DYNAMICS OF THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: EVIDENCE FROM THE ANNENBERG SURVEY

Michael Hagen
mhagen@asc.upenn.edu

Richard Johnston
rjohnston@asc.upenn.edu

Kathleen Hall Jamieson
kjamieson@asc.upenn.edu

Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania

DYNAMICS OF THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

The year 2000 raised the stakes in studying Presidential campaigns, but it also dramatically increased the resources for doing so. It raised the stakes by delivering a close result. Whether or not we believe that campaigns produce nontrivial, systematically unpredictable effects, the outcome of most Presidential elections is rarely close.1 And the predictive track record of models relying on information available before the campaign has been very good. We take no position on the current controversy about the proper structure of such predictive models.2 We do, however, think that the closeness of the result is a salutary reminder of the contingency of things. In a race so close, the campaign almost certainly must have mattered. The only question is whether survey instrumentation could be made sensitive enough to capture meaningful dynamics. This paper reports on such an instrument, the 2000 Annenberg Election Study.

Much of the paper is frankly exploratory. It begins with a brief description of the study. Then comes narrative of the July-November horse race, to outline the dynamics begging explanation but also to begin pointing to key events and factors. We then work through factors in a sequence that roughly corresponds to the encompassing estimation model in Miller and Shanks (1996). Many of the campaign’s effects are perfectly assimilable to models emphasizing enduring forces and predictable results. But not all are, and the trajectory of preferences indicates that we need a broader theory of events than implied in Holbrook (1996). Basic forces in the choice can respond to apparently modest induction. Right down to the end, preference formation may harbor enough slack for candidate appearances on the stump or unexpected news stories to matter.

THE ANNENBERG STUDY

The analyses in this paper draw upon a major component of the Annenberg 2000 Election Study. The overall study comprised 100,000 interviews with over 80,000 voting-age respondents, with fieldwork under the management of Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and Shulman Ronca Bucuvalas Inc (SRBI). The largest single element in the study was the National Continuous Monitor, which was in the field almost continuously from November 1999 to January 2001. The highest density of sampling was concentrated between early July and Election Day, when about 300 interviews were completed each day. This is the sample reported here.4

---

1 The chronic one-sidedness of most Presidential campaigns burns through Campbell (2000), Table 3.4. In the thirteen campaigns from 1948 to 1966, the mean frontrunner’s early-September lead was 16 points. The typical effect of campaign’s on this was to cut the lead in half.

2 The debate is captured by contributions to the most recent issue of PS: Political Science and Politics.

3 Special mention must be made of Mary McIntosh and Chris Adasiewicz at PSRA, without whom the whole enterprise would have foundered.

4 In the Presidential Primary season, the national sample was supplemented by oversamples in key primary electorates. At various points along the way, panel reinterviews were also conducted. Some of these were retrospections on the election just concluded, including panel interviews conducted after 7 November. Some panels bracketed key campaign events, the nominating conventions and Presidential debates.
Apart from its sheer scale, the distinctive feature of the National Continuous Monitor is its manner of release to the field. All telephone numbers were generated at random and then, also at random, assigned to “replicates”. Each replicate was a body of numbers sufficient to yield 50 completed interviews over a two-week clearance period. Replicates were then released to field day by day, at least one per day and often more. By clearing each replicate the same way (allowing for seasonal variation in accessibility and the like), the day on which a respondent happens to be interviewed becomes as much a product of random forces as that person’s initial selection for the overall sample was. The density of interviewing can vary from period to period without loss of this random character. For the data here, then, each day saw six replicates released to field.

THE HORSE RACE

Figure 1 portrays the course of major-candidate vote intentions from late July to Election Day. The rough plot represents daily values, to which we refer frequently. As sampling error creates surplus vertical flux in the daily plot, we also superimpose a smoothed tracking, in this case by “loess” with a bandwidth of 15%.

Gore was behind by late July and fell even further behind with the Republican convention. The Democratic convention neutralized the impact of the Republican one and then delivered Gore a lead, which he essentially held until late September. By October Gore had fallen behind, and only at the end did he recover. This much is probably familiar as narrative, and it need not occasion much theoretically-motivated hand wringing. But closer examination sheds new light on the operation of familiar events and directs attention to unanticipated places. First consider the impact of the most highly visible events.

Conventions

The first point about conventions has already been established by Holbrook (1996). Exactly as we expect, the Democratic convention had greater impact than the Republican one. No electoral forecasting model predicted a Republican victory for 2000. Most predicted a comfortable Democratic win and even the revisionist argument of Bartels and Zaller (2001) had the Gore the victor. By any count, then, the system already leaned too far to the Republican side, such that the possible impact of that party’s convention was severely constrained. The smoothed tracking suggests that it boosted Bush’s share five or six points. The Democratic convention had double that effect, but only to move the system into the zone that the forecasting models indicated.

5 The logic of the design is outlined in Johnston and Brday (2001).
6 The start date for the plot reflects the timing of changes to the ASC questionnaire, as only on 17 July did we set in place a four-candidate query. The data in this paper are screened only for vote intention and are not weighted. We are struck that the late-campaign Gore share of our respondents’ two-party intentions is almost exactly the share he ultimately received. All attempts to screen for interest or other such purported indicators of “likely vote” only worsened the predictive value of late samples, much as Crespi (1988) found.
7 Our tracking from the beginning of the year with a two-candidate question indicates that Gore gained on Bush over the primary season, then dissipated those gains from April to July.
If this much is familiar, the same cannot be said for the exact time path for each convention’s effect. The ASC survey’s high resolution reveals that the convention effect has two parts, and that the second part enjoys a remarkably rapid onset. These points come out of inspection of the daily data, without benefit of smoothing.

The first impact predates the convention itself, and seems to be a Vice-Presidential nomination effect. Four days before the Republicans convened, the Gore share dropped to the low 40s. Before that it exhibited considerable volatility, but readings in the high 40s were as ubiquitous as those lower in the range. From 26 July, however, the share’s oscillations were confined to the 40-45 range, and stayed there until 2 August. Roughly the same sequence occurred in the run-up to the Democratic convention. On either the 10th or the 12th, the Gore share surged, instantly undoing all damage from the Republican event. The new level was sustained until August 17. It seems natural to attribute the dramatic Democratic surge to the inspired choice of Joe Lieberman. The larger narrative suggests a simpler and more generalizable interpretation: the choice of a Vice-Presidential nominee, almost regardless of party or person, generates positive coverage, which in turn induces a surge in support for the ticket.\footnote{This consistent with the interpretation in Holbrook (1996) for the whole convention sequence.} The timing of the Democratic event reproduces almost exactly that for the Republican event. That the amplitude was greater is more economically attributed to the fact that the system was more out of equilibrium after the Republican convention than before.

Of course, Vice-Presidential nominations do not exhaust the convention narrative. For each party, there also occurred a surge specific to the convention itself. In each case, the surge coincided with the nominee’s acceptance speech and had all its effect immediately. On the fourth day of the Republican convention, the Gore share dropped from the low- to mid-40s to below 40%. No further decay appeared. On the Democratic side, the overnight surge came the day following Gore’s acceptance speech. This difference most likely reflects the fact that where Bush’s acceptance speech was given in the Eastern Time zone, Gore’s was on Pacific time. Otherwise, as with the earlier pulse, the impact was immediate.

\textit{Debates}

Detecting debate effects takes more work, and generally yields weaker returns. But impact can be found. It is delayed, suggesting that effects are mediated. Where it occurs, the effect is commonly ephemeral. Is this because the impulse is inherently transitory, fated to decay on its own? Or does it reflect the fact that debates are closely spaced, such that earlier debate effects are actively erased by later ones. This opens up the possibility that the last debate is qualitatively different, and narrative in this section and analyses later on suggest that it was indeed a critical event.

The first debate was commonly interpreted as a Bush victory, but if it moved the horse race, it did so only after a three-day lag and only for a couple of days. Any impact it might have had was gone before the second debate, suggesting weak induction all along. The second debate, in contrast, did have an adverse impact on Gore and this impact endured to the next debate. Again, the onset seems delayed, but there is no mistaking the
direction in the daily tracking. The smoothed line also picks up Gore’s dip. The third
debate clearly helped Gore. Again, the onset is delayed, but the surge when it came may
have given him the lead back, at least for a while. The lead subsequently changed hands,
but Gore’s competitive position clearly improved.

Other Dynamics

Most of the story so far is either familiar or of limited consequence. Convention effects
were bigger and, for the most part, more sustained than debate ones. But the convention
effects conformed entirely to type. The impact of the last debate was numerically modest
but politically very important, and so this event does bear serious scrutiny. But even it
moved the system back toward the zone implied in forecasting models. Meanwhile, other
movement in the horse race begs explanation. Most importantly, why did Gore’s
September lead collapse?

We can start with when it collapsed. In journalistic commentary, much was made of the
first debate. It does seem true that that event had an adverse impact on the Gore share.
But our tracking suggests that the biggest impact had already occurred, indeed that Gore
was already making a partial recovery from that earlier impact. The big drop occurred
between 26 and 27 September. The overnight impact was truly massive, 10 to 15 points,
well outside the 95% confidence interval for a daily sample. The negative impulse began
to decay immediately, but was never completely dissipated. By the eve of the first debate,
Gore was still about five points behind his position of late September. As later analysis
shows, we think that this sequence is the hinge of the campaign.

Critical though it may be, the late September drop is not the only shift that merits
scrutiny. We will flag two more, at this point only to note them; later we suggest
interpretations. The first is in early September. Although Gore was basically ahead from
his acceptance speech to 26 September, the ride was not entirely smooth. By our
reckoning he fell behind -- at least fell into a tie -- right after Labor Day. His recovery
occurred between the 11th and 12th and took him to still greater heights. The second is the
pattern of recovery after the last debate. Although there seems no question that the Gore
line truly turns back up at that point, its progress was uneven. It fell back between 24 and
25 October, and only reached the 50% threshold on the campaign’s very last weekend.

Basic Elements in the Choice

To flesh out the account of campaign events, indeed to identify some of them, we start
with the conceptualization of the voter’s task in Miller and Shanks (1996). Not only is
this an all-encompassing framework but its bloc-recursive order also roughly follows the
continuum of susceptibility to novel, potentially disruptive information. At one end is the
unmoved mover of political science, party identification. Close to party identification, is
ideological self-placement, from liberal to conservative.

Political science renderings of the “minimal-effects” model focus on the cognitive and
motivational effects of party identification. Within our disciplinary domain, we can
distinguish at least three degrees of commitment to minimalism. The least demanding

---

9 See for instance, Finkel (1993) or the review by Zaller (1996).
says that party identification is an anchor, but not otherwise a motivational force. Next in line is to say that party identification can be condition for self-persuasion, to use Brody’s and Page’s (1972) nomenclature. The extreme form says that party identification, in interaction with the voter’s own position on a policy question, actively shapes political cognition, “projection” in the Brody-Page nomenclature. This paper will work through tests of each process.

Ideology refers to policy, but does not exhaust the domain, so we also examine certain specific issues. Besides, we have learned to think of issues and ideology as links in a hierarchical chain (Sniderman et al., 1991), and the Miller-Shanks setup is nicely assimilable to this perspective. Within the domain of specific issues, the literature already alerts us to look for “priming”, for increases in the weight of certain issues at the expense of others (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Johnston, et al., 1992). Shifts in vote intention may reflect shifts in the relative centrality of issues favoring one side or the other. Of particular interest are issues new to the political agenda. Here shifting issue weights may reflect not so much priming as voters’ discovery of where candidates actually stand. And a new issue may be a field for persuasion. Now, if and as voters strengthen their grasp on the issue or change their own positions on it, are pre-existing alignments likely to be disrupted, or merely reinforced? As it happens, 2000 presents such an issue, investment of social security contributions in the stock market, and we examine it in some depth.

Next in line are economic perceptions and judgment on the old administration. These may not be a site for campaign persuasion, but they may be susceptible to priming. Finally, there are perceptions of candidates, which, as we shall show, can be importantly shaped by the campaign.

**PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND IDEOLOGY**

However uncertain the result, the 2000 election was an intensely partisan affair, just as Bartels (2000) would lead us to expect. Column 1 of Table 1 gives the basic picture, averaged across the full campaign. The setup echoes that in Bartels (2000) by freeing the effect for each level of partisan intensity. At each intensity, Democratic identification is coded +1 and Republican, -1. The intercept locates pure independents and indicates the overall bias in preference. The estimation indicates that strong identifiers are very distinct from the rest and that “leaners” are at least as partisan as weak identifiers.

---

10 This, after all, was the logic of the first great issue-based interpretation of campaign dynamics in Berelson, et al. (1954).

11 In the ASC data, the Democratic identification advantage is slight at best, five points among all respondents and less than three among those with a major-candidate vote intention. The difference almost certainly lies in interviewing mode, telephone versus in-home. In the NES 2000 preliminary release, the D-I-R distribution for that face-to-face component is 53-11-36. For the telephone component, the distribution is 46-13-41, exactly what we get.

12 The setup differs from Bartels’ in two particulars: the partisan direction of coding is reversed and estimation is by logit, not probit.

13 This pattern seems consistent with those identified by Keith, et al. (1992). At the same time, party identification is not utterly the unmoved mover. The Gore surge in late September was accompanied by a small surge in Democratic identification. The surge was washed away as Gore’s vote dropped. The amplitude of identification movement was much smaller than that in vote intention. It seems unlikely,
Across the entire period, the structure in Table 1 essentially does not vary, except to accommodate the one thing that really does move, the intercept. Early to late, this stage of the estimation made no gains in predictive power.

Figure 2 brings this out visually. Consistent with the coefficient pattern in Table 1, leaners are classed as partisans. By the end, only about 10% of identifiers supported the other party’s candidate. Independents roughly split the difference, leaning at the end slightly in the Republican direction. Independents also supplied most of the visible dynamics, spanning a range of about 20 points. But panel A of Figure 2 conceals as much as it reveals. The vertical gap between the parties overwhelms what movement there is on each side. Panel B remedies this by initializing each series to late July, to lower the aspect ratio. Of course, the amplitude of identifiers’ swings is smaller than that for independents. But all three groups are broadly responsive to the same forces, at least until the very end. All lines dip around the Republican convention and rise around the Democratic one. Democrats are generally more responsive to forces favoring the Democratic candidate, as we might expect, but Republicans were not immune to them. Republicans did lead the flight from Gore, although independents followed. By the end, Republicans may have returned to where they were on the eve of the Democratic convention. That much suggests partisan inertia. But they did not fall all the way back to the post-Republican-convention trough. And movement among identifiers outweighed that among independents, because of the sheer bulk of the identifying group. Independents constitute only nine percent of those with a major-candidate preference. In round numbers, each party group supplied slightly more of a candidate’s growth or decay than independents did. Together, party identifiers supplied between two-thirds and three-quarters of the total flux.

Party identification, thus, very much anchored the electorate. But its strength as an anchor did not increase as the campaign progressed. We show below that it motivated both self-persuasion and projection, just as Brody and Page (1972) conjectured, but neither of these forces was sufficient utterly to neutralize pressure from the campaign.

The other long-term force in play was ideology. To a great extent, liberal-conservative identification just reinforced the role of party, but the overlap was far from complete. This is one point in Figure 3. The line labeled “self” locates respondents on a liberal-conservative scale by direction and intensity of party identification. All Republican group means are on the conservative side, all Democratic group means are on the liberal however, to be the product of sampling error. The pattern echoes Bartels (2000), Appendix (“Endogenous Partisanship as a Complicating Factor”).

14 Note that the estimation in Table 1 covers only some of the July-November period, in contrast to our graphical presentations. Later exhibits indicate that certain relationships do not get fixed, so to speak, until roughly Labor Day. The *prima facie* indication is that respondents require the interval between the last convention and the holiday weekend to get the campaign in focus.

15 Strong identifiers move the least of all, unsurprisingly. We present whole-party groups to reduce visual clutter.

16 Over all, conservatives outnumber liberals over 1.6:1. This is close to the ratio in recent NES samples, despite the fact that we use a five-point scale and the NES uses a seven-point one. We produce about 10 points fewer moderates than the NES.
side, and the difference between parties always overwhelms intensity differences within parties. That said, slack remains, especially on the Democratic side. Intensity of Democratic identification makes no difference to ideological position, and the Democratic mean is only slightly to the left. Ideological variance is higher among Democrats than among Republicans.

The second column of Table 1 reveals that ideological differences played a major role, independently of party, and that ideology gained power as the campaign progressed. The latter point is indicated by the interaction of “lib-con” with “debates”, where the latter means, an interview conducted in October or November. Before October, the difference between ideological extremes had less impact than weak or leaning party identification. In October-November, in contrast, the liberal-conservative difference rivaled that for “weak” identifiers. So here we have an inertial force that truly does become more important as the campaign progresses.

Ideology may have become more important because the ideological gap between candidates, as perceived, widened. This seems to be the implication of Figure 4, which plots respondents’ own liberal-conservative positions and the positions imputed to candidates by time. All along, the respondent mean is closer to the mean Bush imputation than to the Gore one, and the difference was wider at the end than at the beginning. Panel B, which plots absolute gaps, brings out short-term dynamics with greater clarity. The convention period, if anything, reduced the Gore-Bush discrepancy slightly. The opening of the gap was a feature of the late campaign, specifically the start of the debate season. Gore may have hurt himself, then, by moving further left -- or appearing to -- than was wise. Two points must qualify this possibility, however. First, the ideological movement started after the drop in Gore’s vote share, so even if ideological clarification contributed to his difficulties, something else must also have been at work. Second, the leftward shift in Gore perceptions occurred almost entirely among Republican identifiers (analysis not reported), and all along Republicans played a critical role in placing Gore out on the left. The other lines in Figure 3 show the abiding pattern. Respondents of all stripes place Bush well on the right, further to the right than most groups place Gore. The biggest discrepancy in Bush placement is not between Democrats and Republicans but between independents and all others: independents draw Bush modestly to the center. Even so independents typically place Gore less to the left than they place Bush to the right, and the mean distance to Gore is less. Independents and all forms of Democrat agree on Gore’s location, ever so slightly left of center. Republicans, on the other hand, push Gore far to the left, strong Republicans most of all. Among voters realistically available for appeals by Gore, the red shift in Gore perception may not matter for

---

17 For the -1,+1 scale of Figure 3, strong Democrats have a standard deviation of 0.46. The corresponding value for strong and weak Republicans is 0.38. For the other four categories on the identification scale, the SD is 0.40-0.41. A Democrat is nearly three times more likely to be very conservative than a Republican is to be very liberal.

18 The debate timing is masked in Figure 4 by the loess smoothing.

19 This is a surmise in Bartels and Zaller (2001), who impute a position to Gore modestly to the left of Clinton in 1996. They locate Bush closer to the center than they do Gore, and much closer than Dole in 1996.
campaign persuasion. What it may do is reaffirm Republicans in their resolve to defeat the enemy.20

ISSUES

The campaign featured a handful of issues, and at least one issue was novel enough for the campaign to be a site for real, potentially disruptive learning. The ASC instrument presented issue questions in two generic formats. Most items fell into one of four batteries modeled on Shanks’ “Survey of Governmental Objectives” (SGO).21 Another battery was designed specifically in anticipation of the 2000 campaign, and comprised respondents’ own positions on each of several issues and the same respondents’ imputations of a position on the issue to each candidate. Most of the legwork in this paper is performed by these latter items. Figure 5 gives candidate and respondent locations on ten such items. Space pressure on the instrument forced us to randomize administration of these items in early September. So Table 1 employs the more powerful set along with the most powerful SGO item, on defense spending. This paper thus is only a preliminary distillation of issue effects.22

If in a general ideological sense, Al Gore seemed well to the left of the center of opinion, the same cannot be said for most specific issues. Two sets of five issues appear in Figure 5. On the left are questions whose affirmative wording corresponds to Gore’s position. On every one, more respondents were supportive than opposed, closer to Gore than to Bush. Opinion was most closely divided on gays in the military and the release of oil from the strategic reserve. Of these issues only one, giving citizens the right to sue HMOs, figured in Table 1’s estimation.

On the other five issues the affirmative wording corresponded to the Bush position. On three of these, Gore was seen as closer than Bush to the center of opinion. On a fourth, voters saw Gore as on the “wrong” side: where he officially supported the death penalty, a small plurality imputed the opposite position to him.23 Most critical for Gore, however, was the question of investment of Social Security contributions in the stock market. Gore was generally seen as opposing the market option, where Bush was clearly seen as favoring it, as did a clear majority of respondents. If Gore’s challenge on the death penalty was to teach the electorate that he too was on their side, on the stock market his task was to bring them over to his own position.

If anything, Gore’s stock market challenge only stiffened as the campaign heated up. Figure 6 shows that neither candidate was all that clearly perceived before October, and

20 The essentials of the attribution pattern in Figure 3 were first reported in Brady and Sniderman (1985). See especially their Table 4. The asymmetry they observed between liberals and conservatives, which corresponds in detail to the one reported here between Democrats and Republicans, led them to formulate the “likability heuristic”.


22 Specific wording for the items can be found in the Appendix.

23 Democrats generally did see Gore as a supporter but Republicans would have none of this. After the last debate, in which Gore clearly affirmed support for the death penalty, perception shifted modestly in the “correct” direction and by the end he was more often seen as a supporter than as an opponent.
almost as many respondents saw Gore as favoring the market option as opposing it. The first debate induced a dramatic widening of the perceived gap and the third debate widened it further. This pattern suggests that opinion on Social Security investment should have become more important after the first debate. Perceptions of both candidates moved off center, but most of the action was on Gore’s side. But by clarifying his opposition to the measure, Gore only increased his distance from the bulk of respondents.

At the same time, the center of opinion did move in his direction, although it never crossed over to his side. Once again, the vertical separation in panel A masks the shift among respondents. Panel B brings shifts out more clearly by focusing on respondents’ own positions and by controlling party identification. Most importantly, Gore brought most Democrats to his side, along with many independents. The biggest shift began on the very day of the last debate. This seems to confirm Ansolabehere’s and Iyengar’s (1995) argument that campaign persuasion is most likely where it works with, rather than against, partisan predisposition.

The early misperception of Gore was the product of systematic bias. Figure 7 indicates that until the very end Democrats were relatively unlikely to see Gore’s opposition clearly. In July, Democrats’ perceptions leaned slightly to the wrong side, and only in October did Democrats really start to get it right. Even in October, the Republican-Democrat gap remained, as Republicans also became more likely to fix Gore correctly. Only at the end did Democratic perceptions converge on Republican ones.

Democrats were more likely to get Gore wrong because for most of the campaign he and they were on opposite sides. Panel B of Figure 7 makes this point by showing the interaction between party identification, policy opinion, and perception of Gore. Democrats who favored investment in the stock market pulled Gore toward the same position. Republicans who opposed investment pushed Gore the other way. Of course, few Republicans actually took this counter-party position, and so their cognitive bias, if we can call it that, only clarified the stakes for the vast majority who took the opposite position to Gore. In contrast, as we have noted, for most of the campaign Democrats also tended to favor the stock market option. For many Democrats, cognitive bias obfuscated the choice. Here we see, then, the classic finding in Lazarsfeld, et al. (1954), stylized by Brody and Page (1972) as “projection”, replicated half a century later. The magnitude of the misperception is hardly trivial.

Even so, the bias is mainly a cross-sectional phenomenon, helping to anchor voters to their parties. It does not suffice completely to insulate Democrats and Republicans en masse from the truth. Figure 7.B shows that as the campaign entered the debate phase, the net shift in perceptions was toward clarity, even as cognitive bias remained operative. At campaign’s end the power of policy distance to induce bias was still great. But the bias now operated from a starting point closer to the truth. And the actual incidence of such bias shrank: as Democrats shifted their own positions toward Gore’s position, fewer Democrats were motivated to misperceive him. So cognitive bias there certainly was, but it did not insulate the electorate from the campaign. The dominant persuasive effect of the campaign, meanwhile, was consistent with partisan predisposition.

24 Once again the smoothing masks discontinuity at the debates.
Issues carry weight in their own right, as the estimation’s overall predictive power grows. Among issues, investment of social security contributions burns to the front once the debate season arrives. It was of modest importance before October but, for this issue set, of surpassing importance for the last six weeks. Issues also transmit influence from party and ideology, especially ideology, as indicated by shrinkage in coefficients further up the chain.

**THE ECONOMY AND THE PRESIDENT**

In academic circles, the great controversy of 2000 was occasioned by the failure of hitherto highly successful forecasting models. This paper can address the controversy only obliquely. But the issue is so central that we cannot entirely duck it, and even if the ASC data do not always address the controversy, some patterns in the data are striking in their own right. Besides, an encompassing model cannot neglect the key retrospective components of the choice.

In virtually all mainstream models these components include the performance of the national economy and general approval/disapproval of the current administration, where the latter also carries influence from the former. The ASC survey captures these two factors incompletely and somewhat idiosyncratically. Our *economic performance* indicator elicits a rating on the economy’s current *level* of performance, rather than the year-over-year or annualized change more commonly discussed. It seemed awkward to ask about still more change after so many quarters of robust growth. Our indicator of satisfaction with the *administration* does not in fact refer to the administration but to the person of Bill Clinton. We recognize that this is not the same thing, but this is close as we can get. Each item is revealing in its own way.

The economy measure is tracked in Figure 8. Only after the conventions did respondents sort themselves consistently by party. Before the conventions, Democrats were less enthusiastic than Republicans about the economy. After the conventions, the reverse was always true. Seemingly, only as Democrats were reminded to take credit for the robust economy did they themselves infer that the economy was indeed robust.

---

25 The military spending coefficient is a bit misleading. Where all other issue measures are essentially dichotomies, the spending has a more graduated range, with very few respondents in categories other than the adjacent ones, “same” or “more”.

26 See the summary of components in Campbell, 2001, Table 4.

27 Specifically: “How would you rate economic conditions in this country today? Would you say they are excellent, good, only fair or poor?” We also asked a parallel item for personal financial situation, but consistently with earlier work, as summarized by Kiewiet (1983), this factor was inconsequential. We also asked about the perceived effect of federal government policies on each factor, but have not had a chance to explore what difference these perceptions make.

28 If the balance of judgment in Figure 7 seems unduly negative, this may be the consequence of an arbitrary coding choice. For all terms in Table 1’s estimation we tried to fix indifference at zero and the positive and negative extremes at -1,+1. Identifying the indifference point for the item described in the preceding note is not straightforward. One might argue that “only fair” combined with “don’t know” comes closest. This would leave us with an unbalanced measure. As it happens all of the interesting action lies between “excellent” and all other categories. For now we fix the zero point at “good”. The “only fair” and “poor” categories outweigh the “excellent” one, hence the negative readings.
Thereafter the width of the party gap was essentially fixed. It is implicit in the figure is that all along the economy impressed independents the least.

Powerful waves also surged through economic judgments, affecting all party groups. Even as August saw the party ordering reverse, Democrats and Republicans alike became more optimistic. From September to late October, in contrast, all groups became more pessimistic. Then, in late October, all groups reversed field dramatically and ended up about as positive as they had been in late September. From Labor Day on, it seems pretty clear that the impulse behind this decline and surge was the stock market. All major indices dropped and recovered on exactly the same timetable as our respondents’ judgments did. The amplitude of shifts also corresponded, in the sense that the indices and respondents’ subjective reckonings recovered in early November to about the early September level.

Judgments on President Clinton also moved over the campaign and with similarly equivocal implications. Figure 9 plots smoothed daily means for Clinton thermometer ratings, with the mean economy rating also in place for reference. As with other measures, the thermometer rating is centered at 0 and compressed to the -1, +1 interval (although to facilitate comparison with familiar thermometer values, Figure 9 presents values in the -0.5, +0.5 range, so that, for example, a 0.1 shift corresponds to 10 points on the thermometer scale). For July and August, Clinton ratings moved with those for other Democratic objects, downward around the Republican convention and upward around the Democratic gathering. From a peak in late August, the President’s standing then deteriorated. Its decline appears to have halted in early September only to resume, such that by the end of the month all gains over two months before were dissipated. Then Clinton recovered, and at the end was no worse than he had been at mid-September. Only in a gross sense does Clinton’s rise, fall, and rise track the similar drift in economic judgment. Most turning points in the Clinton series fail to coincide with any in the economic series.

The most striking thing about the Clinton series, however, is its effective range. Only at the peak did Clinton’s rating brush the indifference point. Otherwise it tended to vary between 45 and 48. For comparison, Gore and Bush ratings were always much higher: where Clinton’s average rating was just over 47, Gore’s average stood at 55 and Bush’s, at 59. However elevated were published ratings of Clinton’s Presidency, this particular rendering of his popularity was not flattering at all. Short-term ynamics aside, the more important Clinton was to judgment on Gore, the worse Gore’s position must have been.

---

29 The gap narrowed slightly over September, then widened rather dramatically in early October, as Republicans moved more swiftly than Democrats in the negative direction, then closed again as Republicans also swung back especially sharply. At the end the gap was about the same as in early September.

30 In contrast, Bartels and Zaller (2001, note 11) report, the Index of Consumer Sentiment was steadily positive in this period.

31 Clinton ratings were powerfully conditioned by party identification, of course. Among Democrats the mean rating was 70, among independents, 48, and among Republicans, 23.
Both economic judgment and Clinton rating matter to the vote. The *ceteris paribus* impact of economic judgments seems weak. Some of their effect may be masked by the presence of the Clinton term. Certainly, if we enter the economic and Clinton terms in that order, then the economic coefficient is about half again larger without the Clinton term. If the latter is an intervening variable, then the truer reading of the economy’s effect comes from the estimation without the Clinton term. Conversely, if economic judgment carries partisan freight not already captured by the earlier terms in the bloc recursive setup, then the economic coefficient with the Clinton term controlled may be closer to the truth. Either way, the impact of economic judgments does not seem large.

The Clinton effect, on the other hand, does seem large. In part, this is an artifact of measurement. A unit shift on the Clinton thermometer represents half the total distance on the original scale, roughly the distance between Democratic and Republican identifiers. The net shifts in Figure 9 are much smaller, of course. Perhaps the best way to think about Clinton’s effect is compare his mean rating with the indifference point. If the typical respondent were merely indifferent to Clinton, as opposed to mildly hostile, Gore’s share might have been about one point higher.

Unsurprisingly, this set of factors carries a large partisan and ideological charge. The transition from column (3) to column (4) produces the biggest shrinkage yet in party coefficients and a considerable reduction in ideological ones. These terms also add as much weight to the estimation as the issue bloc did. Most of the work was done by Bill Clinton.

### The Candidates

The final links in the chain are the candidates themselves. We estimate candidate factors last for two reasons. First, much of what is expressed as candidate judgment is derivative of all prior considerations. To the extent that candidate effects are mere epiphenomena, candidate coefficients themselves should be attenuated by control for anterior factors. If candidates are intervening variables, then entering them into the estimation should reduce coefficients on factors higher in the chain. Second, candidate considerations may be especially subject to campaign induction, at least to the extent the candidates are not well known.

Candidate considerations are captured in the ASC study by trait ratings directly modeled on the NES (Kinder, 1983). The four in play here are “honest”, “knowledgeable”, “really cares about people like me”, and “inspiring”. As Table 1 indicates, all four seem implicated in vote intention. Coefficient differences across traits and candidates are modest. All tend to yield coefficients around or just under one. As variances on these measures tend to be modest, unstandardized coefficients paint an exaggerated picture of impact. A big slice of the impact is partisan and ideological in disguise, as this stage has a big further effect in attenuating anterior coefficients. Especially striking is the hit on the ideological terms. Some of the apparent candidate judgment is really issue-based, as some of these coefficients are also sharply reduced. Especially notable are abortion and military spending. No less notable is the effect on the economy and Clinton terms. While it may have the same interpretive difficulty as before with the shrinkage of the economic term -- its shrinkage may indicate that economic judgments color Gore/Bush attributions, but then the opposite may also be true -- no such confusion attends the Clinton term. It is
simply implausible that opinion on Bush or Gore conditions the impact of Clinton judgments on the vote. Most reasonable is that much apparent judgment on Bush and Gore is just Clinton opinion re-expressed. This makes sense of the dramatic shrinkage of the Clinton term in the shift from column (4) to column (5).

For all that, candidate judgments exert considerable additional force in their own right. These terms produce the biggest increment in overall power of the equation. To be sure, this is the largest package of coefficients and that alone may create the appearance of power. There may even be an identification problem with the trait-vote relation. All that said, the *prima facie* indication still is that candidate considerations are worth taking seriously.

The interesting questions, however, are: Which trait imputations really differentiated the candidates? and, Which, if any, had dynamics independent of the other traits? The answers lie in Figure 10. At the end of the campaign, Gore had a huge advantage over Bush in our best indicator of competence (“knowledgeable”). Bush had a no less huge advantage in our best indicator of character (“honest”). How these contrasts were produced may be the key stories of the campaign.

First consider early shifts, from July to roughly mid-September. For each candidate each trait moves roughly synchronically with the other trait. Bush gets better on both traits around the Republican convention and then embarks on a gradual slide. At that point he seems a tiny bit more knowledgeable than honest, but this may mainly reflect the fact respondents resist the possibility that a candidate for major public office is not knowledgeable. Gore clearly is rated all along as more knowledgeable than honest but again the temporal dynamics correspond between the two: a dramatic upshift in ranking after the Democratic convention.

By late September, however, movements diverge between traits and between candidates. Gore’s ratings on “knowledgeable” never slacken but his reputation for honesty collapses. The drop begins about 18 September and continues until about 10 October. There is no recovery.\(^{32}\) Where Bush loses no ground on “honesty”, his reputation for knowledge slides. Moreover, about 40% of the total drop from his post-convention peak to Election Day comes right after the last debate.

Figure 11 asks how much of these dynamics cut through party groups, and how much merely reinforces predisposition. Obviously at each cross-section trait perception is highly partisan, especially for Gore’s character.\(^{33}\) What is more, the party gaps widen toward campaign’s end. For Bush’s competence, Republican identifiers are insulated from the campaign, as no trend at all is visible. Democrats supply all the drop that matters, and so this shift helps consolidate the coalition. Perceptions of Gore’s honesty, on the other hand, is less purely partisan in its dynamics. Republicans are more responsive than Democrats to suggestions of dishonesty, to be sure, but both groups follow the same basic path: more positive judgment after the conventions, less positive

\(^{32}\) Somewhat masked by the smoothing is acceleration of the drop right after the first debate.

\(^{33}\) We have yet to explore whether this gap is specific to this trait, or just another manifestation of the partisan asymmetry noted above.
from late September on. Democrats end up only a little more positive than they were before their convention.

**TOWARD AN INTERPRETATION OF DYNAMICS**

Gore’s character collapse was, we suspect, the hinge of the campaign. Movement in attributions of honesty to Gore led movement in vote intention by less than a week. The shift cannot be attributed to a highly visible campaign event, such as a debate (although the first debate probably accelerated the decay). We must infer that the catalyst lies in the world of ephemera, in news coverage or in advertising and its accompanying stump rhetoric. If it was a news story that undid Gore, the story itself was almost certainly itself a “spike” not a “wave”, to borrow the language of control theory. If it was a spike, it touched a deep nerve. Figure 11 indicates that the nerve was raw not just for Republicans, but also for Democrats. The timing of the shift directs our attention to Gore’s musings on the cost of dog medicine.

Of course, Gore did recover, sort of. And here too there seems to be a media story requiring further exploration. The last debate seems critical to Gore’s recovery. This is indicated by the basic tracking of vote intention and by turning points in the loess smoothing. That indication is reinforced by movement in opinion on the Social Security/stock market issue, in particular by the rallying of Democrats to their candidate. The narrative makes a close parallel to Columbia-school account of 1948, as Harry Truman exploited the Taft-Hartley Act to rebuild the New Deal Coalition (Berelson, et al., 1954). Mobilizing sentiment in 2000 on Social Security seems like a quintessential New Deal move. On one hand, this is an observation that diminishes the independent significance of the campaign. The party-specific character movement of movement nicely illustrates the Ansolabehere-Iyengar (1995) point that persuasion is more likely to be successful if it reinforces predisposition, rather than rubs against it. But this is to say only that persuasion is constrained. It does not say that partisan self-persuasion is inevitable. Gore could have chosen not to emphasize this issue. It is especially interesting to speculate what would have happened had the last debate not given him the opportunity to do so before a national television audience.

That debate also gave George W. Bush an occasion to do an uncanny imitation of Dana Carvey imitating his father. Viewers, Democrats at least, noticed this. Again, the perceptual shift was constrained by party predisposition. But had Bush not performed poorly in the last debate, would the slide in his competence attributions among Democrats have accelerated?

Meanwhile, the tracking directs us to other periods for which we have yet even to begin an accounting. Although it was a comfortable stylization of the campaign to say that Gore had the lead in September, lost it before October, and drew even at the end, there were other shifts. Most days in early September, Gore seems clearly to have been behind. The loess smoothing of Figure 1 slights these observations, but the facts seem incontrovertible. Did Gore slide in early September simply because the convention impetus played out, or did a campaign take an initiative or commit a gaffe, or did

---

34 The first debate clearly plays a role in the larger story of learning on this issue.
The tracking also alerts us to the speed with which things can change. Even with aggressively smoothed data, we detect phase shifts that seemingly require less than a week. And this overstates the time required, as some of consequential movements were clearly overnight. Sometimes the overnight impulse dissipated in whole or in part, and began to do so quickly. But clear turning points, abrupt breaks can be identified. Figure 12 makes this point by a modest pooling of days and setting 95% confidence bands around the observations. By this construction, seven three-day observations are extremely unlikely to have been generated by the system governing the preceding three days. These are:

- the drop after Bush’s acceptance speech,
- the surge before the Democratic convention,
- the surge after Gore’s acceptance speech,
- Gore’s mid-September surge,
- the late-September drop that we earlier identified as the “hinge” of the campaign,
- Gore’s surge after the last debate, and
- his drop about a week later.

It goes without saying that few of these turning points in the campaign will stand as turning points in US history. None of them should distract us from the fact that the most important single fact about a respondent was his or her party identification. But the shifts did occur, and they kept on occurring well into late October. Merely by existing, they pose an explanatory challenge.

LOOSE ENDS

That explanatory challenge is a huge loose end for this paper. On one hand, party identification is a powerful, abiding inertial force. Much of the drift of this paper is to reconfirm the power and relevance of all variants of the minimal effects model. Yet shifts big enough to disturb the waters of a close race also are part of the landscape. And the operation of self-referential cognitive bias and self-persuasion do not absolutely insulate the electorate against the campaign, even though we supply ample evidence that these processes, if anything, intensify toward the end.

Meanwhile, the modeling exercise in Table 1 is a mere beginning. Mainly, it establishes some plausible relationships and helps organize the data. It is certainly not appropriate for generating imputations of the dynamic effect for movement in key factors. Even this

---

35 We mention the following only in a footnote, the better to underscore our diffidence. It is a fact that Gore’s mid-September surge follows his appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show. There is a downward spike, 20-21-22 September, which follows Bush’s appearance on the same program with a one-day lag. Could these be the national-audience equivalent of a candidate appearance in a state?

36 The shifts also make us wonder if the concerns expressed in Zaller (2001) are exaggerated.
paper’s account faced issues in identification of causal direction. At the same time, the setup conflates longitudinal and cross-section variation. To take rolling cross section data such as these and extract longitudinal effects requires us to move to an approach like that outlined by Johnston and Brady (2001). In the meantime, coefficients in Table 1 are likely to exaggerate the vote-intention implications of a real-time shift.
TABLE 1: THE ENCOMPASSING MODEL
(Estimated for 4 September-6 November, N = 7796)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Party ID</th>
<th>(2) + Ideology</th>
<th>(3) + Issues</th>
<th>(4) + Retrospective</th>
<th>(5) + Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong PID</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak PID</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaning PID</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Con</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
<td>(0.13)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib-Con*Debates</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.18)</td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMO Suits</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict Abortion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut Taxes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Spending</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest SS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest SS*Debates</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush-Cares</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush-Honest</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush-Inspire</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush-Knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gore-Cares</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gore-Honest</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gore-Inspire</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gore-Knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-2 L_n L)</td>
<td>5968.27</td>
<td>5724.50</td>
<td>5331.89</td>
<td>4778.26</td>
<td>2879.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo-(R^2)</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asymptotic standard errors in parentheses.
Figure 1: Gore Share, Two-Party Vote

Smoothing by loess, bandwidth = 0.15.
Respondents with major-candidate preference only.

Figure 2: Gore Share by Party Identification

A. Levels - % Gore

B. Changes - initialized to 22 July

Smoothed by loess, bandwidth = 0.20.
Leaners classed as partisans.
Figure 3: Party Identification and Ideological Perception

Respondents with major-candidate preference only

Figure 4: Ideological Location by Time

A. Locations

B. Distances

Loess smoothing, bandw idth = 0.20.
Respondents with a major-candidate preference
Figure 5: Voters and Candidates on Issues

Figure 6:
Social Security and the Stock Market I: Locations

A. Locations:
Respondents’ own and imputations to candidates

B. Self-Persuasion:
Respondents’ location by party identification

Loess smoothing, bandwidth = 0.20.
Respondents with a major-candidate preference
Figure 7:
Social Security and the Stock Market II: Cognitive Bias

A. Imputations by Party ID

Loess smoothing, bandwidth = 0.20.

B. "Projection" by Issue Position and Party

Loess smoothing, bandwidth = 0.20.

Figure 8: Economic Perceptions

Loess smoothing, bandwidth = 0.20.

Respondents with a major-candidate preference
Figure 9: The Economy and Bill Clinton

Smoothed by loess, bandwidth = 0.15.
Respondents with major-candidate preference only.

Figure 10: The Critical Traits

A. "Honest"

B. "Knowledgeable"

Loess smoothing, bandwidth = 0.15.
Respondents with a major-candidate preference
Figure 11: Party Identification and Trait Attribution

Loess smoothing, bandwidth = 0.20.
Respondents with a major-candidate preference

Figure 12: The Identifiability of Transitions

Entry is Gore share plus 95% confidence band for three-day period
APPENDIX: POLICY QUESTIONS

1. Direct Respondent-Candidate Matches:

Respondent: Do you personally favor or oppose (Insert)?

Candidate: What about George W. Bush/Al Gore? Do you think he favors or opposes:

… giving patients the right to sue their health maintenance organization or HMO?

… making it harder for a woman to get an abortion?

… requiring a license for a person to buy a handgun?

… using government funds to make sure that every child in the US is covered by health insurance?

… the death penalty for some crimes?

… allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the United States military?

… using government money to help some parents send their children to private schools?

… allowing workers to invest some of their Social Security contributions in the stock market?

… selling some of the oil reserve to increase the winter heating oil supply?*

*[Question to respondents: This fall, the government has decided to sell some of the country’s strategic oil reserve to increase the supply of winter heating oil. Do you personally favor or oppose this?]

2. Constructed Match:

Which do you personally think is more important? Cutting taxes or strengthening Social Security?

To the best of your knowledge, who favors:

… the biggest tax cut?

… the biggest increase in spending for Social Security?

George W. Bush or Al Gore?

Candidates assigned to positions on a single tax vs. Social Security continuum on the basis of response to the last two questions.

3. SGO Item:

Please tell me how much money you think the federal government should spend on each of the following. Should the federal government spend more on this, the same as now, less or no money at all?

… maintaining a strong military defense
REFERENCES


