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Title: Media Questions on the 1996 Election Study and Related Content Analysis of Media Coverage of the Presidential Campaign
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Dataset(s): 1995 Pilot Study

Abstract

Buhr, Crigler, and Just evaluate the media exposure items tested in the 1995 Pilot Study. The authors find that the new general television news exposure question does not reduce over reporting of media exposure relative to the traditional NES item. However, a summary television news exposure variable -- created by scaling the new program-specific exposure variables -- reduces over-report relative to the general news exposure question. The authors then gauge the predictive validity of the new exposure items by testing how well those items predict voter information levels. To measure these information levels, Buhr, Crigler, and Just use three variables: (1) general information, (2) knowledge of the anchor of the news program most often watched by the respondent, and (3) general anchor knowledge. The authors find that, overall, the new television news measures outperform the traditional NES measures in that they more successfully predict anchor and general political information. The authors also find that the new item which measures exposure to network news is the best predictor of political information. The authors conclude by recommending that the traditional NES media items be replaced by the Pilot Study items. The authors also recommend that the NES include items measuring newspaper exposure, knowledge of specific campaign advertisements, and knowledge of candidate issue emphasis. Finally, Buhr, Crigler, and Just recommend including questions designed to assess which media market the respondent is in, to link the NES to contextual data which will be gathered during the 1996 campaign season by the consortium for campaign media analysis in conjunction with ICPSR.

Memo to the National Election Studies Board

From: Tami Buhr, Harvard University
        Ann Crigler, University of Southern California
        Marion Just, Wellesley College

Date: January 23 1996

RE: Media Questions on the 1996 election study and related content analysis of media coverage of
            the presidential campaign

        This memo covers three areas. Part one includes a brief description of a new consortium of
media scholars and the analysis of the 1996 presidential election media coverage they will be conducting
in conjunction with the NES survey. The second section includes an analysis of media questions asked
on the 1995 pilot. Finally, proposals for the 1996 NES study are made in the third section. An appendix
lists the consortium members and other scholars who have been consulted and the media and content
analysis variables that will be coded.

I. Consortium for Campaign Media Analysis.

        Scholars have long recognized that the analysis of public opinion alone cannot explain which
campaign communications influence voters. Likewise, the study of campaign media cannot, by itself,
explain how citizens respond to specific messages. The objective of the Consortium for Campaign Media
Analysis (CCMA) is to advance the study of media and elections by rigorously preparing, documenting,
archiving, and disseminating data from a wide-ranging content analysis of the 1996 presidential campaign
developed in conjunction with the National Election Studies. These data will help researchers to unite the
study of the campaign at the macro level--what happened and how it is reported and talked about in the
mass media--with the study of individual behavior at the micro level--who uses which media, what they
learn, and how they decide to vote.

        Which media? The consortium members will analyze the verbal and visual content of a broad
range of campaign communication. The communications to be monitored include: network evening news
programs on ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN, the *New York Times*, a sample of newspapers stratified by
circulation, newsmagazines, a sample of political talk radio (including Rush Limbaugh and a sample of
other leading programs), a sample of televised candidate interview programs (including such programs as
Larry King Live, the Today Show, and Nightline), candidate political advertising during the primaries and
general election campaigns, candidate speeches and film biographies at their national party conventions,
candidate speeches appearing on their respective World Wide Web pages, and candidate general election
debates. To make a good fit with the National Election Studies survey, the emphasis is on nationally
available communications. The outlets selected for the study represent a spectrum of campaign
communications ranging from media that are primarily under journalists' control (e.g., network news) to
those mostly under the control of candidates (e.g., ads and speeches). The media selected also differ in
their embrace of the news values of objectivity, ranging from the fairly neutral presentations of CNN
(Kerbel, 1995 and Just, et al., 1996) to the opinionated outlets such as talk radio. Given the national
structure of the research design and the links to the NES survey, we have not included local television nor
outlets used by smaller segments of the population such as National Public Radio or the Internet.

        Which aspects of the media? The content analysis will utilize a consistent instrument so that
various kinds of media can be rigorously compared, but will also take account of key differences across
these communications (e.g., the importance of visuals in television news and candidate advertisements

and the question and answer exchanges of the candidate debate and interview programs). The coding instrument is designed to interface with the schedule of questions (such as media usage, issue salience, perceived closeness of the election, and candidate issue position and trait questions) in the 1996 NES survey. The analysis will, therefore, carefully monitor the nature of the coverage of the campaign in each medium (length and placement of the discussion of the campaign), and attention to the issues, horserace, and candidates. The analysis will include an assessment of the tone of the communication about the candidates in various contexts and the framing of the communication. Special attention will be given to the visual and verbal presentations of the candidates in those media they control as well as in those they do not. The common instrument takes account of the previous findings and research interests represented by all of the participants, as well as those of other scholars in the field of media and campaigns. See appendix for further information.

Funding and Coordinating the Consortium. The content analysis of presidential campaign media in 1996 is being supported by grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Markle Foundation. These grants will cover the collection, analysis, and entry of the data into electronic form. Additional funding is being sought to support the archiving and dissemination of these massive data sets for use by other scholars. The co-directors of the consortium (Crigler and Just) will be responsible for coordinating the collection of the data. The actual analysis of the media will be carried out by members of the consortium in several sites: the Center for Media and Public Policy, the Jesse Unruh Institute of Politics at the University of Southern California, the Political Communication center at the University of Oklahoma, as well as Villanova, Bryn Mawr College, and Wellesley College. In order to maximize intercoder reliability, all of the work on particular variables will take place in a single site. The co-directors will oversee the process, focusing on issues of quality control, responding to new developments in the campaign, making sure that the instruments are working as expected, organizing codebooks, and consulting with the researchers and personnel at NES and the ICPSR. If additional funding is secured, archive specialists from ICPSR will meet with the data specialists at each site to discuss file structure, coding norms, and other aspects of the data structure which will enhance its usefulness for the broader community. Our expectation is that these data will be only the first installment in a continuing effort to track campaigns over time.

II. Analysis of 1995 Pilot Data, WMUR-Dartmouth College Poll

The data collected by the Consortium for Media Analysis will provide a tremendous opportunity for election scholars to better understand the impact of campaign information on the development of voter preferences. But in order for scholars to take full advantage of the content analysis data, they will need an improved and more extensive battery of media exposure questions in the 1996 NES survey.

The 1995 pilot study included a new set of questions designed to measure voters' exposure to coverage of the campaign across a variety of television news shows, likelihood of exposure to political advertisements through entertainment television viewing, and talk-radio exposure. This section presents the results of an analysis of the new questions. Based on these results, Section III makes recommendations concerning which questions to include in the 1996 NES. The data come from 1995 NES pilot survey and a poll of likely New Hampshire Republican primary voters conducted by Dartmouth College in October of 1995. The Appendix contains question wording, frequency distributions, and other descriptive statistics on the variables contained in this analysis.

A. Television News

  The NES has traditionally measured exposure to newspapers, television news and the radio with two questions that assess the number of days in the past week the respondent used each media and the amount of attention paid to news about the campaign. The 95 pilot tested a series of new television news questions that emphasize habitual viewing, use a branching format, and focus on different types of news programming.[1] Part 1 will present, describe, and compare the new and old measures in terms of their descriptive statistics. Part 2 will compare the performance of the measures in explaining political knowledge and knowledge of network news anchors.

1. Descriptive Statistics

  One of the concerns with the old television news question is that it encourages people to overreport their exposure to the news. The new general television news question does not reduce overreporting. When the old question (v2160) is compared with a new variable that combines whether or not the respondent ever watches news programs with frequency of viewing (v2300, v2301), the distributions are almost identical. The two variables have a correlation of .68. A two by two table of the questions does not reveal a systematic increase or decrease in responses from one question to the other. Approximately 17% of respondents gave a lower response category to the new question, while 16% gave a higher category than they had given to the old question.

  Similar to the old series of TV questions, the new questions ask about attention. But unlike the old attention question, the new question does not ask about attention to news about the campaign, but instead asks respondents how much attention they pay to the news program itself (v2302). The question reminds respondents that they might have the news on, but they could be doing other things at the same time. For researchers interested in the process of information acquisition, this new attention variable can begin to help explain the breakdown that sometimes occurs between news exposure and news reception. For this analysis we created an additive index that combines news exposure and attention. This variable is tested below and is described in greater detail in the Appendix.[2]

  A serious drawback of the old question wording is that it treated all television news programs equally when in reality there is a great deal of diversity in news programming. A regular viewer of the network news is considered the same as a regular morning news viewer though the programs differ considerably in their amount of political content. The pilot contained questions about exposure to five different types of television news programs (v2007a, v2008a, v2303 to v2309). The diversity of questions will allow researchers to make more accurate classifications of voters by their media use, and in conjunction with the content analysis data, identify voters who are exposed to information that was primarily available from one type of program.

  An initial question is to what extent watching one type of news program is related to watching another. For example, are regular network news viewers also regular viewers of news magazines? Table 1 gives the correlation matrix for the use of five different types of news programs. The results reveal a moderate relationship between network TV, local TV, and TV news magazines viewing, but a smaller relationship between morning news programs and entertainment news programs. Given that some of

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[1]The old television news question was asked in both the 94 election survey and the 95 pilot. Due to the decline in the news viewing from 94 to 95, the 95 data will be used to make comparisons with the new questions piloted in 95 (see Table A1 in the Appendix).

[2]Unfortunately the pilot data file did not contain the old TV attention variable from the 1994 study. Due to time constraints, we did not have time to extract this variable from the 94 data file and add it to the pilot file. As a result, we will not be able to compare this new index with the old one.

these programs are quite different from one another, the low correlations are not surprising. But they do demonstrate the necessity of asking about the different news programs for those researchers who are interested in matching up media content data with the individual level survey data.

Table 1. Correlations between Exposure to Different TV News Program

	Network	Local	Morning	Entertainment	Magazine
Network		.41	.24	.23	.39
Local	.41		.23	.29	.40
Morning	.24	.23		.14	.22
Entertainment	.23	.29	.14		.36
Magazine	.39	.40	.22	.36	

An additional reason for asking about exposure to specific news programs is that when combined, such questions might more accurately measure overall news exposure than one question that asks about general news exposure. In order to test this idea, we created two measures of television news exposure from the five specific news questions. The first measure is a simple additive scale that sums across the types of news programs. This variable, the additive TV index, is described in more detail in the Appendix and tested more thoroughly below. The second measure, a summary TV variable, is intended as a check on the accuracy of the general news questions. Do respondents give more accurate estimates of their exposure to TV news when asked about specific types of programs one by one than when asked about all news programs in general? This variable scans across the responses to the five TV program questions and takes on the value of the most frequently watched news program. The distribution of the summary TV variable is in the Appendix.

The correlation between this summary TV measure and the general news variable (created from v2300 & v2301) is .68 indicating a good deal of similarity. The frequency distribution suggests that the summary variable might reduce overreporting of news exposure though. Approximately 40% of respondents are classified as every day news viewers with the summary measure compared to the 47% of respondents who responded every day when asked the general news question. A cross tab of the two variables is even more informative. Compared to the general news question, 23% of respondents would drop down to a less frequent news viewer category if this new measure were used, and 15% would move into the more frequent category.

2. Predictive Ability

The biggest test for the new media questions is how well they predict voter information levels. Three dependent variables are used to compare the old TV news exposure question with the new measures. The first dependent variable is an additive political knowledge scale constructed from responses to eight questions included in the 1994 survey. If we assume political knowledge levels are determined in part by exposure to political information, the media questions that best predict political knowledge controlling for relevant demographic characteristics are the stronger measures.

The other two dependent variables come from new questions that test resondents' knowledge of the network affiliations of the news anchors.[3] We constructed two measures of anchor knowledge. One, a dummy variable that indicates knowledge of the respondent's most frequently watched anchor, and two, an index of the number of anchors the respondent correctly matched with his network. The ability to identify the television anchors is a medium-specific variable that measures reception of television news. Political knowledge is arguably a measure of the reception of past news. But since the respondent could have picked up this knowledge from any news source, this variable is not ideal for linking specific media content data with the respondent. Many researchers are also interested in the relationship between news exposure and reception of that information. Thus it is important to continue to identify questions that are good measures of news exposure. Though it would certainly be possible to not watch any network television news and still know the anchors' network affiliations, we expect those who watch more television news will be more successful at identifying the anchors than those who watch little news on TV. We will conclude from this analysis that the TV news exposure questions that best predict anchor knowledge controlling for demographic variables are the more accurate measures of exposure.

We have 10 measures of television news exposure to test. (All measures are detailed in the Appendix.) Each of the 10 measures was regressed separately on the three dependent variables. The coefficients for the news are reported in Table 2. In all of the equations we controlled for education, age, gender, race and political interest. For ease of presentation the coefficients of the control variables are not reported. We also controlled for political knowledge when predicting anchor knowledge since we wanted to know if watching more television news predicts knowledge of the anchors controlling for the ability to remember facts or simply being well-informed.

Overall, the new television news measures outperform the old measure. The old TV news exposure question does not significantly explain political knowledge or the anchor scale but it did reach significance in the own anchor equation. Only network news exposure is significantly and positively related to political knowledge. Interestingly, those who watch more entertainment television programs tend to score significantly lower on the political knowledge scale. The poor performance of most of the TV news measures in predicting political knowledge reinforces the need to ask about specific news programming rather than clumping diverse news programs together in one question. Those who watch more network TV have a high level of political knowledge, which is why they choose to watch network news over "Hard Copy", but it is also one of the reasons they are more informed. Those who do watch "Hard Copy" are the least knowledgeable about politics of all news watchers. If we want to be able to explain differences in political information levels, we must be able to distinguish people based on their main sources of information.

The new measures were more successful at predicting knowledge of the anchors' network affiliations. The anchor scale is a more difficult test than the own anchor variable and as a result, only three achieved significance: the new general news exposure question, general news exposure with attention added, and exposure to network news. On the easier test, knowledge of the respondent's own anchor, all of the new measures were significant except exposure to morning news, entertainment news, and magazine news programs. Based on the results from the news anchor equations, the general news measure that combines exposure to the news with attention is the television news measure with the most

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[3]In case the anchor identification questions turned out to be too difficult, they were asked of only one-half of the 95 pilot study sample. The other half of the sample was asked to rate the news anchors on thermometer scales. A willingness to rate the anchor was presumed to indicate knowledge of the anchor. Unfortunately the thermometer ratings did not work as hoped. With the exception of Bernard Shaw, almost 95% of respondents were willing to give a thermometer rating to the other three network anchors.

explanatory power. It has the largest coefficient in both equations compared to any other news measure, and is also larger than any of the control variables in both the anchor equations.

**Table 2. A Comparison of the Predictive Ability
of Television News Measures**

Independent Variable	Political Knowledge	Anchor Scale	Own Anchor
Old General TV News	.30	.60	.99*
	(.28)	(.46)	(.52)
New General TV News 1	.07	1.85**	2.70**
	(.30)	(.63)	(.69)
New General TV News 2 (Exposure + Attention)	.10	2.93**	3.98**
	(.38)	(.92)	(.98)
Network News	.61**	.79*	2.19**
	(.26)	(.44)	(.51)
Local News	.22	.37	1.18**
	(.23)	(.41)	(.45)
Morning News	-.08	-.43	.16
	(.24)	(.42)	(.46)
Entertainment News	-.72**	.28	.43
	(.31)	(.49)	(.53)
Magazine News	-.15	.97	1.03
	(.38)	(.62)	(.68)
Additive TV News Scale	.12	.90	2.53**
	(.40)	(.74)	(.80)
Summary TV News Variable	.29	.69	1.83**
	(.30)	(.55)	(.58)

Note: The first number in each cell is a logistic regression coefficient. An ordered logit was run on the political knowledge and anchor scales. The numbers in parentheses are standard errors. The independent variables were all standardized.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

3. New Hampshire Survey Results

       Another test for the new media questions comes from a survey of likely Republican primary voters in New Hampshire. While we cannot make any direct comparisons between the old and new question wording since the old questions were not asked, this data set has the advantage of containing interesting measures of campaign information reception that the off-year pilot survey does not. The New Hampshire survey tested the new question wording on newspaper readership, which was not included in the pilot, but did include the same network and local TV questions asked in the pilot. Additionally, respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions about the candidates. Each respondent was allowed up to four responses on seven candidates. (See the Appendix for more information on the variables in the New Hampshire survey.) These variables will allow us to see if those who watch news on TV or read the paper more frequently also have more to say about the candidates controlling for demographic characteristics like education, age, and gender.

       Table 3 contains the results from this test with three models predicting the number of responses to the candidate open-ended questions. As with Table 2, the control variables are not presented, though all are significant. Table 3 shows that more frequent media use of all sorts is positively associated with the number of comments made about the candidates. Network news is the strongest predictor of candidate comments followed by two newspaper measures and local TV.

       The newspaper variables deserve special attention since they were not included in the pilot study. Respondents were asked if they read a daily newspaper, and if yes, how often. They were then asked how closely they read the *news pages* of their daily paper as opposed to the sports, business, or entertainment pages. The first newspaper variable in Table 3 is this simple frequency of reading a daily newspaper. The second variable, is an additive scale that gives more credit to people who closely read the news pages of their daily paper. Both variables are significant but the addition of attention does not provide any additional explanatory power in this model.

      B. Entertainment Television and Political Advertising Exposure

       The pilot included a number of questions about entertainment television viewing that act as surrogates for political ad exposure. This section contains a short analysis of some of the entertainment questions contained in the 95 pilot. Respondents were asked the number of hours of TV they typically watched during the morning and afternoon and the number of hours spent watching evening television (v2298, v2299). As an alternative measure of television viewing, respondents were asked how often they watched five particular TV shows (v2317 to v2321). We created an additive index that summed across the five shows. An entertainment knowledge scale similar to the political knowledge scale is the dependent variable in this analysis (v2322 to v2329).[4] More information about these variables is contained in the Appendix.

       The regression analysis presented in Table 4 shows that both the index created from the five TV program questions and hours of evening television are very good predictors of entertainment knowledge. The index is the best predictor of knowledge, but hours of evening television, not surprisingly, does the next best job. Morning and afternoon television viewing is not significant.

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[4]Cynics of the American public take note. Respondents gave an average of 2.1 correct answers in response to the entertainment knowledge questions and an average 4.6 correct political knowledge answers. The perfect score for each is 8.

**Table 3. The Effect of Media Use on
Candidate Knowledge from NH Survey**

Independent Variable	Number of Candidate Responses
Paper Reading	.41**
	(.13)
Paper Reading plus Attention to News Pages	.40**
	(.15)
Network News	.57**
	(.15)
Local News	.36**
	(.15)
N	506

Note: The first number in each cell is an OLS regression coefficient. The numbers in parentheses are standard errors. The independent variables were all standardized.
*   < .05
** < .01

**Table 4. Entertainment Knowledge Predicted
by TV Viewing**

Independent Variable	Entertainment Knowledge
TV Program Index	3.30**
	(.31)
Hours of Evening TV	1.56**
	(.39)
Hours of Morning and Afternoon TV	.09
	(.34)

Note: The first number in each cell is an OLS regression coefficient. The numbers in parentheses are standard errors. The independent variables were all standardized.
*   < .05, ** < .01

III. Proposed Recommendations for the 1996 NES Survey.

Media Questions

Based on the results of the analysis in section two, we conclude that many of the new media questions tested in the 95 pilot study should be included in the 96 survey. The new questions are easier to

answer with their emphasis on habitual viewing and the branching format. In addition, the television questions ask about different types of news programming rather than simply news in general, which both increases the accuracy of media exposure estimates and gives researchers the ability to link individual respondents with specific media content data. The models run on political knowledge and knowledge of the network anchors demonstrate the improved accuracy of the new measures and the importance of questions that measure exposure to a variety of news programs.

Television News

We would like to see the NES replace the two traditional TV news questions with those included in the pilot survey.

v2300: There are lots of programs on television, like entertainment shows, sports, movies, and the news. We are interested in whether you watch the news. Some people don't and some do. Do you ever watch the news?

v2301: How often do you watch news programs -- every day, most days, once or twice a week, or only occasionally?

v2302: When some people watch the news, they watch the full broadcast straight through. Others only watch some of it because they are also watching or doing other things at the same time. How about you? When you watch the news on TV, would you say you pay very close attention, fairly close attention, occasional attention, or very little attention?

v2303: Do you ever watch morning news programs like "The Today Show" or "Good Morning America"?

v2305: Do you ever watch local news programs like "Eyewitness News" or "Action News"?

v2307: Do you ever watch entertainment news programs like "Hard Copy" or "Entertainment Tonight"?

v2309: Do you ever watch news magazine programs like "60 Minutes" or "20/20"?

v2007a: Do you ever watch national network news programs like "World News Tonight" on ABC, "The NBC Nightly News", or "The CBS Evening News"?

v2304, v2306, v2308, v2008a: How often do you watch those types of shows -- every day, most days, once or twice a week, or only occasionally?

Newspapers

It is important for the creation of media exposure indices that this question format be extended to newspaper use. The newspaper questions have been asked on three surveys of New Hampshire residents and have performed quite well. We propose the 96 NES survey include the following questions on newspaper use.

Do you ever read a daily newspaper?

Many people don't have time to read the entire newspaper. They normally read only certain sections such as the sports pages, the business pages, the entertainment pages or the news pages. How often do you read the news pages of your daily paper -- every day, most days, once or twice a week, or only occasionally?

When you read the <u>news pages</u> of your daily paper do you normally read most of the stories, some of the stories, a few of the stories, or do you mainly skim the headlines?

<u>Political Ad Exposure</u>
We propose the 96 NES include a measure of evening TV viewing to act as a surrogate for ad exposure. The pilot analysis showed that an index built from five questions that asked respondents how often they watched particular programs was a very strong predictor of knowledge of facts about prime time shows. At the same time, a question asking respondents simply how many hours of evening television they watched also predicted the entertainment knowledge scale but not as strongly as the index of programs.
The television program questions have the additional advantage of being fun for the respondents as they provide a break from all of the political questions. We would like to see either or both sets of questions on the 96 survey.

v2298: On a typical weekday, about how many hours of television do you watch during the morning and afternoon?
v2299: How about evening television? About how many hours of television do you watch on a typical weekday evening?

Do you watch [insert program] every week, most weeks, only occasionally, or not at all?
Programs:
v2317: NYPD Blue; *v2318*: Home Improvement; *v2319:* Murder, She Wrote; *v2320*: Friends; *v2321:* Prime Time Live.

<u>Talk Radio</u>
Though we were unable to run detailed analyses of the new talk radio questions included in the pilot study, we would like to urge the NES to include some questions on the 96 survey that measure talk radio exposure. Talk radio is playing an increasingly important role as a source of political information for some voters and in influencing American political discourse.

<u>A diary to supplement the survey questions.</u>

This idea was discussed at the January meeting of the consortium. There was great interest in having the NES leave a diary of campaign attention with a sub-sample of respondents. The diary would be a week long record of the respondent's media usage and any other contact with or about the campaign (e.g., conversations, meetings, donations, direct mail). The diary would offer an excellent validity check for the survey's media questions and add to researchers' understanding of citizens' campaign information environments. In addition, scholars studying the British election are planning to conduct a diary study along with their survey. This would be an excellent opportunity for comparative research. We would prepare a diary for the 1996 study, if the NES board agreed. However, given the shortness of time and finances, we suggest that a diary be piloted during an off year election study.

<u>Questions to Measure Campaign Effects</u>:

Participants in the NES conference held at the Annenberg School in November 1994 (in preparation for the 1995 pilot and the 1996 general election study) expressed concern for measuring the

influence of the campaign on voter preferences. During the 1992 presidential campaign, for example, the entrance of Ross Perot as a significant third party candidate challenged the electoral balance between the two parties and contributed to the defeat of President George Bush. Media coverage of campaign events (such as this or the party conventions and presidential debates) may be significant turning points for voters. In order to examine both the importance of campaign events to voter preferences and the role of the media in learning about the campaign, we propose that the NES include the following question:

> What do you think is the most important thing that has happened so far in this presidential campaign?

We asked this question over the course of the 1992 election. Respondents and interviewees were able to answer it without any problems. Perot's entry, exit, and reentry into the race were among the most frequent responses.

In addition to this general campaign effects question, we propose that the NES ask questions about the respondents' knowledge of specific political advertisements and candidate issue emphases. This becomes feasible with the new CAPI capabilities that will be used in this year's survey. We cannot entirely predict what these questions will be at this point, but they might be along the following lines:

> Which candidate talked most about (X topic) in his ads?

> Which candidate talked most about (X topic) during the presidential debates?

> Which candidate most strongly favors a flat tax?

> Which candidate most strongly favors cutting government spending?

Questions to Link NES Survey to Content Analysis

Several questions will be needed to facilitate linking the survey and content analysis data. Past research suggests that citizens use campaign communications to gain information about public policy topics and their salience and candidate character traits and issue positions. In turn, this information may contribute to their levels of political knowledge and vote preferences. Many questions are and have been asked regularly on the NES survey to measure these dimensions. We urge (and expect) that these questions will be continued. These include: the most important problem question, questions regarding knowledge of and candidate positions on various public policy issues (e.g., abortion, the environment, government spending, taxes); and the candidate trait questions (e.g., moral, strong leadership, cares about people like you, knowledgeable, and gets things done).

Most of these questions can be easily coded in the media coverage. And, because the content coding is being conducted inductively --categories will be added as they appear in the media -- we should be able to reconstruct any variables that are included in the NES survey. However, data analysis would be facilitated if the NES questions/response categories were readily apparent in the content codes. We will need to know which ones will be included in the 1996 survey, so that we can be certain to include them in our final analysis and codebook.

A couple of questions or response categories would greatly aid the linkage between the NES and content data sets and may need to be added to the survey. In addition to the geo coding (county, city/town, and Congressional district) that is already being collected by the NES, we need NES to code the media market in which the respondent resides. Because of cable television, overlapping media

markets, and the availability of more than one media market in many locations, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to reconstruct media markets from the present geo coding. To distinguish which media market the respondent primarily uses, we would propose a variant of the following question:

> Thinking about television, do most of the <u>local</u> stations you watch come from the city where you live or some other city?
> Same city ___   Other city_____
> (If other city) What city is that?_____

> variant: When you watch tv, from what city are most of the <u>local</u> tv stations broadcast?

Because congressional districts do not correspond perfectly with media markets, the media market question would also be of use to congressional election scholars seeking to use the media questions on the NES survey to analyze congressional races.

Another question that would link survey respondents' newspaper usage to the macro level newspaper content analysis would be to ask which newspaper each respondent reads. This open-ended question has been asked on past NES surveys. Ideally, we would prefer to continue the open-ended question, so that any scholar can code specific newspaper usage to suit his/her own analyses. As a fall back, the link between the NES survey and the consortium's content analysis could still be accomplished by asking a closed-ended question with response categories that include the list of newspapers that the consortium is analyzing.

<u>Questions for the Pre- versus Post-Election Studies</u>

Media Questions. Past NES surveys have included the media questions in the pre-election surveys. This should continue with the proposed media usage and attention questions so that researchers can assess changes in media usage and attention over the course of the campaign.

Advertising Questions. These questions would most ideally be asked in both the pre- and post-election surveys. The pre-election survey is advantageous to track the ad influence over the course of the fall. There is often a flurry of advertising activity at the end of the campaign and this could only be captured in the post-election study.

Media Market. This question can be asked in either the pre- or post-election studies.

Appendix

Consortium for Campaign Media Analysis
(Participants attending January 1996 Conference at Harvard)

Larry Bartels, Princeton University
Tami Buhr, Harvard University
Ann Crigler, University of Southern California
Marion Just, Wellesley College
Lynda Lee Kaid, University of Oklahoma (Director of Political Commercial Archive)
Matthew Kerbel, Villanova University
Robert Lichter, Center for Media and Public Policy, Washington, DC
Pippa Norris, Harvard University
Thomas Patterson, Syracuse University
Marc Ross, Bryn Mawr College
Steve Rosenstone, University of Michigan
Holli Semetko, University of Amsterdam (absent)

Consulted with Doris Graber, Henry Brady, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, and John Zaller

List of campaign sources to be analyzed:

National television network news (ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC)
The New York Times
A sample of newspapers (stratified by circulation)
newsmagazines
A sample of political talk radio (including Rush Limbaugh and a sample of other leading programs)
A sample of televised candidate interview programs (including such programs as *Larry King Live, the Today Show, and Nightline*)
Candidate political advertising
Candidate speeches and film biographies at their national party   conventions
Candidate speeches appearing on their respective World Wide Web pages
Candidate general election debates

<u>Partial list of content analysis variables</u>

Date and Source of communication
Length and placement of campaign coverage
Type of communication (e.g., editorial, news story, news analysis, letter, speech, ad, interview, debate)
Topic of the communication
Overall tone of the communication
Reporter labelling
Issues mentioned (and how extensively)
Policy debates (source, policy, view)
Election year players mentioned (and how extensively)
Evaluations of election year players (by whom, about what, tone)
Candidate issue positions (including questions asked on NES)
Candidate character (including the candidate trait questions from   the NES survey)
Horserace evaluations
Use of Polls
Analysis of ads
Group affiliations
Campaign themes
Visuals:
  visual tone to candidates
  # of seconds candidates seen
  symbols used
  who is seen with the candidates
Soundbites
Framing of communication (e.g. retrospective/prospective, strategy, game, image, issues, ideological)
Advertising:
  production techniques used (both audio and visual)
  candidate characteristics emphasized
  candidate issues
  attacks (by whom, against whom, about what)
  tone of ad to candidates
  analysis of visuals
  camera shots

Appendix

Old Television News Question (v126 (94), v2160 (95)):
How many days in the past week did you watch news on TV? Ranges from 0 to 7 days.

Table A1. Distribution of Old TV Question

Days	1994 (v126)	1995 (v2160)
0	7.4	7.2
1	3.3	6.0
2	6.6	9.1
3	7.4	10.5
4	6.4	8.7
5	7.6	14.0
6	1.0	7.6
7	60.3	36.5
Avg.	5.3	4.6
N	486	483

r=.50, t=6.09

New Television News Question:
v2300: There are lots of programs on television, like entertainment shows, sports, movies, and the news. We are interested in whether you watch the news. Some people don't and some do. Do you ever watch the news?

v2301: How often do you watch news programs -- every day, most days, once or twice a week, or only occasionally?

v2302: When some people watch the news, they watch the full broadcast straight through. Others only watch some of it because they are also watching or doing other things at the same time. How about you? When you watch the news on TV, would you say you pay very close attention, fairly close attention, occasional attention, or very little attention?

Table A2. Distribution of
New TV Question

Question	Frequency (%)
V2300	
Yes	96.1
No	3.9
N	484
V2301	
Every day	49.1
Most days	24.6
Once/twice a week	15.9
Only Occasionally	10.3
N	464
V2302	
Very close	30.3
Fairly close	52.4
Occasional	15.6
Very little	1.7
N	464

General TV News Question 1 (combines v2300 and v2301):
This variable ranges from 0 to 4. The scale of v2301 is flipped so that those who watch only occasionally take on a value of 1 while those who watch every day receive a value of 4. Those respondents who said they never watch news shows in response to v2300, receive a value of 0.

Table A3. Distribution of
General TV Question

	Frequency (%)
Never Watch	4
Occasionally	10
Once/twice a week	15
Most days	24
Every day	47
n	484

General TV News Question 2 (combines v2300, v2301, v2302):
This variable is an additive index created from general TV news 1 above and v2302. Those who watch a lot of news on TV and pay close attention are at the top of the scale while those who watch no news on TV are at the bottom of the scale.

```
GENNEWS2
                                               Valid     Cum
Value Label               Value  Frequency  Percent  Percent  Percent

                             0         21      4.3      4.4      4.4
                             2          4       .8       .8      5.2
                             3         17      3.5      3.5      8.7
                             4         40      8.2      8.3     17.0
                             5         67     13.8     13.9     30.9
                             6         99     20.4     20.5     51.5
                             7        145     29.8     30.1     81.5
                             8         89     18.3     18.5    100.0
                             .          4       .8   Missing
                                    -------  -------  -------
                           Total      486    100.0    100.0

Mean          5.965     Std dev        1.880


Valid cases    482     Missing cases      4
```

Specific News Questions:
v2303: Do you ever watch morning news programs like "The Today Show" or "Good Morning America"?
v2305: Do you ever watch local news programs like "Eyewitness News" or "Action News"?
v2307: Do you ever watch entertainment news programs like "Hard Copy" or "Entertainment Tonight"?
v2309: Do you ever watch news magazine programs like "60 Minutes" or "20/20"?
v2007a: Do you ever watch national network news programs like "World News Tonight" on ABC, "The NBC Nightly News", or "The CBS Evening News"? [This question was subject to a question order test. Half of the sample was asked the question at the very beginning of the survey, while the other half received the question as part of the media battery towards the end of the survey. There were no significant differences in the responses from the two question placements. As a results, this analysis uses the responses from the entire sample.]

Each of the above questions was followed by:
v2304, v2306, v2308, v2008a: How often do you watch those types of shows -- every day, most days, once or twice a week, or only occasionally?

The two questions for each media were combined to create 5 variables ranging from 0 to 4. Those who watch only occasionally take on a value of 1 while those who watch every day receive a value of 4. Those respondents who said they never watch a type of news show receive a value of 0.

Table A4. Distributions of Combined TV Questions

	Network	Local	Morning	Entertainment	Magazine
Never Watch	14	18	57	43	14
Occasionally	20	19	15	27	44
1-2 Times/wk	21	17	10	19	31
Most Days	21	22	9	9	9
Every Day	24	25	9	3	2
N of Cases	485	485	485	485	485

Note: Entries are percentages.

Additive TV News Index:

An additive TV news scale was constructed summing up media exposure across the five specific TV program questions. It ranges from 0 to 25 in which 0 means the respondent watches none of the programs on any day, and 25 means the respondent watches all of the programs every day. A respondent who watches both the local and network news 5 days a week will have a TV news score double that of a respondent who watches only the local news 5 days a week. This scale ranges from 0 to 19, has a mean of 7.8 and a standard deviation of 4.1.

Summary TV News Variable:

This variable is constructed by scanning across the 5 specific TV program questions and assuming the value of the most frequently watched type of program. A potential problem with the summary index is if a respondent watches a different type of program each day. For an extreme example, someone might watch "The Today Show" on Monday, watch local news on Tuesday, "World News Tonight" on Wednesday, "Hard Copy" on Thursday, and "20/20" on Friday and takes a break from news on the weekend. This respondent would accurately give a response of 1-2 times a week to each TV program question and most days to the general news question. The summary measure would code this respondent as a 1-2 times a week viewer when most days is the true response. It is possible but not probable that this type of scenario accounts for what appears to be a reduction in overreporting with the summary variable.

Table A5. Distribution of SummaryTV News Index

	Frequency
Never Watch	5
Occasionally	10
Once/twice a week	18
Most days	27
Every day	40
n	485

Political Knowledge Scale:
An additive scale based on the responses to the 8 knowledge questions asked in the 1994 election survey. For each correct answer, the respondent receives a point so that variable ranges from 0 to 8. The scale has a mean of 4.6 and a standard deviation of 2.1.

Network News Anchor Variables:
v2351: We are interested in how much people learn about television news personalities. Take Tom Brokaw. Do you happen to know which network he works for -- is it CBS, CNN, or which?
v2352: What about Peter Jennings?
v2353: Dan Rather?
v2354: Bernard Shaw?

We created two news anchor variables. The first is a dichotomous variable in which the respondent receives a 1 if he correctly identifies the anchor of the network he watches most of the time and a 0 if he gets the network wrong or responds he does not know. The second is a scale ranging from 0 to 4 based on the number of correctly identified news anchors.

Table A6. Network News Anchor Knowledge

	Frequency (%)
Correct Identification of Own Anchor	40
Anchor Scale (Number Correct)	
0	34
1	25
2	12
3	17
4	13

New Hampshire Questions:
The questions on network and local TV use were the same as those in the pilot (see v2305, v2306, v2007a, and v2007b above).

Newspapers:

Do you ever read a daily newspaper?

Many people don't have time to read the entire newspaper. They normally read only certain sections such as the sports pages, the business pages, the entertainment pages or the news pages. How often do you read the <u>news pages</u> of your daily paper -- every day, most days, once or twice a week, or only occasionally?

When you read the <u>news pages</u> of your daily paper do you normally read most of the stories, some of the stories, a few of the stories, or do you mainly skim the headlines?

Table A7. Distributions of New Hampshire Survey Media Questions

	Newspapers (%)	Network TV (%)	Local TV (%)
Never Watch	18	14	10
Occasionally	10	15	14
1-2 Times/wk	16	21	17
Most Days	14	20	20
Every Day	42	30	40
Does not Read Paper	19		
Skim Headlines	17		
A Few News Stories	13		
Some News Stories	23		
Most News Stories	27		

Candidate Questions:
Now we'd like to hear your thoughts and ideas about the candidates who are running for president this year. For each candidate that I mention, I'd like you to tell me anything that comes to mind about his abilities, background, issue positions, or anything else.

QA. How about [insert candidate name]?   What comes to mind when you think about [insert candidate name]? Anything else? (Interviewer is to probe and record up to 4 responses.)

We created a scale that ranges from 0 to 28 noting the number of candidate responses given across all seven canddiates. This scale had a mean of 6.3 and a standard deviation of 4.9.

Hours of TV Viewing:
v2298: On a typical weekday, about how many hours of television do you watch during the morning and afternoon?
v2299: How about everning television? About how many hours of television do you watch on a typcial weekday evening?

The average hours watched in the morning/afternoon is 1.65 with a standard deviation of 1.76. Average evening hours is 2.38 with a standard deviation of 1.47.

Specific Program Viewing:
Do you watch [insert program] every week, most weeks, only occasionally, or not at all?
Programs:
v2317: NYPD Blue; *v2318*: Home Improvement; *v2319:* Murder, She Wrote; *v2320*: Friends; *v2321:* Prime Time Live.

A additive scale of program viewing that summed across the five programs was created. In practice the scale ranges from 5 to 18, has a mean of 8.3 and a standard deviation of 2.4.

Entertainment Knowledge (v2322 to v2329):
We created an additive entertainment knowledge scale based on the responses to the eight TV knowledge questions. For each correct answer, the respondent receives a point so that variable ranges from 0 to 8. The scale has a mean of 2.1 and a standard deviation of 1.9.