the campaign with an intimate knowledge of the candidates, especially when there is no incumbent running, as was the case in 2000. To base one's vote choice on evaluations of the candidates themselves and their issue positions requires more information. One might expect that over time voters will be exposed to more of that information, helping them to draw on more "sophisticated" considerations. The same process should be especially visible in battleground states, where the candidates concentrate their communication with voters.

Perhaps the most sophisticated criterion for vote choice is specific issues (see Sniderman, Glaser, and Griffin 1990; Moon 1990, 1992; Kahn and Kenney 1999). To connect one's own opinions and one's vote requires more attention and thought. This is why previous literature has found that issues become important in vote choice when voters are more educated (Sniderman, Glaser, and Griffin 1990), possess more political information (Moon 1990, 1992), are more certain about the candidate's position on an issue (Alvarez and Franklin 1994), and consider an issue personally salient (Rabinowitz, Prothro, and Jacoby 1982; Krosnick 1990).[1] During a campaign, chances are that issues will not be that pertinent unless voters have also had the opportunity to hear the candidates speak about their views. This is precisely what campaign activity accomplishes.

[1] Similarly, Huckfeldt *et al.* (1999) find that party identification and ideology are more strongly related to evaluation of politicians when they are accessible in memory. Rahn *et al.* (1990) report an anomalous finding:

Voters who live in battleground states turn on their televisions and hear the candidates making statements like "My opponent wants to spend our budget surplus on tax cuts for the richest one percent of Americans"; voters in safe states hear that less often, if at all. Thus a reasonable expectation is that campaigns will function like an individual-level attribute such as education: voters exposed to campaign information will vote based on more refined considerations. In particular, they will more ably link their own issue positions to their ultimate vote choice.

The third possibility, mentioned above, takes into account the specific content of campaign activity. In this view, campaigns prime issues that are salient in the actual campaign discourse. This is the argument of Carsey (2000), who demonstrates how the big issues of gubernatorial campaigns become important to voter decision-making. In this chapter, I do no test this hypothesis as directly as I would like. For the present purposes, I will simply draw a very stylized portrait of campaign discourse and compare it to the pattern of priming observed in the survey data.

III. Data Sources

Scholarly study of presidential campaigns has suffered in the past from electoral data ill-suited to capturing any spatial or temporal variation that might be present. Here I employ four different datasets, the combination of which should help me triangulate on campaign processes. Two in particular illuminate dynamic temporal processes. The first is the Gallup tracking poll. From September 4 to November 6, Gallup conducted 62 polls. Every day, Gallup began a new poll, sampling respondents over a three-day period. These daily readings provide a nuanced picture of ebbs and flows over time. Unfortunately, the Gallup tracking poll included almost no useful covariates consistently over this period. The only exceptions were party identification and self-reported ideology. This inhibits a thorough investigation of the motivations underlying vote choice.

The second data source is the CBS-*New York Times* polls conducted from July through November. These also capture variation over time. While they were more episodic than the Gallup

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the factors related to candidate evaluations do not seem to vary depending on how well-informed the

poll, occurring only two or three times a month, they do extend back into the summer, providing a portrait of opinion before the campaign really kicked into high gear. These polls also included a broad range of questions about the candidates and various issues relevant to the campaign. Their chief shortcoming is that many of these questions appeared only sporadically, making any time series patchy and incomplete.

The final data source is the 2000 National Election Study. The NES is of course the traditional powerhouse of American electoral data, unparalleled in the extensive variety of questions it asks. The NES sample also contains spatial and temporal variation, as respondents were interviewed from September 5 until the eve of the election. I investigate the effects of spatial variation first by simply comparing respondents in "battleground" and "safe" states. I then investigate the effects of both space and time simultaneously by determining the level of advertising that each respondent had experienced, based on the media market in which they live and on when they were interviewed. A striking number of respondents were *not* ostensibly exposed to any presidential campaign advertising, and there is evidence that their decision-making differed substantially from those who could have been exposed. These differences mirror those between voters in battleground and safe states.

The 2000 NES is particularly useful because of a crucial experiment in survey mode. Traditionally, the NES has interviewed respondents face-to-face in their homes. These respondents are located through multi-stage cluster sampling. The NES samples geographic units in three stages: first, the "primary sampling unit" of U.S. Metropolitan Statistical Areas or New England County Metropolitan Areas; second, "area segments" comprised of census blocks within those units; and third, housing units within those segments. Actual respondents are selected at random from within the housing units.[2] The advantage of this sampling procedure is that it allows the NES to locate

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respondent is.

[2] The documentation for the 2000 study contains more detailed information about the sampling procedure. It is available on-line at http://www.umich.edu/~nes.

respondents physically, so that they can then be contacted and eventually, if all goes well, interviewed face to face.

The disadvantage is that it is poorly designed to sample any kind of politically salient geographic unit, be it states or congressional districts or what have you.[3] A given sample may be impeccably representative of the American voting-age population, but contain within it a skewed distribution of states. Because of this, scholars cannot make valid inferences when incorporating contextual information from the geographic unit in question—a point made by Westlye (1983) in regards to Senate elections and Stoker and Bowers (2001) in regards to Congressional elections. Stoker and Bowers write, "In other words, there is no reason to believe that findings based on the [congressional districts] that fall into the NES sample would be similar to what one would observe if analyzing the population of [districts] as a whole" (22). In regards to the presidential election, a cluster sampling design will capture certain states but miss others entirely. This has consequences if a skewed sample fails to reflect the true distribution of state-level characteristics such as campaign intensity.

The 2000 NES allows researchers to avoid this problem because it varied the survey mode: 55 percent of the sample derives from a cluster sample and was interviewed face-to-face (the "FTF" portion), but the remaining 45 percent was sampled at random from a list of phone numbers and then interviewed by phone (hereinafter, the "RDD" portion, meaning random-digit-dialing).[4] This phone poll is not based on any prior sampling of geographic units. Respondents are just plucked off of a gigantic list of numbers and called.[5] The phone poll therefore includes a more representative sample of states—all 48 continental United States, as opposed to 28 states in the FTF portion—one

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[3] Nardulli (1994: 468) makes this point strongly: "Because most survey data are derived from *national* probability samples, researchers cannot use them to conduct subnational analyses of electoral change."

[4] Out of a sample of 1,807, 1,006 were initially interviewed in person and 801 by phone. In the post-election wave, some respondents first interviewed in person were interviewed by phone, such that in this wave 694 were interviewed in person and 862 by phone. This was done to determine the effects of survey mode. The mode of interview in the pre-election wave is crucial here, since it indicates the sampling technique used to identify the respondents.

[5] More specifically, the numbers were selected from a list of 5,760 phone numbers, which were those identified as potentially working residential numbers from an initial list of 8,500 phone numbers from the forty-eight continental states.

that allows a truly valid investigation of campaign intensity. (In Appendix F, I provide a short comparison of the RDD and FTF samples to illustrate this point.)[6]

IV. Variation over Time

[insert Figures 5.1 and 5.2 here]

If a campaign is to "matter," it should induce variation over time. Things on Election Day should not be as they were on Labor Day. Ideally, and perhaps most fundamentally, people's attention to the campaign should increase through the summer and fall. Likewise, we might expect the fortunes of the candidates to ebb and flow. Figure 5.1 demonstrates the former, drawing on the CBS-*New York Times* polls. Both the percentage of respondents who said the campaign as "interesting" (as opposed to "dull") and who said they were paying "a lot" of attention to the campaign increased notably from July to November. Figure 5.2 presents the point estimates of Gore's percent of the two-party vote, along with a smoothed line to iron out sampling fluctuation.[7] This figure tells the by-now-familiar story of Gore's early lead, his "fall" after the first debate, and his resurgence at the campaign's end.

The puzzle in these results is that Gore under-achieved relative to what the prevailing economic and political conditions would predict; indeed, various forecasting models had Gore winning with as much as 56 percent of the vote (see, *e.g.*, Campbell 2001; Holbrook 2001; Lewis-Beck 2001; Wlezien 2001). Gore had been part of an administration that coincided with a very robust economy. Over 90 percent of CBS-New York Times respondents in two separate polls (Sept. 27-Oct. 1 and Oct. 18-21) said that the economy was "fairly good" or "very good"—though, as Frankovic and McDermott (2001) point out, such prolonged economic health may have made voters complacent, as very few of them thought the economy was the most important issue for government to address. That said, Gore was perceived as the better protector of economic health: in the last CBS

[6] An extension of the analysis would be to use other phone polls, including the CBS and Gallup polls, to examine both spatial and temporal variation simultaneously. That is one direction I plan to go in future versions of this project.

poll, 76 percent of respondents said that Gore was likely "to make sure the country's economy remains strong." Sixty-five percent said that of Bush, a figure that is noticeably lower than at the campaign's outset, when 80 percent expressed confidence in Bush's economic stewardship. Secondly, Gore had served as vice-president under a president whose job approval ratings were solidly positive at this point in time: the fraction who approved of Clinton's job performance was around 61 percent for the entire time span of these CBS polls. Other polls confirm these results. In the 2000 NES, for example, 83 percent of respondents thought the economy had "gotten better" or "stayed the same" over the past year. Sixty-seven percent approved of how Clinton was doing his job as president.

In terms of the substantive issues of the campaign, Gore also had a distinct advantage. The most important issues, as identified by NES respondents, were education, Social Security, and health care, all of them on traditionally Democratic turf.[8] In the July 20-23 CBS-NYT poll, 59 percent of respondents thought that the Democrats were "more likely" than Republicans to "improve education." Similarly, 55 percent thought the Democrats more likely to "make the right decisions about Social Security" and 65 percent thought them more likely to "improve the health care system." As a candidate, Gore also had the net advantage on most of these issues: averaging across the CBS polls that included these questions, 65 percent of respondents judged him likely to improve health care (vs. 41 percent for Bush), and 80 percent judged him likely to "preserve Social Security" (vs. 61 percent for Bush). On education did Bush achieve parity, 67 percent judged him likely to improve education, a figure only marginally less than the 70 percent who said the same of Gore.

Moreover, on many of these issues, the public's position was more similar to Gore's than to Bush's:

- 62 percent thought that the federal government would do a better job than insurance companies at "providing affordable prescription drug coverage to the elderly" (CBS-*NYT* Sept. 9-11).

[7] The smoothing procedure is kernel smoothing, with a bandwidth of .3. I used the ksm function of Stata 7.

- 71 percent agreed that "we must protect the environment even if it means jobs in your community are lost because of it" (CBS-*NYT* July 13-16).
- 58 percent thought that the federal government should do more "when it comes to regulating the environmental and safety practices of business" (CBS-*NYT* July 13-16).
- 87 percent favored child safety locks on handguns (CBS-*NYT* July 13-16) and 60 percent believed that "laws covering the sale of handguns should be made more strict" (CBS-*NYT* Oct. 29-31).
- 35 percent favored using the budget surplus to "preserve programs like Medicare and social security," while only 14 percent favored using it to "cut income taxes"—with the remaining 50 percent saying "pay down the national debt" or "something else" (CBS-*NYT* Oct. 6-9).

On more general questions about the role of government, the public did express relatively conservative views—*e.g.*, in response to this question, "if you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services," 66 percent chose a smaller government (CBS-*NYT* Nov. 1-4). Nevertheless, it would appear that both the public's agenda, their views of how the candidates would handle this agenda, and the specific measures that they would take to address this agenda are all in Gore's favor.

[insert Table 5.1 here]

Furthermore, public opinion was by and large constant over the campaign, as Table 5.1 demonstrates. Party identification and ideology, here given as the percentage of Democrats and liberals, were quite stable. Opinion on specific campaign issues also manifests little change. The only consistent and notable trend is this decline in support for using the surplus to preserve social security. However, this shift away from Gore's stated preference—the infamous "lockbox"—did not mean more support for Bush's tax cut. "Retrospective" evaluations of Clinton's job approval and

[8] This is based on v000431 in the NES. More detailed information about coding is available on request.

the country's overall direction were uniformly positive. There appears to be little outright persuasion, with voters shifting their views in response to some particularly convincing message.

So what aspects of this campaign might have damaged Gore's chances? The obvious candidate is Clinton himself. As is by now well-known, positive approval of Clinton's job performance co-existed with very negative perceptions of Clinton as a person. Eighty-three percent of NES respondents said that the phrase "he is moral" describes Clinton "not very well" or "not at all well." The Gore campaign believed that Clinton was poison and did not call upon him to stump for Gore, even in states like Arkansas. Wrote one reporter in mid-October, "After eight years together, here is the state of the relationship between President Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore: Mr. Gore won't pick up the phone. He doesn't call, and Mr. Clinton doesn't know why" (*New York Times*, 20 October 2000).

Another problem was Gore himself. Famously wooden, he did little to enhance his likeability during the campaign. His debate performance, particularly in the first one, was seen as schoolmarmish—Vowell (2003: 101) describes him in this debate as "the sighing, eye-rolling, eager beaver, buttinsky Gore." Perhaps even more importantly, a series of not-quite-truths—about a student in Florida who had to stand in science class because there was not enough space, about whether he had visited Texas with the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency after several serious fires, and, most famously, about how his mother-in-law paid more for prescription arthritis medication than Gore did for the same medicine for his dog—were gleefully broadcast by Republicans, who began to claim that there was good reason to doubt Gore's veracity in general.[9]

[insert Table 5.2 about here]

And there is evidence that perceptions of Gore's honesty declined during the campaign. Several of the CBS-*NYT* polls asked respondents one or both of these two questions: "Do you think Al Gore can be trusted to keep his word as President, or not?" and "Do you think Al Gore says what

[9] See Vowell (2003), however, for a discussion of how one particular tale—that Gore told a high school classroom that he was responsible for discovering the polluted Love Canal in New York—was based on a factual misunderstanding of what Gore actually said.

he really believes most of the time, or does he say what he thinks people want to hear?" Table 5.2 gives responses to these questions as well as several other traits. Both indicators of Gore's honesty decline over time. While 70 percent of respondents in the August 18-20 poll said they trusted Gore to keep his word, only 52 percent did so in the October 6-9 poll. Similarly, the percent of people who agreed that Gore "says what he really believes" declined by 12 points from August to November. Furthermore, those I do not display the data here, these trends are not limited to those already predisposed to dislike Gore. They are instead evident in every partisan group. For example, the proportion of Democrats who state that Gore "says what he really believes" declines from 71 percent to 56 percent between August and November. Bush is not nearly so afflicted; in fact, the percentage of people who believe he "says what he believes" increases slightly over time.

The remainder of Table 5.2 demonstrates relative parity in terms of these other traits. In terms of whether the candidates can "deal wisely with an international crisis," have "strong qualities of leadership," and "cares about the needs and problems of people like yourself," the differences between Gore and Bush are fairly small—about 5 or 6 percentage points. Gore's biggest advantage, not surprisingly, concerns preparedness—*i.e.*, "has Bush/Gore prepared himself well enough for the job of President and all the issues a President has to face, or do you think he needs a few more years to prepare?" A large majority of people sees Gore as ready, while a bare majority considers Bush fully prepared. Though the gap between Gore and Bush shrinks over time, these data demonstrate that Gore's experience paid off, but that doubts about his veracity could have had adverse consequences.

To investigate whether the campaign primed any of these considerations, I estimated successive models in each poll, including each specific campaign issue or traits measure one at a time, as well as party identification and ideology, which serve as controls. Ideally, of course, one would create a more fully specified model including all relevant variables, but unfortunately most of these variables, excepting party identification and ideology, were included somewhat haphazardly. Thus, I

build these very simple models not because they capture the voter's decision calculus, but because they provide useful insight into temporal dynamics.[10]

I present two quantities of interest. First, each variable's effect on the probability of a Gore vote, represented as the shift in probability arising from a one-unit shift in the variable while holding party identification and ideology constant.[11] The trend in these effects will indicate whether a particular issue gained salience, or became "primed," as the campaign went on. Second, I present how over-time shifts in the distribution of each variable and in its relationship to vote choice would have affected Gore's predicted share of the vote. I multiply the predicted probability of a Gore vote at each category of an independent variable by the percent of respondents in that category, and sum those numbers. I represent this quantity with reference to the initial poll in which the variable is included, since the concern here is not with the absolute magnitude but with the change over time. A variety of caveats attend this calculation, notably that it is merely a *ceteris paribus* prediction based on a single issue, looking in particular only at the hypothetical "moderate independent." Nevertheless, any changes in this predicted vote share over the campaign illustrate in a tangible fashion how priming can have consequences for candidates' fortunes.

[insert Table 5.3 here]

Table 5.3 presents the effects of party identification, ideology, and specific campaign issues. The first two rows represent the results of a model including only party identification and ideology. The effect of party identification is fairly constant over time: a one-unit shift, from independent to Democrat, increases the likelihood of voting for Gore by about .49. The stability of this effect and of aggregate partisanship itself mean that there was no net advantage to either candidate over the course of the campaign: Gore's predicted share of the vote in the final poll is only 1 percent less than that in the earliest poll. Ideology, by contrast, does have an increasingly large effect through August,

[10] As best as I can discern from the CBS-*NYT* documentation, questions about presidential vote choice were asked only of registered voters. Thus the models that follow draw upon only those respondents.
[11] More specifically, I set party identification and ideology to their midpoints, "independent" and "moderate," respectively. This has some substantive merit as well, since these centrist "swing" voters were arguably crucial in this very close election.

September, and October, peaking at .26 and then declining slightly afterwards. This makes sense in that ideology is a proxy for people's views on a variety of issues; if the campaign gradually acquainted voters with the candidates and their respective ideologies, voters should better connect their own ideology to their vote decision. The net effects of this increase in explanatory power are rather small, however: the predicted partisan division of the vote rarely changes by more than a point or two over these four months.[12]

The effects of specific political issues demonstrate considerably more change during the campaign. Three of these issues—abortion, social security, and vouchers—have a much stronger impact later in the fall than in the first July poll. The effect of abortion increases from .07 to .26; that of social security more than doubles, from .09 to .26; and that of school vouchers more than triples, from .07 to .26. Note that these effects are commensurate with that of ideology at its peak. Moreover, each of these shifts bears fruit for Gore. Because the distribution of abortion opinion is skewed towards the pro-choice position—in that nearly twice as many people thing that abortion should be "generally available" than think that it should be "not permitted"—its increasing significance improves Gore's predicted vote share by 18 points as of late September. Likewise, because there was a small decline in support for private investment of social security monies between July and October, the enhanced explanatory power of this variable nets Gore 8 points. There is a similar benefit from vouchers (11 points).

The remaining issues produce less dramatic results. There is a noticeable increase in the effect of how one wants to spend the surplus, though this does not shift the predicted vote division all that much.[13] The effect of views about size of government declines a tad, while that of views about the current direction of the country increase slightly. On balance, Clinton approval, like party identification and ideology, has a powerful effect that varies little over the course of the campaign.

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[12] A similar model using the Gallup tracking poll shows no real trend in either party identification or ideology. Unfortunately, differences between these two sets of polls in survey design and measurement of these variables make it somewhat difficult to compare the results directly.

[13] This single "surplus" measure is constructed as follows: -1 (cut income taxes); 0 (reduce debt or "something else"); 1 (preserve Medicare and social security).

[insert Table 5.4 here]

Table 5.4 presents comparable figures for perceptions of various candidate traits. Here I combine perceptions of Gore and Bush into a single indicator, coded –1 if only Bush was perceived as prepared, *etc.*, 1 if only Gore was so perceived, and 0 if both or neither of the candidates were so perceived. The table entries represent the effect of these indicators. As in the previous table, the results are based on models that include only one trait at a time, controlling for party identification and ideology.

As demonstrated in Table 5.2, Gore's biggest strength was his preparedness. And unsurprisingly, this variable has a potent effect on vote choice: a shift from indifference to perceiving Gore, but not Bush, as prepared, increases the likelihood of a Gore vote by .44 in September, and then by slightly higher more in successive polls. However, because the balance of opinion does not vary much over these weeks, there is no net gain in Gore's predicted vote share. By contrast, Gore's weakness, his perceived honesty, has deleterious consequences. As fewer people believed that Gore would "keep his word," Gore loses 2 and then 4 points relative to the August 18 poll. Even more dramatic is the effect of "says what he believes": the increasing effect of this variable combined with more negative perceptions costs Gore 2 and then 7 points.

Gore does better in terms the remaining traits. In the case of "leadership" and "deals wisely with a crisis," Gore gains about 4 to 5 points relative to the initial July 20 poll. Perceptions of crisis management exhibit the greatest increase in explanatory power of any of these trait perceptions, increasing from .35 in late July to .48 in the penultimate poll. Note, however, that Gore's gains occur fairly early on and do not grow as the campaign progresses. Thus, in a sense, though Bush did have to address concerns about his overall competence, given both his short experience in public office and his flair for the malapropism, these concerns did not become more prominent as the campaign progressed. From roughly the end of August until Election Day, Bush holds his own.

These results suggest two things about the 2000 campaign. First, Gore generally benefited from the growing salience of issues like abortion, vouchers, and the investment of social security.

Second, he suffered because people's perceptions of his honesty grew less favorable over the campaign—even as he maintained an advantage on other dimensions, like preparedness. At a more theoretical level, these results demonstrate how campaigns can prime sophisticated cues such as specific political issues.

V. Variation Across Space

Presidential campaigns are seldom national campaigns. Candidates typically focus on winning the votes not of Americans generally but of Americans living in particular states. While some states have political histories and cultures that make them nearly unwinnable for one of the parties, others are truly competitive, so-called "battleground" states where the outcome is actually in question. The Electoral College adds a further twist, encouraging candidates to campaign in states not only where they can conceivably win, but also where big chunks of electoral votes are up for grabs. This understanding of presidential campaigns as fundamentally subnational permeates candidate strategy, news coverage, and popular understanding. The candidates identify the battleground states and shower love and affection on them. They visit these states repeatedly and advertise heavily within them. Meanwhile, they ignore states considered "safe" for one of the candidates. For example, in 1992, Bill Clinton was the first presidential candidate to concentrate his advertising expenditures on ads that ran only in specific local markets, not in the nation as a whole. The ultimate goal of this strategy was to win twenty targeted states, which together would provide half of the required 270 electoral votes (Devlin 1993). Clinton won nineteen of them. In 2000, both Bush and Gore focused almost exclusively on battleground states. Said Gore advertising director Bill Knapp, "The media strategy was the battleground state strategy. We were advertising in no state that was not a pure battleground state" (quoted in Devlin 2001: 2356). Althaus, Nardulli, and Shaw

(2002) and Goldstein and Freedman (2002) demonstrate that opposing presidential candidates often campaign in exactly the same geographic areas.[14]

[insert Figures 5.3 and 5.4 about here]

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 provide a portrait of campaign advertising and how it varied over time and space. Figure 5.3 includes separate trendlines for advertising on behalf of Bush and of Gore; the quantity of interest is the number of ads aired daily from June 1 until November 6.[15] There is relatively little advertising throughout the summer, with the exception of a spike in Bush advertising around the Republican national convention. But beginning in September, there is a relatively steady increase in advertising volume (with weekly periodicity throughout, since candidates typically advertise less on weekends than on weekdays). There is also rough parity between the two candidates until the very end of the campaign, when Bush advertising vastly outnumbered Gore's.

Figure 5.4 provides one illustration of how advertising varied across space. While candidates are naturally concerned with individual states because of Electoral College dynamics, the economy of advertising revolves around a different geographical unit, the media market. Individual states may contain one or more media markets. California, for example, has twelve. Furthermore, media markets do not obey state boundaries. Some residents of northern California share a media market—the Medford-Klamath Falls market—with residents of southern Oregon. New Jersey has no unique market at all; New Jerseyans live either in the New York or the Philadelphia market. Thus candidates must buy advertising in markets even when those markets are not optimally located in terms of battleground states.

The four markets in Figure 5.4 include three in relatively important states, Dayton, Miami, and Minneapolis-St. Paul, and one in a largely uncontested state, San Francisco. These demonstrate how much the quantity and temporal pattern of advertising can vary across geography. Miami, the

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[14] However, Beck *et al.* (1997) show that there is no apparent interaction between the efforts of Democratic and Republican party organizations at the county level during the 1992 presidential election.

[15] Each airing of each advertisement is counted once. Since candidates can air an ad not only many times throughout a day, but also on multiple network affiliates, this quantity can become quite large. These figures

largest market in what was to become the pivotal state, experienced significant advertising early on, in late July, and then continually through the fall. At its highest level, over 200 ads ran in this market in a day. Dayton also experienced advertising early on, but as the fall progressed the candidates did not increase their attention to this market. If anything, advertising in Dayton decreased slightly. Minneapolis, by contrast, displays a much different pattern. There is no advertising in the Twin Cities until October 10, and then it increased rapidly thereafter, to over 250 ads in the last week of the campaign. Finally, San Francisco, perhaps the least competitive market in a relatively uncompetitive state, saw only a modicum of advertising, just at the very end of the race.

[insert Figure 5.5 here]

Differences in advertising are mirrored in another measure of candidate attention, appearances within a given state. Though candidates sometimes travel to fairly uncompetitive states for a variety of reasons—fundraising, building relationships with key party constituencies, "feinting" so as to convince the opponent to expend resources in these states—they generally concentrate their attention where it counts, in the so-called battleground states. To illustrate this, Figure 5.5 presents the number of candidate appearances in the states, broken down by the *Cook Political Report*'s classification of states. This classification has four categories:

1. "Solid" states considered safely in one candidate's camp: for Gore, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont; for Bush, Alaska, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

2. "Likely" states considered to favor one candidate strongly: for Gore, New Jersey; for Bush, Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Ohio.

include ads aired by Bush and Gore themselves, by the party committees, and by outside groups directly advocating for a candidate.

3. "Leaning" states considered to favor one candidate, but not with certainty: for Gore, California, Delaware, Illinois, Washington; for Bush, Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Nevada, and Virginia.

4. "Toss-up" states considered too close to call: Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

As Figure 5.5 demonstrates, both Gore and Bush concentrated their attentions on these toss-up states.[16] The number of appearances increased almost exponentially from June 7 until Election Day. By contrast, the number of appearances in the remaining three groups of states increases much more slowly, though there is by the end of the campaign a monotonic relationship between the number of appearances and the *Cook Political Report* classification, with "likely" states followed by "leaning" states and "solid" states.

It stands to reason, then, that voters in different states experience the campaign differently. Some see a barrage of advertising. Some do not. Some see the candidates pass through their communities. Others do not. Recently, Shaw (1999a, 1999b) has drawn on this "natural experiment" to demonstrate how campaign activity affects candidate fortunes in aggregated tracking polls. However, at the individual level, studies of presidential campaigns and elections frequently ignore variation among states.[17] Common practice dictates analyzing national samples to draw

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[16] The candidate appearances data come from daily reports of the *New York Times* and were graciously shared by Richard Johnston. I exclude Gore's "appearances" in the District of Columbia and Bush's "appearances" in Texas since the vast majority of these were not intended to woo voters in those two places.

[17] Iyengar and Simon (2000: 153) point out the folly in this: "The problem with this aggregate approach, of course, is hat it masks the considerable cross-sectional variation in the volume and tone of advertising. For example, Bill Clinton's advertisements were nowhere to be seen in California during the 1992 campaign simply because George Bush had conceded the state. Viewers in the 'battleground' states, on the other hand, would have been exposed to much higher doses of advertising. This variation also lends itself to the study of campaign effects." Jackson and Carsey (1999a, 1999b) examine individual-level variation across states in the effect of party identification, ideology, and various demographic characteristics on presidential voting—though they do link this variation to state culture and history rather than to campaign strategy. Scholars have also examined how Electoral College incentives empower certain states (Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1986) and structure candidate strategies (Brams and Davis 1974, 1975; Colantoni, Levesque, and Ordeshook 1975a, 1975b; Bartels 1985; Shaw 1999c), but these literatures do not speak to how such strategies might affect public opinion.

conclusions about the country as a whole, even though "when respondents are drawn randomly from throughout the entire nation, it is extremely difficult...to capture the particularly nuances or any one respondent's media environment" (Mondak 1995: 150). Such practice has a particularly unfortunate consequence: it elides the role of presidential campaigns. Once attention is paid to the states, the campaign's relevance becomes evident, even though presidential races have traditionally been considered the least likely sites of campaign-driven change.[18]

Given the increased activity in battleground states, voters who live in them should experience the campaign differently. We might think of their experience in terms of "agitation," in two senses. The first is psychological agitation: campaign activity could pique voters' interest, leading them to follow the race more closely, become more invested in the outcome, and so on.[19] Second, campaign activity could produce behavioral agitation. Voters in battleground states might attend to the news more closely, witness more advertising, get more phone calls about the election, and even participate themselves in the campaign. Some of this behavioral agitation is in essence passive, as it reflects exposure to campaign communication and mobilization. Other parts are more active, leading voters to work on behalf of a candidate, for example.

[insert Table 5.5 about here]

Table 5.5 presents a variety of indicators that capturing both aspects of campaign "experience." To simplify presentation, I use only a dichotomous measure of campaign activity, dividing respondents by whether they lived in a "battleground" or "non-battleground" states. Battleground states comprise the "toss-up" states as designated by the *Cook Political Report* plus battleground states as designated by CNN. Taking advantage of CNN's judgment means adding several states to this category—Arkansas, Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Nevada, Ohio, and

[18] One could easily question whether the "treatment" that a campaign provides in battleground states is really exogenous to the effects one observes from such a treatment. Perhaps battleground states are predisposed in some way to manifest the effects I would like to attribute to the campaign. Appendix G provides a few initial thoughts on this issue.

[19] A concomitant process, which I cannot explore, given these data, is that campaign activity stimulates political discussion (see Huckfeldt, Sprague, and Levine 2000).

Washington, each of which was arguably "in play" for Gore and Bush.[20] The sample here includes those respondents interviewed by phone as part of the 2000 NES.

In general, respondents in battleground states do not report more psychological agitation. They are not more prone to pay attention to the campaign or to express concern.[21] However, respondents in battleground states do manifest more behavioral agitation in some areas, especially exposure to and involvement in the campaign. A higher percentage of voters in battleground states report reading about the campaign in the newspaper as well as seeing campaign advertisements and programming, though here the different in exposure to advertising is most substantively meaningful: in battleground states 84.6 percent of respondents report seeing campaign advertisements, compared to 69.2 percent in non-battleground states.[22] Similarly, voters in battleground states are more likely to be contacted or receive mail from a party. For example, 44.8 percent of respondents in battleground states were contacted, as opposed to 34.8 percent of those in non-battleground states. Finally, there is evidence that respondents in battleground states were themselves more active in the campaign, in that more tried to influence others' vote and participated in a campaign activity of some sort.[23] This confirms the finding in Table 5.4, that parties and candidates concentrate their resources in states where it will matter the most—though the campaign's coverage is such that voters in less competitive states still encounter advertisements and the like. The general pattern of results suggests that voters experience the campaign differently depending on where they live.

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[20] Other measures produced similar results to those in Table 5.4. First, using the *Cook Political Report* exclusively, I categorized states into three categories instead of two: "safe," "leaning," and "toss-up." As expected, this produced some linear relationships with the campaign exposure variables—*e.g.*, the percent that reported seeing advertising increases from safe states to leaning states to toss-up states—but in general the same story emerges. Second, employing a dichotomized appearances variable, splitting the states into those with less than ten and ten or more appearances, produces very similar results.

[21] One wonders whether these sorts of indicators are at least somewhat contaminated by social desirability bias, which could mute the differences between battleground and non-battleground states. I examined the CBS-*NYT* indicators presented in Figure 5.1 and found similarly small differences between battleground and non-battleground states.

[22] It seems likely that an ordinal measure allowing respondents to specify roughly how many advertisements they have seen would pick up even more variation based on campaign activity.

[23] Here I define campaign participation as doing one or more of the following: displaying a button or sticker, attending meetings or rallies, doing any other campaign work, or donating money to a candidate, party, or group.

The next question is: does greater exposure to campaign activity affect the vote decision? In particular, does campaign activity make certain considerations salient to vote choice? To get at this question, I estimate a logit model of vote choice (1-Gore, 0-Bush) that included these variables:

- Party identification and ideology.
- Three "retrospective" measures: evaluations of the national economy, evaluations of Clinton's job performance, and evaluations of Clinton's personal integrity. These capture both the positive and negative aspects of the Clinton administration's eight years in office.
- A host of variables that measure the respondents' issue positions: whether the government should spend more and provide more services; how to spend the budget surplus; abortion, gun control, the environment, and government vs. private health insurance.
- Two indices of candidate traits, organized into "competence" and "integrity." As in the CNS-*NYT* polls, measures comparing the candidates on these dimensions suggest that Gore's relative advantage lies in his competence (where he has a slight advantage) than in his integrity (where the candidates are evaluated roughly equally).

All variables are coded in a pro-Gore direction, and more information about question wording and coding is available in Appendix H.[24]

I investigate the campaign's effect on voter decision-making in two ways. First, I simply estimated separate models of vote choice in battleground and non-battleground states as defined by CNN and the *Cook Political Report*. The advantage of this scheme is that it "captures" the variety of campaign activity that voters might be exposed to, including advertising, candidate appearances, and attendant media coverage. The disadvantage is that, because media markets overlap state lines, voters in some uncompetitive states may have been exposed to political advertising. For example,

[24] Given that the RDD sample is rather small (n=801), I impute values on the independent variables to replace missing data, drawing on the Amelia package described by King *et al.* (2001) and available for downloading at King's webpage, http://gking.harvard.edu. The logit models thus represent averages across several datasets, each of which contains a realization of the imputed values.

Bush and Gore advertised in the Boston market primarily to reach New Hampshire voters, not Massachusetts voters.

To get around this difficulty, I first obtained from the NES the city and county in which each respondent lived (information that was not publicly released for phone respondents). Then, using information provided by Nielsen Media Research, I coded the media market in which each respondent lived. Based on that information, and knowing also the date on which the respondent was interviewed, I could then determine using the CMAG data how much advertising the respondent could theoretically have witnessed.[25] I then constructed a simple dichotomous indicator of whether the respondent lived in a market and was interviewed at a time in which he or she could have been exposed to some advertising, or not. While this measure is exceedingly blunt, it provides a reasonable first cut at the effect of the campaign.[26]

Not surprisingly, these two measures are related. In terms of the total, cumulated ads aired in a given market by a given date, NES respondents who lived in battleground states were exposed to an average of 3832 ads (with a median of 3902). NES respondents who lived in non-battleground states were exposed to an average of 557 (with a median of 0). A key question is whether the apparent effects of campaign activity on voter decision-making are robust across both measures.

How should we expect voters exposed to varying levels of campaigning to differ in their decision-making? One expectation is that specific issues, such as the size of government, the budget surplus, and abortion, should matter more in battleground states, for the same reason that they mattered more as in October than in July in the previous section: campaign activity provides voters with information that allows them to connect better their own issue positions to their vote decision.

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[25] For 19 respondents I could not determine the market in which they lived, either because the requisite information was unavailable from the NES or in the Nielsen documentation. A much larger group of respondents (N=394) lived in media markets in which CMAG did not monitor advertising. Their sample of markets includes only the top 75 markets, which excludes those markets in which about 20 percent of Americans live, and, in this case, about 22 percent of the NES sample lived. Nevertheless, this leaves a healthy number of cases with information about advertising.

[26] Future iterations of this project will do much, much more with the CMAG data and their impact on opinion. I will take account not only of the volume of advertising but also of its thematic content. Campaign priming should depend crucially on the precise messages conveyed. While the CMAG data were released with some

A second expectation concerns the role of retrospective considerations. A frequently heard refrain from the campaign concerned Gore's reluctance to run on the Clinton administration's record. Indeed, Gore himself said in his convention speech. "Our progress on the economy is a good chapter in our history. But now we turn the page and write a new chapter...This election is not an award for past performance." In his post-mortem analysis, Pomper (2001: 141) writes, "Rhetorically and politically, Gore conceded the issue of prosperity to Bush." It is thus possible that as issues like abortion came to the fore in battleground states, retrospective considerations receded. In terms of candidate traits, we might expect concerns about Gore's honesty to wax in battleground states, particularly because Republicans were more than happy to raise such concerns during the campaign—*e.g.*, when Bush said, "I think he is prone to exaggeration," and Dick Cheney said, "He seems to have this uncontrollable desire periodically to add to his reputation, to his record, things that aren't true." Obviously, more specific and empirically grounded hypotheses will emerge from a detailed examination of candidate and party messages, particularly through televised advertising. But even these schematic expectations have some face plausibility and can guide the interpretation here.

[insert Table 5.6 here]

Table 5.6 presents the four models of vote choice using the phone portion of the 2000 NES.[27] Two models are broken down by battleground and non-battleground states and two by whether the respondent was theoretically exposed to advertising. The quantities in these tables are the effect of each variable on the probability of a Gore vote, holding the other variables at their means.[28] Do these models vary depending on campaign intensity? Yes. While party identification strongly conditions vote choice regardless of campaign activity, and ideology never has a statistically significant impact, evaluations of the economy lose all of their explanatory power in battleground

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such information coded (see my discussion of the 1998 data in chapter 2), this information is not sufficient for a wholly credible analysis.

[27] See Appendix Table A-3 for similar models using the entire NES sample. The results are similar to those reported here in almost every important respect.

[28] These shifts in probability and their associated levels of statistical significance were calculated using the Clarify subroutines for Stata 7.0 developed by King, Tomz, and Wittenberg (2000). In this case, Clarify works in concert with the multiple realizations of these data generated by the aforementioned Amelia program in its attempt to impute missing values.

states and in states with some advertising. The difference in its effect could hardly be more striking. In safe states, the associated shift in the probability of a Gore vote is .23; in safe states, it is an incorrectly signed and statistically insignificant -.05. There is a similar disparity comparing respondents ostensibly exposed and unexposed to advertising (.27 vs. .02). The implications for Gore are not salutary: in the states where it mattered the most, he appears not to have benefited at all from the strong economy of the previous eight years.

Trends in both Clinton's job performance and perceptions of his integrity also work against Gore. In states with significant campaign activity, people's (generally positive) evaluations of Clinton's job performance matter less. The coefficient drops in magnitude by more than a half and loses statistical significance in battleground states. The same takes place among respondents in markets with advertising. By contrast, perceptions of Clinton's integrity are strongly significant in battleground states, producing a .26 shift in probability versus .06 among respondents in non-battleground states. A similar, though not as drastic, difference is evident when employing the advertising measure. These results suggest that Monica Lewinsky's shadow was in fact long, whereas other, positive aspects of Clinton lost explanatory power in crucial states. Thus retrospective considerations were less powerful where Bush and Gore spent most of their time and money. Unfortunately for Gore, however, the one consideration that attained greater salience, Clinton's integrity, does not work in his favor.

In competitive states, the race was also much more about "the issues," as hypothesized above. The contrast between non-battleground and battleground states is pronounced. In states with a less intense campaign, however measured, no issue position is ever statistically significant. This applies to something as general as whether to increase "government services and spending" and to something as specific to the 2000 campaign as how to spend the budget surplus. By contrast, several issue positions become relevant in battleground states. Voters relied more on their feelings about the size of government. The effect of "government services and spending" on the probability of a Gore vote increases from essentially zero to .21 in battleground states. Moreover, voters in

contested states/markets also relied on abortion and gun control. The effect of abortion increases from (an incorrectly signed) -.03 in safe states to .18 in battleground states, and that of gun control from -.01 to .18. Campaign activity enables voters to draw on more nuanced information when they go to the ballot box.[29]

Did campaign activity also strengthen how perceptions of the candidates influenced vote choice? Apparently not. Gore's biggest asset, his perceived competence, actually lost explanatory power in battleground states, where its effect is less than half the size of that in non-battleground states. But this trend is not evident when distinguishing voters by their advertising exposure. There are no differences in the effect of perceptions of the candidate's competence. Thus it appears that, while Republican messages criticizing Gore for his excursions at Buddhist temples and for other liberties with the facts may have sullied him over time, they did not necessarily prime this consideration in battleground states.

These results thus appear to indicate some degree of trouble for Gore. Though certain of these issues are traditionally "owned" by Democrats and thus are undoubtedly fertile soil for Gore to till, particularly among moderate swing voters, one of his biggest strengths, the national economy, lost explanatory power in battleground states. Meanwhile there is evidence that one of his biggest problems, Clinton's scandals, gained explanatory power in these most crucial states.

One way to understand the effects of priming on support for Gore and Bush is to look at key constituent groups of each party coalition and compare the probability of their supporting each of the candidates in non-battleground and battleground states. The party coalition groups I examine are fairly standard: for Democrats, racial minorities, women, union members, and those of relatively low socioeconomic status; and for Republicans, whites, religious conservatives, men, and those of relatively high socioeconomic status. I also examine two groups of potential swing voters, partisan independents and ideological moderates. To produce a predicted candidate preference, I simply compute the predicted probability of support for Gore or Bush given the average partisanship, issue

[29] I am not yet seeking to attribute the greater impact of these issues to specific campaign themes or messages.

positions, and trait evaluations of each particular group. These probabilities are presented in Table 5.7. For example, if all independent variables are set to their means for blacks in non-battleground states, the predicted probability of a Gore vote is .98. For blacks in battleground states is .94.

[insert Table 5.7 about here]

Comparing these two groups of states demonstrates two interesting trends. First, Gore's support among traditional Democratic constituencies tends to decline in battleground states. For example, women in non-battleground states are predicted to support Gore with probability .68. This declines to .55 in battleground states. There are similar, and in some cases greater, declines among blue-collar and service employees, the poor, and union members. The only counter-example is blacks, who remain stalwart Democrats no matter what. The second trend is essentially the converse: Bush's support among traditional Republican constituencies increases in battleground states. The probability of a Bush vote among whites is .49 in safe states and .70 in battleground states. Comparable increases occur for each of the other groups. If one imperative of campaigning is mobilizing your base, these results suggest that Bush was more successful than Gore. And indeed, this makes sense, given that it is precisely Democratic constituencies who are more likely to have favorable views of Clinton and the economy; that these considerations were less salient in battleground states weakens their support for Gore. Both groups of swing voters manifest a similar pattern. In battleground states, the probability of both the average independent's and the average moderate's supporting Gore declines relative to non-battleground states.[30]

These results suggest that spatial variation in campaign activity has consequences. Voters in battleground states report more exposure to and contact by the campaigns. Moreover, voters in battleground states and voters who were exposed to some campaign advertising draw on very different sorts of criteria when making a vote decision, relying more on their attitudes towards

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Content analysis of campaign messages is a necessary first step.

[30] An alternative hypothesis is that differences these probabilities in battleground and non-battleground states arise solely from mean differences in the attributes of each group in these states. However, examination of descriptive statistics for each group in the two party coalitions reveals no systematic differences between battleground and non-battleground states.

specific issues in particular. There is also evidence in the 2000 race that retrospective considerations tended to matter less in these states, with the crucial exception of Clinton's personal integrity. The predicted behavior of party coalition members illustrates the substantive impact of campaign-induced priming: Gore fails to rally the faithful, whereas Bush apparently succeeds. Thus, the campaign effects described here have consequences not only for voters but also for candidates.

VI. Conclusion

The 2000 presidential race demonstrates first and foremost that campaigns matter. Evidence of this emerges when one looks over time: as the campaign progressed, voters grew more interested in it, came to have different perceptions of the candidates, and drew more on their feelings about specific issues when arriving at a vote decisions. Further evidence emerges when one looks beyond the nation as a whole and focus on the states. While nationally the presidential campaign appears a monolith, great variation emerges subnationally. Arguably there is not one presidential campaign, but many. Voters in contested states experience and perceive greater campaign activity. Consequently, the factors motivating vote choice in these states differ from those in uncontested states. Voters who were exposed to a truly intense campaign rely more on issues and less on their evaluations of the economy and on their views of Bill Clinton. This suggests that campaign activity stimulates voters to consider particularly nuanced reasons for the vote, ones that go beyond cues like party identification and the economy.

The pattern of priming in battleground states in particular has further implications for the election's outcome. The 2000 election left most scholars and pundits scratching their heads over Al Gore's defeat. How could he have lost amidst conditions so favorable to his party? The results suggest that he lost because the same "fundamentals" that had him winning so easily in forecasting models were largely absent from voters' minds in the states where it mattered the most. Despite fears that Clinton hindered Gore's prospects, my analysis suggests that Gore would have benefited had the Clinton administration's accomplishments, particularly concerning the economy, been more

salient. It is an open question at this point whether Gore, who himself was so reluctant to invoke the record he and Clinton had built since 1992, bears direct responsibility for that unfortunate fact. And certainly invoking the positive aspects of Clinton's reign without bringing up the negative aspects, such as his affair with Monica Lewinsky, is a tricky enterprise at best. Regardless, this finding clearly demonstrates that priming can shape the actual outcome of the election.

Unanswered questions remain. As noted above, what were the actual strategies of Gore and Bush in 2000? What themes and issues characterized were prominent in their campaign advertising? A thorough portrait of the campaign's discourse will produce more specific hypotheses that can be tested using the survey data. If indeed there is a connection between specific messages and the criteria voters use when making up their minds, then priming is not simply an artifact of an intense campaign but instead follows directly from the choices candidates make.

Table 5.1. Trends in Party Identification, Ideology, and Issue Positions

	Starting Date of Poll										
	July		August		September		October			November	
	13	20	4	18	9	27	6	18	29	1	2
PID: Democrat	47%	47	44	48	46	48	47	46	46	47	47
Ideology: liberal	22%	23	20	22	21	21	21	20	19	22	21
Issues											
Abortion "generally available"	32%	39			37	36					
Invest social security bad idea	40%						44				
Oppose vouchers	50%							53			
Use surplus to preserve S. Security	54%				40	38	35				
Use surplus to cut taxes	15%				15	11	14				
Bigger government	41%								32	34	33
Country in right direction				64					57	58	58
Approve of Clinton		63%	59	62	58	62	60	64		61	59

Source: CBS-New York Times polls, July-November 2000.

Table 5.2. Trends in Perceptions of Candidate Traits

	Starting Date of Poll										
	July		August		September		October			November	
	13	20	4	18	9	27	6	18	29	1	2
Trust to keep word											
Gore				69%	54		52				
Bush				65%	57		59				
Says what he believes											
Gore				48%						38	36
Bush				46%						50	50
Prepared											
Gore						75%	75	77	73	72	70
Bush						54%	53	52	54	53	54
Deal wisely with crisis											
Gore		47%	44	55	55		55			59	56
Bush		50%	53	52	50		47			49	50
Leadership											
Gore		61%		67	61	65	66	70			
Bush		74%		73	70	71	72	75			
Cares about me											
Gore		68%	67	74	67	69	65	70		66	65
Bush		60%	64	58	54	58	57	61		60	60

Source: CBS-New York Times polls, July-November 2000.

Table 5.3. The Dynamic Effect of Party Identification, Ideology, and Issue Positions

	Starting Date of Poll										
	July		August		September		October			November	
	13	20	4	18	9	27	6	18	29	1	2
PID											
Effect on p(Gore)	.49	.47	.50	.49	.50	.48	.47	.48	.48	.49	.49
Gore gain/loss	–	-2%	-3%	0%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%
Ideology											
Effect on p(Gore)	.11	.13	.17	.17	.15	.18	.25	.26	.22	.20	.18
Gore gain/loss	–	0%	-1%	3%	-1%	-1%	-2%	-3%	-2%	-1%	-1%
Abortion											
Effect on p(Gore)	.07	.13			.24	.26					
Gore gain/loss	–	11%			18%	18%					
Social security											
Effect on p(Gore)	.09							.26			
Gore gain/loss	–							8%			
Vouchers											
Effect on p(Gore)	.07								.26		
Gore gain/loss	–								11%		
Surplus											
Effect on p(Gore)					.09	.13	.18		.15		
Gore gain/loss					–	1%	2%		0%		
Size of government											
Effect on p(Gore)	.22							.20		.16	.19
Gore gain/loss	–							-3%		-4%	-3%
Direction of country											
Effect on p(Gore)				.28					.29	.36	.34
Gore gain/loss				–					-1%	4%	3%
Clinton approval											
Effect on p(Gore)		.41	.36	.42	.42	.43	.43	.44		.43	.41
Gore gain/loss		–	-5%	0%	-1%	1%	0%	2%		0%	-1%

Table entries are based on trivariate logit models that consist of party identification, ideology, and each of the issues one at a time. "Effect on p(Gore)" is the effect of a one-unit shift in each variable on the probability of voting for Gore, holding party identification at "Independent" and ideology at "moderate." "Gore gain/loss" represents how Gore's predicted vote share would change among the hypothetical "moderate Independent" given shifts in the distribution of the independent variable and in its coefficient over time. These are evaluated relative to the first poll in which the independent variable appears. Source: CBS-New York Times polls, July-November 2000.

Table 5.4. The Dynamic Effect of Trait Perceptions

	Starting Date of Poll									
	July		August		September		October			November
	13	20	4	18	9	27	6	18	29	1	2
Prepared											
Effect on p(Gore)						.44	.44	.46	.47	.46	.46
Gore gain/loss						–	0	3	0	0	-2
Trust to Keep Word											
Effect on p(Gore)				.47	.48		.47				
Gore gain/loss				–	-2		-4				
Says what he believes											
Effect on p(Gore)				.42						.46	.46
Gore gain/loss				–						-2	-7
Deal wisely with crisis											
Effect on p(Gore)		.35	.45	.43	.43		.43			.48	.47
Gore gain/loss		–	-3	3	3		4			5	4
Leadership											
Effect on p(Gore)		.45		.44	.45	.45	.46	.47			
Gore gain/loss		–		4	3	4	4	5			
Cares about me											
Effect on p(Gore)		.48	.47	.44	.48	.48	.46	.48		.49	.49
Gore gain/loss		–	-2	2	2	0	0			-1	-2

*Table entries are based on trivariate logit models that consist of party identification, ideology, and each of the issues one at a time. "Effect on p(Gore)" is the effect of a one-unit shift in each variable on the probability of voting for Gore, holding party identification at "Independent" and ideology at "moderate." "Gore gain/loss" represents how Gore's predicted vote share would change among the hypothetical "moderate Independent" given shifts in the distribution of the independent variable and in its coefficient over time. These are evaluated relative to the first poll in which the independent variable appears. Source: CBS-*New York Times *polls, July-November 2000.*

Table 5.5. Exposure to Campaign Advertising, Party Contact, and Campaign Participation

	Non-battleground States (N=560)	Battleground States (N=241)	Difference
Interest in Campaign			
Paying "very much" attention to campaign (pre)	33.0%	31.6%	-1.4%
Paid "very much" attention to campaign (post)	39.8	40.5	0.7
Cared about outcome of election	81.5	80.5	-1.0
Exposure to Communication			
Read about campaign in paper	61.7	64.6	2.9
Saw campaign advertising	69.2	84.7	15.5*
Saw campaign programming	79.0	84.6	5.6*
Contact and Participation			
Contacted by a party	34.8	44.8	10.0*
Received mail from a party	63.3	72.0	8.7*
Attempted to influence others	34.5	42.3	7.8*
Participated in campaign activity	16.2	23.0	6.8*

*Source: 2000 National Election Study. * difference between non-battleground and battleground states is significant at the .05 level. Battleground states (according to CNN or* The Cook Political Report*): AR, AZ, DE, FL, IL, IA, LA, ME, MI, MN, MO, NV, NH, NM, OH, OR, PA, TN, WA, WV, WI.*

Table 5.6. The Effect of Campaign Activity on Vote Choice Structure

	Safe States Δ prob	Battleground States Δ prob	No Ads Δ prob	Ads Δ prob
Party Identification	.22*	.29*	.22*	.23*
Ideology	-.05	.12	.13	.04
Retrospective Evaluations				
Economic Evaluations	.23*	-.05	.27*	.02
Clinton Job Approval	.07*	.02	.07*	.01
Perceptions of Clinton's Integrity	.08	.26*	.13	.17*
Issues				
Government Services & Spending	.0001	.21*	-.08	.18*
Abortion	-.03	.13*	-.02	.09
Gun Control	-.01	.18*	.04	.12*
Surplus	.23	.16	.21	-.06
Environment	.001	.03	.01	-.003
Health Insurance	.07	.02	.10	.02
Trait Perceptions				
Competence	.30*	.12*	.23*	.24*
Integrity	.07	.03	.01	-.004
N	321	295	219	575

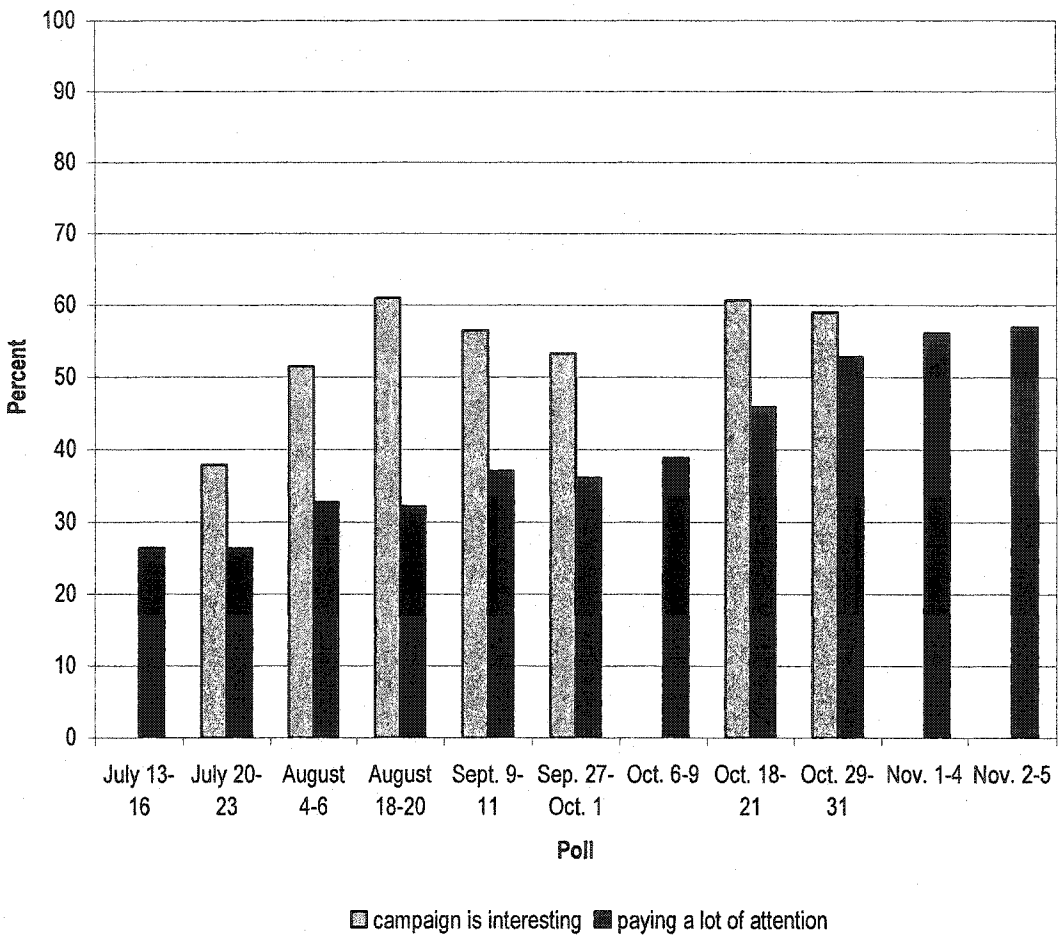
Table entries are the change in the probability of a Gore vote given a one-standard-deviation change in the independent variable, holding all other variables at their means. The dependent variable is coded 0-Bush and 1-Gore. Battleground states (according to CNN or The Cook Political Report*): AR, AZ, DE, FL, IL, IA, LA, ME, MI, MN, MO, NV, NH, NM, OH, OR, PA, TN, WA, WV, WI. Source: 2000 National Election Study. *p<.05 or better (one-tailed).*

Table 5.7. Simulated Behavior of Selected Voter Ideal Types

	Probability of Vote	
	Safe States	Battleground States
Democratic Coalition Groups	**Vote for Gore**	
Blacks	.98	.94
Latinos	.77	.58
Blue-Collar & Service Employees	.58	.28
Women	.68	.55
Income < $25,000	.74	.54
Union Members	.83	.65
Republican Coalition Groups	**Vote for Bush**	
Whites	.49	.70
Born Again	.55	.80
Executives & Professionals	.42	.60
Men	.45	.74
Income > $25,000	.46	.67
Swing Voters	**Vote for Gore**	
Independents	.48	.40
Moderates	.79	.63

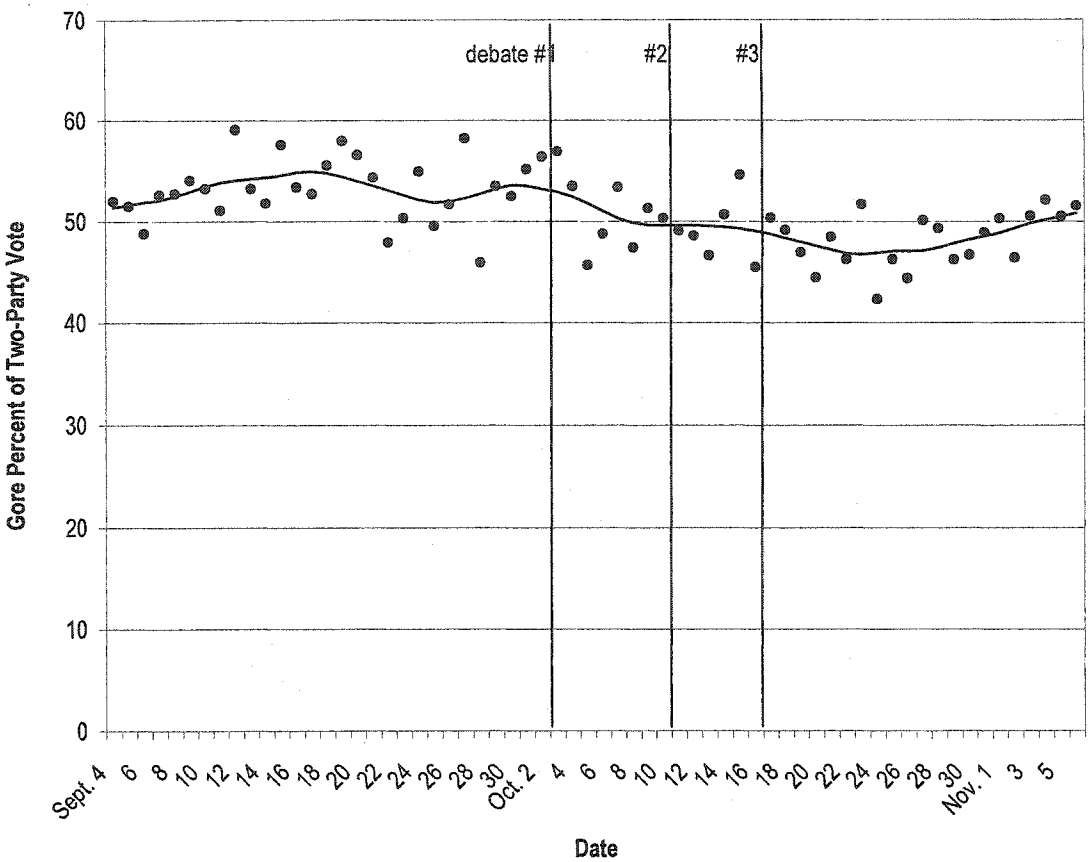
Table entries are the predicted probability of voting for Gore or Bush. Results based on the models in Table 5.6.

Figure 5.1. Interest in and Attention to the Campaign



Source: CBS-New York Times *polls, July-November 2000.*

Figure 5.2. The Dyamics of Candidate Fortunes



Source: Gallup tracking polls, September 4 – November 6 2000.

Figure 5.3. Advertising on Behalf of Bush and Gore

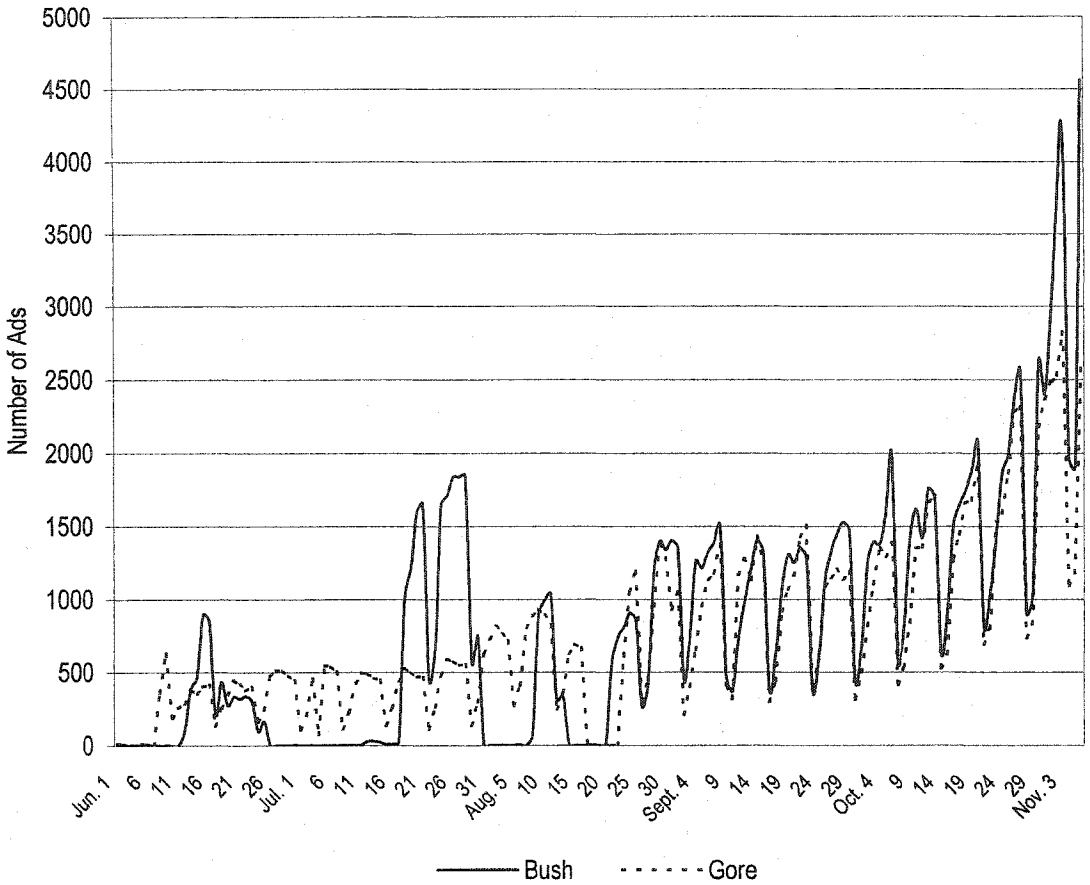


Figure 5.4. Presidential Advertising in Four Selected Markets

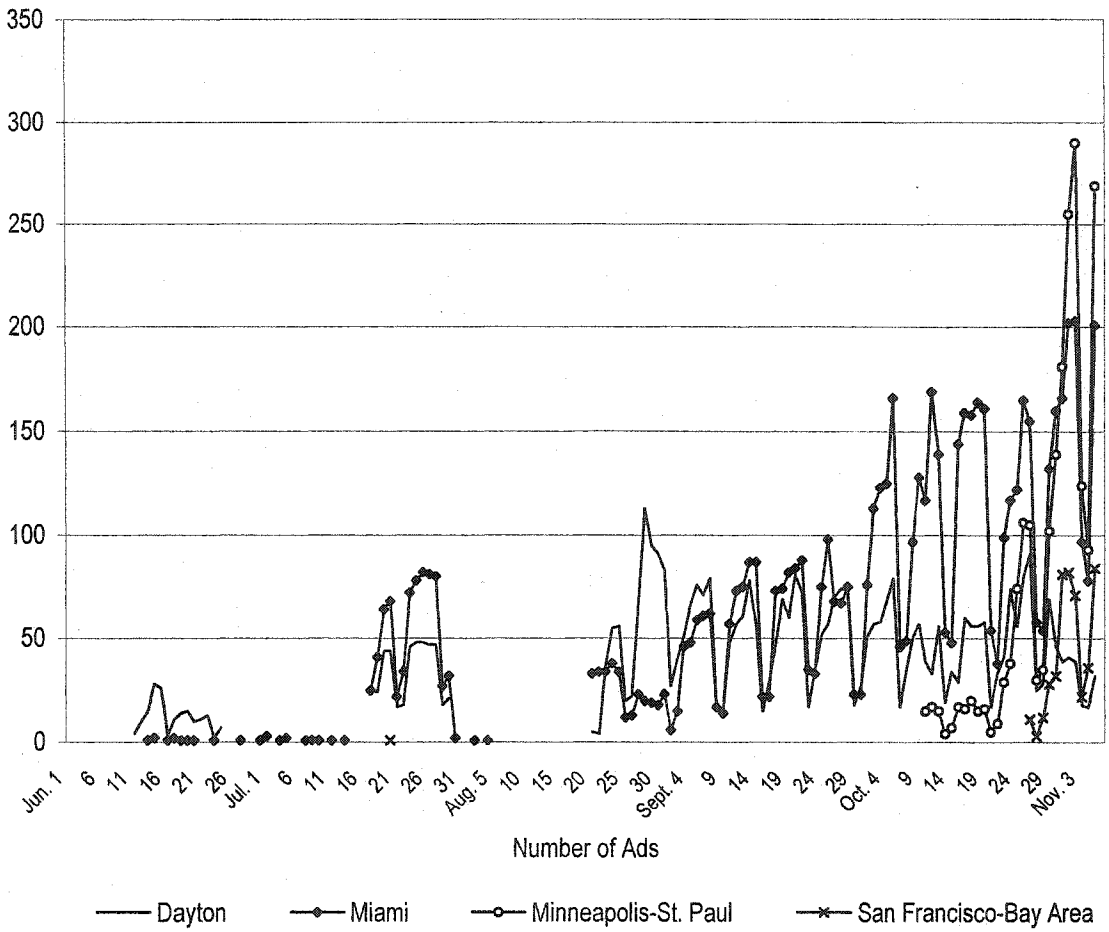
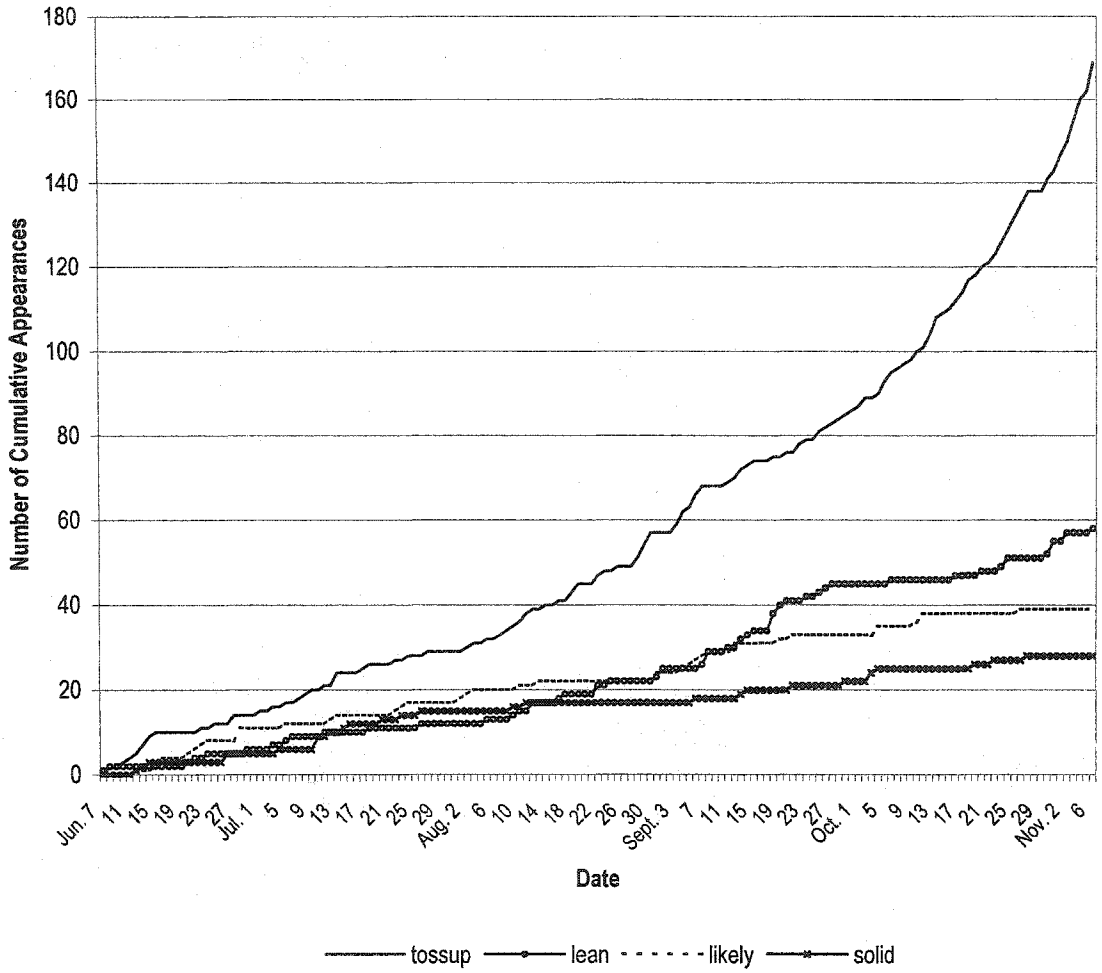


Figure 5.5. Candidate Appearances by Competitiveness of State



CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to shed light on candidate strategy and how it affects voters. In the broadest sense, I argue that candidates strategy is much more complex than traditional theories suggest, and that campaign effects are more notable than scholars of elections have assumed. Below I summarize the major findings, discuss their theoretical and at times normative implications, and sketch out some future directions for research.

I. The Origins of Campaign Agendas

Candidate advertising in congressional races in 1998 suggests that both parties were working off the same playbook. Their respective agendas, dominated by education, entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare, and taxes, were very similar. What differences existed were matters of emphasis, and it is here that the influence of ownership emerges. Republicans discuss taxes more often than Democrat. Democrats discuss education more often than Republicans. But these differences are only tendencies: plenty of Republican candidates, more than half in fact, included references to education in their advertising. Moreover, there are some issues—Social Security is perhaps the most notable example—on which party differences are non-existent.

A consequence of issue ownership's inconsistent impact is that "dialogue" within campaigns is possible. Though some scholars (*e.g.*, Simon 2002; Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002) have concluded, on the basis of both theoretical predictions and empirical evidence, that candidates either should or do "talk past" each other, this is not necessarily true. There are races in which opposing candidates focus on the same issues.

Moreover, as races become truly competitive, dialogue becomes more likely. This result dovetails nicely with other work (Kahn and Kenney 1999; Simon 2002) in which competitiveness

provokes more discussion of issues by candidates. While so much of the ink spilled about campaign reform centers on finding ways to make candidates need less money and campaign more "positively," the empirical power of competitiveness suggests perhaps a more prosaic and yet more challenging agenda for reform. What may engender dialogue about "the issues" is not rules of etiquette, but changes to the structure of electoral "markets." Many congressional districts been essentially colonized by one party thanks to gerrymandering and the chronic incumbency advantage. In such districts, where it is difficult even to locate and fund a viable opposition candidacy, any substantive exchange of ideas—even one that contains more than platitudes and obfuscation—will be meager at best. Unfortunately, the sorts of reforms that would render elections more competitive are precisely those that directly threaten the elected representatives who would have to legislate such reforms. Truly contested campaigns may therefore continue to be relatively scarce.

Issue ownership's inconsistent impact has further implications for party images and stereotypes. At the heart of ownership theory is the idea that parties have reputations as effective stewards for certain issues. These reputations have developed over time as a consequence of emphasis by the parties and of successful policymaking. But what do these reputations really mean when Republicans do not hesitate to discuss their commitment to better schools, and Democrats do likewise in regards to safer streets? Are these traditional party images changing? If so, why? If not, why do candidates trespass on the opposition's territory? Are they simply covering their bases, thinking it better to say something than nothing? Or is there little danger in trespassing when all one does is endorse a consensual goal (*e.g.*, "better education") in vague terms—as is often the case?

In short, there is much more to be learned about where campaign agendas come from. Several sources unexplored here suggest themselves. One is other political actors, such as interest groups, who have well-defined agendas and the means to promote them. For example, in this year's Democratic presidential primary, health care has become particularly salient due at least in part to lobbying from the Service Employee International Union. Hennessy (2003) reports on "Shirley Ray," a nurse emblazoned on an SEIU-funded billboard strategically located at the Manchester, NH,

airport, whose accompanying messages reads, "Running for President? Health care better be your priority."

A second source of campaign agendas is the opposition candidate. Most candidates do not blithely walk their own course, oblivious to their opponent—though many certainly talk as if they do. In fact, opposing candidates typically seem to be looking over their respective shoulders, reading each other's statements and watching each other's ads and often crafting a direct response. It is not uncommon to see an advertisement from one candidate that directly cites or shows footage from an advertisement aired by his opponent. Thus it may be that candidates transgress the bounds of issue ownership in part to mimic or respond to their opponent's agenda. Fortunately, the sort of advertising data analyzed in chapter 2 can provide leverage on this question, particularly because they are ordered over time and can thus demonstrate when, how, and why any strategic interaction might occur.

Comparing the role of strategic interaction to factors like candidate record and issue ownership can illuminate a more fundamental question that underlies the study of elections: the relative balance of structure and contingency. Issue ownership is an indicator of structure because it derives from the record a party has built up over time and cannot be changed wholesale in the course of a single campaign. A candidate's record is similar since candidates cannot simply make themselves over at will. If issue ownership and candidates' personal history continue to be the primary source of campaign content, then elections will likely feature more continuity than discontinuity (leaving aside the effect of exogenous shocks such as a recession or war). But if there is evidence of strategic interaction and temporal variation, and if those processes do not simply intensify a factor like issue ownership, then campaigns will appear more contingent, even idiosyncratic. What any given election is "about" will be defined at least in part by the choices candidates make in the months and weeks prior to an election.

II. Convergence, Divergence, Valence

The question of what issues candidates discuss leads naturally the question of how they discuss those issues. The 1998 races examined in chapter 2 suggest that the spatial model of elections, with its conception of policy "dimensions" on which candidates locate themselves so as to maximize their vote, does not find much traction in campaign advertising—*i.e.*, the medium through which candidates would most fervently communicate their spatial locations. Candidates rarely embrace issues on which there is truly some underlying ideological spectrum. In the parlance of Stokes, they embrace "valence issues" instead. Moreover, they talk about such issues, things like education, in mostly non-ideological ways, eschewing a debate like school vouchers for uncontroversial commitments to smaller classrooms. When ideology does emerge, it does so in coded language—for example, in pledges to put education dollars in the classroom and not in the "bureaucracy."

But this is not to say that Democrats and Republican are somehow clones of each other, spouting the same gentle platitudes. There are differences between the parties in how they discuss issues. Very few Democrats lambaste the education bureaucracy or advocate competency testing for teachers. Very few Republicans advocate HMO reform. Moreover, it is relatively rare for opposing candidates within a given race to talk about issues in the same way. As much empirical work on candidate position-taking has found, there is "divergence," *contra* the prediction of the Downsian framework. But this divergence is different from what previous work has described. It does not imply that parties take opposite positions—no Republicans stated their opposition to HMO reform in 1998—but instead that they have different goals or emphases within a given issue area.

Campaign messages appear disheveled, in a manner of speaking: not "positional," but not devoid of ideology; manifesting some partisan differences, but rarely opposite stances. What does this suggest for theories of candidate strategy? One potential component of such a theory might be a model of the risks and rewards associated with benign rhetoric about consensual issues, versus those associated with confrontational rhetoric about divisive issues. It may be that risk-aversion in

candidates manifests not as ambiguity (see Shepsle 1972; Page 1976)—after all, pledging to improve education by making classrooms smaller and schools safer is not unclear—but as a reluctance to be unambiguous about issues like abortion, or the death penalty, or school vouchers, issues where there is a veritable pro and con.

Another implication of dishevelment concerns voters. What does the nature of campaign advertising mean for how voters react to and learn from advertising? Political advertising is not, as stereotype would have it, devoid of any substance: candidates devote a significant amount of time to their beliefs about issues. But if candidates do not manifest clear differences, what are the mechanisms by which voters can choose between them (leaving aside, for the moment, party identification)? The spatial model imagines voters comparing their positions to the candidates' and then choosing the candidate closest to them. But it seems difficult to imagine how this works when candidates do not articulate "positions." Instead, it may be that voters are not so much figuring out where candidates are located in some sort of "issue space" as they are developing impressions of the candidates as people—something which involves not only the candidates' policy goals but also their personalities, experiences, and so on. Moreover, while the analysis here has focused solely on the issue content of ads, voters' response may also depend on imagery, tone, and word choice. In sum, how candidates communicate with voters informs not only appropriate models of candidate strategy, but also appropriate models of voter learning.

III. Campaign Effects: When, How, and For Whom

The machinations of candidates would mean little if they had no effect on voters. The three races examined here, the 1998 California and Illinois gubernatorial races as well as the 2000 presidential race, all demonstrate that campaigns can matter. The key is to leverage variation in campaign activity across both time and space. To investigate campaign effects in these three races, I drew on variation in candidate advertising, which ebbed and flowed over time and, in the presidential campaign, across media markets.

This latter fact—the targeting of ads by the presidential candidates in key markets—most likely constitutes the new paradigm in presidential campaigning. If candidates no longer choose to advertise nationally, then there is the potential for striking and perhaps meaningful information asymmetries across the fifty states. Voters in contested markets will be exposed to messages that voters in uncontested markets never hear. Much of the study of American elections and voter behavior is based on presidential elections, and typically these elections are treated as national phenomenon—*e.g.*, national samples of voters are analyzed to discern the nature of vote choice and the meaning of the election. However, if there is no truly national campaign, there may be in fact considerably heterogeneity in voter decision-making, and no single answer to the question, "What was this election about?"[1]

Though the empirical analysis here is based on only these three case studies, there are empirical continuities among them that point to a more general theory of campaign effects, and to further directions for research. The chief questions that such a theory must answer are, *when* and *how* and *for whom* do campaigns matter?

One process that occurred in the two gubernatorial races involved advertising's rallying partisans to their party's candidate. In Illinois, Democrats rallied to Poshard, despite his conservatism. In California, Republicans rallied to Lungren. A first lesson from this is that campaign effects may in fact vary across the two parties. There can be important movement among voters from one party but not the other. A second lesson, observable in both cases, was that the candidate whose voters rallied to him was himself initially under-achieving within his own party. Thus, we might expect to see greater campaign effects where there is a mismatch between the chronic psychological forces that drive voting, such as party identification, and voters' candidate preference in a given race. Ostensibly disaffected partisans may be especially vulnerable to the campaign's influence, which will lead them eventually to support their party's candidate. To be sure,

[1] Of course, it is also possible that media coverage of the presidential campaign, which is more widely dispersed and is available in markets the candidates ignore, may mitigate information asymmetries. A thorough accounting of campaign effects should take into account media coverage as well as candidate activities and advertising.

this is not an unfamiliar story, harkening back to the Columbia School's work on "activation." But the present analysis suggests in particular *who* is likely to be activated and how advertising can serve as the means of activation.

The second major campaign process that emerges in all three races is priming. In the presidential race, voters who were exposed to campaign activity by virtue of living in a battleground state or a contested media market relied more on certain issues and less on retrospective considerations. In the two gubernatorial races, gun control became more salient in voters' minds in response to campaign advertising on this issue. Furthermore, priming is not just an inconsequential reshuffling of considerations in voters' minds. The salient issues of a campaign have distinct consequences for the candidates, just as the theory of heresthetics suggests. This is especially evident in the presidential race. As a member of the incumbent administration, one of Gore's biggest strengths was the "fundamentals", notably the economy, which was humming along nicely. But as retrospective evaluations faded from significance in the battleground states, so did the probability of supporting Gore, even among those voters typically considered part of the Democratic coalition. Meanwhile, Bush experienced the opposite: voters in battleground states were more likely to support him than their demographic clones in safe states. Priming thus has consequences for both voters and candidates.

What general conclusions can be drawn from this empirical evidence of priming? Specifically, what can be said theoretically about when priming will occur? In both gubernatorial races, advertising about gun control emanated from essentially only one of the candidates—Davis in California, Ryan in Illinois. There was thus a clear and strong message: one candidate was a gun control proponent and the other an opponent. A one-sided message such as this seems especially likely to induce priming. Similarly, a two-sided message in which the candidates take opposite positions should have a similar effect. In both cases, the information voters receive not only draws their attention to an issue through sheer repetition, but also demonstrates why incorporating that issue into their decision-making would be useful: if you are pro-gun control, you should vote for the

Davis or Ryan, because Lungren and Poshard are suspect on the issue. Priming and its relation to issue voting in particular likely hinges on this combination of volume—hearing a message over and over until the issue becomes salient—and message—hearing that the candidates are distinct in their views.

What, then, results when there is repetition but a more obfuscatory message? What if both candidates seized on an issue and articulated the same position? Or what if, as the results in chapter 2 demonstrate, there is no clear position being taken? Good theoretical expectations about priming depend on the precise nature of the message. Otherwise, observed heterogeneity in voter decision-making may appear haphazard. For example, the results in chapter 5 show that abortion, gun control, and beliefs about the size of government all gained potency in battleground states during the 2000 presidential race. But other issues important to the campaign—how to use the surplus, the government's role in providing health insurance—do not. Why is this? It is not through lack of repetition: Gore intoned his refrain about the surplus, putting Social Security in a "lockbox," so often that it became the stuff of late-night comedy. Perhaps it derived instead from less-than-coherent campaign messages. Similarly, one wonders why exactly the economy became so irrelevant in battleground states. Did the campaign's discourse serve to "de-prime" issues as well as prime them? Or does the use of more sophisticated cues, like specific issues, simply displace simpler cues, like the economy? Ultimately, a theory of priming must adequate conceptualize and measure the variety of messages that may occur and estimate each message's ability to make an issue salient.

The final question is, for whom do campaigns matter? The empirical analysis herein suggests several different factors that condition an individual's response to the campaign. One already mentioned is party identification. Depending on the two candidates running, the potential for opinion change may be more pronounced in one party than another. Or it may also be true that weak partisans or independents are more vulnerable—hence the conventional wisdom about the malleability of "swing voters." A second factor, relevant for priming in particular, is an individual's belief about the candidates' positions on an issue. Of course, such beliefs can be themselves affected

by the campaign, though there was little evidence of this in the two gubernatorial races. But it seems unlikely that a repetitious campaign message will have any effect if a voter does not know or understand the candidates' positions to begin with. A third factor, one that I have not explored here in any detail (though knowledge of the candidates is a reasonable proxy), is simple exposure to the campaign. Some voters may rarely attend to political news or be tuned into their television sets when campaign advertising appears. They will therefore appear impervious to the candidates' appeals.

A first difficulty in locating affected voters is that all of these factors may be at work simultaneously, and perhaps in complex interactions. To identify the role each factor plays, one needs data about public opinion that are more voluminous than the typical survey. Otherwise there are simply too few cases to disentangle these interactions, especially since many of these factors are themselves related to each other (*e.g.*, knowledge of the candidates' issue positions and political attentiveness). As Zaller (2002) points out, the alleged non-existence of media effects may arise from inadequate data, not incorrect theory. Though there has been considerable progress in designing surveys well-suited to the study of campaigns, these surveys must be adequate in size if they are to uncover campaign effects.

A second challenge to political scientists in locating those voters affected by the campaign is to bring their search closer to actual politics, and in particular to the decision-making of campaign professionals themselves. Denizens of the war room are by all accounts thinking in very precise terms about the kinds of voters they want to appeal to. The proverbial "soccer mom" is one recent archetype. Therefore, a more relevant test of campaign effects might be whether a candidate was able to accomplish what he, or at least his handlers, wanted to accomplish.

IV. Closing Thoughts

Thinking about the goals of candidates and their campaign teams leads to a broader point about campaign strategy and its effects. Most often scholars conceptualize campaign effects as they do media effects, with the causal arrow running from the message to its recipient, *e.g.*, from the

television ad to the voter. But the actual process of campaigns actually involves an interaction between elites and the mass public. Candidates and their stable of consultants certainly want to affect voters; otherwise, they would not spend so much money and time making commercials and pressing the flesh. But they do not make their decisions in a vacuum. They are not working with a blank canvas. They must instead confront an electoral history, an existing partisan alignment, and a contemporary set of preferences among citizens. Candidates therefore use their pollsters and consultants first to determine where the candidate stands among the public and then to craft strategies that will best enhance the candidate's stature. As the campaign unfolds, further polling enables candidates to evaluate the success of these strategies and make necessary changes. In this way public opinion becomes both an influence on campaigns and the object of campaign influence.

Investigating campaigns in this more holistic way should speak to normative questions about the relationship between mass opinion and elite action. At the core of democracy is some presumed conversation between representatives and the represented. Endemic in this conversation, one hopes, is that each participant both communicates and listens. It would be troublesome if politicians never took public opinion into account. It would be equally troublesome if the public never paid attention to what politicians do and say. But what is truly important is to probe beyond the mere incidence of conversation to understand how it transpires and how each participant's view is incorporated. Thus, to conceptualize of campaigns as interactions between politicians and voters not only helps knit together scholarly literatures about candidates strategy, voting behavior, and political psychology, but also helps speak to questions about whether the way we elect presidents, senators, members of Congress, and so on reflects important democratic values. This in turn will suggest ways in which campaigns might be reformed so as to promote an informative discourse and a thoughtful response, from both candidates and voters.

Appendix A. Codes for Issues in 1998 House and Senate Candidate Advertising

Personal Characteristics of Candidate(s)

1. Background
2. Political record
3. Attendance record
4. Ideology
5. Personal values
6. Honesty, integrity
7. Special interests

Policy Issues

Economy

10. 10. Taxes
11. Deficit, surplus, budget, debt
12. Government spending
13. Minimum wage
14. Farming (*e.g.*, friend of)
15. Business (*e.g.*, friend of)
16. Employment, jobs
17. Poverty
18. Trade, NAFTA
19. Other economic reference

Social Issues

20. Abortion
21. Homosexuality
22. Moral values
23. Tobacco
24. Affirmative action
25. Assisted suicide
26. Gun control
27. Other reference to social issues

Law and Order

30. 30. Crime
31. Drugs
32. Death penalty
33. Other reference to law and order

Children

40. 40. Education
41. Lottery for education
42. Child care
43. Other child-related issue
44. School prayer

Foreign policy and Defense

50. Defense
51. Missile defense, Star Wars
52. Veterans
53. Foreign policy
54. Bosnia
55. China
59. Other defense, foreign policy issue

Clinton

60. 60. Clinton
61. Ken Starr
62. Whitewater
63. Impeachment
64. Sexual harassment, Paula Jones

Other

70. Environment
71. Immigration
72. Health care
73. Social security
74. Medicare
75. Welfare
76. Civil rights, race relations
77. Campaign finance reform
78. Government ethics
79. Roads, transportation
95. Other
99. None

Appendix B. Analysis of 1998 California Gubernatorial Campaign with Newspaper Coverage

To document newspaper coverage of the race, I coded newspaper coverage of the candidates' positions on various issues, measured as the number of words in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Contra Costa Times*, and *Ledger-Dispatch*. These four newspapers include the two major Bay Area dailies serving major cities (the *Chronicle* and the *Mercury News*) as well as two papers serving outlying suburban areas—whose inclusion helps account for potential variations in coverage due to the varying demographics of the Bay Area. These four newspapers also provide coverage for the majority of Annenberg respondents: of those who said they read a daily newspaper, 62 percent read one of these four. I obtained the text of news coverage by searching on-line databases like Lexis-Nexis for articles that contained a mention of either Davis or Lungren and of the issue in question. I elected to count the number of words as opposed to some other metric (articles or paragraphs, for example) because I wanted the most precise measure possible of coverage devoted to these issues in particular. An article about, say, one of the debates might be 1,500 words long but contain only 2 sentences detailing the candidates' exchange on any given issue. Thus, it would be misleading to simply count the entire article as being "about" that issue. Moreover, one would like to distinguish an article with only these two sentences from an article that was actually focused entirely on a given issue.

In general, newspaper coverage of specific issues and the campaign generally was spotty. For example, even with an issue as prominent as abortion, there were stretches of days and weeks where at best abortion merited no more than a few hundred words in a newspaper such as the *San Francisco Chronicle*. There was not a sustained information flow that would on its face seem capable of producing effects such as partisan activation and or priming. Indeed, my attempts to replicate the analyses here in with comparable measures of newspaper coverage (again coded in the same weighted, cumulated fashion) generated insignificant results. The lack of an activation effect is not surprising given the research of Beck et al. (2002), who find that newspaper coverage generally lacks any partisan bias and thus has little effect on vote intention. The lack of a priming effect can be

attributed mostly to the lack of issue coverage. Thus, the importance of campaign advertising as a mechanism for campaign effects is all the more evident, at least for this particular race.

Appendix C. Alternative Estimation for the Rolling Cross-Section

Johnston and Brady (2001) present an estimator designed specifically for the rolling cross-section. This design draws upon a post-election reinterview often incorporated in rolling cross-sections. By using measures of variables from both the pre-election and post-election interviews and by making certain assumptions, the rolling cross-section can be analyzed something like a panel survey. Here I briefly explicate this model and its assumptions and then discuss its utility for the analysis in this essay.

Assume a simple bivariate model where the vote intention (Y) of person i at time t is modeled as a function of one independent variable (X) and that person's vote intention before the campaign begins (Y_{i0}, *i.e.*, when t=0):

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta X_{it} + \gamma_1 Y_{i0} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

In turn, one can express Y_{i0} as a function of X at t=0:

$$Y_{i0} = \alpha_0 + \beta_0 X_{i0} + \varepsilon_{i0} \quad (2)$$

Substituting (2) into (1) and collecting terms yields:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_2 + \beta X_{it} + \gamma_2 X_{i0} + \psi_{it} \quad (3)$$

where:

$$\alpha_2 = (\alpha + \gamma_1\alpha_0);\ \gamma_2 = \gamma_1\beta;\ \text{and}\ \psi_{it} = (\gamma_1\varepsilon_{i0} + \varepsilon_{it}) \quad (3a)$$

The best indicator of X_{i0} would be a pre-election cross-section wave of interviews—such that the actual rolling cross-section constitutes a re-interview with respondents from the pre-election wave. However, the most rolling cross-sections afford no such wave; indeed, such a wave might prepare respondents for the later interview and thus make the campaign wave unrepresentative.

Johnston and Brady argue that the value of the independent variable in a *post*-election wave ($X_{i,t+1}$), wherein respondents interviewed during the campaign are recontacted, can be used as a reasonable proxy for its value before the campaign began. On its face, this seems somewhat counterintuitive, since the campaign could conceivably change X in such a way that its value after Election Day is quite different from its value before the campaign began. However, one need not

assume that the campaign does not change X. Assume rather that it changes the initial value of X by only some constant amount (δ_t) that can change over time but remains constant across voters:

$$X_{it} = X_{i0} + \delta_t \quad (4)$$

If equation (4) is accurate, then the value we need to obtain ($X_{i,t+1}$) is computed thus:

$$X_{i,t+1} = X_{i0} + \delta_{t+1} \quad (5)$$

Thus the post-election measure of X differs from the pre-election measure by only some constant, which is itself perfectly correlated with this pre-election measure. Consequently, we can substitute $X_{i,t+1}$ for X_{i0} in equation (3) and only the intercept will change. The equation estimated thus becomes:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_2 + \beta X_{it} + \gamma_2 X_{i,t+1} + \psi_{it} \quad (6)$$

Johnston and Brady (2002: xx) write that, "...all the variance in the post-election measure [$X_{i,t+1}$] is, for our purposes, cross-sectional: the election is over and the furor has died immediately; clearance of the post-election sample is relatively rapid; and initiation of contact is orthogonal to the date of pre-election interview." Thus, in equation (4), the coefficient β equals the campaign effect, while γ_2 measures the residual impact of the baseline value of the independent variable. The full cross-sectional effect is $\beta + \gamma_2$.

What are the pros and cons of this estimator? Obviously, it is a creative way to turn the rolling cross-section into a quasi-panel, and therefore to isolate a given variable's effect, controlling for its previous value. However, this works only by assuming that if a variable changes during the campaign, it changes by the same amount for all voters. Is this assumption valid? For some variables, it may be. But it is easy to conceive of variables that whose dynamics might not be constant. If interest in the campaign increases through September and October, will it necessarily increase the same amount for every person? Or might there be people more predisposed to become interested?

There are several practical disadvantages as well. First, the new analysis would rely only on those respondents reinterviewed after the election, reducing the available sample from 2,902 to 1,090.

This is obviously less than ideal. Second, many of the variables in these equations do not change dramatically during campaigns. Such things as views of abortion, party identification, and self-reported ideology, and so forth are not particularly labile. Including two realizations of these variables would seem to introduce unnecessary collinearity. Another problem specific to the Annenberg Survey is that, for unknown reasons, the vast majority of re-interviews did not ask voters their issue positions on assault weapons, abortion, and so forth. So for these variables, this estimator will not work at all. Moreover, it is unclear how a model with crucial interactions between issue positions, political information, and the volume of information in advertising and news coverage would work if one had to include post-election realizations of those issue positions.

Ultimately, given the strong assumptions underlying this estimator, and the particular difficulty in applying it to this dataset and to the particular models I want to estimate, a simpler estimation strategy is probably better. Hence I rely solely on the pre-election wave of this survey for the results presented herein.

Appendix D. Variable Coding in 1998 California Gubernatorial Survey Data

Variable	Coding
Annenberg Survey	
Ideology	"Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?" Coded 1–very conservative to 5–very liberal. Missing data are coded as moderates.
Beliefs about Candidate Issue Positions	These variables include the responses to two versions of this question, each of which was administered to a random half of the sample. The first question was: "Next I am going to read you some current issues. For each one, please tell me if you think Dan Lungren, the Republican candidate, favors it, if Gray Davis, the Democratic candidate favors it, if both favor it, or if neither favors it: [insert issue statement]." The second version was actually two questions, one asking the respondent Lungren's position and the other Davis' position. See the text for more discussion of these measures.
Party Identification	Formed from the standard three-question battery. Coded 1–strong Republican to 6–strong Democrat.
Position on Abortion	"Next, we are interested in how you feel about some current issues. Here's the first issue: It should be harder for women to obtain abortions. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?" Coded 1–strongly agree to 4–strongly disagree.
Position on Assault Weapons Ban	"Next, we are interested in how you feel about some current issues. Here's the next issue: We should ban assault weapons. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?" Coded 1–strongly disagree to 4–strongly agree.
Vote Intention	"If the election were held today, which candidate would you vote for? Dan Lungren, the Republican, Gray Davis, the Democrat, or someone else?" Coded 0–Lungren and 1–Davis.
Field Polls	
Liberalism	"Generally speaking, in politics do you consider yourself as conservative, liberal, middle-of-the-road, or don't you think of yourself in these terms? [For conservatives & liberals:] Do you consider yourself a strong or not very strong conservative/liberal? [For middle-of-the-road:] If you had to choose, would you consider yourself as being, conservative, liberal, or middle-of-the-road?" Coded 0–strong conservative to 6–strong liberal.
Party Identification	August and early October polls: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, an Independent, or what? [For Republicans and Democrats:] Would you call yourself a strong or not very strong Republican/Democrat? [For all others:] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" Coded 0–strong Republican to 6–strong Democrat and then collapsed into dummies for Democrats and Republicans. Late October poll: The party identification series was not asked, so dummy variables for Democrat and Republican created from a question about party registration: "Are you currently registered as a Republican, a Democrat, or just what?" [If respondent says independent, ask:] "Suppose you were voting in a primary election. In which party's primary election do you usually vote?"
View of Abortion	"In respect to the issue of abortion, do you favor laws that would make it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion, favor laws that would make it easier to get an abortion, or should no change be made to existing abortion laws?" Coded 1–more difficult, 2–no change, and 3–easier.

Appendix E. Analysis of 1998 Illinois Gubernatorial Campaign with Newspaper Coverage

To measure newspaper coverage of the race, I read all articles in the *Chicago Sun-Times* from July 7 through November 2 that contained the phrase "George Ryan" or "Glenn Poshard," simply counting the number of words devoted to particular topics.[1] The license scandal was far more prominent than any other issue; it commanded over four times as many words as the second-most prominent issue, Ryan's fundraising (*e.g.*, the controversy surrounding his solicitation of state employees). By contrast, the most prominent policy issue, gun control, garnered only 5,100 words, less than a fifth of what the two ethical issues dogging Ryan tabulated.

Examining trends in newspaper coverage of these top three issues reveals the growing prominence of the license scandal in particular. Most of the news about Ryan's fundraising practices occurred over the summer and early fall. Coverage of gun control was fairly infrequent. By contrast, coverage of the license scandal increased steadily, peaking in mid-October. The amount of newsprint devoted to the subject on any given day was typically larger as well; most mention of gun control or fundraising merited fewer than 500 words, whereas the license scandal, which at times generated three or four or even five articles in a single edition, earned as much as 2,585 words on any given day. Clearly, then, as newspaper readers encountered the candidates, the dominant context was the scandal in Ryan's office, not any other candidate- or policy-related issue.

As a result, it is not surprising that newspaper coverage did not prime gun control in the same fashion as candidate advertising. Moreover, there is no evidence that newspaper coverage of the scandal propelled vote intention. This is because there was much less coverage in the last two weeks of October and the beginning of November, which is precisely when Democrats began to rally to Poshard.

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[1] Chicago has two major newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times*. The *Tribune* is the more widely read of the two; for example, of those who said they read a daily newspaper, 40.5 percent read the *Tribune* and 23 percent the *Sun-Times*. Unfortunately, the *Tribune* is not archived electronically in a systematic fashion, as the *Sun-Times* is on LEXIS. Thus I rely here solely on the *Sun-Times*. There were two debates during the campaign (October 4 and October 16). However, these were largely non-events. Only 10 percent of the Annenberg sample said they watched the first and a miniscule 4 percent watched the second.

However, it is possible that local television news could have played a role in this race. Whereas in California local television largely ignored the governor's race, in Illinois it seems likely that the license scandal generated precisely the kind of lurid news likely to be featured on the nightly broadcast. Unfortunately, such data is very difficult to come by, especially four years after the fact. But it should be acknowledged that it could have had some impact here.

Appendix F. Comparing Survey Modes in the 2000 NES

Comparing the 2000 NES FTF and RDD samples illuminates the latter's usefulness. First and most basically, the RDD sample includes more states. In fact, it includes respondents from all 48 states in the continental United States. The FTF sample includes only 28 of 48 states. Second, the RDD sample better represent the states in terms of campaign intensity.

[insert Table A-1 about here]

Table A-1 displays the non-battleground and battleground states captured by each of the two NES subsamples. The FTF sample simply misses vast swaths of the United States. It fails to include any respondents from six battleground states in particular: Delaware, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, and West Virginia—which together possess 39 Electoral College votes. Moreover, it fails to include fourteen non-battleground states, including big portions of the Midwest (Kansas, North and South Dakota, and Nebraska) and the South (Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, and Oklahoma). The RDD design thus better captures subnational variation in campaign activity.

This difference in sampling design has further consequences. The design itself may affect not only the distribution of important state-level variables, like campaign intensity, but also individual-level variables—*e.g.*, exposure to and participation in campaign activity—that should vary between battleground and non-battleground states. if living in a contested state affects how you experience the campaign, and a sampling design misrepresents the distribution of contested and uncontested states, then we may misunderstand the relationship between campaign activity and these individual-level variables. One verifiable example is turnout.

[insert Table A-2 about here]

Table A-2 compares the turnout of respondents in battleground and non-battleground states across three different samples: the 2000 November Voter Supplement of the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, and the two NES sub-samples. The CPS, serving here as a benchmark due to its thorough coverage of states and large sample size, shows very little difference between these two groups of states (0.5%). Though both of the NES subsamples produce higher estimates of

turnout, the NES RDD subsample better captures the small difference between battleground and non-battleground states. Within the RDD subsample, the gap in turnout between these two groups of states is only 1.0 percentage point, quite close to the gap as measured by the CPS. However, the FTF estimates this gap to be 5.5 points, a difference that is statistically significant (p=.04, one-tailed).[2] The RDD sample better represents state-level variation in the presidential campaign, which produces a more representative distribution of one key individual-level variable as well. Thus the RDD seems better suited to understanding how state-level campaign activity affects voters.

[2] That turnout in the FTF sample is lower than that of the RDD sample seems to reflect a mode effect. Average turnout in the FTF sample is 73.5, as compared to 79.2 in the RDD sample. A mode effect is expected here, in that telephone surveys typically draw a higher proportion of whites, the wealthy, and the well-educated—in part because these people are more likely to have working telephones and more likely to answer surveys (Ellis and Krosnick 1999).

Table A-1. Mode of Survey and Distribution of Battleground and Non-Battleground States

Non-battleground States		Battleground States	
RDD	FTF	RDD	FTF
Alabama	Alabama	Arizona	
California	California	Arkansas	Arkansas
Colorado	Colorado	Delaware	
Connecticut	Connecticut	Florida	Florida
Georgia	Georgia	Illinois	Illinois
Idaho		Iowa	Iowa
Indiana	Indiana	Louisiana	Louisiana
Kansas		Maine	
Kentucky		Michigan	Michigan
Maryland	Maryland	Minnesota	Minnesota
Massachusetts	Massachusetts	Missouri	Missouri
Mississippi		Nevada	
Montana		New Hampshire	New Hampshire
Nebraska		New Mexico	
New Jersey	New Jersey	Ohio	Ohio
New York	New York	Oregon	Oregon
North Carolina		Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania
North Dakota		Tennessee	Tennessee
Oklahoma		West Virginia	
Rhode Island		Wisconsin	Wisconsin
South Carolina			
South Dakota			
Texas	Texas		
Utah	Utah		
Vermont			
Virginia	Virginia		
Wyoming			

Table A-2. Turnout in Battleground and Non-Battleground States

	Percent of Respondents Who Reported Voting		
	non-battleground	battleground	difference
Current Population Survey	67.2%	67.7%	0.5%
NES RDD	78.7	79.7	1.0
NES FTF	71.2	76.7	5.5

Table entries are the percent of respondent who reported voting in the 2000 election. Source: November Voter Supplement of the 2000 Current Population Survey, 2000 National Election Study. Battleground states (according to CNN or The Cook Political Report*): AR, AZ, DE, FL, IL, IA, LA, ME, MI, MN, MO, NV, NH, NM, OH, OR, PA, TN, WA, WV, WI.*

Table A-3. The Effect of Campaign Activity on Vote Choice Structure (entire NES sample)

	Safe States Δ prob	Battleground States Δ prob	No Ads Δ prob	Ads Δ prob
Party Identification	.18*	.23*	.17*	.18*
Ideology	.03	.08	.09	.05
Retrospective Evaluations				
Economic Evaluations	.12*	-.02	.20*	.004
Clinton Job Approval	.04*	.02	.04*	.02
Perceptions of Clinton's Integrity	.18*	.22*	.19*	.19*
Issues				
Government Services & Spending	-.02	.19*	-.03	.11*
Abortion	.03	.12*	.04	.07*
Gun Control	.01	.13*	.04	.08*
Surplus	.19	.14	.16	.05
Environment	.02	.01	.01	.02
Health Insurance	.07	-.001	.11	.01
Trait Perceptions				
Competence	.29*	.26*	.28*	.32*
Integrity	.03	.08*	.003	.04
N	743	623	484	575

Table entries are the change in the probability of a Gore vote given a one-standard-deviation change in the independent variable, holding all other variables at their means. The dependent variable is coded 0-Bush and 1-Gore. Battleground states (according to CNN or The Cook Political Report*): AR, AZ, DE, FL, IL, IA, LA, ME, MI, MN, MO, NV, NH, NM, OH, OR, PA, TN, WA, WV, WI. Source: 2000 National Election Study. *p<.05 or better (one-tailed).*

Appendix G. The Possible Endogeneity of Campaign Strategy

A "model" that could be thought to underlie the presidential campaign entails three stages. First, candidates choose the states they consider competitive (the "selection" stage). These states become the battleground states. Second, candidates expend resources disproportionately in those states (the "treatment" stage). Finally, voters in those states show effects relative to voters in less competitive, non-battleground states (the "outcome" stage).

The selection stage depends on the attributes of states, particularly their partisan balance and their weight in the Electoral College. So the choice of a state as a battleground is some function of these qualities. In my story, the effects (the outcome) have to do with how voters weight certain criteria in their vote choice. One might imagine separate equations for battleground states and safe states:

$$V_{i,bg} = X_{i,bg}\beta_{bg} + \varepsilon_{i,bg}$$

$$V_{i,safe} = X_{i,safe}\beta_{safe} + \varepsilon_{i,safe}$$

The essence of the priming hypothesis is that $\beta_{bg} \neq \beta_{safe}$. The question is whether this result actually flows from the campaign treatment. There could be endogeneity in this model in a couple senses.

Endogeneity #1: Outcome Affects Selection

In this scenario, voters in battleground states are "chronically" different than voters in safe states. Given that voters in battleground states rely more on issues, this would mean that these voters are just habitually better issue voters *a priori*. A possible rebuttal to this is that the battleground states in 2000 are quite heterogeneous as states. It is hard to imagine that there is some common issue orientation that characterizes residents of Nevada, Oregon, Tennessee, Michigan, and New Hampshire.

A second possibility is that battleground states get chosen *because* voters have some unique issue agenda or some quality that makes them susceptible to priming. There is likely some truth to this, in that candidates want to compete where certain agendas or emphases will play well. However,

there are reasons to doubt that selection is truly endogenous to effect. First, a significant portion of candidate strategy is *national.* There is basically one agenda and what differentiates battleground states is their exposure to that agenda. Differences between battleground and safe states arise from differences in the *quantity* of campaigning. Second, what arguably distinguishes voters in battleground states at the outset is not their innate weighting of certain criteria for vote choice (the βs) but the distribution of key variables among these voters (the Xs). This is because the partisan balance in a state is itself a function of how voters are arrayed in terms of party identification, ideology, their positions on mainstay issues like abortion, *etc.* Moreover, states become battlegrounds in a given election for different reasons: their chronic political competitiveness, the unique appeals of certain candidates (*e.g.*, Clinton in the South, Lieberman in Florida), and unique events pre-dating the campaign that may already have mobilized certain constituencies. These different paths mean that "battleground states" as a group should not display one given orientation that would make the outcome actually a cause of selection.

Endogeneity #2: Outcome Affects Treatment

A second kind of endogeneity concerns the possible effects of "outcome" on "treatment." While undoubtedly candidates' decision to contest certain states is a discrete choice in some sense, the actual level of competitiveness in the states is itself both continuous and variable. As a campaign unfolds, candidate fortunes will wax and wane in any given state, at least in part because of strategy and expenditures in that state. One reason for these fortunes could vary is campaign-induced priming. As issues that favor one candidate become salient, this candidate could start to do better. This could lead her opponent to spend more so as to remain competitive. And this could in turn create new effects among voters. This process then repeats itself over time during the campaign.

I would make two observations about this conceptualization. First, it is overall a better model of campaigns, as it captures the strategic interaction among candidates. Second, the endogeneity in this case does not render observed campaign effects spurious. Those effects are real.

But those effects themselves also condition further decisions about strategy. The analysis in this paper cannot sort out this more complicated causal story, but with candidate advertising data over time, I should be able to construct a more nuanced dynamic tale.

Appendix H. Question Wording and Variable Coding in 2000 NES

Variable Name	*NES #*	Question Wording and Coding
Abortion	v000694	"There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Please tell me which one of the opinions best agrees with your view: (1) By law, abortion should never be permitted; (2) The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest or when the mother's life is in danger; (3) The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established; and (4) By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice." Coded as is.
Attention to Campaign (pre)	v000301	"Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you have been very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested in the political campaigns so far this year?" Coded 1-not much, 2-somewhat, 3-very.
Attention to Campaign (post)	v001201	"Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested or not much interested in the political campaigns so far this year?" Coded 1-not much, 2-somewhat, 3-very.
Budget Surplus	v000690 v000693	Built from two question: 1) "Some people have proposed that most of the expected federal budget surplus should be used to cut taxes. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposal?"; and 2) "Some people have proposed that most of the expected federal budget surplus should go to protecting social security and Medicare. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposal?" Coded –1 if approve of tax cut and disapprove of protecting social security; +1 if approve of protecting social security and disapprove of tax cut; and 0 for all other responses.
Care about Outcome of Election	v000302	"Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal who wins the presidential election this fall, or that you don't care very much who wins?" Coded 0-no and 1-yes.
Clinton Job Approval	v000341	"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president? Strongly or not strongly?" Coded 1-disapprove strongly, 2-disapprove not so strongly, 4-approve not so strongly, 5-approve strongly.
Clinton Economic Performance	v001603 a	"Since 1992, would you say President Clinton has made the nation's economy better, made the economy worse, or had no effect on the economy one way or the other? Much better or somewhat better? [or] Much worse or somewhat worse?" Coded 1-much worse, 2-somewhat worse, 3-no effect, 4-somewhat better, 5-much better.
Clinton Moral Climate	v001628	"Has the Clinton administration made the nation's moral climate better, worse, or hasn't it made much difference either way? Much better or somewhat better? [or] Much worse or somewhat worse?" Coded 1-much worse, 2-somewhat worse, 3-no effect, 4-somewhat better, 5-much better.
Competence	v000526, 527, 529, 533, 534, 536	Basic question format: "In your opinion, does the phrase 'he is <trait>' describe Gore/Bush extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?" "Competence" is a scale that first averages responses to the traits knowledgeable, strong leadership, and intelligent, and then subtracts Bush average from Gore average.

Contacted by Party	v001219	"As you know, the political parties try to talk to as many people as they can to get them to vote for their candidate. Did anyone from one of the political parties call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign this year?" Coded 0-no and 1-yes.
Economic Evaluations	v000491	"Now thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten worse, stayed about the same, or gotten better? Much better/worse or somewhat better/worse?" Coded 1-much worse to 5-much better.
Environment	v000776	"Which is closer to the way you feel, or haven't you thought much about this? Do we need to toughen regulations to protect the environment a lot, or just somewhat? Are regulations to protect the environment way too much of a burden on business or just somewhat of a burden?" Coded 1-too much of a burden to 5-toughen regulars a lot.
Government Services and Spending	v000550	"Which is closer to the way you feel, or haven't you thought much about this? Should the government reduce/increase services and spending a great deal or (reduce/increase services and spending) only some?" Coded 1-reduce services and spending a great deal to 5-increase services and spending a great deal.
Gun Control	v000731	"Do you think the federal government should make it more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now, make it easier for people to buy a gun, or keep these rules about the same as they are now? A lot easier/more difficult or somewhat easier/more difficult?" Coded 1-a lot easier to 5-a lot more difficult.
Health Insurance	v000614	"Which is closer to the way you feel or haven't you thought much about this? Do you feel strongly or not strongly that there should be a government insurance plan? Do you feel strongly or not strongly that individuals should pay through private insurance plan?" Coded 1-private insurance plan (strongly) to 5-government insurance plan (strongly).
Ideology	v000446	Combines two versions: (1) "When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal; moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, extremely conservative, or haven't you thought much about this? If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative?" and (2) "When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or haven't you thought much about this? If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative? Would you call yourself a strong liberal or a not very strong liberal? Would you call yourself a strong conservative or a not very strong conservative?" Coded 0-strong conservative to 0-strong liberal.
Influence Others	v001225	We would like to find out about some of the things people do to help a party or a candidate win an election. During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates? Coded 0-no and 1-yes.
Integrity	v000526, 527, 529, 533, 534, 536	Basic question format: "In your opinion, does the phrase 'he is <trait>' describe Gore/Bush extremely well, quite well, not too well, or not well at all?" Integrity is a scale that first averages responses for the traits moral, really cares about you, dishonest, and out of touch, and then subtracts Bush average from Gore average.

Participation in Campaign Activity	v001226-v001231	Coded 1 if R engaged in any of the following: "wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or place a sign in your window or in front of your house"; "go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate"; "do any (other) work for one of the parties or candidates?"; "give money to an individual candidate running for public office"; or "give money to a political party." Coded 0 otherwise.
Party Identification	v000523	"Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Would you call yourself a strong Democrat/Republican or a not very strong Democrat/ Republican? [If not Republican or Democrat] Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic party?" Coded 0-strong Republican to 0-strong Democrat.
Presidential Vote	v001249 v001277	For self-reported voters: [How about the election for President? Did you vote for a candidate for President?] Who did you vote for?" For self-reported non-voters: [How about the election for President? Did you prefer one of the candidates for President?] "Who did you prefer?" Coded 0-Bush and 1-Gore. All other responses coded as missing.
Read about Campaign in Paper	v000336	"Did you read about the campaign in any newspaper?" Coded 0-no and 1-yes.
Received Mail from Party	v001222	"Did anyone from one of the political parties send you mail about the campaign this year?" Coded 0-no and 1-yes.
Seen Campaign Advertising	v000338	"Do you recall seeing any ads for political candidates on television this fall?" Coded 0-no and 1-yes.
Seen Campaign Programming	v000120 1	"Did you watch any programs about the campaign on television?" Coded 0-no and 1-yes.

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