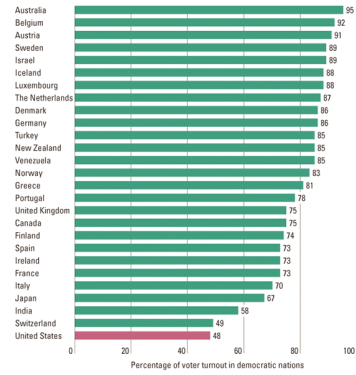


Who Votes? How Do They Vote?
 What Do They Want?

MU MVZ 449
 Spring 2010
 Dave McCuan
 Masaryk University

Int'l Comparisons – Voter TO



International Comparisons

Institutional factors that influence turnout:

- Registration/voting laws
- Scheduling of Election Day
- Two-party system
- Competitiveness
- Voter fatigue

2008 Primary/Caucus Turnout

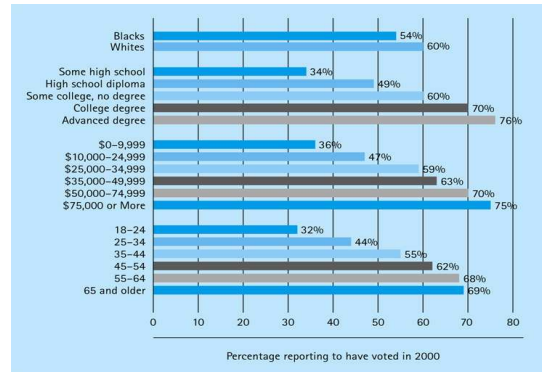
State	VEP Turnout Rate	State	VEP Turnout Rate
New Hampshire	52.5%	Washington	27.3%
California	41.7%	Maryland	27.3%
Ohio	40.5%	Virginia	26.9%
Oregon	39.7%	Mississippi	26.5%
Vermont	39.2%	Tennessee	26.4%
Massachusetts	38.7%	Arkansas	26.0%
Wisconsin	36.5%	Montana	24.7%
Indiana	36.1%	Utah	23.7%
Florida	33.8%	Delaware	23.7%
West Virginia	33.5%	Arizona	23.7%
Illinois	33.2%	Nebraska	21.0%
North Carolina	32.8%	Michigan	20.2%
Georgia	32.7%	New York	19.9%
Missouri	32.6%	Connecticut	19.8%
Pennsylvania	32.5%	Louisiana	19.3%
Alabama	31.7%	Idaho	18.1%
South Carolina	30.4%	Iowa	15.3%
New Mexico	30.4%	Nevada	9.5%
New Jersey	30.2%	Minnesota	7.2%
South Dakota	28.9%	North Dakota	5.9%
Oklahoma	28.7%	Colorado	5.5%
Rhode Island	28.5%	Alaska	5.0%
District of Columbia	28.5%	Maine	4.9%
Kentucky	28.4%	Kansas	4.3%
Texas	28.3%	Wyoming	2.8%

Source: Michael McDonald, GMU

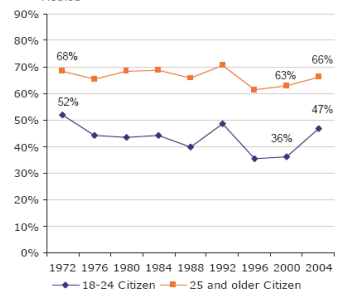
Why people vote

- Civic duty?
- Rational choice perspective: vote when benefits > costs
 - *Down's Paradox of Voting*
 - Costs of voting are high
 - Benefits are low
- Is it ever rational to vote?

Who Votes? SES

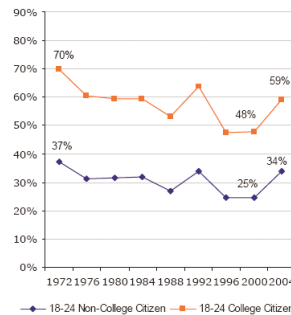


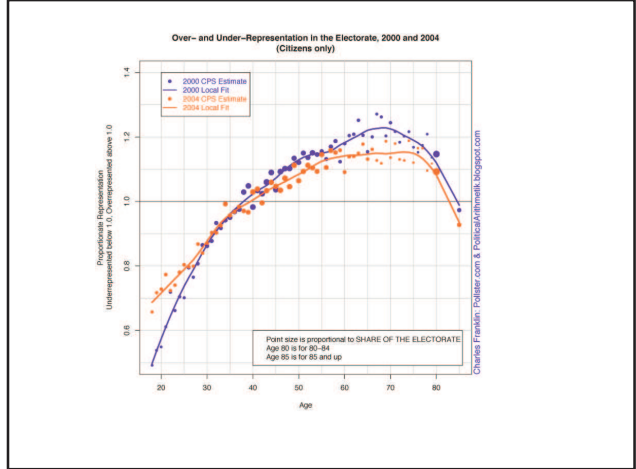
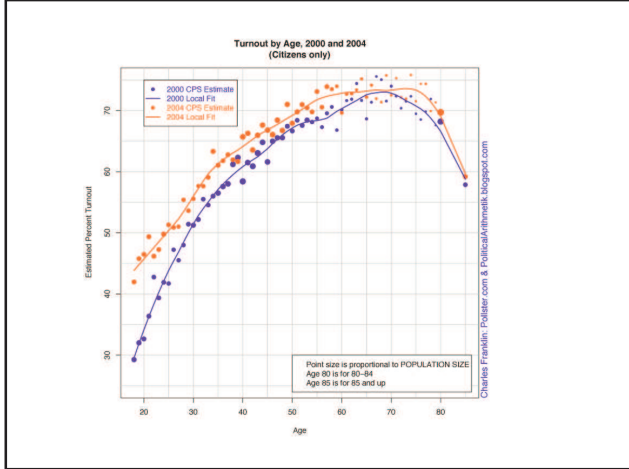
Graph 1: Ages 18-24 and 25+, Voter Turnout in Presidential Years



Source: CPS November Voting and Registration Supplements, 1972 to 2004.

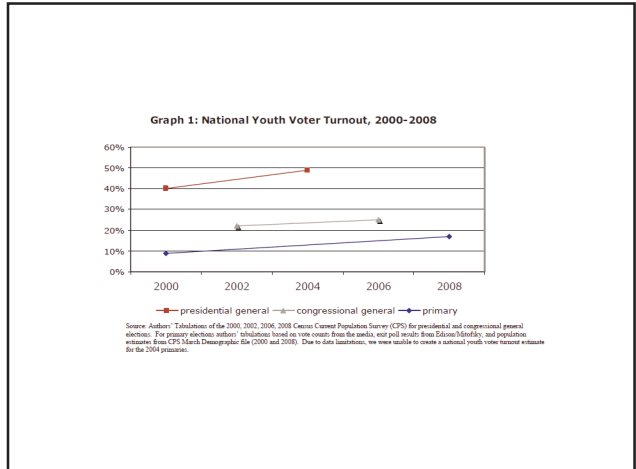
Graph 1: 18-24 Year Old Citizen Voter Turnout by Education Level, Presidential Years





Youth Vote by State

State	% of 18-24 year-olds	State	% of 18-24 year-olds
Minnesota	69	New York	45
Wisconsin	63	Georgia	45
Iowa	62	California	45
Maine	59	Nevada	44
New Hampshire	58	Alabama	44
Kentucky	57	Oklahoma	44
Ohio	56	Pennsylvania	43
Michigan	54	South Carolina	43
Missouri	53	North Carolina	43
Washington	52	Arizona	42
Mississippi	52	Illinois	42
Utah	51	New Mexico	42
Maryland	51	Nebraska	42
New Jersey	50	Indiana	41
Oregon	49	Virginia	41
Colorado	49	Connecticut	41
Idaho	48	Kansas	40
Louisiana	48	Texas	39
Massachusetts	46	Tennessee	39
Florida	46	Arkansas	36
West Virginia	46		

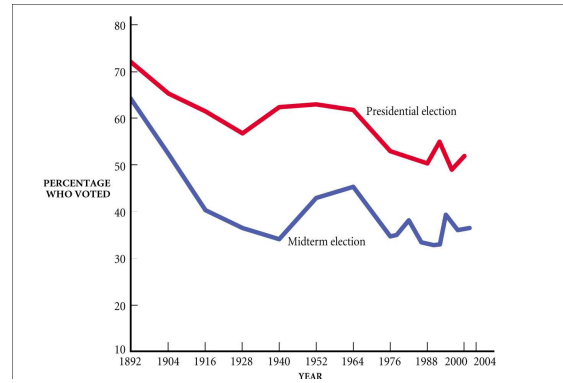


Who Votes?

1. Resources
 - Time
 - Money
 - Civic skills
2. Psychological engagement
 - Political interest
 - Efficacy
 - Sense of stake in outcome
3. Recruitment
 - Being asked to participate

Net Result: Bias in political participation

Decline in Turnout

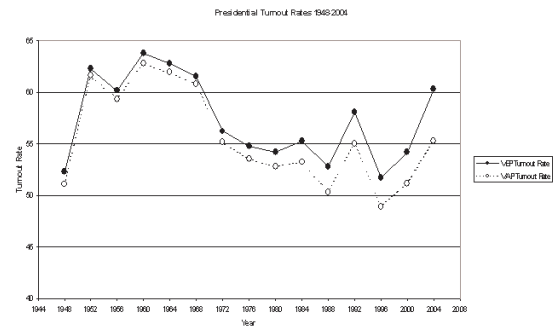


Calculating Turnout

- Turnout = $\frac{\text{\# of Votes Cast}}{\text{Voting Age Population (VAP)}}$
 - But Census VAP includes
 - Non-Citizens
 - Ineligible felons (depends on state law)
 - People who can't register because moved
- So, should be:

$$\text{Turnout} = \frac{\text{\# of Votes Cast}}{\text{Eligible Voters}}$$

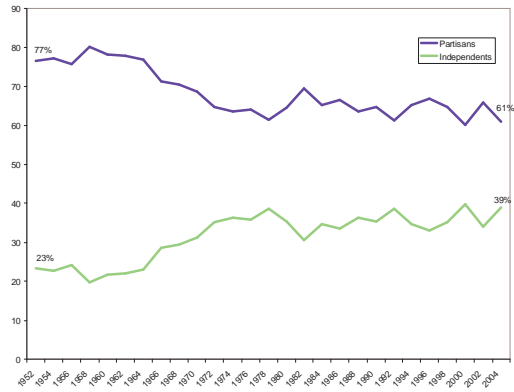
Turnout Rate for Eligible Voters



Why is Turnout Declining?

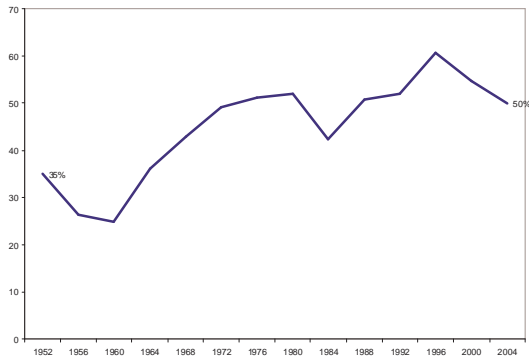
- *Puzzle of participation*: Factors predicting turnout have increased in recent decades, but turnout has declined
 - Education levels are higher
 - Institutional barrier reduced
 - Voting Rights Act
 - 24th Amendment
 - poll taxes and literacy tests abolished
 - shortened state and local residency requirements
 - Motor Voter
 - bilingual ballots
 - easier absentee voting
 - So why the decline??????

Decline of Partisanship

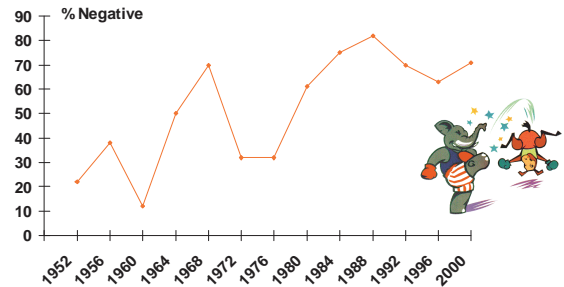


Increasing Cynicism:

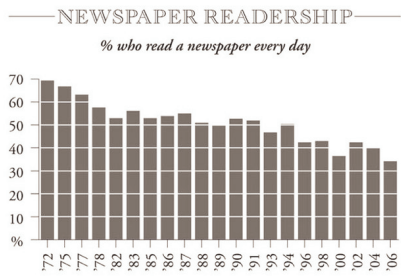
“Public officials don’t care much what people like me think.”



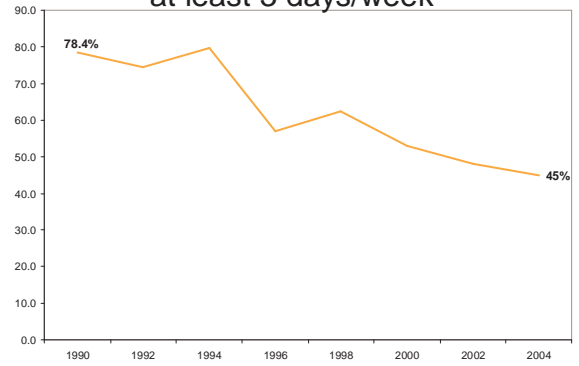
Percent of Negative Televised Presidential Advertisements, 1952-2000



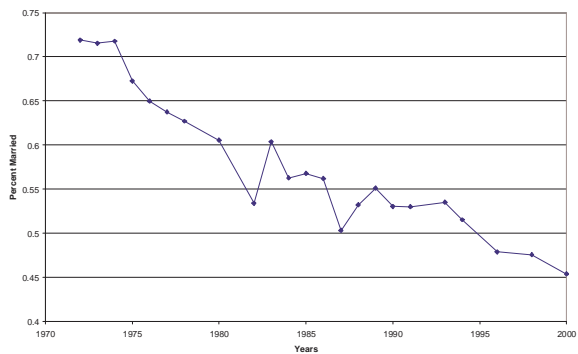
Decline in Daily Newspaper Readership



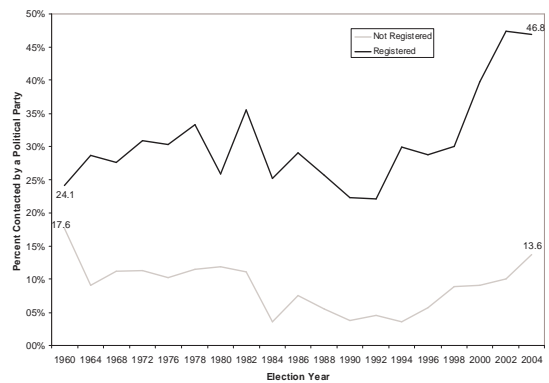
Percent Watching Nightly News at least 3 days/week



Decline in Marriage



Party Contact by Voter Registration



Expansion of Suffrage in 20th Century

- 1920: 19th Amendment gives women right to vote
- 1924: U.S. Act recognizes Native Americans as citizens
- 1961: 23rd Amendment gives DC right to vote in federal elections
- 1964: 24th Amendment prohibits poll taxes (federal elections)
- 1965: Voting Rights Act
 - 1966 courts ruled laws applied to *state* elections
- 1971: 26th Amendment lowered voting age to 18

Is Low Turnout a Problem?

NO:

- Indicates satisfaction
- Smaller is smarter
- Interests of nonvoters can still be represented
- Elections don't matter anyway

Is Low Turnout A Problem?

Yes:

- Voters unrepresentative
- Democratic legitimacy
- Alienation from government

Campaigns & the Individual Vote Decision

Do Campaigns Matter? The CW

- Pundits, Journalists, Candidates: Yes
- Academic conventional wisdom: No

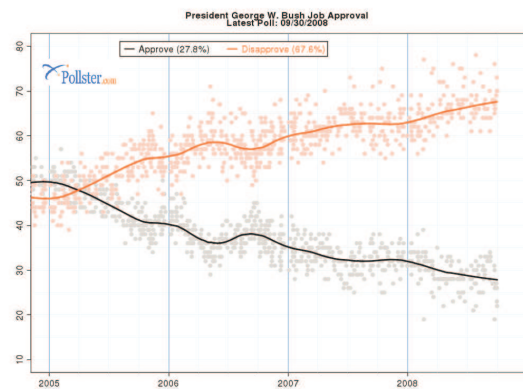
Traditional Academic Perspective

1. Individual votes are predictable
2. In aggregate, effects cancel out
3. Dynamics during campaign are predictable
4. Outcomes are predictable

Influence of Party ID

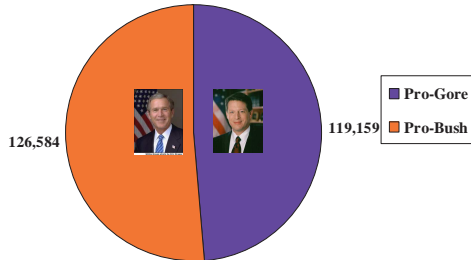
	Bush	Gore
Republicans	90.6%	9.4%
Democrats	9.8%	90.2%

Source: NES cumulative file



Bush v. Gore

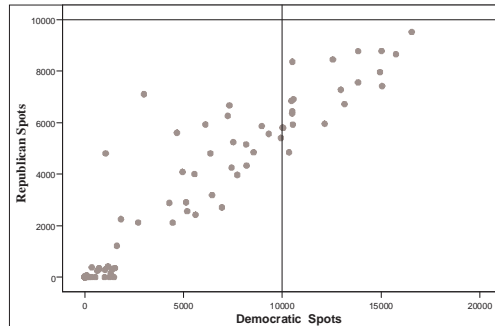
Total Number of Spots Aired Nationwide
(including candidate, party, & interest group ads)



Source: Ken Goldstein 2003

Bush and Kerry followed each other

2004 CMAG TV Spots by Market

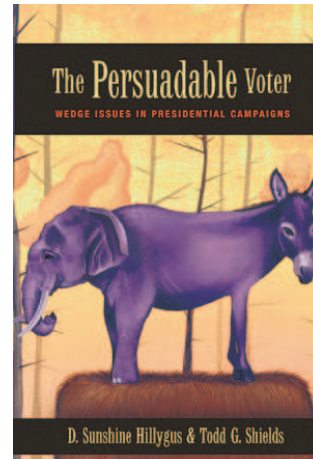


Caution with Forecasting Models

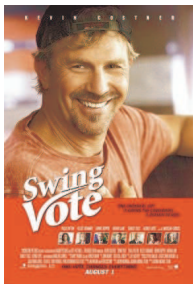
- Electoral College predictions!
- Not hard to get close given margin in presidential elections
- What measure of economy is relevant?
- Not necessarily inconsistent with "campaigns matter" perspective

Do campaigns matter? Yes, but with constraints

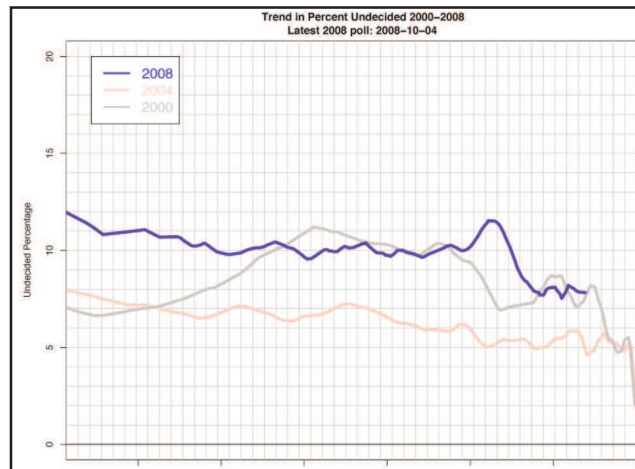
- Structural and campaign explanations not mutually exclusive
 - Predictable behavior \neq campaigns don't matter
- In close elections, small effects matter
- Campaigns influence some voters more than others



Who are the persuadable voters?



- Soccer moms, NASCAR dads?
 - Undecided voters?
 - Political independents?
 - Ideological moderates?
- 2008 predictions were:*
- Hockey moms?
 - Millenials?
 - Working-class whites?
 - Kevin Costner's film?



Swing VOTERS

	Little/No Interest in Campaign	Unlikely to Vote
All Respondents	11%	13%
Moderates	18%	22%
Independents	21%	25%
Undecided	32%	39%

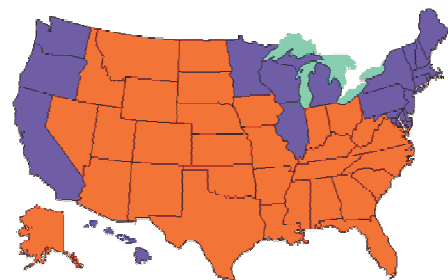
3 Key Arguments

- The persuadable voters are cross-pressured
 - Esp. partisans who disagree with party on pol. issue
- Strategic candidates will try to exploit the tensions that make campaigns matter
 - Will use “wedge issues” to appeal to these persuadable voters
- Today’s information environment encourages use of wedge issues
 - Information and technology shape the candidates’ issue messages

Challenging Conventional Wisdom

1. American voters are polarized along partisan and ideological lines
2. The persuadable voters are uninformed, unengaged, and not policy-motivated
3. Candidates talk about divisive issues as part of a “base mobilization” strategy

A Nation Divided by Party and Ideology?



Extent of Policy Disagreement across Issues (2004)

	Incongruent	Neutral	Congruent
Faith-based Initiatives	36%	24%	40%
School Prayer	36%	21%	43%
Abortion	35%		65%
School Vouchers	35%	17%	48%
Partial Birth Abortion	35%		65%
Drug Imports	34%	17%	49%
NCLB Education policy	30%	28%	42%
Tort Reform	29%	21%	50%
Gay Marriage	29%	16%	56%
Gun Control	27%	10%	62%
Environment vs Oil	27%	20%	53%
Stem Cell	26%	23%	51%
Business Regulation	25%	31%	44%
Health Care	25%	23%	52%
Union Support	23%	26%	51%
Social Security Privatization	22%	28%	50%
Government Aid to Poor	22%	27%	51%
Affirmative Action	21%	27%	52%
Tax Cuts vs. Minimum Wage	20%	20%	61%
Multilateralism	15%	30%	55%
Use of Force/Terrorism	14%	27%	59%
Iraq War Evaluation	13%	12%	75%
Economy Evaluation	11%	24%	65%
Average All Issues	26%	20%	54%

Cross-pressures in 2004

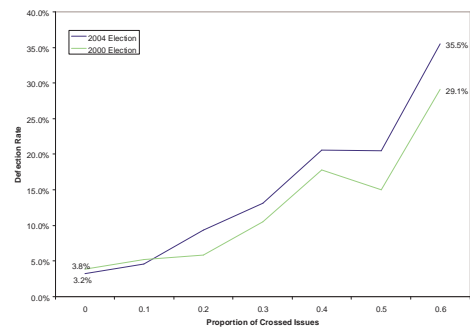
	All Partisans	Strong Partisans	Politically Attentive	College Graduates	Politically Aware
Completely Congruent	33%	35%	38%	43%	42%
Cross-Pressured on at least 1 issue	67%	65%	62%	57%	58%
Cross-Pressured on more than 1 issue	40%	36%	35%	30%	31%
Cross-pressured on 5 or more issues	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%
Average	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.2
Sample size	1872	1113	684	450	620

Note: Only includes crosspressures on issues the voters consider "very" or "extremely" important to them personally of 10 salient issues from campaign (abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research, gun control, affirmative action, environment, health care, aid to the poor, minimum wage, and social security privatization).

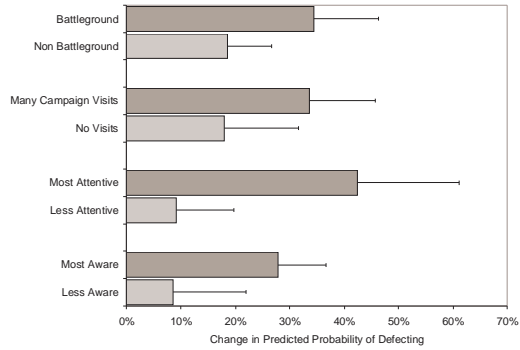
How many potentially persuadable?

	Percent of Citizenry	Percent of Electorate	Percent of Electorate (Politically Aware)
Cross-pressured Partisans	26%	27%	25%
Cross-pressued Partisan Leaners	8%	9%	5%
Policy-Conflicted Pure Independents	13%	9%	4%
Total Persuadable	46%	46%	34%

Defection by Extent of Policy Disagreement



Predicting Defections: 2004 Presidential Election



Note: Political knowledge, strength of partisanship, race, gender, income, education held at global means or modes.

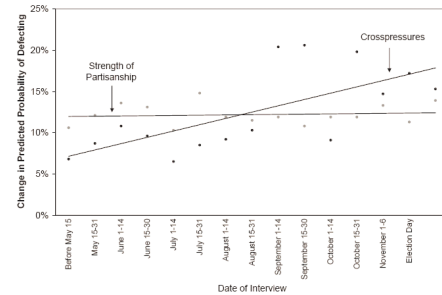


Figure 4.5. Over Time Change in Impact of Cross-pressures and Strength of Partisanship Predicted Probability of Defecting, 2000
 Note: Graph shows that the effect of policy incongruence increases, while strength of partisanship (strong partisan vs. weak partisan) remains flat over the course of the campaign. Also shown is the linear trend in the relationship. Data source is the 2000 Knowledge Networks Election Study.

Theoretical Expectations: Consequences for Candidate Behavior

- In presidential race, candidates must attract persuadable voters to win election
- To influence persuadable voters, will try to prime wedge issues
 - Expectation contrasts with:
 - Median Voter Theorem
 - Base mobilization strategy
- Information environment and communication technologies shape messages that candidates use to target persuadable voters
 - Will moderate message when have less information or when communicating to heterogeneous audience



Protecting the Rights of the Unborn for 24 years.

MCCAIN

THE MCCAIN RECORD ON LIFE

* While enduring five years of imprisonment as a POW in Vietnam, John McCain saw the headline denouement of March 1968. Throughout his career in public service, John McCain has been a consistent champion for the unborn.

* 0% rating from pro-abortion groups

* Fought to ban partial-birth abortion

* Opposed taxpayer-funded abortion at overseas facilities

Cindy McCain cradles little Bridget, a baby she and John adopted in 1993 from Mother Teresa's orphanage in Bangladesh. Bridget has been a great blessing to the McCain family. Today, Cindy and John work together to promote adoption and to help women facing crisis pregnancies.



CALL TO BRING CHANGE

It's time to bring the world the change we need. It's time to bring the world the change we need. It's time to bring the world the change we need. It's time to bring the world the change we need. It's time to bring the world the change we need.

Barack Obama
Sen. Prayer
Nov. 3, 2008

CALL TO SERVE

Called by the Christian faith, Barack Obama is the leader we can trust to challenge the rights of the innocent and change the way our government runs. He will bring together Republicans and Democrats to address the problems facing our nation.

COMMITTED CHRISTIAN

It takes in the power of prayer. Through prayer, we can see our struggles, our problems, our needs, and the compassion and the will to change our nation. That is the power of prayer. That is the power of prayer. That is the power of prayer. That is the power of prayer. That is the power of prayer.

BARACK ON THE POWER OF PRAYER

BARACK
OBAMA
FOR PRESIDENT

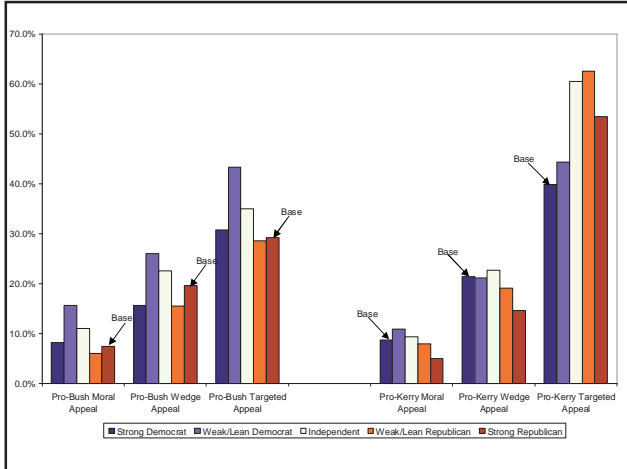
“Ground War” vs. “Air War”

	Direct Mail		Television Advertising	
	General Wedge Issue	Moral Wedge Issue	General Wedge Issue	Moral Wedge Issue
Candidate Funded	30%	9%	0%	0%
Party Funded	23%	7%	3%	3%
<i>Both</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>1%</i>	<i>1%</i>

Moral Issues: abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research
 Wedge Issues: moral issues plus other divisive issues, like affirmative action, immigration, environment, etc.

Targeting the Base?

	Pure Mobilization Appeal	Volunteer Appeal	Fundraising Appeal	Both Party Labels	Own Party Label	Issue Appeal
Candidate-Funded	0%	14%	9%	0%	9%	70%
Party-Funded	5%	4%	10%	11%	50%	69%
<i>Both</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>70%</i>



"I FEEL SAFE WITH PRESIDENT BUSH."

Janet Kreisman
Registered Democrat

"I've always been a pro-choice Democrat, but party loyalties have no meaning when it comes to my family's safety."

JOIN THE RNC

Conclusions

- Recap:
 - Candidates must win "swing voters" to win White House
 - These "swing voters" are often cross-pressured rather than moderate
 - Candidates try to win over these cross-pressured voters by priming wedge issues that advantage them over their opponent
 - The information environment allows for greater use of wedge strategy
- Potential implications of micro-targeting & changing demographics:
 - Fragmentation of campaign policy agenda
 - Polarization of candidates
 - Exacerbation of political inequality
 - Superficial politics
 - Potential crisis in governance