

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN – POLITICAL SCIENCE HONORS THESIS

# Advertising Effects

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The Impact of Campaign Ads on Voter Preferences in the 2004 Presidential  
Election

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## **Research Abstract**

This paper examines the effects of campaign advertisements on American public opinion in the 2004 Presidential election. It combines survey data and data about ad timing and placement during the campaign to study the effects on respondent preferences. Ads are shown to be most effective among respondents who watched a lot of TV (and thus had the opportunity to be exposed to a high amount of ads), respondents who were relatively unengaged in politics, and those interviewed early in the campaign (before they had the opportunity to learn much about the candidates).

## **Preface**

I began working on this paper as a summer research project through the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program. My interest came from a class I had recently taken with Professor Brader called “Media Effects on Public Opinion.” In Media Effects, we discussed the multiple avenues for public opinion to be influenced by those in the media. Furthermore, from this class and others, I learned about multiple theories of public opinion – from John Zaller’s RAS Model to Lodge et al.’s Impression-Driven Model, to Phil Converse and The American Voter’s discussion of an uninformed public.

From these theories, it seemed to me that there was room for campaigns, and specifically campaign ads, to change the way people think about politics. Less clear is a description of the specific ad characteristics and voter demographics that mediate the effect of campaign ads. This information is important for a variety of reasons, but I was most interested in understanding which tools are best for winning elections. Who are the people most open to persuasion? What ads are more effective at persuading Republicans and independents to vote for Democratic candidates? Which ads encourage unlikely voters to decide to show up at the polls? Since elections are won at the margins, even a small swing in public opinion can make the difference. If the winning campaign is the best campaign, then knowing which tools to use is essential to win elections.

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## Introduction

In an era of Photoshop, brand management, and new media, it's no wonder that Americans are skeptical of and hostile to much of the information they receive. Each election cycle, news stories about campaign ads are as prevalent as the ads themselves, whether produced by campaigns, interest groups, political parties, or PACs. Just like the politicians who air them, campaign ads are often the subject of scandals themselves: from the infamous attacks on Dukakis in '88 ("Willie" Horton ads) to the Swift Boat ads questioning Senator John Kerry's war record in 2004. Because of the existence of such attack ads, Americans have become deeply critical of political advertisements. Campaigning is described as "dirty" and "unfair," and the media often discuss this distaste.

One news story in particular stays in my memory: during the 2006 election cycle, NPR interviewed Dennis Steele and Scott Sanders – voice actors who narrate campaign ads. Their voices are deep and powerful. To demonstrate how they can make anything sound negative, they read a slightly edited version of children's nursery rhymes. Sanders reads, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. He said he could put himself together again. But after wasting thousands of our tax dollars, all the king's horses and all the king's men, he failed us. Humpty Dumpty. Wrong on wall sitting." Next, Steele reads, "London Bridge is falling down. Falling down, falling down. And who's to blame for withholding needed infrastructure funding? My fair lady. Take the key and lock her up. It's time for a change." The point, of course, is to play on an industry that most Americans describe as dirty. This story notes that, given the right spin and an intimidating voice, anything will sound negative.

Furthermore, the idea of the Rational Independent – coolly weighing the issue platforms of each candidate – plays a large and important role in the American psyche. The idea of 30-

second, emotion-laden advertisements playing a role in important decisions of government could be seen as undemocratic, with many believing that emotions are unsophisticated and easily manipulated. If the Rational Independent is swayed by something as small as a campaign ad, how rational or independent can they be?

If there is so much to hate about campaign advertising – it is dirty, unfair, and even undemocratic – why do campaign managers and media advisers continue to make use of this strategy? Because it works. Because, in spite of those who say that campaign ads don't affect them, they do. Because in a campaign, the ends justify the means.

This paper seeks to understand how advertising affects the electoral process. Which types of advertising most effectively persuade voters? Which types encourage viewers to go to the polls on Election Day or – maybe – discourage that activity? Further, which segments of the American population are most susceptible to the arguments presented in these campaign ads? Can targeting certain demographics increase supporters' turnout on Election Day? These questions focus on a fundamental question: What ads do voters see and how do they react to them? This question revolves around a discussion of American public opinion and how that opinion is subject to change.

Advertising is a multi-billion dollar industry. While most of that money goes to influencing consumer decisions, a good portion of that money is spent on influencing the electoral process. At best, campaign ads inform voters on the issues of the day and the candidates' platforms, and even encourage turnout on Election Day. At worst, ads spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion to support one cause or candidate over another. This possibility for manipulation becomes especially worrisome given new rules on campaign finance, as corporations are now able to anonymously donate to campaigns, raising questions of

electoral influence and even bribery. Clearly, there are dangers involved when influencing mass opinion. However, as Madison so aptly noted in Federalist 10 when discussing the “mischiefs of faction,” “it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.” Applied to this subject, despite those who are worried about the possible misuse of campaign ads, they remain an essential form of liberty, the annihilation of which would be folly.

This research examines how Americans are affected by campaign advertising. Understanding this will help campaigns spend their war chests wisely. It will also put into perspective the criticism that campaign ads have received as the alleged cause of Americans’ lackluster (to say the least) interest in politics. I examine voters’ reactions to ads supporting or attacking the two main candidates in the 2004 Presidential election: Senator John Kerry and President George W. Bush. The thesis is formatted as follows:

Chapter One is a review which discusses the multiple threads of the literature surrounding the effects of campaign advertisements. It discusses the research examining the attack ads, as well as the effects of campaign ads in general. The literature review also examines a body of research surrounding the ways that campaigns can appeal to the emotions of voters.

Chapter Two applies much of the research outlined in the literature review to this research question in particular. Chapter Two lays out the five hypotheses designed to test the effects of campaign ads on voter preferences. They range from expectations on the type of ad that will be most effective at persuading voters to a test of which campaign made the most emotional advertisements. Chapter Three discusses the datasets and variables used to test these

hypotheses. It describes the measures of public opinion used to test how the ads affected voters. Chapter Three also details the methods used to collect the data about campaign ads.

Chapter Four is the first step in understanding the content of the ads that ran during the 2004 Presidential General Election Campaign. This is where I discuss the results of a content analysis of the ads that were run by the campaigns themselves (not the parties, interest groups, or PACs as discussed throughout the rest of this thesis). This chapter is designed to test a hypothesis outlined in Chapter Two, and also to give an understanding of what strategies the campaigns used in producing their ads.

Chapter Five again examines the ad deployment strategy; this time, however, the focus is on the timing and placement of the ads. Chapter Five discusses when and where campaign ads were aired, demonstrating the rhythm of the campaign and the emphasis on some states over others. From this, a sketch of the campaign emerges: advertising intensified as Election Day drew closer. This was especially evident in areas that were competitive and electorally significant.

Chapter Six tests the majority of my hypotheses, and answers the questions: what is effective and who is affected? This chapter discusses how the habits, partisanship, and political engagement of viewers all play a role in the effectiveness of exposure to campaign ads. It also describes how variables from vote choice and favorability to likelihood of turning out to vote are affected by these ads. Finally, it details how the effects of ads are different early in the campaign as opposed to late in the campaign. The Conclusion outlines avenues for future research and discusses the implications for American democracy.



## **Chapter One: Literature Review**

Though campaign advertising has been a part of politics for over five decades, scholars are still conflicted over the effects of different types of advertising strategies. As a result, the literature on political advertising is vast and multi-faceted. This section examines the major threads of this debate; including those surrounding the effects of negative ads, as well as the effects of emotional appeals in ads. I believe that the strongest evidence supports those who are persuaded that emotional appeals and negative ads are effective on voters exposed to these ads.

### **The Negative Effects of Negativity**

Conventional wisdom holds that political advertising in general – and *negative advertising* in particular – is harmful to democracy. This is the theory that has been studied most extensively, which has resulted in many subtle differences in the literature on the subject. The traditional argument is that ads reduce complex and important ideas to emotion-laden, 30-second clips, leading to a cynical electorate with low political efficacy and low trust in government. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) argue this case with a study involving a series of experiments. They find that negative ads, while admittedly increasing knowledge about political issues, also have undesirable demobilizing effects, such as decreasing political efficacy, trust in government,

and turnout. Their experiments – though they have a very comprehensive design – do not measure voters’ exposure to real ads, which is a drawback when it comes to the external validity and hence the applicability of their findings. Furthermore, this study does not look deeply into the effects of the different characteristics of the ads, and because of this, readers cannot draw conclusions about exactly which characteristics may contribute to demobilizing effects.

Kahn and Kenny (1999) take a slightly different approach, and partially Ansolabehere and Iyengar’s argument. Their research design differs in that they make use of surveys and interviews rather than experiments. They used the 1990 American National Election Study for one portion of their study, but also used media analysis and interviews with campaign managers to assess campaign tone. Kahn and Kenny asked campaign managers if they would characterize their opponent’s actions during the campaign as “mudslinging,” or if it was portrayed that way by the media, and thus have a working definition of “legitimate” criticism. By looking at the ads’ tone as opposed to overall message, Kahn and Kenny help answer the question of what ad characteristics affect viewers. While they find that “legitimate” negative ads can serve a democratically desirable function (this portion of their findings will be discussed in more detail later), they suggest that mudslinging ads are associated with lower turnout.

Though the tone of ads was covered extensively by Kahn and Kenny, perhaps there’s something else at work in this discussion of the effects of political ads on voters, such as the timing or content. In fact, Krupnikov (2009) finds that the timing of the ad makes a big difference in its effects. She combines ad data and survey data (over a period of 1976-2000, and then in 2000 more deeply), and finds that when negative ads are aired *after* the viewer has made his selection of candidate preference, the ad will have a demobilizing effect, but that no demobilizing effect occurs *before* the viewer has made his or her selection. Krupnikov also finds

that this demobilizing effect is especially distinct among weak partisans. She goes on to argue that Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) found demobilizing results of negative ads because their study focused on ads that aired late in the election season, i.e. after people had made their candidate selection.

Dardis, Shen, and Edwards (2008) turn away from the timing of the ad, and instead focus on content. They use an experimental design to look at how the specific content of a negative ad affects voter decision-making. Interestingly – and contrary to conventional wisdom – they find that issue-based attacks are more likely to produce viewers who are cynical and have low political efficacy, and that these effects were greatest for those who were exposed to the negative ads most often. Perhaps, as they argue, this is because when viewers are constantly bombarded with ads where candidates are attacking each other’s complex issues and policy positions it makes “government seem more unavailable, unpalatable, or Byzantine to the common citizen – especially upon exposure after exposure.” ( p. 39) This is an interesting finding, and one that will have implications for research studying the role of emotion in ads .

Thus, the school of thought that argues that negative ads can have demobilizing effects includes Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995), who make the broadest claim, arguing that negative ads lead to much less democratically desirable behavior. Kahn and Kenny (1999) delve into greater detail and argue that only when negative ads present irrelevant information in an inappropriate manner (i.e. “mudslinging”) do they have demobilizing effects; Dardis, Shen, and Edwards (2008) argue that it is exposure to issue-based attacks that leads to lower self-efficacy and increases cynicism. And Krupnikov (2009) argues that negativity only has demobilizing effects *after* candidate selection has been made by the viewer. It is worth noting that Krupnikov (2009), Dardis, Shen, and Edwards (2008), and Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) use an

experimental design in at least part of their studies, while Kahn and Kenny (1999) rely on survey data. Most convincing are the scholars who look more precisely into this question, because the claim that negative political ads always result in democratically undesirable behavior is too broad to be convincing.

### **The Positive Effects of Negativity**

The argument that *negative* campaign ads are sometimes democratically beneficial – that is, that negative ads can have positive effects on self-efficacy, interest, and turnout – has also been advanced by multiple scholars. For example, Dardis, Shen, and Edwards (2008), who find that issue-based negative ads cause an increase in cynicism towards government and a decrease in self-efficacy, also find that negative ads that are *character-based* have just the opposite effect. They find that as exposure to character-based negative ads increases, so does self-efficacy. Unlike their finding relating to high exposure to *issue* ads (high exposure led to a huge drop in self-efficacy), high exposure to *character* ads results in much higher self-efficacy. Perhaps seeing candidates' flaws gives viewers confidence in their own ability to change the system, and that is what led to this contrary to conventional wisdom result. Similarly, Kahn and Kenny (1999), while arguing that *mudslinging* has negative effects on turnout, find that negative campaign ads have mobilizing effects when the criticisms they launch are *useful* – that is, when they are “relevant and appropriate.” (p. 878)

Freedman and Goldstein (1999) also spend time looking at how negative ads (and not just campaign advertising in general) can have a positive effect on viewers. They argue that the idea that negative ads can have a positive effect is theoretically defensible because negative ads provide politically relevant information, negative information is given greater weight than

positive information, and the fact that negativity can give a sense that what is at stake is important and that “the outcome matters.” (Freedman & Goldstein, 1999, p. 1190)

### **The Negligible Effects of Political Advertising**

There are, however, scholars who remain skeptical of the effects of political ads (beneficial or otherwise). Huber and Arceneaux (2007), for example, find that while ads do have *persuasive* effects, they do not have any mobilization or educational effects on viewers. By combining a survey and a natural experiment (which, they claim occurred in the 2000 election where media markets based in battleground states overlapped non-battleground states, thus exposing viewers to ads promoting candidates for whom the viewers could not vote), they argue that their study comes closer to determining causality without sacrificing external validity.

Taking a more conventional approach, Jackson, Mondak and Huckfeldt (2009) use the Wisconsin Advertising Project data combined with survey data to study the 2002 congressional elections. They search for an undesirable effect of political ads, and come up short. They do not find that negative political advertising has any effect on viewer attitudes, including respondents’ attitudes on government and on their self-efficacy. They conclude, “the bottom line is straightforward: present efforts have produced *no* empirical support for the case against negative ads.” (p. 64)

Stevens (2009) offers another facet of the argument that political ads are ineffective. Up to this point, most researchers have been looking only at the volume of negative ads to which viewers are exposed. Perhaps, Stevens suggests, the proportion of negative ads to positive ads plays a role in voter attitudes and actions. Stevens argues that when researchers focus solely on volume of ads aired, negative advertising does have a modest effect on turnout, but when

proportion of negative ads is taken into account, this effect essentially evaporates. Thus, he argues that the results of scholars who find positive effects are “underspecified and, as a result, potentially overly optimistic.” (p. 429) Interestingly, Stevens uses the same data as Franz et al., and finds no effect with his different independent variable.

Another instance of a null finding from negative campaign ads is a portion of Krupnikov’s (2009) study. Krupnikov uses data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project, which is also used in this paper as well as by multiple other scholars. While she did find substantial demobilizing effects when negativity occurred *after* selection of candidate preference had occurred, negative ads shown *before* selection (as well as positive ads shown *after* selection) had no effect on voter turnout. Thus, part of the argument drawn from Krupnikov’s study must be that negative ads have no demobilizing effect when they are shown before viewer selection. These three studies that demonstrate when and how negative ads are – in the short-term – ineffective (or at least do not have any negative effects) are important because each uses a very different research design, yet all (with their null results) reject the conventional wisdom that negative campaign advertisements have corrosive effects on democratically desirable characteristics, whether the dependent variable in question is turnout (Krupnikov, 2009; Huber & Arceneaux, 2007), self-efficacy (Jackson, Mondak & Huckfeldt, 2009), or political learning (Huber & Arceneaux, 2007).

### **The Positive Effects of Political Advertising**

On the other side of this debate are those who believe that negative advertisements serve a positive function, and help to produce more alert, interested, and informed citizens. These

scholars argue that political advertisements lead to increased rates of voter turnout, political knowledge, and political efficacy. A vast majority of this research uses data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project (incidentally, this data was also used as part of Krupnikov's measure of ad exposure), a project which uses data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group and codes it for certain characteristics. CMAG collects data (including complete text and a storyboard) on all of the political ads that air in the top 100 media markets in the US, allowing researchers to be much more confident in knowing what types of ads are being aired, and when.

Perhaps the largest force to be reckoned with on this side of the debate is the team of Ken Goldstein, Michael Franz, Paul Freedman, and Travis Ridout. Together, they have written extensively about the positive impact of negative ads; most notably, that it is effective at persuading voters (Franz & Ridout, 2007), leads to voters who are more interested in the campaign and know more about the candidates (Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004), and stimulates voter turnout (Freedman & Goldstein, 1999; Goldstein & Freedman, 2002). In their book, Campaign Advertising and American Democracy, they argue that political ads are the "multivitamin" of American politics, and that the positive effects of political ads often give the most benefit to "those who need it most: the least informed and least engaged members of the electorate." (p. 138)

Franz and Ridout (2007) detour away from the question of negativity specifically, and ask the question "Does political advertising persuade?" By looking at ads for the presidential and US Senate races in 2004, they find that advertising does persuade, and those with less political knowledge are the most easily persuaded. Franz and Ridout (2007) use the Wisconsin ad data, but this time they combine it with a three-wave study. Their measurement of exposure is a particularly valid portion of their study; they use a method of measuring TV habits referred

to as the “five-program method,” or the method that asks about respondents’ viewing patterns of watching shows like local news, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, morning news shows, and afternoon talk shows. This is the method that Ridout, Shaw, Goldstein and Franz (2004) concluded was the most predictive and accurate method of assessing viewing habits. Thus, that Franz and Ridout (2007) used this method in their study of the 2004 Senate elections lends credibility to their argument, and reassures me that their measure of exposure does, in fact, give a good understanding of how many ads each respondent is potentially exposed to.

Franz and Ridout’s finding that the least politically aware are most susceptible to being persuaded by campaign ads replicated work by Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2004), who look at the way individuals’ characteristics affect ad effectiveness. However, Valentino, Hutchings, and White differ from Franz and Ridout (2007) in that they argue that exposure to political ads depresses the likelihood that politically sophisticated viewers will search out more information. Along the same lines, Huber and Arceneaux (2007) find that the persuasiveness of advertising is dependent on viewer characteristics; ads are most effective on “those individuals sufficiently aware to be exposed to campaign communication but not so aware that they either hold strong prior beliefs or can resist messages contrary to those beliefs.” (p. 974)

Thus, the research supporting the argument that political ads (including negative ads) have a positive impact – that they teach and persuade, they lead to increased efficacy and engagement, increase turnout, and are an all-around “multivitamin” for an anemic democratic system – is substantial. These researchers arguing that political advertisements serve a positive democratic purpose use a variety of tested research methods across elections of different types and in different years, which lends credibility to the results that they are not the consequence of a flawed research design. The reliability of different methods of measuring tone, for example, was



studied by Ridout and Franz (2008) in order to assess whether differing conclusions about the effectiveness of ads are based on different measures of campaign tone. They look at five different measurements of tone and conclude that all standard methods are highly correlated, and thus research design is not the cause of conflicting findings on advertising effects.

### **Emotional Appeals and the Theory of Affective Intelligence**

Another facet of the literature surrounding the effects of campaign advertising does not directly concern the impact of ads' tone or focus; rather, it addresses the way campaign advertisements use emotional appeals to make their case to viewers. It may seem that appealing to emotions in political ads is a manipulative tool for winning elections; that candidates who use "scare tactics" or make false promises are the very embodiment of the politics that many Americans despise. However, this is not the argument that most political scientists who study emotional appeals make. Based in political psychology, some scholars have begun to argue that advertisements with emotional appeals lead to more democratically desirable behavior than ads without these emotional appeals (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Brader, 2005, 2006), and that parties that successfully use emotional appeals win more elections (Westen, 2007). As the literature stands, the bottom line is that the role of emotion in political decision making is complex, with appeals to different emotions having different effects on voters.

Rational choice models assume no role for emotion in decision making, which is a critical flaw in these models. Thus, the Affective Intelligence Theory was proposed to fill this void. This theory was born out of research in neuroscience that found that "emotional reactions actually *precede* rather than follow conscious perceptions." (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen,

2000, p. 35) This means that, in making decisions, people do not come to their decision and then decide how they feel about it. Rather, subconscious emotions lead people to their decision.

This fact alone could be used by democratic skeptics who argue that the public does not have the knowledge to make good decisions (e.g. Converse, 1960). However, Marcus and MacKuen (1993) find that in fact, emotional reactions can serve a positive democratic function. They have identified two emotions as playing a major role in decision-making: anxiety and enthusiasm. Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen (2000) developed the Theory of Affective Intelligence to understand the role that anxiety and enthusiasm play in political decision making. The theory suggests that these two emotions have very different effects on voters, and that politicians can appeal to these emotions, or, in their case, researchers can as well.

Conventional wisdom suggests that feelings of anxiety encourage voters to act without considering the consequences, but Marcus and MacKuen show that the opposite turns out to be true. By using panel data from the 1980 American National Election Study as well as survey data of Missourians during the 1988 presidential campaign, they find that anxiety “stimulates peoples’ attention and releases them from their standing decisions” (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993, p. 678). When people abandon their “standing decisions” (such as party loyalty), they “perk up, gather new information, and perhaps abandon their old habits” (p. 677). Thus, when feelings of anxiety are triggered, people rely less on routine shortcuts like partisanship and instead seek out and use new information.

To describe the Theory of Affective Intelligence in another way, under normal conditions (when she is not feeling anxious or threatened), a person relies on habits (such as partisan identification, heuristics or other shortcuts) to make her decisions. This reliance on habit is called the dispositional system, and allows us to “perform tasks without consciously considering

them” (Neuman, Marcus, Crigler & MacKuen, 2007, p. 2). However, when she is in an unfamiliar situation – and she will know she is because she feels anxious – she will rely much more heavily on the new information that is available to her. This part of the theory is called the surveillance system, and is “activated when something unexpected is encountered”( p. 2). She will also seek out new information as a result of this anxiety. Thus, anxiety cues an individual to act more “rationally,” weighing the information much more carefully.

However, knowing that this relationship exists is not enough. It is important to understand how politicians use this information in order to cue specific emotions. Brader (2006) found that political advertisements can trigger feelings of anxiety and fear if they contain “images associated with death, conflict, and misery such as guns, violent crimes, barren landscapes, pollution, and warfare” (p. 162). The music in a political ad can also cue certain emotions. For example, in his experiment, Brader uses “high-pitched, dissonant instrumental chords pulsating beneath the narration,” to cue anxiety in viewers of political ads. Individuals exposed to political ads featuring images and music designed to cue feelings of fear and anxiety relied less on prior preferences and instead put more weight on the information provided in that ad. It was found that “cuing fear stimulates vigilance, increases reliance on contemporary evaluations, and facilitates persuasion” (Brader, 2005, p. 388). Furthermore, Brader (2006) also finds that appeals to anxiety “spark greater willingness to donate time to election efforts and solidify belief in the importance of voting” (p. 96). Thus, the results from Brader (2005, 2006) largely replicate and expand upon the findings of Marcus and MacKuen (1993) and their colleagues.

Though anxiety can cause citizens to change their political behavior, it is not the only emotion to have that effect. When enthusiasm is cued, for example, it increases interest and

involvement in politics or a campaign. Brader's experimental study demonstrates that it is possible to cue enthusiasm in political advertisements by using "warm images and music reinforcing the campaign ad's message of a safe, improving community" (Brader, 2006, p. 96). The experiment involved showing one of three sets of ads to participants: a control ad (that contained generic images and no music), a negative ad containing fear appeals, and a positive ad containing enthusiasm appeals. To cue enthusiasm in his participants, Brader used positive, brightly-colored images and a "sentimental, stirring symphonic" track (p. 84).

These types of cues increase a viewer's "interest in the campaign, willingness to volunteer, and intentions to vote in both the primary and general election." (p. 107) He notes that "emotional cues, especially enthusiasm, provide candidates with a powerful instrument for motivating more citizens to get involved in the campaign" (p. 107). Brader's work supports the theory of affective intelligence in another way as well. He notes that, regardless of the treatment group, emotional appeals had no effect on subjects' cynicism about politicians and political parties. He concludes that this fact flies in the face of theories about affect transfer (the idea that it is possible to associate feelings about an object with feelings about a politician or a political issue).

Marcus and MacKuen (1993), however, argue that "it is only during the fall campaign that a candidate-induced emotional response spurs involvement" (p. 680). During that time, however, enthusiasm becomes much more important than anxiety in spurring campaign involvement. Clearly, there is disagreement as to *just how far* cues for enthusiasm can get a candidate; however, that it certainly plays an important role in promoting involvement in a campaign is without a doubt. Research from Marcus, MacKuen, and their colleagues makes a strong case for the Affective Intelligence Theory, suggesting that "people use emotions as tools

for efficient information processing.” (Marcus & MacKuen, 2000, p. 672) Feelings of anxiety propel an individual to seek out new, relevant information, and they act as an alarm bell that relying on habitual routines is not the best choice in this new, unfamiliar situation. On the other hand, feelings of enthusiasm encourage individuals to get involved in a campaign or an election.

However, scholars have introduced multiple caveats to the Theory of Affective Intelligence. Individual characteristics, such as personal efficacy or political sophistication, may affect the role of emotion in political decision making. By replicating Marcus and MacKuen’s (1993) findings, Rudolph, Gangl, and Stevens (2000) argue that “anxiety among the highly efficacious drives involvement while anxiety among those with low internal efficacy does not” (p. 1189). This suggests that anxiety cues widen the gap between those with high and low political efficacy. The politically efficacious – a group that is likely more engaged in politics to start with – become even more engaged in politics when exposed to cues for anxiety, while those with low political efficacy remain at the same level. They find there is “insufficient evidence to conclude that the interaction of negative affect and low internal efficacy has a demobilizing effect on the electorate.” (p. 1196)

Political sophistication has also been suggested as mediating the effects of emotional cues on political behavior. Though conventional wisdom suggests that emotional appeals prey on the emotions of naïve and unsophisticated voters, the opposite again appears to be true. Brader (2006) finds that “A person’s expertise in politics makes campaign advertising more relevant to his goals and behavior and, therefore, makes the emotional cues in such advertising more powerful in shaping his response” (p. 143). Huddy and Gunthorsdottir (2000) find that emotional appeals are more effective on individuals who are the most “highly involved” or most knowledgeable about an issue to argue that citizens engage in “passionate reasoning.”

Perhaps the relationship between emotions and political behavior is even more complex. Nadeau, Niemi and Amato (1995) argue that anxiety has an indirect effect on political learning and knowledge because of its role in determining the importance of the issue to the individual. Emotions, then, influence issue importance, or saliency, which in turn affects political learning. Their study examines students' feelings about the importance of preserving the use of the French language in Quebec and their feelings of either anxiety or hope of success about whether or not attempting to protect the language is a lost cause. They note, "The significance of anxiety... emphasizes that this emotion contributes to knowledge, but that that contribution is funneled through its impact on the perceived importance of the subject." (Nadeau, Niemi & Amato, 1995, p. 569) This finding suggests that – along with the conditional variables of an individual's personal political efficacy and sophistication –there is perhaps a mediating variable of issue saliency in the relationship between emotions and political behavior.

Up to this point, much of the discussion has centered on two emotions: anxiety and enthusiasm. Though scholars disagree to some extent about the mechanics of the relationship between emotion and political behavior, most agree that this relationship is important – whether it is direct (Marcus, Neuman & MacKuen 2000; Marcus & MacKuen 1993; and Brader 2006), based on political efficacy (Rudolph, Gangl & Stevens 2000), political sophistication (Brader 2000; Huddy & Gunthorsdottir 2000), or even saliency (Nadeau, Niemi & Amato 1995).

The research presented thus far has given rise to the criticism of emotional appeals in politics. If, as has been demonstrated, emotional affect plays a large role in citizen's political behavior, and if, as researchers have also demonstrated, these emotions can be manipulated by scholars or politicians, is this not a cause for concern? Are citizens' decisions being manipulated by appeals to their emotions? Huddy and Gunthorsdottir (2000) say "no." Rather, they find

support for an idea that they refer to as passionate reasoning; they, like Brader (2006) find that emotional appeals are most effective on those individuals who are already highly involved with an issue. Huddy and Gunthorsdottir use an experimental design measuring whether support for an environmental group changed based on the emotional content of visual images presented to participants. They find that low-involvement environmental supporters “are no more likely to oppose an anti-environment organization that is willing to sacrifice a cute versus an ugly animal, *nor are they more likely to support an organization attempting to save a cute animal*” (Huddy & Gunthorsdottir, 2000, p. 762). Thus, the “cuteness” of the animal (and therefore the emotional effect brought on by that animal) has no effect on participant’s willingness to get involved on behalf of that animal. They note, “Emotion... is pervasive, politically important, and serves as a potentially useful tool for citizens as they negotiate the complexity of contemporary politics” (p. 746), suggesting an integrated model of affect and cognition. Thus, they argue that, “Our findings challenge the longstanding view of an easily manipulated and gullible public” (p. 766).

Taken to the next logical step, this research on emotional appeals in politics has implications for the way campaigns should operate. If, for example, one party is more effectively appealing to the emotions of voters because of the way they are communicating their ideas, this can have real effects on election outcomes. Westen (2007) argues just that. His thesis is based on the idea that in the early-to-mid part of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Republican Party was more successful at appealing to the emotions of voters than the Democratic Party, which played a role in Republicans’ electoral success in 2000, 2002, and 2004. If Democrats want to win more elections, Westen argues that they need to appeal more effectively to the emotions – not just the logic and reason – of American voters. He writes, “Successful campaigns build on a strong party brand defined by core values, address conflicts

within and between voters, offer principled stands on issues that matter to voters, attend to both conscious and unconscious values and attitudes, activate and inhibit networks associated with positive and negative emotions, and, perhaps most importantly, *“speak the truth to voters in a way that is emotionally compelling”* (p. 257 – emphasis mine).

For example, Westen criticizes the Democratic inability to campaign emotionally by pointing out the Kerry campaign’s (non-) response to the Swift Boat attack ads that appeared in the 2004 presidential campaign. Westen argues that the day the first ad came out Kerry’s team should have,

“Launched a character assault – preferably in front of an audience of veterans – against a self-proclaimed ‘war president’ who ran ads dishonoring a decorated war veteran... He should have angrily demanded that the president stand before the American people, with his hand squarely on the Bible, and swear before God that neither he nor Rove nor any member of his campaign had anything to do with this unprecedented wartime attack on the honor of a decorated war veteran.” (p. 344)

Instead of responding passionately as Westen suggests, the Kerry campaign waited weeks to respond and ultimately wrote a rather wishy-washy and round-a-bout letter to the Bush campaign. This, Westen argues, is the type of behavior that has become the signature style of Democratic politicians and candidates – and is exactly what they need to change in order to run more successful campaigns. Democrats need to focus on “creating, solidifying and activating networks that create primarily positive feelings toward [the] candidate or party and negative feelings toward the opposition.” (p. 85)



Taken together, the literature on the effects of emotion on political behavior strongly support the argument that political debate more effectively persuades voters and stimulates turnout and involvement if it is framed in ways that appeals to voters' emotions. The literature is especially persuasive because it relies on multiple methods of studying this research question. For example, Marcus and MacKuen (1993, 2000) used surveys to examine the effects of emotions, and Brader (2005, 2006) utilized a combination of surveys and experiments. Furthermore, cutting-edge technologies have been developed to study this question in new ways (see Valentino et al., 2008). Thus, we can be sure that these results are not simply a by-product of a flawed research design. Not only do these studies have face validity, but they draw on a background of psychology, and examine how the brain works as a way to justify theory.

Overall, the literature surrounding the role of emotion in political decision making is quite persuasive. Though there is slight disagreement surrounding the *extent* to which emotions change political behavior, there is almost universal agreement that *it does*. Emotional appeals in politics lead to changed citizen behavior, whether it is through increased involvement (when enthusiasm is triggered), a decreased reliance on habits and increased information seeking (when anxiety is triggered). Though these emotional appeals can be and are often used for changing democratic participants for the better, this does not mean that they can only be used for that purpose; cueing anger has been shown to decrease viewers' desire to participate in the political process (Valentino, Hutchings, Banks & Davis, 2008; Valentino, Hutchings & White, 2002; Valentino, Hutchings & Williams, 2004). However, the literature overwhelmingly suggests that appeals to emotions in politics should be largely cleared of their bad reputations. Without emotional reactions, fewer citizens would learn about and be involved in politics.

The results from the research on emotional appeals in politics, and especially emotional appeals in political ads, strongly support the argument that appeals to voters' emotions are more successful than non-emotional appeals. None of these studies found undesirable effects (such as depressed turnout, learning, or efficacy) as a result of advertisements that used emotional appeals. Thus, I am most convinced by the research concluding that campaign advertisements have positive effects on voter turnout, and that these effects are often the product of emotional appeals and the existence of negativity in these advertisements. I reject the conventional wisdom that negative ads and ads that "prey on the emotions" of voters are a detriment to democracy; the evidence to the contrary is much too strong. It is easy to blame Americans' anemic interest in political affairs on campaign advertisements; however, research has demonstrated that campaign ads serve a positive function and help to increase desirable democratic attitudes and actions.

## **Chapter 2: Hypotheses**

Though the literature surrounding political advertising is quite extensive, there are still questions to be answered. For example, much of the work that has been done has been conducted using an experimental design which can more easily establish causality but is not always externally valid. Thus, experiments have the drawback of not offering a sense of the persuasive power of political ads in a real life environment (when viewers may be channel surfing, or not paying attention to the TV). This thesis explores whether or not the effects of political advertising found in an experimental setting carry over when the researcher does not control exposure to the ads.

I test five different hypotheses to learn more about the effects of real political ads on real viewers and voters. The aim of these hypotheses is twofold. The first is to understand better

what types of ads are more persuasive than others; in a sense, what is the best way to persuade Americans to support and turn out for one candidate over another? Further, to understand how different ads appeal to different sets of voters; for example, if positive ads are more effective at persuading Independent voters. Thus, the first set of hypotheses is based around both ad characteristics as well as viewer demographics. The second aim of these hypotheses is to understand how political campaigns strategically spend their advertising dollars. These hypotheses are centered not only the traditional content (the focus and tone), but also the emotional content of political ads.

### **Ad Effects Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1 (Tone): Negative ads are more effective at influencing voter preferences than positive ads. This hypothesis is based largely off the work of Freedman and Goldstein (1999) (also Goldstein & Friedman, 2002), who find that exposure to negative ads increases the likelihood of voting. It also stems from the work of Jackson, Mondak, and Huckfeldt (2009), who defend negative ads from accusations of depreciating viewers' self-efficacy. If negative ads are having an effect on voters' self-efficacy (and, as a result, voter turnout), and if voters give more weight to negative information than to positive information (Freedman & Goldstein, 1999), then surely there is a possibility that negative ads are more successful at persuading voters than positive ads. If this hypothesis is true, then respondents who live in areas in which a high number of negative political ads are aired will be more likely to express support for the candidate who runs those ads.

Hypothesis 2 (Focus): Ads that focus on the candidates' personalities will be more effective at influencing voter preferences than ads that focus on policy. If ads focusing on

personality are more effective at increasing viewer self-efficacy (Kahn & Kenny, 1999), perhaps they are also more persuasive. This is especially compelling as a number of people (reporters, pundits, and the like.) have suggested that a major part of Bush's appeal was the fact that he is the kind of guy that many would "like to have a beer with." Whether or not voters actually kept this "beer appeal" in mind in making their decision will be, at least to some extent, answered with this hypothesis. If true, then respondents in areas that received a large amount of ads focusing on the candidates' personality/image – as opposed to policy – will be more likely to vote for that candidate.

Hypothesis 3 (Political Engagement): Political ad effects will be strongest for respondents with low levels of political interest. Viewers who spend time discussing/thinking about politics have the ability to counter messages put forward in political ads; the politically unengaged are less likely to have this ability. If this hypothesis is true, it will confirm the findings of Franz et al. (2007): that political ads act as a "multivitamin" for American democracy and aid the decision-making of the least interested voters.

Hypothesis 4 (Partisans): The more partisan the viewer, the less of an effect the ad will have on her preferences. Thus, ad effects will be greatest among Independents. The foundation for this hypothesis is similar to that of the Political Engagement hypothesis. Not only do partisans tend to have access to more political information than non-partisans (and are thus more likely to act like political sophisticates), but partisanship is generally the best predictor of vote choice. Because of this, I expect partisanship to act as an insulator of advertising effects, and those who are not committed to one party or another will be the most likely to be persuaded by political advertising.

## **Ad Strategy Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 5 (Strategic Emotional Appeals): I expect that the Bush campaign used emotional appeals more often than the Kerry campaign; these emotional appeals will be heavily concentrated in areas that are competitive. This hypothesis is designed to test the thesis outlined by Westen (2007), or the idea that Republican candidates have appealed to the emotions of voters more successfully than Democratic candidates, with the electoral successes of 2000 through 2006 as proof. If this hypothesis is true, the ads produced by the Bush campaign will be more emotion-laden (contain music, emotional imagery, manipulate coloring schemes), and these emotional ads will air in the most competitive states.

## **Chapter 3: Data and Methods**

### **National Annenberg Election Survey**

To test these hypotheses, it was necessary to create a unique dataset that included data about both American citizens and the advertisements that ran during the campaign. This first need was met with the National Rolling Cross Section (NRCS) data of the National Annenberg Election Survey. The NRCS interviewed 81,422 respondents between October 2003 and November 2004. For this paper, however, I examined only respondents interviewed in the nine weeks leading up to the 2004 Presidential Election, or just after the parties' national nominating conventions were held. Responses were also limited to those who live in a media market where at least one campaign ad supporting Bush or Kerry was run during the general election campaign. The result was a dataset that included 11,514 respondents. Important variables were then created based on survey responses and demographic information.

As the dependent variable in this study is voter preferences, I examined multiple measures of this concept. The first is a general question, asking respondents who they would vote for if the election were held today.<sup>1</sup> The second and third variables measuring voter preferences ask respondents to rate how they feel about the candidates on a scale of 0 to 10.<sup>2</sup> I collapsed this scale so that scores of 0 through 3 were coded as an Unfavorable Rating, 4 through 6 fell into the Neutral Rating category, and 7 to 10 were counted as a Favorable Rating.

The conditional variables studied include the respondents' television viewing habits, education and partisanship, as well as his or her political engagement. Assessment of the respondents' TV use was created by computing the number of times per week the respondents reported viewing certain programs (resulting in the Television Viewing Habits Scale). Though not exactly the same method recommended by Ridout, Shaw, Goldstein and Franz (2004) because it was not possible with the NAES data, the spirit of the methodology is the same. That is, respondents are asked the number of times in the past week they watched a five different programs, which I computed to form a scale. Respondents who answered between 0 and 7 (meaning they watched one or more of the five asked-about programs a total of seven or fewer times in the past week) were placed in the Light TV Use category, those who responded between 8 and 15 were in the Medium TV Use Category, and responses above 15 were placed in the High TV Use category.

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<sup>1</sup> The exact question wording is: "If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republicans; John Kerry and John Edwards, the Democrats; or Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo of the Reform Party?" (Question 470)

<sup>2</sup> "On a scale of zero to 10, how would you rate (George W. Bush/John Kerry)? Zero means very unfavorable and 10 means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable. Of course you can use any number between 0 and 10." If don't know: "Do you mean you don't recognize the name, or you know the name but not well enough to rate them?"

Respondents falling into the High TV Viewing category are slightly different than the entire sample. They are slightly more Democratic than the whole sample (32.3% call themselves strong Democrats, compared to the 24.2% identifying the same way among all respondents).<sup>3</sup>

The variables measuring party identification (referred to throughout this paper as party ID or PID) is standard: partisanship is measured on the traditional scale of one to seven, where one represents Strong Democrat, four is a true Independent (a respondent who says he is an independent who does not lean towards one party or the other), and seven represents Strong Republican. Scores of three and five on this scale represent the independents leaning towards the Democratic or Republican Party, respectively. This scale was created by combining responses to three questions regarding general identification, strength of identification, and the “leanings” of political independents.<sup>4</sup>

I created the Political Engagement Scale as a measure of how tuned into politics each respondent is. NAES asked each respondent the number of times she or he discussed politics each week both with family and friends and at work. Possible scores on the Political Engagement Scale include Unengaged (those who reported discussing politics with family and friends or at work between 0 and 4 times per week), Moderately Engaged (5 to 9) and Highly Engaged (10 to 14 times per week).

## **Wisconsin Advertising Project**

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<sup>3</sup> For tables examining the differences in partisanship and vote choice between the whole sample and those who fall in the High TV Viewing category, see Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> Party ID question wording:

Question 258: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?”

Question 259: “Do you consider yourself a strong or not a very strong (from cMA01: Republican/Democrat/Independent)?”

Question 260: “Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?”

The Wisconsin Advertising Project dataset was important to utilize because it contains data about all of the political ads that aired during the 2004 campaign. During the final eight weeks of the campaign, 340 different Bush and Kerry advertisements were run in the top 100 media markets. These ads were aired over 349,000 times during this period. The WAP data includes information not only on *where* and *when* the ads aired, but also on the content of the ads. This is crucial to understanding what types of political advertisements are effective in shaping the preferences of the electorate. Each respondent's possible ad exposure is measured based on the media market that the respondent lives in and the number of ads that had been aired up to their date of interview. Thus, the conditional variable throughout this analysis is the number of each type of ad that every respondent theoretically could have seen before they were interviewed by NAES.

This paper relies heavily on variables concerning the focus and tone of the ad. Ad tone is measured based on whether the ad is primarily intended to attack, contrast, or promote the candidates.<sup>5</sup> This allows testing of H1 – whether or not negative ads are more effective at influencing voter preferences than positive ads (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Krupnikov, 2009; Stevens, 2009; Kahn & Kenny, 1999; Mayer, 1996.).

The effect of the focus of the ad has also been studied (Dardis, Shen & Edwards, 2008; Westen, 2007) and is important for testing H2 – whether policy (issue) or personality (image) ads are more effective tools of persuasion. The variable describing whether the primary focus of the ad is a candidate's personal characteristics or policy position will help test this hypothesis.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ad tone question wording: "In your judgment, is the primary purpose of the ad to promote a specific candidate, to attack a candidate, or to contrast the candidates?"

<sup>6</sup> Ad focus question wording: "In your judgment, is the primary focus of this ad the personal characteristics of either candidate or on policy matters?"



Other variables I utilized from the WAP data are whether or not an American flag appeared in the ad, the estimated cost of airing the ad (“based on normal cost of timeslot within market”<sup>7</sup>), and the number of seconds of the ad.

#### **Chapter 4: Ad Content and Emotional Appeals**

This section tests Hypothesis 6, that the Bush campaign used more emotional appeals in their ads than the Kerry campaign. Again, this hypothesis originates from Westen (2007); he argues that Republicans are more successful at appealing to the emotions of voters, and this is why Republicans made more successful electoral bids between 2000 and 2006. If the Republican Party is making emotional appeals more frequently in their campaigns, then one place this should manifest itself should be in their campaign ads.

Unfortunately, the WAP dataset does not include information that would enable analysis of whether Bush or Kerry used more emotional appeals in their campaign ads. To examine this, it was important to code the videostyle – the “verbal content, the nonverbal content, and the film/video production techniques used in political ads” (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 27)– of the ads run by the Bush and Kerry campaigns themselves. I was able to do this because the Political Communications Lab at Stanford University has an archive of these ads available on its website.<sup>8</sup> I coded these ads based on their coloring schemes, positive and negative imagery, background music, and patriotic symbols.<sup>9</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 1, two emotions have been highlighted as playing an important role in political decision-making: anxiety and enthusiasm (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Marcus,

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<sup>7</sup> WiscAd 2004 Presidential Codebook, p. 2

<sup>8</sup> <http://pcl.stanford.edu/campaigns/2004/archive.html>

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 2 for codebook

Neuman & MacKuen 2000; Brader, 2006). Appeals to anxiety often make use of black and white or dark coloring schemes. Discordant music in a minor key is also likely to raise the level of tension in a listener. Finally, negative imagery – such as images related to terrorism, drugs or violence, abandoned buildings, desolate landscapes or pollution, or the faces of people who look stressed or unhappy – is also likely to be utilized in these appeals to anxiety. These images are similar to those used by Brader (2006), and Kaid and Johnston (2001).

Appeals to enthusiasm were coded for based on the ad's use of bright colors and positive imagery. Positive imagery includes ads that feature smiles, clean neighborhoods, hardworking Americans, and schools or graduations. Finally, appeals to patriotism were coded based on the presence of traditional American symbols – an American flag, an eagle, famous American landscapes, an American document, or a prior President (similar to Kaid & Johnston, 2001) – in each ad, or if the ads utilized patriotic music, such as the National Anthem or a drum march.

To test the hypothesis that Republicans use more emotional appeals than Democrats, I compared the number of emotional appeals made by the Bush campaign to those made by the Kerry campaign. According to the Stanford PCL website, during September and October of 2004, the Bush campaign produced 27 ads; the Kerry campaign produced 41. A comparison with the WAP data shows some inconsistencies between the two datasets. While WAP has the Bush campaign airing 18 ads in September and October, Stanford provides 27 ads. This could be explained by the fact that perhaps the Bush campaign *produced* more ads than they eventually decided to air. The inconsistencies between the two datasets in relation to the Kerry campaign's ads, however, are less easily explained. According to the WAP data, Kerry ran 63 ads in the last two months. However, the PLC data only contains 41 Kerry ads. While many of the ads do

match between the two data sources, a major drawback is that the ad run most often by the Kerry campaign (“Guiding Principles”) is not listed in the PCL dataset.

While this inconsistency in the data sources is certainly a flaw with the data used in this section, it does not make the analysis any less worthwhile. Rather, it is simply important to keep in mind that more research should be done on this area to make data sources more complete and accurate.

Overall, I found mixed support for Hypothesis 6. No differences between the candidates’ ads emerged among positive ads, though some results did emerge in terms of the different use of emotional appeals in negative ads. A major difference between the campaigns, however, is in their use of neutral imagery.

In their positive ads, the Bush and Kerry campaigns used essentially equal amounts of appeals to enthusiasm. Of Bush and Kerry’s positive ads, 41.7% and 41.9%, respectively, used bright colors. Similarly, 50% of Bush’s positive ads and 51.6% of Kerry’s positive ads used at least one positive image. Positive Bush ads were slightly more likely to use multiple positive images (33.3% compared to Kerry’s 29%), but overall the positive ads were relatively equal in their use of appeals to enthusiasm.

No significant differences emerge in the way the two campaigns used dark coloring schemes in their negative ads; 62.9% of Kerry’s negative ads were shown in mostly dark colors, and 57.9% of Bush’s negative ads did the same. Furthermore, their use of black and white coloring was nearly identical: Bush’s 31.6% to Kerry’s 31.4%. The campaigns were also similar in their use of negative imagery in their attack ads. Almost 48% of the Bush attack ads utilized negative imagery, and almost 43% of Kerry attack ads did so as well. However, 11.4% of Kerry’s attack ads used two negative images, whereas no Bush ads used more than one.

An area of differentiation between the Bush and Kerry campaign ads was in their use of American or patriotic symbols. Despite my informal expectations that the Bush campaign would rely on patriotic appeals much more often than the Kerry campaign, the opposite turned out to be true. In fact, 77.8% of Bush ads did not feature any patriotic imagery, whereas 61% of Kerry ads used at least one American symbol (and 7.3% used more than one)! Similarly, as demonstrated by Table 1, 22% of Kerry ads used marching or drumming music. No Bush ads used drums to appeal to viewers’ patriotism.

**Table 1**

**Use of Drumming or Marching Music in Candidates' Ads**

			Drum Use		Total
			No Drums	Drums Used	
CANDIDATE	BUSH	Count	27	0	27
		% within CANDIDATE	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	KERRY	Count	32	9	41
		% within CANDIDATE	78.0%	22.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	59	9	68
		% within CANDIDATE	86.8%	13.2%	100.0%

Despite the above discussion of imagery, music and coloration present in the ads, one accusation that Westen pinned on Democrats is that often they simply lack a way of “telling the truth in a way that is emotionally compelling” (p. 257). In ads where the candidate spends a lot of time speaking to the camera, the difference between Bush ads and Kerry ads is quite different. In fact, in 73.2% of Kerry’s ads, he spends time addressing the camera. This is true in only 40.7% of Bush ads. This is the greatest difference between the Bush and Kerry ads, and the area where hypothesis 6 is most supported.

For example, Kerry’s ad “Obligation” demonstrates this fact clearly. For almost the entirety of the ad, Kerry is a talking head. He explains, “The obligation of a Commander-in-Chief is to keep our country safe. In Iraq, George Bush has overextended our troops, and now

failed to secure 380 tons of deadly explosives, the kind used for attacks in Iraq and for terrorist bombings. His Iraq misjudgments put our soldiers at risk and make our country less secure.

And all he offers is more of the same. As president, I'll make a fresh start to protect our troops and our nation. I'm John Kerry, and I approve this message." The ad is shot in an office, with an American flag visible in the left side of the background. Soft classical music plays as Kerry talks to the camera, and for about 8 seconds Kerry's head is replaced by a New York Times article headlined "Huge Cache of Explosives Vanished from Sight in Iraq."

While Kerry certainly criticizes Bush in this ad, it lacks the emotional appeals that Bush makes quite successfully in many of his ads. In contrast to Kerry's "Obligation" ad, one of the Bush campaign's ads – "Whatever It Takes" – has stuck with me long after I first watched it. Bush stands behind a podium, giving a speech to a crowd of soldiers, veterans, and their families. Bush stands in front of a red, white and blue background and says,

"I've learned firsthand that ordering Americans into battle is the hardest decision, even when it was right. I have returned the salute of wounded soldiers, who say they were just doing their job." The camera focuses on a veteran in the audience, with American flags waving in the foreground, "I've held the children of the fallen who've been told their dad or mom is a hero, but would rather just have their mom or dad. I've met with the parents and wives and husbands," the camera focuses on a woman with tears in her eyes, holding an American flag, "who have received a folded flag. And in those military families, I have seen the character of a great nation." Camera fades between cheering crowd, waving flags, and pictures of veterans.

"Because of your service and sacrifice, we are defeating the terrorists where they live and plan, and are making America safer. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes." At this last line, the background music swells and the audience cheers.

The difference in these two ads is striking. It demonstrates the fact that, despite many of the similarities in the use of emotional appeals made through the ads' videostyle, a fundamental difference distinguishes the Bush ads from the Kerry ads: the use of the talking head. In both ads described above, the candidates were speaking about the military. Both made appeals to viewers' patriotism by featuring American flags. It was the format of the ad that was noticeably different; this format change, while certainly important in understanding the candidates' approach to persuasion, is the most significantly different factor between the candidates' ads.

Thus, the support for Hypothesis 6 is mixed. The candidates' ads were quite similar in their appeals to enthusiasm and their use of negative imagery in appeals to anxiety. However, Kerry – not Bush – was more likely to appeal to viewers' patriotism in his ads. The greatest support for Hypothesis 5 comes from the fact that the Kerry campaign was much more likely to use a non-emotional format for getting their message across: the talking head.

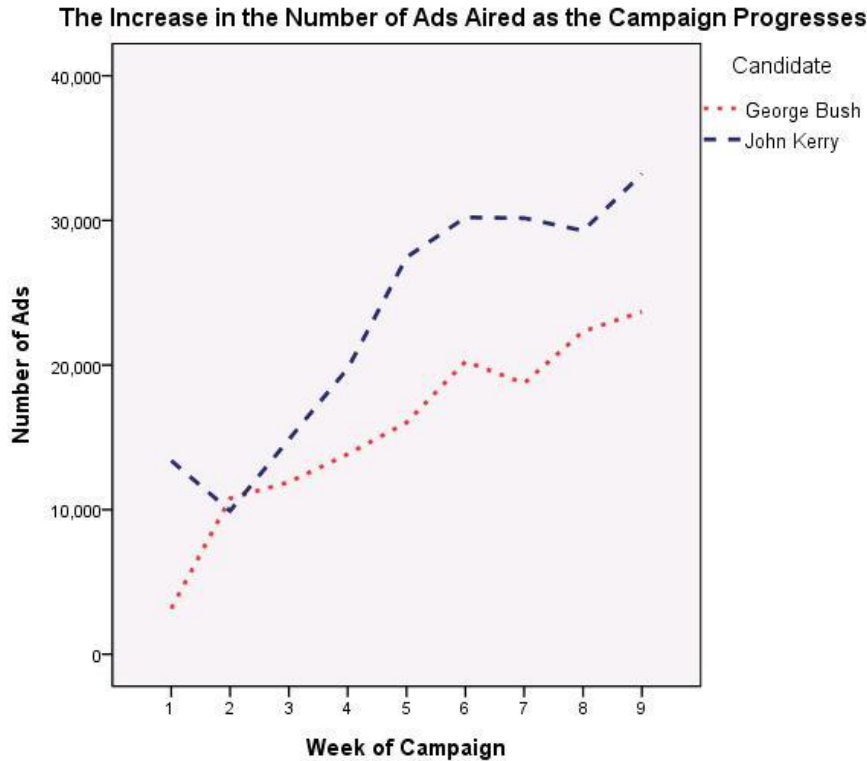
### **Chapter 5: Advertising Strategy – Timing and Placement**

Political ads in any campaign are not deployed randomly; campaigns choose the timing and location of their ads based on a number of factors, including the electoral significance of the area and the competitiveness and candidate's approval in the area. Thus, ad placement is very strategic, and understanding why the candidates placed ads the way they did is crucial to understanding the ads' effects.

In total, in the nine weeks leading up to the election – which encompasses almost the entire general election campaign – the campaigns, the parties, and interest groups ran over 348,000 ads for Bush or Kerry. In terms of the raw number of ads in the 2004 Presidential campaign, Kerry ran almost 50% more in the top 100 media markets: 208,270 to Bush's 140,707

ads. In every week but one (week 2), Americans saw more ads for Kerry than ads for Bush (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



As shown in Table 2, the ads run by the campaigns themselves differed in their ad tone. Bush was much more inclined to go on the attack: 70.3% of Bush ads were negative. Kerry, on the other hand, was more likely to draw a contrast between himself and Bush in his ads: he did so 59% of the time. Furthermore, Kerry’s ads made up nearly 100% of the contrast ads, as Bush aired a contrast ad only 11 times. This is not unexpected; the Bush team likely decided to use their incumbency as an advantage and ignored the challenger in ads. Kerry was also more likely to run positive ads: 38.2% of his ads were positive, compared to only 29.5% of Bush’s ads. Further, nearly 90% of the positive ads aired during the 2004 general election were Kerry’s.

**Table 2**

**The Candidates' Overall Ad Tone**

			Ad Tone			Total
			Attack	Contrast	Promote	
Candidate	George Bush	Count	7174	11	3013	10198
		% within Candidate's Ads	70.3%	.1%	29.5%	100.0%
		% within Ad Tone	79.6%	.0%	10.7%	13.4%
Candidate	John Kerry	Count	1835	38827	25104	65766
		% within Candidate's Ads	2.8%	59.0%	38.2%	100.0%
		% within Ad Tone	20.4%	100.0%	89.3%	86.6%
Total		Count	9009	38838	28117	75964
		% within Candidate's Ads	11.9%	51.1%	37.0%	100.0%
		% within Ad Tone	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The tone of the ads across the campaign varied widely. As shown in Figure 2, while Bush ads were initially more positive than Kerry's, by the fourth week of the campaign the Bush ads were almost entirely negative. In the final week, however, the number of negative Bush ads dipped substantially; perhaps with the intention of leaving a positive final impression with voters just before they headed to the polls. Alternately, Kerry ran primarily contrast ads until the seventh week of the campaign, when the emphasis of his ads became negativity. Unlike the Bush ads, the number of negative Kerry ads continued to increase through the end of the campaign.



Figure 2

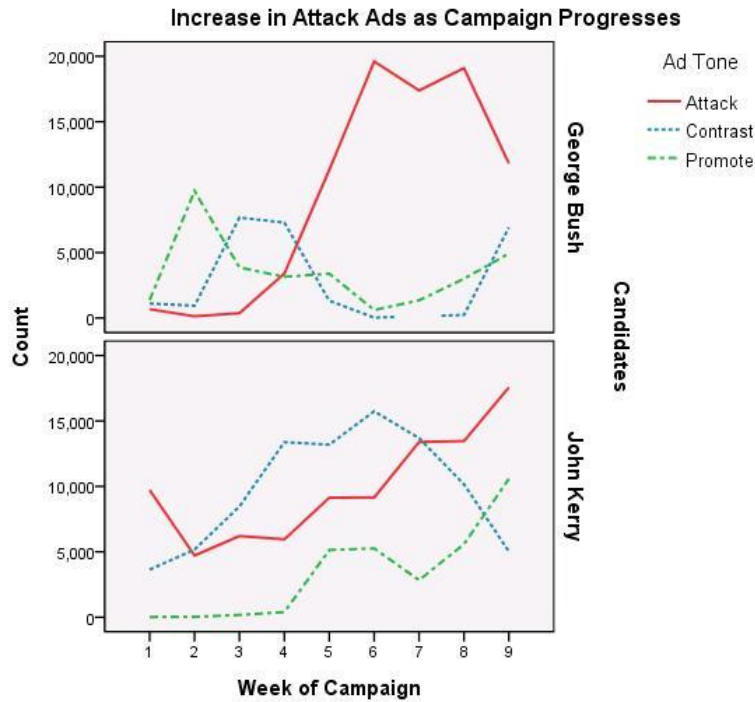
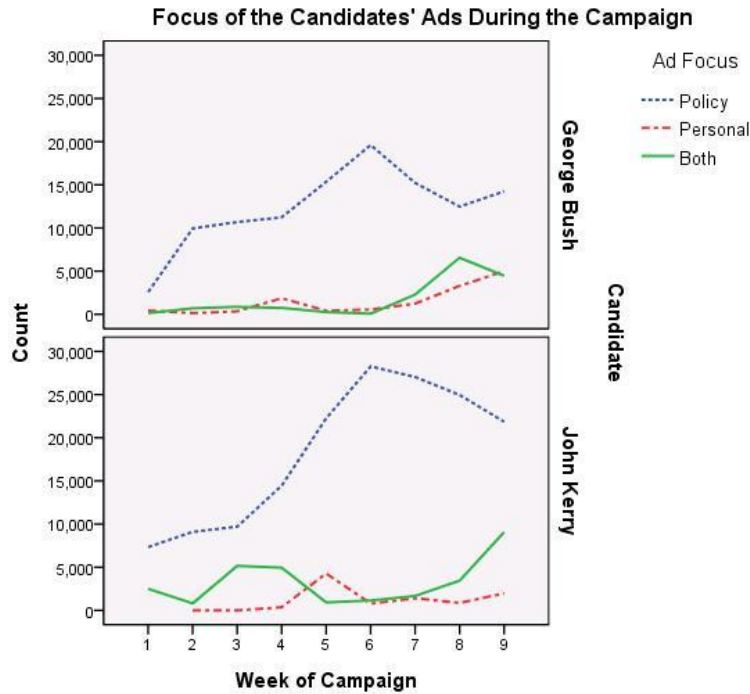


Figure 3 does quite a bit to dispel the myth that political ads are focused on the character of a candidate rather than on policy matters. In fact, throughout the entire campaign, the ads of both candidates focused much more on matters of policy than on personality. In the last week of the campaign, however, Bush ads began to focus more intensely on personality than they had earlier in the campaign. Kerry ads also began to focus more on personality – by increasing the number of Kerry ads that focused on both Personality and Policy – starting about two weeks out from Election Day. Thus, though there was an uptick in the focus on personal characteristics in the last few weeks (especially among Bush ads), throughout the campaign the ads were largely focused on the policy positions of the candidates.

Figure 3



Figures 1, 2 and 3 demonstrate how the campaigns grew in intensity as Election Day drew nearer. Nine weeks out from the election, both campaigns were running a relatively low number of ads. However, halfway through election season, a major difference emerged in the level and type of advertising that the candidates were producing. For Kerry, the rise in ads was steep and steady. The focus was increasingly negative, policy-focused ads. Bush’s increase in total ads was slightly more gradual and he never reached the highs that Kerry did towards the end. However, the sharp climb in Bush attack ads around weeks four to six demonstrate the point at which the Bush campaign clicked into gear.

While the timing of the ads is quite informative as to how the campaigns “sped up” as the election drew nearer, the placement of the ads is important to understanding which states the campaigns felt were worth the fight. The campaigns focused on areas which, in the presidential election of 2000, had been won by a narrow margin. The ten media markets that received the

most ads<sup>10</sup> were based out of five states: New Mexico, Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, and Nevada. Each of these states was won in 2000 by less than four percent of the vote and was considered a battleground state. These battleground states appear in the data as media markets where both Bush and Kerry placed a high amount of ads. In fact, throughout the campaign, the placement of Bush and Kerry ads is very highly correlated ( $r=.957$ ). Figure 4 demonstrates this correlation nicely. Each data point represents the number of Bush or Kerry ads that ran in an individual media market throughout the nine weeks of the general election campaign. Markets that received only a light amount of ads are located in the bottom left of Figure 4, whereas markets with a high amount of ads are in the upper right corner. The Tampa and Miami markets received the most ad play during the campaign, and are the markets located in the upper right corner in Figure 4.

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<sup>10</sup> Albuquerque, Cleveland, Columbus, Green Bay, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Miami, Milwaukee, Orlando, Toledo

Figure 4

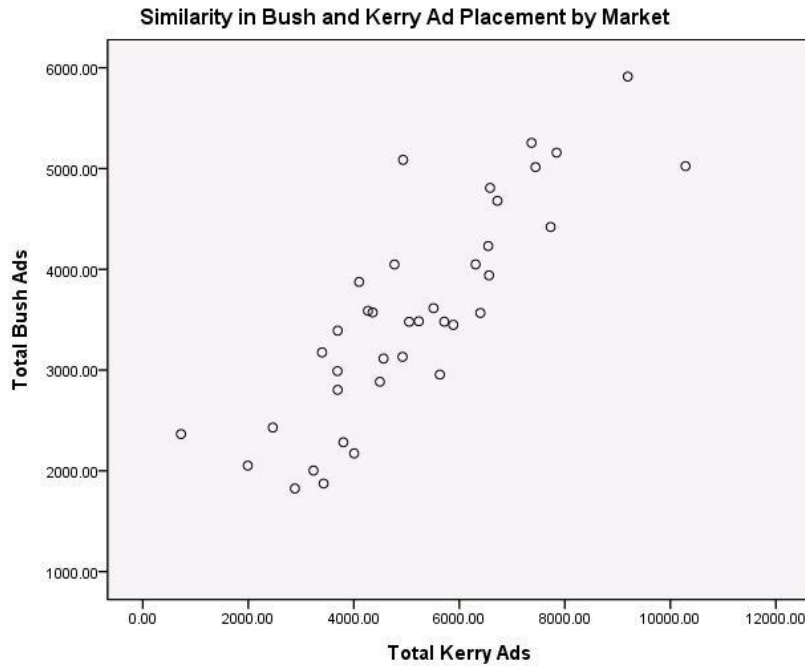


Table 3 reinforces the idea that the candidates thought that the same media markets were important or competitive (or not), and placed their ads accordingly. Florida was the deciding state in 2000, and it was hotly contested in the 2004 election. This is obvious by the high ad placement in the Florida media markets. The first seven rows of Table 3 are Florida media markets in which political ads ran during the 2004 Presidential campaign. Of the ten media markets that broadcast in Florida, seven received a high amount of ads during the campaign. The three that received no ads are located in the relatively lightly populated Florida panhandle.

Not all states were as hotly contested as Florida, however. California and Texas, for example, are considered to be safe states for Democrats and Republicans, respectively. Neither Bush nor Kerry wasted money on potential voters in these states; of the 15 markets located in California, only San Diego received any ads during the general election campaign: it received a single ad. Other California markets, such as San Francisco or Los Angeles market, received no

ads. Similarly, rows nine to eleven in Table 3 represent the only three markets in Texas (of 19) to receive any ads. The San Antonio market received only one ad. The Shreveport and El Paso media markets both significantly overlap into other states: the Shreveport is market, of course, based out of Louisiana. The El Paso media market includes part of southern New Mexico (a battleground state). Because of this overlap into other states, both Bush and especially Kerry felt it worthwhile to air ads in these two – but no other – Texas media markets.

**Table 3**

<b>Safe and Contested Media Markets</b>							
	Total Bush Ads	Total Kerry Ads	Total Ads in Market	Bush Ads in Election Week	Kerry Ads in Election Week	Bush Ads in First Week of Campaign	Kerry Ads in First Week of Campaign
Ft. Myers	2,990	3,690	6,680	469	422	95	219
Mobile	3,175	3,397	6,572	762	670	123	252
Jacksonville	4,049	6,308	10,357	560	829	122	317
Orlando	5,014	7,443	12,457	913	1,252	34	296
Shreveport	0	562	562	0	562	0	0
Tampa	5,913	9,192	15,105	996	1,775	147	397
West Palm Beach	2,284	3,801	6,085	564	608	1	113
San Diego	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Shreveport	0	562	562	0	562	0	0
San Antonio	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
El Paso	1,171	1,834	3,005	328	409	0	17

What is significant about Table 3 is not only which markets are listed. Though it is important to observe the high number of ads that were aired in battleground states such as Florida, just as important are the markets that *are not* listed. Almost all of the markets in “safe” states were ignored because it was simply not worth the effort for either campaign to advertise there.

This chapter is important because it gives a feel of the rhythm and pace of the campaign. Clearly, the campaigns intensified as Election Day drew near, particularly in battleground states. Furthermore, throughout the entire campaign, the ads were overwhelmingly focused on matters

of policy and not personal characteristics of the candidates, yet the ads got significantly more negative as the campaign progressed.

## **Chapter 6: Advertising Effects**

This chapter examines the different variables that influence the possible effect of the campaign ads run in the 2004 general election. It tests the majority of my hypotheses, such as whether or not negative and personality-focused ads are more effective at swaying public opinion than positive, policy-focused ads (Hypotheses One and Two). It also tests Hypothesis Three: whether unengaged voters are more likely to be swayed by campaign ads, and Hypothesis Four: whether independents are more open to influence than partisan voters. The layout of the chapter is as follows: first is a discussion of how television viewing habits affect campaign ads' possible impact on voters' preferences. Viewers who watch a lot of television are exposed to more ads than those who watch less. The results suggest that Kerry's positive and negative ads affect Kerry's favorability, while Bush favorability is relatively stable under different levels of the amount of TV use.

Second, the differences between independent and partisan voters are explained. Much of the analysis in this chapter is based upon correlations between party ID and candidate favorability, and how this relationship is affected by ad exposure. However, without the predictor of attachment to one party or the other, how do ads affect the way that voters feel about the candidates? This section explains how independent voters are affected differently than partisan voters; independent voters were especially swayed by Kerry's negative ads.

The third section is similar to the third, but with the focus on political engagement. If, as has been argued (Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004), campaign ads serve a “multivitamin” function, then they should be especially effective on those who are least engaged in politics. This was supported, and unengaged respondents were generally influenced more than the politically engaged by an increased level of advertising.

The fourth section changes the dependent variable to focus on the respondents’ likelihood of voting. This tests whether exposure to certain ads makes respondents more or less likely to turn out to vote. For the majority of the advertising types, increased exposure to ads did increase turnout likelihood.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the difference effects on respondents interviewed toward the end of the campaign and those interviewed earlier in the election cycle. These late respondents have been exposed to more ads than those interviewed in the first week of the campaign. This means that, presumably, the ads have had more time to affect these late respondents than others and there is a potentially greater effect of the accumulation of repeated exposure to them.

Before beginning the analyses, however, I want to discuss the partisan inclinations of the data briefly. First, as presented in Table 4, Republicans tended to be more loyal supporters of Bush than Democrats were of Kerry. Strong Republicans, for example, rated Bush favorably 93.9% of the time; only 84.8% of strong Democrats rated Kerry as highly. Moreover, while 6% of strong Democrats rated Bush favorably, only 3.7% of strong Republicans gave Kerry a similar rating.

Independents, on the other hand, tended to feel more neutral about Kerry than they did about Bush. True independents rated Kerry favorably 29.9% of the time, and a whopping 43.7%

gave him a neutral rating. The independents were split over Bush, however, with almost exactly a third of independents falling in each rating category.

Also important to note is that the “leaners” (Independents Leaning Democratic and Independents Leaning Republican) tended to act more like true partisans than weak Democrats or weak Republicans. For example, Independents leaning Republican rated Bush favorably more often than weak Republicans (75.9% compared to 70.7%, respectively). The same was true among Democrats: weak Democrats rated Kerry favorably only 56.2% of the time, compared to the 65.7% of Independents leaning Democratic who rated him in the same way.

**Table 4**

Table of Party ID and Bush and Kerry Favorability										
			Scale of Kerry Favorability			Total	Scale of Bush Favorability			Total
			Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable		Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	
Party ID	Strong Democrats	Count	74	304	2102	2480	1922	417	148	2487
		% within Party_ID	3.0%	12.3%	84.8%	100.0%	77.3%	16.8%	6.0%	100.0%
	Weak Democrats	Count	168	396	723	1287	622	377	306	1305
		% within Party_ID	13.1%	30.8%	56.2%	100.0%	47.7%	28.9%	23.4%	100.0%
	Independents Leaning Democrat	Count	67	362	822	1251	850	294	111	1255
		% within Party_ID	5.4%	28.9%	65.7%	100.0%	67.7%	23.4%	8.8%	100.0%
	True Independents	Count	153	253	173	579	199	191	198	588
		% within Party_ID	26.4%	43.7%	29.9%	100.0%	33.8%	32.5%	33.7%	100.0%
	Independents Leaning Republican	Count	601	399	92	1092	70	195	835	1100
		% within Party_ID	55.0%	36.5%	8.4%	100.0%	6.4%	17.7%	75.9%	100.0%
	Weak Republicans	Count	528	436	147	1111	107	222	794	1123
		% within Party_ID	47.5%	39.2%	13.2%	100.0%	9.5%	19.8%	70.7%	100.0%
	Strong Republicans	Count	1829	391	86	2306	51	91	2179	2321
		% within Party_ID	79.3%	17.0%	3.7%	100.0%	2.2%	3.9%	93.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	3420	2541	4145	10106	3821	1787	4571	10179
		% within Party_ID	33.8%	25.1%	41.0%	100.0%	37.5%	17.6%	44.9%	100.0%

### Television Viewing Habits

Much of this analysis relies on whether or not the relationship between party identification and candidate favorability changes based on the respondents’ exposure to ads. For



example, whether weak Democrats are more likely to rate Kerry favorably when they are exposed to a high amount of Kerry's promotional ads. The TV Viewing Habits Scale is an important variable because it takes respondent behavior into consideration. Theoretically, a person who watches quite a bit of TV is more likely to see campaign ads than a person who does not watch much TV. Combining questions about the respondents' television habits (which channels they watch and how many times in the last week they watched) gives a good sense of each respondent's relative TV use.

A comparison of the correlations between people who watch TV only rarely (score of "Low" on the TV Habits Scale) and those who watch TV often (score of "High") shows mixed results. Bush favorability was hardly affected by whether or not the respondent watched a lot of TV; however, Kerry favorability was greatly affected.

In terms of the Kerry ads, increasing the number of both positive ads and negative ads strengthened the correlation between party ID and Kerry favorability. This correlation was strengthened among both low and high TV viewers, but was stronger in both cases among high viewers.

When Kerry ran a high amount of promotional ads in a respondent's market prior to their interview date, Democrats were more likely to rate him favorably if they watched a lot of TV. For example, strong Democrats who were exposed to the highest amount of positive Kerry ads (because of their date of interview, their media market, and their TV habits) rated Kerry favorably 98.2% of the time. Strong Democrats who – though also in high exposure markets – did not watch a lot of TV only rated Kerry as favorably 86.2% of the time. The same relationship is true for weak Democrats: in markets where Kerry ran a high amount of positive

ads, high viewers rated Kerry favorably 66.7% of the time, whereas he is rated as highly only 52.4% of the time among low viewers.

Similarly, Republicans were *less* likely to rate him *unfavorably* if they saw a lot of ads promoting Kerry than if they watched a low amount of TV. Strong Republicans in markets with a high amount of positive Kerry ads rated him negatively only 79.4% of the time, whereas 86.5% of strong Republicans in the same markets who did not watch much TV report negative feelings about him. Weak Republicans in heavy placement markets also rated Kerry less negatively when they watched a high amount of TV (40.7%) compared to a low amount of TV (65%).<sup>11</sup> In sum, Kerry's promotional ads appear to have done what they were intended to do; as respondents had more opportunities to see these positive ads, they felt more positively towards Kerry.

Among High TV viewers alone, however, Kerry's promotional ads did not have the same effect on different partisans. As shown in Table 5, High Viewing Strong Democrats increased in their positive feelings toward Kerry as the amount of Kerry promotional ads increased. This pattern is even stronger among weak Democrats; when weak Democrats watch high amount of TV, they become even more pro-Kerry as the amount of positive Kerry ads in their market increases. As shown in Table 5, weak Democrats' favorability of Kerry increases linearly from 55.9% among those who are exposed to no advertising, up over 10 percentage points to 66.7% among those who live in Heavy Exposure markets.

This relationship holds true once again for the high-viewing independents (both true independents and also those who lean Democratic). Among true independents (those respondents who tell interviewers that they do not lean toward one party or another), those who saw no Kerry ads feel positively about him only 28.5% of the time, this increases to 52.6% when

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 1 for these tables

exposed to a medium amount of Kerry promotional ads, and then dips down to 40% among those exposed to a high amount.

**Table 5**

**The Effect of Kerry's Positive Ads on the Relationship Between PID and Kerry Favorability (Among High TV Viewers)**

Positive Kerry Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	16	31	14	29	110	83	291	574
			% within Party ID	2.4%	11.0%	5.0%	23.6%	56.1%	46.6%	76.0%	27.2%
	2.00	Count	67	93	71	59	68	60	71	489	
		% within Party ID	10.0%	33.1%	25.5%	48.0%	34.7%	33.7%	18.5%	23.2%	
	3.00	Count	585	157	193	35	18	35	21	1044	
		% within Party ID	87.6%	55.9%	69.4%	28.5%	9.2%	19.7%	5.5%	49.5%	
Total	Count	668	281	278	123	196	178	383	2107		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	5	6	3	6	22	16	75	133
			% within Party ID	3.4%	12.2%	4.8%	31.6%	51.2%	34.8%	72.8%	28.5%
	2.00	Count	15	12	14	6	18	20	23	108	
		% within Party ID	10.3%	24.5%	22.6%	31.6%	41.9%	43.5%	22.3%	23.1%	
	3.00	Count	125	31	45	7	3	10	5	226	
		% within Party ID	86.2%	63.3%	72.6%	36.8%	7.0%	21.7%	4.9%	48.4%	
Total	Count	145	49	62	19	43	46	103	467		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	6	4	2	2	19	11	69	113
			% within Party ID	3.9%	11.4%	4.3%	10.5%	67.9%	35.5%	84.1%	28.6%
	2.00	Count	15	8	7	7	7	11	10	65	
		% within Party ID	9.8%	22.9%	14.9%	36.8%	25.0%	35.5%	12.2%	16.5%	
	3.00	Count	132	23	38	10	2	9	3	217	
		% within Party ID	86.3%	65.7%	80.9%	52.6%	7.1%	29.0%	3.7%	54.9%	
Total	Count	153	35	47	19	28	31	82	395		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	0	2	0	3	6	5	27	43
			% within Party ID	.0%	11.1%	.0%	30.0%	42.9%	33.3%	79.4%	25.7%
	2.00	Count	1	4	7	3	5	6	5	31	
		% within Party ID	1.8%	22.2%	35.0%	30.0%	35.7%	40.0%	14.7%	18.6%	
	3.00	Count	55	12	13	4	3	4	2	93	
		% within Party ID	98.2%	66.7%	65.0%	40.0%	21.4%	26.7%	5.9%	55.7%	
Total	Count	56	18	20	10	14	15	34	167		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

This curvilinear trend appears in multiple areas throughout the data, and as such I would like to draw the reader's attention to it now. As shown in the previous chapter, markets in

battleground states become saturated by the end of the campaign with both candidates' ads. At some point, the ads presumably produce diminishing returns, where after a certain number of ads have been viewed, each ad packs less and less of a punch; the markets have become oversaturated with campaign ads. Furthermore, because of the fact that Bush's high impact areas are almost always the same ones as targeted by Kerry, a respondent who is exposed to a high number of Kerry ads is almost certainly also exposed to a high number of Bush ads. Thus, the curvilinear trend is not unexpected.

This curvilinear effect also appears among the high TV-viewing Democratic Leaners. Table 5 shows a clear upward trend in these Democratic Leaners' positive feelings towards Kerry as the amount of Kerry promotional ads in their market increase from no ads (69.4% report feeling warmly towards him), through a low number of positive Kerry ads (72.6%), and peaks with the medium number of positive Kerry ads, with 80.9% of High TV watching Democratic-leaners reporting positive feelings towards Kerry. Then, among those Democratic leaners who are exposed to a high amount of positive Kerry ads, the percentage reporting positive feelings towards him falls to 65%. Perhaps this change results from the relatively small number of respondents who fall into the High exposure category for positive Kerry ads, or perhaps it is another manifestation of the curvilinear effect as seen among true independents.

Kerry's positive ads have two separate effects on respondents' rating of Kerry. The first is that, among all partisans, High TV viewers are more likely than Low TV viewers to rate Kerry favorably in markets where a Kerry positive advertising was heavy. The second effect is that this pattern is also evident among High TV Viewers at different levels of Kerry advertising: respondents in areas where positive Kerry advertising was heavy were more likely to rate him favorably than those in areas where Kerry ran little to no positive advertising. However, this

effect was limited to Democrats and Independents; unlike the comparison between High and Low TV viewers, Republicans did not react favorably to increased viewing of Kerry positive ads when the scope was limited to High viewers and the change in level of Kerry advertising was the moderating variable.

Now turning to Kerry's attack ads, as Kerry increased the number of attack ads, more non-Republicans felt positively about him. When exposure to Kerry's attack ads increased based on respondents' TV viewing habits, strong Democrats were more likely to express support for Kerry. Among strong Democrats who lived in markets with a moderate level of Kerry attack advertising, support for Kerry increased from 77.6% among those who watch a low amount of TV to 85.2% who watch a high amount of TV. Further, of strong Democrats who watch a lot of TV and live in markets with a heavy amount of Kerry attack ads, 88.3% rate Kerry favorably (from 7 to 10 on a 0-10 scale), compared to strong Democrats who also live in high-placement markets but who watch low levels of TV, of whom only 80% rate Kerry as highly.<sup>12</sup>

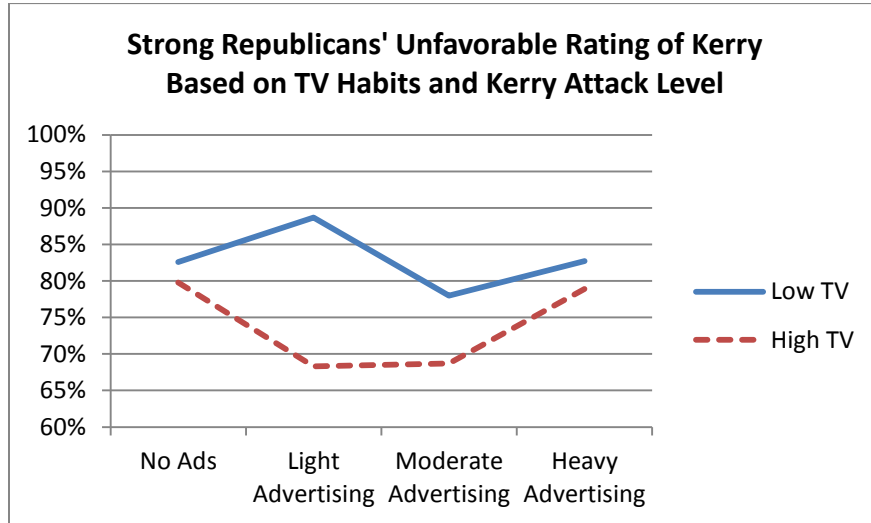
Exposure to Kerry's attack ads also affects the way Republicans rate his favorability. Across all levels of ad-placement (no ads, light advertising, moderate advertising, and heavy advertising), strong Republicans who watch a high amount of TV are less likely to rate Kerry negatively (0 through 3 on the 0-10 scale) than those who watch a low amount of TV. This difference is relatively small among those who live in markets where no ads were run (low TV = 82.6%, high TV = 79.8%), but is substantial in markets with a low number of ads (low TV = 88.7%, high TV = 68.3%). This difference is also quite large in markets with a medium amount of ads (low TV = 78%, high TV = 68.7%), and also apparent in those with a high amount of attack ads (low = 82.7%, high = 78.9%). These percentages represent the proportion of strong

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<sup>12</sup> Tables on the effect of Kerry attack advertising on Kerry favorability based on Level of TV Viewing are available in Appendix 1

Republicans who rate Kerry unfavorably, based on the number of ads run in their media market and the amount that they watch TV (See Figure 5).

Figure 5



This graph demonstrates that Kerry’s unfavorables among strong Republicans are significantly lower at light and moderate levels of Kerry attack advertising when the respondents are high TV viewers. In sum, increased exposure to Kerry’s attack ads is correlated with both Democrats and Republicans feeling more positively about Kerry. Though this effect is curvilinear among High Viewing Republicans, it is linear for Democrats (both when comparing High and Low TV viewers, and comparing different levels of Kerry attack advertising).

Turning now to the way Bush’s attack ads affected Kerry favorability, among low TV viewers, the correlation between party ID and Kerry favorability is -.593 for those who live in markets with heavy levels of Bush attack advertising. However, among those who watch high amount of TV, the correlation strengthens to -.639 in these heavy markets. Note in Table 6, exposure to Bush attack ads is not persuading Democrats to feel more positively towards Bush, but rather reinforcing the partisanship of all who see them. This table includes only respondents who report watching a high level of TV.

**Table 6**

**The Effect of Bush Attack Ads on Kerry Favorability Among High TV Viewers**

Level of Bush Attack Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	13	28	14	20	82	65	222	444
			% within Party ID	2.5%	12.5%	6.4%	21.1%	53.2%	42.8%	78.4%	27.1%
	Neutral	Count	52	75	58	51	55	58	47	396	
		% within Party ID	10.2%	33.5%	26.6%	53.7%	35.7%	38.2%	16.6%	24.2%	
	Favorable	Count	447	121	146	24	17	29	14	798	
		% within Party ID	87.3%	54.0%	67.0%	25.3%	11.0%	19.1%	4.9%	48.7%	
Total	Count	512	224	218	95	154	152	283	1638		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	6	5	1	13	35	25	91	176
			% within Party ID	3.0%	6.4%	1.2%	34.2%	64.8%	53.2%	68.9%	27.9%
	Neutral	Count	22	23	18	10	19	11	33	136	
		% within Party ID	11.1%	29.5%	21.7%	26.3%	35.2%	23.4%	25.0%	21.6%	
	Favorable	Count	170	50	64	15	0	11	8	318	
		% within Party ID	85.9%	64.1%	77.1%	39.5%	.0%	23.4%	6.1%	50.5%	
Total	Count	198	78	83	38	54	47	132	630		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	2	3	2	1	7	4	28	47
			% within Party ID	3.1%	13.6%	8.3%	25.0%	43.8%	22.2%	77.8%	25.5%
	Neutral	Count	6	5	2	2	7	10	7	39	
		% within Party ID	9.4%	22.7%	8.3%	50.0%	43.8%	55.6%	19.4%	21.2%	
	Favorable	Count	56	14	20	1	2	4	1	98	
		% within Party ID	87.5%	63.6%	83.3%	25.0%	12.5%	22.2%	2.8%	53.3%	
Total	Count	64	22	24	4	16	18	36	184		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	6	7	2	6	33	21	121	196
			% within Party ID	2.4%	11.9%	2.4%	17.6%	57.9%	39.6%	80.1%	28.7%
	Neutral	Count	18	14	21	12	17	18	22	122	
		% within Party ID	7.3%	23.7%	25.6%	35.3%	29.8%	34.0%	14.6%	17.8%	
	Favorable	Count	224	38	59	16	7	14	8	366	
		% within Party ID	90.3%	64.4%	72.0%	47.1%	12.3%	26.4%	5.3%	53.5%	
Total	Count	248	59	82	34	57	53	151	684		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

The interesting thing about this relationship is that strong partisans – when exposed to Bush attack ads – are always more likely to support (in the case of Democrats) or reject (in the case of Republicans) Kerry when they watch high levels of TV. Of strong Democrats who watched a high amount of TV and had been exposed to heavy Bush attack advertising, 90.3% rated Kerry favorably; compared to 79.8% of strong Democrats who watched a low amount of TV. Perhaps one would expect that, as exposure to Bush’s attack ads increased, Democrats would be turned off from Kerry. However, this was not true. At all levels of the Bush Attack

Scale, among strong and weak Democrats – and even independents leaning Democratic – a higher level of TV viewership was correlated with a more favorable opinion of Kerry.

When looking just at respondents who score High on the TV Viewing Habits Scale, the percentage of strong Republicans reporting unfavorable feelings toward Kerry starts high in among those exposed to no Bush attack ads (78.4%), then falls to 68.9% in markets where he runs a low amount of negative ads. However, this percentage climbs to 77.8% when exposure to Bush's negative ads reaches a moderate level, and once more to 80.1% where he runs a high amount of negative ads.

Despite the anomaly when comparing strong Republican High and Low TV Viewers, the data surrounding the effect of Bush attack ads on Kerry favorability tells a compelling message: Bush attack ads polarize the viewers. Democrats, when exposed to a high amount of Bush attack ads, feel more positively about Kerry, while Republicans rate Kerry more negatively when the amount of Bush attack ads increases.

This focus on respondents who watch a high amount of TV in this section strongly supports the idea that campaign ads have an effect on the way voters make their decisions. Changes in the level of both Kerry's promotional and attack ads, as well as Bush's attack advertising were strongly correlated with a change in the relationship between party ID and Kerry's favorability rating. In the case of Kerry's promotional ads, Democrats who were exposed to more ads – both because of their TV viewing habits and their media market – reacted positively and rated Kerry more favorably whereas Republicans were relatively unaffected. On the other hand, when exposed to Kerry's attack ads, Kerry's favorability improved among both Democrats and Republicans. Finally, viewers became more polarized in their partisanship as



exposure to Bush’s attack ads increased; while Republicans rated Kerry more unfavorably as exposure increased, Democrats were even more firmly rooted in their approval of Kerry.

**Independents**

A large part of a campaign is based on an attempt to capture the Independent voters. This section focuses on testing Hypothesis Four, to understand if and how independents respond differently to campaign ads than partisans. During the campaign, the independents were split over Bush and Kerry (See Tables 7 and 8). On the one hand, they *liked* Bush slightly more than they liked Kerry (38.5% to 36.4%). But they also *disliked* Bush much more than they disliked Kerry (37.4% to 27.4%). This dichotomy is understandable; voters had already had four years to get to know Bush, whereas many had not heard of Kerry before the 2004 campaign began. Voters had simply accumulated less information about Kerry from which to form an opinion.

**Table 7**

**Bush Favorability Among Independents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unfavorable	1148	37.4	37.6	37.6
	Neutral	722	23.5	23.6	61.3
	Favorable	1183	38.5	38.7	100.0
	Total	3053	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	19	.6		
Total		3072	100.0		

**Table 8**

**Kerry Favorability Among Independents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unfavorable	843	27.4	27.9	27.9
	Neutral	1062	34.6	35.1	63.0
	Favorable	1119	36.4	37.0	100.0
	Total	3024	98.4	100.0	
Missing	System	48	1.6		
Total		3072	100.0		

Among independent respondents, correlations were generally low between the ads respondents were exposed to and their preference for one candidate or another. This is to be expected, however; as party ID is the strongest predictor of vote choice, the room for campaign ads to have an impact on voter preference is certainly on the margins. The strongest effect is seen based on the number of Kerry attack ads a respondent is exposed to. For example, when independents view no Kerry attack ads, they rate Kerry favorably only 34.3% of the time (see Table 9). However, this favorability rating of Kerry jumps to 41% when independents view a high level of Kerry attack ads. Similarly, Kerry’s Unfavorability drops from 30.5% when respondents see no Kerry ads to 25.7% when in a market with a heavy amount of Kerry attack ads. Though this correlation is not especially strong, it is highly significant.

**Table 9**

**The Improvement of Kerry Favorability Among Independents as Exposure to Kerry Attacks Increases**

			Scale of Kerry Favorability			Total
			Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	
Level of Kerry Attack Ads	No Advertising	Count	371	429	417	1217
		% within KerryScale_Attack	30.5%	35.3%	34.3%	100.0%
	Light Advertising	Count	100	127	126	353
		% within KerryScale_Attack	28.3%	36.0%	35.7%	100.0%
	Moderate Advertising	Count	98	131	142	371
		% within KerryScale_Attack	26.4%	35.3%	38.3%	100.0%
	Heavy Advertising	Count	252	327	402	981
		% within KerryScale_Attack	25.7%	33.3%	41.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	821	1014	1087	2922
		% within KerryScale_Attack	28.1%	34.7%	37.2%	100.0%

However, when examining the independents interviewed early in the campaign cycle compared to the end, different results emerge. Early independents are more susceptible to Kerry attacks; they significantly affect both Kerry and Bush Favorability. However, neither variable is affected significantly among independents by any type of ad late in the campaign. Rather, Kerry attacks are most effective in shaping the way viewers rate the candidates early in the campaign.

As shown in Table 10, the percentage of independents ranking Kerry favorably increases as the level of attack advertising increases (ignoring the Heavy level – as discussed earlier, the campaigns were much less intense in their advertising early in the campaign so there were very few Heavy areas). Greater percentages of early independents rate Kerry favorably and fewer rate him unfavorably.

**Table 10**

**The Effect of Kerry Attack Ads on Kerry Favorability Among Independents Early in the Campaign**

			Scale of Kerry Favorability			Total
			Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	
Level of Kerry Attack Ads	No Ads	Count	39	45	28	112
		% within KerryScale_Attack	34.8%	40.2%	25.0%	100.0%
	Light Ads	Count	60	95	88	243
		% within KerryScale_Attack	24.7%	39.1%	36.2%	100.0%
	Moderate Ads	Count	21	32	43	96
		% within KerryScale_Attack	21.9%	33.3%	44.8%	100.0%
	Heavy Ads	Count	1	2	1	4
		% within KerryScale_Attack	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	121	174	160	455
		% within KerryScale_Attack	26.6%	38.2%	35.2%	100.0%

Kerry’s attack ads also affected these voters’ rating of Bush early in the campaign (although this relationship is not significant when looking at the entire campaign as a whole or towards the end of the campaign). As shown in Table 11, as Kerry attacks more, early independents rate Bush less favorably and more unfavorably. Though this relationship is not quite as strong as that of the Kerry attack ads on Kerry favorability, it is nonetheless significant.

**Table 11**

**The Effect of Kerry Attack Ads on Bush Favorability among Early Independents**

			Scale of Bush Favorability			Total
			Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	
Level of Kerry Attack Advertising	No Ads	Count	37	22	55	114
		% within KerryScale_Attack	32.5%	19.3%	48.2%	100.0%
	Light Ads	Count	92	60	89	241
		% within KerryScale_Attack	38.2%	24.9%	36.9%	100.0%
	Moderate Ads	Count	43	22	32	97
		% within KerryScale_Attack	44.3%	22.7%	33.0%	100.0%
	Heavy Ads	Count	0	1	3	4
		% within KerryScale_Attack	.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	172	105	179	456
		% within KerryScale_Attack	37.7%	23.0%	39.3%	100.0%

This section on independents is important for testing Hypothesis 4, whether independents are more susceptible to political ads than partisans. The results presented here support this hypothesis; when exposed to campaign ads, partisans return to their respective political corners. Independents, on the other hand, are persuaded – especially when exposed to a high amount of Kerry’s attack ads. This trend was especially evident in the first few weeks of the campaign, but remained strong up until the last few weeks of the election, at which point independents had presumably been exposed to enough information about the candidates to have made up their minds.

### **Political Engagement**

In this section I discuss the importance of respondent engagement in politics as a conditional variable for the ads’ effects on voters. As discussed earlier, the correlation between party ID and voter preference and favorability is strong; party ID has been shown to be the most dominant factor in voters’ decisions about how to vote. However, this relationship is significantly weaker among the politically unengaged. Party attachment serves as much less of an anchor among those who discuss politics rarely; yet as political engagement increases, so too does the importance of party ID (see Table 12). Among the unengaged, the relationship between PID and vote preference is only  $-.478$ . However, this relationship strengthens to  $-.594$  among the moderately engaged, and to  $-.615$  among the highly engaged.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The correlation is negative because a score of 1 in Party ID represents a strong Democrat, whereas a 7 represents a strong Republican. However, with the way the NAES data are coded, those who say they plan to vote for Bush are recorded as 1, and a vote for Kerry is a 2.

**Table 12**

**Importance of Political Engagement on Correlation between PID and Vote Preference**

Political Engagement Scale			Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
Low	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.478	.010	-53.063	.000
		Gamma	-.622	.013	-53.063	.000
		Spearman Correlation	-.586	.011	-47.884	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.529	.012	-41.338	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases		4394			
Medium	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.594	.010	-67.558	.000
		Gamma	-.762	.013	-67.558	.000
		Spearman Correlation	-.703	.010	-57.651	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.663	.012	-51.645	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases		3404			
High	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.615	.014	-51.960	.000
		Gamma	-.782	.017	-51.960	.000
		Spearman Correlation	-.725	.014	-44.785	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.692	.016	-40.811	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases		1817			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Further, when the politically unengaged are exposed to political ads, the importance of their partisan attachment changes. Table 13 demonstrates that, when unengaged strong Republicans are exposed to an increasing amount of Bush ads, their partisanship becomes a more significant force in determining their feelings towards Bush. As the table shows, when these respondents see only a small number of Bush ads, they report feeling favorably towards him only 90.6% of the time. However, this percentage increases to 95.7% among respondents exposed to a mid-level amount of ads, and then dips down to 92.6% among high exposure respondents (once again displaying the curvilinear trend likely caused by the congruence of both candidates' advertising in battleground states). As the number of respondents in this analysis is over 1,500, these differences are significant. However, increasing the level of Bush ads does not strengthen the correlation between partisanship and support among strong Democrats; rather, as unengaged

strong Democrats are exposed to a high amount of Bush ads, they report slightly *lower* levels of negative feelings towards Bush. Thus, exposure to Bush ads among the unengaged resulted in more positive feelings about Bush by all.

**Table 13**

**The Effect of Bush Ads on Bush Favorability among Unengaged Respondents**

Level of Bush Advertising				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
Light Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	118	55	52	16	2	8	3	254
			% within Party ID	73.8%	42.6%	62.7%	32.0%	2.6%	6.7%	2.3%	34.0%
	Neutral	Count	30	40	24	21	20	23	9	167	
		% within Party ID	18.8%	31.0%	28.9%	42.0%	26.0%	19.2%	7.0%	22.4%	
	Favorable	Count	12	34	7	13	55	89	116	326	
		% within Party ID	7.5%	26.4%	8.4%	26.0%	71.4%	74.2%	90.6%	43.6%	
Total			Count	160	129	83	50	77	120	128	747
			% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	47	29	23	11	4	7	1	122
			% within Party ID	74.6%	47.5%	50.0%	37.9%	11.1%	11.3%	1.4%	33.3%
	Neutral	Count	13	18	19	10	9	14	2	85	
		% within Party ID	20.6%	29.5%	41.3%	34.5%	25.0%	22.6%	2.9%	23.2%	
	Favorable	Count	3	14	4	8	23	41	66	159	
		% within Party ID	4.8%	23.0%	8.7%	27.6%	63.9%	66.1%	95.7%	43.4%	
Total			Count	63	61	46	29	36	62	69	366
			% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	231	104	109	38	13	14	11	520
			% within Party ID	71.3%	44.6%	58.6%	31.7%	7.7%	7.4%	3.4%	33.7%
	Neutral	Count	75	74	60	40	39	40	13	341	
		% within Party ID	23.1%	31.8%	32.3%	33.3%	23.1%	21.3%	4.0%	22.1%	
	Favorable	Count	18	55	17	42	117	134	300	683	
		% within Party ID	5.6%	23.6%	9.1%	35.0%	69.2%	71.3%	92.6%	44.2%	
Total			Count	324	233	186	120	169	188	324	1544
			% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Bush ads also had an impact on the way unengaged respondents viewed Kerry. When unengaged strong Democrats were exposed to only a low amount of Bush ads, they favored Kerry 86% of the time. However, when exposed to a high amount of Bush ads, this favor dropped to 78.8%. Bush ads also increased the percentage of unengaged strong Republicans who rated Kerry *unfavorably*: from 80% when they saw a low amount of Bush ads to 85.7% under moderate exposure and then a slight dip back to 82.8% under high exposure.

From this, it is clear that political engagement is a strong force in determining the effect of political advertisements. Among the unengaged, seeing a high amount of Bush ads – regardless of type – made Democrats and Republicans feel better about Bush and worse about Kerry. Kerry ads did not have a similar effect when shown en masse; however, Kerry’s attack ads were quite effective at persuading the unengaged to rate Kerry more favorably. Unengaged strong Democrats are more likely to rate Bush unfavorably as they are exposed to more of Kerry’s attacks (see Table 15). As Table 14 shows, strong Democrats exposed to a high number of Kerry attack ads are 4.2 percentage points more likely to rate Kerry favorably than those exposed to none of these ads. Kerry’s attack ads also influence strong Republicans’ attitudes toward Kerry: Republicans who see none of Kerry’s attacks ads are 4.2 percentage points more likely to rate Kerry *unfavorably* than those who see a moderate amount of these ads (see Table 14 to note the curvilinear effect among strong Republicans).



**Table 14**

**The Effect of Kerry Attack Ads on Kerry Favorability Among Unengaged Respondents**

Level of Kerry Attack Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Ads	Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	15	53	18	30	131	111	267	625
			% within Party ID	4.1%	17.8%	8.4%	25.9%	54.1%	43.5%	74.0%	33.7%
		Neutral	Count	68	103	92	59	88	112	80	602
			% within Party ID	18.4%	34.6%	42.8%	50.9%	36.4%	43.9%	22.2%	32.4%
	Favorable	Count	287	142	105	27	23	32	14	630	
		% within Party ID	77.6%	47.7%	48.8%	23.3%	9.5%	12.5%	3.9%	33.9%	
	Total	Count	370	298	215	116	242	255	361	1857	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Ads	Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	4	12	8	9	34	33	73	173
			% within Party ID	3.3%	13.8%	11.8%	21.4%	49.3%	42.9%	74.5%	30.7%
		Neutral	Count	18	34	24	23	28	40	22	189
			% within Party ID	14.8%	39.1%	35.3%	54.8%	40.6%	51.9%	22.4%	33.6%
	Favorable	Count	100	41	36	10	7	4	3	201	
		% within Party ID	82.0%	47.1%	52.9%	23.8%	10.1%	5.2%	3.1%	35.7%	
	Total	Count	122	87	68	42	69	77	98	563	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Ads	Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	7	14	3	7	31	51	81	194
			% within Party ID	5.6%	12.3%	4.1%	15.6%	60.8%	45.5%	69.8%	30.5%
		Neutral	Count	19	38	34	22	15	48	32	208
			% within Party ID	15.3%	33.3%	45.9%	48.9%	29.4%	42.9%	27.6%	32.7%
	Favorable	Count	98	62	37	16	5	13	3	234	
		% within Party ID	79.0%	54.4%	50.0%	35.6%	9.8%	11.6%	2.6%	36.8%	
	Total	Count	124	114	74	45	51	112	116	636	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Ads	Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	12	30	15	37	62	82	209	447
			% within Party ID	4.0%	14.1%	8.2%	33.3%	40.3%	47.4%	71.1%	31.4%
		Neutral	Count	42	77	50	46	77	63	69	424
			% within Party ID	14.1%	36.2%	27.5%	41.4%	50.0%	36.4%	23.5%	29.8%
	Favorable	Count	243	106	117	28	15	28	16	553	
		% within Party ID	81.8%	49.8%	64.3%	25.2%	9.7%	16.2%	5.4%	38.8%	
	Total	Count	297	213	182	111	154	173	294	1424	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The level of Bush promotional ads also has an effect on unengaged voters' favorability rating of Bush. First, the correlation between Party ID and Bush Favorability is weaker among unengaged respondents than the engaged at all levels of advertising. However, as the level of positive Bush ads increases, the correlation changes more among the unengaged (from .521 among those who see no Bush promotional ads to .595 among those who see the highest level) compared to the engaged (the correlation strengthens from .642 where no ads are run to a peak of .664 among the moderate level). In areas where Bush runs no positive ads, unengaged strong

Republicans rate him favorably 74.9% of the time, but when he runs a low amount strong Republicans only rate him as highly 67.5% of the time. It then increases to 70.6% of the time among respondents exposed to a moderate amount of positive Bush ads, and again increases to 75.8% among high exposure respondents.

This strengthening of the correlation among all respondents – but especially the unengaged – as a response to increased exposure to Bush promotional ads demonstrates how these ads are reinforcing partisan predispositions. The politically unengaged are less likely to be bound by their partisanship than the engaged. As they are exposed to more of these positive Bush ads, however, their partisanship is reinforced and becomes a more dominant force in their decision-making. As shown in Table 15, as unengaged Democrats see more Bush ads, they are more likely to rate Bush unfavorably. The partisanship of strong Republicans is also reinforced as the level of Bush promotional advertising increases. This change is not as strong as it is among Democrats; probably because unengaged Republicans at all levels of advertising already rate Bush quite highly.

The important thing to take from Table 15 is that when unengaged respondents are exposed to the highest level of Bush promotional advertising, they are more likely to act as though they were engaged in the political discourse. Democrats become significantly more likely to rate Bush unfavorably whereas Republicans are slightly more likely to rate him favorably. The effect of Bush promotional advertising is even more apparent on unengaged strong Republicans' rating of Kerry. In the areas where Bush runs no positive ads, unengaged strong Republicans rate Kerry unfavorably 74.9% of the time, when Bush runs a low amount strong Republicans only rate him as negatively 67.5% of the time. Kerry's unfavorables among strong Republicans then increases to 70.6% under the moderate level of positive Bush ads, and

again increases to 75.8% among high exposure respondents.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the positive Bush ads affect viewers by polarizing their feelings about both Bush and Kerry.

**Table 15**

**The Effect of Bush Promote Ads on Bush Favorability Among Unengaged Respondents**

Level of Positive Bush Advertising				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Ads	Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	236	113	131	28	14	13	7	542
			% within Party ID	63.1%	37.3%	57.7%	22.8%	5.8%	5.1%	1.9%	28.7%
	Neutral	Count	90	99	65	56	54	60	21	445	
		% within Party ID	24.1%	32.7%	28.6%	45.5%	22.2%	23.5%	5.8%	23.6%	
	Favorable	Count	48	91	31	39	175	182	333	899	
		% within Party ID	12.8%	30.0%	13.7%	31.7%	72.0%	71.4%	92.2%	47.7%	
	Total	Count	374	303	227	123	243	255	361	1886	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Ads	Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	157	73	77	25	4	12	3	351
			% within Party ID	73.7%	44.0%	62.1%	32.1%	3.8%	6.9%	1.8%	34.0%
	Neutral	Count	43	53	37	29	26	35	11	234	
		% within Party ID	20.2%	31.9%	29.8%	37.2%	24.8%	20.1%	6.4%	22.7%	
	Favorable	Count	13	40	10	24	75	127	157	446	
		% within Party ID	6.1%	24.1%	8.1%	30.8%	71.4%	73.0%	91.8%	43.3%	
	Total	Count	213	166	124	78	105	174	171	1031	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Ads	Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	143	74	70	26	12	12	10	347
			% within Party ID	70.8%	45.1%	56.5%	38.8%	10.8%	9.1%	4.5%	33.9%
	Neutral	Count	44	52	41	23	29	25	9	223	
		% within Party ID	21.8%	31.7%	33.1%	34.3%	26.1%	18.9%	4.0%	21.8%	
	Favorable	Count	15	38	13	18	70	95	204	453	
		% within Party ID	7.4%	23.2%	10.5%	26.9%	63.1%	72.0%	91.5%	44.3%	
	Total	Count	202	164	124	67	111	132	223	1023	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Ads	Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	95	39	37	14	3	5	2	195
			% within Party ID	73.6%	42.9%	55.2%	25.9%	4.6%	7.8%	1.6%	32.8%
	Neutral	Count	30	27	25	19	13	17	4	135	
		% within Party ID	23.3%	29.7%	37.3%	35.2%	20.0%	26.6%	3.2%	22.7%	
	Favorable	Count	4	25	5	21	49	42	119	265	
		% within Party ID	3.1%	27.5%	7.5%	38.9%	75.4%	65.6%	95.2%	44.5%	
	Total	Count	129	91	67	54	65	64	125	595	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The level of attack ads that Kerry runs also plays an important role in determining the effects of advertising on unengaged respondents on the base relationship of party ID and favorability. As shown in Table 16, the correlation between party ID and Bush favorability is

<sup>14</sup> See appendix 1 for The Effects of Positive Bush Advertising on Kerry Favorability Rating Among Unengaged Respondents

strengthened as the level of Kerry attack advertising increases. Note that there is a significant curvilinear effect; the relationship is especially strong at the moderate level of Kerry attack advertising, but then drops at the highest level.

**Table 16**

**The Curvilinear Relationship Between Kerry Attack Ads and Bush Favorability Among the Unengaged**

KerryScale_Attack			Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
.00	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.523	.014	38.677	.000
		Gamma	.677	.016	38.677	.000
		Spearman Correlation	.615	.015	33.804	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.620	.015	34.269	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases			1885		
1.00	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.553	.024	23.338	.000
		Gamma	.707	.028	23.338	.000
		Spearman Correlation	.645	.027	20.154	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.654	.027	20.609	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases			571		
2.00	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.592	.021	28.962	.000
		Gamma	.752	.023	28.962	.000
		Spearman Correlation	.689	.022	24.123	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.697	.023	24.707	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases			647		
3.00	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	.557	.015	38.305	.000
		Gamma	.710	.017	38.305	.000
		Spearman Correlation	.654	.016	32.712	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.657	.017	32.982	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases			1432		

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.
- c. Based on normal approximation.

This pattern in the correlations is anchored strongly in the changes of favorability ratings among Democrats when exposed to Kerry’s attack ads.<sup>15</sup> For example, unengaged strong Democrats who are not exposed to any of Kerry’s negative ads feel unfavorably towards Bush only 62.8% of the time. However, this percentage increases to 71.9% among strong Democrats

<sup>15</sup> For full crosstab, see Appendix 1.

when exposed to high levels of Kerry's attack advertising. This relationship is even more pronounced among weak Democrats, who rate Bush unfavorably 36.5% of the time when they see none of Kerry's attack ads. This Unfavorability rating peaks at 57.1% (under a moderate amount of Kerry attack ads), before dipping to 41.9% when exposed to a high amount of these ads. Kerry's attack ads do not have much of an effect on unengaged Republicans' rating of Bush.

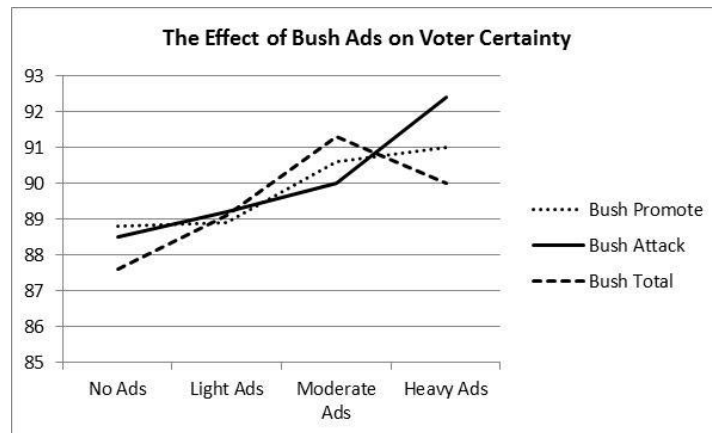
The results presented in this section discussing the way unengaged respondents were affected differently than engaged respondents supports Hypothesis 3 (that the unengaged will be more affected by ads than the politically engaged). While Bush ads *en masse* were quite effective at increasing levels of support among Republicans, the effects of Kerry's ads were more visible when looking at the type of ad. Both Kerry's attacks and Bush's positive ads polarized unengaged voters, reinforcing their partisan predispositions, encouraging the unengaged to return to their respective partisan corners.

### **Vote Likelihood**

If there is one thing that jumps out at first glance in the following figures, it is that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Despite the fact that 2004 was a year for high turnout in the US (60.7%), this is hardly a stellar record. However, respondents reported intentions of turning out at levels upward of 90%! Unless the NAES sample is markedly different than the general population – and there is no reason to suspect this to be true – this is a case of over reporting vote intention. Keeping in mind that the turnout data are inflated, relationships between the amount of advertising in a market and the respondents' stated intention to vote do certainly emerge.

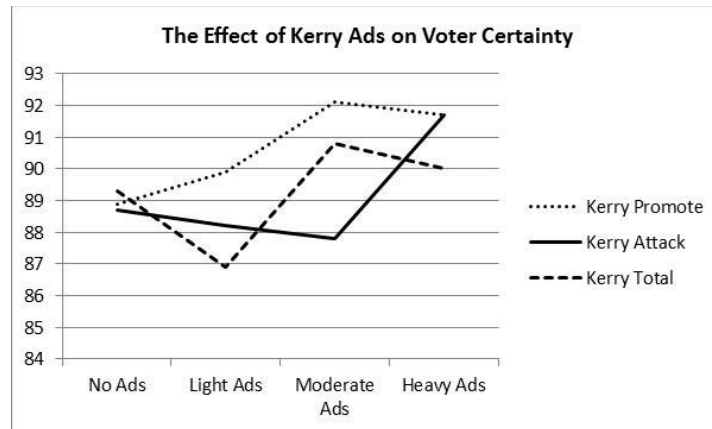
NAES measures vote intention with two questions: the first asks respondents whether or not s/he intends to vote (if s/he has not already voted early). Ninety percent of respondents reported that they did intend to vote. The second question asks respondents planning to vote to report (on a scale of 1 to 10) how likely they were to vote. I chose to focus this analysis on the second question because it allows more room for respondents to realistically evaluate their chances of voting. Regardless of the independent variable – whether it be either Bush or Kerry, positive ads, negative ads, or total ads – when the number of ads respondents are exposed to increases, so too does the number of people reporting they intend to vote with absolute certainty (10 out of 10). Figures 6 and 7 demonstrate this pattern well.

Figure 6



As shown, the increase in voter certainty is especially strong when Bush runs a high level of attack ads, but the relationship is also strong and linear for positive Bush ads. As opposed to Bush’s positive and attack ads, when looking at the total amount of Bush ads a respondent is exposed to, the likelihood of turning out to vote increases until the highest level of ads. At that point, vote certainty dips slightly. This curvilinear trend is similar to that which has emerged repeatedly throughout the analysis, although the reasoning is less intuitive in this instance.

Figure 7



Exposure to Kerry attack ads has a similar effect on respondents' certainty that they will vote. As the level of Kerry's positive ads increases, respondents report higher certainty of turning out to vote. The same is generally true of Kerry's attack ads, but the levels of certainty are generally lower than for the promotional ads except at the lowest and the highest levels. As a result, when looking at Kerry's total ads, no definitive pattern emerges.

### The Focus of the Ad: Policy vs. Character

As discussed in Chapter 1, the literature examining the focus of campaign ads (as opposed to tone, which has been discussed in detail up to this point) suggests that ads that focus on a candidate's policy positions – as opposed to the candidate's personality or image – can make viewers feel more disengaged from the political process (Dardis, Shen, & Edwards, 2008). However, in the 2004 Presidential election the vast majority of campaign ads were focused on issues of policy. Furthermore, there is no reason to expect that 2004 was any more policy-focused than other campaigns of this era.

In Chapter 2, I outlined my hypothesis that ads focused on the personality of the candidates would be more effective at changing the way viewers feel about the candidates than ads focused on policy issues. Though testing this hypothesis was made somewhat difficult because of the low number of respondents exposed to a heavy (and at times even moderate) level of personality-focused, the results are as follows (note the small N for the character-focused ads in the following tables; for this reason, analysis is limited to examining the difference in exposure between respondents exposed to no ads and those exposed to a moderate level of ads).

Table 17 demonstrates that, as respondents view a higher amount of Bush's character-focused ads, partisans are polarized in their feelings about Kerry. For example, as exposure to these ads increases, strong Democrats rate Kerry slightly more favorably. The same is true for independents leaning Democratic, whose positive rating of Kerry increases from 65% of the time when exposed to none of Bush's character-focused ads, to 72.3% when exposed to a moderate level. Further, Republicans rate Kerry more unfavorably as exposure to Bush's character ads increase. Among strong Republicans, 77.8% rate Kerry unfavorably when exposed to no Bush character ads; this increases to 82.9% when exposed to a moderate level of these image-focused Bush ads.



**Table 17**

				Party ID							
Level of Bush Character Advertising				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	Total
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	46	123	48	103	435	388	1220	2363
			% within Party ID	2.5%	12.9%	5.1%	24.3%	55.3%	46.9%	77.8%	32.3%
	Neutral	Count	228	305	283	198	278	334	290	1916	
		% within Party ID	12.5%	31.9%	29.9%	46.8%	35.3%	40.4%	18.5%	26.1%	
	Favorable	Count	1544	528	616	122	74	105	59	3048	
		% within Party ID	84.9%	55.2%	65.0%	28.8%	9.4%	12.7%	3.8%	41.6%	
	Total	Count	1818	956	947	423	787	827	1569	7327	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	26	39	17	46	138	120	519	905
			% within Party ID	4.6%	13.8%	6.6%	33.8%	52.5%	47.8%	82.5%	37.9%
	Neutral	Count	66	73	68	46	110	92	88	543	
		% within Party ID	11.6%	25.8%	26.6%	33.8%	41.8%	36.7%	14.0%	22.8%	
	Favorable	Count	475	171	171	44	15	39	22	937	
		% within Party ID	83.8%	60.4%	66.8%	32.4%	5.7%	15.5%	3.5%	39.3%	
	Total	Count	567	283	256	136	263	251	629	2385	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	2	6	2	4	23	16	87	140
			% within Party ID	2.2%	14.0%	4.3%	21.1%	65.7%	57.1%	82.9%	37.8%
	Neutral	Count	10	15	11	8	10	9	13	76	
		% within Party ID	10.8%	34.9%	23.4%	42.1%	28.6%	32.1%	12.4%	20.5%	
	Favorable	Count	81	22	34	7	2	3	5	154	
		% within Party ID	87.1%	51.2%	72.3%	36.8%	5.7%	10.7%	4.8%	41.6%	
	Total	Count	93	43	47	19	35	28	105	370	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 18 demonstrates a similar polarization of partisans when exposure to Kerry’s character ads increases. Among strong Democrats, the percent rating Kerry favorably increases from 84.1% when exposed to none of Kerry’s character ads to 87.5% when the level of exposure is changed to a moderate level. Similarly, strong Republicans’ dislike of Kerry increases from 79.5% among those exposed to no Kerry character ads to 85.4% when exposure increases to the moderate level.

**Table 18**

**The Effect of Kerry Character Ads on Kerry Favorability**

Level of Kerry Character Advertising				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	47	123	42	98	434	370	1163	2277
			% within Party ID	2.8%	13.8%	5.0%	25.8%	56.4%	47.1%	79.5%	33.6%
	Neutral	Count	217	283	262	177	269	312	248	1768	
		% within Party ID	13.1%	31.7%	31.5%	46.6%	35.0%	39.7%	17.0%	26.1%	
	Favorable	Count	1393	488	529	105	66	103	51	2735	
		% within Party ID	84.1%	54.6%	63.5%	27.6%	8.6%	13.1%	3.5%	40.3%	
	Total	Count	1657	894	833	380	769	785	1462	6780	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	26	37	25	53	157	144	625	1067
			% within Party ID	3.3%	10.2%	6.3%	27.7%	52.3%	46.9%	78.6%	34.0%
	Neutral	Count	84	106	91	73	121	120	139	734	
		% within Party ID	10.7%	29.1%	22.9%	38.2%	40.3%	39.1%	17.5%	23.4%	
	Favorable	Count	672	221	282	65	22	43	31	1336	
		% within Party ID	85.9%	60.7%	70.9%	34.0%	7.3%	14.0%	3.9%	42.6%	
	Total	Count	782	364	398	191	300	307	795	3137	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	1	8	0	1	7	9	35	61
			% within Party ID	3.1%	32.0%	0%	25.0%	35.0%	69.2%	85.4%	40.7%
	Neutral	Count	3	6	7	2	9	3	2	32	
		% within Party ID	9.4%	24.0%	46.7%	50.0%	45.0%	23.1%	4.9%	21.3%	
	Favorable	Count	28	11	8	1	4	1	4	57	
		% within Party ID	87.5%	44.0%	53.3%	25.0%	20.0%	7.7%	9.8%	38.0%	
	Total	Count	32	25	15	4	20	13	41	150	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Turning now to the effect of ads focused on issues of policy as opposed to the candidates’ image or character, the number of respondents exposed to high amounts of ads increases significantly. Table 19, which shows the effect of Kerry’s policy ads on Bush’s favorability rating, highlights the fact that Democrats report increased feelings of negativity towards Bush when Kerry runs policy ads. This effect is curvilinear among strong Democrats, where 73.9% rate Bush unfavorably when exposed to no Kerry policy ads; this percentage peaks at 84.5% when the level of exposure increases to moderate ads, and then falls slightly to 78.5% when the ad level increases again to heavy advertising. The right half of Table 19 demonstrates the fact that Republicans’ opinions are not affected by exposure to Kerry’s policy ads.

**Table 19**

**The Effect of Kerry Policy Ads on Bush Favorability**

Kerry Policy Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	754	243	347	70	32	42	17	1505
			% within Party ID	73.9%	46.3%	70.4%	31.4%	6.6%	8.9%	1.9%	36.5%
	Neutral	Count	197	157	106	80	86	98	40	764	
		% within Party ID	19.3%	29.9%	21.5%	35.9%	17.7%	20.7%	4.4%	18.5%	
	Favorable	Count	69	125	40	73	368	334	849	1858	
		% within Party ID	6.8%	23.8%	8.1%	32.7%	75.7%	70.5%	93.7%	45.0%	
	Total	Count	1020	525	493	223	486	474	906	4127	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	259	82	132	29	8	14	4	528
			% within Party ID	80.4%	42.7%	69.5%	37.7%	5.2%	9.3%	1.3%	38.0%
	Neutral	Count	41	57	44	28	22	29	11	232	
		% within Party ID	12.7%	29.7%	23.2%	36.4%	14.2%	19.2%	3.6%	16.7%	
	Favorable	Count	22	53	14	20	125	108	289	631	
		% within Party ID	6.8%	27.6%	7.4%	26.0%	80.6%	71.5%	95.1%	45.4%	
	Total	Count	322	192	190	77	155	151	304	1391	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	147	55	54	11	3	10	2	282
			% within Party ID	84.5%	48.2%	54.5%	27.5%	4.8%	11.0%	1.5%	39.6%
	Neutral	Count	19	34	35	16	13	20	9	146	
		% within Party ID	10.9%	29.8%	35.4%	40.0%	20.6%	22.0%	6.8%	20.5%	
	Favorable	Count	8	25	10	13	47	61	121	285	
		% within Party ID	4.6%	21.9%	10.1%	32.5%	74.6%	67.0%	91.7%	40.0%	
	Total	Count	174	114	99	40	63	91	132	713	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	762	242	317	89	27	41	28	1506
			% within Party ID	78.5%	51.1%	67.0%	35.9%	6.8%	10.1%	2.9%	38.1%
	Neutral	Count	160	129	109	67	74	75	31	645	
		% within Party ID	16.5%	27.2%	23.0%	27.0%	18.7%	18.4%	3.2%	16.3%	
	Favorable	Count	49	103	47	92	295	291	920	1797	
		% within Party ID	5.0%	21.7%	9.9%	37.1%	74.5%	71.5%	94.0%	45.5%	
	Total	Count	971	474	473	248	396	407	979	3948	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 20 examines the effect of Kerry’s policy-focused ads on respondents’ rating of Kerry. As shown, the largest effect is on independents leaning Democratic, whose Kerry favorability rating increases from 63.5% among those who see no Kerry policy ads, to 69.9% when exposure increases to a heavy level. Though their “favorable” rating of Kerry does not significantly change when exposure to Kerry’s policy ads increases, independents leaning Republican are more inclined to report feeling neutral towards Kerry when exposure to Kerry’s policy ads increases (and the percentage reporting negative feelings towards Kerry drops significantly).

**Table 20**

**The Effect of Kerry Policy Ads on Kerry Favorability**

Kerry Policy Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	27	74	25	63	275	227	725	1416
			% within Party ID	2.7%	14.4%	5.1%	28.5%	57.2%	48.5%	80.4%	34.6%
	Neutral	Count	133	152	154	103	160	174	145	1021	
		% within Party ID	13.1%	29.5%	31.4%	46.6%	33.3%	37.2%	16.1%	25.0%	
	Favorable	Count	855	289	311	55	46	67	32	1655	
		% within Party ID	84.2%	56.1%	63.5%	24.9%	9.6%	14.3%	3.5%	40.4%	
	Total	Count	1015	515	490	221	481	468	902	4092	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	9	27	11	15	90	65	228	445
			% within Party ID	2.8%	14.3%	5.8%	19.7%	58.1%	43.6%	75.7%	32.3%
	Neutral	Count	40	64	59	38	53	72	66	392	
		% within Party ID	12.6%	33.9%	31.1%	50.0%	34.2%	48.3%	21.9%	28.4%	
	Favorable	Count	269	98	120	23	12	12	7	541	
		% within Party ID	84.6%	51.9%	63.2%	30.3%	7.7%	8.1%	2.3%	39.3%	
	Total	Count	318	189	190	76	155	149	301	1378	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	4	15	2	8	34	40	102	205
			% within Party ID	2.3%	13.3%	2.0%	20.5%	54.0%	44.4%	78.5%	29.0%
	Neutral	Count	15	42	36	20	27	36	23	199	
		% within Party ID	8.6%	37.2%	36.4%	51.3%	42.9%	40.0%	17.7%	28.1%	
	Favorable	Count	155	56	61	11	2	14	5	304	
		% within Party ID	89.1%	49.6%	61.6%	28.2%	3.2%	15.6%	3.8%	42.9%	
	Total	Count	174	113	99	39	63	90	130	708	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	34	52	29	67	202	196	774	1354
			% within Party ID	3.5%	11.1%	6.1%	27.6%	51.4%	48.5%	79.5%	34.5%
	Neutral	Count	116	138	113	92	159	154	157	929	
		% within Party ID	11.9%	29.4%	23.9%	37.9%	40.5%	38.1%	16.1%	23.7%	
	Favorable	Count	823	280	330	84	32	54	42	1645	
		% within Party ID	84.6%	59.6%	69.9%	34.6%	8.1%	13.4%	4.3%	41.9%	
	Total	Count	973	470	472	243	393	404	973	3928	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The results from this section do not generally support my hypothesis that ads that focused on the candidates’ personalities would be more effective at persuading viewers to support one candidate over the other. In fact, the opposite pattern emerged; as exposure to personality-focused ads increased, respondents reported higher levels of partisan polarization. Exposure to ads that focused on the personality of a candidate encouraged partisans into their respective political corners, and thus had an effect on all who saw them. This effect on all viewers, regardless of partisanship, is unlike the effect that policy ads had on respondents. Results on the effect of Bush’s policy ads were not presented because no significant pattern emerged.

However, as shown in Tables 19 and 20, Kerry's policy-focused ads did not significantly affect the way Republicans rated Kerry; the effect was limited to strengthening the relationship between party ID and Kerry favorability among Democrats.

### **Effects at the End of the Campaign**

This section focuses on respondents who were interviewed towards the end of the campaign (in the last two weeks of the election campaign). Presumably, the relationship between party ID and favorability and preference should be quite strong among these respondents, because they have had the most time to get to know the candidates and have their party ID reinforced.

The most striking difference between respondents interviewed at the end of the campaign and those earlier in the campaign is the effect that Kerry attack ads have on Bush favorability. As expected, the correlation between Party ID and Bush favorability is stronger at the end of the campaign than among earlier respondents; this is true in markets where Kerry runs no attack ads as well as in those where his advertising level is high (.619 throughout the entire campaign, .629 in the last weeks).

When Kerry attacks, the relationship between PID and Bush favorability is strengthened. This correlation changes more based on the amount of Kerry attack ads throughout the whole campaign than in the last two weeks (the correlation strengthens .029 between no ads and heavy ads over the whole nine weeks, compared to only a .017 strengthening in the last two weeks). At the end of the campaign, the correlation is strongest in areas where Kerry places a high amount of attack ads; when Kerry attacks, Democrats dislike Bush more; Republicans are indifferent to

the attacks (see Table 21<sup>16</sup>). For example, in areas with no advertising, strong Democrats interviewed late in the campaign dislike Bush 72.1% of the time; this increases to 77.9% when exposed to a high amount of Kerry’s attack advertising. Unlike their effect on Bush favorability, Kerry’s attacks at the end of the campaign do not affect Kerry’s own favorability.

**Table 21**

The Effect of Kerry Attack Ads on Bush Favorability Among Late Respondents												
Level of Kerry Attack Ads				Party ID						Total		
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00		7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	238	82	101	19	11	6	6	463	
			% within Party ID	72.12%	50.00%	67.79%	26.76%	6.88%	4.03%	2.03%	35.10%	
		Neutral	Count	70	50	35	25	34	31	13	258	
			% within Party ID	21.21%	30.49%	23.49%	35.21%	21.25%	20.81%	4.39%	19.56%	
		Favorable	Count	22	32	13	27	115	112	277	598	
			% within Party ID	6.67%	19.51%	8.72%	38.03%	71.88%	75.17%	93.58%	45.34%	
	Total			Count	330	164	149	71	160	149	296	1319
				% within Party ID	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Heavy Advertising	Scale of Bush Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	289	74	113	31	7	16	8	538
% within Party ID				77.90%	48.05%	69.75%	36.47%	5.04%	13.68%	2.16%	38.46%	
Neutral			Count	65	42	34	24	35	22	15	237	
			% within Party ID	17.52%	27.27%	20.99%	28.24%	25.18%	18.80%	4.04%	16.94%	
Favorable			Count	17	38	15	30	97	79	348	624	
			% within Party ID	4.58%	24.68%	9.26%	35.29%	69.78%	67.52%	93.80%	44.60%	
Total			Count	371	154	162	85	139	117	371	1399	
			% within Party ID	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

This effect of Kerry Attack ads on Bush favorability (as shown in Table 21) among late respondents is the only instance where late respondents were much affected by ads. Throughout the campaign as a whole, when Bush increased his attacks on Kerry, strong Republicans responded by feeling more negatively about Kerry. This pattern was especially evident when comparing the low level of Bush attacks to the high level. However, as shown in Table 21, this pattern disappears in the last two weeks of the election.

<sup>16</sup> The Light and Moderate Kerry ad levels are excluded from Table X because of the low number of respondents falling into these categories in the last two weeks of the election.

The effect of Bush's attacks on strong Democrats is similar. Throughout the entire campaign, when Bush attacks more, strong Democrats feel more positively about Kerry. However, in the last two weeks, there is no significant difference in strong Democrats' feelings toward Kerry when no Bush attack ads are run in their market, compared to when a High amount are. It would seem that, by this point late in the campaign, their feelings about Kerry have crystalized, and are no longer open to Bush's negative appeals.

Table 22 is also another instance of a curvilinear pattern emerging in the data. Note that there is no moderate level of Bush attack ads in the last two weeks; as shown in Chapter 5, towards the end of the campaign, Bush decreased the amount of attack advertising he used. However, the correlation between Kerry favorability and Party ID strengthens slightly at light levels of Bush attack advertising, but then weakens when respondents are exposed to heavy amounts.

**Table 22**

**Curvilinear Effect of Bush Attack Ads on Kerry Favorability on Late Respondents**

Level of Bush Attack Ads			Value	Asymp. Std. Error <sup>a</sup>	Approx. T <sup>b</sup>	Approx. Sig.
No Advertising	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.630	.017	-38.638	.000
		Gamma	-.787	.018	-38.638	.000
		Spearman Correlation	-.726	.017	-31.972	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.734	.018	-32.694	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases		919			
Light Advertising	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.668	.040	-17.653	.000
		Gamma	-.826	.041	-17.653	.000
		Spearman Correlation	-.768	.039	-13.515	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.785	.040	-14.299	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases		129			
Heavy Advertising	Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.629	.017	-39.005	.000
		Gamma	-.785	.018	-39.005	.000
		Spearman Correlation	-.719	.018	-33.054	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.725	.018	-33.609	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	N of Valid Cases		1022			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

The final case in this section is the effect of positive Kerry ads on Kerry favorability. This relationship tells a story not about the effect of the ads, but demonstrates why it is important to understand how ad placement affects the party ID/candidate favorability correlation. Towards the end of the campaign, in areas where Kerry doesn't run any promotional ads (or few ads), the correlation between party ID and Kerry favorability is strong and negative (strong Republicans rate Kerry negatively, strong Democrats rate Kerry favorably). However, this relationship weakens when Kerry runs a lot of promotional ads near the end. Recall from Chapter Five that the areas where he runs a lot of ads at the end were hotly contested; also, Kerry did not run many promotional ads until the end of the campaign. So there is no reason to be surprised when no difference emerges in the party ID/Kerry Favorability relationship in the last few weeks compared to the whole campaign.



Furthermore, the weakening relationship between party ID and Kerry favorability as the number of Kerry promotional ads increases is probably not because Kerry's promotional ads suddenly began to make respondents forget their partisanship. Rather, it is a reflection of *where* the Kerry team chose to put their positive ads in the final two weeks. The point of looking at this example is to stress the point that the results presented in this analysis are probably understating the effect of campaign ads on voter preferences. This example clearly demonstrates that the Kerry campaign strategically placed positive ads at the end of the campaign in markets where the biggest gains were needed. This is the drawback of using a non-experimental design; it is difficult to ascertain if some findings are null because ad placement strategy is obscuring the effects.

### **Conclusion**

This thesis sought to analyze the ways in which voters are affected by campaign ads. To do this, I examined different types of advertising that Americans are exposed to, while also looking at different subgroups of the population to see if (and how) some groups react differently than others. Some of my hypotheses were supported by the evidence presented here; unengaged respondents were affected significantly more by exposure to campaign ads, supporting Hypothesis Three. Hypothesis Four, that partisans would be insulated from persuasion effects was also supported: persuasion was most often seen among weak partisans, not those strongly committed to their party.

Other hypotheses, however, were not supported by the data. Hypotheses One and Two concerned whether the tone and focus of an ad changed its effect. However, exposure to both

promotional and attack ads changed the way that respondents rated the candidates, meaning that negativity was not a more effective form of persuasion as I had predicted. Furthermore, my hypothesis (Hypothesis Two) that character-focused ads would persuade viewers more than policy-focused ads would also was relatively unsupported, although the low number of character ads made this analysis difficult.

Finally, I found only mixed support for Hypothesis Five, that the Bush campaign would use more emotional appeals than the Kerry campaign. While appeals to emotion were relatively similar in comparing the ads' videostyle, major differences emerged when looking at ad format and the amount of time the candidates spent addressing the camera in each ad.

There are multiple avenues for future research that should be pursued to understand better the way voters are affected by campaign ads. The first, and possibly most important, would be to look at this question at a less salient level; examining the effects of campaign ads at the mayoral, state house, or other local level. Though this paper focuses exclusively on national level ads, I would expect ad effects to be even more pronounced in examining local campaigns because – unlike at the presidential level – local elections rarely saturate the news cycle. Because voters are less aware of the partisanship, policy stances, and even date of local elections, there is more room for campaign ads to play a role in the decision-making process.

Another related research question would be to examine how voters are affected when candidates advertise against each other. The research presented here only examines the way voters are affected by one candidate's ads at a time. However, this is certainly unrepresentative of the way that voters are exposed to ads; as shown in chapter 5, Bush and Kerry advertised heavily in the same markets. To fully understand advertising's effect on voters, it is crucial to examine the ratio of one candidate's ads to the other. For example, how does the effect change

when 75% of the ads that voters see are advertising for Bush as opposed to only 40%? Exploring this area might explain some of the curvilinear trends that turned up frequently in the results presented here.

Along those same lines, the research presented here did not consider other hypotheses that could also affect the way citizens feel about the candidates. For example, campaign ads aired on TV are not the only form of campaigning that Americans are exposed to. Campaigns hold rallies and GOTV efforts; they utilize leafleting and yard signs, as well as other forms of ads (radio, newspaper, and – more and more – new media). Televised campaign ads could simply be reflective of the intensity of other campaign efforts in the respondents' area. It is likely that areas with a heavy level of advertising are also being targeted by other methods as well. Thus, perhaps the advertising level is just one measure of the political atmosphere in a respondent's district over the course of the campaign. More research needs to be done examining the role that televised campaign ads play compared to other forms of campaign activities.

Though more research is certainly needed, the story presented here suggests there is no need to be concerned of massive voter manipulation through emotion-laden advertisements. Voters are not being persuaded to vote against their better judgment or first instinct by the ads that they see during campaign seasons. Nor do the data suggest that the effect of ads is negligible and that campaigns are wasting their time and money by airing these ads. Rather, the data demonstrate that campaign ads have a moderate effect, especially on voters who see them most (who view a lot of TV and who live in battleground areas where advertising was generally quite high) and who are least engaged in the political process.

Moreover, the effect of campaign ads is rarely persuasion, and voters are not changing their electoral decisions on the basis of 30-second campaign ads. Rather, ads reinforce the partisan predispositions of the viewers. This was true not only for the positive ads, but for the infamous attack ad as well. It was also true when character-focused ads were examined separately. Of course, there are exceptions: strong Republicans who fell in the high TV use category were somewhat swayed by Kerry's advertising and felt more favorably towards him as their ad exposure increased. Among High TV viewers, strong Republicans voted for Bush 94.2% of the time (compared to 96.2% among all strong Republicans); while this difference is not large, it is important. Because elections are often fought at the margins, a percentage or two here and there can make all the difference. However, this persuasion effect was the exception more than it was the rule.

The data suggest more consistently that exposure to campaign ads encourages voters to divide into their respective political parties. The results suggest time and time again – among unengaged respondents especially – that ad exposure encourages partisan predispositions and behavior; a common trend was that the correlation between party ID and candidate favorability strengthened as advertising increased. Americans who were unengaged in the political process were more likely to act as though they were engaged: they were more likely to feel as though there was something at stake in the election when they were exposed to a high number of ads. This means that, as exposure to ads increased, viewers were more likely to turn out to vote – and they voted for the candidate who shared their partisanship. This certainly implies a positive effect of campaign ads: as voters are exposed to more, they feel more and more that participating in the election is important and are more likely to do so.

It is interesting – although not entirely surprising – that Kerry favorability was the most responsive dependent variable tested. More often than not, the advertising effects appeared only in the way respondents rated Kerry. It was rare that Bush’s favorability was much affected, and even rarer when voter preference changed as a result of exposure to campaign ads. This can be explained by considering Lodge et al.’s “On-line Model” of candidate evaluation. If voters are continuously updating their evaluations of candidates based on information they receive (and then forget), there is certainly a large role for campaign ads to affect the way voters feel about a candidate. However, if a voter has already accumulated a strong impression of a candidate (say, if he was the incumbent President for four years), then it will take much more to change his mind about that candidate; the opinion already has a firm foundation. In 2004, this was true for Bush, so there was more room for respondents’ rating of Kerry to be shaped by their exposure to campaign ads.

This has implications for the way that campaigns are run. As shown, Bush’s favorability was relatively unaffected by the ads he ran. Campaigns supporting the reelection of an incumbent candidate should focus less on *persuading* members of the opposite party – or even independents – to vote for them; their image has already had a chance to be cemented in the public mind. Rather, incumbents should focus on building enthusiasm for the candidate and ensuring that members of their party who would not otherwise vote show up on Election Day.

On the other hand, campaign ads can be very beneficial for changing public opinion surrounding a challenger candidate. Because Americans had relatively little information about who Kerry *was* before the campaign, there was much more room for his image to be shaped by campaign ads than there was for Bush. Challenger candidates in the future should rely heavily on campaign ads to introduce the candidate to the public.

Certainly this research has implications for running an efficient campaign. However, it also has implications for the way Americans relate to political campaigns. If campaign ads have democratically-beneficial effects in situations where Americans are relatively uninformed about the issues, then campaign ads have the potential to increase desirable behaviors in low-salience elections. There is room for campaign ads to increase interest and participation particularly at the local level and during primaries, where historically only those highly engaged (read: highly partisan) turn out to vote. This increase in participation is not only important for democratic theorists; by engaging a higher number of less extreme voters at all levels of representative selection, the candidates selected will also be more moderate.

This may seem counterintuitive based on the findings that campaign ads polarize voters into their respective political parties. However, by increasing this level of polarization, ads also give voters a feeling that what they are participating in is important. This rise in the number of average Americans participating in local and primary politics – not elites, not extreme ends of the political spectrum – could result in the moderate candidate and subsequently the moderate representative. In American democracy, representatives do not represent all Americans; they represent those who vote. If, as argued in this thesis, campaign ads have the ability to increase the number of people who feel engaged in politics and turn out to vote, then they have the ability to shape the political landscape and make room for more moderate candidates.

## Appendix 1: Tables

**Party ID and Voter Preference among High TV Viewers**

			Party ID							Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
Voter Preference	Bush	Count	31	76	29	46	219	181	532	1114
		% within Voter_Preference	2.8%	6.8%	2.6%	4.1%	19.7%	16.2%	47.8%	100.0%
		% within Party ID	3.3%	21.3%	7.5%	28.6%	81.4%	69.9%	94.2%	37.8%
	Kerry	Count	897	238	326	66	26	57	22	1632
		% within Voter_Preference	55.0%	14.6%	20.0%	4.0%	1.6%	3.5%	1.3%	100.0%
		% within Party ID	94.3%	66.7%	84.5%	41.0%	9.7%	22.0%	3.9%	55.4%
	Other	Count	23	43	31	49	24	21	11	202
		% within Voter_Preference	11.4%	21.3%	15.3%	24.3%	11.9%	10.4%	5.4%	100.0%
		% within Party ID	2.4%	12.0%	8.0%	30.4%	8.9%	8.1%	1.9%	6.9%
Total	Count	951	357	386	161	269	259	565	2948	
	% within Voter_Preference	32.3%	12.1%	13.1%	5.5%	9.1%	8.8%	19.2%	100.0%	
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Voter Preference and Party ID among All Respondents**

			Party ID							Total
			1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
Voter Preference	Bush	Count	90	272	101	183	858	837	2104	4445
		% within Voter_Preference	2.0%	6.1%	2.3%	4.1%	19.3%	18.8%	47.3%	100.0%
		% within Party ID	3.8%	21.8%	8.4%	32.2%	80.9%	77.7%	96.2%	45.9%
	Kerry	Count	2180	843	986	202	87	140	52	4490
		% within Voter_Preference	48.6%	18.8%	22.0%	4.5%	1.9%	3.1%	1.2%	100.0%
		% within Party ID	93.2%	67.6%	81.8%	35.5%	8.2%	13.0%	2.4%	46.3%
	Other	Count	70	132	119	184	116	100	32	753
		% within Voter_Preference	9.3%	17.5%	15.8%	24.4%	15.4%	13.3%	4.2%	100.0%
		% within Party ID	3.0%	10.6%	9.9%	32.3%	10.9%	9.3%	1.5%	7.8%
Total	Count	2340	1247	1206	569	1061	1077	2188	9688	
	% within Voter_Preference	24.2%	12.9%	12.4%	5.9%	11.0%	11.1%	22.6%	100.0%	
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**The Effect of Positive Kerry Advertising on the Relationship between Party ID and Kerry Favorability among Low TV Viewers**

Positive Kerry Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	14	46	13	33	134	131	392	763
			% within Party ID	3.2%	16.0%	5.2%	26.2%	53.8%	46.0%	82.0%	36.0%
	2.00	Count	75	92	84	55	93	126	70	595	
		% within Party ID	17.0%	31.9%	33.6%	43.7%	37.3%	44.2%	14.6%	28.1%	
	3.00	Count	353	150	153	38	22	28	16	760	
		% within Party ID	79.9%	52.1%	61.2%	30.2%	8.8%	9.8%	3.3%	35.9%	
Total		Count	442	288	250	126	249	285	478	2118	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	2	4	4	14	28	30	95	177
			% within Party ID	2.9%	6.2%	6.1%	38.9%	62.2%	55.6%	81.2%	39.2%
	2.00	Count	12	23	25	10	15	21	20	126	
		% within Party ID	17.6%	35.4%	37.9%	27.8%	33.3%	38.9%	17.1%	27.9%	
	3.00	Count	54	38	37	12	2	3	2	148	
		% within Party ID	79.4%	58.5%	56.1%	33.3%	4.4%	5.6%	1.7%	32.8%	
Total		Count	68	65	66	36	45	54	117	451	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	5	6	7	7	19	18	78	140
			% within Party ID	8.1%	12.2%	15.6%	26.9%	40.4%	47.4%	85.7%	39.1%
	2.00	Count	11	19	10	16	23	15	10	104	
		% within Party ID	17.7%	38.8%	22.2%	61.5%	48.9%	39.5%	11.0%	29.1%	
	3.00	Count	46	24	28	3	5	5	3	114	
		% within Party ID	74.2%	49.0%	62.2%	11.5%	10.6%	13.2%	3.3%	31.8%	
Total		Count	62	49	45	26	47	38	91	358	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	2	2	0	2	10	13	45	74
			% within Party ID	6.9%	9.5%	.0%	20.0%	58.8%	65.0%	86.5%	45.4%
	2.00	Count	2	8	7	6	5	3	5	36	
		% within Party ID	6.9%	38.1%	50.0%	60.0%	29.4%	15.0%	9.6%	22.1%	
	3.00	Count	25	11	7	2	2	4	2	53	
		% within Party ID	86.2%	52.4%	50.0%	20.0%	11.8%	20.0%	3.8%	32.5%	
Total		Count	29	21	14	10	17	20	52	163	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	



**The Effect of Kerry Attack Advertising on the Relationship between Party ID and Kerry Favorability among High TV Viewers**

Level of Kerry Attack Advertising				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	9	18	12	17	72	58	186	372
			% within Party ID	2.1%	11.4%	7.1%	22.4%	57.6%	47.5%	79.8%	28.5%
	2.00	Count	41	53	46	39	40	40	35	294	
		% within Party ID	9.7%	33.5%	27.2%	51.3%	32.0%	32.8%	15.0%	22.5%	
	3.00	Count	372	87	111	20	13	24	12	639	
		% within Party ID	88.2%	55.1%	65.7%	26.3%	10.4%	19.7%	5.2%	49.0%	
Total	Count	422	158	169	76	125	122	233	1305		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	3	7	3	7	17	8	43	88
			% within Party ID	3.0%	14.9%	5.9%	33.3%	50.0%	27.6%	68.3%	25.4%
	2.00	Count	10	10	12	9	15	15	17	88	
		% within Party ID	9.9%	21.3%	23.5%	42.9%	44.1%	51.7%	27.0%	25.4%	
	3.00	Count	88	30	36	5	2	6	3	170	
		% within Party ID	87.1%	63.8%	70.6%	23.8%	5.9%	20.7%	4.8%	49.1%	
Total	Count	101	47	51	21	34	29	63	346		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	6	9	0	6	23	14	57	115
			% within Party ID	4.9%	12.9%	.0%	27.3%	65.7%	42.4%	68.7%	27.6%
	2.00	Count	12	24	12	8	11	12	19	98	
		% within Party ID	9.8%	34.3%	23.1%	36.4%	31.4%	36.4%	22.9%	23.5%	
	3.00	Count	104	37	40	8	1	7	7	204	
		% within Party ID	85.2%	52.9%	76.9%	36.4%	2.9%	21.2%	8.4%	48.9%	
Total	Count	122	70	52	22	35	33	83	417		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	9	9	4	10	45	35	176	288
			% within Party ID	2.4%	8.3%	3.0%	19.2%	51.7%	40.7%	78.9%	27.0%
	2.00	Count	35	30	29	19	32	30	38	213	
		% within Party ID	9.3%	27.8%	21.5%	36.5%	36.8%	34.9%	17.0%	19.9%	
	3.00	Count	333	69	102	23	10	21	9	567	
		% within Party ID	88.3%	63.9%	75.6%	44.2%	11.5%	24.4%	4.0%	53.1%	
Total	Count	377	108	135	52	87	86	223	1068		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

The Effect of Kerry Attack Advertising on the Relationship Between PID and Kerry Favorability among Low TV Viewers

Kerry Attack Ads				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	11	31	5	27	90	70	256	490
			% within Party ID	4.1%	17.5%	3.4%	34.6%	55.2%	42.4%	82.6%	37.3%
	2.00	Count	48	52	57	32	58	72	44	363	
		% within Party ID	17.8%	29.4%	38.3%	41.0%	35.6%	43.6%	14.2%	27.7%	
	3.00	Count	211	94	87	19	15	23	10	459	
		% within Party ID	78.1%	53.1%	58.4%	24.4%	9.2%	13.9%	3.2%	35.0%	
Total	Count	270	177	149	78	163	165	310	1312		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	0	8	4	4	23	17	55	111
			% within Party ID	.0%	16.0%	8.2%	19.0%	50.0%	38.6%	88.7%	32.9%
	2.00	Count	9	21	13	11	20	25	6	105	
		% within Party ID	13.8%	42.0%	26.5%	52.4%	43.5%	56.8%	9.7%	31.2%	
	3.00	Count	56	21	32	6	3	2	1	121	
		% within Party ID	86.2%	42.0%	65.3%	28.6%	6.5%	4.5%	1.6%	35.9%	
Total	Count	65	50	49	21	46	44	62	337		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	3	7	5	5	20	32	64	136
			% within Party ID	3.9%	13.5%	9.4%	17.9%	60.6%	54.2%	78.0%	35.5%
	2.00	Count	14	19	16	13	9	25	16	112	
		% within Party ID	18.4%	36.5%	30.2%	46.4%	27.3%	42.4%	19.5%	29.2%	
	3.00	Count	59	26	32	10	4	2	2	135	
		% within Party ID	77.6%	50.0%	60.4%	35.7%	12.1%	3.4%	2.4%	35.2%	
Total	Count	76	52	53	28	33	59	82	383		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	1.00	Count	9	12	10	20	58	73	235	417
			% within Party ID	4.7%	8.3%	8.1%	28.2%	50.0%	56.6%	82.7%	39.4%
	2.00	Count	29	50	40	31	49	43	39	281	
		% within Party ID	15.3%	34.7%	32.3%	43.7%	42.2%	33.3%	13.7%	26.6%	
	3.00	Count	152	82	74	20	9	13	10	360	
		% within Party ID	80.0%	56.9%	59.7%	28.2%	7.8%	10.1%	3.5%	34.0%	
Total	Count	190	144	124	71	116	129	284	1058		
	% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

The Effects of Positive Bush Ads on Kerry Favorability Among Unengaged Respondents

Level of Positive Bush Advertising				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	15	53	18	30	128	104	268	616
			% within Party ID	4.1%	17.8%	8.0%	25.0%	54.0%	41.4%	74.9%	33.2%
	Neutral	Count	72	103	96	62	85	116	75	609	
		% within Party ID	19.5%	34.7%	42.7%	51.7%	35.9%	46.2%	20.9%	32.8%	
	Favorable	Count	283	141	111	28	24	31	15	633	
		% within Party ID	76.5%	47.5%	49.3%	23.3%	10.1%	12.4%	4.2%	34.1%	
	Total	Count	370	297	225	120	237	251	358	1858	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	5	16	11	14	57	82	112	297
			% within Party ID	2.4%	9.8%	8.9%	18.4%	54.3%	47.7%	67.5%	29.2%
	Neutral	Count	27	60	42	40	39	73	49	330	
		% within Party ID	12.9%	36.6%	34.1%	52.6%	37.1%	42.4%	29.5%	32.5%	
	Favorable	Count	178	88	70	22	9	17	5	389	
		% within Party ID	84.8%	53.7%	56.9%	28.9%	8.6%	9.9%	3.0%	38.3%	
	Total	Count	210	164	123	76	105	172	166	1016	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	13	25	9	23	44	66	156	336
			% within Party ID	6.3%	15.5%	7.3%	34.8%	40.4%	50.8%	70.6%	33.0%
	Neutral	Count	33	55	43	24	52	48	55	310	
		% within Party ID	16.0%	34.2%	34.7%	36.4%	47.7%	36.9%	24.9%	30.5%	
	Favorable	Count	160	81	72	19	13	16	10	371	
		% within Party ID	77.7%	50.3%	58.1%	28.8%	11.9%	12.3%	4.5%	36.5%	
	Total	Count	206	161	124	66	109	130	221	1017	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Advertising	Scale of Kerry Favorability	Unfavorable	Count	5	15	6	16	29	25	94	190
			% within Party ID	3.9%	16.7%	9.0%	30.8%	44.6%	39.1%	75.8%	32.3%
	Neutral	Count	15	34	19	24	32	26	24	174	
		% within Party ID	11.8%	37.8%	28.4%	46.2%	49.2%	40.6%	19.4%	29.5%	
	Favorable	Count	107	41	42	12	4	13	6	225	
		% within Party ID	84.3%	45.6%	62.7%	23.1%	6.2%	20.3%	4.8%	38.2%	
	Total	Count	127	90	67	52	65	64	124	589	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The Effect of Kerry Attack Ads on Bush Favorability Among Unengaged Respondents

Level of Kerry Attack Advertising				Party ID							Total
				1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	
No Ads	Bush Favorability Rating	Unfavorable	Count	235	111	127	26	14	15	7	535
			% within Party ID	62.8%	36.5%	58.5%	21.8%	5.6%	5.8%	1.9%	28.4%
	Neutral	Count	95	101	61	57	57	59	22	452	
		% within Party ID	25.4%	33.2%	28.1%	47.9%	23.0%	22.8%	6.0%	24.0%	
	Favorable	Count	44	92	29	36	177	185	335	898	
		% within Party ID	11.8%	30.3%	13.4%	30.3%	71.4%	71.4%	92.0%	47.6%	
	Total	Count	374	304	217	119	248	259	364	1885	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Light Ads	Bush Favorability Rating	Unfavorable	Count	95	38	44	17	2	4	3	203
			% within Party ID	76.0%	42.7%	63.8%	40.5%	2.9%	5.1%	3.0%	35.6%
	Neutral	Count	19	25	17	15	17	19	5	117	
		% within Party ID	15.2%	28.1%	24.6%	35.7%	24.6%	24.4%	5.1%	20.5%	
	Favorable	Count	11	26	8	10	50	55	91	251	
		% within Party ID	8.8%	29.2%	11.6%	23.8%	72.5%	70.5%	91.9%	44.0%	
	Total	Count	125	89	69	42	69	78	99	571	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Moderate Ads	Bush Favorability Rating	Unfavorable	Count	89	60	37	12	5	8	0	211
			% within Party ID	71.8%	51.7%	50.0%	25.5%	9.8%	7.0%	.0%	32.6%
	Neutral	Count	26	33	33	19	11	22	6	150	
		% within Party ID	21.0%	28.4%	44.6%	40.4%	21.6%	19.3%	5.0%	23.2%	
	Favorable	Count	9	23	4	16	35	84	115	286	
		% within Party ID	7.3%	19.8%	5.4%	34.0%	68.6%	73.7%	95.0%	44.2%	
	Total	Count	124	116	74	47	51	114	121	647	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Heavy Ads	Bush Favorability Rating	Unfavorable	Count	212	90	107	38	12	15	12	486
			% within Party ID	71.9%	41.9%	58.8%	33.3%	7.7%	8.6%	4.1%	33.9%
	Neutral	Count	67	72	57	36	37	37	12	318	
		% within Party ID	22.7%	33.5%	31.3%	31.6%	23.7%	21.3%	4.1%	22.2%	
	Favorable	Count	16	53	18	40	107	122	272	628	
		% within Party ID	5.4%	24.7%	9.9%	35.1%	68.6%	70.1%	91.9%	43.9%	
	Total	Count	295	215	182	114	156	174	296	1432	
		% within Party ID	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

## Appendix 2: 2004 Presidential Campaign Ads Codebook

### Ad Message

Tone (if contrast, note first whether the ad is positive and negative in first and second occurrence spots, then insert contrast [=3] in third occurrence – it is a contrast ad ONLY IF the contrasting portion is more than 1 sentence.

- 1 = Positive
- 2 = Negative
- 3 = Contrast

### Focus

- 1 = Personal Characteristics/Image
- 2 = Policy Positions/Issues
- 3 = Both

### Theme/Issues

- 0 = None
- 1 = Women's health concerns (includes abortion)
- 2 = Education
- 3 = Aged/Elderly (social security benefits, administration of social security)
- 4 = Health problems/cost of medical care/healthcare
- 5 = Poverty
- 6 = Crime/Violence (includes guns or "law and order" issues like death penalty or prisons)
- 7 = General mention of Moral/Religious Decay (of nation – including sex, bad language)
- 8 = Government spending (balancing the budget, deficit, taxes or tax reform)
- 9 = Narcotics
- 10 = The Economy, Recession (jobs, prosperity of the nation, economic growth, GNP)
- 11 = Candidate's political background/experience
- 12 = Defense/terrorism (support for troops, 9/11)
- 13 = Candidate's military experience
- 14 = Energy Independence
- 15 = Other

### Ad Videostyle

#### Music

- 1 = Classical/Instrumental
- 2 = Modern (Pop, rock, jazz)
- 3 = Marching music/marching drum
- 4 = Trumpet or announcing music
- 5 = Folk music/country/western
- 6 = National anthem
- 7 = Other
- 8 = Combination

#### Dominant Coloring Schemes

March 2011

- 1 = Black and white
- 2 = Dark colors (browns, dark blues, dark grays, etc. – scene looks dark)
- 3 = Bright colors (bright blues, reds, yellows, oranges, etc.)
- 4 = Neutral colors (normal lighting, etc.)

American Symbols/Patriotic Images

- 1 = Flag
- 2 = National bird (Eagle)
- 3 = Famous American Landscapes
- 4 = Famous Documents (i.e. Constitution, Declaration of Independents)
- 5 = Prior presidents
- 6 = Other famous patriotic symbols

Positive Imagery

- 1 = Smiles/happy faces
- 2 = Clean, well-kempt neighborhoods
- 3 = Americans hard at work
- 4 = Schools, graduations
- 5 = Other

Negative Imagery

- 1 = Terror-related images
- 2 = Drugs, violence
- 3 = Abandoned buildings
- 4 = Desolate landscapes, pollution
- 5 = Unhappy/stressed faces/frowns
- 6 = Other

Neutral Images

- 1 = Candidate giving speech, talking to camera

**Actors**

(code candidate as 0 until third category. Code only major actors, not a crowd.)

Race

- 1 = White
- 2 = Non-white

Gender

- 1 = Male
- 2 = Female

Candidate Featured?

- 0 = no
- 1 = yes

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