

Making a Connection: Repetition and Priming in Presidential Campaigns

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Abstract

This paper examines whether the content of presidential advertising campaigns helps to create and reinforce associations between the issues a candidate emphasizes and that candidate. The argument relies on the distinction between mechanisms of priming, noting that the effects of exposure to the campaign fit better with a frequency mechanism than a recency mechanism. Using the 2000 presidential campaign, I find that the accumulated issue emphasis of the candidates' advertising campaigns more strongly moderates the impact of issue considerations on evaluations than does recent emphasis, and in some cases, further serves to improve the predictability of these connections. This suggests the campaign can promote the development of longer-term associations via frequency accessibility and applicability which, in turn, enables citizens to hold the future leader accountable for the priorities embodied in the campaign.

Focusing on contemporary American presidential campaigns, I examine whether the content of the burgeoning advertising campaigns helps to create and reinforce associations between the issues a candidate emphasizes and that candidate. Such connections would prod citizens to rely more heavily and more predictably on those issues when evaluating the candidate. Moreover, such connections, once established, should endure, thereby playing a role in later presidential evaluation.

The present research examines campaign priming communication, but the implications extend beyond the campaign to address whether citizens process information about candidates and candidate agendas during the campaign in a way that would facilitate holding leaders accountable for their campaign rhetoric. If citizens, via the campaign, come to connect a set of issues or issue priorities to a candidate, this could provide a mechanism for holding a leader more accountable to the campaign agenda. These enduring connections, as opposed to short-term priming, may wield influence on evaluations once a candidate is ensconced in office; additionally, considerations connected to the candidate in the minds of the public as a function of message repetition may be more readily revived later, for instance, during the next election cycle. If, on the other hand, citizens do not develop connections between candidates and their campaign issues, citizens will find their ability to constrain leaders more limited. Campaign influences that are predominantly transitory and easily disrupted should make candidates feel freer to address whatever issues are likely to help them win, regardless of their intentions in office – a normatively less desirable state of things.

Priming in Context

To understand how campaigns can create and reinforce enduring connections between candidates and issues, we must start by reconsidering the psychological underpinnings of priming. My argument relies on recognizing the critical distinction between two mechanisms of priming – recency- and frequency-induced priming – and noting that the effects of exposure to the campaign fit better with a frequency mechanism than a recency mechanism. Indeed, this distinction between recency- and frequency-induced priming is especially important because the *political* implications of the two are qualitatively different: frequency priming helps build accountability whereas recency priming inhibits it.

When political scientists talk about priming, or altering the dimensions of leader evaluation by influencing the accessibility of alternative considerations (Iyengar and Kinder 1987), they characterize the weight given to particular considerations in judgment as a function of accessibility (Miller and Krosnick 2000). Accessibility of a consideration is increased through recency (Iyengar et al 1984; Mendelsohn 1996) or frequency (Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Krosnick and Brannon 1993) of exposure to a message, or both (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Price and Tewksbury 1997). Seldom does work on political priming distinguish between these mechanisms (see Althaus and Kim 2006 for a recent exception), yet these are different mechanisms produced by different environments and for which psychologists posit different outcomes.

The social psychology literature concurs that priming is a function of accessibility. Yet social psychologists distinguish further between two types of accessibility – temporary and chronic – and add another inducer of priming, applicability (Bargh et al 1986; Higgins and Brendl 1995; Higgins 1996). These sources of priming have different antecedents – recency, frequency, and strength of associations, respectively. Acknowledging these different mechanisms for promoting priming is key to reconciling contradictory conclusions about the duration, short or long, of priming effects (Althaus and Kim 2006).

Recent exposure to an issue increases temporary accessibility by momentarily bringing the issue into working memory; when asked to evaluate a target, considerations already in working memory are more likely to be used. Frequent exposure makes an issue more chronically accessible or more generally available in working memory. Such chronically accessible issues are more likely to be used in evaluation regardless of the recency of a stimulus. Stronger associations between an issue and a target of evaluation increases the perceived applicability of the issue to the evaluation. An issue that is strongly connected to a politician in the mind of a citizen is more likely to be used in evaluation because when the politician is pulled into working memory, so too are the issues connected to him.

Frequent exposure to a consideration and an evaluative target *simultaneously*, in addition to promoting longer-term accessibility of the consideration, generates stronger connections between the consideration and the target of evaluation, thereby serving to increase the applicability of the consideration to judgment. Thus, repeated exposure can strengthen a “priming effect” in multi-

ple ways: by increasing the duration of the consideration's accessibility in working memory and by increasing the perceived relevance of the consideration to the target (Anderson 1983). While priming is understood to be of consequence because it can change political judgments, it may do even more. Priming can shape expectations of a leader by strengthening the association between a consideration and the evaluative target in long-term memory.

Priming in the News

That news media shape public opinion through priming is one of the most widely accepted results in political behavior. The most persuasive evidence of media priming comes from experimental research. Experimental studies, by definition, are primarily examining recency effects as evaluations are normally captured close behind exposure to a treatment. The pioneering work of Iyengar and Kinder (1987), however, one of the few studies to incorporate an explicit comparison between repeated and one-shot message exposure, finds more powerful priming effects in their five-day sequential experiments than in their one-day assemblage studies; this is suggestive of potential differences between recency and frequency mechanisms.¹ Iyengar and Kinder further demonstrate experimentally that stories directly connecting a problem to the president produce even more powerful priming effects, supporting the role of applicability.

Media priming studies focusing on major political events as they occurred at the time, such as the Iran-Contra scandal (Krosnick and Kinder 1990) or the Gulf War (Krosnick and Brannon 1993; Pan and Kosicki 1997), emphasize the impact of messages that have received more frequent coverage. Yet conclusions from these studies still presume this frequent coverage serves to activate primed considerations temporarily, making citizens "victims of the architecture of their minds" (Miller and Krosnick 1996).² This perspective – that priming is a worrisome power of the press, that citizens are "Victims of Priming" (Iyengar and Kinder 1987, 90) – is common in studies of media priming. Such studies, whether highlighting recency, frequency or both as mechanisms, treat priming as a transitory effect and imply that citizens criteria for leader evaluation can be refocused rapidly from one issue to another.

The psychological theory of priming entered the political science lexicon through studies of the news media. That media priming work has emphasized the consequences, if not strictly the

mechanism, of recency priming makes sense, as this fits well with the social structure of the news media, which itself emphasizes rapid refocusing of attention to a news stream. News coverage of issues and events tends to be relatively transitory as news must respond to an ever-changing set of events. Combined with a preference for stories that are timely and novel (Shoemaker and Reese 1996), these incentives reduce the likelihood of sustained coverage of an issue outside of unusual crises and scandals. Further, in news coverage of issues, stories only inconsistently tie issues directly to political leaders in ways that strengthen the applicability of the message to leader evaluation (Iyengar 1991). Even in the context of campaigns, in which news media cover the same candidates over extended periods of time, journalistic standards are ill-suited to providing the stimulus for longer-term associations between issues and candidates in the minds of citizens, i.e., repeated coverage of candidate issues and themes (Patterson 1993).

Priming in Campaigns

Studies of campaign priming generally reference media priming, assuming the process is similar in the campaign context, while ignoring the distinction between mechanisms of priming – recency and frequency of exposure and associational strength.³ The incorporation of priming research into campaigns offers a concerning picture of candidates manipulating an easily distracted citizenry by altering the basis of judgment without consequence.

An uncritical incorporation of priming research, though, may be misleading. The general media context and the campaign context are sufficiently different to expect the mechanisms influencing priming to differ across these contexts. Further, the implications for citizen competence that follow from these distinct mechanisms are sufficiently different for us to care about these details. Campaigns, and modern presidential campaigns in particular, are structured to promote repetition. This repetition of themes by candidates and their campaigns promotes both greater accessibility of themes in response to frequent exposure and, more importantly, stronger connections between the highlighted themes and the candidates highlighting them in ways that enhance the relevance of these issues for leader evaluation.

Campaign texts preach to candidates to choose themes likely to advantage them and to repeat these themes endlessly, a sermon candidates enact pretty well. Consequently, the messages will be

transmitted to the public over and over again, via campaign ads, reports of speeches and events, and debates, increasing the chances that dominant themes will be more chronically accessible.

Repetition also ties the themes directly to a candidate by bringing the issue and the candidate to mind together. People do not simply rely on the most accessible considerations in making political judgments. Rather, issues need to be both accessible and relevant to the judgment at hand. Citizens, often ignorant about the locus of policy control in the complex American federal system, may quite reasonably deem candidate messages as appropriate considerations for voting decisions. Presidential candidates actively endeavor to convince citizens that particular problems, those they are perceived to be better able to handle (Petrocik 1996), are relevant and within the realm of the federal government. Thus, repetition, in strengthening the link between an issue consideration and a candidate, serves to increase the odds that the theme will be judged applicable when citizens evaluate the candidates.

Campaigns, more than standard media coverage, are designed to promote long-term accessibility of themes and to consistently connect these themes to candidates in ways that increase the perceived applicability of these themes to judgments about candidates. The combination of long-term accessibility and strong associations means citizens are more likely to learn to connect campaign information to the candidates in ways that increase the potential for future accountability.

Distinguishing Recency and Frequency Effects in Campaigns

In the context of campaigns, recency priming suggests that a consideration is used in evaluation because an attitude object like candidate Al Gore, when brought to the top of the head, meets up with other considerations already sitting there due to recent exposure. Having just seen a television news story about the rising cost of health care, a citizen uses health care as a more important basis for judgment when constructing an evaluation of Gore.

Campaign priming through frequency, on the other hand, suggests two pathways of influence on evaluation. First, repetition of an issue makes the issue chronically accessible, so even if the consideration has not been encountered recently, it is more likely to be found at the top of the head at the moment of evaluation. Second, and more importantly, because campaign communications necessarily invoke a consideration and a candidate at the same time, frequency strengthens the

association between the candidate and the consideration. This greater applicability suggests that a consideration is used in evaluation because an attitude object like candidate George W. Bush, when brought to the top of the head, *pulls* along with it those considerations to which it is strongly attached. While such connections already exist for individuals prior to the campaign – issue ownership is another way of thinking about these pre-existing associations – candidates work to reinforce or challenge these associations through their repeated emphasis in their campaigns. Frequent attention to an issue, then, both promotes easy accessibility as well as greater perceived applicability of the issue for candidate evaluation.

Both mechanisms – temporary accessibility as a result of recent exposure and associational strength and long-term accessibility as a result of frequent exposure – imply that primed considerations play a stronger role in evaluation; that is, they'll be weighted more heavily than non-primed considerations. But the frequency mechanism further implies that the considerations connected to the candidate will be used more predictably as those exposed to the repeated message come to a shared understanding of the relevance of these considerations for judgment. Repetition and association serve as clarifying mechanism; when two ideas – Bush and tax cuts – are jointly and repeatedly brought to a citizen's attention, the implications for evaluation become clearer. Hearing Bush talk about tax cuts further bolsters the inference that Bush prioritizes tax cuts.⁴ Citizens, in response, should become better at matching up their own priorities with those of the candidates. As a result, citizens who prioritize an issue similarly should arrive at increasingly similar evaluations of a candidate given more information about how the candidate prioritizes that issue. There is little in the recency mechanism that would promote an increasingly predictable use of an issue priority judgment. That a consideration happens to be sitting at the top of the head, as recency accessibility suggests, does not mean a citizen understands the implications of that consideration for the current evaluation.

These two processes, the use of a consideration in evaluation due to recency of exposure versus the development of connections and longer-term accessibility due to frequency, are tricky to disentangle observationally, to be sure.⁵ Still, the distinction is important because the broader implications of these two processes are quite different. Recency priming is a transitory influence. If this is the dominant effect of campaigns then there is considerably less cost to a bait and switch

on the part of a winning candidate – professing one set of priorities in the campaign, but focusing on another once in office. A frequency mechanism, on the other hand, encourages a more enduring accessibility and the development of stronger connections with clearer implications in the minds of voters. This relatively long-lasting phenomenon suggests that citizens can incorporate issue considerations into their evaluations in useful ways. While candidates may shape how citizens evaluate them, in the process they establish expectations of their future behavior, and thus standards for future accountability. If priming as a function of frequency is common in campaigns then citizens can, at the very least, be easily reminded of what a leader said as a candidate, and thus, are more able to hold him accountable.

Citizens may not evaluate candidates along precisely the same dimensions, however, so candidate evaluation and vote choice are not identical decisions (Lau and Redlawsk 2006). Indeed, candidates are generally trying to play down some considerations and to play up others in hopes of becoming identified with the issues they wish to make salient; if two candidates are effectively offsetting one another's impact, the comparative vote choice will obscure these effects. To the extent that candidates define the standards for their evaluation as president during the campaign (Jamieson 2000), it is important to examine how candidates are evaluated individually. Consequently, an empirical examination of the potential for campaign priming to encourage future accountability calls for an examination of candidate evaluations rather than vote choice.

Similarly, issue priorities, rather than positions, are the key candidate considerations. As work on issue ownership suggests, citizens frequently care more that a problem is solved than with how (Petrocik 1996), though certainly individuals who express strong partisan attachments may care more about the particulars than the average voter. Candidates reveal their priorities through their campaign emphases, and these priorities signal what problems a future leader is likely to spend effort and resources on. Budge and Hofferbert (1990) argue that the topics emphasized in a party's platform "constitute implicit commitments to greater effort in the area if elected" (p.114). These signals are not cheap talk; their evidence indicates that budgets move in accord with these emphases, particularly for the party occupying the White House. Candidate emphasis, and the priorities therein revealed, are important cues as to candidates' revealed intensities, an important dimension of leader behavior (Hall 1996).

Issue priority messages have the additional benefit for citizens of being easier to understand than more complex policy proposals, which can involve technical details that make the lids of even the most wonkish eyes grow heavy. An individual need not understand a candidate's detailed proposal for improving the quality of education, only that the candidate believes it represents a problem that requires fixing with the help of government. Because of the relative lack of ambiguity, citizens' evaluations of priority messages are also relatively straightforward. Thus, the implications for candidate evaluation should be clearer.⁶ It follows that the more a candidate emphasizes the importance he attaches to an issue through his allocation of rhetorical attention, the more citizens should adjust their evaluations of the candidate in a similar fashion conditional on their own issue priority.

Further, an examination of campaign priming must allow for the fact that citizens need not respond *en masse* to candidate communications, but may be differentially influenced by the candidates on the basis of partisan predispositions (Zaller 1992). In particular, candidates may exert more influence on the evaluative criteria of their supporters. Similarly, all candidate attempts at priming need not be equally effective. Connections between candidates and issues are not developed anew in each campaign. As associational strength suggests, previously encountered associations will be more easily processed upon later exposure; thus, connections that exist before the campaign – built on party or candidate reputations – ought to be more readily activated and renewed than weak or previously nonexistent associations. This implies that issues owned by a candidate or his party (Petrocik 1996) will be more readily connected to that candidate during the campaign in response to the candidate's emphasis on the issue.

Research Design

This study relies on a national rolling cross-section survey conducted from November 1999 through Election Day 2000 combined with detailed advertising data. The University of Wisconsin Survey Center administered the national telephone survey of the 48 contiguous states, conducting daily survey interviews from November 12, 1999 through Election Day. The key questions of interest involve presidential candidate evaluations, gauged with a 101-point feeling thermometer,⁷ and cit-

izen issue priorities, captured for four issues – improving education, reducing federal taxes, saving Social Security, and reforming health care – with closed-ended issue priority questions.⁸ Sampling was carried out on a daily basis and each day's interviews represent a small, but independent, sample. Approximately thirty interviews were completed each week, producing a total of 1,511 respondents.

The survey data are combined with a data set of the presidential advertising campaign from the Campaign Media Analysis Group. This data set tracks television advertisements broadcast in the top seventy-five media markets, capturing information on what spot is aired, when and where. The Wisconsin Advertising Project undertook extensive content analysis of these ads, including what issues, if any, are mentioned in each (Goldstein et al 2002).⁹ Thus, I can construct a measure of the presidential campaign advertising environment for individual respondents.¹⁰ While I cannot ascertain whether individuals actually saw the ads aired in their media markets, I can produce measures of how available candidate campaign themes were in their geographic and temporal contexts.¹¹ Since much campaign information is transmitted via other sources – opinion leaders, social networks, or the mass media – the impact of such advertising does not rest solely on observation of the spots by individuals.¹²

The four issues tracked by the survey – education, health care, taxes, and Social Security – did indeed play a dominant role in the 2000 presidential campaign agendas. In fact, these four issues were among the six most frequently mentioned issues in each of the candidates' advertising campaigns (including those sponsored by the national party committees). Bush and the RNC most frequently mentioned education in the ads they aired; 51% of ad airings mentioned education, compared to 16% of Gore's ads. Gore and the DNC emphasized health care above other topics (42%, compared to 27% of Bush's ads). Mention of these issues far outpaced any other issue for each of the candidates. Social Security and taxes were also key issues, mentioned in 36% and 22% of the Bush ad airings, respectively, and in 14% and 26% of the Gore ad airings. Importantly, these four issues also vary with respect to party reputation. On the basis of issue ownership, we might expect Gore to be advantaged in reinforcing a connection between himself and education and health care, and Bush to be advantaged with respect to taxes.

Of course, the presidential campaign is not a unitary entity. While some areas received adver-

tising saturation, others were virtually ignored. We can employ this variation in campaign contexts to compare the responses of citizens inhabiting such different information environments.¹³

Candidate-issue ad emphasis is measured in two ways. Priming as a function of frequency relies on the intuition that individuals' information environments are not only a function of the ads aired on the day they are interviewed, but on all the ads aired to which they could have been exposed. In other words, the campaign information environment is a cumulative one. Accordingly, the measure of cumulative candidate-issue ads on any given day in a given media market is the sum of the ads on all days leading up to that one. It captures the number of times a candidate-issue connection has been made explicit within the campaign ads aired in a citizen's viewing area at the time of the interview.

Recency priming, on the other hand, is predominantly concerned with whether the issue has been recently accessed. To compare more clearly the cumulative effect of exposure to the repeated ad message and the effect of recent exposure to an ad message, the second measure of candidate-issue ad emphasis incorporates only the three days leading up to a respondent's date of interview.¹⁴

Modeling Candidate Evaluation

The goal is to examine how issue priorities are used in candidate evaluations conditional on the campaign environment in which citizens reside. Thus, the model describes citizens' evaluations of the two dominant-party candidates as a function of issue priorities (ranging from -2 "not a problem", to 2 "the highest priority"), the campaign information environment defined by the candidate-issue emphasis in the advertising campaign, and individual attributes, chiefly, partisanship (measured from -3 "strong Republican" to 3 "strong Democrat"). Political ideology, retrospective economic perceptions, political awareness, education, age, gender and minority status are also included and subsumed below in \mathbf{X}_j .

$$Cand\ Eval_{im} = \beta_{0m} + \beta_{1m} Issue\ Priority_i + \beta_{2m} \ln(Issue\ Emphasis_m) + \beta_3 Party_i + \mathbf{X}_j \beta_j + u_{im} \quad (1)$$

Here, i indexes individual respondents while m denotes the information environment, designated by a respondent's media market and time of interview.

β_{1m} captures the primary relationship of interest, the relationship between how a citizen prioritizes an issue and her evaluation of the candidate. The weight given to issue priorities, though, is itself modeled as a function of the citizens' campaign environments. The weight is allowed to vary based on the attention a candidate has paid to a particular issue within a respondent's media market either cumulatively or recently. This part of the model, then, answers the question: do citizens rely more heavily on the issue priority rating as candidates air ads mentioning the issue more frequently (or recently)?

In addition, the weight citizens give to a particular issue in producing their evaluations of each candidate is allowed to vary as a function of individual partisanship, since people of different partisan stripes may not weight the issues equally in the first place. And, finally, the weight of an issue priority is allowed to vary as a function of the interaction between partisanship and the respondent's campaign environment to allow for the possibility that candidates are more successful with some audiences – those predisposed to favoring them – than others. Thus, the strength of the issue priority in evaluations of the candidates is:

$$\beta_{1m} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}\ln(\text{Issue Emphasis}_m) + \gamma_{12}\text{Party}_i + \gamma_{13}\ln(\text{Issue Emphasis}_m) \times \text{Party}_i \quad (2)$$

Substituting Equation (2) into Equation (1) produces the estimated interactive model.¹⁵

While a recency priming hypothesis predicts an increasing weight given to a consideration when individuals have been recently exposed to the consideration, there is less reason to believe that short-term recency priming will improve the predictability of evaluations conditional on the consideration. The clarification that attends stronger links between an issue consideration and a candidate predicts that increasing attention to the issue on the part of the candidate will aid citizens in lining up their own issue priorities more reliably with those of the candidate and evaluate him accordingly. This expectation is not about the level of one's candidate evaluation, but about the error – the difference between how you evaluate a candidate and how the average person like you (e.g., those who share the same priorities, characteristics and exposure to a candidate's issue

emphasis) evaluates the candidate. This final part of the model is represented by:

$$\sigma_{u_{im}}^2 = \exp(\delta_0 + \delta_1 Education_i + \delta_2 \ln(Issue\ Emphasis_m)) \quad (3)$$

u_{im} represents the error – the degree to which a respondent does not evaluate a candidate as the model predicts. As the variability of this term increases it implies that people are more spread out around the average evaluation for folks like them. As it decreases, it implies that citizens are more clustered together around a conditional average evaluation. Substantively, a significant effect here indicates that in the presence of more information about how a candidate prioritizes an issue, a citizen’s evaluation of that candidate becomes more predictable on the basis of how the citizen prioritizes the issue. I model the variance, Equation (3), as a function of advertising context in one’s area along with respondent education since education, too, should improve the predicability of citizen reliance on key considerations in forming a candidate evaluation.¹⁶

In addition, for both measures of candidate-issue ad emphasis, the ad counts were logged. Theoretically, it is implausible that a candidate could increase the weight given to an issue in his or her evaluation infinitely simply by talking about it infinitely. Rather, there must exist some maximum effect of a particular issue. As an attempt at recognizing this constraint, I use the natural log of the ad count to reflect the decreasing marginal impact of more and more ad airings on the same issue.

Finally, because there is not enough information in the data to adequately discriminate between the recent and frequent ad measures simultaneously, the models are fit separately with each ad measure and the resulting estimated models are compared using an information-theoretic approach, primarily, the Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) values.

Model selection criteria, such as the AIC, do not constitute hypothesis tests. Thus, AIC model comparison is not about finding the “right” model, but about gauging the relative usefulness of a model among a set of possible models (Burnham and Anderson 2002). From this perspective, hypothesis testing does not necessarily offer a superior approach to model selection, as classical hypothesis testing is generally predicated on the existence of a “true” model. Model selection criteria, on the other hand, are useful even when the assumption that the true model is part of the

estimated set is tenuous. The goal is to select a best approximating model for the data at hand, one that necessarily simplifies the representation of reality.

The model that produces the *minimum* AIC value is considered the best. It is not the absolute size of the AIC value, however, but the differences between AIC values within the estimated set, that are important. The larger the difference between the AIC value for a given model and the minimum value in the set of models, the less plausible it is that the given model is the best in the set; thus, the model with a reported AIC difference of zero is the favored model. Burnham and Anderson (2002, p. 70) suggest that differences of 0-2 indicate substantial support for a model, differences between 4-7 indicate considerably less support for the higher-AIC model, and differences greater than ten suggest essentially no support.

These AIC differences can be used to rank the models and to further quantify the plausibility that a given model is the best among the set. The Akaike weight is a normalization of relative likelihood of each model given the data and is interpreted as the weight of the evidence in favor of a model among the set.¹⁷ The AIC-favored model – the model with the minimum AIC value – will, in turn, have the minimum AIC difference and the largest Akaike weight. The AIC difference and weight provide metrics for evaluating the degree to which one model best fits the data. Each of these values is reported in the tables that follow.

Results

Tables 1 through 4 present the results, issue by issue. Because the coefficients in interactive models don't convey everything we want to know – in particular, it is not always clear from these coefficients when the marginal effect of the variable of interest is significant – the key results from each model are depicted graphically in Figures 1 through 4.¹⁸ The first two panels of each figure graph the marginal effect of an issue priority on candidate evaluation as a function of the candidates' accumulated advertising campaign in a respondent's media market at the time of her interview and the respondent's party identification. The bottom two panels in each figure do the same, but for the candidates' recent advertising campaign. Because the inclusion of confidence intervals for all three lines would overwhelm the figures, I follow Brambor et al's (2006) recommendation and use stars

to indicate at what points on the graph the marginal effects are statistically significant. Finally, to provide a sense of range, the graphs include (represented along the right x -axis) a histogram of the relevant number of ads Gore or Bush had aired in the relevant respondent's market.¹⁹

To conserve space, and the patience of readers, I will refer to the tables to compare the frequency and recency models and to consider the results from the variance function, and will focus on the graphs to convey the primary results based on the interactions.

The “Republican” Issue: Taxes

Table 1 provides the results for candidate evaluations as a function of tax cutting priority and mention of taxes in the candidates' advertising. For this issue, the AIC strongly favors the frequency model for Gore. The AIC difference for the recency model exceeds 10 and the weight of the evidence is consequently much higher for the model with frequent ads than for recent ads. For Bush, the AIC somewhat favors the frequency model, though the AIC difference for the recency model is just approaching 4, a range that begins to make the frequency model somewhat more plausible. The Akaike weight is notably higher for frequency. Thus, I will focus on the graphical results for the frequency models below.

Table 1 about here

A high priority attached to taxes clearly disadvantaged Gore, decreasing his evaluations considerably, as is evident from the negative marginal effects for Gore in Figure 1. And Gore was generally unable to overcome this disadvantage by emphasizing the issue in his ad campaign. Indeed, among Republicans Gore's attention to taxes in his advertising campaign serves to strengthen the negative effect of prioritizing tax cuts. The figure also clarifies the slight differentiating effect of Gore's tax ads, leading to a more negative weight on tax priorities among Republicans and a less negative weight on tax priorities among Democrats. In environments with a moderate level of attention to taxes in Gore's advertising campaign, the initially negative influence of tax priority on Gore's evaluations is neutralized among Democrats.

Figure 1 about here

Figure 1 also presents the effect of Bush's ads on the marginal effect of prioritizing taxes, highlighting the overall positive effect of Bush's attention to the issue. While absent any ads, the influence of tax cut priorities doesn't achieve statistical levels of significance among Independents, as more ads are aired the weight becomes significantly positive. The influence of tax priority among Democrats is always positive and significant, but becomes noticeably more so as Bush's attention to the issue increases. While the marginal effect becomes more positive among Republicans as Bush's ad campaign mentions taxes more frequently, the influence of tax priorities never achieves a conventional level of statistical significance.

The effect of frequent attention to taxes in Gore's ads has an additional effect on citizens. As more information becomes available about how Gore prioritizes the issue, the error variance decreases significantly (Table 1). Individuals who prioritize tax cuts similarly also evaluate Gore more similarly as the number of ads mentioning taxes increases. The analogous result does not obtain for the recency measure, or for Bush's evaluations in response to either recency or frequency.

The "Democratic" Issues: Education and Health Care

The results for each candidate's evaluations conditional on education (Table 2) and on health care (Table 3) are strikingly similar. For both issues, the recency model is favored slightly by the AIC for evaluations of both Gore and Bush. The AIC differences between the models, though, are in the negligible 0-2 range, and the resulting Akaike weights provide reasonable support to either model. In other words, neither mechanism does a noticeably better job explaining evaluations conditional on health care or education priority. Not surprisingly, then, the frequency and recency models come to similar conclusions.

Table 2 about here

Figure 2 visually represents the results for education priority and evaluations of Gore and Bush conditional on accumulated and recent advertising emphasis. The graph makes clear that the more accumulated ads Gore airs on education in a respondent's environment, the more weight Democrats place on the issue, the less weight Republicans place on the issue, while the weight Independents give to the issue remains relatively unchanged. Among Democrats, though the average influence

of education priority on Gore's evaluations increases, it never attains any conventional level of statistical significance. Among Republicans, however, the weight given to education priority is significant absent any attention by Gore to the issue; greater advertising emphasis on education by Gore reduces the influence of the issue enough to ultimately make it indiscernible from zero. Thus, while absent any attention by Gore, Republicans give greater weight to the issue in their evaluations, on average, than do Democrats, as issue attention increases to even relatively minimal levels, this difference disappears. In short, Gore's advertising campaign primarily serves to *de-emphasize* the influence of education priority for Republicans and Independents. A similar pattern emerges in response to recent ad emphasis – only here the never significant marginal effect of education priority among Democrats trends downward.

Figure 2 about here

The second panel of Figure 2 highlights the marginal effect of education priority on evaluations of Bush conditional on the frequency of issue ads. Bush's attention to education in his advertising campaign moves the influence of education priority on his evaluations in a positive direction for everybody, though not equally. Absent any attention, Democrats and Independents evaluate Bush less positively the more highly they prioritize education. But in areas where Bush's campaign gives even moderate attention to the issue, the weight of education priority reduces to something statistically indistinguishable from zero for both groups; while education initially disadvantages Bush, the prominent place education held in his campaign advertising serves to turn a negative effect into a neutral one. The weight of education priority in shaping evaluations of Bush among Republicans is never significant and Bush's attention to the issue does little to alter that. The final panel in Figure 2 reveals the same pattern in response to recent ads.

The effect of Gore's attention to health care in his accumulated advertising campaign on the marginal effects of health care priority is shown in the first panel of Figure 3. Again, Republicans and Independents who prioritize health care highly evaluate Gore significantly more favorably than those who do not, absent any attention to the issue on Gore's part. As Gore's advertising campaign makes more frequent mention of the issue in a respondent's environment, however, the advantageous effect of health care priority is neutralized. Democrats, for their part, never weight

the issue significantly in the evaluations of the candidate, and Gore's advertising campaign does not alter this. While Republicans consistently evaluate the priority more highly than do Democrats, beyond a certain level of attention by Gore, the coefficients do not differ significantly from zero regardless of partisanship.

Table 3, Figure 3 about here

Figure 3 also shows the overall positive effect of Bush's accumulated ads on the weight given to health care priority in his evaluations, moving the weight from a slightly negative effect to a slightly positive effect for Democrats and Independents. Nonetheless, for no amount of observed attention does health care priority significantly impact evaluations of Bush. Attention to the issue in his advertising campaign fails to significantly prime this consideration. In response to recent ads, Democrats and Independents still appear more responsive to the advertising campaign, but in a negative direction. Once again, though, the marginal effect of health care priority is never statistically discernible from zero.

Moving to the variance effects, both Table 2 and Table 3 reveal that both greater cumulative and recent attention given to education and to health care by both Bush and Gore reduced the variance of their respective evaluations based on these issues. To the extent citizens evaluated Gore and Bush on the basis of the priority they gave to education and health care, they did so with less error the more each candidate emphasized these issues, overall and recently, so that individuals who prioritized them similarly also evaluated the candidates more similarly.

The Wild Card: Social Security

For the final issue under consideration, Social Security priority, the AIC value again favors the frequency model (Table 4). The AIC difference for both Gore and Bush models is greater than 5, a range that suggests the frequency mechanism is more plausible. The resulting Akaike weight clearly favors the frequency measure, allocating over 90% of the weight to models employing the frequency measure. Consequently, I emphasize the graphical results for the frequency measure below. Note, however, that marginal effects of Social Security priority fail to achieve any level of significance conditional on recent issue attention.

Table 4 about here

Moving to Figure 4, in the absence of advertising attention to the issue, neither candidate has an obvious advantage; marginal effects for both Bush and Gore hover around zero. The priority citizens give to Social Security is not consistently related to their evaluations of either candidate. But both candidates alter the weight given to the issue as a function of how frequently they mention the issue in campaign ads.

Figure 4 about here

Figure 4 reveals the differential effect a greater accumulation of Social Security ads by Gore's campaign has on the weight of Social Security priority as a consideration in his evaluation among partisans. The more Gore's campaign emphasizes the issue, the more negative the influence of one's Social Security priority becomes among Republicans. Among independents, Gore's attention to the issue is associated with a slightly more negative influence of the priority on evaluations, but the effect is never statistically distinguishable from zero. For Democrats, the weight of the issue priority increases quite a bit, though even this large coefficient never achieves a conventional level of statistical significance.

Meanwhile, the results for Bush highlight the overall positive effect of Bush's Social Security advertising campaign on the weight given to respondents' Social Security priority in their evaluations. As Bush's attention to the issue increases in respondents' environments, the weight Republicans give to the issue increases to significant levels. Similarly, the coefficient on the issue becomes significant for Independents as well. Among Democrats, the coefficient on the issue moves from slightly negative to moderately positive, but it is never statistically discernible from zero.

Finally, the coefficients on advertising attention in the variance function demonstrate that increases in both recent and accumulated attention result in a reduction of the error variance for evaluations of both candidates.

To summarize, the models employing the recency and the frequency measures are either indistinguishable (for education and health care) or the frequency mechanism finds stronger support (for

taxes and Social Security). The substantive results – marginal effects of issue priorities and variance effects of issue advertising – are also similar across both versions of the model; when there are important differences, though, as for the variance of Gore’s evaluations conditional on tax cutting priority or the significance of the marginal effects of Social Security priority, the frequency measure fares better. The campaign appears to have done more to promote *longer-term associations*, rather than *short-term accessibility*, between Social Security and taxes and the candidates, though not in identical ways.

For Gore, the most common effect of his issue emphasis, among the issues studied, is largely neutral for Democrats and negative for Republicans. Overall, his influence on the criteria of evaluations was more likely to be selective, conditional on partisan predispositions. For Bush, the more common pattern in response to his advertising emphasis is to move the weight of issue priorities in a positive direction for the electorate more broadly, though the degree of responsiveness also varies by partisanship.

This pattern is consistent with the conventional wisdom that Bush won the air war and Gore ran a relatively ineffective campaign. That Gore’s ad campaign was less successful than Bush’s could be due to less compelling ads on the part of Gore, more effective opposition ads by Bush’s campaign, or by asymmetries in how congruent the mass mediated campaign was with each candidates’ ad campaign. Unfortunately, these data cannot discern between these explanations.

Still, the pattern of results across these issues and candidates suggest further qualifications. First, the existence of a prior connection – as a function of issue ownership – can facilitate the development of a connection between the candidate and the issue in the campaign, as with Bush and taxes. Prior connections can also inhibit the development of an association between the issue and the trespassing candidate, as with Gore and taxes or Bush and education. With respect to education, Bush needed first to overcome a pre-existing negative connection. Indeed, that is all his emphasis on the issue seems to have accomplished; but that, itself, may be the goal. It is precisely such cases, when candidates work to counter prior connections, that highlight the role priming plays in de-emphasizing issues. Priming as accessibility cannot fully accommodate a negative relation between recent or frequent exposure to a consideration and a down-weighting of the the consideration in evaluation; priming as building associational strength can. Gore, however, was not

similarly successful when emphasizing taxes. Indeed, the evidence here suggests that Democratic candidates may only hurt themselves by engaging the issue (see Bartels 2005).

Second, the more information citizens are likely to have about a candidate, the more selectively responsive to candidate messages they are likely to be. Democrats, it would seem, were more open to the opposition party's candidate's suggestions for evaluative criteria than were Republicans. Given Gore's tenure in office, and his inevitable connection to the policies and reputation of Bill Clinton's administration, it seems intuitively correct that Republicans, many of whom loathed the Clinton administration more than Democrats loved it, would be less responsive to Gore's redefinition of himself. Bush, on the other hand, was relatively unknown. Consequently, his attempts to define the appropriate dimensions of his evaluations may have simply fallen upon a more responsive audience. In the face of strong pre-existing associations with a candidate like Gore, the campaign faces an uphill battle in influence these connections, and success may be limited to favorably disposed partisans.

Conclusion

All priming effects are not created equal. It matters, when priming occurs in campaigns, if it is a transitory recency effect or a more enduring frequency and applicability effect. This analysis suggests the need to take this distinction more seriously. Candidates may hope to merely induce a short-term priming effect advantageous to their cause, one that carries through Election Day but no farther; but the repetitive strategy of contemporary campaigns may favor the development of enduring connections which, once established, can harden into public expectations.

These analyses support the idea that candidates *can* strengthen the associations between themselves and advantageous issue concerns via their campaigns, but that they will do so is not a given. The development of connections seems more likely given time and repetition; the cumulative effect of the campaign is generally greater than (or equal to) the recent campaign message. Clearly, though, the subtleties of when candidate-issue connections are developed in response to a priming strategy require further examination. But this requires researchers to be more mindful of how we theorize priming, and how we consequently measure priming stimuli. To better understand

campaign priming, rather than assume a short-term automatic process or, alternatively, assume that frequency and recency lead to the same outcome, scholars should consider multiple ways of aggregating campaign information to more clearly distinguish these different types of information-processing effects.

The ability of citizens to learn to connect the issues a candidate emphasizes to the candidate during the course of the campaign improves the likelihood of holding leaders accountable for the future policy agenda. If candidates are heavily and reliably evaluated on the basis of issues priorities promoted during the campaign, and these issues continue to serve as a criterion of presidential evaluation after the election, then presidents attuned to their public standing may feel constrained to act in accordance with their campaign rhetoric. These connections, once established, need not persist on their own to wield influence. The development of associations between candidates and issues in the minds of citizens means that these issues and ideas are more easily processed and incorporated when later mentioned by the media, the opposing party, or future challengers; that is, citizens are more readily reminded of these links by elites with an interest in persuading a president to be accountable. If, instead, longer-term candidate-issue connections never develop during a campaign, the likelihood of future accountability is considerably more limited.

To be sure, the results here do not demonstrate that citizens do hold leaders accountable. But if we think of prospects for accountability as requiring a combination of conditions, this is a step toward demonstrating that at least one of these conditions can be promoted through campaigns. Citizens can develop connections, beyond a transitory recency priming effect, between candidates and the issues they discuss. That they will do so is not a given; like many interesting processes, this one is conditional.

Scholars have long seen campaigns in a negative light, worrying that candidates can bamboozle their way to victory. The results presented here join a small but growing literature that reconsiders how the campaign context influences citizen thinking in beneficial ways (Kam 2006). Evidence of repetition priming offers a hint of a more optimistic outlook: campaigns may bolster political accountability.

Notes

¹Though in comparing assemblage experiments that include three or six priming messages, Iyengar and Kinder find no discernible difference. The authors don't pursue this difference in results in any detail.

²Miller and Krosnick (2000) argue that accessibility is not, in fact, the key mediator of priming. The study on which they base this conclusion, though, relies on experimental work, not survey-based work like those from which the more troublesome conclusions were initially drawn. Other experimental work, meanwhile, suggests accessibility does mediate priming (Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002), so the precise role of accessibility remains an ongoing question.

³One-shot election surveys that investigate whether themes prominent in the campaign are granted more weight in vote choice seem to assume priming is induced through frequent exposure to a message (Druckman 2004; Carsey 2000). Research into campaign effects that directly incorporate campaign dynamics, on the other hand, often rely on truncated measures of campaign communications – e.g., a 7-day moving average – that necessarily assume priming effects are transitory (e.g., Johnston et al 1992; Johnston et al 2004).

⁴Johnston et al (2004) allude to this difference in their study of the 2000 campaign, noting that “the relation between priming and learning can be murky as priming can lead to learning.” Through sheer repetition of a candidate's argument, citizens may become more aware that a particular candidate constitutes a better means to a preferred policy end.

⁵Althaus and Kim (2006) conclude that priming is a function of both applicability effects and accessibility effects, noting the reinforcing effect of these influences.

⁶Indeed, for valence issues – like improving education or reducing crime – the key difference between candidates is how highly they prioritize the issue.

⁷Candidate evaluations were based on the following question: “I'd like to get your feelings toward the candidates for president by asking you to rate each one on a scale that runs from 0 to 100. 0 means you feel very unfavorable toward the candidate, 100 means you feel very favorable, and 50 means you feel neutral toward the candidate. Using any number from 0 to 100, overall how do you feel toward [George W. Bush].”

⁸The questions read as follows, “As you know there are many important issues facing our country, but we have only limited resources for addressing these issues. Keeping this in mind, how much of a priority should the federal government give to [Saving Social Security], a very high priority, a high priority but not the highest, a medium priority, or a low priority.” Respondents were asked to rate the priority they would give to each issue, with the order of issue presentation varied randomly.

⁹The data were obtained from a joint project of The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law and Professor Kenneth Goldstein of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and includes media tracking data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group in Washington, D.C. The Brennan Center-Wisconsin project was sponsored by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brennan Center, Professor Goldstein, or The Pew Charitable Trusts.

¹⁰Not every respondent resided in one of the top seventy-five media markets, however, so data on the information environment is unavailable for 350 respondents.

¹¹The bulk of real-world campaign studies on priming do not directly link the campaign *content* with public opinion, instead looking for outcomes like differences in the size of issue or trait coefficients across different campaigns (e.g., Carsey 2000) or as time passes within a given campaign (e.g., Mendelsohn 1996). This is largely a function of the type of data that has been widely available to date, most of which is not especially well-suited to capturing spatial or temporal dynamics in public responses to a campaign that varies over time and space.

¹²Nonetheless, a measure of exposure to the ads would be preferable. Lacking this, the ad measure contains error and the resulting estimates of the effects based on the ads should be attenuated. While controlling for political attentiveness should help soak up some of the noise in the ad measure, thereby increasing the signal-to-noise ratio, and reducing the bias, unquestionably some attenuation bias remains.

¹³Advertising environment is not assigned randomly, of course. Candidates determine which markets will receive a flood of campaign communications. These choices are driven more by probable electoral margins than by the perceived issue concerns of citizens. To the degree that candidates can target ads toward citizens predisposed to an issue, however, this should serve to

weaken the impact on candidate-induced priming as such citizens are likely to weight the issue heavily already, leaving less room for an increase in response to advertising.

¹⁴I also constructed a 7-day recency measure. The models using this measure generally fell between those of the 3-day and cumulative models.

¹⁵The estimated model includes, as well, the interaction between candidate issue emphasis and individual partisanship to adhere to the principle of marginality.

¹⁶The resulting heteroskedastic regression model is estimated via maximum likelihood. The model is estimated separately for each issue priority because there is not enough information in the data to adequately separate out these effects simultaneously. In addition, separate models for each issue offer a cleaner interpretation of the variance effect.

¹⁷Formally, the Akaike weight is calculated as: $w_i = \frac{\exp(-1/2\delta_i)}{\sum_{r=1}^R \exp(-1/2\delta_r)}$, where δ_i represents the AIC difference for model i . See Burnham and Anderson 2002, p. 75, for further elaboration.

¹⁸The three-way interactions with continuous variables can make interpretation especially difficult to convey clearly, as marginal effects depend on the summation of three coefficients. For instance, even if none of the constitutive coefficients are individually significant, the marginal effect of an issue priority may be significant if the covariance terms comprising the standard errors are negative. For a cogent discussion of these issues, see Brambor et al 2006.

¹⁹The histogram does not represent the overall distribution of a candidate's advertising on an issue, but the distribution of the respondents' media environments varied over both time and location.

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Table 1: Tax Priority and Candidate Evaluations

	<i>Gore Evaluations</i>		<i>Bush Evaluations</i>	
	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads
<i>Direct Effects</i>				
Tax priority	-5.075** (0.844)	-5.168** (0.814)	1.541 (0.995)	2.433** (0.820)
Tax ads × Tax priority	-0.106 (0.389)	-0.078 (0.800)	0.453† (0.267)	0.267 (0.816)
Tax ads × Partisanship × Tax priority	0.109 (0.184)	0.132 (0.419)	0.073 (0.126)	0.000 (0.365)
Tax ads	0.9878 (0.451)	0.825 (0.882)	-0.363 (0.342)	-0.611 (0.950)
Tax ads × Partisanship	0.002 (0.225)	-0.072 (0.516)	-0.108 (0.168)	-0.073 (0.454)
Partisanship × Tax priority	0.386 (0.396)	0.417 (0.379)	0.386 (0.469)	0.559 (0.387)
Partisanship	7.035** (0.549)	7.068** (0.524)	-6.483** (0.638)	-6.705** (0.533)
Ideology	0.895* (0.364)	0.876* (0.367)	-2.873** (0.370)	-2.883** (0.370)
Economic perceptions	1.203** (0.367)	1.254* (0.367)	1.169** (0.372)	1.148** (0.373)
Education	0.000 (0.724)	-0.091 (0.729)	-1.470* (0.733)	-1.554* (0.737)
Political awareness	1.873† (1.000)	1.880† (1.008)	1.258 (1.012)	1.418 (1.013)
Female	2.283 (1.489)	2.375 (1.502)	-2.457 (1.518)	-2.332 (1.516)
Age	0.017 (0.046)	0.015 (0.047)	0.013 (0.047)	0.017 (0.047)
Minority	7.165** (2.006)	6.643** (2.002)	-1.560 (2.029)	-1.738 (2.034)
Constant	39.655 (6.154)	39.886 (6.155)	27.637 (6.265)	27.235 (6.209)
<i>Variance Effects</i>				
Tax ads	-0.078** (0.025)	-0.066 (0.049)	-0.017 (0.015)	-0.044 (0.048)
Education	-0.177** (0.042)	-0.167** (0.042)	-0.104* (0.043)	-0.108* (0.042)
Constant	6.936 (0.145)	6.876 (0.144)	6.705 (0.149)	6.695 (0.145)
<i>Model Summary/Comparison</i>				
χ^2	720.34**	699.43**	596.98**	589.68**
N	1023	1023	1019	1019
AIC	7515.07	7525.72	7507.26	7511.15
AIC Difference	0	10.64	0	3.89
Akaike weight	.995	.005	.875	.125

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2: Education Priority and Candidate Evaluations

	<i>Gore Evaluations</i>		<i>Bush Evaluations</i>	
	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads
<i>Direct effects</i>				
Education priority	3.376** (1.013)	3.459** (0.960)	-2.737* (1.286)	-2.287* (1.019)
Education ads	-0.045 (0.468)	-0.715 (1.218)	0.232 (0.296)	0.475 (0.620)
× Education priority				
Education ads × Partisanship	0.207 (0.227)	0.091 (0.496)	0.071 (0.137)	0.110 (0.305)
× Education priority				
Education ads	0.731 (0.787)	3.886† (2.082)	-0.407 (0.508)	-1.146 (1.027)
Education ads	-0.053 (0.378)	0.045 (0.849)	-0.298 (0.234)	-0.459 (0.502)
× Partisanship				
Partisanship	-1.109* (0.456)	-0.962* (0.437)	-0.474 (0.600)	-0.348 (0.462)
× Education priority				
Partisanship	9.132** (0.793)	9.156** (0.761)	-5.139** (1.025)	-5.719** (0.805)
Ideology	0.914* (0.368)	0.864* (0.368)	-3.051** (0.371)	-2.996** (0.369)
Economic perceptions	0.873* (0.376)	0.947* (0.373)	1.374** (0.376)	1.311** (0.376)
Education	0.376 (0.728)	0.533 (0.732)	-1.796* (0.728)	-1.908** (0.726)
Political awareness	1.732† (1.009)	1.854† (1.006)	1.187 (1.004)	1.233 (1.000)
Female	0.564 (1.510)	0.559 (1.510)	-1.728 (1.518)	-1.913 (1.515)
Age	0.045 (0.046)	0.047 (0.047)	-0.005 (0.047)	-0.002 (0.047)
Minority	6.025** (2.006)	5.739** (2.003)	-0.278 (2.016)	-0.658 (2.008)
Constant	33.381 (6.302)	31.620 (6.294)	30.744 (6.430)	31.557 (6.305)
<i>Variance Effects</i>				
Education ads	-0.163* (0.042)	-0.137* (0.062)	-0.029* (0.015)	-0.090** (0.033)
Education	-0.049** (0.023)	-0.163** (0.042)	-0.103* (0.043)	-0.107* (0.042)
Constant	6.904 (0.143)	6.883 (0.143)	6.746 (0.151)	6.728 (0.146)
<i>Model Summary/Comparison</i>				
χ^2	680.64**	678.68**	589.27**	588.75**
N	1025	1025	1021	1021
AIC	7555.77	7555.17	7527.55	7525.58
AIC Difference	0.60	0	1.97	0
Akaike weight	.425	.575	.272	.728

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 3: Health Care Priority and Candidate Evaluations

	<i>Gore Evaluations</i>		<i>Bush Evaluations</i>	
	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads
<i>Direct Effects</i>				
Health care priority	2.806** (1.009)	2.861** (0.923)	-1.687 (1.129)	-1.104 (0.940)
Health care ads	-0.236 (0.346)	-1.071 (0.738)	0.260 (0.310)	-0.130 (0.731)
× Health care priority				
Health care ads × Partisanship	0.033 (0.160)	-0.411 (0.350)	0.096 (0.141)	-0.083 (0.336)
× Health care priority				
Health care ads	1.144* (0.525)	3.093** (1.095)	-0.378 (0.475)	-1.005 (1.031)
Health care ads	0.116 (0.242)	0.931† (0.495)	-0.301 (0.216)	-0.046 (0.445)
× Partisanship				
Partisanship	-0.776† (0.440)	-0.648 (0.406)	-0.145 (0.499)	0.051 (0.416)
× Health care priority				
Partisanship	8.484** (0.708)	8.374** (0.654)	-5.725** (0.805)	-6.338** (0.674)
Ideology	0.905* (0.368)	0.907* (0.368)	-3.094** (0.372)	-3.026** (0.371)
Economic perceptions	1.094** (0.373)	1.161** (0.373)	1.313** (0.376)	1.276** (0.376)
Education	0.463 (0.733)	0.444 (0.733)	-1.845* (0.734)	-1.949** (0.736)
Political awareness	1.354 (1.021)	1.374 (1.018)	0.979 (1.017)	1.015 (1.014)
Female	0.557 (1.515)	0.561 (1.516)	-2.000 (1.522)	-1.811 (1.522)
Age	0.018 (0.047)	0.030 (0.047)	0.013 (0.048)	0.016 (0.048)
Minority	5.420** (2.004)	5.628** (2.021)	-0.341 (2.022)	-0.885 (2.019)
Constant	33.055 (6.280)	32.137 (6.309)	28.527 (6.386)	29.055 (6.317)
<i>Variance Effects</i>				
Health care ads	-0.044* (0.020)	-0.098* (0.045)	-0.032* (0.016)	-0.114* (0.045)
Education	-0.134** (0.043)	-0.131** (0.043)	-0.099* (0.043)	-0.102* (0.043)
Constant	6.816 (0.146)	6.784 (0.144)	6.727 (0.151)	6.700 (0.146)
<i>Model Summary/Comparison</i>				
χ^2	671.00**	675.07**	571.08**	571.50**
N	1019	1019	1015	1015
AIC	7508.37	7508.056	7488.08	7486.34
AIC Difference	0.32	0	1.74	0
Akaike weight	.461	.539	.295	.705

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 4: Social Security Priority and Candidate Evaluations

	<i>Gore Evaluations</i>		<i>Bush Evaluations</i>	
	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads	Cumulative Ads	Recent Ads
<i>Direct Effects</i>				
Social Security priority	-0.808 (1.007)	-0.883 (0.978)	-0.886 (1.201)	0.573 (1.024)
Social Security ads	-0.347 (0.578)	-0.551 (1.219)	0.874** (0.333)	0.712 (0.758)
× Social Security priority				
Social Security ads × Partisanship	0.746** (0.260)	0.741 (0.487)	-0.020 (0.157)	0.347 (0.365)
× Social Security priority				
Social Security ads	1.342 (0.899)	3.043† (1.812)	-0.958† (0.534)	-1.205 (1.233)
Social Security ads	-0.698† (0.409)	-0.935 (0.758)	-0.272 (0.253)	-1.040† (0.602)
× Partisanship				
Partisanship	-0.641 (0.452)	-0.442 (0.438)	-0.514 (0.536)	-0.576 (0.460)
× Social Security priority				
Partisanship	8.707** (0.752)	8.610** (0.730)	-5.283** (0.885)	-5.538** (0.764)
Ideology	1.125** (0.371)	1.182** (0.374)	-3.111** (0.364)	-3.114** (0.366)
Economic perceptions	1.152** (0.379)	1.216** (0.378)	1.218** (0.372)	1.109** (0.373)
Education	0.254 (0.739)	0.162 (0.743)	-1.7638 (0.728)	-1.643* (0.720)
Political awareness	1.552 (1.020)	1.716† (1.021)	1.102 (0.993)	1.084 (0.998)
Female	1.516 (1.538)	1.367 (1.540)	-2.426 (1.523)	-2.725† (1.522)
Age	0.049 (0.048)	0.045 (0.048)	-0.014 (0.047)	-0.028 (0.048)
Minority	5.914** (2.036)	5.436** (2.030)	-0.787 (2.028)	-1.136 (2.026)
Constant	37.105 (6.371)	37.506 (6.361)	29.658 (6.362)	29.777 (6.292)
<i>Variance Effects</i>				
Social Security ads	-0.075* (0.030)	-0.167* (0.071)	-0.056** (0.017)	-0.153** (0.040)
Education	-0.135** (0.042)	-0.136** (0.042)	-0.093* (0.043)	-0.095* (0.042)
Constant	6.823 (0.143)	6.814 (0.142)	6.720 (0.148)	6.697 (0.144)
<i>Model Summary/Comparison</i>				
χ^2	643.78**	628.59**	606.00**	602.04**
N	1019	1019	1015	1015
AIC	7527.79	7533.617	7472.36	7477.47
AIC Difference	0	5.83	0	5.11
Akaike weight	.949	.051	.928	.072

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$. Standard errors in parentheses.

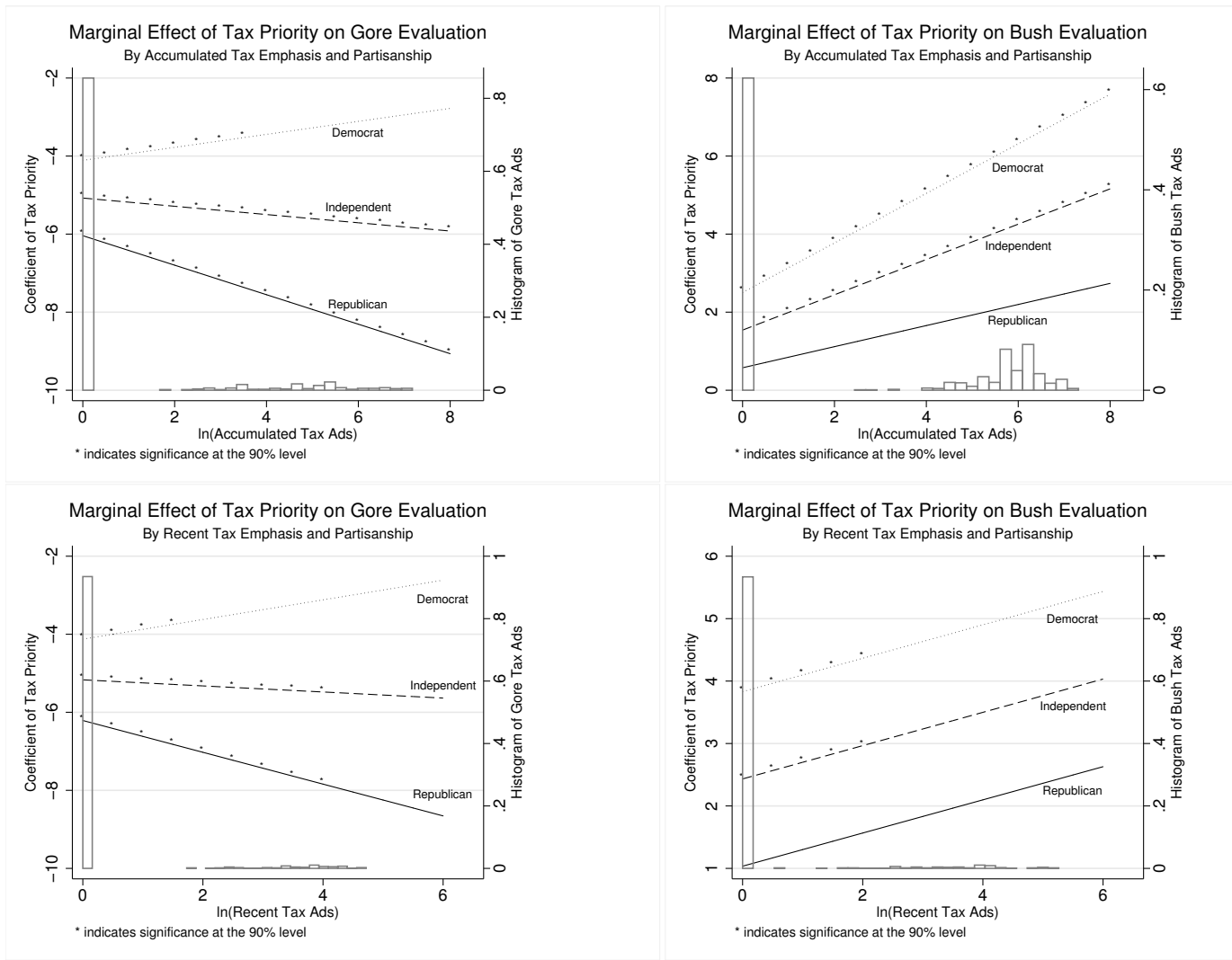


Figure 1: Marginal Effects of Tax Cutting Priority

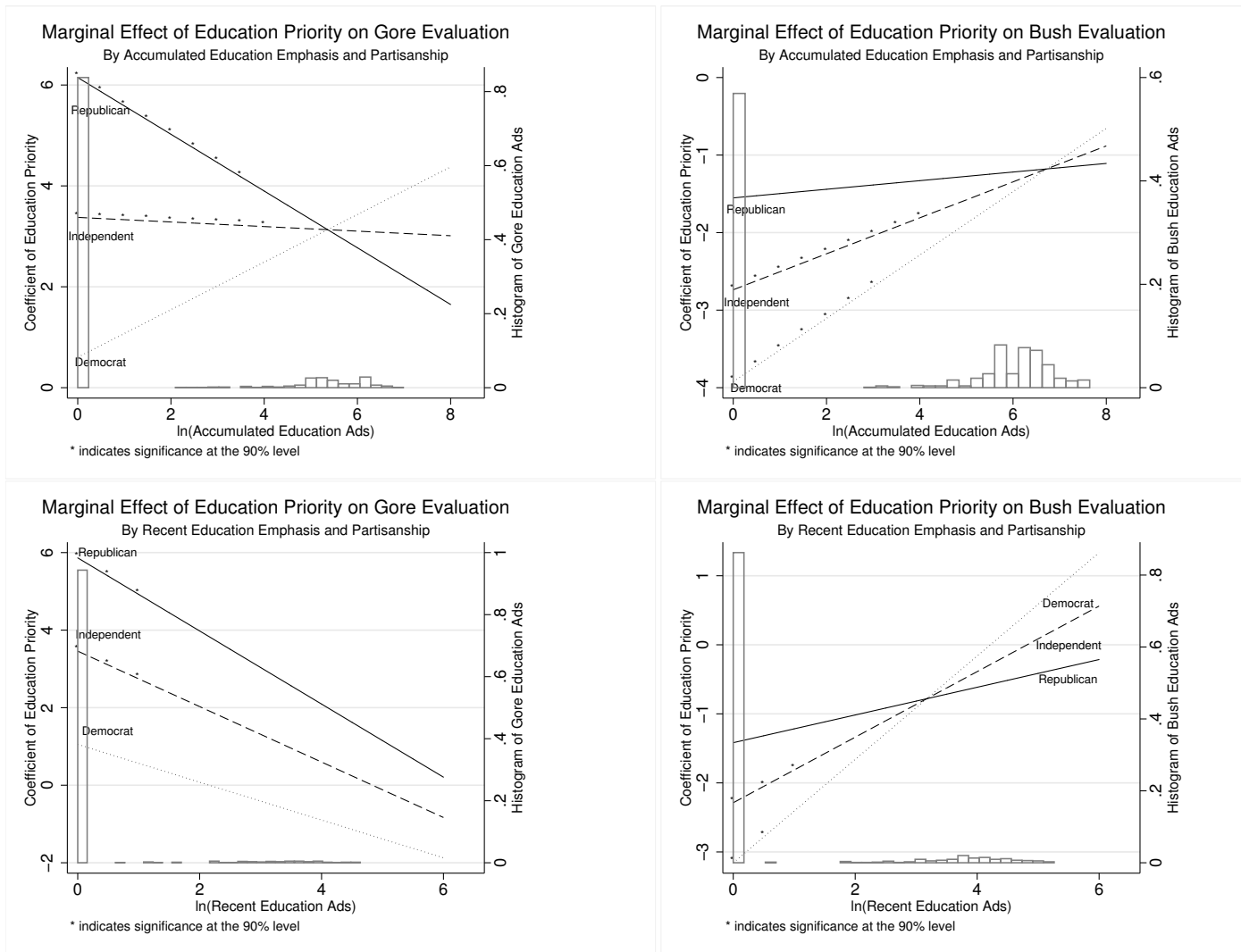


Figure 2: Marginal Effects of Education Priority

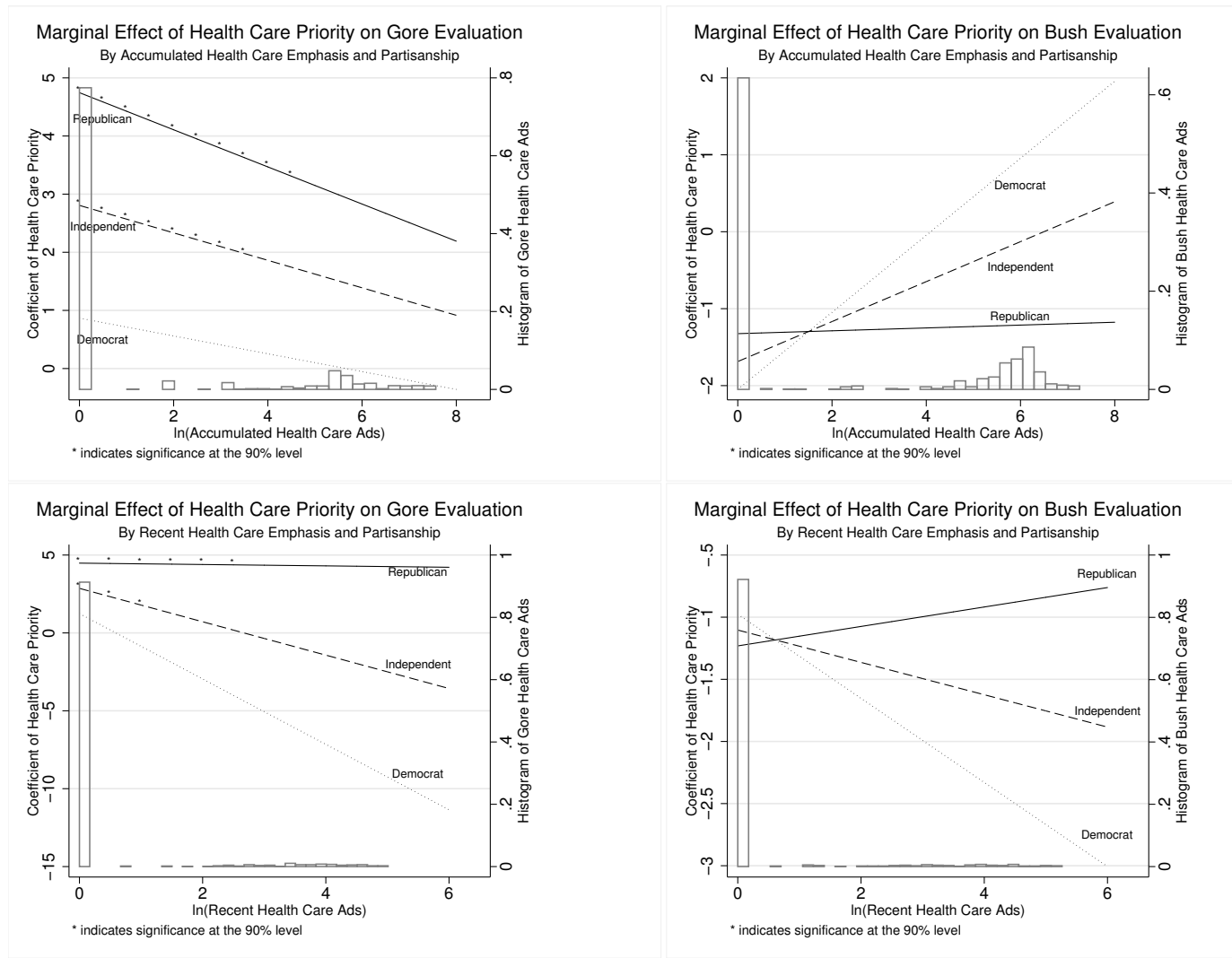


Figure 3: Marginal Effects of Health Care Priority

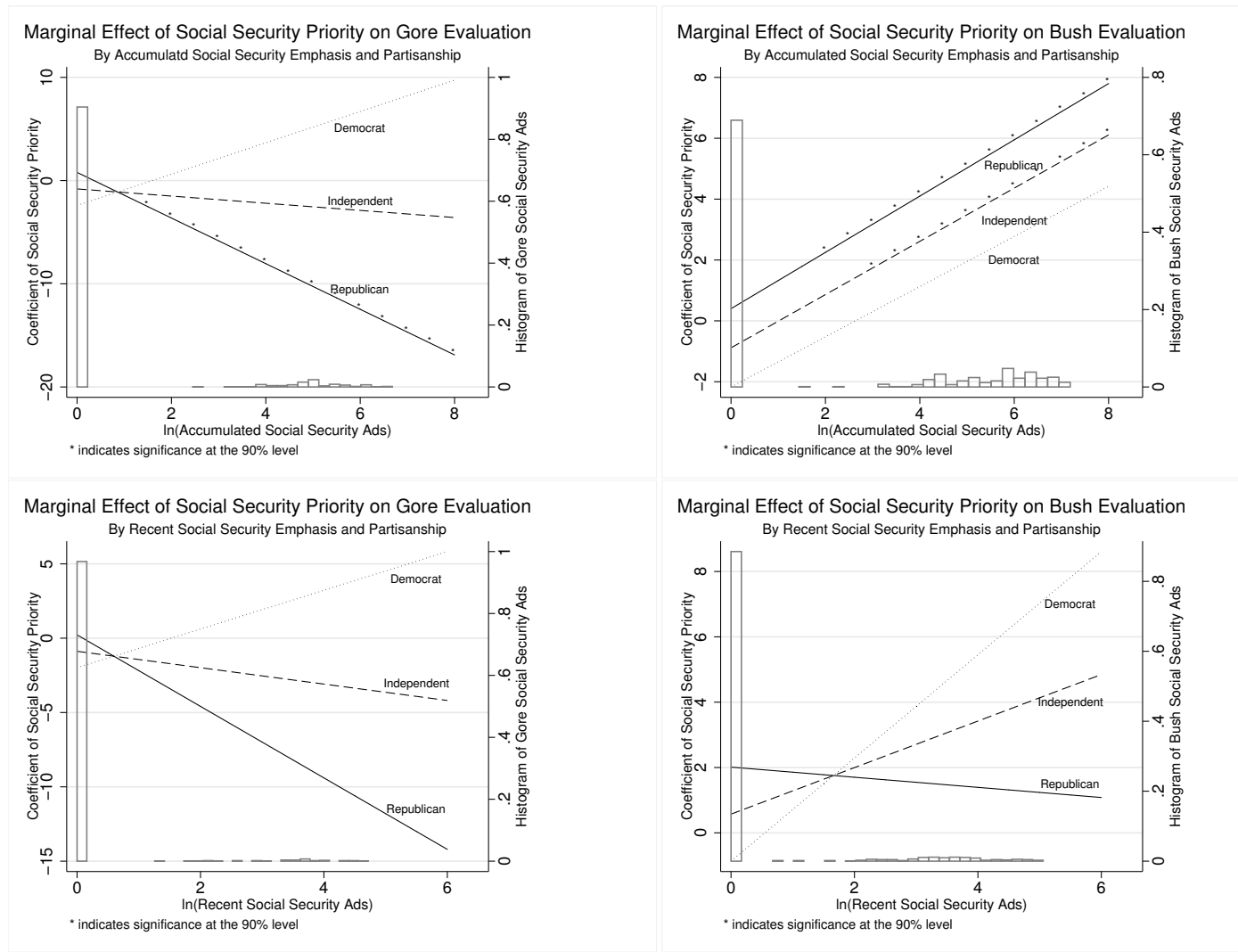


Figure 4: Marginal Effects of Social Security Priority