CHAPTER 4

CANDIDATE ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE

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American presidential campaigns are marked by both well-choreographed and genuinely frantic behavior on the part of candidates. Campaigns are also characterized by oscillations in voters' preferences. Candidates presume an implicit connection between these phenomena. It is this presumption that motivates the extra campaign stop in St. Louis, or the additional television advertisement in Atlanta. However, political scientists have raised questions about the significance of the association between candidate activity and support changes.

The initial empirical studies of American public opinion and voting behavior were the first challenges to the perception that presidential elections are decided by the candidates' abilities to persuade voters during the campaign. These analyses, especially *The Peoples' Choice* and *Voting*, showed the electorate's political indifference and lack of knowledge and raised questions about the relevance of campaigns for the masses. This skepticism concerning the salience of presidential campaigns is echoed in the survey research literature from *The American Voter* to *Retrospective Voting*. The idea that presidential campaigns are only peripherally important as determinants of elections is also a fundamental assumption of macroeconomic voting models.[1] This prevailing conventional wisdom about presidential campaigns has recently been questioned, though the argument that campaigns matter has been neither well-specified nor empirically substantiated.[2] To use a common analogy, the prevailing conventional wisdom sees presidential campaigns as gigantic tugs-of-war. The key to the analogy is that, according to the consensus opinion, in this tug-of-war the teams are so evenly matched that the struggle always ends in a draw. Therefore, if one side has an advantage going in, they will ultimately win the contest by maintaining this margin.

The argument in this chapter is that campaign events influence voters' presidential preferences. Campaigns therefore "matter" to the extent that (1) the election is close prior to the campaign and (2) one candidate is able to move preferences more often than his opponent, or is able to increase his support at critical times. Put another way, if an election is a blow-out in September, incremental movement in response to the campaign is likely to be inconsequential.

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[1] For example, Raymond Fair's "The Effect of Economic Events on Votes for President," *Review of Economics and Statistics,* (1978) 60: 159-172 or Edward Tufte's "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Review,* (1975) 69: 812-826.

[2] Particularly interesting investigations of the role of campaigns in presidential elections include Samuel Popkin's *The Reasoning Voter,* Matthew McCubbins' *Under the Watchful Eye* and Martin Wattenburg's *The Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics*. Popkin's *The Reasoning Voter* is a notable exception to the generalization that works on the importance of presidential campaigns are theoretically under-specified.

Furthermore, campaigns may not influence a close election if a series of "bounces" for each candidate balance out. However, campaign induced movement could be decisive in a variety of ways for a tight race. One can conceive of a close race in which one candidate does not "counter" the successful activities of his opponent. Or one can imagine a close election in which one candidate manages to produce a final surge in his direction, leaving his opponent no time to generate a leveling response. In short, this study contends that there is an association between campaigning and preferences, and that this relationship makes it impossible to argue that campaigns *do not influence presidential election outcomes.*

Up to this point, the focus of this analysis has encompassed both campaign activities and voters' preferences. Chapter Two described the aspects of contemporary presidential campaigns by tracing their historical origins, and offered a typology of candidate activities. Chapter Three examined candidate support during the presidential campaign and presented evidence that aggregate- and individual-level preferences are more volatile in recent election years. Questions about the relationship between voters and campaign stimuli have been set aside until now. The task at hand is to bring these puzzle pieces together.

The argument of this chapter is pursued by examining the extent to which candidate activities affect the preferences of voters, and to characterize the potential influence of campaigning on presidential election outcomes. The present analysis aims not merely at gauging effects, but at characterizing them in a way that enhances our knowledge of elections. This is significant because while it is important to know whether voters' preferences change, it is equally important to understand *how* their support ebbs and flows in response to specific stimuli. This study necessarily includes both voters' responses to messages and events, and how *different types* of messages and events influence voters' preferences. The scope of the examination covers both the magnitude of initial movement and the durability of the changes.

The preliminary concern of this chapter is on quantifying the influence of campaign events on aggregate presidential preferences. The strategy for measuring the effect of such activities is to identify a large number of campaign events and record changes in the pre- and post-activity trial ballot margin between the candidates.[3] The significance of the movement associated with these events can then be estimated through difference of means tests. Tests for the significance of absolute movement show us whether campaign events affect *any* change in candidate support.

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[3] There is a distinction between "candidate activities" and "campaign occurrences". The former has a planned and controllable aspect that is absent in the latter. For the sake of parsimony, all such incidents will be referred to as "campaign events".

This absolute movement analysis is conducted on data from eleven presidential elections (1952 to 1992), and is also performed separately for the pre- and post-party reform eras (1952-1968 and 1972-1992). Tests of how campaign events specifically affect a candidate's relative standing are called directional tests, and help answer the question of whether particular campaign activities significantly help or hurt those undertaking them. The directional analysis is also used to address the more general issue of campaigns' influence on election outcomes. In addition to examining the general impact of activity, party differences for both the absolute and directional effects of campaign event types are measured and discussed. The first two substantive sections of this chapter address absolute and directional effects. The third section addresses the durability of voter preference shifts. These data indicate that the effects of major campaign events are frequently durable, as well as significant. The final section of the chapter includes a consideration of some methodological issues and a brief discussion of what these findings mean to our understanding of elections.

CONSTRUCTING A STUDY OF CAMPAIGNS AND CANDIDATE SUPPORT

Identifying Campaign Events

In Chapter Two, a distinction was made between the internal and external aspects of a presidential campaign. The concept of the internal campaign is meant to embody a vital, but largely invisible part of campaigning. It encompasses activities such as fund-raising, organizational development and maintenance, research, coordination and strategic planning. The external campaign is the more visible side of the campaign. Speeches, travel, advertisements, posters, conventions, debates and interviews are all components of the external campaign. The analysis in this chapter focuses on this second, more visible side of a campaign.

Identifying the "raw materials" of the external campaign does not require much fancy footwork. One can build a large data set of campaign events using the Gallup chronologies of presidential campaigns from 1952 to 1992. The Gallup chronologies yield a fairly standardized and objective list of campaign events over these years, making the task of selection less subject to bias. Some events not on the Gallup list have been added to the data set. From books and articles, a more exhaustive list of campaign events was developed--including all debates and major gaffes--for each presidential campaign. Events from this comprehensive list were added to the data set if they met an "importance standard": they had to have been the subject of three or more stories from the *New York Times*. This resulted in the addition of 29 campaign events and raised the total sample size to 161 events. This, of course, is in no way a random sample of campaign

events. Campaigns involve much more activity than the handful of events identified here. However, it is true that the sum of campaign activity *is a relatively small number of prominent events*. Furthermore, these events represent the campaign's most concerted effort to persuade voters and, as such, are the logical focus of any analysis of campaign effects.

It is possible to simplify the analysis by classifying events using the typology delineated in Chapter Two. This typology breaks the external campaign's primary tasks into eleven specific types of presidential campaign events.[4] These event types are listed in the table presented on the next page, along with definitions and examples.

Generally, classification is straight-forward. Conventions and debates are rather obvious events to classify. Scandals, such as Reagan-appointee Raymond Donovan's conviction in 1984 for defrauding the New York City Transit Authority, are similarly easy. This holds true for outside occurrences, such as the Suez Crisis in 1956 or the suicide attack on the U.S. Marine outpost in Lebanon in 1984. Candidate foul-ups are marginally more difficult to classify, because they occasionally involve policy statements or political messages. For example, in late August of 1980 Ronald Reagan made the statement that the United States was in a "depression". This was considered a faux-pas by many, coming on the heels of other unusual utterances during his "focused impact" strategy. For others, though, it was a political statement. It was viewed by these people, most of whom were from the political right, as a declaration that Reagan was serious about unemployment and willing to take drastic measures to turn the economy around. However, this ambiguity is exceptional. Most candidate mistakes, such as Bill Clinton's 1992 statement that he tried marijuana but "did not inhale", are much easier to identify.

Other events, especially messages, are more troublesome for classification. For instance, attack messages can have a retrospective/comparative component. Ronald Reagan certainly used

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[4] Only ten classes of events are mentioned in Chapter Two. The eleventh occurs when one differentiates between presidential and vice-presidential debates. Factor analysis suggests the statistical differences between the two are slight. However, common sense dictates that a distinction be made. Who, for instance, would compare the 1960 Nixon-Kennedy debates with the 1976 Mondale-Dole or 1984 Bush-Ferraro debates?

One could object to the distinctions made between event types. In particular, the case can be made that "messages" should be treated as one comprehensive category. My defense of the four-fold distinction among message types has two components. First, media specialists have found different effects for prospective, retrospective and personal attack advertisements (Ansolabehere, Iyengar and Behr; 1992). The valence category is therefore the only distinction that is primarily my own. Second, there are enough cases so that one can be confident effects will be detected for each of the message types *if they exist*. In other words, we will not mask the existence of effect because there are not enough cases. The flip side of this point is that message effects, if they exist, will be registered *somewhere* among the sub-categories.

Campaign Event Types	Definitions	Examples
Prospective Message	statement on which policies will be undertaken by the candidate	McGovern's 1972 promise to raise taxes
Retrospective Message	statement on recent changes in the country's condition	Reagan asks "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" during 1980
Valence Message	statement on the values embodied by and that will guide a candidate	Bush says "Pledge of Allegiance" at a flag factory in 1988
Attack Message	statement criticizing an opponent's personality or qualifications	Bush ridicules "Massachusetts Miracle" as the "Massachusetts Mirage" in 1988
National Convention	quadrennial party nominating conventions	1992 Dem. Convention in New York
Presidential Debate	formal, televised debates between major presidential candidates	1960 Kennedy-Nixon Debates
Vice-Presidential Debate	formal, televised debates between major VP candidates	1988 Quayle-Bentsen Debate
Party Unity Activity	candidate appears with a leader of a "diesident" faction of the party	Jimmy Carter embraces Ted Kennedy after 1980 nomination struggle
Outside Event	nat'l or int'l non-campaign event	1968 cessation of Vietnam bombing raids
Scandal	accusation of impropriety	Nixon "slush fund" in 1956
Foul-Up	gaffe or mis-statement by candidate	Carter "lust in my heart" statement in 1976 Playboy interview

attack and retrospective messages simultaneously in his 1980 campaign against Jimmy Carter. Specifically, Reagan frequently followed his "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" question with this joke: "Recession is when your neighbor loses his job ... depression is when you lose your job ... recovery is when President Carter loses his job". Another category of classification ambiguity is the potential connectedness between some party unity activities and the articulation of prospective messages. Richard Nixon's appearance with President Eisenhower in 1960 was accompanied by a speech that was widely regarded as an attempt by Nixon to appeal to moderate Democrats. Unfortunately, close calls do not resolve themselves. Ultimately, these campaign events are classified by the primary nature of the activity--judged by the author--as reported by the media of the day.[5]

[5] For this study, I tried alternative classification schemes when a campaign activity did not fall neatly it into a single event type. For example, a secondary categorization of campaign events was devised that took into account the multiple nature of some campaign events. However, it did not change the substantive findings of the chapter and was set aside for simplicity's sake. At a more methodological level, principle components analysis was used to group events. However, because this analysis was based on the similarity of movement associated with the events (and not on "theoretical" similarity) it proved to be of limited utility.

Table One displays the frequency of campaign event types, as well as the frequency of events for Republican and Democratic candidates. There were 161 events over the course of eleven presidential elections. The number of events in the Gallup chronology has been held roughly equal over the years by the Gallup Organization. The average was a little less than thirteen major events per election year. This number of cases is sufficient to study how events (and classes of events) affect support for candidates. Moreover, the analysis can be done by party. There were 80 campaign events involving Republican candidates and 81 involving Democratic candidates. Republican and Democratic candidates both averaged around seven major events during the campaign (some events involved both parties, which leads to double-counting activities such as debates and increases the total number of events). Discounting conventions and debates, candidates for the presidency averaged five major events per campaign. This does not seem at odds with the reality of a presidential election campaign. It is possible that the mean number of events offered here might seem low to those who have worked in campaigns. However, five major events per campaign is far from a trivial number. Moreover, as I stated earlier, the number of events is not a reflection of the total activity (or inactivity) of a campaign.

Measuring Absolute Changes in Candidate Support

Having identified an array of campaign events from previous presidential elections, the second analytical challenge is to measure the support movement associated with these campaign events. In gauging these effects, this chapter begins by examining absolute changes in the margin between candidates. Absolute change shows how much campaign events affect voters' preferences, irrespective of whether the movement specifically widens or narrows the margin between the candidates. The trial ballot margin between the candidates is used for two reasons: (1) it reflects the relative standing of both candidates and (2) it is less variable than are support figures for an individual candidate.[6] Survey data are used to measure the margin. For every presidential election year from 1952 to 1992 a trial ballot measure is calculated for each day of the campaign.[7] Thus, for every day of every presidential year since 1952, there is an estimate of the

[6] The reason for this second fact is that the percentage of undecided voters in a given sample has a greater influence on the candidate's support percentages than on the margin between the candidates.

[7] In general, the data begin around September 1 of a presidential election year and continue through election day. In some instances, data points are added in order to measure the effect of campaign events which occur prior to September 1 (such as conventions).

Table 1

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN EVENT FREQUENCY, 1952-92

	Total	Republican Activity	Democrat Activity
Message			
Prospective	19 (12%)	10 (13%)	9 (11%)
Retrospective/ Comparative	8 (5%)	4 (5%)	4 (5%)
Valence/ Values	13 (8%)	5 (6%)	8 (10%)
Attack	17 (11%)	6 (8%)	11 (14%)
National Convention	22 (14%)	11 (13%)	11 (13%)
Presidential Debate	32 (20%)	16 (20%)	16 (20%)
Vice-Presidential Debate	8 (5%)	4 (5%)	4 (5%)
Party Unity Activity	5 (3%)	2 (3%)	3 (4%)
Scandal	11 (7%)	6 (8%)	5 (6%)
Foul-Up	11 (7%)	5 (6%)	6 (8%)
Outside Event	15 (9%)	11 (14%)	4 (5%)
Total	161 (100%)	80 (100%)	81 (100%)

Note: Case frequencies for the parties are calculated by the number of events directly involving the party's presidential candidate. Certain activities involve both parties (debates) and are counted twice.

margin between the candidates and a list of campaign events which occurred on that date.[8]

The measure of movement associated with campaign events then becomes quite simple: the margin between the candidates on the day before the event is compared to the average margin that exists from one to three days after the event. The posterior data point encompasses three days to account for an information lag that could slow the relevant changes in the support margin. The absolute value of this difference is the estimate of movement. Average movement for a class of campaign events is the sum of all changes corresponding to the event type, divided by their relative frequencies.

Determining the significance of a campaign event type's absolute movement raises some complicated issues. One could take the mean absolute movement for a type of campaign event, along with the standard deviation, and calculate the significance levels from t-statistics. The problem with this approach is that it does not take into account the sampling errors which affect the estimate of the trial ballot margin. In other words, this approach assumes that if no campaign event is undertaken, there will be no change in the trial ballot margin from time$_t$ to time$_{t+1}$. But we know this is not the case; sampling error often changes the margin between the candidates even though the political context is constant.

My way of dealing with the issue of estimating survey error is to examine the average absolute movement in the trial ballot margin associated with days on which no major campaign events occur.[9] This gives us a mean and a standard deviation that can serve as a base-line for comparing the significance of movement associated with campaign events. A graph of the movement in the trial ballot margin for event and non-event days is presented in **Figure One**. The question of significance can then be addressed with a one-tailed test of the difference between the

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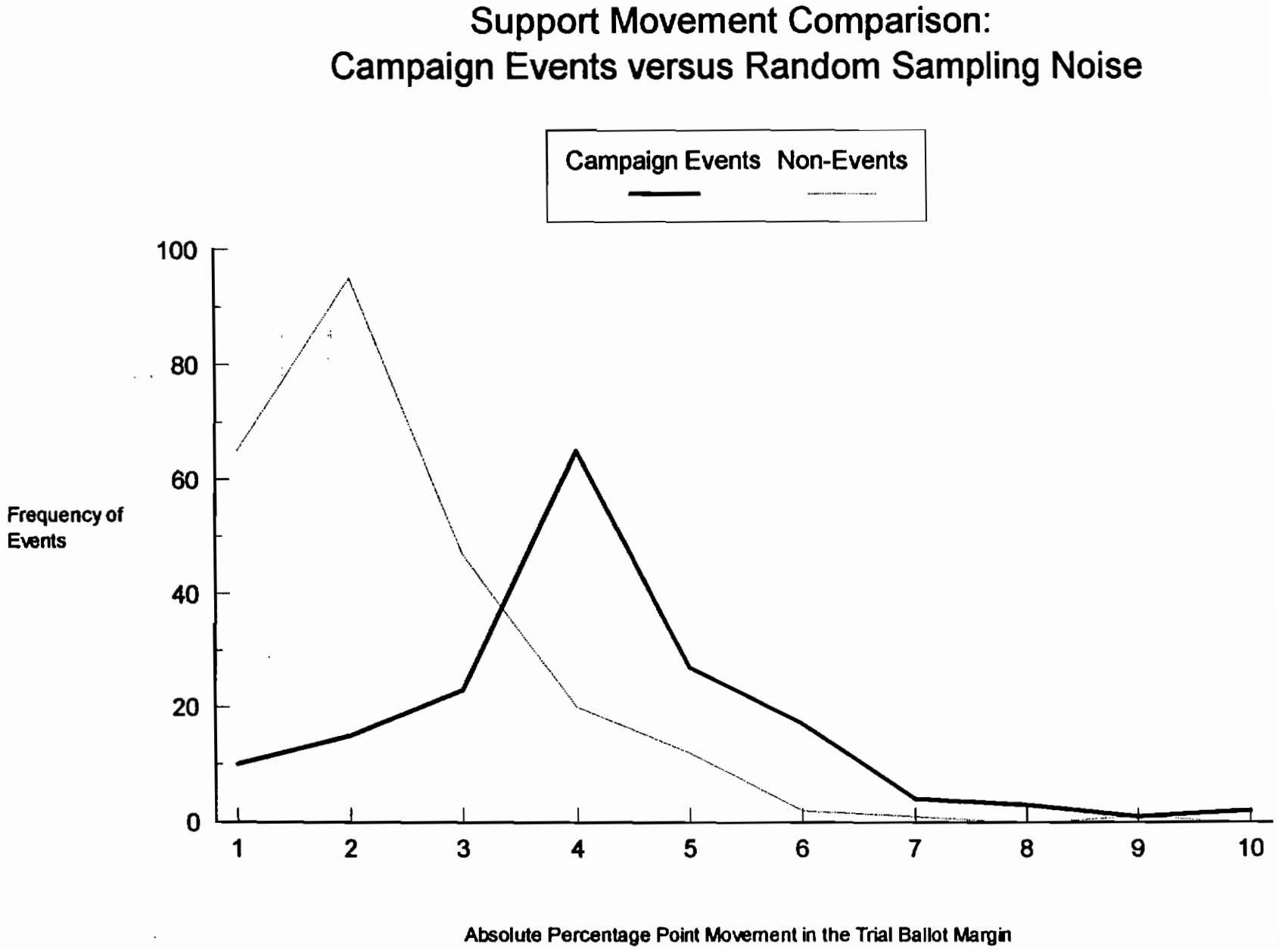
[8] The estimates of the margin are based on all available public and private trial ballot results from 1952 to 1992. The surveys are of registered voters. Estimates are derived for a given day in one of several ways. When there are multiple trial ballots from a single day, an average is computed and entered as the estimate of candidate support. When a single poll result is available for a day, it serves as the estimate of candidate support. For days without any trial ballots, an estimate is computed from two sources: (1) the margin trends suggested by trial ballot results from the days immediately before and after the day in question, and (2) National Election Study candidate support data from the particular day, as well as from the days before and after, which are weighed by age/sex and race/region population proportions. A generalized least squares regression procedure can be used to yield a single trial ballot figure by utilizing these two estimates of the candidate support margin as the dependent variables and weighing them by their respective error terms.

[9] The problem of comparing absolute movement associated with campaign events to zero was brought to my attention by John Zaller. The estimate of survey error offered here is also based on my discussion with Zaller.

Figure 1


Support Movement Comparison:
Campaign Events versus Random Sampling Noise
Campaign Events
Non-Events
Frequency of Events
100
80
60
40
20
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Absolute Percentage Point Movement in the Trial Ballot Margin

event and non-event movement means.[10] The up-shot is that the absolute effect analysis will focus on two numbers: (1) the magnitude of the movement associated with campaign event types and (2) the significance of the difference between event movement and random error, as determined by a one-tailed test.

Measuring Directional Changes in Candidate Support

Absolute changes in the trial ballot margin are used to respond to the question of whether a campaign event has *any* impact. Because the focus of that inquiry is the ability of campaigning to produce *any* reaction, different kinds of movement in the trial ballot are treated the same: as evidence that campaign activities affect voters' preferences. But a more exacting criterion for significance can be imposed if one considers not just the magnitude of the movement, but whether a candidate's position improves or worsens with a particular type of event. This is the purpose of the directional analysis of campaigning.

The same data used in the absolute effects analysis are used to measure the directional effects of campaign events. However, unlike the absolute effects study, which is interested in any movement, the directional effect analysis looks at whether a candidate gains or loses support by engaging in particular kinds of campaign activity. Directional movement therefore takes into account the identity of the candidate most clearly associated with the campaign event. Directional movement estimates compare the trial ballot margin on the day before the event with the average margin one to three days afterward. The movement is positive when a candidate's position is improved (i.e., a candidate decreases his deficit, moves ahead, or increases his lead) and negative when it worsens (i.e., a candidate falls further behind, loses a lead, or sees his lead diminished). Average movement for a class of campaign events is the sum of all changes in the trial ballot margin (positive and negative) corresponding to the event type, divided by their relative frequencies.

The directional movement estimates are less subject to some of the concerns that make the analysis of absolute effects so daunting. First, directional movement can be compared to a base-line of zero percentage point movement. If one takes the absolute value of movement, the cumulative error will always average to some number greater than zero; however, if one allows error to be positive or negative, one can assume it will sum to zero.[11] Second, we can often

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[10] A one-tailed test is undertaken because one would always expect the movement associated with campaign events to be greater than for non-event days.

[11] Assuming no systematic bias exists in the survey estimates of candidate support.

judge the directional movement estimates according to substantive expectations. That is, certain campaign events (conventions, messages, party unity activities) are expected to boost a candidate's standing, while others (scandals, gaffes) are expected to reduce a candidate's share of the vote. When we examine the movement related to a category of campaign events, we can therefore ask whether the direction of movement is anticipated, as well as whether or not that movement is significantly different from zero. In sum, for the study of directional effects the key measures (the average movement in the trial ballot margin and a significance test for that movement) are intuitive and straight-forward.[12]

For this chapter's examination of campaign events, the analytical goal is to construct a high-level scrutiny test. In particular, the objective is to subject the associations between events and changes in candidate support to a conservative test. There are two reasons the present tests are conservative in their estimation of the impact of campaign events: (1) the use of national surveys can mask the local effects of campaign events, and (2) the definition of "effect" employed here is narrow and acknowledges only whether events alter a candidate's position in the polls. The first point observes that the current framework would not pick up an effect unless it were national. Thus, a campaign event might influence who wins a state, but might not change the national trial ballot margin. Such an occurrence would go unnoticed here. The second point is equally important. The present framework does not consider other purposes that might be accomplished by specific campaign events, such as "long-run positioning"[13] or "inoculation activities".[14] These are activities designed to change the *perceptions* voters have about the candidates; they may or may not alter voters' preferences for one candidate over another, though.

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[12] The nature of the significance test (or t-test) comparing directional movement to zero depends upon whether one has a directional expectation for the movement. For conventions, messages, party unity activities, scandals and foul-ups, a one-tail test is appropriate. For events that have an unpredictable effect, such as debates or outside events, a two-tail test is better.

[13] "Long-run positioning" is when a candidate takes a position on an issue (often an unpopular position) with the hope of establishing a favorable impression in a more general political sense. For example, in 1996 a candidate may take a pro-life stance on abortion (the less popular position, according to national surveys) in order to position herself as a "conservative" or as someone who is willing to make a "moral" stand regardless of what is politically convenient.

[14] "Inoculation" is making a statement or defining a position for an issue on which a candidate believes he is politically vulnerable *before his opponent attacks him on it*. For example, a candidate who has voted to cut social security could run a commercial emphasizing their positive work for the elderly on other issues. In essence, this is a preemptive strike designed to minimize damage.

The only sense in which this set-up is not conservative is in its exclusive use of "major" campaign events. After all, there are a myriad of activities undertaken by a presidential campaign which have no impact on the public opinion polls. However, this exclusivity does not lower any evidentiary thresholds; it merely raises the stakes of the analysis. If the "major" events do not affect candidate support, it is safe to assume that campaigns are unimportant to voters' preferences.

Finally, before proceeding to the campaign effect analysis, I should point out that much of the absolute and directional analysis controls for the candidate's partisanship. In other words, campaign events associated with the Democratic candidate are separated from those involving the Republican candidate. My reasoning is that it is possible the significance of certain types of campaign events differed for Republican and Democratic candidates in recent presidential elections. Because these differences may enhance our understanding of electioneering from 1952 to 1992, they will be noted and commented on in the course of this examination.[15]

ESTIMATING THE INITIAL ABSOLUTE IMPACT OF CAMPAIGN EVENTS

Absolute Effects

Table Two shows the average absolute movement associated with each type of campaign event for the years 1952-1992. The mean difference in the percentage point margin between the candidates is presented along with the standard deviations and significance levels. In the table, the mean movement is measured by taking the absolute value of poll movement associated with each activity in an event type, summing within the category, and dividing by the total number of activities in that category. The averages for the parties are obtained by selecting for those events directly involving that party and performing this same computation. Standard deviations are derived from variance in the trial ballot margin's movement. The significance levels are calculated from difference of means tests between the estimated movement and the average movement attributable to sampling error. Specifically, t-tests are conducted in which the movement associated with a given class of events is compared to the movement that occurs in response to

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[15] Calculating separate estimates of campaign effects for Republican and Democratic candidates merely requires creating a "Democratic" dummy variable which takes on a non-zero value for every day that has a campaign event associated with a Democrat, and doing the same for Republican candidates. It is then possible to *select* those events involving candidates from a given party and to compute the trial ballot movement associated with the party's events.

Table 2

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN EVENTS AND MOVEMENT IN THE POLLS, 1952-92

	Absolute Percentage Point Poll Movement	For Republicans	For Democrats
Message			
Prospective	2.6*** (2.14)	1.6 (1.69)	3.4*** (2.35)
Retrospective/ Comparative	3.0** (2.00)	2.3 (2.52)	3.7** (1.53)
Valence/ Values	2.6** (2.12)	3.3* (3.21)	2.1 (1.64)
Attack	3.1*** (2.50)	2.7* (1.97)	3.5*** (2.71)
National Convention	7.3*** (3.33)	7.8*** (2.82)	6.9*** (4.28)
Presidential Debate	4.2*** (2.95)	4.2*** (2.95)	4.2*** (2.95)
Vice-Presidential Debate	4.0** (3.37)	4.0** (3.37)	4.0** (3.37)
Party Unity Activity	4.0*** (1.73)	5.0*** (0.00)	3.5* (2.12)
Scandal	3.9*** (3.11)	4.7*** (3.72)	3.0* (2.24)
Foul-Up	6.8*** (2.05)	5.0*** (0.00)	7.3*** (2.06)
Outside Event	3.8*** (2.81)	3.7*** (2.45)	4.4** (3.58)
Total	4.1*** (3.35)	4.4*** (3.01)	3.6*** (1.53)

*** significance level < 0.01
** significance level < 0.05
* significance level < 0.10

Note:: Absolute percentage point movement is the difference in the margin between the major party candidates one day before an event and the average margin one to three days afterwards.

Note: Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

Note: The significance of the movement is calculated by a difference of means test between the observed movement and an estimate of movement attributable to sampling error. The latter is 1.7 percentage points with a standard deviation of 1.0 percentage points. This estimate was calculated by taking the average movement associated with 220 days–20 from each presidential campaign from 1952 to 1992–that had no major campaign events.

Note: Statistics for the parties are obtained by selecting for those events involving a given party and performing the same computations described above.

non-event days.[16]

The data for 1952-1992 buttress the argument that campaign activities produce changes in candidate support. Predictably, the "bigger" events of the election year were associated with the most movement. Figure Two shows the absolute effects of the campaign events rank-ordered by their magnitude. National conventions (7.3 percentage points) and candidate foul-ups (6.8 percentage points) were coincident with the greatest changes in support. Following these were debates (4.2 percentage points for presidential, 4.0 for vice-presidential), party unity activities (4.0 percentage points), scandals (3.9 percentage points) and outside events (3.8 percentage points). Finally, the four types of candidate messages weigh in: attack messages were associated with the most movement (3.1 percentage points), then retrospective messages (3.0 percentage points), valence messages (2.6 percentage points) and prospective messages (2.6 percentage points). Overall, the average movement for 161 presidential campaign events was 4.1 percentage points, which translates into a less than 0.01 probability the movement was due to random variation. Each category of campaign event was associated with movement that is significant beyond sampling error at the 0.10 probability level. In other words, all types of major campaign events were related to statistically significant changes in the aggregate candidate preferences of voters. In terms of our tug-of-war analogy, it appears that the mid-point moved when one team pulled the rope.

Differences in Absolute Effects by Party

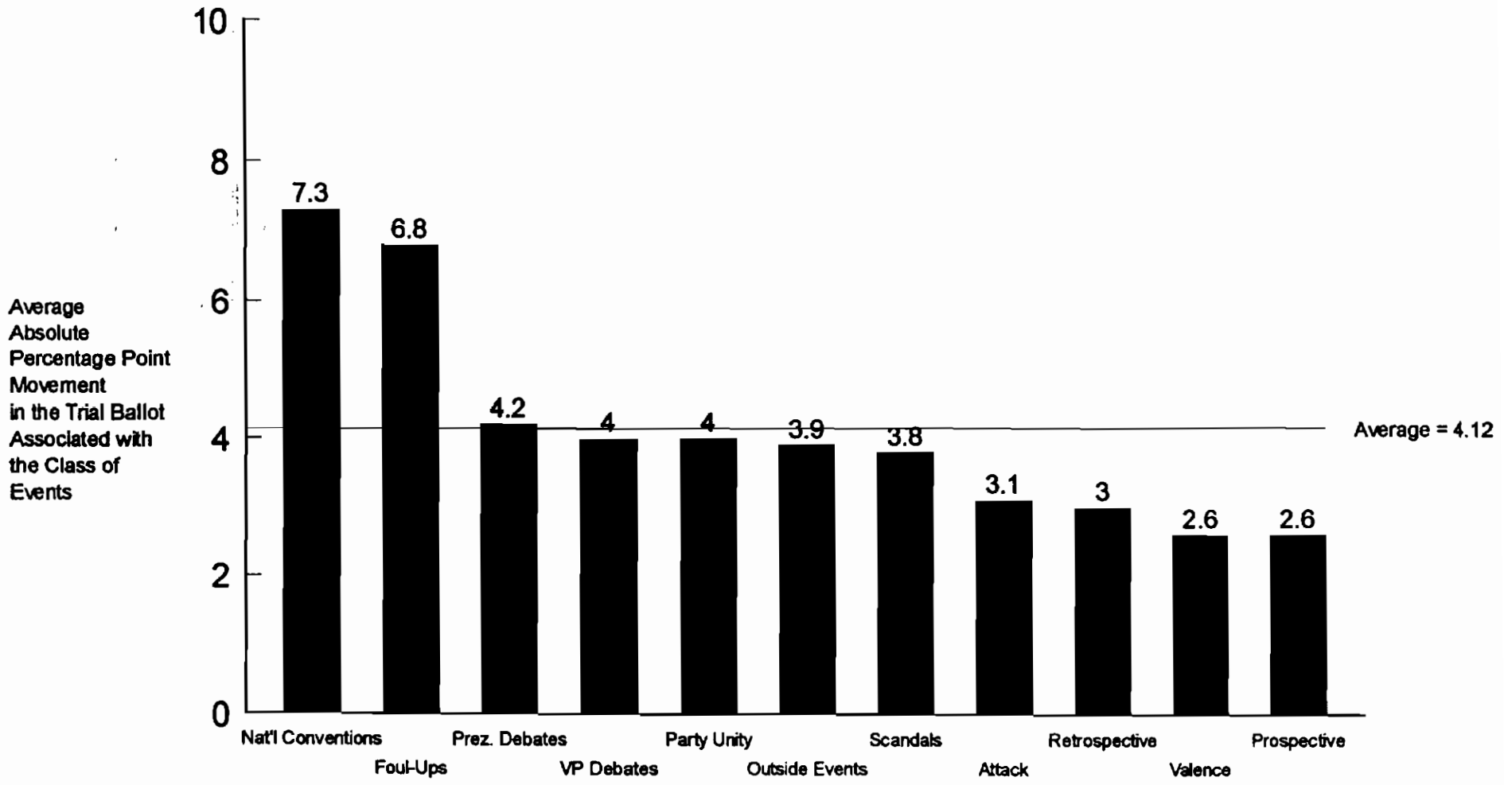
The data indicate campaign events were indeed "hot buttons" for presidential elections from 1952 through 1992. That is, absolute movement measures indicate that campaigning usually induced some kind of change in voters' preferences. It would be interesting, though, to see if both Republican and Democratic candidates were able to similarly shake the status-quo with their electioneering. If the "hot buttons" for the candidates differed, we can generate interesting observations and questions about campaigning in recent presidential elections. The examination of party differences also bears on the more general issue of whether campaigns matter; if campaign effects transcend party lines, it would strengthen the broader contention that candidate activity

[16] The sampling error estimate is 1.7 percentage points with a standard deviation of 1.0 percentage points. In Figure One, the distribution of the movement associated with event days is compared to that for non-event days. The differences between the means are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that something beyond sampling error is responsible for the movement we see after campaign events. This is also suggested by the larger tail on the event distribution curve.

Figure 2

Campaign Events and Movement in the Polls, 1952-92

(Rank-Ordered by Magnitude of Effect)



influences voters' preferences.

The evidence indicates the influence of campaign events on voters' preferences holds across the partisanship of the candidate. The magnitude of the effect appears to have differed by the partisanship of the candidate, though. For Democratic presidential candidates, the average movement was slightly lower overall: 3.6 percentage points for 81 campaign events, compared to 4.4 percentage points for 80 Republican events. Furthermore, the significance of particular events was not the same for Republican and Democratic presidential candidates. When one separates the effect of campaign events by party, one not only notices the overall differences but also the inter-party differences in the effect of any particular event.

Democratic Candidates' "Hot Buttons"

Despite the generally lower influence of Democratic activities, it is worth observing that the effect of Democrats' messages was greater. In particular, the retrospective (3.7 percentage points), attack (3.5 percentage points) and prospective messages (3.2 percentage points) of Democratic candidates were associated with significant (at the 0.05 level) movement; only Republicans' attack and valence messages were related with movement significant at the 0.10 level. The greater influence of Democratic candidates' messages on voters, especially the attack messages, would surprise even those bold enough to predict the existence of *any* effect. The prevailing conventional wisdom holds that, in recent elections, Democratic candidates have been less able than Republican candidates to make voters respond to messages that favor their party (Petrocik, 1991). Needless to say, the present finding does not contend that the Democrats have done *better* with their messages; it only suggests that Democratic candidates' messages shake up voters' preferences more than those voiced by Republicans.

This may be related to the fact that Democratic candidates were challengers in five of the last six presidential elections. The challengers were more often than not underdogs and had to draw supporters away from the incumbent by making the case that they could do better. It is therefore plausible to assume they tended to have a wider range of strategic options and may have elicited more unpredictable and substantial movement when they spoke. In short, it is conceivable that challengers often could and did take more chances with their pronouncements. For example, running as a challenger in the period from 1952 to 1992 involved aggressively painting a negative portrait of the incumbent administration's job performance. George McGovern, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis attacked their incumbent opponents repeatedly in each of their respective campaigns. Their attacks ranged from accusing the GOP of dishonesty (Carter, referring to Watergate) to implying the Republicans had financed an economic recovery by

mortgaging the future with deficit spending (Mondale and Dukakis). On the Republican side, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan were clearly on the attack in 1964 and 1980, respectively. All of these candidates, Democratic and Republican, had to develop and press these messages. Part of the movement they elicited was endemic to their role as challengers; articulating the latent dissatisfaction of voters with the reigning administration. Admittedly, Clinton's conservative tactics in 1992 occur as a counter-factual to this argument. The key distinction, then, may not be incumbent versus challenger, but underdog versus favorite.

Even more puzzling than the message effect difference is the fact that Democratic candidates' foul-ups have also achieved more movement than those of their Republican counterparts. The average change in the trial ballot margin associated with Democratic gaffes was 7.3 percentage points, with this movement being significant beyond survey variance at the 0.01 level. For Republicans, the mean movement was a statistically significant 5.0 percentage points. The movement may say something about Democratic candidates, but may also be attributable to bad luck.

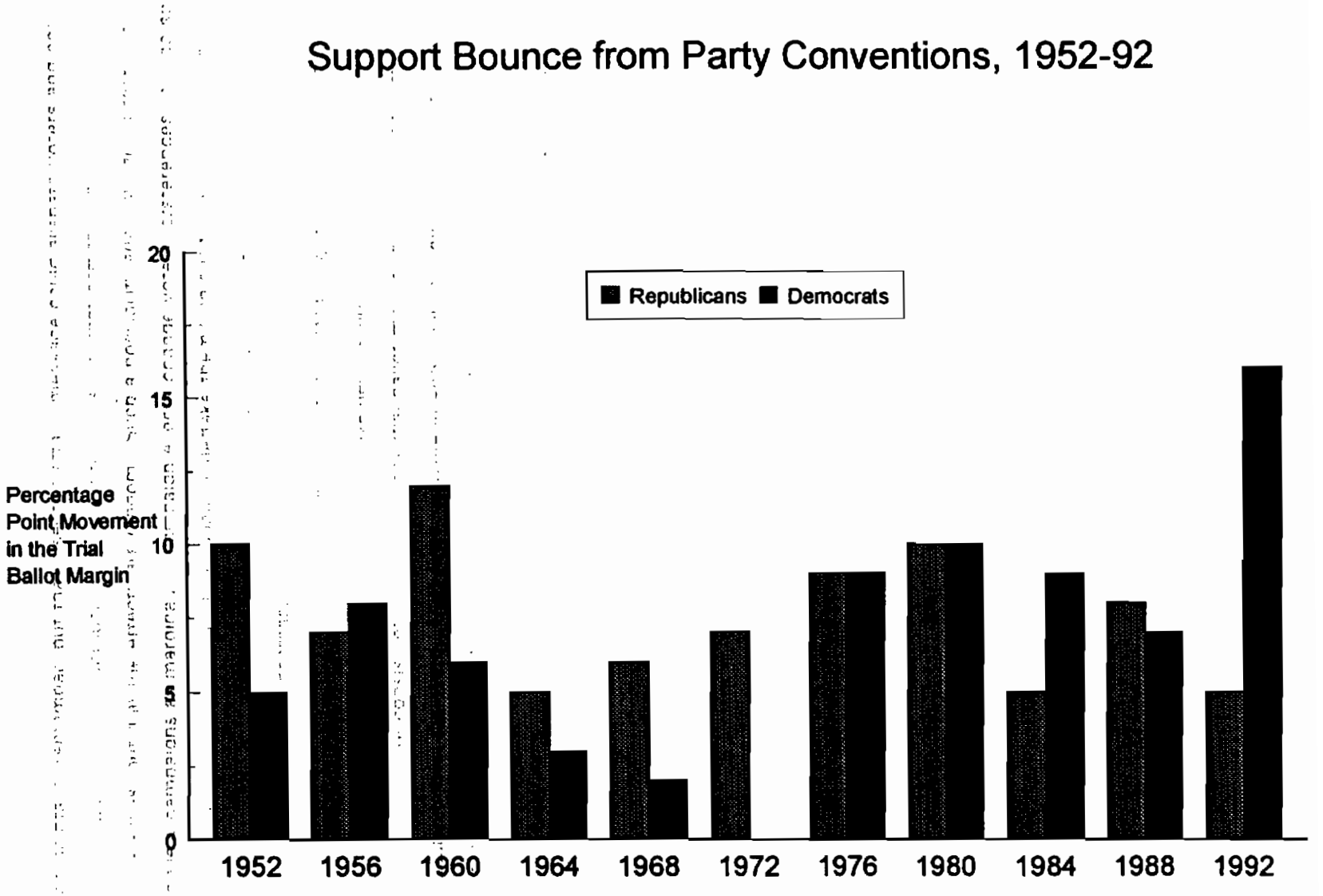
It should not be surprising that national conventions caused the greatest movement for Democratic candidates. The average bounce from the Democratic Convention was 6.9 percentage points. Besides conventions and gaffes, the events which caused the most serious alterations in the status-quo for Democratic candidates were outside events (4.4 percentage points) and presidential debates (4.2 percentage points).

Republican Candidates' "Hot Buttons"

For Republican presidential candidates, the overall absolute movement was 4.4 percentage points for 80 campaign events. This is slightly above the total mean and significantly exceeds the Democratic movement. Republicans elicited substantial movement (significant at the 0.01 level) in response to their conventions (7.8 percentage points) and party unity activities (5.0 percentage points). The convention movement was far and away the most dramatic for any campaign event type, though from Figure Three it is apparent that effects varied greatly. The lesson is that no campaign events (not even conventions) could be taken for granted in past presidential campaigns. *Unlike golf, there are no "gimmees" in campaigns.*

Contrary to foul-ups, scandals appear to have had greater effect on Republican candidates. Scandals produced 1.7 percentage points more movement for Republican candidates than for Democrats (4.7 percentage points to 3.0). While this finding may say something about past Republican candidates, it is also possible that, as the incumbent presidential party for twenty of the past twenty-four years, Republicans have had an advantage of opportunity for scandal (at least at

Figure 3


Support Bounce from Party Conventions, 1952-92
Republicans
Democrats
Percentage Point Movement in the Trial Ballot Margin
20
15
10
5
0
1952
1956
1960
1964
1968
1972
1976
1980
1984
1988
1992

the executive level). In addition, it should be mentioned that scandals have not had a uniform effect for Republican candidates; the large standard deviation for movement associated with these events indicates that sometimes scandals had a great effect while other times they induced only minimal changes in voters' preferences. An example is the minimal impact of the 1984 Donovan indictment compared to the four percentage point movement after Nixon's "slush fund" episode in 1952.

The party unity result is also large, but warrants suspicion. The movement associated with the Republican candidates' party unity activities could have been a function of the low number of cases for these events. It is conceivable that this effect would not persist with the addition of more cases. It is even more plausible that partisan party unity effect differences (4.5 percentage points movement for Republicans, 3.0 for Democrats) would disappear with additional events because the Democratic Party is generally thought of as the party with more elements to unify.[17] This, one assumes, makes the Democrats the party with more to gain with party unity activities.

Turning again to candidate pronouncements, there is one exception to the earlier observation that Democratic candidates' messages were associated with greater changes in the trial ballot margin. Republican candidates have gotten greater movement out of their valence messages than have Democratic candidates (3.3 compared to 2.1 percentage points). The movement in response to Republican values messages is significant at the 0.10 level, as is the difference between the parties. This fits with the conventional perception of Republican candidates as having been more focused and effective with "values" issues. That Democratic candidates have undertaken more of these appeals than Republicans since 1952 is less expected. Ten percent of all Democratic campaign events from 1952 through 1992 were valence appeals, compared to 6% for the Republicans. This difference is not consistent over time, though. The truth of the matter is that Democratic candidates were more likely to articulate valence messages until the Reagan and (especially) the Bush elections. At that point, the Democratic candidates decreased their values appeals as the Republicans increased theirs. In 1992, Bill Clinton reversed the decline in values messages on the Democratic side with variations on his "putting people first" campaign theme. The GOP's success with valence issues may be due to their recent familiarity with "values" messages, an argument supported by the 4.0 percentage point absolute movement produced by Ronald Reagan's valence appeals in 1984 and George Bush's valence appeals in 1988. This is

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[17] This "Democratic vastness" is true both in numeric terms and in sociological terms, as the Democratic Party has more identifiers and is more heterogenous than the GOP--though the Republicans have become more numerous and diverse since the Reagan elections. For a discussion, see Paul Abramson, John Aldrich and David Rhode, 1989, *Change and Continuity in the 1988 Elections.* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press): 121-146.

discussed further when directional movement differences between the parties are considered.

As might be expected, the effect of outside events is roughly the same for Democratic and Republican candidates. Outside events associated with Democratic candidates (for instance, Lyndon Johnson's cessation of bombing raids on Vietnam in 1968 and Jimmy Carter's activities to secure the release of the hostages from Iran in 1980) appear to affect voters' preferences slightly more than outside events associated with Republican candidates (such as Kissinger's 1972 election eve announcement that "peace is at hand" in Vietnam). However, as with national conventions, the differences between Republican and Democratic candidates are not statistically significant.

Summary of Absolute Effects and Differences by Party

The existence of absolute campaign effects across event types for both parties is certainly the most important finding of this analysis. Aside from this primary result, some other points also warrant mention. First, conventions, party unity activities and presidential debates have produced the most substantial movement in the polls. Second, it is clear that since 1952 Republican and Democratic presidential candidates experienced different levels of movement from similar campaign events. The "hot buttons" for Democratic candidates were not the same as those for Republican candidates. One would infer from these data that candidates have had differential abilities to incite changes in voters' preferences. However, it is not obvious that these differences are endemic to the parties. At any rate, knowing that campaign events changed voters' preferences, and that this effect differed by party, unquestionably adds to the incentive to push the investigation of the specific effects of campaign activities.

Absolute Effects in Different Eras

There are a number of ways to segment these data. Many of these approaches yield interesting insights into the effects of campaign events. One especially interesting approach involves breaking the data into pre- and post-party reform eras. This draws on the argument that changes in the parties' nomination processes, particularly the McGovern-Fraser reforms of the early seventies (which opened up the selection of the Democratic presidential nominee to the party's rank-and-file), altered the dynamics of voter responses to the candidates (Polsby, 1979; Bartels, 1988). In particular, the contention is that the electorate has become more politically volatile. This volatility is tied to the development of candidate-centered campaigns, which was accelerated by two occurrences: (1) the decline of the political parties' control over the nominations and (2) the general increase in political independence as new cleavages have cross-cut the New Deal Party

System. Campaigns currently provide a range of "brand name" information about the candidates formerly conveyed by party labels (McCubbins, 1992; Popkin, 1992). Thus, the potential exists for campaigns to be increasingly persuasive in the present era.

Table Three shows the absolute movement of candidate support for campaign events from 1952 through 1968, and from 1972 to 1992. Many findings merit mention. First, candidate gaffes look to have been a very important feature of recent presidential campaigns. From Jimmy Carter's *Playboy* interview in 1976 to George Bush's 1992 reference to his opponents as "bozos", foul-ups have either been more frequent or have received more attention since 1972. With no notable gaffes prior to 1972, these occurrences were largely responsible for increasing the overall mean movement in the post-reform era. These events were easily correlated with significant changes in the trial ballot margin, as they induced an average absolute movement of 6.8 percentage points.

Second, after 1968 national conventions (average movement increasing from 5.3 to 8.7 percentage points) and retrospective messages (1.3 to 4.7 percentage points) were associated with a greater impact on voters' preferences. Since 1972, both have been related to significant changes in voters' preferences (though conventions were also significant from 1952-1968). The increased significance of conventions and retrospective messages can be explained in a variety of ways. The evolution of media (and media coverage) may be the explanation of the changes. The parties have also undoubtedly gotten better at staging events such as conventions for maximum television effect. As for the media and retrospective messages, the adversarial relationship that developed between the president and the media in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate led to more critical coverage of the presidency. This made it easier for challengers to articulate credible, negative retrospective appraisals (Ansolabehere, Behr and Iyengar; 1993). Furthermore, the increased importance of the media as an informational resource exacerbated the impact of this critical coverage. At the presidential level, the electoral repudiations of Ford, Carter and Bush indicate this was not advantageous to incumbents.

Third, events whose effect on the trial ballot margin decreased since 1968 include scandals (4.5 to 3.6 percentage points) and party unity acts (5.0 to 3.5 percentage points). The decrease in the influence of scandals could have been driven by the fact that since 1968 most scandals have been exposed under the intense light of the primaries; long before the general election campaigns began. This cushioned the impact of subsequent discussions or developments. In 1992, for example, Bush's involvement in Iran-Contra and Clinton's alleged marital infidelities were known long before the traditional Labor Day kick-off to the general election campaign. In fact, it could be argued that *any* shock value which existed on these issues had completely worn off by the Fall due to the ubiquity of coverage by the media. In other words, so many stories were presented about

Table 3

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN EFFECTS, PRE- AND POST-1972

	1952-1968		1972-1992	
	Event Frequency	Absolute Percentage Point Poll Movement	Event Frequency	Absolute Percentage Point Poll Movement
Message				
Prospective	10	2.3 (2.36)	9	2.8*** (2.09)
Retro./Comparative	4	1.3 (1.15)	4	4.7*** (0.58)
Valence/Values	6	3.0* (3.61)	7	2.4* (1.51)
Attack	7	3.7** (3.51)	10	3.0** (2.39)
National Convention	10	5.3*** (3.41)	12	8.7*** (5.43)
Presidential Debate	4	4.0** (2.71)	12	4.3*** (3.14)
Vice-Presidential Debate	0	xx	4	4.0** (3.37)
Party Unity Activity	2	5.0*** (0.00)	3	3.5* (2.12)
Scandal	6	4.5*** (3.87)	5	3.6** (2.89)
Foul-Up	0	xx	11	6.8*** (2.05)
Outside Event	5	4.5** (3.87)	10	3.5*** (2.50)
Total	55	3.76*** (3.16)	86	4.26*** (3.47)

Note: Absolute percentage point movement is the difference in the margin between the major party candidates one day before an event and the average margin one to three days afterwards. Standard deviations (underneath) are presented in parentheses.

Note: The significance of the movement is calculated by a difference of means test between the observed movement and an estimate of movement attributable to sampling error. The latter is 1.7 percentage points with a standard deviation of 1.0 percentage points. This estimate was calculated by taking the average movement associated with 220 days–20 from each presidential campaign from 1952 to 1992–that had no major campaign events.

Note: Statistics for the parties are obtained by selecting for those events involving a given party and performing the same computations described above.

Iran-Contra and promiscuity that it is possible people (1) could not separate fact from fiction and (2) no longer cared about fact. Actually, the data indicate this is a slight over-statement with respect to the arms-for-hostages affair, but not by much.[18] The trend in party unity activities' effect is less explicable. It may simply be that this post-1968 movement was a more accurate reflection of the actual influence of these endeavors (remember the small number of cases from the pre-1972 era). Both scandals and party unity activities were still associated with statistically significant changes (at the 0.05 and 0.10 levels, respectively); the movement was just not as substantial as it was from 1952 to 1968.

Overall, campaign events *were* associated with greater movement in the post-reform era (4.3 compared to 3.8 percentage points). There is a less than one in nine probability that these differences are solely a function of random variation. Moreover, with the exceptions of scandals and party unity activities, the effect is strikingly consistent. On a more specific level, the preceding evidence shows that gaffes, conventions and retrospective messages have produced more significant changes in the trial ballot margin since 1972. These data not only support the argument that candidate-centered politics had arrived, but are also consistent with a variety of studies of the growing importance of the media in elections (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). The evidence that campaign events had a greater impact after 1968 adds texture to the earlier finding that campaign events can change the aggregate preference profile of an electorate.

ESTIMATING THE INITIAL DIRECTIONAL IMPACT OF CAMPAIGN EVENTS

Directional Effects and Party Differences

The absolute effects analysis tells us that preferences can be changed by campaigns. It does not address the more particular question of whether these campaign effects have any predictable political consequence. To give a generic example, the absolute effect analysis treats a three percentage point gain produced by a campaign event the same as a three percentage point loss. Thus, the estimate of absolute movement is uninterested in the specific political ramifications of an event; movement is movement. The absolute measure is insensitive to the possibility that a type of event may turn voters off as readily as it may turn them on. To phrase the issue in more overtly political terms, it is possible that an attack message could boost a candidate three

[18] Internal polling from Bush/Quayle suggests that the release of the Weinberger memo in late October, which placed the former vice-president "in the loop" on the arms-for-hostages deal, cost him at least two percentage points in the trial ballot margin.

percentage points in September, but that a second attack message could alienate voters and cost him two percentage points in October. This raises the prospect that campaigning may change voters' preferences, but that the effects are random. Such a possibility again suggests that it is correct to view campaigns as marginal. If campaign events change voters' preferences, but do so in an unpredictable way, why should a candidate undertake them? In such a universe, candidates would be wise to limit any campaigning until they can distinguish between events that increase their support and events that decrease it.

This section focuses on directional movement; it investigates how different campaign events affect the candidate's standing. Directional movement is significant only if an event type consistently improves (or consistently diminishes) the trial ballot margin for the candidate most closely associated with the event. Significant absolute effects could disappear if an event demonstrably decreases a candidate's support in some instances but enhances it at other times. In short, absolute effects show the ability of the campaign to move voters, while the directional effects demonstrate the ability of campaign events to produce *a large and predictable alteration in voters' preferences.* The directional effects analysis therefore establishes a higher standard for testing the significance of campaigning.

The directional effects of different campaign event categories from 1952 through 1992 are shown in **Table Four**. There are three things to note in this table: (1) the direction of the movement associated with each event type, (2) the relative magnitude of the events' effects and (3) the significance of the movement related to the events.[19] On the whole, candidates' campaign activities produced positive changes in the aggregate distribution of voters' preferences. Further, movement was in the anticipated direction for 92% of all campaign events (see **Figure Four**). In partisan terms, Democratic candidates gained more support from campaign activities than Republicans. The average difference between Democratic and Republican candidates is almost a full point. As with some of the data on absolute movement, the 1952-1992 findings are not consistent with the notion that Republican candidates were better at campaigning than are Democrats. However, the Democratic candidates' slim advantage was rooted in the movement

[19] The data used for the directional analysis are the same used in the absolute effect analysis. The only difference is that for the directional analysis, *the direction of the change in the trial ballot result was measured (for the three days after an event that was associated with a specific candidate).* The significance is determined through a t-test comparing the movement associated with the event to zero. The standard deviation for the movement is derived from the variance in movement estimates for all events within a campaign event category.

Table 4

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN EVENTS AND MOVEMENT IN THE POLLS, 1952-92

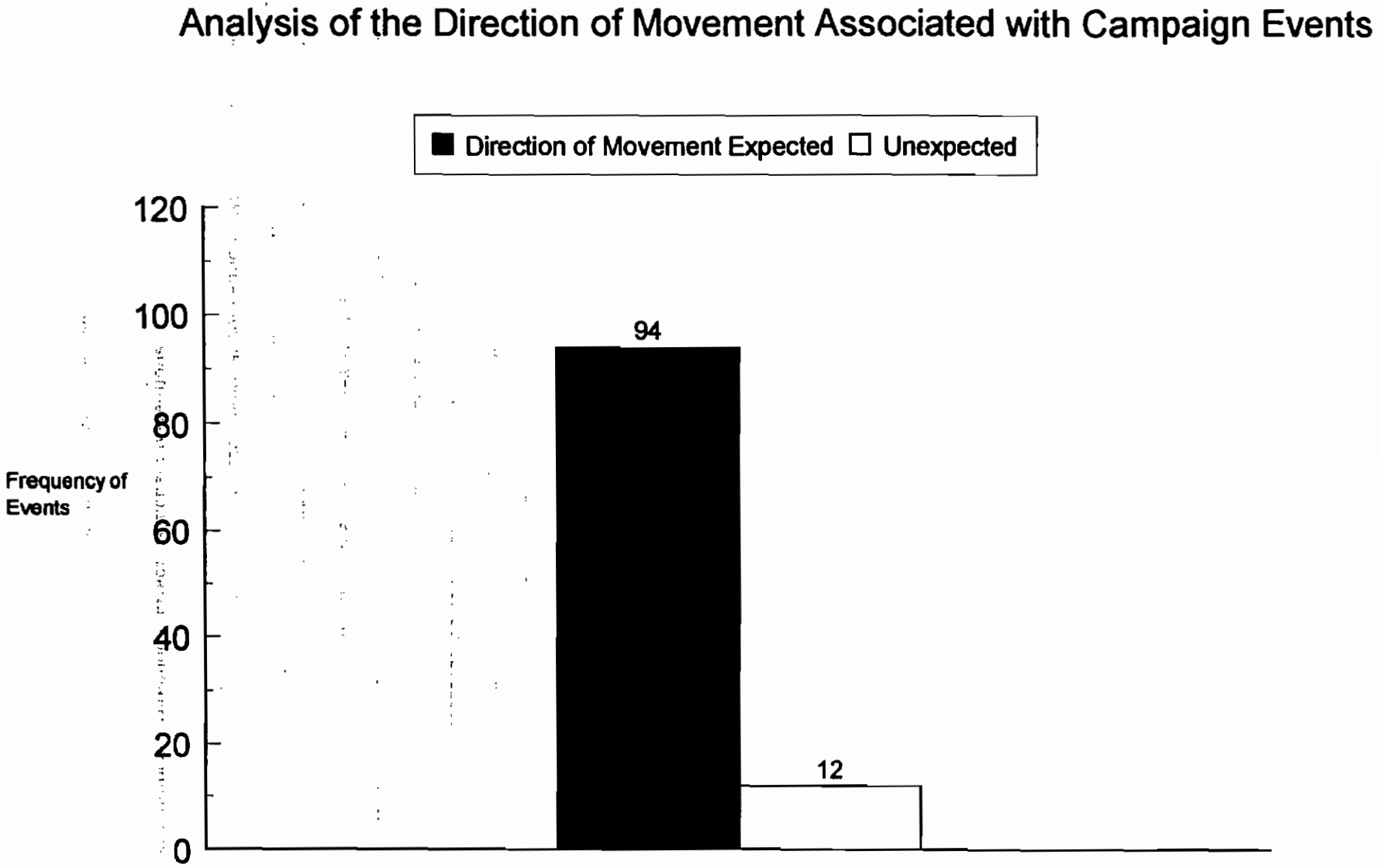
	Event Freq.	Net Movement For Republicans	Event Freq.	Net Movement For Democrats
Message				
Prospective	10	0.4 (2.50)	9	0.1 (4.34)
Retrospective/Comparative	4	-1.0 (2.61)	4	-0.3 (4.73)
Valence/Values	5	2.2* (1.48)	8	0.6 (2.72)
Attack	6	1.0 (3.35)	11	0.9 (4.47)
National Convention	11	7.8*** (2.82)	11	6.9** (3.95)
Presidential Debate	16	-1.7* (1.20)	16	1.7* (1.20)
Vice-Presidential Debate	4	-3.0* (2.55)	4	3.0* (2.55)
Party Unity Activity	2	5.0*** (0.00)	3	3.5* (1.65)
Scandal	6	-1.3 (3.07)	5	0.2 (4.02)
Foul-Up	5	-5.0*** (0.00)	6	-7.3*** (2.06)
Outside Event	11	0.6 (4.57)	4	-0.1 (5.89)
Total	80	0.39 (4.27)	81	1.14 (5.30)

Note: Absolute percentage point movement is the difference in the margin between the major party candidates one day before an event and the average margin one to three days afterwards. Standard deviations are presented in parentheses.

Note: The significance of the movement is calculated by a difference of means test between the observed movement and an estimate of movement attributable to sampling error. The latter is 1.7 percentage points with a standard deviation of 1.0 percentage points. This estimate was calculated by taking the average movement associated with 220 days–20 from each presidential campaign from 1952 to 1992–that had no major campaign events.

Note: Statistics for the parties are obtained by selecting for those events involving a given party and performing the same computations described above.

Figure 4


Analysis of the Direction of Movement Associated with Campaign Events
Direction of Movement Expected
Unexpected
Frequency of Events
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
94
12

related to the debates. Because Democrats have benefitted from both presidential and vice-presidential debates while Republicans have been disadvantaged (+1.7 percentage points for the Democrats in presidential debates, +3.0 percentage points in vice-presidential debates), the composite mean for movement associated with Democratic candidates' activities rises as the Republican candidates' falls. When one controls for the debate effect, the advantage for Democratic candidates disappears.[20]

Minimal Directional Effects: Messages and Outside Occurrences

There are several points to be made when examining Table Four. The first and perhaps most important finding is that neither parties' campaign messages were generally associated with statistically significant increases in support at all. In fact, only prospective, valence and attack messages were coincident with *increased* support. Retrospective messages corresponded to an immediate drop-off in candidate standing; Republicans lost a single percentage point with retrospective messages, while Democratic candidates dropped 0.3 percentage points. The only striking difference between Democratic and Republican candidates with regard to the directional effect of campaign messages is that Republicans elicited positive and significant movement in conjunction with valence messages.[21] As mentioned above, this effect was largely driven by Reagan and Bush's appeals in the 1984 and 1988 campaigns. Reagan's articulation of the "morning in America" theme was associated with a four percentage point movement in 1984, while Bush's "patriotism" appeal in 1988 (specifically, his speech at a flag factory defending the place of the "Pledge of Allegiance" in the schools) coincided with a three percentage point movement. By contrast, Nixon's appeal to the "silent majority" in 1968 was not as successful at moving voters. The overall pattern of minimal effects for message appeals is consistent with the traditional conception of the presidential campaign as, at best, marginally influential to voters.

A second finding is that the effect of outside events also failed to favor Republican or Democratic candidates. If one believes that incumbent presidents can manipulate events to boost their chances for re-election, this might be surprising. Events like the Suez Crisis or the death of marines in Lebanon do not appear to have been major factors in presidential elections.

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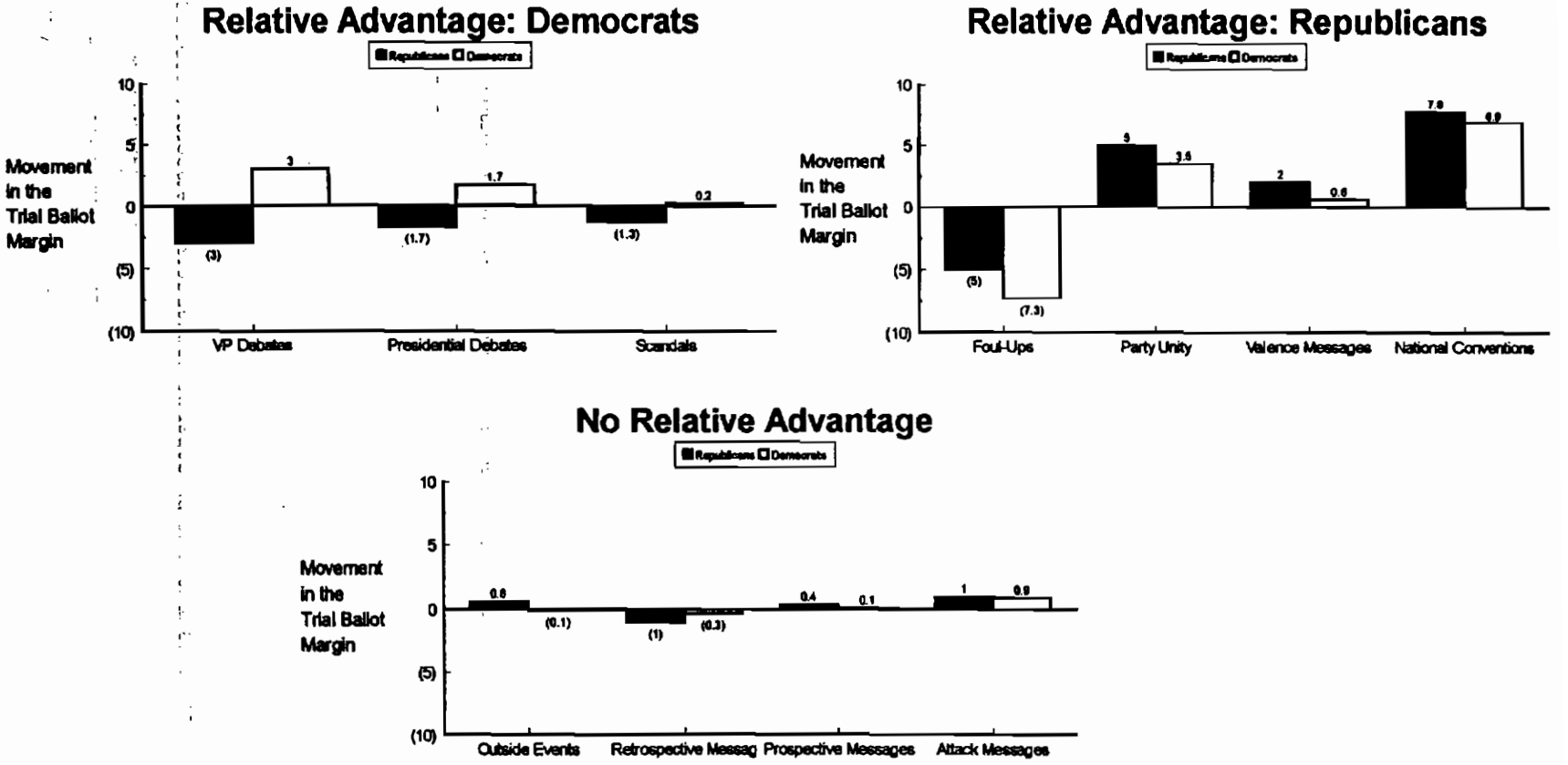
[20] It is also true that since 1952 Democratic candidates have trailed decidedly in seven of eleven campaigns, and that they have therefore had more "room for improvement" than their Republican counterparts. This explanation of the Democratic advantage does not explain the disappearance of overall differences when one controls for the debate effect.

[21] Directional effect differences between the parties are shown in Figure Five.

Figure 5

Differences in Campaign Event Effectiveness by Party, 1952-92



Substantial Directional Effects: Debates, Scandals, Gaffes and Party Unity Activities

From the directional effect data, it is also apparent that some campaign events did produce alterations in candidate support. Moreover, some of the influential event types definitely worked better for one party than they did for the other. As mentioned earlier, debates have helped Democratic candidates at the expense of Republicans. This might confuse those of us whose lasting image of the 1988 presidential campaign is Michael Dukakis coolly letting the election slip away with his analytical review of why he would not want the death penalty for someone who had raped and murdered his wife. This finding *is* consistent with even a cursory review of past debates, though. Richard Nixon's standing in the polls was diminished after his first debate with John Kennedy. Gerald Ford's statement that "Eastern Europe is not under Soviet domination" allowed Jimmy Carter to go from a two percentage point lead to a six percentage point lead in 1976. Ronald Reagan performed well in the 1980 debates, but his rambling closing statement in his first 1984 debate with Walter Mondale cost him almost four percentage points in the polls. In 1992, Republican George Bush avoided any obvious mistakes in the three presidential debates, but failed to gain any ground as he never emerged from Ross Perot's or Bill Clinton's shadows.

On the vice-presidential side, in 1976 Senator Robert Dole's claim that all of America's wars in this century have been "Democratic wars" alienated voters during his debate with Senator Walter Mondale. The GOP ticket lost approximately three percentage points after the encounter. A similar drop occurred in 1984, when George Bush's post-debate statement that he "kicked a little ass" in his exchanges with Representative Geraldine Ferraro received wide play. Of course, the sum of all fears for Republicans occurred in 1988 with Senator Dan Quayle's oscar-winning performance as Senator Lloyd Bentsen's straight-man in the "you're no Jack Kennedy" skit. That Quayle held his own in 1992 with Senator Al Gore and Admiral James Stockdale does not alter the negative effect debates have had for GOP candidates since 1960.

Similarly, scandals also appear to have resulted in greater negative alterations in support for Republican candidates. Indeed, the significance of scandals appears to have been driven by Republican controversies. The average influence of scandals for Republican candidates was -1.3 percentage points. The effect on Democratic candidates was actually positive, though it was very close to zero. This is in accord with the absolute effect differences between the parties which indicate that the GOP got more voter movement from scandals. Moreover, the same explanations for those differences (concerning Republican incumbency, the greater opportunity for scandal and more intense media scrutiny) apply here. One additional hypothesis for this effect difference is the possibility that the media pursue Republican scandals with more zeal than they cover scandals involving Democratic candidates. This was the refrain from the Republican National Committee

during the 1992 presidential campaign. The RNC was particularly angered over the media's "obsession" with the Iran-Contra affair.[22] However, it does not seem to be the case that the media ignored scandals involving Democrats. In 1992, the House Banking scandal and the Gennifer Flowers stories both received considerable attention, though whether the Flowers incident died due to media saturation or a conscious decision by networks and papers to drop the subject is arguable.

Contrary to the effect of scandals, candidate foul-ups have hurt Democratic candidates more than Republican candidates. Again, this is consistent with absolute effect differences. Of course, the main point is that *all* candidates lost a substantial amount of support when they committed a gaffe. However, the average loss for a Democratic candidate was seven percentage points after such an occurrence, whereas the loss was only five percentage points for a Republican. Is it possible that the "liberal" media went after Democratic foul-ups with more zeal than they went after Republican candidates' gaffes? Again, one is hard-pressed to offer evidence of the media suppressing a story involving a candidate's mistake. An alternative explanation for the discrepancy is that Democratic candidates may have been more prone to make what one could call "personal" mistakes as opposed to "policy" mis-statements. That is, Democratic candidates appear to have had a penchant for making damning personal admissions and mis-steps that Republicans mostly managed to avoid. For instance, Ronald Reagan's 1980 statements that trees cause pollution and that America is "energy-rich" were less consequential than Jimmy Carter's promise to Barbara Walters to "speak with more reticence in the future" and avoid name calling.[23] The stronger negative reaction of voters to personal faux-pas could be explained by the possibility that people are more *interested* in these incidents, so they elicit a more biting backlash (Wattenburg, 1992).

Anecdotal evidence of this hypothesis occurs from the 1992 campaign. In 1992, the public appeared to be more willing to forgive Clinton for confusing laser-guided bombs with Patriot missiles than they were to forgive him for smoking pot and "not inhaling". Accepting the hypothesis that from 1952 to 1992 Democratic candidates were more likely to make these personal faux-pas, one can only assume that the "advantage" Republican candidates had was in large part due to chance. It seems unlikely, after all, that GOP candidates were making conscious

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[22] The Republican perspective was the subject of a late September discussion on ABC's *Nightline* program. During that episode, Bush-Quayle spokesman Charlie Black leveled many of the charges repeated here.

[23] Hamilton Jordan. 1982. *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York): 350.

decisions to confine their mistakes to policy realms. However, Democratic candidates would have done well to be wary of personal revelations.

The positive effect of party unity activities for candidates of both parties shows up again in the directional analysis. The data indicate that unity activities increased Republican candidates' share of the vote by five percentage points and boosted Democratic candidates by three and a half percentage points. From these data, one could make a plausible argument that the absence of any serious public reconciliation between Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford in 1976 cost Ford the election. These findings are ironic given that the trend has been away from these activities. In reality, the *only* forum for the reconciliation of party factions in presidential campaigns since 1972 was the parties' national conventions.

The absence of party unity activities in recent elections has not exactly caused campaign managers or political scientists to lose sleep. It is undoubtedly true that some of these people have little or no use for such activity. These individuals could point to 1992 as evidence for their perspective. Two lasting images from the 1992 race are Bill Clinton's pointed critique of Sister Souljah at the annual meeting of the NAACP and George Bush's silence in the aftermath of Pat Buchanan's "cultural war" speech at the Republican National Convention. The lesson apparently taught by those encounters is that party unity--as manifested by conciliatory gestures to components of your political coalition--is overrated. Bush was hurt, the story goes, by not rebuking Buchanan, while Clinton's stock rose when he expressed differences with the radical wing of his party.[24] The Democrats, in particular, appeared convinced that Clinton *had* to distance himself from the left in order to have any appeal to mainstream voters.

What, then, is to be made of these data on party unity activities? As mentioned earlier, it may be that the results are anomalous due to the low number of cases. However, it *is* possible that the present findings are compatible with the lessons of 1992. The beneficence of party unity activity may have been confined to appeals to the ideological center of the party.[26] Or, perhaps party unity activities induce only short-term positive changes in voters' preferences. If this were the case, whatever increase in support a candidate received for appealing to a wing of the party would have been undone by a negative reaction from other elements of the electorate. The

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[24] According to surveys undertaken by Market Strategies, Inc., Bush's boost from the Republican Convention was 5 percentage points. This was 3 percentage points below the average bounce. The Republican National Committee's analysis suggests that the negative reaction to the convention cost Bush 1 to 1.5 percentage points. A June national survey by Market Strategies, Inc. showed that 67% of voters approved of Clinton's stand against Sister Souljah. Perhaps more importantly, over 50% of Democrats felt this way.

[26] This, however, seems not to have been the case for the Democrats in 1980.

persistence of the party unity effect is tested in the next section.

The Most Significant Directional Effect: National Conventions

Finally, as one might already have predicted, national conventions were the single most positive campaign activity for both Republicans and Democrats. In this way, the directional data are identical to the absolute movement numbers. The most important finding of the directional analysis with respect to conventions is that the effect was always positive and usually quite large. A somewhat lesser finding is that there was a slight party differential for the movement produced by conventions. Recall from **Table Four** that the average Republican gain was eight percentage points; this is one percentage point higher than the Democratic bounce. One explanation for this discrepancy is that the Republicans held their convention last in eight of the past twelve election years. Holding one's convention last has two potential advantages. First, one gets to respond to one's opponent. A candidate who goes last gets the final word, as it were. Second, it is not unreasonable to assume that the candidate whose convention was first will be artificially high in the polls going into the second convention. He has been allowed to speak unrebutted. Therefore, a candidate whose convention is second is positioned to benefit from both the persuasive power of his convention and a drop-off among the bandwagon support of his opponent.

However, not all differences can be explained by the timing of the conventions. In particular, the data show the influence of Democratic conventions on voters' preferences was much less predictable than that associated with Republican conventions. The mean bounce from the Democratic convention was 6.9 percentage points, but *the standard deviation was around three percentage points*. Some Democratic conventions, such as 1968 and 1972, were correlated with small improvements in the candidate's standings. Others, especially 1980 and 1992, resulted in double digit increases in support for the candidate. To be sure, variability existed for Republican conventions, but not as much. It is difficult to say if there were systematic reasons for this large variance of effect on the Democratic side. Certainly there is anecdotal evidence for why these earlier Democratic conventions did not galvanize support. The 1968 Democratic Convention had a near riot outside the Chicago Stadium. The 1972 Democratic Convention was confounded by the Eagleton incident. But is running a placid, coronation-type convention enough to elicit an improvement in the candidate's standing? Perhaps so, given the Democratic candidates' bounces in the rancor-free conventions of 1988 and 1992. It may also be that the Democrats have learned to how to control the content and visual representation of their conventions. In a memorable scene from a documentary about the Clinton campaign of 1992, a great deal of discussion occurred in the "war-room" over the question of whether hand-made "Clinton-Gore" placards were preferable to a

"sea of red, white and blue" professionally made signs during the convention speeches.[28] This control is in stark contrast to the spontaneous events of the Democratic Convention in 1968. At least one counterfactual exists for this hypothesis of improved control helping the bounce: the 1980 convention induced a ten percentage point bounce even though it featured an ideological fight over the platform and nomination between delegates of President Jimmy Carter and Senator Ted Kennedy. The most one can say, then, is that conventions produced a bounce, and that divisive conventions may not have killed the bounce, but they were unlikely to help it.

A Summary of Directional Effects and Party Differences

Put plainly, the data show that campaign events from 1952 through 1992 produced effects of three magnitudes. Magnitude One events are marked by sizable increases (over three percentage points) in support for the candidate undertaking them. Magnitude Two events did not significantly change voters' preferences either positively or negatively. Magnitude Three events are associated with substantial (over three percentage point) reductions in candidates' support. The following table illustrates how different campaign events fit into this typology.

	Magnitude 1 **Significant and Positive**	**Magnitude 2** **Not Significant**	**Magnitude 3** **Significant and Negative**
Democratic Candidates	Conventions Party Unity Activities Presidential Debates VP Debates	Prospective Mess. Retrospective Mess. Attack Mess. Valence Mess. Scandals Outside Events	Foul-Ups
Republican Candidates	Conventions Party Unity Activities Valence Mess.	Retrospective Mess. Prospective Mess. Attack Mess. Scandals Outside Events	Presidential Debates VP Debates Foul-Ups

One obvious question is if the differences between the parties are artifacts without systemic origins, or do they represent real distinctions for Democratic and Republican candidates.

[28] From Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker's *The War Room*, a 1993 documentary distributed by October Films.

The truth is that one cannot tell from the present data. My guess is that most differences are overstated. For example, it appears that the debate differences may have been rooted in incumbency. To the extent that debates allowed both candidates appear as equals, incumbents surrendered some mystique by debating challengers. Democratic candidates, who were the challengers for 14 of the 16 presidential debates, could have benefitted from this effect.[27] The explanation, thus, is not party but incumbency. The explanation for the Republicans' advantage in articulating valence messages is less obvious. It is true that the Republican candidates have talked more about "values" in recent elections. And it is unquestionable that the Republicans have become the party most people identify as being most able to preserve "traditional" and "family" values. But whether this occurrence is due to the particular Republican candidates, to the ideology of the Republican Party, or to the fact that GOP candidates simply talk about these things more is arguable.

ESTIMATING THE DURABLE EFFECT OF CAMPAIGN EVENTS

If, on average, major presidential campaign events were associated with changes in voters' preferences, this finding brings up the question of durability. That is, did campaign events change candidates' support for a day or so, at which point this support returned to some equilibrium? Or did campaign events affect a "permanent" change in the support for the candidates?[28] Certainly the latter scenario suggests the phenomenon is of greater importance than does the first. The present goal is to understand if campaign events induced lasting changes in support. As with the immediate impact analysis, testing the durability of campaign effects requires a careful set-up. Both the analytical time-frame and the measure of candidate support must be well-specified in order to attain convincing evidence.

Recall that campaign events' initial impact is measured by the difference in the trial ballot margin between the candidates on the day before the event compared to the margin registered one to three days afterwards. In order to test the durability of effect, the logical step is to add more data points to the analysis. This study includes three post-event data points. The first anterior

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[27] I count the Democratic candidates as the challengers in the four Kennedy-Nixon and the two Bush-Dukakis debates. As sitting vice-presidents, Nixon and Bush clearly had more "presidential" standing than their Democratic opponents going into these debates.

[28] "Permanent" means that a change in the trial ballot margin lasts until the next campaign effect occurs. In this sense, the more accurate phrase might be "temporarily permanent" or "temporarily durable".

support is an average of surveys conducted one to three days after the event. The second anterior data point will be the average of polls done four to six days after the event, with the third anterior point being comprised of surveys taken seven to ten days after the event. These additional data points allow the determination of the initial campaign effect's persistence.[29]

Because this set-up has a time-series aspect to it, it possible to go beyond merely reporting means. One can construct a formal representation of the "shape" of the data over the eleven day period surrounding an event. An endeavor of this sort facilitates the generation and testing of specific hypotheses about the nature of presidential campaign events' effects. Towards this end, this analysis adopts three temporal effect models.[30] These constructs offer unique representations of change in support for a candidate.[31] The models are as follows:

1) **spike effect model:** describes a situation in which there is an instantaneous alteration in voters' preferences favoring one candidate. However, this quickly subsides. In other words, the aggregate distribution of preferences is briefly de-stabilized, but reverts to the pre-event equilibrium.

2) **step effect model:** similar to the spike effect model insofar as there is an abrupt change in voters' preferences. Unlike the spike effect model, the change is permanent. A durable alteration of support for the candidates is affected. A new equilibrium is established.

3) **wave effect model:** voters' preferences are believed to change in response to the stimulus of a campaign event, but only gradually. The effect is incremental and accumulates over the course of several days.

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[29] The ten day time-frame is a matter of practicality. One wants to extend the time-frame as much as possible to test persistence. However, beyond ten days, additional campaign events begin to accumulate making the isolation of effects exceptionally difficult.

[30] Edward Carmines and James Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[31] My framework differs from Carmines and Stimson's in a couple of respects. First, I am dealing with a narrower time-frame. The authors' analysis examines data from the 1940's to the 1970's. The effect modeled here is confined to the space of ten days. Second, in my study short-term effects take place against the back-drop of long-term trends. By contrast, Carmines and Stimson *are solely concerned with long-term trends*. For my study, the initial mean level of candidate support is thus varied over the ten day interval to reflect gradual trends. Because the differences are minimal I use the static initial support level as the basis for comparison in the formal analysis of change. I am sure there are numerous other differences, but the general structure of Carmines and Stimson's models appears appropriate for this analysis.

Each of the models can be linked with a particular perspective on the durability of campaign effects. The spike effect model suggests that events were associated with immediate but *short-term* changes in candidate support. If campaign events were related to *immediate and lasting* alterations in popular standing, the situation was akin to that described by the step effect model. The wave effect model posits that events were correlated with a *gradual but significant* change in aggregate preferences. Figure Six displays the candidate support dynamics one would expect in response to presidential campaign events for each of the theoretical models.

It is important to keep in mind that two of the explanations--the step effect and wave effect models--describe changes in response to campaign stimuli which are significant and persistent. In other words, if the trial ballot margin between two candidates changes after a campaign event, the "new" margin remains for ten days in both the step and wave effect models. Therefore, confirmation of the accuracy of either of these models leads to the conclusion that campaign effects from 1952 to 1992 were durable.

For analytical purposes, it is necessary to know that each model is a variation of this first-order transfer function:

$$Y_t = [w_o /(1 - S_1B)]I_t + N_t$$

The terms can be defined as follows:

Y_t = the estimate of the change in margin between the candidates.

w_o = the zero-order initial impact parameter, which is equivalent to the change in the support margin from the day before the event to three days afterwards.

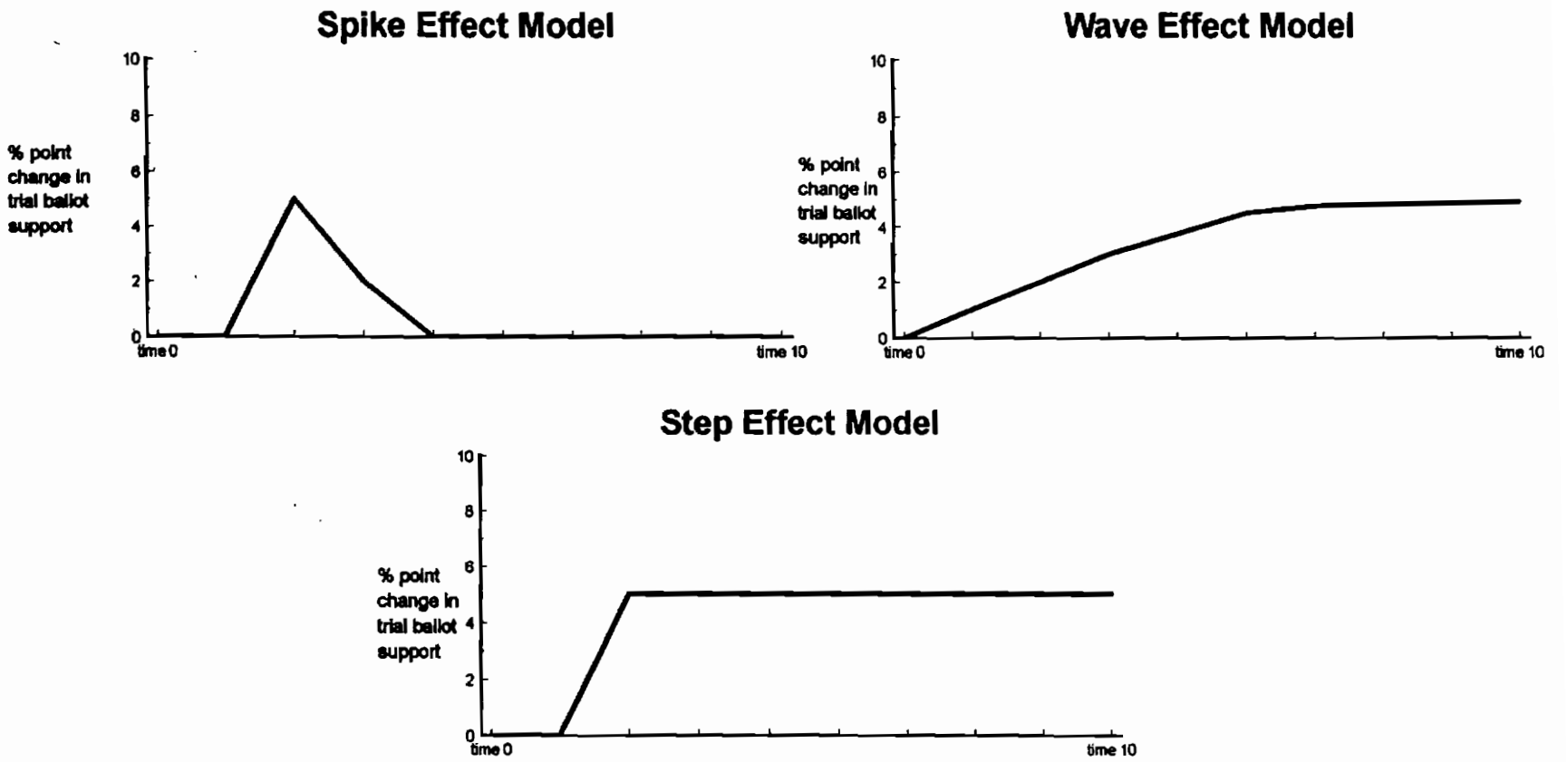
S_1 = a first-order growth/decay rate parameter, which estimates the change in the support margin from 4-10 days after the event.

B = a "back-shift operator" which represents the lag in the effect under study. Formally, its value is $BX_t = X_{t-1}$, where X is the day of interest and ranges from 0 to 10. B suppresses the impact of S_1 as one moves closer to the event's occurrence.

I_t = an input series of zeros and ones; zero if before the campaign event and one if after.

Figure 6

Models of Trial Ballot Support Change Associated with Campaign Events



N_t = a noise model accounting for residual time dependence in the series.[32]

The first-order equation is used because of the assumed lag for changes in voters' preferences after campaign events. In other words, first-order equations are generally appropriate if the dependent variable is resistant. For this analysis, the first-order equation is a substantial improvement on static models. This improvement is because "static observation of cumulative cause with cumulative effect will find a causal connection if it is there, but with very little likelihood of identifying correct functional form or direction".[33]

The immediate goal is to determine which of the three models best fits the data. This can be done by interpreting the coefficient terms of the equation. Variations in S_1 and w_0 distinguish the hypothetical models. In estimating the level of change in voters' preferences after the initial reaction to a campaign event, S_1 ranges from negative one to positive one. The closer the parameter is to one or negative one, the greater the indication that preference changes are occurring after the initial impact of a campaign event. W_0 is the key coefficient for judging a presidential campaign event's initial influence because it estimates the change in the trial ballot margin for the three days after its occurrence. A large w_0 indicates a substantial immediate effect, while a small w_0 means little initial change in candidate support.[34] The table below shows the expected character of the equation's S_1 and w_0 terms for each of the models.

Model	S_1	w_0
Spike Effect	negative	very large/significant
Step Effect	zero	very large/significant
Wave Effect	positive	small/significant

The initial analysis examines the data for all campaign events, while a separate study is conducted excluding national conventions. This distinction recognizes the potential influence of

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[32] The formal expression of the noise term is as follows:

$$N_t = (1 - \emptyset B^2)a_t$$

where $\emptyset$ is a moving average of change in candidate support and a_t is random variation.

[33] Carmines and Stimson, appendix.

[34] Actually, w_0 ranges from negative one to positive one. For present purposes, the parameter's magnitude is gauged according to the expected direction of the event's effect. A large negative effect induced by, say, a scandal would result in a w_0 close to one, as would a large positive effect for, say, conventions.

conventions on the whole data set due to both number of conventions and the rather large effect associated with these events. There are 161 presidential campaign events in the inclusive analysis and 139 in the exclusive study.

The equation is fit to the data in the table presented below. For both data sets, one of the

	All Campaign Events	Excluding Conventions
W_o	2.541** (0.97)	0.900* (0.43)
S_1	0.030 (0.23)	-0.044 (0.16)

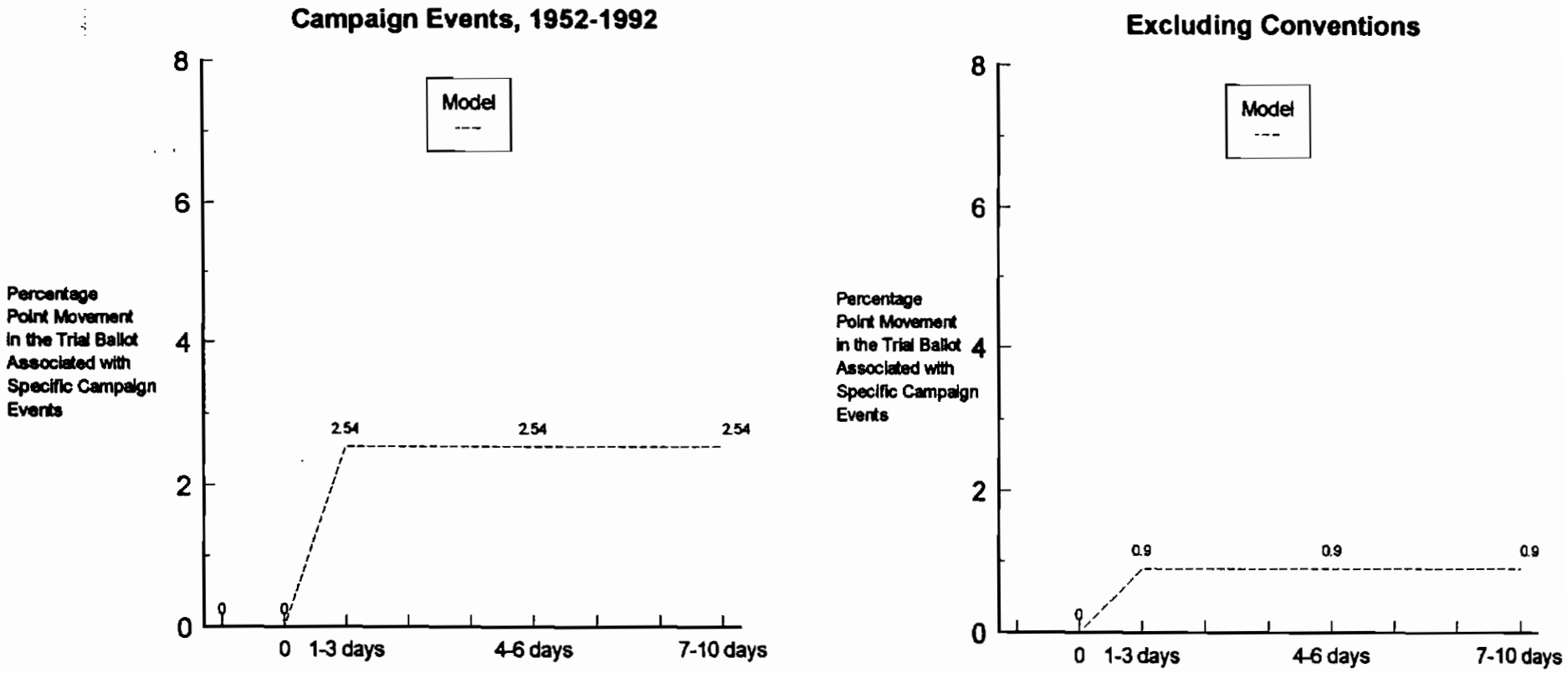
first things one notices about the coefficients is the magnitude of the parameter w_o, which, one recalls, estimates the initial impact of a campaign event on voters' preferences. The significance of w_o corroborates the earlier observation that campaign events changed support for candidates. The second point to note is the relative insignificance of the decay rate parameter. S_1, which estimates the return of voters' preferences to the pre-event mean, appears small overall (though it is somewhat larger in the exclusive data set). The data therefore indicate that presidential campaign events changed support for a candidate (shown by the significance of w_o) and that this change was durable (demonstrated by the insignificance of S_1). Taken together, these two findings strongly suggest that campaign events produce more than spike effects.

The inclusive data certainly appear to conform to the step effect model. As noted earlier, the initial impact parameter for these data is large and significant (2.54), while the first-order growth/decay rate is close to zero (0.03). The graph of the inclusive data in **Figure Seven** shows a step-like pattern, generally identified with the step effect model. The "convention-less" data are a bit trickier. The initial impact parameter is significant, but is only half as large as that for the inclusive study (0.90 compared to 2.54). Conversely, though the decay rate is not significant, it *is* more significant than the rate for the inclusive set (-0.04 compared to 0.03). These data seem to fall somewhere in between the step effect and the spike effect models. All things considered, the step effect model is still probably more appropriate because of the small size of the decay rate parameter.

It is clear that the durability of campaign event effects should differ by event types. In the table presented on the following page, the persistence equation is fitted to the data for each type of campaign event. (Appendix A shows the S_1 parameter and the w_o coefficient with standard errors). It is true that some types of campaign events' effects (though by no means all) are

Figure 7

The Durability of Campaign Events' Effect



Note: The growth rate parameter S1 is omitted in the estimation of the model due to its relative statistical insignificance.

	Minimal Effects	Spike Effects	Step Effects	Wave Effects
Prospective Messages	w=0.2 s=0.2			
Retrospective Messages	w=-0.6 s=0.4			
Valence Messages		w=1.8 s=-0.7		
Attack Messages	w=0.9 s=0.1			
Conventions			w=7.4 s=1.5	
Presidential Debates				w=1.7 s=0.4
Vice-Presidential Debates		w=3.0 s=-1.6		
Outside Events		w=0.3 s=0.3		
Party Unity Activities		w=4.2 s=-1.2		
Foul-Ups			w=-6.2 s=-0.5	
Scandals			w=-0.7 s=-1.5	

eliminated after a few days. As one might have anticipated, the message effects were close to zero after a few days. Prospective, retrospective and attack messages seem to have been associated with minimal spike effects and were not durable. The caveat to the generalization about message effects being temporary is that values messages produced a somewhat more persistent effect; these messages fall somewhere in between the spike and step effect models. The findings support the conventional wisdom among political scientists which considers candidate pronouncements only marginally persuasive to the vast majority of voters.

Outside events also appear to have produced spike effects, as did party unity activities and vice-presidential debates. The spike effect finding for party unity activities is evidence for the idea expressed earlier that such endeavors might have produced a back-lash after the initial bump in support. For example, in 1980 liberals may have been moved by Jimmy Carter's reconciliation with Senator Ted Kennedy, but it is also possible that moderates defected after the initial dust settled. A simple hypothesis worth considering is that party unity activities stimulate a short-term "rallying of the troops", but that the effect is transitory.

The ephemeral impact of vice-presidential debates shown by the data will probably come as a relief to Republicans, who (one will remember) were usually on the wrong end of the changes in candidate standing associated with these events. Interestingly, presidential debates did not produce step-effects; instead, they seemed to generate wave effects. It is certainly true that immediate changes in support for the candidates occurred after debates. However, the cumulative effect increased in the days after the event. It could be that (1) it took a few days for the debate to sink into the political mind-set of voters and (2) the media's post-hoc interpretations of a debate had a secondary influence on voters' preferences. This latter possibility is especially intriguing

given what transpired in 1992. Focus groups and over-night polls showed that most people thought Ross Perot either won or fought the other candidates to a draw in each of the three presidential debates.[35] Polls conducted two or more days after the debates showed that the percent of voters who thought Bill Clinton had won increased significantly from the debate night surveys. This phenomenon was particularly apparent after the second debate, when the media was virtually unanimous in declaring Clinton the victor.

The same wave effect is not apparent for the remaining types of campaign activities. The step effect model best captures the pattern of influence exerted by foul-ups and scandals, as well as by conventions. This is somewhat unexpected for conventions, as one might anticipate a wave effect of rising support which reflected the four days of festivities. Unfortunately, the absence of a wave effect may be due to the absence of surveys taken during the conventions. Polls were usually delayed until after the nominee's acceptance speech. Thus, any iterative increase in support during the convention is missed due to the limits of the data. This qualification aside, conventions fall into the class of events that were associated with step-like changes in voters' preferences for the candidates.

In sum, the central finding is that campaign events, taken as a whole, produced movement in the trial ballot margin which persisted until the next campaign event. For individual campaign event types, the data are mixed as to the durability of campaign effects. For scandals, foul-ups, conventions, presidential debates and valence messages, it seems that campaign effects were not only significant but persistent. However, vice-presidential debates, party unity and outside events do not appear to have permanently recast the nature of the trial ballot margin; movement was transitory.[36] Little movement of any kind was associated with the occurrence of prospective, retrospective and attack messages.

DISCUSSION

Strong evidence has been presented in this chapter for the connection between campaign

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[35] Data referred to come from Market Strategies, Inc. focus groups and post-debate national tracking surveys conducted for Bush-Quayle.

[36] For campaign events which produced temporary movement, the question is whether this was because the initial effect wore off or because counter-activities were undertaken by one's opposition. This possibility that counter-events destroyed the initial effect is considered more thoroughly in the concluding section.

events and changes in candidate support. It is not always the case that campaign events elicited changes in the aggregate support registered for the candidates. Occasionally, though, changes *did* occur. And often these changes were significant and durable. The weight of these findings suggest that while uniform and constant campaigning existed in recent presidential elections, it was singular and specific campaign events--the most prominent manifestation of electioneering--which caused changes in voters' preferences. More generally, what appears to have occurred in presidential campaigns from 1952 to 1992 is a series of surges and counter-surges from the candidates. This produced a generic campaign which looked like the following: a major campaign event occurred and the margin between the candidates rose or dropped by an average of two percentage points. This equilibrium became the new base-line of support. Subsequent events were undertaken which altered voters' preferences and established different equilibria. Therefore, as far as elections were concerned, presidential campaigns stimulated a series of "steps" in the candidates' support related to major events.

Unless one believes that both campaigns were equally well-planned and executed in each year from 1952 to 1992, the conception of support "surges" and "counter-surges" suggests the importance of campaigns varied. In more general terms, the surge/counter-surge scenario implies the primary determinant of the campaign's significance was the closeness of the race at the inception of the campaign. It is intuitive that differences in the number and effectiveness of the candidates' campaign events become more critical as the margin narrows. Anecdotal accounts of presidential elections corroborate this perspective. In 1960 and in 1976, John Kennedy and Jimmy Carter had a few more major campaign events than Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. These might have put them over the top. Similarly, having the last major campaign initiative can also be decisive in a close race. Ronald Reagan's final push in 1980 (on the weekend before the election, he blitzed the airways with a series of retrospective advertisements) blew open a very tight election with Jimmy Carter. In this sense, close presidential campaigns can be like football games, in which the winner is likely to be the team with the final possession.

There are some questions about these findings that need to be addressed, though. Two things are particularly troubling. First, as stated near the outset of the study, the events chosen are not a random sample of campaign activities--they are *the most important campaign events of their election years*. Because of this, the punch-line to the story presented needs to be amended: *the most important campaign events* were associated with changes in candidate support. But what can one really say about the garden-variety campaign event? There may have been hundreds of minor campaign events for every major one, and these minor events may not have influenced voters' preferences at all.

It is true that a presidential campaign often tries a number of issues before hitting upon one that becomes the focus of major activity. In 1992, the Bush campaign tried several themes, including family values, experience, trust, and a negative portrayal of Clinton's record as governor of Arkansas, and never settled definitively on a single one. However, my interest in this analysis is whether *any* campaign activities were related to alterations of support. Towards this end, it makes sense to look at major events; if there was no effect associated with these events, it is reasonable to assume that there was generally little or no effect. It should also be pointed out that no one inside the campaign believes that anything short of a major campaign event will be noticed by voters (actually, no one outside the campaign believes this either). It seems counter-productive, therefore, to include minor campaign events in the study and perhaps mask the impact of major events. Moreover, there is also the issue of tractability. It is simply not feasible to gather a list of <u>all</u> campaign events for any year. Because such a list is unattainable, it is equally impossible to sample randomly from some total universe of events.

A second problem also requires consideration. A presidential campaign consists of a multitude of events. These events often occur very close to one another. A perfect example would be the presidential debates in 1992, with the third debate falling a mere eight days after the first. Given this, the natural question to ask is whether the persistence analysis done in the second half of the chapter is valid. After all, couldn't subsequent events occur that make it impossible to isolate the effects of the event of interest?

The short answer is to admit that this is a problem. However, the problem is not common until 1976, when the variety and number of events somewhat shortened the time between these events. When secondary events actually interfere with the analysis, a number of solutions are employed. Whenever possible, polls that appear to reflect the influence of a secondary event are eliminated. Additionally, the reaction to events is controlled for when there is reason to believe one contributes disproportionately to movement in a particular direction. For instance, in 1992 the vice-presidential debate was held two days prior to the second presidential debate. Bill Clinton received a boost in polls taken the day after the second debate. The solution applied here is to control for this boost when analyzing the effect of the vice-presidential debate. The assumption is that the surge was probably due to Clinton's highly touted performance in the second debate; the corollary assumption is that the movement was not due to a delayed reaction to Gore's appearance in the vice-presidential debate.

Another issue--which I would not characterize as a "problem", but certainly warrants attention--is the role of the media as the middle-man in the campaign. Newspapers and television

(especially television) are the means by which many campaign activities are communicated to the electorate. Because of this, these media mitigate the effectiveness of the campaign in a variety of ways. They can emphasize aspects of a campaign different from those emphasized by the candidate. They can even refuse to cover an event or carry the candidate's message. They can also editorialize as they report the candidate's activities. In other words, the media have the power to influence the relationship between campaign events and voters' preferences. The media are, to the chagrin of many politicians, an intervening variable.

A presidential campaign, then, involves not only undertaking the "correct" activities (i.e., those activities most likely to favorably alter the trial ballot margin), but also in getting the media to convey these events to voters in a favorable way. In terms of the relationship between campaign events and voters' preferences, one could thus convincingly argue that the media suppress the magnitude of the association. Put another way, the media filter reduces the persuasiveness of a candidate's original or unfiltered campaign event. By not controlling for the influence of the media, the potential effectiveness of campaign activities is therefore probably understated. This argument is predicated on the assumption that the media are cynical when they report on the activities of most presidential candidates. Admittedly, this is a major assumption. However, it is an assumption embraced by the major presidential candidates in 1992, as evidenced by the mad dashes of Perot, Clinton and Bush to talk-shows and other forms of non-mediated television. A later chapter is dedicated to a consideration of how the media influenced the effectiveness of the candidates' campaigns in 1992.

In this chapter, presidential campaign data from 1952 to 1992 point to the fact that certain types of campaign events *caused* changes in the candidate preferences held by voters. This association is too frequent and too often in the anticipated direction to allow me to entertain contrary hypotheses. Moreover, most presidential elections in this time frame saw support surges and counter-surges produced by the major parties' campaigns. Potentially, this relationship is of critical importance. Any differential in the effectiveness of campaigning could have been decisive in the selection of the president in 1960, 1968, 1976 and 1992; in any of these elections, a movement of three percentage points in the trial ballot margin toward the loser would have altered the result. Of course, the significance of a presidential campaign depends on the margin between the candidates and on the vigor and timing of the candidates' activities. Because these factors vary, it is difficult to say, in general, whether the association warrants the time, money and aggravation expended on presidential campaign events. In certain cases, however, campaigning unquestionably can swing a race. *This possibility alone insures that campaigning will occur.* The stakes are too high for a presidential candidate to neglect any activity that may be decisive, even if

the activity is expensive and the probability it will be decisive is not high. The real possibility that campaigns may determine winners is also the most compelling argument for further study of the effects of electioneering.

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Appendix A

	W_o	S_1
Messages		
Prospective	0.2 (2.9)	0.2 (1.2)
Retrospective	-0.6 (2.9)	0.4 (1.6)
Valence	1.8 (1.7)	-0.7 (0.5)
Attack	0.9 (2.7)	0.1 (2.7)
National Convention	7.4 (3.3)	1.5 (3.6)
Presidential Debate	+/- 1.7 (1.2)	+/- 0.4 (1.7)
Vice-Presidential Debate	+/-3.0 (2.6)	+/- 1.6 (1.2)
Party Unity Activity	4.2 (1.1)	-1.2 (0.9)
Scandal	-0.7 (3.6)	-1.5 (0.9)
Foul-Up	-6.2 (1.0)	-0.5 (3.1)
Outside Event	0.3 (5.1)	-0.3 (1.6)

Note: Standard errors are provided in parentheses.

CHAPTER FIVE

Hits and Misses: The Impact of Campaign Events in the 1992 Presidential Election

The historical overview and analysis in Section One allows one to construct a general understanding of campaigning's impact. It discards a great deal of information, though. The scope of analysis encompasses multiple elections, and much of the subtlety and detail from specific years is lost. This chapter examines the 1992 presidential campaign in an attempt to retrieve some of the nuanced information lost in the comprehensive analysis.

The question remains the same as in Section One: what is the relationship between campaign events and voters' presidential preferences? The advantage of focusing exclusively on the 1992 presidential election is that it allows a wider consideration of the complex relationship between campaigning and voting. In particular, this chapter is interested in two relationships: (1) the general receptiveness of voters to the 1992 presidential campaign and (2) *how* individual campaign events were received.

The chapter begins with some comments on the appropriateness of 1992 as a case study. This discussion is followed by the initial analytical effort: an examination

of voters and the mood of the electorate in 1992. This section presents an overview of the political interest, awareness, knowledgeability and volatility of the electorate. The data show Americans paid close attention to the presidential race and their preferences changed considerably in response to specific episodes in the campaign. The study then examines the effect of campaign events on voters' candidate preferences. Three specific issues are analyzed: (1) what did the candidates do, (2) how much did the grandest campaign events effect voters, and (3) what was the overall impact of campaigning in 1992? The investigation parallels that conducted in Chapter Four, with different types of campaign events separated out for analysis.

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE 1992 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

For an investigation of campaign effects, 1992 is an intriguing year because one could explain the election in completely different ways. On the one hand, with a weak economy and wide-spread anxiety about the condition of the country, one might reasonably contend the election was a foregone conclusion. From this stand-point, Republican George Bush, as the incumbent president, was held accountable for the perceived decline of the country's fortunes and was replaced by Democratic challenger Bill Clinton. This outcome was even more certain given the plurality of Democratic identifiers in the electorate. From this perspective, the presidential campaign was largely irrelevant. At the most, the campaign *might* have served to educate people as

to the political context of 1992. At the least, the campaign would have raged impotently around voters whose preferences were determined by the state of the economy and their underlying partisan attachments.

On the other hand, it is possible to conceive of 1992 as a year in which the presidential campaign played an important role for the election's outcome. One need not be a highly paid consultant to believe the 1992 campaign educated and influenced, in some independent sense, voters' preferences. After all, even though the President became a lightning rod for criticism, the dissatisfaction of voters in 1992 extended well beyond George Bush. The House Banking Scandal, the Congressional pay raise controversy, the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill Senate Judiciary Committee Hearings and a host of other individual and collective transgressions led voters to feel a general animosity toward all branches of the federal government. Moreover, *both* major party candidates were thought to have major flaws during the 1992 presidential primary season. Indeed, the general disgruntlement among voters over the state of the nation and the available options for remedy fueled the rise of Ross Perot's independent candidacy. In other words, the inevitability of Bill Clinton's victory was not so apparent in the spring and early summer of 1992. In fact, all of the candidates looked unelectable to some degree in the early stages of the year. It is entirely plausible to hypothesize that the key to Clinton's win rested with his ability to persuade and mobilize a voting plurality of the perspicuity of his agenda. From this framework, the

campaign appeared to have been key to Clinton's success. The automatic or mechanistic nature of his success *is only obvious in retrospect.*

THE 1992 ELECTORATE

If the campaign affected the 1992 presidential election, this influence will be manifest in the characteristics and opinions of the electorate. In particular, there are three areas to look at to establish that voters were subject to persuasion:

1. their interest and attentiveness;
2. their ability to understand the candidates' messages; and
3. their willingness to make or change decisions to support a candidate.

An electorate that was affected by the campaign will score highly in each of these areas. The data studied in this section tackle the issue of whether voters had these prerequisites in 1992.

Interest and Awareness

Public opinion survey data from 1992 indicate that interest and participation were high, both in relative and absolute terms. Eighty-three percent of respondents to the National Election Study's post-election survey claimed to have had at least some

interest in the election. Thirty-nine percent said they were "very much interested" in the election, an 11 percentage point increase from 1988 and 1984. Besides being more interested, Americans also appeared to have cared more about politics and the campaign in 1992. During presidential elections in the 1980's, 62% of respondents to the National Election Study told interviewers they cared "a good deal" about the political campaign. In 1992, 76% of Americans indicated they cared about the campaign and the election.

Americans not only expressed more concern and interest in politics and the election in 1992, it appears they were also acting on these sentiments. Turnout for the 1992 election was approximately 55%. This exceeded by five percentage points the 50% turnout rate for the 1988 election, and marked the first increase in the turnout rate since 1960.

Furthermore, voters paid attention to the campaign in 1992. For example, paid political advertisements were viewed by a substantial majority of voters. In the National Election Study's post-election survey, 64% of respondents said they saw at least one presidential campaign advertisement in 1992 (see **Table 5.1**). Perhaps more importantly, 89% of those who claimed to have seen an advertisement could remember something specific from the ad.

In addition to the paid political advertisements, the major campaign events also played to wide and attentive audiences. In the national tracking polls conducted after

each presidential and vice-presidential debate, approximately three out of every four respondents claimed to have watched or listened to the debate.[1] In fact, the survey data corroborate what media sources had suggested: the audiences *increased* with each successive presidential debate. Seventy-two percent of respondents viewed the first presidential debate, while 76% tuned in for the second, and 79% watched the third (67% said they watched the vice-presidential debate, which was sandwiched between the first and second presidential encounters).

At a more general level, voters were capable of remembering events from the campaign. When asked if they recalled anything from the campaign, 85% of Americans answered affirmatively, offering specific memories (see **Figure 5.1**).

The fact that a vast majority of citizens expressed an interest in politics, paid attention to the major forums through which candidates communicate and could recall campaign events certainly supports the continued investigation of the impact of campaigning in the 1992 presidential election.

Getting Campaign Information

The fact that Americans seem to have been paying attention to politics in 1992 is certainly a precondition for the campaigns to have affected voters' preferences. It is

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[1] Data are from Market Strategies Inc.'s National Tracking Surveys conducted for Bush/Quayle. Data are from the two days following each debate and are based on surveys of 600 respondents.

not, however, sufficient. For a campaign to serve an important function, individuals must not only be tuned into the campaign, they must also understand and internalize the information which the campaigns provide.

It appears that people both heard and understood the three presidential candidates' campaigns in 1992. In a post-election survey, respondents were quite capable of identifying the respective themes of the Bush, Clinton and Perot campaigns. They gave references which differed from candidate to candidate. These references closely matched the rhetoric of the campaign. The data thus show that the campaign helped voters to make meaningful distinctions among the three candidates.

Figure 5.2 presents these data. Eighty-eight percent of respondents said that the Clinton campaign's main messages were fixing the economy, health care and "putting people first". This last mention is particularly impressive in that it is a phrase directly attributable to Clinton's campaign rhetoric. Only 2% could not identify Clinton's message or thought that he had no theme. For George Bush, 67% identified economic, character and experience themes as the most important to his campaign. Seventeen percent admitted not knowing Bush's theme or said he did not have one. Finally, 65% of Americans cited economic or systemic reform themes as Ross Perot's most important.[2] Fourteen percent did not know what Perot's theme was, or said he

[2] More specifically, people referred to Perot-isms, such as "lifting up the hood" or "cleaning out the barn". As with Clinton, the public's ability to latch on to these colloquialisms suggests people were paying attention and the candidates were able to find a language that struck a responsive chord.

had none.

Respondents often explained themes -- and differentiated candidacies -- by repeating catch-phrases used by the candidates. Voters may not have been able to recite the candidates' platforms, but they absolutely understood the issue agendas and themes the different campaigns chose to emphasize. Similarly, the relatively small number of people who were unable to identify any campaign themes further buttresses the contention that the penetration of the campaign into the consciousness of the electorate of 1992 was both wide and, in relative terms, deep.[3]

Campaign Persuasion: Deciding Late

If voters make up their minds about the election in the early going, campaigns must be regarded as irrelevant to the outcome. Establishing the "openness" of voters to the different candidacies in 1992 is therefore a critical task in considering the importance of campaigns.

The preliminary survey data are striking in this regard. These data show that Americans were more open-minded in 1992 than in any other presidential election since the advent of the National Election Study. Only 18% of voters said they knew all along who they would vote for in 1992, 21 percentage points under the 1948-1988 average. Forty-five percent reported that they made their voting decision *during* the

[3] Bill Clinton appears to have had the most success in conveying the essence of his campaign. This will be commented on in more detail later.

1992 campaign -- that is, after the traditional Labor Day kick-off to the general election campaign -- 11 percentage points more than the 1948-1988 average.

A different, more detailed examination of late-deciders is offered in **Figure 5.3.**[4] According to these data, 12% of voters made up their minds on *Election Day* in 1992, while another 40% said they decided after the presidential debates. All told, 63% claimed that their decision was reached after October 1, 1992.

The electorate claimed to have realized their voting preferences much later in 1992 than in any other presidential election for which polling data are available. The data are unambiguous on this matter. An important condition for the campaigns' significance has thus been met; the preferences of voters had not crystallized prior to the campaign. When coupled with the earlier findings that voters were attentive and receiving information from the political campaign in 1992, this evidence of their "openness" advances the possibility that the campaign affected their preferences.

Campaign Persuasion: Changing Minds

The simplest way to examine the relationship between voters' preferences and campaigning is to look at the pattern of aggregate support for the candidates. Of course, there are hundreds of polls from 1992 which measured the support for the presidential candidates. As mentioned earlier, the particular questions of interest

[4] These data are taken from Market Strategies, Inc.'s Post-Election National Survey done for the Republican National Committee (N = 848).

within the surveys are called "trial ballots" and attempt to estimate the electoral strength of the candidates at a given point in time. An aggregation of these trial ballots gives one a picture of the support patterns which existed through the months leading up to Election Day of 1992. If the movement in the trial ballots was inconsequential, the implication is that the campaign did nothing more than reinforce a preference structure that existed at the outset of 1992. This could be considered a significant function, but is of secondary importance in terms of influencing the election. Conversely, if there is a substantial amount of oscillation in the 1992 trial ballots, the immediate task would be to test the relationship between volatility and specific campaign activity. The congruence of preference movement and campaign events would strongly suggest the importance of campaigning.

Table 5.2 shows the average trial ballot margin for each month of the 1992 presidential election. The maximum movement was a whopping 21 percentage points (from June to July), while the average monthly movement was 5 percentage points. Over the entire campaign, Clinton gained 23 percentage points on Bush in the trial ballot margin, turning a 15 percentage point deficit in January into an 8 percentage point lead in November.

The trial ballots facilitate another preliminary test of the role of the 1992 presidential campaign. **Figure 5.4** shows all three-way trial ballot poll results from 1992. From these data, it is clear that voters' preferences oscillated considerably

across the election year. Five distinct periods can be discerned from the trial ballots:

(1) the initiation of the three-way race (February 20-July 12): after Ross Perot's tantalizing interview on CNN's *Larry King Live*, the independent candidate rose steadily in the polls, pulling slightly ahead of George Bush and Bill Clinton. Bush led Clinton throughout this period which covers all of the primary election season. Bush's problems with perceptions that the economy was still a mess were balanced by Clinton's troubles with character issues. Clinton closed the gap considerably near the end on the heels of a campaign initiative to define the candidate's roots as the father-less and poor boy from Hope, Arkansas.

(2) Clinton's domination of the two-way race (July 24-September 30): from the close of the Democratic Convention until October, Clinton maintained a double-digit lead over Bush. A closer look at the data reveal two "sub-periods": one between the conventions (during which Clinton's lead dissipated) and another after the Republican Convention (in which little or no movement occurred). Clinton campaigned vigorously during this period, while Bush was inactive. Perot's support dipped below 10% immediately after his withdrawal and stayed there over the entire time interval.

(3) Perot's re-entrance and resurrection (October 1-October 19): Perot re-entered the

race and gradually increased his support from 10% to approximately 20% in the polls. His support was directly tied to his efforts in the presidential debates. The margin between Clinton and Bush stabilized at about 10 percentage points.

(4) Bush's final surge (October 20-October 30): after the third presidential debate, Bush continued to trial and sought a knock-out. He attacked Clinton's record and character. The Clinton lead closed to 5 percentage points.

(5) A leveling off (October 31-November 2): the pro-Bush trend stalled immediately after the release of Caspar Weinberger's memorandum suggesting to Bush's complicity in the arms-for-hostages deal. During the final week and the margin was constant over the last week-end.

Nineteen ninety-two actually saw long periods of stability interrupted by brief, explosive interludes of volatility. If one takes the trial ballot margin as the dependent variable and conducts an ordinary least-squares regression analysis to explain its variance, a clearer picture emerges. **Table 5.3** estimates separate models for the time periods noted in the visual scan of the trial ballots across the year.

The first model covers the period prior to the Democratic Convention in New York. The data indicate that the pre-convention phase of the campaign was marked by

a significant trend towards Bill Clinton. The intercept term shows that Bush' 15 percentage point lead in January had been reduced by 12 percentage points on the eve of the Democratic Convention. The coefficient for this period is 0.06, which represents the daily reduction in Bush's lead. This averages to approximately two percentage points movement towards Clinton per month.

After Clinton's dramatic rise in mid-July, he held a 25 percentage point lead in the polls. The second model shows that the inter-convention period was marked by significant movement towards Bush. This movement was on the order of 0.3 percentage points per day, and left Clinton ahead by roughly 12 percentage points after the Republican Convention. The explanation for this movement seems to be the natural erosion of Clinton's improbable lead. Bush did little campaigning during this time and many pundits commented that the Clinton camp actually did a remarkable job of *minimizing* the drop-off after their convention.[5] Throughout late August and all through September, Clinton's lead stabilized at 12 percentage points. The model indicates decidedly insignificant movement in any direction over this interval.

From the third model, we see Perot's re-entrance on October 1 and the presidential debates were associated with a minor surge for Clinton. The Democratic nominee gained 0.15 percentage points per day and sat atop a sixteen percentage point

[5] Germond and Witcover, among others, make this point repeatedly in *Mad as Hell: Revolt at the Ballot Box, 1992*, (New York: Random House, 1993). In particular, the authors focus on the post-Convention bus trips as politically astute activities which "kept the ball rolling" and minimized any loss of momentum.

lead after the third debate.

The post-debate period saw the much-talked about Bush surge. Estimates from the fourth model show Bush was gaining approximately one percentage point every day for ten days. The trend abruptly ended on the Friday before the election.

The fifth model corroborates the impressionistic reading of **Figure 5.2**. From the Friday before the election until Election Day, the trend became insignificant, with Clinton actually ending up almost seven percentage points ahead of Bush in the election eve trial ballots.

ANALYZING THE CAMPAIGN'S EFFECT

A more systematic analysis of campaign effects in 1992 can be undertaken by building on the overview of campaign effects in the preceding section and by using the framework constructed in Chapter Four. A list of 81 campaign events from 1992 has been developed. The list was culled from several sources, including the Gallup Organization's Chronology of 1992, a review of the daily political newsletter *The Hotline*, and Jack Germond and Jules Witcover's account of the campaign.[6] The list is neither exhaustive nor representative; it is an attempt to capture as many of the

[6] Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, *Mad as Hell: Revolt at the Ballot Box, 1992,* (New York: Random House, 1993).

major events of the 1992 presidential campaign as possible.[7] These 81 events can be divided into the 12 separate categories developed in Chapter Two. **Appendix 5.1** provides descriptions of the categories, while **Table 5.4** gives the frequency of events falling into each type.

What the Candidates Did

The frequencies with which candidates engaged in certain campaign events tell an interesting story. Forty-seven percent of George Bush's major campaigning encompassed the articulation of messages. Even more pointedly, 39% of his campaigning involved prospective messages, such as the unveiling of his economic plan at the Association of Detroit Businessmen. All of these messages were economic. Thus, a great deal of the incumbent president's campaign consisted of his trying to tell voters where he intended to lead the country. Bush also attacked Clinton, questioning his character and the like, though these endeavors constituted under 10% of his major campaigning.

Conversely, only 27% of Bill Clinton's major activities were messages. The Arkansas governor was obviously making quite a few policy statements, but other

[7] Because the analytical purpose is to determine the relationship between campaign events and voters' preferences, it is reasonable to create a list of major events and test their effects. If none are found, one may assume lesser events will be similarly unrelated to movement in voters' preferences. In essence, this postpones the issue of estimating a representative effect until one establishes the existence of *any* effect.

activities of his were gaining the spot-light. It doesn't take much of an imagination to figure out that the Clinton campaign's responses to allegations were eclipsing his messages. Nineteen percent of Clinton's campaigning was taken up by scandals and gaffes, compared to only 9% for Bush. The Clinton campaign spent almost one-fifth of its major campaign activity on reacting to negative news about their candidate.

Both candidates saw 36% of their major campaign time consumed by primary elections and outside news stories, such as Hurricane Hugo. Clinton was able to expend slightly more time on what one can call party-building activities, like the national convention and debates. Eight percent of Clinton's campaigning went to these activities, whereas Bush spent six percent of his major campaigning on these.

The Impact of Major Events

As mentioned earlier, all available public and private trial ballots have been assembled from 1992. These can be used to construct estimates of the margin between the major party candidates for each day of 1992.[8] From the margins, one can measure the impact of campaign events on voters' preferences during the 1992 presidential election. When one looks at the change in the margin associated with candidates' events, three things stand out from this campaign: (1) Bill Clinton was *the*

[8] As in Chapter Four, for days with more than one trial ballot, an average margin was calculated; for days with no trial ballots, a margin was calculated using generalized least squares regression techniques on the anterior and posterior data points.

beneficiary of movement during the year, and this advantage was almost entirely due to the effect of the Democratic National Convention, (2) Ross Perot's surprisingly strong showing and the diminution of the two-party vote was driven by the reaction to Perot's performance in the presidential debates and (3) George Bush's campaign messages were almost completely ineffective.

The Conventions

The effectiveness of the 1992 Democratic Convention is apparent in **Figure 5.5**. The bounce after the New York City affair was six percentage points greater than any other national convention since the advent of polling. Furthermore, the 11 percentage point difference between the Democratic and Republican Convention bounces was the largest in contemporary history. Part of the bounce may have been due to Perot's exit. His departure meant 30% of Americans were left without a candidate just as the curtain was rising on Clinton's big show. The disjuncture between support for the incumbent and the perceived condition of the nation was another factor. Put differently, the magnitude of the bounce was undoubtedly aided by the fact that Bush was artificially high in the polls given the state of the economy and widespread anxiety amongst voters. But the fact remains that the Democrats grabbed a huge percentage of disgruntled voters with their performance in New York City and never lost them.

The Debates

In many ways, the presidential debates were Ross Perot's convention. A variety of data indicate that Ross Perot not only won the debates, but in doing so convinced approximately 10 percent of the electorate to vote for him. Tracking polls conducted in the aftermath of the debates show that Perot was perceived to be the clear winner in presidential debates one and three (by 19 and 5 percentage points, respectively). These data are displayed in **Table 5.5**.

In reality, Perot did even better than these impressive numbers suggest. Perot's performance in the debates is minimized in the aggregate survey data because strong Republican and, more particularly, strong Democratic identifiers preferred their party's candidate in the debates. These opinions somewhat overwhelmed the opinions of less committed voters.

Focus groups went further in attesting to Perot's effectiveness. The Bush campaign gathered voters in strategically selected locales for each debate. The participants were screened so that the groups consisted of undecided voters.[9] In addition to monitoring the reactions of voters to the debate, a series of pre- and post-debate questions were asked of participants. These pre- and post-debate perceptions dramatically demonstrate Perot's effectiveness. Perot was thought to have done the

[9] No strong partisans, straight-ticket voters or people who strongly supported Bush, Clinton or Perot were admitted. Participants had to be from the middle-income bracket (making between $15,000 and $75,000 a year) and a gender balance was sought. Lawyers, post-graduates, social scientists and government employees were excluded from the studies.

best job, had the best moment, been the most believable and been the most sincere *in each of the three presidential debates* (see **Table 5.6**). His share of the vote increased by 12, 9 and 17 percentage points after each of the respective debates. While not generalizable to the American electorate as a whole, the focus group data strongly imply that Perot's effectiveness in the debates was dramatic among swing voters. This is a compelling corroboration of the survey findings. Furthermore, Perot's particular strength among swing voters is key to understanding Perot's 10 percentage point rise in the trial ballot during the debates and his strong showing on Election Day.

The Messages

While Clinton sky-rocketed in the polls after the Democratic Convention and Perot flirted with a quarter of the popular vote after the debates, George Bush was unable to produce an event which generated comparable movement. Throughout the months of September and October of 1992, Bush and his campaign searched for an issue or message around which opposition to Clinton might crystallize.

Not that such an event was impossible. The survey data suggested several issues -- including Clinton's record on crime, children and the environment as governor of Arkansas -- which a majority of undecided voters said would make them less likely to vote for the Democratic challenger. However, these messages were not conveyed to voters. Many of these messages *were* introduced, but often in a half-

hearted way, insuring that they received little media or public attention. Still other messages -- especially those concerning Clinton's record as governor of Arkansas -- were countered by the Clinton campaign and characterized as "negative". And some were simply not effectively articulated by the candidate himself.

The Impact of All Campaign Events

While focusing on the watershed campaign events of 1992 shows that candidates were differentially successful in affecting changes in voters' preferences in 1992, it remains to be proven that campaigning generally produced changes or that campaigning generally favored Clinton over Bush. To more broadly examine the impact of campaigning on the electorate, one must expand the number of events under scrutiny. The simplest approach is to measure the average movement associated with each class of campaign events (this recreates the analytical design applied in Chapter Four). Testing for changes in voters' preferences is quite simple. For each campaign event, the margin that existed one day before the event is compared to the average margin which existed from one to three days afterwards. The change in the margin is thus an estimate of the immediate effect of the campaign event on voters' preferences. For a given campaign event category, changes associated with every event within that category are summed and divided by the total number of events to yield a measure of the event's average influence.

Table 5.7 displays the average change in the trial ballot margin associated with each category of campaign event for Bill Clinton and George Bush. The significance of the movement is measured by difference of means tests. T-tests -- one-tailed for events with anticipated consequences (messages, conventions, party unity activities, scandals and foul-ups) and two-tailed for events that create ambiguous expectations (debates, outside events and primary elections) -- were used to generate measures of the events' significance compared to zero.[10] While statistically significant effects are noteworthy, we do not have many cases and should be wary of downplaying effects just because they do not achieve arbitrary levels of significance.

There is considerable variation across the different campaign event categories, both in terms of the magnitude and the direction of effects. Let us start at the bottom of the typology listed in **Table 5.7**. Party primaries improved Bill Clinton's status by an average of 2 percentage points, while George Bush was diminished by the same rate. This effect existed in spite of the fact that Bush *won all of the Republican primaries*. This is understandable in retrospect; the incumbent president's triumphs over Pat Buchanan were less than impressive to many, while Clinton's ability to recover from the scandals of January and February seemed to shore up his national

[10] Movement associated with days on which no major campaign events occur is assumed to be zero insofar as survey error will, on average, have a net effect of zero on the trial ballot margin. Empirically, this assumption is supported by the regression analysis of the preceding section which suggested that the average movement in the trial ballot margin during the campaign was approximately one tenth of a percentage point per day.

standing.

As might have been expected, outside occurrences were not related to dramatic changes in voters' preferences in any given direction in 1992. This is understandable because there is no reason to think events such as the Los Angeles Riots and Hurricane Hugo would consistently advantage the Democratic or the Republican candidate. The outside events of 1992 tended to reduce George Bush's share of the vote, because these events were linked to the inability of the executive branch of the federal government to act effectively. For instance, the problems with disaster relief for South Florida in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo highlighted the domestic lethargy of the Bush Administration in the minds of some voters.

Gaffes hurt both Clinton and Bush in 1992. The magnitude of the effect was 2 percentage points, and the candidates committed just about the same number of mistakes: four by Bush and five by Clinton. However, the effect of scandals was not even. Though Clinton was plagued by numerous scandals throughout the campaign -- the most famous of which involved his alleged evasion of the military draft -- these events did not hurt him. Rather, the influence of his five scandals was to *increase* his standing. This lends evidence to those who argued that Clinton's early problems inoculated him from subsequent allegations. Bush, conversely, lost 2 percentage points over the revelation that the State Department had authorized an investigation of Clinton's passport file, as well as the file of Clinton's mother.

Party unity activities helped both candidates, though Clinton was able to move more voters. Party unity activities for both candidates involved fence-mending with vanquished primary challengers, such as Paul Tsongas and Bob Kerrey for Bill Clinton, and Pat Buchanan for George Bush. Clinton's activities gained him 1 percentage point, on average; they were consistently positive enough to register statistical significance. Clinton's activities did not include any singular events with Jesse Jackson, backing up the observation that Jackson was kept at arms length during the campaign. Though Bush received a boost from these events on the whole, their impact was variable.

The presidential and vice-presidential debates were related to increases in Bush's share of the vote against Clinton. The effect was 1 percentage point for the vice-presidential encounter, but only 0.3 percentage points for the presidential debates. Thus, Bush did manage to improve his position over the course of these ten days in October. However, Bush's performance was (1) lost in the resurgence of Ross perot, and (2) judged against the standard of whether he did enough to turn the race around. Both of these evaluative criteria made Bush success appear minimal.

As discussed earlier, each convention produced a favorable bounce for its candidate, but the Democratic surge dwarfed Republican gains. The 11 percentage point difference speaks for itself and I need not belabor the point.

As far as messages go, Clinton managed to best the minimal impact of Bush's

messages. Clinton did consistently well with his prospective messages, gaining about 3 percentage points on average. He was slightly less successful with his retrospective and valence messages, though the movement associated with these messages was positive. Clinton's attack messages fared poorly, inducing negative movement on the whole. By contrast, Bush's attack messages were the only reliable message he had going for him, improving his status by an average of 1 percentage point per message. Bush produced negative movement with his prospective, retrospective and valence messages, substantiating the argument made in the preceding section (though, admittedly, this negative movement was not statistically significant).

CONCLUSION

Americans showed an unusual awareness and involvement in the 1992 presidential election campaign. Long term downward trends in interest and turnout were reversed. Voters' preferences shifted in response to stimuli provided by the campaign. Post-election surveys showed that a majority of voters did not commit to their candidate until well into the fall campaign. If the election of Bill Clinton was a foregone conclusion, Americans were deluded into thinking of themselves as uncommitted and investing inordinate amounts of energy following the campaign.

The data reviewed in this chapter show there was no delusion. The 1992 presidential campaigns produced movement in the aggregate distribution of voters'

preferences. How significant was this movement for the election? One particular event, the Democratic Convention, provided Bill Clinton with the means for turning a deficit into a comfortable victory. Furthermore, the success of Clinton's campaign may have been responsible for the minimal effects generated by Bush's campaign in September and much of October. The Democratic campaign succeeded in dictating the agenda throughout the summer of 1992 and deftly deflected all attempts by the Republicans to regain the initiative in the fall. Finally, Ross Perot's startling success was almost completely attributable to his campaign performances, especially in the debates.

The relationship between candidates' activities and voters' preferences which existed in 1992 undoubtedly exists in every presidential election, though one would assume the magnitude of this association to be variable. The potential variability of this relationship cannot obscure the fact that campaigns convey the information voters use to make decisions. A slightly different question is whether campaigning had an impact *beyond the contextual realities of the political universe in 1992*. It is toward this question that we turn in Chapter Six.

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Appendix 5.1

Description of Campaign Event Categories

Campaign Event Types	Definitions	Examples
Prospective Messages	statement on which policies will be undertaken by the candidate	Clinton's pledge to raise taxes on those making $200,000 a year
Retrospective/Comparative Messages	statement on changes in the country's condition during the last term	Clinton's charge that Americans are working harder for less money
Valence/Values Messages	statement on the values embodied by, and which will guide the candidate	Quayle's "Murphy Brown" speech on "family values"
Attack Messages	statement criticizing an opponent's personality or qualifications	Bush's attack on Clinton and Gore as "bozos"
National Conventions	quadrennial party nominating conventions	Republicans in Houston Democrats in New York City
Presidential Debates	formal, televised debates between the major presidential candidates	Three presidential debates of 1992
Vice-Presidential Debates	formal, televised debates between the major VP candidates	One vice-presidential debate of 1992
Party Unity Activities	event in which candidate appears with leader of a "dissident" faction of the party	Buchanan's endorsement of Bush prior to the GOP Convention
Outside Events	natl' or int'l political (but non-campaign) event	Saddaam Hussein's confrontation with U.N. inspectors
Scandals	accusation of impropriety	Clinton's "marital infidelities"
Gaffes/Foul-Ups	mistake or mis-statement by candidate	Clinton calling Patriot Missiles "smart bombs"
Primary Elections	state-wide party primary election	Series of primaries in 1992

Table 5.1

Voter Attentiveness to Political Advertising in 1992

What do you remember from the campaign advertisements?		
	Percent mentioning (5 mentions possible)	Total Number mentioning
mentioned specific Bush Ad	22%	544
didn't like Ads/ negative campaigning	20	503
didn't pay attention	16	402
mentioned specific Clinton Ad	14	358
disliked Bush Ads	9	224
mentioned specific Perot Ad	8	203
liked Perot Ads	4	88
disliked Clinton Ads	3	75
disliked Perot Ads	2	40
liked Bush Ads	1	28
liked Clinton Ads	1	23
SUMMARY:		
Recalled specific Ads/ had general feeling	64%	1583
Paid no attention/ intentionally ignored/ said no information provided by Ads	36%	905

Notes: Data are from National Election Study 1992 Post-Election Survey (N=2487).

Table 5.2

Changes in Presidential Trial Ballot Margins for 1992

	Average Trial Ballot Margin (Bush - Clinton)	Number of Polls	Change from Previous Month
January	14.6 (5.8)	5	xx
February	10.0 (2.8)	9	- 4.6
March	7.2 (5.9)	13	-2.8
April	11.8 (5.3)	25	+ 4.6
May	6.2 (2.9)	13	- 5.6
June	4.2 (4.1)	15	- 2.0
July	-16.5 (12.5)	28	- 20.7
August	-13.8 (6.7)	28	+ 2.7
September	-11.7 (3.4)	26	+ 2.1
October	-11.5 (3.1)	61	+ 0.2
November	-8.3 (2.5)	3	+ 3.2

Notes: Figures are calculated from all available public and private polls.

Table 5.3

Regression Analaysis of Changes in Voters' Preferences During 1992

(Estimates are derived from OLS regression analysis of trial ballot margin change over time. The dependent variable is the Bush vote minus the Clinton vote, meaning negative numbers indicate a Clinton lead.)

	Pre-Democratic Convention (1/1-7/13)	Inter-Convention (7-18/8/20)	Early Campaign (8/24-9/30)	Middle Campaign (10/1-10/19)	Late Campaign (10/20-10/29)	Last Few Days (10/30-11/3)
Coefficient (standard errors)	0.06 *** (0.01)	0.33 *** (0.06)	- 0.02 (0.07)	- 0.15 * (0.09)	0.86 ** (0.20)	- 0.58 (1.19)
Intercept	- 3.0	11.7	- 12.6	- 16.2	- 5.9	- 6.9
Number of Cases	86	43	30	33	22	06
Adjusted R-Squared	0.21	0.41	0.03	0.05	0.16	0.14

*** indicates t-statistic significance at the 0.01 level.
** indicates t-statistic significance at the 0.05 level.
* indicates t-statistic significance at the 0.10 level.

Table 5.4

1992 Presidential Campaign Event Frequencies

	Frequency	Bush	Clinton
MESSAGES			
Prospective	14	10	3
Retrospective	7	4	2
Valence	9	3	6
Attack	10	5	3
PARTY ACTIVITIES			
Conventions	2	1	1
Presidential Debates	3	3	3
Vice-Presidential Debates	1	1	1
Party Unity Activities	6	2	4
MISTAKES			
Scandals	7	1	5
Foul-Ups	10	4	5
EXTERNAL EVENTS			
Outside Events	13	7	7
Party Primary Elections	12	12	12
	94	53	52

Notes: A description of these campaign event categories is provided in **Appendix 5.1**. Some events involve more than one candidate (for example, debates and some outside occurrences). Therefore, the summation of the candidates' events exceeds the total number of events. there are 82 different campaign occurrences, 9 events are double-coded and 1 event is triple-coded to reflect the multi-dimensional character of certain events. For instance, Mary Matalin's mention of "bimbo eruptions" in her August, 1992 campaign newsletter could be considered either an attack or a gaffe.

Table 5.5

Survey Data on Ross Perot's Debate Success

(Data are from Market Strategies, Inc. 's National Tracking Polls conducted on the two days immediately following the debate (N=600, 300 for each day). Percentage thinking a candidate won the debate include those who thought it was a tie between that candidate and one of the others. For example, the percent under the "Clinton/Gore Won" category include not only those who thought Clinton won the debate outright, but also those who thought Clinton and Bush tied and those who thought Clinton and Perot tied.)

	Debate Audience	**Reactions to Debates (percent thinking . . .)**			
	Saw/ Heard Debates	Bush/ Quayle Won	Clinton/ Gore Won	Perot/ Stockdale Won	Else
Presidential Debate 1 (October 10)	72%	15%	26	45	14
Presidential Debate 2 (October 14)	76%	17%	53	19	11
Presidential Debate 3 (October 18)	79%	27%	30	36	7
Vice-Presidential Debate (October 12)	69%	37%	50	7	6

Table 5.6

Focus Group Data on Ross Perot's Debate Success

(Data are from focus groups conducted by Market Strategies, Inc. Groups were chosen so that only undecided voters were included. Group sizes ranged from 32 (for debate 1) to 42 (for debate 3). More detailed information on the composition of the groups is provided in the text.)

	George Bush			Bill Clinton			Ross Perot		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Pre-Debate Support	22%	38%	20%	38%	21%	26%	16%	12%	11%
Post-Debate Support	28%	36%	23%	31%	19%	29%	28%	29%	29%
Change in Support	+6	-2	+3	-7	-2	+3	+12	+17	+18
Best job	13%	17%	17%	16%	29%	14%	50%	43%	49%
Worst job	25%	38%	43%	34%	14%	20%	13%	17%	11%
Best moment	9%	12%	20%	6%	12%	20%	81%	67%	60%
Worst moment	31%	36%	46%	28%	29%	29%	19%	24%	11%
Most relaxed	13%	24%	9%	13%	40%	29%	66%	21%	46%
Least relaxed	38%	36%	60%	25%	21%	14%	9%	17%	9%
Most believable	25%	33%	14%	16%	21%	17%	50%	40%	60%
Most convincing	25%	19%	17%	22%	36%	26%	44%	33%	57%
Most sincere	25%	19%	23%	13%	24%	6%	41%	45%	66%

Table 5.7

Effect of Presidential Campaign Events for George Bush and Bill Clinton

(Average change in the trial ballot margin produced by the given category of campaign events are presented. Traditional measures of significance are also given, though the limited number of cases for some event types (such as conventions and vice-presidential debates) limit their utility.)

	George Bush	Bill Clinton
	Average Net Effect	Average Net Effect
MESSAGES		
Prospective	-0.9	3.0
Retrospective	-1.5	1.0
Valence	-1.7	0.9
Attack	1.0*	-0.7
PARTY ACTIVITIES		
Conventions	5.0	16.0
Presidential Debates	0.3	-0.3
Vice-Presidential Debates	1.0	-1.0
Party Unity Activities	0.5	1.0**
MISTAKES		
Scandals	-2.0	0.8
Foul-Ups	-2.0	-2.0**
EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES		
Outside Activities	-1.7***	2.0**
Party Primary Elections	-2.3	2.1**
TOTAL	53	52

*** indicates t-statistic significance at the 0.01 level.
** indicates t-statistic significance at the 0.05 level.
* indicates t-statistic significance at the 0.10 level.

Figure 5.1

Voters' Recall of Campaign Events in 1992

(Data are from Market Strategies, Inc.'s 1992 U.S. National Post-Election Survey; N = 848)

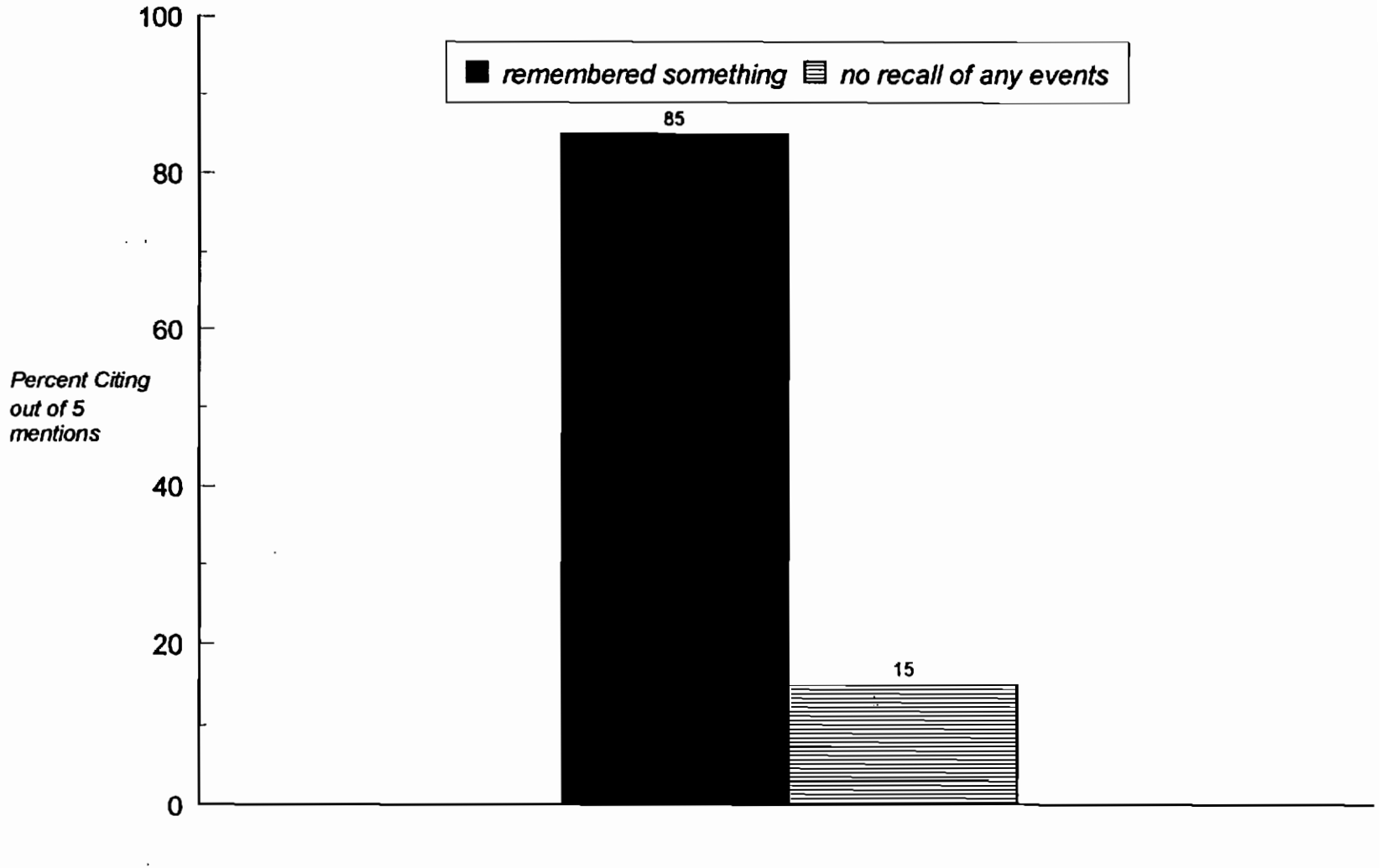
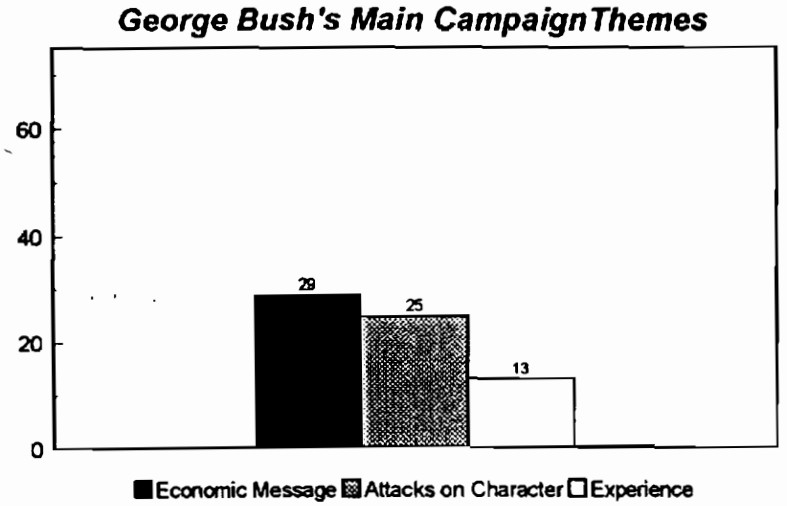
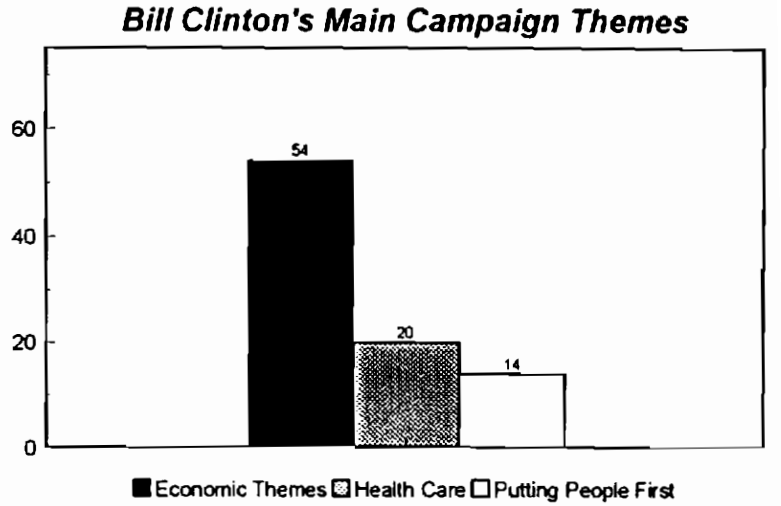


Figure 5.2

Voters' Recall of the Candidates' Campaign Themes in 1992

(Data are from Market Strategies, Inc.'s 1992 U.S. National Post-Election Survey, N = 848)





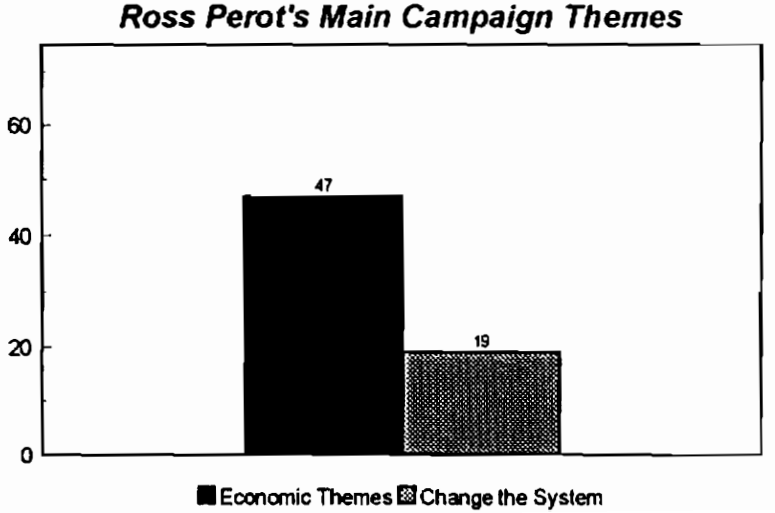


Figure 5.3

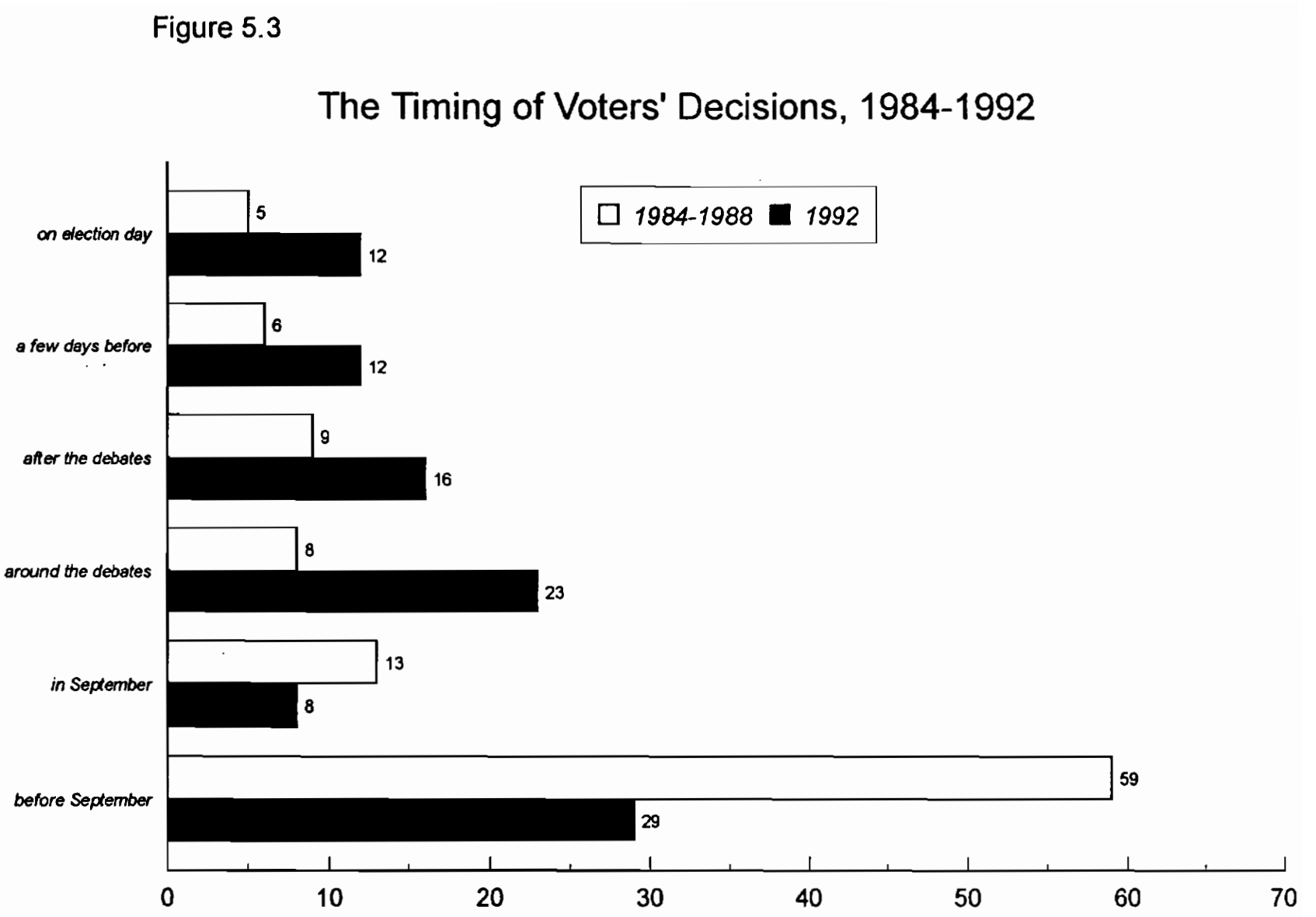

The Timing of Voters' Decisions, 1984-1992
1984-1988
1992
on election day
5
12
a few days before
6
12
after the debates
9
16
around the debates
8
23
in September
13
8
before September
59
29
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70

Figure 5.4

Comparative Convention Bounces, 1960-1992

(Data are from the Gallup Organization's Polls conducted immediately prior to and after the parties' national conventions. The "bounce" is the increase in the candidate's percentage of the vote associated with the national convention.)

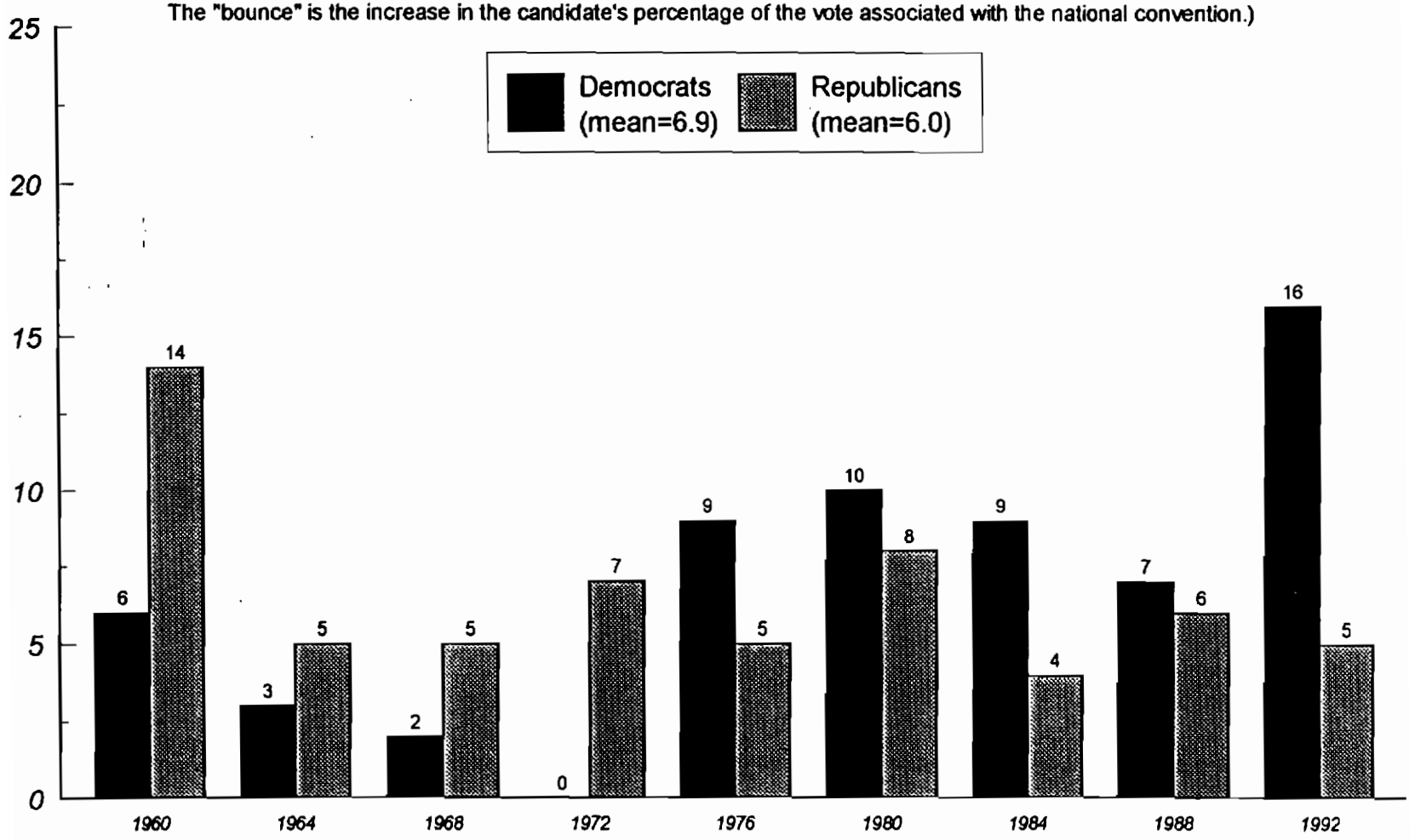
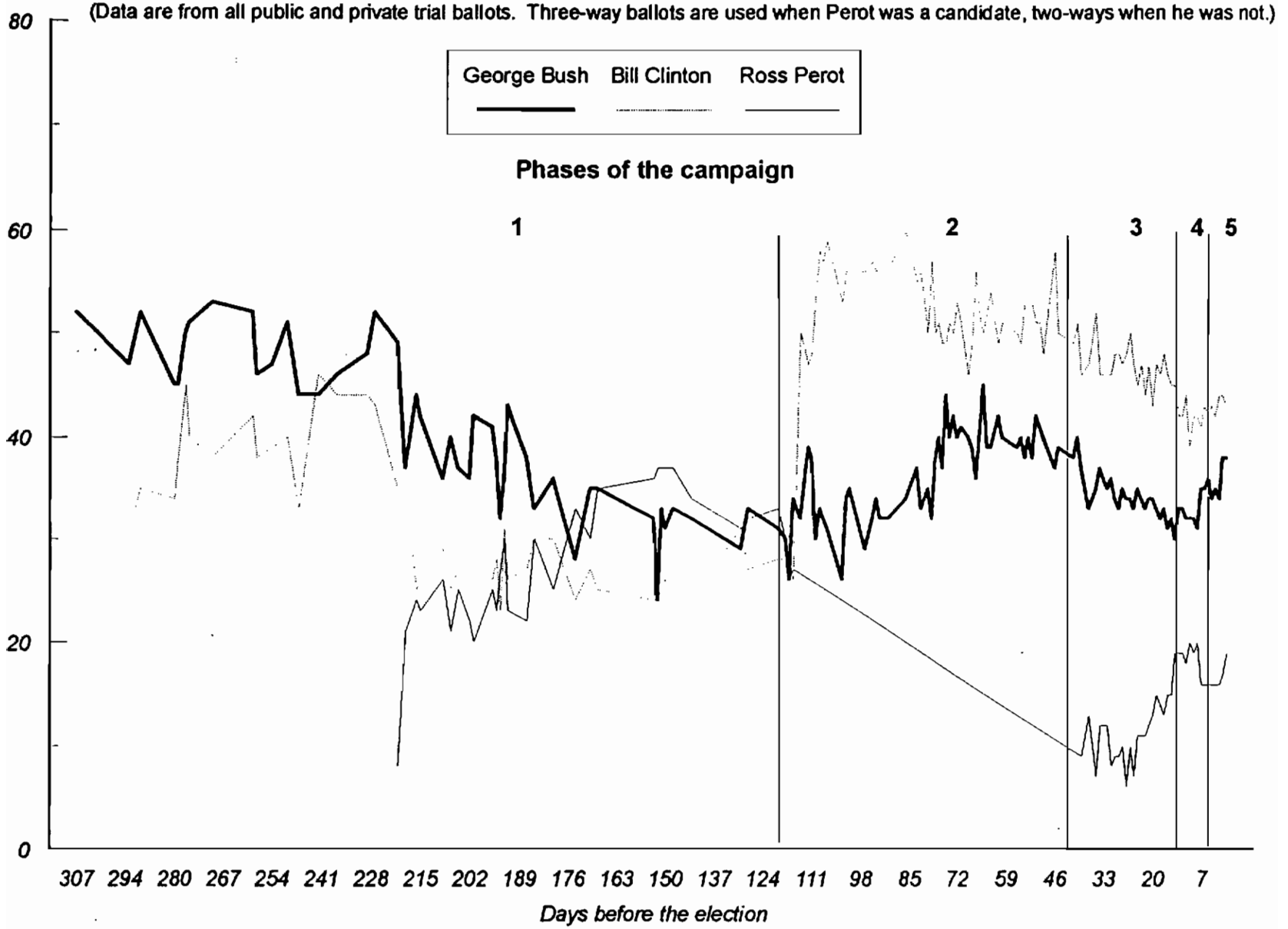


Figure 5.5

Candidate Support Movement Across 1992

(Data are from all public and private trial ballots. Three-way ballots are used when Perot was a candidate, two-ways when he was not.)



CHAPTER SIX

Conditions, Campaigning and the 1992 Presidential Election

This chapter examines the association between candidate support and campaigning in 1992, while controlling for economic and other conditional variables. The analysis considers the possibility that campaign events were merely the vehicles through which external circumstances influenced the 1992 presidential vote. The expectation, though, is that campaigning had an independent effect on voters' preferences in the 1992 race. This expectation is based the theoretical conception that process can have an independent effect on outcome, as well as on the differential effectiveness of campaign events noted in Chapter Five.

The chapter pursues a two-pronged attack. The first focuses on the explanatory power of conditional variables for 1992. This section includes a consideration of partisan, economic and retrospective variables as predictors of voters' preferences. Although other factors are scrutinized, the most important feature of this first analysis is the review of macroeconomic models of the 1992 presidential vote. The second prong analyzes the simultaneous effects of campaign and conditional variables on voters' presidential preferences. The presentation and interpretation of these data go a

long way towards shedding light on the issue of how campaigns impact presidential elections.

NON-CAMPAIGN VARIABLES IN 1992

Party Identification

Partisanship is perhaps the most powerful practical and theoretical variable we have to understand voting in the United States. The relationship between party identification and the vote is so well-documented in American politics' literature that it has become one of our fundamental truths. From the descriptions of the phenomenon in Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee's *Voting*, to its rigorous explication in Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes' *The American Voter*, to the recent reconsideration of leaning partisans by Wolfinger, Westlye, Keith, Magelby, Orr and Nelson in *The Myth of the Independent Voter*, partisanship has been the key factor in contemporary studies of voting.

As a voting model, party identification has a specific manifestation. In its most simplistic terms, party identification can predict the vote in the absence of any short-term forces or factors. In other words, if an election were held tomorrow between unknown Republican and Democratic candidates, Republicans would cast their ballots for the Republican and the Democrats would mark the box next to the Democrats' name. The outcome would therefore depend upon the distribution of partisan

preferences in the electorate. Applying this logic to the 1992 presidential election, Bill Clinton would be the predicted winner (all things being equal) because the Democrats held a 47% to 45% partisan advantage on Election Day.[1] A Republican victory requires a deviation from the model. Deviations occurred in 1992, but **Table 6.1** shows that Clinton's party identification advantage was not undercut by the defection that hampered recent Democratic candidates.

In **Table 6.1** one sees that 65% of Americans voted consistent with their party identification. Of the remaining 35%, almost two out of every three were Democrats or Republicans who did not vote for their party's candidate. The remainder were independents who, by definition, did not have any partisanship. Of the 23% who were partisan defectors, roughly one-third voted for the other party's candidate and two-thirds voted for Ross Perot.

The rate of defection was similar across party lines. Just under 4% of the electorate were Republicans voting for Bill Clinton, while slightly over 4% were Democrats casting ballots for George Bush. Eight percent of voters were Republicans voting for Perot and 7% were Democrats voting for the Texas billionaire. The fact that there was no party bias to the defection pattern distinguished 1992 from the

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[1] Data are from the National Election Study's Post-Election Survey.

presidential elections of the 1980's.[2] Obviously, it also meant that the majority party candidate would win.

However, party alone cannot explain the 1992 election. Thirty-five percent of voters were not guided by their party identification. An advantage among this segment comparable to that which existed in 1988 would have swung the election to George Bush. Partisanship provides a base-line, but other factors were equally critical to the 1992 election.

Economic Models

To the extent that presidential elections deviate from a straight party vote, observers have viewed the state of the economy as a primary explanation for the variance. Political scientists have long noted the relationship between economic performance and political success.[3] The basic logic of all economic models of the

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[2] The lack of defection could also be seen as eveidence for Fiorina's argument that party identification is actually a "running tally" reflecting one's previous partisanship and recent political events. The interpretation would be that short-term forces caused people to identify with the Democratic Party and that their votes were then consistent with this identification. This was a slight departure from previous elections. A pro-Republican movement in party identification did occur in 1984 and 1988, though ticket-splitting was much more common in these elections than changes in partisanship.

[3] Louis H. Bean. 1972. *How to Predict the 1972 Election.* (New York: Quadrangle Books); Edward Tufte. 1975. "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections," *American Political Science Association* 69: 812-826; Ray Fair. 1978. "The Effect of Economic Events on Votes for President," *Review of Economics and Statistics 60: 159-172.*

vote is roughly the same: voters reward an incumbent (or an incumbent party) if that incumbent has produced economic prosperity. However, there are many opinions as to *which* measures of economic prosperity are most associated with the vote.

Five models stand out from the rest because they are both well-specified and historically accurate. These models come from Tufte, Fair, Lewis-Beck and Rice, Abramowitz, and Campbell and Wink.[4] The present analysis examines these models and their estimations of the 1992 vote, pointing out inaccuracies and suggesting ways in which errors may have occurred.

Tufte's and Fair's electoral models were center-pieces of the macroeconomic modeling literature which burgeoned in the 1970's and 1980's. These models are probably the most purely economic. The Tufte model predicts the two-party vote using the change in real disposable personal income for a one year period (October to October) prior to the presidential election.[5] Fair's model relies on two variables: (1) the growth in per capita GNP for the second and third quarters of the election year and (2) the rate of inflation for the two years before the election. Though these models are the most economic of the five, they also include non-economic determinants of the vote. For 1992, Fair introduced a model for incumbency, in effect

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[4] Steven Rosenstone's model is notably absent from this list. This is due to the difficulty in reconstructing Rosenstone's measures.

[5] Tufte. "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections," 812-826.

giving "bonus" points to a sitting president because of voters' proclivity to favor incumbents.[6] Tufte, who has presumably moved onto other research, did not adjust his model in 1992. Thus, Tufte's model is the purest in the sense that it does not introduce political terms to "correct" its predictions.

The three "second generation" models include political variables. For example, Lewis-Beck and Rice's model openly acknowledges that political contexts influence voting. Specifically, Lewis-Beck and Rice model the two-party vote by using the incumbent president's approval rating from the mid-Summer Gallup Poll and the results from the midterm elections for the House of Representatives, together with GNP growth between the third and first quarters prior to the presidential election.[7] Their economic indicator, in addition to being modified by political variables, is thus lagged. The assumption is that reactions to economic reality take time to filter into voters' consciousness.

Similarly, Abramowitz uses the standard GNP growth and presidential popularity measures, but he also includes what he calls the "time for a change" variable. Abramowitz contends that a party that has held the White House for eight years pays a considerable penalty when its candidate seeks to extend the streak to a third term. He explains Bush's 1988 success under much the same circumstances by

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[6] Fair. "The Effect of Economic Events on Votes for President," 159-172.

[7] Michael Lewis-Beck and Thomas Rice. 1992. *Forecasting Elections*. (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press).

pointing out that "Dukakis ran such a terrible campaign ... Bush would have to be awfully lucky to have the same thing happen again."[8] This explanation and acknowledgement of the significance of a campaign is, needless to say, unusual for a someone championing a macroeconomic model of the vote.

Finally, Campbell and Wink's forecasting model includes both GNP growth and presidential performance indicators, but also takes into consideration recent voting histories of the states *and* presidential preference polls from two months prior to the election.[9] Obviously, Campbell and Wink's electoral model goes farther than any of the others towards incorporating political effects. And not just political effects, but *campaign* effects. The model's predictive power is diminished by this, as one has to wait until the fall before a final prognostication can be made.

Campbell and Wink's model is particularly useful for this analysis because its results for 1992 may be compared to the more overtly economic models. Indeed, we have more than a simple selection of macroeconomic models; we have a selection of models which vary markedly as to the extent to which they emphasize economic variables. At one end of the spectrum, Tufte's model uses only economic variables to explain the presidential vote. On the other end, Campbell and Wink's model treats the economy as one of several variables which play a crucial role in determining

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[8] quoted in *The Washington Post*, September 6, 1992: section A, p. 1.

[9] James A. Campbell and Kenneth A. Wink. 1990. "Trial Heat Forecasts of the Presidential Vote," *American Politics Quarterly* 18: 251-269.

presidential election outcomes. Because of this, it is possible to comment on whether reliance on economic variables helped or hindered prediction in 1992.

Table 6.2 shows the models' predictions (as of September, 1992) and the actual vote for 1992. Every model except Abramowitz's underestimated Clinton's share of the two-party vote. The electoral vote estimations were similarly understated. The models which are more purely economic met with limited success. The Fair model not only missed the final vote by over seven percentage points, but erroneously predicted that Bush would be re-elected. Tufte's model had Clinton winning the election, though the actual margin was almost four percentage points greater than Tufte predicted.[10] Given the relative inaccuracy of these predictions, one is led to infer that something more than aggregate macroeconomics drove the 1992 vote.

The hybrid economic-political models faired only slightly better. The Lewis-Beck and Rice model picked Bush to win based on the September data. In fact, it estimated that Clinton would win only 42% of the Electoral College, which missed the actual outcome by 144 electoral votes. I should remark that their revised estimates, based on October data, had Clinton winning with a 50.3% share of the two-party vote. However, even this second estimate missed Clinton's actual vote by three percentage points. Campbell's model had the correct winner and was within two percentage

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[10] One must assume that Tufte and Fair's models were computed using September to September data. The effect of using these data as opposed to the October to October data is generally less than two-tenths of a percentage point on the vote estimation.

points and fifteen electoral votes of the actual outcome. This is an impressive result, but not as impressive as Abramowitz's. The Abramowitz model was accurate to the tenth of a percentage point on the two-party presidential vote. Perhaps his "time for a change" variable was an insight necessary to understand 1992.

Out of the five respected models in the study, two (Fair and Lewis-Beck & Rice) had the wrong winner. Another, the Tufte model, predicted a two percentage point Clinton win, thereby projecting a cliff-hanger and not the solid Clinton victory that actually occurred. Clearly, something was missing.

There is reason to believe the models were insufficiently political. Within Bush's Republican campaign, the economic models were applied with adjustments for political factors. The Republican National Committee combined personal income growth and the mid-summer Gallup Organization Poll's presidential approval rating, hoping to "add to the best economic indicator a variable to capture something of the voters' evaluations of the character and competence of the candidates".[11] This model predicted that Clinton would win 53.2% of the two-party vote for the 1992 presidential election, missing the actual outcome by a tenth of a percentage point. There is little doubt that the critical variable was the survey rating of Bush's popular standing.

The mispredictions of the economic models should not obscure the fact that they were not wholly inaccurate predictors of the vote in the 1992 presidential

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[11] 1992 Post-Election Report for the Republican National Committee.

election. Omitting Fair, on average the predictions had Clinton winning 51.2% of the two-party vote. This is within 2.1 percentage points of his actual vote. The rough congruence between prediction and reality suggests that 1992 was not a completely anomalous year; much of what occurred in 1992 was consistent with the way voters usually react to particular circumstances.

Still, one cannot help but note that the actual margin was not two but six percentage points. This is the difference between a cliff-hanger and a rout. Furthermore, predictive differences among the models exist and indicate that objective reality may not have been cut-and-dried in 1992. The limited accuracy of these models offers evidence that other factors besides macroeconomics are necessary to explain Clinton's victory. Models incorporating political factors such as presidential approval were, on the whole, closer to the actual vote. This fact is evidence that politics mattered in 1992. Insofar as politics mattered, it is plausible that campaigns could have influenced voters' preferences.

Retrospective Voting

If partisanship leaves approximately 40% of the 1992 vote unexplained, and the economic models offer decidedly mixed projections for the residual variance, other factors must account for Bill Clinton's victory over George Bush. A retrospective model of the vote holds promise. Theoretically, the retrospective voting model is

simple. It is based on the notion that voters use elections to pass judgement on the performance of those in power.[12] An election is understood to be a referendum on the incumbent office-holder or, if there is no incumbent running, the incumbent party. Projections of the candidates' future performances on key issues are calculated using past performance. If the incumbent is generally thought to have done a good job, he will be re-elected. If not, the incumbent's success depends on (1) the magnitude of the disaffection and (2) the strength of the challenger.

The retrospective model is not only simple for the analyst, but for the voter as well. This model places limited demands on voters' knowledge or interest. It is, in this sense, consistent with the standard conception of Americans as disinterested and somewhat unconcerned with the details of politics.

Retrospective models are not perfect, though. Indeed, they are a mixed blessing for researchers. On the plus side of the ledger, retrospective evaluations have been strongly correlated with past votes. For the 1960 presidential election, Fiorina's two-stage probit vote equations explained 73% of the variance. In 1976, his equations explained 83% of the presidential vote variance.[13] On the debit side, it is difficult to test these models with more recent data. The problem is rooted in the fact that Fiorina's models are constructed after a given election with an eye toward explanation

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[12] Morris Fiorina. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press).

[13] Fiorina. *Retrospective Voting*, 161-170.

of the outcome. They do not purport to be predictive. This tends to make them somewhat dependent upon the idiosyncracies of the modeler and difficult to construct on one's own.

Rather than develop a tepid version of Fiorina's model for the 1992 presidential election, this analysis will rely on an examination of the simple retrospective evaluations of voters. As could be expected, most voters had negative retrospective evaluations of incumbent George Bush in 1992. In fact, survey responses indicate that George Bush should have been resoundingly repudiated. The data are clear about the basis of this defeat; Bush's ratings were the same or worse than Jimmy Carter in 1980, and Carter lost by eight percentage points and over two hundred electoral votes. Seventy-three percent of respondents said they were worse off in 1992 than they were in 1988; 82% said the country was on the wrong track; 54% disapproved of the President Bush's handling of his job.[14] Going by the retrospective evaluations of the electorate, the question is not why George Bush lost, but how he managed to lose by only five percentage points.

Table 6.3 shows how retrospective appraisals were associated with the presidential vote. Sixty-seven percent of voters who thought the country was moving in the right direction voted for Bush, while only 31% of those saying the country was on the wrong track voted for the Republican incumbent. The pattern is similar for the

[14] Data are from the 1992 NES (N = 1,348).

"are you better off today than four years ago" question. Bush carried 68% of those who said they were "better off", but polled only 25% of those who claimed they were "worse off." These two questions undoubtedly influence presidential approval, which should be a more proximate and powerful determinant of the vote. Indeed, Bush received only 11% of the vote from those who disapprove of his handling of the presidency. Conversely, he garnered 71% support from those approving of his job performance.

The power of retrospective evaluations can be estimated by summing the percent of respondents who vote against their appraisals; those in the off-diagonals of **Table 6.3**. Seventy-four percent voted consistent with their response to the "are you better off now . . ." question. The track question was the least predictive, though it produces accurate estimates 64% of the time. As expected, the approval question was most connected with the vote as 81% of Americans voted consistent with their opinion on George Bush's job performance.

The discrepancies between retrospective evaluations and the vote *appear* to have favored George Bush in 1992. Sixty-nine percent of those who voted inconsistently with their response on the track question cast their ballots for Bush. For the "are you better off . . ." question, over three out of four mispredicted respondents voted for Bush. The problem is that a vast majority of Americans took a negative view of the country, meaning that Clinton could afford to lose some of those people to

Bush. Moreover, there was no pattern among those voting out of line with their opinion on the presidential approval question. The retrospective questions do not give an obvious explanation for the narrow margin between Clinton and Bush.

Despite the ambiguity of the data, there is an explanation for the election's closeness which is consistent with the retrospective model: Bill Clinton and Ross Perot were as unattractive to the electorate as George Bush. It should be remembered that although retrospective voting emphasizes the record of the incumbent as a cue to voters' preferences, it also acknowledges the relative merits of all candidates. That is, a negative retrospective judgement is a reason *not* to vote for the incumbent; however, one still needs a reason to vote *for* the challenger. The challenger may have a poor record, or simply be unattractive enough in other ways to minimize the influence of an incumbent's negative retrospective standing.

For 1992, Clinton's narrow victory may have been a function of his own unpopularity, given he was running against someone who was widely seen to be a "failed" president. This is evidenced by the fact that although 38% of voters thought there was more risk in electing George Bush than in electing Bill Clinton, *46% said there was greater risk in electing Bill Clinton than in re-electing George Bush.*[15] Data on candidate favorability *do* show Clinton increased his favorability over the

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[15] Data are from November 11-17, 1992 U.S. National Post-Election Survey conducted by Market Strategies, Inc. for the Republican National Committee.

course of the campaign -- to an average rating of 57 on a 0-100 point scale.[16] This number is not high in historical terms, though, as four out of the last five presidents entered with higher ratings. Clinton was regarded more highly than Bush, but not by much.

The retrospective voting models' failings, such as they are, appear to be limited to overstating the extent of Bush's repudiation. Aside from this, the model tells a convincing story of the 1992 presidential election: a president who was perceived to have made the country worse off during his term was rejected in favor of the challenger. That the challenger had considerable short-comings of his own was not enough to prevent voters from punishing the incumbent. The logic of retrospective voting (especially its emphasis on quick, easy to understand political perceptions and their connection to accountability) is therefore compelling for 1992.

CONDITIONS AND CAMPAIGNING IN 1992

Constructing a Test for Campaign Effects

On the whole, factors such as party identification, the economy and retrospective appraisals of the nation's condition appear to have been related to voters' 1992 presidential preferences. However, this association was far from perfect. We do

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[16] Data from Market Strategies, Inc. show Clinton's ratings rose dramatically during the Convention. Moreover, by late October evaluations of Clinton came to be almost as important to the vote intention as were ratings of Bush.

not have a very complete explanation of the vote. A controlled analysis of the impact of conditional variables *and* campaign factors on voters' presidential candidate preferences is needed.

Support for the presidential candidates is measured from public opinion surveys. For the present analysis, the candidate support measure developed in Chapter Five will be used. This measure includes estimates of the trial ballot margin for every day of 1992.[17] While acknowledging the importance of Ross Perot's independent candidacy, the margin estimated is the difference in support for the major party candidates.

Both conditional and campaign variables are structured in much the same way as the candidate support margin variable. The conditional variables include four measures: (1) presidential approval, (2) consumer confidence, (3) perceived condition of the country, and (4) partisanship. These variables are estimated for each day of 1992. The approval, party identification and perceived condition of the country

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[17] To reiterate the method used previously, if one trial ballot existed for a given day it was used to estimate the margin between the candidates. If more than one survey existed, the average of the trial ballot margin was used. If no survey existed, an estimate was calculated using (1) the trend suggested by the most immediate anterior and posterior data points, and (2) data from National Election Study. NES survey respondents from the given day, as well as from the day before and the day after, were culled and weighted by age/gender, race/region and partisanship to provide an appropriate estimate of the trial ballot margin. A generalized least squares procedure was then used to create an estimate of the trial ballot margin using the trend and the NES data. The GLS procedure derives a measure of support by weighing the input estimates by the inverse square of their error terms.

measures come from survey data.[18] Each variable is coded so that anti-Bush responses are subtracted from pro-Bush responses. For instance, if 45% approve of Bush's job performance while 55% disapprove, the approval variable for that day would be -10. The variable values can therefore range from -100 to +100. Estimates of these variables for inter-survey periods are derived by calculating linear trends suggested by anterior and posterior survey data points.[19]

The same approach to estimation is done for campaign variables.[20] Campaign events are collapsed into three categories: positive, negative and neutral events. The campaign event typology used in Chapters Four and Five are condensed so that there are more cases are available to estimate the relationships in the multivariate analyses.[21] Positive campaign events are meant to refer to activities which should "positively" affect the support for the candidate undertaking them. These events

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[18] These variables are constructed from the monthly (roughly) national polls conducted by Market Strategies, Inc. during the 1992 presidential campaign.

[19] The one exceptional conditional variable is consumer confidence. The consumer confidence index is an estimate of consumer sentiment against an historical baseline (February, 1986). A rating of one hundred would mean consumer confidence equals that of the baseline. For 1992, this measure reaches a high of 69 and a low of 49. The ratings come from a monthly survey of 5,000 United States' households. As with the other conditional variables, estimates of consumer confidence over the course of a given month are calculated by the linear trend of the most immediate anterior and posterior data points. Thus, each of the conditional variables are estimated for every day of 1992.

[20] For all of the analyses, the campaign variables are lagged to account for the delay in the relationship between their occurrence and changes in the candidate support margin.

[21] The universe of campaign events is the same used in Chapter Five.

include prospective, retrospective, valence and attack messages, conventions and party unity activities. Negative campaign events are expected to reduce the standing of the candidate associated with them. This category encompasses scandals and foul-ups. Neutral campaign events could work either for or against a particular candidate. These events include debates and outside occurrences, such as an international or domestic incident. These three campaign event types are thus treated as separate variables.

The operationalization of positive and negative campaign events consists of a "running tally," or cumulative score, for these events throughout 1992.[22] As an example, for positive campaigning, the measure starts out at "0" on January 1, 1992. It remains there until February 15, when it goes to "+1" because George Bush articulated a prominent prospective message on that day. It goes to "+2" when Bush conducted another positive event, and back to "+1" when Clinton undertook his first nationally prominent positive activity. This ebb and flow continues until November 3, 1992. For negative campaign events, the running tally method is used in a similar fashion. The only variation is that Clinton's negative events are added to the total while Bush's are subtracted. The result is two variables whose effect on fluctuations in presidential support in 1992 can be directly tested.

Neutral campaign events do not require a cumulative score. Because there is no expectation of how support will fluctuate in response to debates or world events (at

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[22] The "running tally" idea was suggested by an anonymous paper reviewed by the author.

least in the abstract), it would be problematic to use a running tally. One would not know, a priori, whether one should add to the tally (presuming the event should correlate with positive movement in the margin, understood here as increased support for George Bush), or subtract from it (assuming the opposite). Instead, a dummy variable is used to identify those days associated with the occurrence of neutral events. The main problem -- that the margin could go either way for any given event, so that a strong, unpredictable effects could be obscured -- remains. This set-up makes the issue more tractable, though.[23]

In order to interpret relationships and understand subsequent analyses, it should be pointed out that all but two of the variables are expected to have a positive relationship with changes in the dependent variable. A decline in consumer confidence (or presidential approval, or the occurrence of a positive campaign event for Bill Clinton) is posited to vary positively with an increase in Clinton's share of the vote. Conversely, the occurrence of a positive campaign event for George Bush (or an increase in consumer confidence or presidential approval) should be positively associated with an increase in Bush's support.[24]

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[23] Specifically, an insignificant regression coefficient with a large standard error is a red-flag that a relationship between neutral events and voters' preferences may exist , but is hidden by the multi-directional nature of the association.

[24] There are two exceptions. The first exception is neutral campaign events. The dummy variable set-up ("1" for days with neutral events, "0" otherwise) means that a positive relationship is when neutral campaigning is related to increased support for Bush, while a negative association exists if neutral campaign events produce more support for

Controlled Analyses of Campaign Effects

At this point, an empirical analysis of changes in the margin between the presidential candidates is called for. One wants to account for simultaneous and interactive effects between conditional and campaign factors and the margin. A multivariate regression model allows for these effects. **Table 6.4** presents the results of an ordinary least squares regression analysis in which changes in the support margin are explained by conditional and campaign variables. The model explains a 89% of the variance in the margin. This suggests that the combination of conditional and campaign variables goes a long way towards explaining candidate preference variance.

The relationship between campaign events, both positive and negative, and support margin changes corroborates the evidence from Chapter Five. The campaign variables have regression coefficients with signs in the expected direction. The model estimates that positive campaign events produced a change in the trial ballot margin of 1.9 percentage points. Even given that these events were the most notable from the campaign, this relationship is still striking. For scandals and gaffes, a 0.6 percentage

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Clinton. The second exception is the negative campaign event category. This variable is coded so that negative relationships between the variable and the candidate's standing are expected. This coding makes meaning of the relationship more intuitive. Specifically, a negative correlation indicates that negative events produced a decrease in support for the candidate associated with them. Thus, a negative campaign event for Bill Clinton is conceptualized as inducing a reduction in Clinton's standing. A negative and significant correlation or regression coefficient would confirm this understanding.

point change in the margin was associated with each event. Both positive and negative campaign variables were significantly associated to oscillations in the candidate support margin at the 0.01 level of significance. The significance measurements of the regression coefficients' t-statistics show that presidential approval was the variable most strongly correlated with the candidate support margin measure, *followed by positive campaign events.* Consumer confidence and party identification were the next most correlated, with negative campaign events being slightly less, though still highly, associated with changes in the candidates' support. Among the campaign variables, only neutral campaign events were not related to the margin in a statistically significant way.[25]

In spite of the model's ability to explain the variance in the margin, there is reason to suspect that a straight-forward multivariate regression distorts the causal chain. In 1992, voters' preferences -- which ultimately drive the candidate support margins -- could have been a function of presidential approval, which was influenced by changes in consumer confidence, changes in general appraisals of the country's direction, and campaign variables. Changes in party identification could have had an independent impact on a number of variables, including the margin, presidential

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[25] That neutral campaign events are not as strongly related to predictable changes in the vote is not unexpected. As suggested earlier, the large standard error term for neutral campaign events *may* indicate that these events *are* related to the vote, but not so that one can predict whether these events would have generally helped Bill Clinton or George Bush in 1992.

approval and conditional preceptions.

A linear structural equation model can specify this two-stage relationship. This model is illustrated in **Figure 6.1**. As is evident from the diagram, conditions are conceptualized as a factor, with consumer confidence and opinions about the direction of the country driving this factor. Similarly, campaigns are conceived of as a factor determined by positive, negative and neutral campaign events. Party identification is simply a measured variable. The simultaneous influence of party identification and campaigns on perceptions of conditions is to be estimated by the model. The object of the first stage of the model is presidential approval, with the impact of campaigning, conditions and party identification on this variable being gauged. The second stage of the model estimates the effect of these variables and factors on change in the support margin between the candidates. The results of the linear structural equation model are presented in **Figure 6.2**.

The ability of the model to accurately explain variances can be gleamed from two statitics: (1) the chi-sqaure statistic divided by the degrees of freedom and (2) the comparative goodness of fit index. The first measure strongly evidences the accuracy of the model. Roughly speaking, anything below five qualifies as significant and the measure for this model is below one. The comparative goodness of fit index should be over 0.90 to indicate a well-specified model; the statistic for this model is approximately 0.92. Our model does a good job of accounting for variance in the

dependent variables.

The relationships between variables (and between variables and factors) are estimated by regression coefficients derived from analyses of mean and covariance structures.[26] **Figure 6.2** presents these coefficients within the diagram. Three findings are worth emphasizing:

(1) The campaign factor had a significant affect on changes in the support margin. The path coefficient's standard error was relatively high, but the effect was significant at the 0.05 level. *The central question of the chapter has thus been answered: campaign events affect voters' preferences, even when controlling for other factors.*

(2) Conditions were influenced strongly by campaigning and by oscillations in party identification. However, despite these influences, *conditions still had a significant independent affect on changes in candidate support.*

(3) Presidential approval was not as important for the margin as were campaigning and conditional perceptions. Conversely, party identification had a greater affect on

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[26] The *EQS* program, developed by Peter Bentler, was used to analyze the data. The program differs slightly from factor analytic simultaneous equation models (or *LISREL*), though the resulting coefficients are comparable. For a detailed account of the *EQS* approach, or of the differences between *EQS* and *LISREL*, see Peter M. Bentler. 1989. *EQS: Structural Equations Program Manual* (Los Angeles, Calif.: BMPD Statistical Software, Inc.).

the margin than any of the other factors.[27]

This examination has produced strong evidence for the contention that campaigns affect voters' preferences. The most interesting finding is the persistence of this influence in the face of controls for conditional variables which are generally thought to overwhelm campaign effects. There is even evidence that campaign events influence conditional variables. This brings into question the whole notion that campaigns merely activate latent predispositions and raising the possibility that *campaigns both condition and activate these latent predispositions.*

DISCUSSION

Economic conditions, perceptions of the condition of the country, and presidential approval all influenced the dynamics of support between the presidential

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[27] This last finding can be explained by the amount of variation in the dependent variables. There was a notable lack of variation in presidential approval over 1992; George Bush's approval rating was in the mid to low 40's throughout the election year. However, party identification showed a surprising amount of variation over the presidential campaign. According to the measure employed in this chapter, the Democratic lead in terms of identifiers ebbed at +1 and peaked at +14. This variance raises the possibility that party identification ought to have been treated as a dependent variable for 1992 (as Fiorina and others have suggested in previous years). Resolving this issue is beyond the scope of the present analysis, as recalibrating partisanship to take into account possible inputs would involve individual-level data. It is also doubtful that such an undertaking would alter the finding that campaigning significantly influences changes in the support margin.

candidates in 1992. The evidence shows that campaigns act to convert conditions into support for candidates. The data also show that campaigns affect perceptions of conditions and exert an indpendent affect on the vote. In both of these capacities, they serve an important function.

From all of these data, there is no reason to believe that campaigns simply translate, in a mechanical way, broad perceptions into support for one or the other candidate. Campaign events were not randomly successful in 1992. Furthermore, analyses from previous chapters show that some campaign events have worked and some have failed in American presidential elections. Effective campaign events said the right things to the right people; one cannot just say anything to anybody and assume voters will flock to one's candidacy, even if that candidacy is fortuitously situated. If one is able to articulate an effective theme to a sympathetic group, one stands a chance of affecting both perceptions of the country's condition, as well as the vote.

More specifically, for the 1992 presidential election the notion that conditional realities conspire to create predictable vote outcomes seems at odds with the dynamics of the race. If Clinton was destined to rise to a certain share of the vote in 1992, why did he rise "too high" (according to objective indicators) in the aftermath of the Democratic Convention? Similarly, if Clinton's ascendancy created the need for a Bush counter-surge (to achieve an equilibrium consistent with objective reality), why

didn't this surge occur after the Republican Convention? Why did Bush's surge not occur until after the third presidential debate? One could go on and on with other questions about the specific timing of oscillations in candidate support which are not explained if one relies solely on conditional factors.

The bottom-line is that both conditions and campaigns appear to be important in presidential elections. Even if one believes exogenous factors determine elections, how conditional factors come to be realized is an important question. It is clearly one that cannot be answered without taking into account the means by which information about politics and candidates and issues are conveyed to the electorate.

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Table 6.1

Party Identification and the 1992 Presidential Election

	3-Way Presidential Race			2-Way Presidential Race		
	Bush	**Clinton**	**Perot**	**Bush**	**Clinton**	**Total**
Party Identification						
Strong Democratic	4%	91	5	5%	95	18%
Weak Democratic	16%	66	18	20%	80	17
Leaning Democratic	9%	65	26	8%	92	14
Independent	26%	35	39	43%	57	11
Leaning Republican	62%	11	28	80%	20	12
Weak Republican	64%	13	23	75%	25	13
Strong Republican	87%	3	10	93%	7	15
SUMMARY:						
Democratic	9%	76	15	11%	89	49%
Independent	26%	35	39	43%	57	11
Republican	71%	9	20	85%	15	40

Notes: Data are from 1992 National Election Study (N=1,348).

Table 6.2

Macroeconomic Voting Models and the 1992 Presidential Election

(Popular and Electoral College vote predictions
are for the two-way Clinton vote in the 1992 presidential election.)

	September Prediction	Actual	Deviation	Electoral Vote Prediction	Actual	Deviation
Tufte	51.4%	53.3%	-1.9	xx	370	xx
Fair	44.0%	53.3%	-7.3	xx	370	xx
Lewis-Beck and Rice	48.5%	53.3%	-4.8	226	370	-144
Campbell	51.6%	53.3%	-1.7	355	370	-15
Abramowitz	53.3%	53.3%	0.0	xx	370	xx

Table 6.3

Retrospective Measures and the 1992 Presidential Election

	Clinton	Bush	Perot	Total
Are you better off than you were four years ago?				
Better Off	14%	68	17	19%
Worse Off	56%	25	18	81
Direction of Country				
Right Direction	22%	67	11	18%
Wrong Track	48%	31	21	82
Presidential Approval				
Approve	13%	71	16	46%
Disapprove	68%	11	22	54

Notes: Data are from the 1992 NES (N=1,348).

Table 6.4

Correlational Analyses of Candidate Support Margin and Independent Variables

(Data are daily measures of these variables for each day of 1992 (measurement is explained in the text). Cell entries are correlation coefficients.)

	Trial Ballot	EC Vote	Prez. App.	CCI	Track	PID	Pos. Event	Neg. Event	Neu. Event
presidential approval	.82**	.50**							
consumer confidence	.13	.31**	.45**						
direction of country	.44**	.07	.63**	.49**					
party identification	.80**	.70**	.59**	.10	.31**				
positive campaigning	.79**	.46**	.68**	.37**	.42**	.61**			
negative campaigning	-.42**	-.08	-.66**	-.69**	-.57**	-.21**	-.38**		
neutral campaigning	-.05	-.04	-.04	-.13	-.05	-.03	-.10	-.04	

** = significant at 0.01.
* = significant at 0.05.

Table 6.5

Regression Analysis of Conditions, Campaigning and Changes in the Candidate Support Margin

(Data are from daily measures of the variables for each day of 1992 (measurement explained in text).)

Model of Candidate Support Margin			
	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Statistic Significance
Conditional Variables			
Presidential Approval	0.78	0.06	.00
Consumer Consumer Index	0.45	0.06	.00
Direction of Country	0.10	0.10	.35
Party Identification	1.37	0.18	.00
Campaign Variables			
Positive Campaign Events	1.87	0.15	.00
Negative Campaign Events	-0.59	0.22	.01
Neutral Campaign Events	-1.24	0.80	.12
Adjusted R-Squared	0.89		
Standard Error	4.14		

Figure 6.2

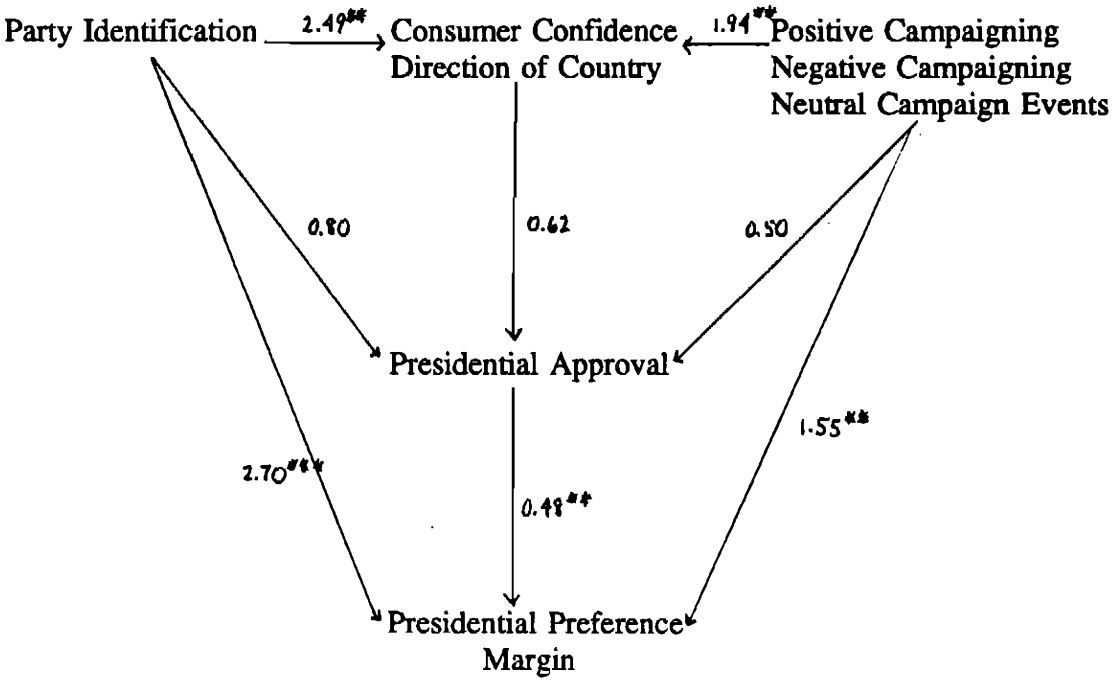
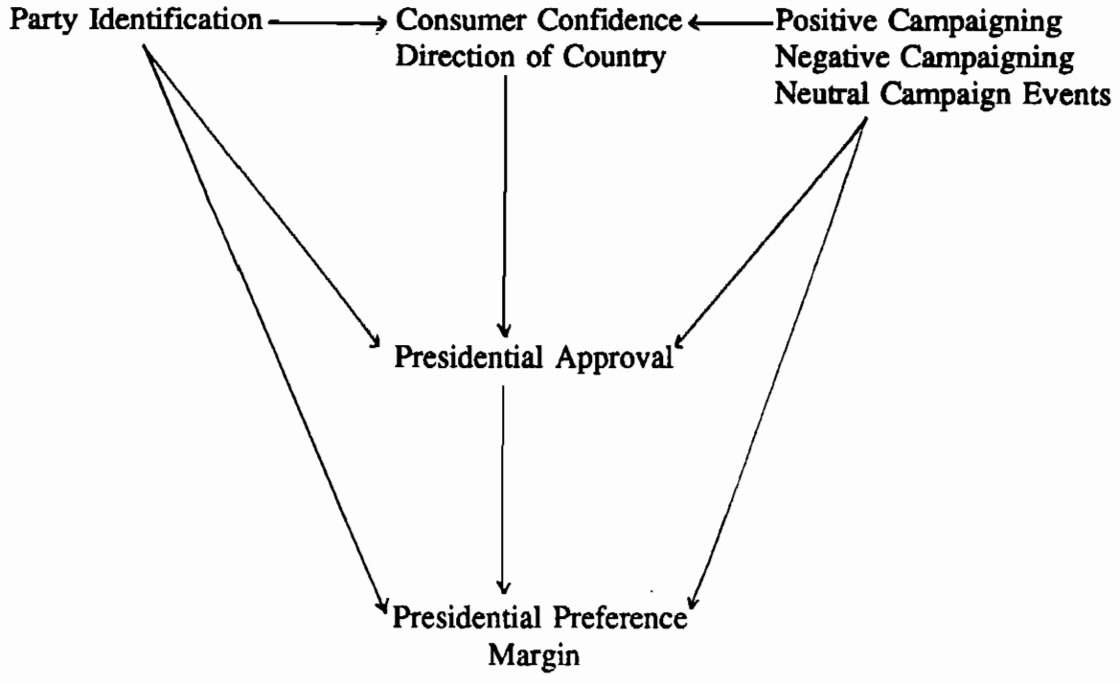

Party Identification
2.49**
Consumer Confidence
Direction of Country
1.94**
Positive Campaigning
Negative Campaigning
Neutral Campaign Events
0.80
0.62
0.50
Presidential Approval
2.70**
0.48**
1.55**
Presidential Preference
Margin

Figure 6.1


Party Identification
Consumer Confidence
Direction of Country
Positive Campaigning
Negative Campaigning
Neutral Campaign Events
Presidential Approval
Presidential Preference
Margin