CANDIDATE STRATEGY AND ASSESSMENT DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science.

Chapel Hill
2013

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ABSTRACT

KEVIN K. BANDA: Candidate Strategy and Assessment During Election Campaigns.
(Under the direction of Thomas M. Carsey)

I examine the formation and consequences of candidates' issue agendas — the issues on which they focus during election campaigns. I argue that candidates' issue-based messages are important for three reasons. First, the issues candidates discuss should affect the issues that their opponents talk about. Second, the issues candidates discuss and the positions they outline in their messages should influence citizens' views of the candidates' ideological and issue positions. Last, the ideological portrayal of candidates' opponents as communicated through a negative message should have two effects: it should (1) alter citizens' views of the target of the attack in the way suggested by the message and (2) lead citizens to view the sponsor of the attack as holding characteristics that are the opposite of their portrayal of their opponent. I use data from 146 U.S. Senate and gubernatorial campaigns to assess my first argument and data drawn from two survey experiments to address the second and third arguments. The results of my analyses offer strong support for my theories.

For my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1 THE DYNAMICS OF CAMPAIGN ISSUE AGENDAS

Candidates and their campaign staffs expend a great deal of effort attempting to shape the information environment voters face when choosing a candidate to support. Candidates want to set the agendas of their campaigns in ways that will maximize their chances of winning elections. One of the ways they might be able to exert agenda control is by focusing on issues that favor them and harm their opponents. While this approach is straightforward, several studies have shown that competing candidates often talk about the same issues even when one candidate holds an advantage relative to her opponent (e.g. Sigelman and Buell 2004; Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006; Sides 2006). What drives candidates to discuss the same sets of issues during campaigns?

I argue that the way in which candidates shape their issue agendas — the sets of related issues they discuss during campaigns — is informed by two factors: the issue agendas of their opponents and the competitiveness of the election environment they face. Candidates must obtain the support of the median voter in order to win elections. One of the ways they may attempt to do so is by responding to their opponents' issue agendas by devoting more of their own campaign's focus to those same sets of issues, or converging in terms of issue agendas.[1] Doing so may help candidates appeal to the median voter by, for example, broadening their perceived degree of expertise across a wider array of issues.

In addition, some scholars argue that the proclivity of candidates to respond to one another is conditioned by the competitiveness of their elections (e.g. Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006). Non-habitual voters are more likely to participate in competitive elections,

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[1]By "converging," I do not mean that candidates will increasingly take similar positions, merely that they will discuss the same sets of issues.

so candidates in competitive races may face additional pressure to address one another's issue agendas in order to appeal to occasional voters, who tend to be more persuadable than habitual voters.

I test these propositions using advertising data collected by the Wisconsin Advertising Project from 146 statewide campaigns — 92 of which were for U.S. Senate seats and 54 of which were for governorships — occurring during six election years across all 50 states. I use a dynamic modeling technique to test my theory and find strong evidence of issue agenda convergence in both noncompetitive and competitive campaigns, but a generally higher level in the latter. In other words, candidates respond to the issue agendas of their opponents and do so to a greater extent in competitive elections. These findings lead to important implications for our understanding of campaign dynamics, candidate strategy, and the importance of issues in statewide contests.

1.1 Campaigns, Candidates, and Issues

The principal finding of most contemporary research on campaigns and elections is that campaigns matter in fundamental ways that can shape election outcomes (see for example Carsey 2000; Stimson 2004; Brady, Johnston, and Sides 2006; Vavreck 2009). While there is evidence that electoral decisions at the system level are influenced by campaigns (Wlezien and Erikson 2002), there is less evidence that campaigns can persuade individual citizens to change their vote choices (but see Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1996; Hillygus and Shields 2008). One way that candidates may seek to influence citizens is by altering their campaign messages in an attempt to change the criteria citizens use when they evaluate candidates, a process known as heresthetic change (Riker 1990). Candidates may try to use their campaigns to induce these changes in a number of ways: they may attempt to stimulate underlying predispositions (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954), produce a sense of "enlightenment" about the state of the country among citizens (Gelman and King 1993), or act as a priming mechanism (Bartels 2006, but see Lenz 2009). Campaigns also alter the

level of ambiguity in politics by reducing citizens' feelings of uncertainty about political candidates (Franklin 1991; Alvarez 1997; Peterson 2004, 2009). In addition, candidates may also attempt to change which issues the public finds most salient (Carsey 2000). Similarly, coverage of campaigns by the news media can affect the perceived importance of issues (Kinder 1998*a*,*b*; Iyengar and Simon 2000).

How then might candidates seek to win over potential voters during election campaigns? Candidates could use one of three broad strategies when attempting to win an election (e.g. Carsey 2000). The first broad strategy involves trying to change their positions on various issues so that their stated preferences are congruent with those of the median voter. While this is a sensible strategy in the abstract, it is problematic for at least three reasons. First, candidates may alienate their party's activists by attempting to appeal to moderates. This is a potentially dangerous strategy because activists tend to hold more extreme policy preferences than other citizens and may sit out an election if they do not feel as if their interests are being represented (Wittman 1983; Miller and Jennings 1986; Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993). Second, candidates may have well established records which might be difficult to escape because their opponents and the news media will likely discuss the weaknesses in candidates' records. Finally, it may be difficult for candidates to change their positions on issues because people are motivated reasoners and are likely to respond to incongruent information about candidates by arguing against and discarding it (Kunda 1990). Information that confirms previously held beliefs is also unlikely to alter attitudes but is likely to be evaluated more positively than comparable incongruent information (Taber and Lodge 2006). While candidates may attempt to improve their standing among their opponents' partisans, they may find it quite difficult to do so because these partisans are already predisposed to dislike the candidates and may disregard messages suggesting that they hold positions on some issues that are congruent with their non-preferred candidates.

The second broad campaign strategy available to candidates is to try to persuade citizens to change their minds about one or more issues in ways that favor the candidate. Like changing one's positions, persuading citizens is also a daunting task. Candidates have little reason to try to persuade their own supporters and those of their opponent are predisposed to dislike them due to biased information processing brought on by partisanship. Trying to convince citizens that their current attitudes are incorrect is difficult to accomplish, especially given that to do so, citizens must admit that their previous attitude was incorrect (Riker 1990).

Because many candidates may find it difficult to change their positions or persuade large numbers of citizens, they may instead pursue a third strategy, that of heresthetic change, in which they attempt to affect the conditions under which citizens make their choices by altering the salience of issues in the electoral environment (Riker 1990). Carsey (2000) argues that candidates focus on the issues that advantage them the most relative to their opponents while avoiding those for which their position is less advantageous. By spending a great deal of time talking about the issues on which they are most advantaged, candidates hope to induce citizens to think about their vote choices in a manner that favors them.

1.1.1 Issue Selection

Much of the extant research on issues in campaigns suggests that candidates should try to focus on the issues that advantage them. There are several potential sources of candidate advantage on issues. First, candidates' records and personal characteristics appear to play important roles in determining whether or not a candidate has an advantage on an issue (Sellers 1998; Brasher 2003). Sellers (1998) and Damore (2004), for example, find that candidates who hold popular positions on issues are advantaged relative to their opponents. A second source of advantage stems from the issue ownership literature, which suggests that the Democratic and Republican parties each "own" a set of issues; they are advantaged

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on these issues because citizens on average believe that they are better able to handle problems related to these issues than are members of the opposing party (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Petrocik 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003; Egan Forthcoming).

These studies and others (see for example Budge and Farlie 1983; Carsey 2000) suggest that candidates should mostly focus on different sets of issues and should, for the most part, avoid engaging the same issues on which their opponents focus.[2] Simon (2002) suggests that candidates should never discuss the same issues as one another, even in competitive campaigns when they may face pressure to do so. The logic underlying this argument is that candidates have little to gain from discussing issues on which their opponents are advantaged because doing so will likely remind citizens that the candidates' opponents are more desirable on some dimensions. In other words, candidates can only harm themselves by addressing their opponents' issues.

The results presented by scholars of issue convergence, however, suggest that candidates routinely discuss many of the same issues that their opponents talk about during election campaigns (Sigelman and Buell 2004; Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006; Sides 2006, 2007). "Issue convergence" in this literature refers to the process in which candidates increase the degree to which they discuss an issue in response to increases in their opponents' focus on the same issue. It is about issue emphasis, not issue positions. There is also some evidence suggesting that candidates diverge — discuss different issues — from one another. Spiliotes and Vavreck (2002), for example, observe divergence among candidates from different parties within districts and states. They do, however, observe convergence among copartisans.

While the issue convergence literature focuses on individual issues, I focus on bundles

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[2]This notion is a bit of a simplification because Petrocik (1996) predicts some degree of dialogue between candidates during campaigns, but he expects this to occur mostly on performance issues such as the state of the national economy and national security. Performance issues are fundamentally different than party-owned issues because issue advantage on the former is fleeting while advantage on the latter is temporally stable. Valence is also central to performance issues; few would argue that a strong national economy and effective national security are superfluous.

of related issues — issue agendas — in this research. The issues that make up a given issue agenda may be related in a number of ways. First, the issues may be related to one another in that they are all part of a single broader issue category. For example, medical insurance for children, Medicare, and hospice services could all be viewed more broadly as being directly related to health care policy. A second type of issue agenda is broader still; issues relating to health care, education, and poverty programs are also similar to one another in that they are all social policies.[3] A third potential form that issue agendas might take are through the relationships between issues and parties, i.e. issue ownership (Petrocik 1996; Egan Forthcoming). Given the strong ties between the bundles of issues that make up an issue agenda, candidates should not only respond to their opponents on individual issues as has been observed in the issue convergence literature, but also across groups of related issues that make up issue agendas.

1.1.2 Issue Agendas

There are several reasons to expect candidates' issue agendas to converge over the course of a campaign. First, parties should try to reduce the support for their opponents by making overtures towards members of opposing coalitions (Downs 1957) and may do so by focusing on wedge issues (Miller and Schofield 2003; Hillygus and Shields 2008). Second, candidates who discuss their opponents' issues may do so by reframing the issue in a way to emphasize the strengths of the candidate or her party (Sides 2006). [4] Holian (2004) provides a clear example on the Republican-owned issue of crime. Republicans

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[3]Other examples of broad policy categories that can represent issue agendas are morality policies, economic policies, and foreign policies.

[4]Jerit (2008) shows that another reason to expect to observe some degree of issue agenda convergence is because providing a counterargument is more persuasive for citizens than reframing an argument or issue. Jerit's research focuses on a political debate that occurred between rather than during an election campaign, but the logic of this argument also fits into a campaigns framework. A candidate's opponent could, for example, discuss their support of additional expenditures on education in terms of leveling the playing field for children in less wealthy areas. Rather than reframing the issue to focus on the costs of the additional spending, the candidate may be better off arguing that additional expenditures will not improve educational outcomes.

historically discussed crime in terms of punishment. When then Governor Clinton "stole" crime during his 1992 campaign for the Presidency, he did so by reframing the issue in terms of crime prevention, a dimension on which he was advantaged relative to his opponent. Third, candidates may also respond to their opponents' attacks in order to defend their records and positions (Skaperdas and Grofman 1995; Theilmann and Wilhite 1998; Lau and Pomper 2004). Fourth, candidates may be more likely to discuss issues that are more salient, which would lead candidates to discuss the same sets of issues even if they were not attempting to directly respond to their opponents (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994). Last, salient elections generate more information for citizens to consider when choosing among candidates (Franklin 1991; Kahn and Kenney 1999) and citizens tend to use information about issues and ideology in addition to partisan cues in these kinds of elections (Basinger and Lavine 2005). More generally, engaging a larger set of issues also allows candidates to provide citizens with more information about their candidacies (Geer 2006; Franz and Ridout 2007).

Party-owned Issue Agendas

I focus more specifically in this research on issues that are owned by one of the two major U.S. parties, i.e. the candidates' *party-owned issue agendas*. I concentrate on party-owned issue agendas rather than individual issues or other kinds of issue agendas because citizens associate candidates with the party that owns the issues they discuss (Banda 2010) and tend tend to associate specific issues with individual parties (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012). For example, citizens who are exposed to a candidate's discussion of Republican-owned (Democratic-owned) issues tend to link that candidate more strongly with the Republican (Democratic) Party when forming attitudes about the candidate's ideological and issue positions. Thus, if citizens form attitudes about candidates in response to the party ownership of the issues those candidates discuss, then candidates may respond to their opponents' party-owned issue agendas by discussing issues owned by the same party. A candidate could, for example, respond to her opponent's discussion of a set of

Republican-owned issues by discussing the same or other Republican-owned issues. Party-owned issues are related to one another because citizens bundle them together and this allows citizens to evaluate candidates on the same dimensions even when they discuss different — but related through party ownership — issues. Candidates, then, can communicate consistent signals to citizens across many related issues simultaneously rather than issue by issue.

I argue — contrary to strict proponents heresthetic change — that candidates should respond to one another's party-owned issue agendas by converging. In other words, candidates should alter the degree to which they discuss Democratic or Republican-owned issues as their opponent alters their own attention to these sets of issues. Stated more formally:

> H_1: *The level of attention devoted to a set of party-owned issues by a candidate will increase as her opponent's attention to the same set of party-owned issues increases.*

Issue ownership does not speak to candidate behavior on all issues, merely to those owned by a party. This is therefore a conservative test of issue agenda convergence because candidates on average are disadvantaged on the issues that are owned by the parties of their opponents. This disadvantage should lead candidates who do not own a set of issues to be less likely to discuss them. Put another way, it should be easier to observe issue agenda convergence on issues that are not owned by parties relative to party-owned issues because the former do not contain inherent advantages and disadvantages due to the countervailing influence of party ownership which should discourage issue agenda convergence. Additionally, because citizens bundle party-owned issues together, it is useful to observe the extent to which candidates (1) do so as well and (2) alter their strategies in response to their opponents' strategies.[5]

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[5]Scholars could also examine strategic interactions between competing candidates on other sets of related issues. For example, citizens and candidates may bundle economic issues together. These issues do not,

1.1.3 Electoral Competition

The extant literature suggests that the issue agendas of candidates will reflect one another to a greater extent when the campaign environment is competitive (Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006). Citizens may find competitive campaigns more interesting to follow because the outcome is not so obvious before Election Day. Citizens who are faced with a noncompetitive campaign may be more likely to ignore political information because they view it as both uninteresting — because the contest is fairly one sided — and irrelevant — because the outcome of the election is not in doubt. Competitive campaigns may stimulate citizens to become more interested in the campaigns, which may in turn lead them to want to learn more about the candidates and their views. Thus, the additional interest that competitive campaigns produce among citizens may lead candidates to feel compelled to respond to their opponents' party-owned issue agendas to teach citizens about themselves and their opponents.

Kahn and Kenney (2004) found that competitive campaigns tend to be more negative than those that are noncompetitive, in large part because frontrunners will bother to spend time attacking their opponents in these contests. Competitiveness is key here for front-running candidates because they only have an incentive to respond to their opponent's attacks when electoral conditions do not overwhelmingly favor them. More generally, when a candidate is attacked, they may feel compelled to respond by either defending themselves or by attacking their opponent on the same or a similar issue.

The news media should also be more interested in competitive campaigns for at least two reasons. First, competitive elections produce information that can be easily framed into a provocative narrative about an important political conflict. These narratives can then be

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however, consistently advantage one kind of candidate over another, so a test of issue agenda convergence on economic issues may be an easier than a test involving party-owned issues.

communicated to citizens who will be more receptive to consuming stories about competitive elections than they will stories following lopsided contests, which do not lend themselves to being repackaged as compelling narratives. The second reason is that journalists may not view noncompetitive elections as being particularly newsworthy. For this reason, they may be less likely to devote scarce resources to covering noncompetitive contests. Candidates are cognizant of the level of coverage the news media devotes to their campaigns and may feel pressured to respond to their opponents' party-owned issue agendas in response to the additional coverage in order to avoid criticism.

Consistent with the work of other scholars (Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006), I argue that as competition increases, so too should the likelihood that candidates' own strategies are informed by those of their opponents. In other words, candidates should converge on issue agendas to a greater extent in competitive elections than they should in noncompetitive elections. This potentially conditional relationship leads to the following hypothesis:

> H_2: *The issue agenda convergence predicted in H_1 should be more pronounced*
> *in competitive campaigns than in noncompetitive campaigns.*

If strict proponents of heresthetic change are correct, candidates will not respond to their opponents' party-owned issue agendas in competitive or noncompetitive elections because they will not want to engage in discourse about issues on which they are viewed as being weak.

1.2   The Dynamics of Campaign Advertising and Party-Owned Issues

I propose a dynamic test of issue agenda convergence in which I model Candidate A's issue agenda as a function of their own issue agenda in the previous time period along with Candidate B's issue agenda in the previous time period. This modeling strategy allows for a direct test of campaign dialogue; if candidates respond to one another by engaging in dialogue, they will increase their attention to their opponents' previous agendas. If candidates talk past each other, there will be no evidence that they respond to one another's

party-owned issue agendas.

I examine the attention given by candidates to party-owned issues expressed through television advertisements for three reasons. First, television advertising is ubiquitous in statewide and national campaigns and is increasingly prevalent as the competitiveness of a campaign increases. Second, studying television advertising allows me to bypass the the news media's filter that would be present in an analysis using newspaper coverage of campaigns. The advertisements run by candidates should reflect the candidates' overall campaign strategies because the advertising messages do not have to pass through the filters of external actors. Third, candidates may change their strategies over the course of their campaigns. Advertising data allows me to observe these changes dynamically.

I analyze U.S. Senate and gubernatorial campaigns for two reasons. First, I argue that candidate strategy may differ based on whether or not an election is competitive. There is little variation in presidential election competitiveness; they are all competitive, at least at the national level.[6] I therefore need contests for which there are both competitive and noncompetitive contexts. Statewide elections like U.S. Senate and gubernatorial contests fit this requirement. Second, candidates for statewide offices rely on advertising to communicate with citizens to a greater extent than do candidates running for the U.S. House and for offices further down the ticket.

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[6]There is much more variance in the competitiveness of presidential elections at the state level.

1.3 Research Design

I make use of the Wisconsin Advertising Project's (WiscAds) 1998 through 2008[7] U.S. Senate and gubernatorial advertising data sets to test my theory.[8] These data contain information on the date, time, and television station on which each political advertisement ran in the 75 largest media markets in 1998, the 100 largest U.S. media markets from 2000 through 2004, and all U.S. media markets in 2008. I use all U.S. Senate and gubernatorial contests in which both major parties were represented by a candidate[9] and in which both candidates ran general election television advertisements.[10] Candidates who were sacrificial lambs were thus excluded from my analysis. This left me with 146 contests — 92 Senate and 54 gubernatorial races — spread across six election years and all 50 states. Given these constraints, advertisements aired in 161 media markets are included in my analysis. Table 1.1 lists the contests observed in this research.

Each advertisement airing was coded by members of the WiscAds teams for a large number of characteristics, the most important of which for this research are the issues discussed in the ads. Coders included up to four issues per advertisement and about 50 issues were included in the coding scheme.[11] Some of these issues were transitory in nature, but many were included in every year of the data. I coded 31 of these issues as being owned

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[9]I treated Paul Wellstone and Walter Mondale as a single candidate in Minnesota's 2002 Senate race due to the former's death late in the campaign. Excluding the race from my analysis does not alter the substantive findings I report in this research.

[10]I excluded contests in which one candidate ran only a trivial number of advertisements or only ran ads in a single week. Excluded elections include New Mexico's 2000 Senate race and New Hampshire's 2004 Senate contest. The losing candidates in these elections aired fewer than 10 advertisements during their campaigns.

[11]Most advertisements were coded as mentioning only a single issue.

Table 1.1: U.S. Senate and Gubernatorial Election Contests Included in These Data

1998	AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN KY, MD, MO, NC, NV, NY, OH, OR SC, WA, WI
2000	CA, DE†, FL, GA, IN†, MD, ME, MI MN, MO†, NC∗, NE, NH∗, NJ, NV, NY PA, RI, UT†, VA, WA†, WV∗
2002	AL†, AR†, AZ∗, CA∗, CO†, CT∗, FL∗, GA† HI∗, IA†, ID, IL∗, KS∗, KY, MA∗, MD∗ ME†, MI∗, MN†, MO, NC, NH†, NJ, NM† NY∗, OK†, OR†, PA∗, RI∗, SC†, TN†, TX† VT∗, WI∗
2003	KY∗, MS∗
2004	CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, IN∗, KY MD, MO†, NC†, NH∗, OK, PA, SC, UT∗ VT†, WA†, WI
2008	AK, CO, GA, ID, IN∗, KS, KY, LA MA, ME, MN, MO∗, MS♯, MT∗, NC†, ND∗ NE, NH†, NM, OK, OR, SD, TX, VT∗ WA∗

∗ Gubernatorial election.
† Senate and gubernatorial elections.
♯ Two Senate elections; one regularly scheduled and one special election.

by either the Republicans or the Democrats, each of which is listed in Table 1.2. I selected these issues because they fit Petrocik's (Petrocik 1996) established descriptions of party-owned issues (see also Egan Forthcoming). These are issues for which the parties have long-standing advantages rather than issues that temporarily advantage one party or the other.[12]

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[12]There is some scholarly debate about whether or not crime continues to be a Republica-owned issue. Sides (2006), for example, reports evidence suggesting that the Republican advantage on crime had largely disappeared by 1998. Egan (Forthcoming), on the other hand, finds that Republicans maintained their long term advantage on crime through 2008 and further finds a great deal of stability in party ownership of issues more generally.

Table 1.2: Coding Scheme: Issue Ownership

Democratic	Republican
Minimum wage	Taxes
Farming (friend of)	Government spending
Union (friend of)	Business (friend of)
Affirmative action	Capital punishment/Death penalty
Civil liberties/privacy	Moral/family/religious
Education/schools	Immigration
Health care	Terrorism
Child care	Assisted suicide
Other child related issues	Creationism
Social Security	Crime
Medicare	Narcotics/drugs
Welfare	Gun control
Prescription drugs	Defense/military
Women's health	Missile defense
Environment	Veterans
Civil rights	

Next, I collapsed these advertising data by contest and media market and created weekly time series. In each observation I recorded the number of advertisements that week that mentioned at least one Democratic or Republican-owned issue.[13] The number of advertisements in a week that contained Democratic and Republican-owned issues for each of the candidates serve as the dependent variables in my analysis. They are also key independent variables in some of my models, as the attention given to them by a candidate's opponent should affect the former's issue agenda.

[13]While I opted to include crime as a Republican-owned issue, this decision did not affect the substance of my findings. Measures of the candidates' weekly Republican-owned issue agendas including and precluding crime correlate with one another at very high levels — about 0.97 — for both Democratic and Republican candidates. Additionally, I also created measures of candidates weekly Democratic-owned issue agendas for which I excluded mentions of Social Security and Medicare. I did so because a large proportion of advertisements mentioning Democratic-owned issues involved these two issues. These new measures correlated with the old measures at .9 or higher for both Democratic and Republican candidates. The results of models using these new measures generated substantively identical results to those that I present.

1.3.1 Contest and Candidate Level Characteristics

I use the Cook Political Report's race ratings as an indicator of electoral competition. In its raw form, the ratings are a seven point measure for which competitiveness is strongest in the middle categories. Its seven values are "solid Democratic," "likely Democratic," "lean Democratic," "toss up," "lean Republican," "likely Republican," and "solid Republican." I collapsed this scale down to a simple dichotomous indicator of competition; contests coded as "leaning" or "toss up" were coded as being competitive (1) while the rest were coded as noncompetitive races (0).

I include dichotomous indicators of whether or not each candidate is an incumbent — because incumbents may be less apt to discuss party owned issues due to their electoral security — or a woman — because female candidates may be more likely to emphasize women's issues (Windett 2011), which also tend to be associated with the Democratic Party — along with dummy variables indicating whether or not the contest was an open seat election and whether or not the election occurred in each election year. I include these latter two indicators to account for potential differences in candidate strategy in open seat elections and in each of the years for which I have data. I also include dichotomous indicators for whether or not each candidate is black and Latino. These indicators allow me to control for potential differences in campaign strategy driven by race, as candidates who are racial minorities may be more likely to spend time talking about racial issues, which are owned by the Democratic Party.

Approximately 36% of elections were open seat contests and just under 59% of the elections were competitive. Thirty percent of contests involved at least one female candidate while three and two percent contained at least one black or Latino candidate respectively. Thirty seven percent of the elections were for governorships. Table 1.3 contains summary statistics for each of the variables included in my analysis.

Table 1.3: Summary Statistics at the Weekly Media Market Level

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max.
Democratic candidates				
# Democratic-owned ads	64.1	87.5	0	706
# Republican-owned ads	44.3	74.1	0	599
Republican candidates				
# Democratic-owned ads	54.6	79.7	0	792
# Republican-owned ads	58.4	86.7	0	663
Contest-level characteristics				
Open seat	0.329	0.470	0	1
Gubernatorial election	0.404	0.491	0	1
Candidate is an incumbent				
Democrats	0.239	0.426	0	1
Republicans	0.431	0.495	0	1
Candidate is female				
Democrats	0.257	0.437	0	1
Republicans	0.042	0.200	0	1
Candidate is black				
Democrats	0.028	0.164	0	1
Republicans	0.014	0.116	0	1
Candidate is Latino/a				
Democrats	0.031	0.174	0	1
Republicans	0.009	0.095	0	1
Year indicators				
2000	0.146	0.353	0	1
2002	0.329	0.470	0	1
2003	0.014	0.116	0	1
2004	0.228	0.420	0	1
2008	0.287	0.452	0	1

1.3.2 Modeling Campaigns as Dynamic Processes

I use pooled time series data in order to capture campaign dynamics. Because my theory predicts interaction between candidates and the behavior I want to model occurs simultaneously, I must control for possible simultaneous and unmodeled correlation in the behavior of the candidates.[14] I do so using seemingly unrelated regression, which allows for multiple equations and for the error terms of each equation be contemporaneously correlated with one another (see Carsey, Jackson, Stewart, and Nelson 2011 for a similar application).

I employ an error correction modeling framework, which allows me to calculate long and short term effects of time serial covariates on my dependent variables in my analysis and is appropriate for both stationary and nonstationary data (DeBoef and Keele 2008). The dependent variable of an error correction model is the first difference of the dependent variable rather than the value at time *t*. This framework also requires the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable, the coefficient of which estimates the rate of error correction, and both first differences and lagged levels of the remaining endogenous covariates.[15]

I estimate four equations simultaneously which predict the Democratic candidate's weekly number of advertisements containing (1) Democratic-owned issues, (2) Republican-owned issues and the Republican candidate's weekly number of advertisements containing (3) Democratic-owned issues, and (4) Republican-owned issues. The equations follow:

$$\Delta DD_{it} = a_1 DD_{it-1} + b_1 RD_{it-1} + c_1 \Delta RD_{it} + (d_1 RD_{it-1} * Comp) + (e_1 \Delta RD_{it} * Comp) + j_1 Comp$$
$$+ k_q Control + \mu_1$$

$$(1.1)$$

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[14]Failing to do so would lead me to violate the assumption that my data are independently and identically distributed, which can lead to insurmountable problems when trying to interpret statistical results.

[15]I tested for unit roots using augmented Dickey-Fuller tests and for autocorrelation using Woolridge (2002) tests panel data in each of my dependent variables. The results of these tests suggested that these variables do not contain unit roots and that first-order autocorrelation is present in the data.

$$\Delta DR_{it} = a_2 DR_{it-1} + b_2 RR_{it-1} + c_2 \Delta RR_{it} + (d_2 RR_{it-1} * Comp) + (e_2 \Delta RR_{it} * Comp) + j_2 Comp$$
$$+ k_q Control + \mu_2$$

$$(1.2)$$

$$\Delta RD_{it} = a_3 RD_{it-1} + b_3 DD_{it-1} + c_3 \Delta DD_{it} + (d_3 DD_{it-1} * Comp) + (e_3 \Delta DD_{it} * Comp) + j_3 Comp$$
$$+ k_q Control + \mu_3$$

$$(1.3)$$

$$\Delta RR_{it} = a_4 RR_{it-1} + b_4 DR_{it-1} + c_4 \Delta DR_{it} + (d_4 DR_{it-1} * Comp) + (e_4 \Delta DR_{it} * Comp) + j_4 Comp$$
$$+ k_q Control + \mu_4$$

$$(1.4)$$

In the preceding equations, each of the two letter long variables stands for one of the issue agenda covariates. The first letter refers to the party of the advertising candidate while the second refers to the party that owns the set of issues that were discussed in the candidates' advertisements that week. "DD_{it}," for example, refers to the Democratic candidate's emphasis of Democratic-owned issues while "RD_{it}" refers to the Republican candidate's emphasis of Democratic-owned issues in media market i and at time t. "*Comp*" refers to the dichotomous competition indicator. "*Control*" is a vector of control variables including whether or not the contest is for an open seat, a governorship, and the candidate is a woman, an incumbent, black, or Latino. I also included a series of dummies indicating the year in which the campaign took place.

The coefficients of the differenced covariates represent the average short term, or contemporaneous, change in the dependent variable that results from a one unit increase in the covariate. The contemporaneous changes occur at time *t*. The coefficients of the lagged covariates correspond to a second short term effect, this time at time *t + 1*. These effects at time *t + 1* are not necessarily theoretically interesting on their own, but when they are divided by the negative of the coefficient generated for the lagged dependent variable, they represent what is called the long run multiplier (LRM), which captures the total short and

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long run change in the dependent variable over future time periods given a one unit increase of the associated covariate.[16]

The theory I have outlined in this paper is agnostic as to whether candidates will respond to one another immediately or in the future. I will therefore focus on the total effects of each of the endogenous covariates of interest each dependent variable. In other words, I will focus on the long run multipliers.

1.3.3 Expectations

I expect that candidates will alter their issue agendas in response to those of their opponents. Candidates should increase the number of advertisements mentioning a set of party-owned issues as their opponents air more advertisements mentioning the same set of party-owned issues. In other words, I expect that coefficients b_n, c_n, d_n, e_n, and their associated long run multipliers will be positive and significantly ($p \leq .05$) different than zero. Should these expectations be met, these results would offer support for my agenda convergence theory rather than the various theories discussed above that predict non-response among competing candidates.

1.4 Results

Before I report the results of my seemingly unrelated regression model, I first present two brief examples of my data. Figure 1.1 contains four panels plotting the number of advertisements mentioning Democratic and Republican-owned issues in the 2002 Texas gubernatorial race and the 2004 North Carolina Senate campaign. In the case of the Texas contest, the data are from the Houston media market while the North Carolina data are from the Raleigh-Durham media market. The general pattern of these data suggests that candidates' party-owned issue agendas shift in response to one another. When one candidate increases or decreases their attention to Democratic or Republican-owned issues, so too does the their opponent. The following analysis is an effort to determine whether this

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[16]I calculate the standard errors of each long run multiplier using the Bewley (1979) transformation (see also DeBoef and Keele 2008).

pattern is consistent across a large number of races.

1.4.1 Candidate Interaction and Party-Owned Issue Agendas

Table 1.4 contains the results of a four-equation seemingly unrelated regression model.[17] The first two columns of results are for equations estimating the extent to which Democratic candidates emphasized Democratic and Republican-owned issues. Columns three and four show the same for Republican candidates.

Error correction models produce output that can be difficult to interpret directly. The model presented in Table 1.4 is further complicated by the presence of interaction terms. Rather than focusing on individual coefficients, I will instead focus on illustrating my findings from these models by generating predicted values of candidates' total short and long term campaign responsiveness as captured by the long run multipliers and presenting them graphically. First, however, note that the estimated coefficients for the short term effects — i.e. the differenced variables of the opponent's advertising — suggest a general pattern of contemporaneous issue agenda convergence among candidates. The interaction terms further suggest that this tendency towards issue agenda convergence is stronger in competitive elections than it is in noncompetitive elections.

Figure 1.2 shows the total predicted effects of a one standard deviation increase in the number of opponent-sponsored advertisements mentioning party-owned issues on a

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[17]I ran a number of models with different specifications, measures, and levels of aggregation. In one, I included dummy variables for each of the media markets included in my analysis. Their inclusion did not alter the substantive character of my findings, so I report the model which does not include these dummies for ease of presentation. In another, I included an ordinal rather than dichotomous measure of electoral competition, which also did not alter my findings. I also ran models set up between winners and losers rather than Democrats and Republicans. Again, this did not affect the substance of my findings. I further ran single equation random effects models and models with random intercepts for the year, state, and media markets. These choices did not alter my findings. I also ran models using an alternate operationalization of my issue agendas in which I measured the percentage of ads candidates ran in a week mentioning Democratic or Republican-owned issues rather than the volume of advertising. This model also shows that candidates converge in response to their opponents, though the conditioning effect of competition that I report in the main text of this paper appears to be less powerful. I ran an additional model in which I only used data from the non-presidential years and found similar results to those presented in Table 1.4. I also ran my main model and those I described above with data aggregated at the daily rather than weekly level and at the state rather than media market level, neither of which altered the substance of my findings. See (Banda 2013) for an issue-by-issue analysis of the dynamics of issue convergence in a similar set of cases.

2002 TX Gubernatorial Race in Houston: Democratic Issues

2004 NC Senate Race in Raleigh: Democratic Issues

Democratic candidate
Republican candidate

2002 TX Gubernatorial Race in Houston: Republican Issues

2004 NC Senate Race in Raleigh: Republican Issues
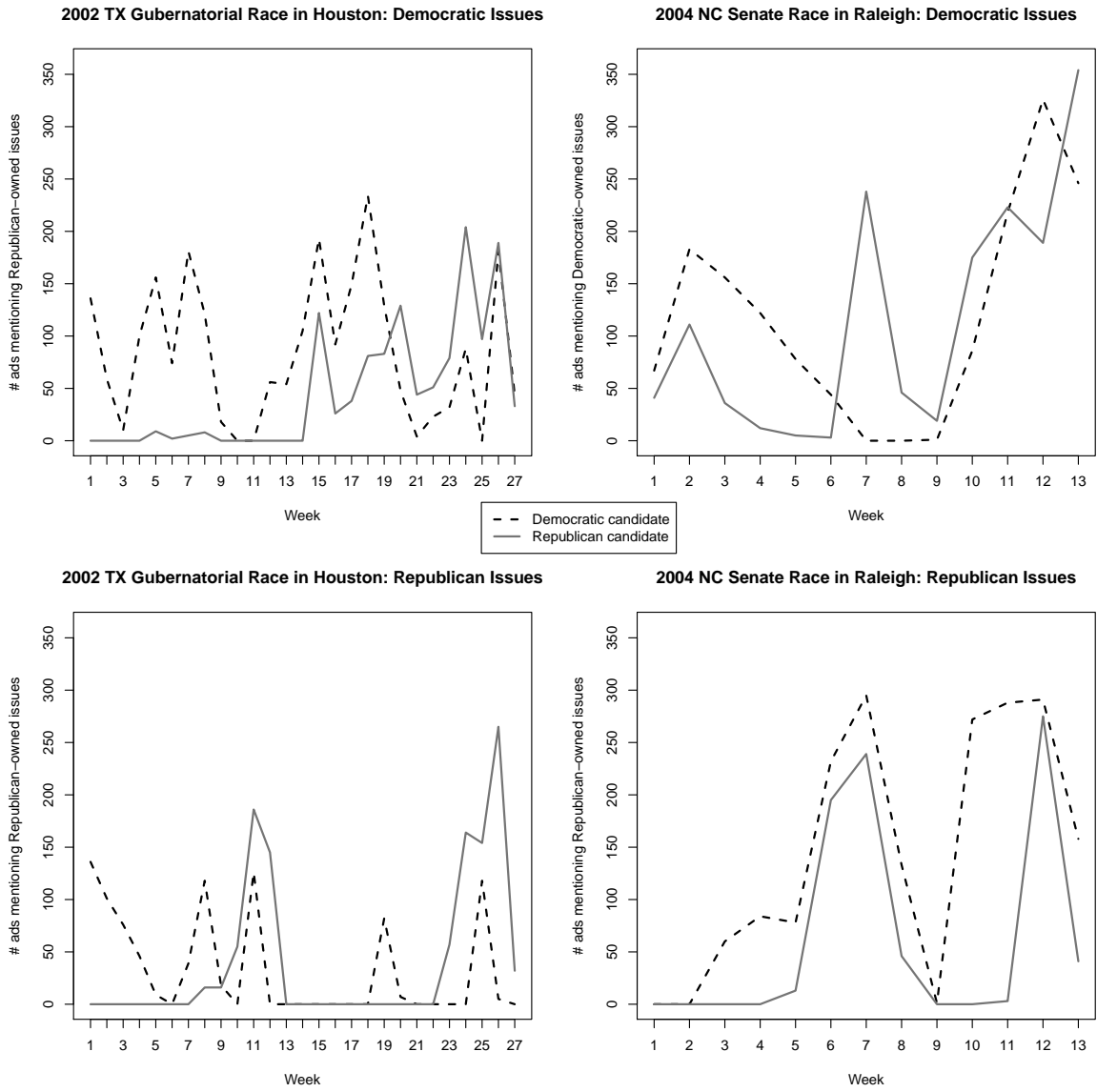
Figure 1.1: Party-Owned Issue Agendas in Two Contests

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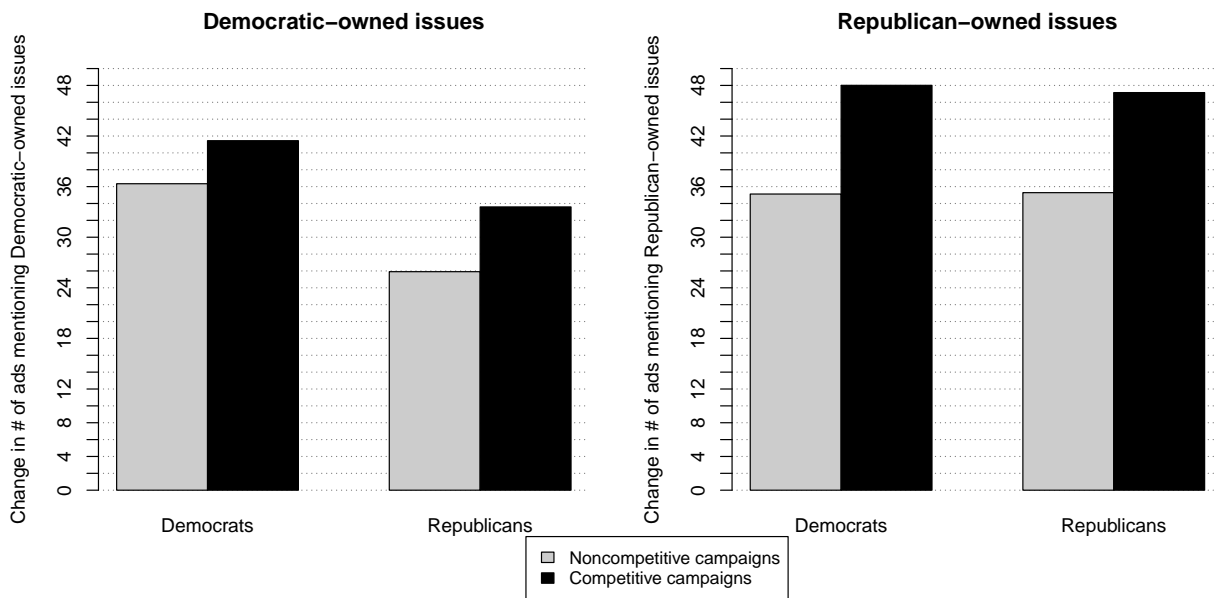
Note: The predicted effects plotted here are generated by one standard deviation increases in a candidate's opponent's party-owned issue emphasis.

Figure 1.2: Total Short and Long Run Predicted Effects of Candidates' Volume of Party-Owned Issue Ads on the Advertising Behavior of their Opponents

candidate's own volume of party-owned issue advertising. These effects were generated using the long run multipliers. Recall that the long run multiplier in an expression of the total short and long term effects of a change in an endogenous covariate on an outcome variable.[18] As shown in Figure 1.2, a one standard deviation — about 74 advertisements — increase in the number of Republican-sponsored ads mentioning Democratic issues on average leads Democratic candidates to run an additional 36 ads about Democratic issues in noncompetitive elections. In competitive elections, Democrats instead respond by running approximately 42 more ads. Republican candidates in noncompetitive elections respond to a standard deviation — 87.5 ads — increase in the number of advertisements mentioning Democratic-owned issues by running about 26 more ads. In competitive elections, this number increases to just under 34 additional advertisements.

The pattern of response among candidates is similar for advertisements mentioning Republican-owned issues. A one standard deviation — 86.7 advertisements — increase in the number of Republican-sponsored ads mentioning Republican-owned issues on average leads Democratic candidates to run about 35 and 48 more ads respectively in noncompetitive and competitive elections. For Republican candidates, these increases are nearly identical: approximately 35 additional advertisements in noncompetitive elections and just shy of 48 more advertisements in competitive elections for a one standard deviation — just under 80 ads — increase in the number of Democratic-sponsored advertisements mentioning Republican-owned issues.

The pattern shown in Figure 1.2 is clear: Democratic and Republican candidates both respond to increases in the number of party-owned ads their opponents run by increasing the number of advertisements they air themselves mentioning the same set of party-owned

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[18]Long run multipliers can either be estimated using the Bewley (1979) transformation — which also generates a standard error — or by dividing the coefficient of the lag of an endogenous variable by the negative of the coefficient estimated for the lagged dependent variable (see DeBoef and Keele 2008).

issues. They do so to a greater extent in competitive elections, which suggests that candidates are more responsive to one another in more competitive campaign environments.[19] The standard errors associated with the long run multipliers for competitive elections indicate that the quantities presented in the figure for competitive and noncompetitive elections differ significantly ($p \leq .05$) from one another.

I present a brief analysis of the correlation of the residuals generated by each of the equations of my seemingly unrelated regression model in Table 1.5. There is a surprisingly low level of correlation among the residuals; the strongest correlation between residuals is -.268. Correlations this low indicate that I could have run separate models without risking biasing my results. Even so, given that I am modeling simultaneous candidate behavior over time, a seemingly unrelated regression was the correct choice both theoretically and methodologically.

1.5 Conclusion

The results of my analysis suggest that U.S. Senate and gubernatorial candidates react to one another dynamically by altering their party-owned issue agendas in response to those put forth by their opponents. These results provide support for the expectations generated by issue agenda convergence theory rather than the expectation of nonresponse generated by other theories of issue emphasis (e.g. Simon 2002). The convergence I observe in my analysis appears to be even stronger in competitive campaigns than it is in noncompetitive campaigns.

The results of this research lead to three implications. The first stems from the finding that candidates can be encouraged to engage sets of issues — in this case the issues that are owned by the party of their opponents — they might otherwise prefer to avoid if their opponents increase the level of attention they give these issues.[20] Issue agenda convergence,

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[19]I present a distributed lag plot of these effects over five weeks that interested readers may examine in the appendix. The vast majority of the total effects I present in Figure 1.2 occur contemporaneously.

[20]This finding does not mean that candidates must necessarily talk about issues in ways that will harm

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while certainly not required for democracy to function, could be useful for citizens because they may find it easier to evaluate candidates who discuss related issues than candidates who talk about unrelated issues. Issue agenda convergence on party-owned issues allows citizens to assess candidates on the same dimensions — those implied by related issues — when they otherwise might be forced to do so on the basis of disparate dimensions — those implied by unrelated issues.

The second implication suggested by this research is that citizens may be presented with a choice between candidates who are more responsive to one another during more competitive campaigns. This may allow citizens to be better able to assess candidates using similar sets of considerations. Competition in this sense may be an important component of a democratic system because it encourages candidates to respond to one another more than they might in noncompetitive election environments. Candidates in competitive elections communicate more information to citizens about similar sets of issues. Citizens may then use this information to form attitudes about candidates and to make direct comparisons between them.

The third implication centers on what happens after elections. While there is some evidence that candidates' issue agendas do not affect election outcomes (Sides 2007), the theory of issue uptake suggests that legislators often coopt the issue priorities of their opponents even after the campaign ends (Sulkin 2005). Winning candidates, then, continue to respond to the criticisms leveled against them and the issues discussed by their opponents once they reach office.

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that candidates are not blind to the election environments surrounding them. They react to their opponents and their responsiveness is conditioned by competition. Future research might examine the responsive nature of candidate strategy across other sets of related issues like social or economic issues, the dynamics of

them. They may reframe the issues in an advantageous manner as shown by Sides (2006) or they may defend their position.

candidate behavior in multi-stage elections, or the responsive behavior of candidates across individual issues.

Table 1.4: Campaign Advertising and the Dynamics of Candidate Responsiveness

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Democratic issues	Republican issues	Democratic issues	Republican issues
Error correction rate				
# Sponsor's issue ads$_{t-1}$	-0.449*	-0.521*	-0.459*	-0.515*
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Opponent's behavior				
Δ# Democratic issue ads	0.475*		0.466*	
	(0.026)		(0.026)	
Δ# Democratic issue ads	0.029		-0.028	
$*$ competition	(0.031)		(0.030)	
# Democratic issue ads$_{t-1}$	0.205*		0.136*	
	(0.026)		(0.023)	
# Democratic issue ads$_{t-1}$	0.034		0.046†	
$*$ competition	(0.030)		(0.026)	
LRM for # Democratic issue ads	0.456*		0.296*	
	(0.026)		(0.023)	
LRM for # Democratic issue ads	0.075*		0.100*	
$*$ competition	(0.030)		(0.026)	
Δ# Republican issue ads		0.286*		0.424*
		(0.022)		(0.037)
Δ# Republican issue ads		0.173*		0.201*
$*$ competition		(0.025)		(0.041)
# Republican issue ads$_{t-1}$		0.211*		0.245*
		(0.022)		(0.038)
# Republican issue ads$_{t-1}$		0.067*		0.091*
$*$ competition		(0.024)		(0.040)
LRM for # Republican issue ads		0.405*		0.476*
		(0.022)		(0.037)
LRM for # Republican issue ads		0.128*		0.178*
$*$ competition		(0.024)		(0.040)
Election is competitive	-0.910	1.773	-1.040	-1.303
	(3.214)	(2.699)	(2.835)	(2.970)
Open seat	11.162*	18.317*	8.072*	5.191†
	(2.580)	(2.227)	(2.669)	(2.911)
Candidate is an incumbent	20.665*	18.057*	15.882*	16.835*
	(2.859)	(2.428)	(2.648)	(2.870)
Candidate is female	-4.356†	-3.920†	4.962	6.192
	(2.336)	(2.000)	(4.797)	(5.178)
Candidate is black	-3.977	-13.678*	-25.255*	-23.191*
	(6.738)	(5.811)	(8.353)	(8.964)
Candidate is Latino/a	-13.115*	-14.802*	11.403	23.877*
	(6.307)	(5.416)	(10.497)	(11.307)
Gubernatorial election	5.127*	-0.258	-4.028†	-4.467†
	(2.459)	(2.102)	(2.295)	(2.509)
Year: 2000	5.143	-7.100†	-3.082	-6.001
	(4.756)	(4.060)	(4.431)	(4.846)
Year: 2002	2.038	-0.469	-8.475*	-7.490
	(4.590)	(3.920)	(4.217)	(4.608)
Year: 2003	32.730*	-22.574*	1.476	46.193*
	(10.138)	(8.702)	(9.491)	(10.298)
Year: 2004	0.486	-1.225	-6.148	3.499
	(4.785)	(4.094)	(4.483)	(4.906)
Year: 2008	-7.202	3.540	-9.865*	0.648
	(4.487)	(3.852)	(4.079)	(4.474)
Intercept	11.020*	-0.346	14.908*	14.318*
	(4.313)	(3.573)	(4.078)	(4.309)
R^2	0.238	0.263	0.228	0.252
BIC		198,787.4		
N		4,531		

Note: Dependent variables are the first difference of a given candidate's number of ads mentioning Democratic or Republican-owned issues in a week. Estimated OLS coefficients from a seemingly unrelated regression model are reported along with standard errors in parentheses. Long run multipliers are estimated using the Bewley (1979) transformation.
† $p \leq .05$ (one tailed), $*$ $p \leq .05$ (two tailed).

Table 1.5: Correlation of Residuals

	Democratic candidates		Republican candidates	
	Democratic issues	Republican issues	Democratic issues	Republican issues
Democratic candidates				
Democratic issues	1.0000			
Republican issues	0.2715	1.0000		
Republican candidates				
Democratic issues	-0.2477	0.0038	1.0000	
Republican issues	0.0816	-0.2680	0.2368	1.0000

Note: The cells are correlations of the residuals between the equations reported in Table 1.4.

2 ISSUE OWNERSHIP, ISSUE POSITIONS, AND CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

One of the most important topics that public opinion and campaigns scholars grapple with is the degree to which citizens are responsive to politics. The classic findings suggest that citizens tend to be politically inattentive, which may not be surprising given that most individuals report that they are not interested in politics and that they care little about electoral outcomes (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). More recent work confirms these findings and further suggests that citizens may not even understand contemporary policy debates (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). These findings suggest the existence of two potential problems. The first problem is related to democratic accountability: the public must respond in reasonable ways to political conditions and events despite being made up of individuals who tend to be politically inattentive. The second problem is faced by candidates, who must communicate with citizens who do not pay attention to or know much about politics.

The conventional wisdom among scholars of public opinion is that party cues and party labels are sufficient for citizens to make reasonably informed political decisions (Downs 1957; Conover and Feldman 1982; Feldman and Conover 1983; Rahn 1993) and that issues do not play an important role in the formation of citizens' attitudes. These findings suggest the existence of an important puzzle: if issues do not matter because citizens do not pay attention, then why do citizens claim that they want to know more about candidates' policy solutions and why do citizens appear to dislike feeling uncertain about candidates' positions (Bartels 1986; Alvarez 1997; but see Tomz and Van Houweling 2009)? It is also puzzling that campaigns focus so much attention on the discussion of issues and "staying on message" if issues do not matter. This research focuses on the following question: how

does discussion of issues and issue positions by a candidate affect citizens' views of the candidate's ideological dispositions and the candidate's positions on the issues he does and does not discuss?

Citizens tend to form attitudes about candidates based on key heuristics like party identification. While party is a powerful shortcut, citizens recognize that not all Democrats and Republicans are identical. Citizens can update their views of candidates in response to small bits of policy information embedded within candidates' messages. These cues may (1) reduce the uncertainty that citizens feel about candidates' positions by offering citizens more information from which they may draw when forming attitudes about candidates and (2) offer inattentive citizens an easy source of additional information that is useful to those who seek to learn about candidates while minimizing the costs associated with information searches.

I focus on the effects of two kinds of information cues on citizens' attitudes about candidates. The first, *issue ownership cues*, are present in messages in which candidates discuss an issue that is "owned" — or strongly associated with — a party (Petrocik 1996). Citizens should view the candidates as being more similar to to the party that owns the issues the candidates discuss. The second kind of cue — "*issue position cues*" — are present when candidates identify their positions on issues. Citizens should again think about candidates in terms of the party associated with the positions candidates outline.

These cues should influence citizens' views of the candidates by associating them to one of the two major parties. Issue ownership and issue position cues should affect citizens' perceptions of candidates' positions on the issues they talk about because these kinds of cues explicitly outline those candidates' positions. These cues should also influence citizens' views of the candidates' general ideological dispositions and their positions on issues they do not discuss. Citizens tend to cluster issues together by party or candidate, so a position on one issue may be correlated with a position on another Layman and Carsey

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(e.g. 2002).

I test my theory using a survey experiment embedded in the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) in which I exposed participants to statements made by a fictional Senator. These messages each contained party labels for the Senator. Additionally, all of the experimental treatments contained one of several different combinations of information cues. I varied the party ownership of the issues discussed in these treatments along with whether or not positions were present in these messages. Finally, I varied the positions the candidate took on the issues, which lined up with either the Democratic or the Republican Party.

I test this theory in three contexts: participants' placements of the Senator's ideology, his positions on the issues he mentioned in the treatments, and his positions on issues he did not mention. My results show that citizens alter their views of the Senator in response to these cues and imply that citizens may be more sophisticated that previous research suggests because the meaning of issue ownership appears to extend beyond perceptions of issue advantage. The discussion of party-owned issues appears to communicate positional information about candidates, which further suggests that issues matter and have potentially powerful effects on citizens' views of political figures above and beyond the effects produced by party labels.

2.1 Attitude Formation and Issues

Citizens draw information from several sources when forming attitudes about candidates during campaigns. Social cognition research suggests that citizens evaluate candidates by categorizing them based on a social taxonomy in a subconscious attempt to reduce the complexity of the social world because doing so is the most straightforward way of reducing political complexity (Conover and Feldman 1989; Kinder 1986; Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuck 1986; Rahn, Aldrich, Borgida, and

Sullivan 1990). Citizens hold expectations about which issues are associated with members of the parties based on stereotypes associated with them (Rahn 1993). Democratic and Republican elected officials have long exhibited consistently different policy preferences (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002; Page 1978) and reputations (Snyder and Ting 2002), a fact that likely reenforces Americans' tendency to think about politics in terms of groups (Converse 1964). Party labels and other partisan cues provide voters with information shortcuts (Downs 1957) and knowledge about the partisanship of a candidate allows people to make useful inferences (Conover 1981; Granberg, Kasmer, and Nanneman 1988; Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985; Hurwitz 1985; Jacoby 1988; Page 1978; Riggle, Ottati, Wyer, Kuklinski, and Schwartz 1992; Wright and Niemi 1983). In short, cognitive heuristics may make political attitude formation and decision-making easier for citizens (but see Lau and Redlawsk 2001).

There is some evidence that citizens are unable to recall the issues that candidates talk about during campaigns (e.g. Dalager 1996). If this is true, it would suggest that the issues candidates choose to discuss in campaigns are irrelevant. However, there is evidence that repetition in campaign advertising reenforces associations between issues and candidates (Claibourn 2008) and that citizens evaluate candidates and people more generally using an on-line process (Hamilton and Sherman 1996; Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995; McGraw and Stroh 1990; McGraw and Dolan 2007). This suggests that even if citizens forget specifics, they will still update their attitudes about candidates to reflect the information to which they have been exposed.

2.1.1 Party Ownership of Issues and Candidate Assessment

The issue ownership literature suggest that certain issues have become associated with the parties in the sense that they are perceived by the electorate to be "owned" by one of the parties (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003; Egan Forthcoming). Parties take ownership of issues by repeatedly and consistently addressing

problems stemming from the issues over time. When parties are successful, citizens on average believe the party that owns an issue is better able to handle problems related to that issue than parties that do not own the issue.[1] Issue ownership, then, can be thought of as a form of issue advantage that originates from the perceived strengths and weaknesses of political parties rather than of individual candidates.

While some proponents of issue ownership argue that candidates should rarely if ever discuss the issues owned by their opponents and should avoid discussing the same issues as their opponents (e.g. Simon 2002), more recent work suggests that "issue trespassing" — the discussion of issues owned by a different party — occurs frequently in U.S. campaigns and that candidates competing against each other often discuss the same issues (Sigelman and Buell 2004; Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006; Sides 2006; Banda 2011; Banda and Carsey 2012). Sides (2006) finds that candidates who discuss their opponents' issues do so by reframing the issue in a way to emphasize the strengths of the candidate or her party (see also Holian 2004). While there is evidence that candidates are covered in a more positive way when the news media focuses more attention on the issues those candidates own (Hayes 2008), it does not appear that the issue agendas of candidates as they relate to issue ownership have strong effects on electoral outcomes (Sides 2007).

Scholars of issue ownership have mostly focused on the issue advantage dimension of issue ownership and have not yet considered how issue ownership affects the ways citizens view candidates' ideological and issue positions. If citizens associate some issues with specific parties, then they should — in the absence of positional information — view candidates who discuss a party-owned issue as being more ideologically congruent with the party that owns the issue than they otherwise would have. In this sense, citizens should

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[1]In the U.S., the Democratic Party tends to own issues related to social welfare, social class and group relations, gender equality, civil rights, and civil liberties. Republicans tend to own issues like crime, national security, lifestyles, and taxation. See Petrocik (1996) for more examples and Egan (Forthcoming) for updated survey data that largely confirms Petrocik's initial coding scheme.

be able to learn about the ideological dispositions of candidates even in the face of otherwise ambiguous information. Similarly, when a candidate takes a position commonly associated with a party, the candidate should also be viewed as being more ideologically congruent with the party associated with that position. Citizens should also assess candidates' positions on issues they discuss in a similar fashion - by responding to information cues embedded within candidates' messages.

Citizens should also use the information that they have at their disposal to infer candidates' positions on issues that are not discussed. For example, a candidate who has taken consistently conservative (liberal) positions on a number of issues may be viewed as holding conservative (liberal) positions on other issues. This sort of inference is reasonable because political elites are ideologically constrained to a greater extent than are citizens (Converse 1964). Politicians generally hold positions that are at the very least moderately cohesive with their parties and clear messages are likely to be strong in the contemporary period given the high levels of party polarization exhibited in the U.S. Congress (e.g. Poole and Rosenthal 2007). In addition, the messages explicated by the parties during and between campaigns suggest that members tend to hold fairly cohesive sets of preferences (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Layman and Carsey 2002).

2.2 Information Cues and Candidate Assessment

The messages communicated by candidates to citizens during campaigns can contain information cues that affect citizens' views of the candidate by associating that candidate with one of the two major U.S. political parties. These cues vary on two dimensions. The first dimension is that of ownership; do the messages discuss issues that are owned by either the candidate's party or the opposing party? The second dimension is centered on positions contained within candidates' messages. A candidate's messages may contain positions that are congruent with their own party, congruent with the opponent's party, or they may mention no positions at all. Table 2.1 contains a two by three matrix summarizing

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Table 2.1: Cue Types

		Party Ownership	
		In-party	Out-party
Positions	None	In-party ownership cues	Out-party ownership cues
	Congruent	In-party ownership, congruent positions	Out-party ownership, congruent positions
	Incongruent	In-party ownership, incongruent positions	Out-party ownership, incongruent positions

this typology, which I further describe below.

2.2.1 Issue Ownership and Issue Position Cues

The messages communicated by candidates to citizens during campaigns can contain two kinds of information cues: issue position cues and issue ownership cues. When candidates identify their position on an issue, they are sending a clear signal via an *issue position cue* about their ideological disposition that citizens should be able to translate into attitudes about the candidates' ideologies and positions on issues. These cues should be difficult for citizens to misinterpret because they are contained within messages containing explicit information about candidates.

Candidates do not always want to identify their positions, but they can still send positional signals to citizens by choosing to discuss certain kinds of issues. As detailed in the previous section, some issues are so closely related to a party that they are "owned" by that party. Candidates can transmit positional signals to citizens by discussing a party owned issue without taking a position on that issue. These kinds of messages contain an *issue ownership cue*. This information is implicit because the candidate does not directly communicate her position on the issue. Instead, she allows citizens to infer her ideological and issue positions using the information implied by the issue ownership cue, which associates the candidate with the party that owns the issue the candidate discussed. Given the close relationship between issues and the party that owns them, citizens should use issue ownership cues to inform their attitudes about candidates.

When citizens hear candidates talk about issues without taking positions on those issues, issue ownership cues should lead citizens to think about the candidates in terms of

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the party that owns the issue. For example, a Democratic candidate who talks about taxes — a Republican owned issue — but does not take a position should be viewed as being more conservative and as holding positions on issues that are more congruent with the Republican Party than she would have had the candidate avoided discussing issues.[2] In other words, citizens should assess the candidate as being more similar to the Republican Party.

Citizens should react similarly when they hear candidates take positions on issues. People associate positions on many issues with parties, so when a candidate takes Democratic positions on one or more issues, people should infer that the candidate is more liberal than they might have thought had the candidate not identified a position. Citizens who know that this candidate holds Democratic positions on issues should also assess them as holding positions that are more congruent with the Democratic Party on these issues than they would have had they not been exposed to messages containing issue position cues.

I further argue that issue position cues should dominate issue ownership cues. In other words, citizens who are exposed to a message that contains both should only respond to issue position cues. This is because issue position cues contain more explicit information that should overwhelm the effect of the implicit information contained in the ownership cue. For example, if a citizen heard a Democratic candidate take a Republican position on a Democratic issue, she should respond to the position cue when forming an assessment of the candidate rather than the ownership cue because the former explicitly informs her that the candidate shares some commonalities with the Republican Party.

Because candidates do not discuss all political issues, citizens must infer the positions they hold on these issues based on the information to which they have access — the issues candidates choose to talk about and the positions they explicate. Citizens should infer that a candidate who exhibits conservative (liberal) policy preferences also holds conservative

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[2]Note that this does not imply that the Democratic candidate in this example should be viewed as being as conservative as a generic Republican candidate, merely that they should be viewed as more conservative than they would have been had they avoided discussing issues entirely.

(liberal) preferences on issues that she does not address because partisan elites tend to exhibit higher levels of attitude constraint than do non-elites (Converse 1964) and parties and the media reenforce the notion that party elites exhibit ideological consistency.

Figure 2.1 contains a graphical representation of the process I outlined above for the example of citizens' views of candidates' ideological positions. Panel (a) shows the kind of perceptions citizens might have of a generic Democrat — D — and Republican — R — in which the Democrat is viewed as being more liberal than the Republican. Panel (b) shows the change in perceptions my theoretical argument would lead me to expect given the presence of a "*congruent cue*," one which suggests the candidates are more like their own parties. This could be either a position cue or an ownership cue. For example, a Democrat might talk about Democratic owned issues without outlining their position or may explicate a position associated with the Democratic Party. In this case, perceptions of the candidates' ideological positions should shift towards the poles as the candidates become increasingly associated with their own parties. Finally, Panel (c) shows the expected effect of an "*incongruent cue*," one that associates a candidate with the opposing party. In this case, citizens' views of the candidates should shift towards the opposing poles. As shown in the figure, these kinds of cues should lead to the candidates being viewed as holding more moderate ideological positions than candidates who communicate no information at all beyond their partisanship.

2.2.2   Partisanship and Information Cues

Partisanship is one of the most stable forces in American politics (Campbell et al. 1960; Jacoby 1988; Rahn 1993). Given the centrality of this concept, it is important to consider how my theory of citizen response to the issue ownership and issue position cues may be influenced by partisanship. Some scholars argue that partisanship is a form of social identity (e.g. Huddy 2001; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002) while others view it as a psychological attachment (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Bartels 2002; Lewis-Beck, Jacoby,

(a) Generic candidates

D   R

Liberal   Conservative

(b) Congruent cues

D_1 D   R R_1

Liberal   Conservative

(c) Incongruent cues

D D_2 R_2 R

Liberal   Conservative
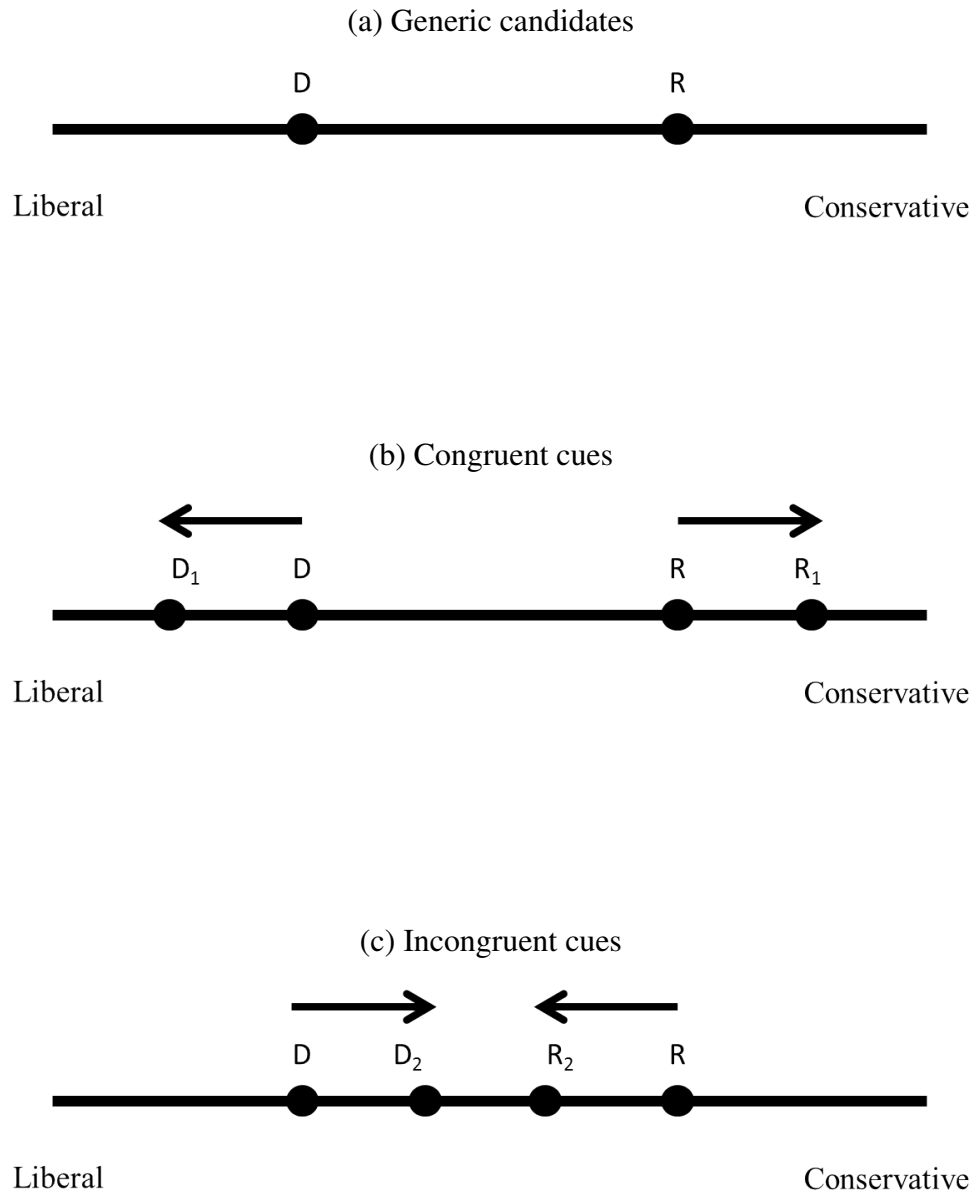
Figure 2.1: Issue Position and Issue Ownership Cues' Effects on Citizens Views of Candidates' Positions

Norporth, and Weisberg 2008), but both sets of scholars agree that partisanship powerfully shapes public opinion and mass political behavior.

Many scholars who study the formation of social identities argue that citizens tend to categorize people as members of in and out-groups. Citizens identify themselves with the former while differentiating themselves from the latter (Tajfel 1982; Brewer 2007). In politics, citizens' conceptions of in and out-groups tend to center on partisanship (e.g. Huddy 2001; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). Proponents of this formulation of social identity theory posit that people have powerful biases that favor in-groups relative to out-groups. Partisans, then, view members of their own party more positively than members of other parties. People do so in order to satisfy their innate need for a positive social identity and in order to maintain intergroup distinctiveness (see Brewer 1991).

This perspective leads to the expectation that the proclivity of citizens to respond to political information is conditioned by the way they view the source of that information. They should be more apt to accept - and thus be responsive to - information that originates from a source they view as credible than from a source they do not view as credible (Druckman 2001). In other words, citizens should be more likely to respond to information cues embedded in candidates' messages when citizens and candidates identify with the same party relative to when they do not. Citizens who view the messages of a candidate from the opposing party should discount the cue when forming an attitude and may go so far as to ignore it entirely.

The psychological perspective is less clear on the effects of partisanship on citizen response to these kinds of source cues. (Bartels 2002) argues that people update their views of political objects in a Bayesian manner. In this conception, the opinions of Democrats and Republicans may be divided, but they respond to information in similar ways. For example, if citizens were exposed to an issue frame designed to increase support for a policy, this line of thought suggests that it might do so at a similar rate among both groups of partisans. We

might still observe a gap in the level of support between the two groups after citizens were exposed to the frame, but support for the policy should have increased similarly among both partisan groups. In other words, party may condition the baseline views that citizens hold towards candidates, but it should not influence the way they respond to the information cues embedded in candidates' messages. [3] This perspective, then, predicts that citizens will respond to issue ownership and issue position cues regardless of whether or not they share their party identification with a given candidate. The previous perspective, on the other hand, predicts that citizens who share their partisanship with candidates will respond more powerfully to these cues than will citizens who do not.

2.3   Research Design

I test my theory of candidate assessment by using a survey experiment contained in the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). My sample includes 1,561 participants across two separate "team content" modules of equal size. Respondents are generally representative of the population of adult U.S. citizens as a whole, though people with higher levels of education and greater interest in politics tend to be overrepresented. These data are, however, better than those used in many experimental designs because the CCES allows me to experiment on a much larger and more representative sample of the electorate that is more diverse than the typical convenience samples made up primarily of undergraduate students or members of a single community.

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[3](Fiorina 1981) offers a third perspective on partisanship's potential for conditioning citizen response to candidates' information cues. This perspective rests on the notion that partisanship is a cumulative tally of a citizen's previous evaluations of the political parties. This argument is similar to Bartels' in that it allows for differences in public opinion between Democrats and Republicans. However, this perspective leads to the expectation that opinion among members of both parties converges over time as people update their views in response to objective political information. "Objective information" is the key phrase here; if citizens do not view information as credible, they have little reason to respond to it.

Survey experiments are useful because they provide researchers with the ability to determine which factors cause the behaviors of interest. Furthermore, when the sample utilized for a survey experiment is representative of the population of interest, the generalizability of a researcher's findings expands. Even so, as has been recently noted by some scholars, survey experiments may still face problems relating to external validity (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 2007; Kinder 2007). Barabas and Jerit (2010), for example, find that the effects observed in a survey experiment may not translate to the population as a whole because they are driven primarily by responses among members of certain subgroups. The results I outline in this research should be interpreted as the effects of issue ownership and issue position cues on the views held by those citizens who might be exposed to similar political messages in the real world, not necessarily on all citizens regardless of their proclivity to become exposed to political information.

2.3.1 Experimental Design

The CCES is completed by participants online.[4] Participants were first asked to answer a number of demographic and political questions. They were then asked to read a short statement made by a fictional Senator from "another state."[5] Finally, they were asked to assess the Senator's ideology and positions on several issues. The initial prompt read as follows:

> *We would like your reaction to some comments made at a recent re-election campaign appearance by a Senator from a different state, [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin, who said:*

The Senator's partisanship was randomly assigned with equal probability as either a Democrat or a Republican. Next, participants were randomly assigned to a treatment, each

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[4]Internet survey research is significantly cheaper than many other survey collection methods, but because the distribution of internet access is not uniform, internet samples could be biased towards younger, better educated, and wealthier people. YouGov provided internet access to people who lacked it, which helps to alleviate this problem.

[5]Participants were not told that this Senator was fictional.

Table 2.2: Treatment Assignment

		Issue Ownership	
		In-party	Out-party
No issues	223	-	-
No positions	-	232	214
Congruent positions	-	222	210
Incongruent positions	-	244	216

of which contained a short set of statements attributed to the Senator. These statements along with the Senator's randomly assigned partisanship combined to form the treatments received by participants. I varied whether or not the Senator talked about issues, the party ownership of the issues he talked about, whether or not he expressed his positions on the issues, and whether or not the positions he took were congruent with his party. Table 3.1 summarizes the random assignment of participants into each treatment group.[6] The "no issues" treatment serves as the control group in my analyses.

When the fictional Senator talked about issues, he discussed issues that were owned by either the Democratic or Republican Party. The Democratic-owned issues were affirmative action and health care while the Republican-owned issues were taxes and national defense. In all cases, when the Senator's statements contained any issue content, that content was about only Democratic or Republican owned issues. In other words, when candidates talked about issues they communicated issue position or issue ownership cues. The full text of each treatment can be found in the appendix.

2.3.2 Treatments

Participants who received the control treatment read a statement in which the Senator avoided issues entirely. Nothing in the Senator's statement should have led participants to assess him differently than they would otherwise have done. The only cue embedded in this

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[6]Approximately equal numbers of participants received each treatment. The rates of exposure per treatment are nearly identical for participants across CCES modules. Note that participants could have been exposed to two additional experimental treatments which are not presented in this research. A combined 439 participants received one of the two omitted treatments.

treatment was the Senator's partisanship. Participants' views of the Senator in response to this treatment serve as the baseline for comparison throughout my analyses.

Next I will describe the six experimental treatments that are summarized in Table 3.1. The first pair represent the issue ownership cues treatments. Participants in the "in-party ownership cues" treatment were exposed to statements in which the Senator talked about issues that were owned by his party and did not identify his positions on the issues. In the "out-party ownership cues" treatment, participants read statements in which the Senator talked about issues that were owned by his opponent's party. The statements in this treatment were also devoid of positional information.

The remaining experimental treatments contain issue position cues, each of which exposed participants to statements involving both issues and the candidate's positions. The statements made in the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment contained mentions of issues that were owned by the Senator's party and positions on those issues that would be expected given his partisanship. Participants who received the "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment were exposed to a statement in which the Senator discussed issues owned by his opponent's party. He once again took positions congruent with his party on these issues. In the "in-party ownership, incongruent positions" treatment, participants were exposed to a statement in which the Senator discussed issues owned by his party and, rather than taking positions on those issues that might be expected given his party, took positions in line with his opponent's party.[7] Subjects who received the "out-party ownership, incongruent positions" treatment read statements in which the Senator talked about issues owned by his opponent's party and took positions on those issues that were associated with his opponent's party.

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[7]In other words, the text of this statement for a Democratic Senator is identical to that of a Republican Senator in the "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment. The only difference between the two is the Senator's partisanship.

2.3.3 Measurement and Modeling

After being exposed to a statement attributed to the Senator, participants were asked a series of questions about their views of him. They were first asked to place him on an ideological scale ranging from very liberal to very conservative. Participants were then asked to place the candidate on issues scales for the four issues the Senator could have talked about — affirmative action, health care, taxation, and national defense — and two issues that he never mentioned in any treatment — abortion and government provision of services.[8]

Participants in both CCES modules received the same treatments and were asked to answer the questions about the same issues, but their assessments of the Senator were measured in different ways. In one module, respondents placed the Senator on the standard seven point ideological scale and placed him on eleven point scales for each of the six issues. In the second module, participants placed the candidates ideologically and on issues using a scale that ranged from 0 to 100. Because my findings are robust to either measurement strategy, I combine the responses from both modules by transforming the 0 to 100 point measures to seven point ideological and eleven point issue position measures for ease of presentation.

In order to better test the expectations generated by my theory in a single model, I rescaled participants' assessments of the Senator so that low values indicated that he was assessed as being less congruent with his party while high values indicated that he was perceived of as being more congruent with his party both ideologically and on issues.[9] For example, a Democratic Senator who was assessed as being ideologically conservative would have a low score while a Republican who was also viewed as being conservative

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[8]The text of each question may be found in the appendix.

[9]My substantive findings are not affected by this decision because the treatment effects operate in similar ways for both the Democratic and the Republican versions of the Senator. I performed a separate set of analyses on the Democratic and Republican versions of the Senator, the results of which were substantively identical to those I present in this research.
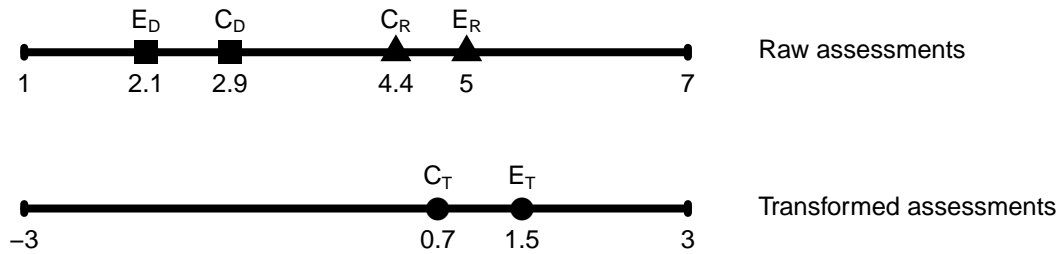
Figure 2.2: Ideological Continuum

would have a high score.[10] This rescaling leads to a measure for which low values indicate assessments that are incongruent with the Senator's party while higher values represent greater perceived congruence ideologically and on issues with the candidate's party.

Figure 2.2 contains a concrete example of this rescaling. I plot the average ideological assessments of the Senator made by participants who received the control treatment (C_D and C_R) and the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment (E_D and E_R) on the top line. The D subscript refers to a Senator that was identified as a Democrat while the R subscript is for participants who observed a Republican Senator. Note that this treatment appears to shift assessments on average towards the ideological pole that is associated with the candidate's party; the Democratic version of the Senator was assessed as being more liberal while the Republican version was assessed as being more conservative. This treatment contains an issue position cue that should have lead participants to associate the Senator with the Senator's party to a greater degree than did the participants who received the control treatment. These data suggest that the treatment was effective.

I plot the average ideological assessments made by participants receiving the control

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[10]For the Republican Senator: ideology - 4. For the Democratic Senator: -1 ∗ (ideology - 4). For the eleven point issue scales: position - 5 for the Republican version of the Senator and -1 ∗ (position - 5) for the Democratic version.

treatment (C_T) and the same experimental treatment (E_T) after transformation on the second line in Figure 2.2. Note that the same pattern observed in the raw scores is shown here again; participants who received the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment on average assessed the Senator as holding an ideological position more congruent with his party than did those who received the control treatment. I use transformed measures of ideological and issue congruence with the candidate's party in my analyses. The range of participants' ideological assessments of the Senator runs from -3 to 3 while the transformed issue assessments go from -5 to 5. These measures of perceived congruence serve as the dependent variables in my analyses.

I use ordinary least squares regression to model participants' perceptions of the Senator's congruence with his party ideologically and on issues that the Senator did and did not discuss.[11] The independent variables in my models are a series of dummy variables indicating whether or not a participant received each of the eight experimental treatments. I do not include a dummy variable indicating whether or not participants received the control treatment because it functions as the excluded category with which I will compare the effects of the experimental treatments.[12] Equation 2.1 represents the form of the models I report. I estimate separate models for each issue and the candidate's perceived ideological

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[11]The ideological and issue congruence measures are seven and eleven point ordinal scales respectively. Ordered models may be more appropriate given the form of these data, but I chose to use linear models for three reasons. First, linear models with dummy variables are substantively equivalent to a series of difference of means tests. Second, results generated by a linear model are easier to present in a straightforward manner than are those from an ordered model. Third, I replicated my analyses using ordered logistic regression and found the same substantive results as the linear models I report below.

[12]I also ran two different sets of models, the results of which may be found in the appendix. In the first, I included a dummy variable indicating whether or not a participant shared their partisanship with the Senator and interacted this indicator with each of the experimental treatment dummies. These models tested the extent to which partisanship conditioned the effects of the treatments. The results of these models suggested that the partisan perceptual filters of participants did not affect their responses to the treatments.

In the second set of models, I included a measure of education and interacted it with the treatments in order to ascertain the degree to which my treatment effects were conditioned by participants' levels of educational attainment. These models suggested that education sometimes had a conditioning effect, but not consistently across treatments in the various models. However, when education did condition response to the treatments, it magnified participants' responsiveness to the issue ownership and issue position cues, i.e. the better educated exhibited more powerful responses to the treatments.

congruence.

$$Ideological\ or\ issue\ congruence\ = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treatment_1 + \ldots \beta_6 Treatment_6 + \epsilon \quad (2.1)$$

The intercept of these models represents the average assessed congruence of the Senator made by participants who received the control treatment. The coefficients produced for each dummy indicate the average additive effect of the treatments on participants' perceptions of the Senator's congruence with his party.

2.3.4 Expectations

I expect to observe that the cues contained within the statements in each experimental treatment lead participants to alter their views of the Senator relative to the views expressed by those who received the control treatment. When a message contains an issue position cue, I expect participants to respond to it by viewing the candidate as more like the party associated with the positions the candidate takes. When a message contains only an issue ownership cue, I expect to observe that citizens view the candidate are being more like the party that owns the issue that the candidate discusses.

Table 2.3 summarizes the expected signs of the treatment dummies' coefficients. Positive coefficients indicate that the average effect of a treatment should shift assessments of the Senator in the direction that is congruent with the Senator's party. This means that a Democratic Senator would be assessed as being more liberal ideologically and on issues while a Republican Senator would be viewed as being more conservative. Negative coefficients, on the other hand, indicate that the average effect of a treatment shifts assessments of the Senator away from that which would normally be expected of his party. In other words, a Republican Senator would be viewed as being more liberal and a Democratic Senator would be assessed as being more conservative.

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Table 2.3: Expected Signs of the Treatment Dummies' Estimated Coefficients Relative to the Control Group

	Issue Ownership	
	In-party	Out-party
No positions	+	–
Congruent positions	+	+
Incongruent positions	–	–

Note: These expectations hold for both assessments of the Senator's positions on issues as well as of his ideology. ns = not significantly different than zero.

More specifically, I expect participants who receive the "in-party ownership cues" treatment to assess the Senator as being more congruent with his own party ideologically and on issues than participants who receive the control treatment. If the Senator is a Democrat, this means that assessments should shift to the left while they should shift to the right relative to the control group if the Senator is a Republican. I expect that participants who receive the "out-party ownership cues" treatment to shift their assessments of the Senator in the opposite direction; these participants should assess the Senator as being less congruent with his party both ideologically and on issues than did those who received the control treatment.

I expect that participants who receive a treatment in which candidates take positions on issues will view the candidates as being more congruent with the party associated with those positions. When the Senator takes positions that would normally be expected of Democrats (Republicans), participants should assess him as being more liberal (conservative) ideologically and on issues. I therefore expect that participants who receive both the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" and "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatments to view the Senator as being more congruent with his party than participants in the control group. I furthermore expect subjects who receive either the "in-party ownership, incongruent positions" or the "in-party ownership, incongruent positions" treatments

Table 2.4: Perceived Ideological Congruence of the Senator with the Senator's Party

	Estimated coefficient	Standard error
Issue ownership cues		
In-party ownership cues	0.44*	(0.15)
Out-party ownership cues	-0.73*	(0.15)
Issue position cues		
In-party ownership, congruent positions	0.76*	(0.15)
Out-party ownership, congruent positions	0.56*	(0.15)
In-party ownership, incongruent positions	-1.41*	(0.14)
Out-party ownership, incongruent positions	-1.62*	(0.15)
Intercept	0.74*	(0.10)
N	1,548	
BIC	5,787.87	

Note: cell entries are estimated coefficients and standard errors generated using ordinary least squares regression.
* = $p \leq .05$ (one tailed)

to view the Senator as being less congruent with his party on issues and ideologically.

2.4 Results

2.4.1 Ideological Congruence

I report the results of the model estimating participants' assessments of the Senator's ideological congruence with his party in Table 2.4. These results are consistent with all of my theoretical expectations. Participants' assessments of the Senator's ideological congruence appear to be powerfully informed — above and beyond party labels — by both issue ownership and issue position cues. This suggests that the perceptions of citizens more generally should also be affected in the same way, at least among those who are exposed to messages containing these kinds of cues.

The mean and standard deviation of participants' assessments of the Senator's ideology were 0.46 and 1.76 respectively on a scale ranging from -3 to 3. The intercept of the model represents the average ideological assessment of the candidate reported by participants who

received the control treatment. At 0.74, this coefficient suggests that people responded to the party cues embedded in this treatment by assessing the Senator as holding an ideological position roughly three quarters of a point on the seven point ideological scale in the direction suggested by the candidate's party.

The coefficient for the "in-party ownership cues" indicator is positive and differs significantly from zero, indicating that when a Democratic (Republican) Senator talked about Democratic (Republican) owned issues, he was viewed as being more liberal (conservative). Similarly, the negative coefficient of the "out-party ownership cues" dummy also differs significantly from zero and suggests that on average, the people who received this treatment assessed a Democratic (Republican) Senator as being more conservative (liberal) when he talked about Republican (Democratic) owned issues but did not take any positions. In addition, the size of this coefficient (-0.73) is nearly identical to that of the intercept (0.74), which indicates that that the "out-party ownership cues" treatment negated most of the influence of the party cues on participants' perceptions of the Senator's ideological congruence with his party. In other words, this treatment on average lead participants to place the Senator at the center of the ideological scale and thus view him as an ideological moderate.[13]

These results also suggest that people used the information about the positions the Senator outlined in his statements when they assessed his ideology. Leaving aside the two treatments containing competing cues for now, when the Senator took positions on issues that were in line with his party, he was on average assessed as being more congruent ideologically with his party regardless of which party's issues he talked about. The estimated coefficients for both the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" and the "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment indicators are both positive and differ significantly

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[13]$0.74 + (-0.73) = 0.01$.

from zero. The coefficient of the former treatment on average shifts participants' assessments of the Senator's ideological congruence with his party even further towards congruence than do the party cues on their own (an additional 0.76 units more congruent than the control group's average assessments of 0.74 on the seven point scale).

Participants who received treatments in which the Senator took positions in line with his opponent's party on average viewed him as being less ideologically congruent with his own party. The estimated coefficients for both the "in-party ownership, incongruent positions" and the "out-party ownership, incongruent positions" dummies are negative and differ significantly from zero. Both coefficients are quite large and overwhelm the effects of party cues. While participants who received the control treatment on average assessed the Senator as being more congruent with his party ideologically — 0.74 units on the -3 to 3 scale — participants who received one of these treatments on average viewed the Senator as being virtually the ideological mirror image of the party cues only Senator — -0.67 and -0.89 units on the same scale.[14]

2.4.2 Issue Position Congruence

Table 2.5 contains the results of the models estimating participants' assessments of the Senator's congruence with his party on the four issues that could have been discussed in the experimental treatments: health care, affirmative action, taxes, and national defense. Each of the dependent variables here range from least (-5) to most (5) congruent with the Senator's party on a given issue. The intercepts once again represent the average placement of the Senator by those who received the control treatment. Each intercept indicates that the party labels in the control treatment lead participants to view the Senator as holding positions on each of the issues the Senator could have discussed that was about one unit away from the center of the position scale and towards the implied position of the party of the Senator.

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[14]I generated these values simply by summing the intercept and the coefficient of interest together.

Table 2.5: Perceived Congruence on Mentioned Issues of the Senator with the Senator's Party

	Health care	Affirmative action	Taxes	National defense
Issue ownership cues				
In-party ownership cues	0.26	0.05	-0.09	0.29
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.24)
Out-party ownership cues	-0.89*	-0.86*	-0.54*	-0.62*
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.24)
Issue position cues				
In-party ownership,	0.87*	0.70*	0.21	0.48*
congruent positions	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.28)	(0.24)
Out-party ownership,	0.53*	0.71*	0.54*	0.24
congruent positions	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.24)
In-party ownership,	-1.78*	-1.79*	-1.81*	-1.46*
incongruent positions	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.23)
Out-party ownership,	-1.85*	-1.80*	-1.67*	-1.91*
incongruent positions	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.24)
Intercept	1.19*	1.15*	1.30*	1.06*
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.20)	(0.17)
N	1,516	1,507	1,507	1,496
BIC	7,697.94	7,620.10	7,580.01	6,991.80

Note: cell entries are estimated coefficients generated using ordinary least squares regression. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

* = $p \leq .05$ (one tailed)

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The first row of results shows the effects of the "in-party ownership cues" treatment on each of the four issues that the Senator may have discussed. Three of the four coefficients are positive as expected, but none differ significantly from zero, thus indicating that this treatment did not on average lead participants who were exposed to it to view the Senator's position differently than did those who were exposed to the control treatment. As shown by the results in the second row, the "out-party ownership cues" treatment on average lead participants to view the Senator as holding positions on these issues that were less congruent with his party. The sizes of these effects across models ranged from 42% to 75% of the size of the effects produced by the control treatment containing only a party label.[15]

The third and fourth rows of results show that the treatments in which the Senator took positions that were consistent with his party — the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" and the "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatments — produced results that were consistent with my expectations. All eight coefficients are positive and six differed significantly from zero, indicating that on average taking positions that were consistent with the Senator's party lead participants to assess him as being more congruent with his party on these four issues. The sizes of the significant effects ranged from 42% to 72% of the effect sizes produced by the control treatments.

The results presented in the fifth and sixth rows of Table 2.5 indicate that the presence of issue position cues suggesting that the Senator held different positions than his party on the issues he discussed on average lead participants to view him as being less congruent with his party on each of the four issues. All of the coefficients produced by these treatments are negative and differ significantly from zero. The effects that these treatments produce are also all larger than those generated by the control treatment's party cue.

Table 2.6 contains the results of two models estimating participants' views of the Senator's congruence with his party on two issues that were not mentioned in any treatment:

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[15] I am assuming that the effect of the party labels is equivalent to the difference between the intercept and the midpoint (0) of the issue position scale.

Table 2.6: Perceived Congruence on Unmentioned Issues of the Senator with the Senator's Party

	Abortion	Government provision of services
Issue ownership cues		
In-party ownership cues	0.09	0.17
	(0.28)	(0.26)
Out-party ownership cues	-0.93*	-0.60*
	(0.29)	(0.27)
Issue position cues		
In-party ownership,	0.23	0.70*
congruent positions	(0.28)	(0.26)
Out-party ownership,	-0.10	0.51*
congruent positions	(0.29)	(0.27)
In-party ownership,	-1.63*	-1.83*
incongruent positions	(0.28)	(0.26)
Out-party ownership,	-1.45*	-1.76*
incongruent positions	(0.29)	(0.27)
Intercept	1.43*	1.24*
	(0.20)	(0.19)
N	1,477	1,496
BIC	7,386.48	7,285.58

Note: cell entries are estimated coefficients generated using ordinary least squares regression. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
* = $p \leq .05$ (one tailed)

abortion and government provision of services. These results are also largely consistent with the expectations derived from my theory; only one coefficient — that generated for the "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment — exhibits an unexpected sign and it does not differ significantly (one tailed $p \leq .05$) from zero. The dependent variables here again range from least congruent (-5) to most congruent (5) with the Senator's party and the intercepts show that on average, the presence of the party labels in the control treatment lead respondents to view the Senator as being 1.24 to 1.43 units more congruent with his party in relation to the midpoint (0) of the measures.

As indicated by the first row of coefficients, the "in-party ownership cues" treatment on

average leads participants to view the Senator as being more congruent with his party on average than does the control treatment, but the effects do not differ significantly from zero for either issue. The estimated coefficients for the "out-party ownership cues" treatment in the second row of results are negative and differ from zero at a traditional level (p ≤ .05), indicating that this treatment leads people to view the Senator on average as holding positions on these two unmentioned issues that are less congruent with his party. The effect sizes for this treatment on participants' views of the Senator's congruence with his party on abortion and government provision of services are 65% and 48% of the size of the effects produced by the party cues embedded in the control treatment.[16]

The third and fourth rows of results show that the "in-party ownership, congruent positions" and "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatments — those in which the Senator talks about issues and takes positions that are associated with his party — do not alter participants views of the degree to which he is congruent with his party on abortion. They do, however, alter participants' assessments of the Senator on government provision of services. Relative to members of the control group, participants who received one these treatments viewed the Senator as holding a position on this issue that was less congruent with his party. The effect sizes of these treatments were 56% and 41% respectively the size of the effect produced by the control treatment's party cues.

The results in the fifth and sixth rows of Table 2.6 show that participants responded to the "in-party ownership, incongruent positions" and "out-party ownership, incongruent positions" treatments by assessing the Senator as being less congruent with his party on the two unmentioned issues. All four estimated coefficients are negative and differ significantly from zero. In addition, a comparison of these coefficients to the intercepts shows that the size of each treatment's effect is larger than that of the party cues embedded in the control

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[16] $|-0.93/1.43| = .65$ and $|-0.6/1.24| = .48$. I am once more assuming that the effects of the party labels in the control treatment are equivalent to the difference between the intercepts and the midpoint (0) of the issue position scales.

treatment.

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that citizens respond to the information cues embedded in candidates' messages by altering their views of candidates. Citizen responsiveness to issue ownership and issue position cues appear to be fairly consistent across views of a candidate's ideology, positions on the issues a candidate talks about, and even positions on issues that a candidate does discuss even in the presence of powerful party cues.

2.4.3 Partisan Lenses and Information Cues

As discussed previously, partisanship may moderate the degree to which in and out-party partisans respond to issue ownership and issue positions cues. The expectation generated by this argument is that out-party partisans may discount or ignore cues communicated to them by candidates because of a lack of shared partisanship between themselves and the candidate. I test this notion by running the same sets of models as in the previous section with a few modification. First, I exclude nonpartisans from these analysis so that I only analyze the views of partisans.[17] Second, I include a dummy variable in each model indicating whether or not a participant identifies with the party of the fictional Senator. Third, I interact this dummy variable with each of the dummies indicating whether or not participants received a given experimental treatment.

This specification allows me to test the effect of each treatment on participants views of the candidate for both in and out-party partisans. It also allows me to test the equivalency of these treatment effects between partisan groups. To better communicate these results, I report the marginal effect of each experimental treatment on in and out-party partisans

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[17]Of the 1,312 respondents who answered the party identification question, 43% were Democrats, 45% were Republicans, and the remaining 12% identified as independents. Independents and those who failed to answer the partisanship questions were excluded from these analyses. The same basic pattern observed in the results presented in the previous section are holds for this subsample of the data.

separately rather than presenting a convoluted table containing a large number of interaction terms.[18] In each of the following tables, an asterisk next to a marginal effect should be interpreted as meaning that effect differs significantly from zero (one tailed p ≤ .05). In other words, that treatment systematically influences the opinions of in or out-party participants who received that treatment. A dagger indicates that a given treatment's effect differs significantly between in and out-party partisans. Note that the expected signs for each marginal effect are the same as listed in table 2.3 above for the coefficients in the direct effects models.

Table 2.7 contains the marginal effects of each experimental treatment on in and out-party partisans' views of the Senator's ideology. These marginal effects and their associated standard errors indicate both in and out-party participants' views of the Senator's ideology were affected by issue ownership and position cues. In-party partisans responded in the expected way to all of the treatments. Out-party partisans' responded to four of the six in a significant manner. The effects of the "in-party ownership cues" and "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatments failed to attain a standard level of statistical significance. Note however that the effects of these two treatments do not differ significantly between the two partisan groups. In fact, the only treatment in which the effects differ between in and out-party partisans is for the "in-party ownership, incongruent positions" treatment. Interestingly enough, out-party participants exhibited a stronger response to this treatment as indicated by the two marginal effects than did in-party participants, a finding which is counter intuitive.

I present the results of a similar set of analyses for each of the four issues the Senator could have discussed in the experimental treatments in Table 2.8. These results are quite similar to the direct effects of the treatments on the same issues discussed previously. The

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[18]I report the raw table of results in Table 1 of the appendix. See Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) on the proper estimation of marginal effects and their associated standard errors in models including interaction terms.

Table 2.7: Partisanship and Ideological Perceptions

	Out-party	In-party
Issue ownership cues		
In-party ownership cues	0.28	0.43*
	(0.24)	(0.25)
Out-party ownership cues	-0.77*	-0.92*
	(0.24)	(0.26)
Issue position cues		
In-party ownership,	0.61*	0.94*
congruent positions	(0.25)	(0.25)
Out-party ownership,	0.24	0.65*
congruent positions	(0.25)	(0.25)
In-party ownership,	-1.86*†	-1.24*
incongruent positions	(0.24)	(0.24)
Out-party ownership,	-2.04*	-1.66*
incongruent positions	(0.24)	(0.26)
N	1,149	
BIC	4,314.30	

Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

* = significant (p $\leq$ .05 one tailed) treatment effect relative to control

†= significant (p $\leq$ .05 one tailed) difference in effect sizes for out and in-party partisans

Table 2.8: Partisanship and Perceptions of Issue Positions: Mentioned Issues

	Health care		Affirmative action		Taxes		National defense	
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Issue ownership cues								
In-party ownership cues	0.57	0.21	0.06	-0.19	-0.02	-0.14	0.41	0.14
	(0.48)	(0.51)	(0.47)	(0.51)	(0.46)	(0.49)	(0.39)	(0.41)
Out-party ownership cues	-0.62	-1.25*	-0.97*	-0.82*	-0.58	-0.93*	-0.67*	-0.87*
	(0.49)	(0.52)	(0.48)	(0.51)	(0.47)	(0.50)	(0.39)	(0.42)
Issue position cues								
In-party ownership,	0.68*	0.99*	0.61	0.65*	-0.01	0.34	0.21	0.39
congruent positions	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.40)	(0.40)
Out-party ownership,	0.20	0.65*	0.36	1.17*	0.36	0.41	0.13	0.05
congruent positions	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.40)	(0.40)
In-party ownership,	-2.27*	-1.65*	-2.32*	-1.38*	-2.25*	-2.07*	-1.80*	-1.66*
incongruent positions	(0.47)	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.49)	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.38)	(0.40)
Out-party ownership,	-1.68*	-1.77*	-2.14*	-1.48*	-2.08*†	-0.93*	-1.99*	-1.83*
incongruent positions	(0.49)	(0.52)	(0.48)	(0.51)	(0.46)	(0.50)	(0.39)	(0.42)
N	1,120		1,120		1,117		1,112	
BIC	5,767.32		5,734.60		5,650.57		5,236.54	

Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
* = significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) treatment effect relative to control
† = significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) difference in effect sizes for out and in-party partisans

first row of marginal effects suggests that the "in-party ownership cues" treatment fails to inform participants' views of the Senator on these issues. Five of the eight marginal effects in the second row of results, those estimated for the "out-party ownership cues" treatment, differ significantly from zero and exhibit the expected negative sign. Four of the five significant effects are among in-party participants.

Twenty-one of the thirty two marginal effects of the issue position cue treatments differ significantly from zero, another finding that is by and large consistent with those produced when I model the unmoderated effects of the treatments on participants' views of the candidates positions on these issues. Furthermore, all sixteen of marginal effects for issue position cue treatments that contain incongruent positions differ significantly; both in and out-party participants powerfully respond by altering their perceptions of the candidates'

positions on these issues. Last, the only treatment effect that differs significantly between in and out-party partisans is that of the "Out-party ownership, incongruent positions" treatment in the model estimating participants' views of the Senator's position on taxation. In this case, out-party participants once again exhibited a significantly stronger response to the treatment than did in-party partisans.

The marginal effects of each experimental treatment on participants' assessments of the Senator's positions on the two issues that were never discussed are shown in Table 2.9. These results are also similar to the direct effects of the treatments previously explicated. The "in-party ownership cues" treatment does not appear to affect in and out-party participants' views. The "out-party ownership cues" treatment, on the other hand, moves opinion in a significant manner three out of four times in the expected direction.

As was the case in the direct effects model, only the two issue position cues treatments which contained incongruent positions affected participants' — both in and out-party — views of the Senator's positions on abortion. All of the issue position cue treatments exhibited significant effects in the expected direction on participants' views of the Senator's position on the provision of government services with one exception: the "out-party ownership, congruent positions" treatment failed to produce a statistically significant effect among out-party participants. Finally, note that none of the marginal effects of the treatments differed significantly between in and out-party partisans for either of these issues.

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that shared party identification between the Senator and participants failed to condition the effects of the treatments on participants' views of the Senator's ideology and issue positions. Only two out of 42 tests of the equivalency of the marginal effects produced by each treatment on in and out-party partisans' assessments of the Senator differed significantly from one another. In both cases, these differences were contrary to my expectations. Rather than producing stronger responses among in-party partisans, these two treatments stimulated a stronger response among out-party partisans. In

Table 2.9: Partisanship and Perceptions of Issue Positions: Unmentioned Issues

	Abortion		Government services	
	Out	In	Out	In
Issue ownership cues				
In-party ownership cues	0.22	-0.06	0.10	0.02
	(0.46)	(0.52)	(0.43)	(0.46)
Out-party ownership cues	-0.81*	-1.38*	-0.36	-1.01*
	(0.46)	(0.50)	(0.44)	(0.47)
Issue position cues				
In-party ownership,	0.61	-0.49	0.69*	0.88*
congruent positions	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.45)	(0.45)
Out-party ownership,	-0.23	-0.36	0.22	0.65*
congruent positions	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.45)	(0.45)
In-party ownership,	-2.08*	-1.68*	-2.29*	-1.50*
incongruent positions	(0.45)	(0.48)	(0.43)	(0.45)
Out-party ownership,	-1.20*	-1.52*	-1.88*	-1.52*
incongruent positions	(0.46)	(0.50)	(0.44)	(0.47)
N	1,099		1,111	
BIC	5,534.36		5,486.84	

 Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

 * = significant ($p \leq .05$ one tailed) treatment effect relative to control
 †= significant ($p \leq .05$ one tailed) difference in effect sizes for out and in-party partisans

sum, shared party identification does not appear to have systematically influenced the way that participants responded to my treatments.[19]

2.5 Conclusion

This research adds to our understanding of the process by which citizens form attitudes about candidates during campaigns. Citizens use issue ownership and issue position cues to form reasonable inferences about where candidates stand on the issues they discuss. Citizens also use these cues to infer where candidates are positioned on issues that candidates do not talk about. Finally, citizens use these kinds of cues to make more general assessments about the ideological dispositions of candidates.

The findings presented in this research lead to three implications. First, this research demonstrates that citizens may be more politically aware than the classic findings on public opinion suggest. Citizens appear to be able to sort through the information contained within political messages and process relatively small and subtle bits of information — issue ownership and issue position cues — in predictable ways. Citizens may not remember precisely why they view candidates in a given way because they discard information once they have updated their attitudes, but the impressions formed or altered by the discarded information remain.

The second implication is related to candidates and the strategies they employ during campaigns. Some candidates may find it advantageous to alter citizens' views of their ideological and issue positions in order to maximize their chance of electoral victory. For example, a Democratic candidate running for office in a conservative district may improve her chance of winning if she discusses Republican-owned issues and/or takes Republican positions on issues, thus associating herself with the Republican Party and shifting citizens' views of her away from the Democratic Party. Talking about Republican-owned issues

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[19]It is possible that this is merely an artifact of my design. This experiment asks participants to assess a fictional politician. Outside the laboratory, this process is dynamic rather than static and may be complicated by the presence of preexisting attitudes about various real world political objects beyond the parties themselves.

without outlining her positions may be an especially advantageous strategy because doing so can alter citizens' perceptions of her without tying her hands in the future on policy outcomes or position taking should she win.

The third implication relates to the importance of issues in electoral politics more generally. These results suggest that issue ownership extends beyond simple issue advantage; people associate some issues with parties and, in turn, those same issues with positions and ideologies. In addition, citizens recognize these relationships and take them into account when forming views of candidates. If citizens are able to recognize this connection, they should also be able to infer from their views of candidates' ideologies and issue positions the kinds of policy outcomes they might observe should these same candidates win elected office.

This research also leads to two points associated with how the presence of new issues may affect the way citizens view candidates. First, issue ownership cues can only exist if a party owns an issue, but many issues are not owned. Parties only come to own issues after their performance over time reinforces the notion that they are better able to offer solutions to problems related to those issues. This suggests that discussions of new issues cannot contain ownership cues because no party could own them yet.[20] Second, how do positions on new issues become associated with parties? While it is possible that parties must consistently take cohesive positions over time in order for citizens to associate positions on issues with parties, it is also possible that citizens will infer that positions taken by Democratic candidates are liberal while those taken by Republicans are conservative. In other words, citizens may project the ideologies of the parties onto the positions their candidates take on new issues. These important questions present potentially fruitful opportunities for future research on this topic.

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[20]A possible exception to this point is that candidates may try to frame new issues in terms of one or more existing issue dimensions. Candidates may, for example, try to connect a new issue to preexisting salient issues like national security or minority rights in order to create a frame that citizens may find more familiar.

3   NEGATIVITY AND CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

Campaigns are important components of democratic societies because they generate information with which citizens can form attitudes and make decisions about candidates. This information may be limited in scope because citizens tend to be both politically inattentive and disinterested (Campbell et al. 1960). Despite these limitations, citizens still have an accuracy motivation when making political decisions and thus tend to rely on cognitive shortcuts. Candidates are aware of citizens' limitations and thus create messages that communicate cues that are both simple and meaningful to voters.

Candidates have many strategies they may consider using over the course of their campaigns, one of the most important of which revolves around the tone of the messages they adopt in their advertisements. Positive messages explicitly focus on the candidate herself: her issue priorities, positions, personal characteristics, and record. Negative messages — or attacks — explicitly focus on the opposing candidate: their shortcomings, unpopular positions, poor record, inexperience, and character failings. Some recent research suggests that citizens in the U.S. tend to view Democrats and Republicans as being "opposites" of one another (Heit and Nicholson 2010), so these negative messages also imply that the sponsor holds traits that are opposed to those attributed to the target. In this sense, negative messages allow candidates to distinguish themselves from their opponents in a short and easy to digest package.

I show in this research that negative messages contain *two-way information cues* — cues that attribute a position to the target and imply that the sponsor holds an opposing position. Two-way information cues should affect citizens' views of the positions candidates hold on the issue discussed in an attack. Because parties and candidates tend to

present cohesive messages during and between campaigns (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Layman and Carsey 2002), the effects of these cues should also extend both to issues that are not mentioned and to assessments of candidates' general ideological orientations. In other words, if a candidate is attacked for holding a position on abortion that is liberal, she should be viewed as being more liberal on abortion, other issues, and ideologically. Her opponent, on the other hand, should be perceived as being more conservative on each of these dimensions. Citizens' views about both candidates, then, are shaped in response to the information communicated by the cues.

The source of two-way information cues should also matter. Citizens who are exposed to these cues should be more apt to accept and thus respond to negative messages sponsored by candidates with whom they share their partisan identities than with those with whom they do not. Source cues in the form of shared partisanship between a citizen and a candidate may inform citizens' proclivities to respond to two-way information cues.

I test the effects of two-way information cues on citizens' views of candidates using data drawn from a survey experiment. I show that participants on average alter their ideological assessments of both the target and sponsor of a message in response to two-way information cues. I further show that respondents' views of the candidates' positions on issues — both that are and, to a much lesser extent, are not discussed — are affected by these cues in similar ways. Last, I find little evidence that source cues in the form of shared partisanship between citizens and candidates conditions citizens' degree of responsiveness to two-way information cues. These results provide further evidence for the notion that citizens may be able to respond to seemingly small bits of information to form views about politicians despite expressing little interest in or knowledge about politics (see also Banda 2010).

3.1 Campaigns and Attitude Formation

An engaged, informed, and attentive electorate is a key component in most understandings of ideal representative democracies. While citizens are expected to hold these characteristics, it has long been apparent that they are unwilling or unable to do so (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Campbell et al. 1960). More recent work further suggests that citizens may not understand contemporary political debates (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Because campaigns are salient and dynamic events, they may provide citizens with the opportunity to learn about candidates and politics more generally. While scholars disagree about how powerful the effects of campaigns on citizens may be, there is a general consensus that they matter in numerous ways (Holbrook 1996; Carsey 2000; Wlezien and Erikson 2002; Stimson 2004; Hillygus and Shields 2008; Kaufmann, Petrocik, and Shaw 2008; Vavreck 2009).

Extant research suggests that citizens are able to process a number of different types of information to form attitudes about politicians. Social cognition research suggests that citizens often evaluate candidates by using a social taxonomy to categorize them, i.e. shortcuts allowing for reductions in the inherent complexity of the political world (Kinder 1986; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuck 1986; Conover and Feldman 1989; Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989; Rahn et al. 1990). Party labels and other partisan cues provide voters with informational shortcuts (Downs 1957), and knowledge about the partisanship of candidates allows people to make cognitively useful inferences about them (Page 1978; Conover 1981; Wright and Niemi 1983; Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985; Hurwitz 1985; Granberg, Kasmer, and Nanneman 1988; Jacoby 1988; Riggle et al. 1992). Citizens may also use partisan stereotypes to form evaluations of candidates (Rahn 1993), a notion that fits with the finding that citizens associate certain issues with parties (Petrocik 1996; Egan Forthcoming). Citizens in the U.S. tend to think about politics in terms of groups (Converse 1964), a fact

that is likely reinforced by the tendency of American political parties to emphasize significantly different agendas while in office (Page 1978; Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002).

The extant literature has provided fewer answers to questions centering on the role that negativity plays in the formation of citizens' attitudes about candidates. Little research examines the way in which information cues are processed by citizens based on the tone of the message. In other words, to what extent and in what ways do negative messages convey information to citizens about the messages' targets and sponsors?

3.1.1 Negative Campaigning

Much of the literature on campaigns has focused on how they influence individual-level behavior. Research within this subset of the literature has in large part focused on the ways in which candidate contact (Wielhouwer and Lockerbie 1994), candidate spending (Green and Krasno 1988; Jacobson 1990), and negative campaigning (Lau and Pomper 2004) affect turnout. This literature has produced mixed results. Early work suggests that negativity depresses turnout because it leads people to think less of the candidates and perhaps the electoral process more generally (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, and Valentino 1994; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). More recent research suggests that negativity either does not affect turnout (Clinton and Lapinski 2004) or that it encourages citizens to vote (Finkel and Geer 1998; Goldstein and Freedman 2002; Kahn and Kenney 2004; Geer 2006; Geer and Lau 2006; Lau and Pomper 2004; Jackson and Carsey 2007, but see Krupnikov 2011).[1]

There are several possible explanations for this observed increase in participation. First,

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[1]Kahn and Kenney (1999) argue that increasingly negative campaigns should stimulate turnout, but only until the election environment becomes too saturated with negative information. If this happens, they posit that turnout will decline.

negative campaigns draw clear distinctions between the candidates (Carsey 2000) and reduce uncertainty about them (Alvarez 1997). Citizens tend to pay more attention to negative information than they do positive information (Kernell 1977; Lau 1982, 1985), negative ads tend to be more memorable (Brians and Wattenberg 1996), and attacks may generate stronger emotional responses — specifically of feelings of anxiety, concern, and fear — among citizens (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Finkel and Geer 1998).

Research on negativity is beginning to move beyond questions of turnout and into other forms of behavior like vote choice and to the study of political attitudes more generally (see for example Franz and Ridout 2007; Ridout and Franz 2011). Most work on attitudes examines the effects of negativity on candidate evaluation. Some studies show that negative messages drive down evaluations of the targets (Merritt 1984; Kaid and Boydston 1987; Basil, Schooler, and Reeves 1991; Kaid 1997; Pinkleton 1998) and sponsors (Merritt 1984; Hill 1989; Martinez and Delegal 1990; Basil, Schooler, and Reeves 1991; Kaid, Chanslor, and Hovind 1992; Lemert, Elliot, Bernstein, Rosenberg, and Nestvold 1991; Hitchon and Chang 1995; Haddock and Zanna 1997; Hitchon, Chang, and Harris 1997; Pinkleton 1998) of these message while others show that targets (Hill 1989; Martinez and Delegal 1990; Lemert et al. 1991; Haddock and Zanna 1997) and sponsors (Kaid 1997) are viewed more favorably. The findings in this literature, then, are decidedly mixed. Understanding the ways in which negative messages influence citizens' perceptions of candidates is key to our understanding of democratic accountability (i.e. Geer 2006). I focus specifically on how negative messages affect citizens' views of candidates' ideologies and issue positions.

3.2   Candidate Assessment and Negativity

Citizens tend to be cognitive misers who prefer to allocate their cognitive resources to subject areas besides politics.[2] In other words, citizens tend to be low-information voters (Popkin 1994). Despite citizens' general disinterest in politics, they still have an incentive

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[2]See Fiske and Taylor (1991) for a general overview of cognitive miser theory.

to make accurate judgements about politicians and policies (Kunda 1990) so that they can make "correct" decisions when they vote (e.g. Lau and Redlawsk 1997; R. and Redlawsk 2006). This incentive drives citizens to make judgements about political objects in large part by relying on heuristics like party labels.

While politicians tend to be more similar to other politicians who share their partisanship than they are to those who do not, citizens are still aware that there is diversity within parties.[3] Understanding these differences may be key to the choices that citizens make when deciding which candidate to support. Still, they want to collect adequate information to make an accurate decision while minimizing the costs they face in exchange for gathering this information.

This accuracy motivation along with citizens' disinterest in politics encourages citizens to rely on easily accessible cues when forming attitudes about candidates. Candidates' messages, many of which citizens may be exposed to through television advertisements, contain these kinds of cues. Citizens should be motivated to use candidates' statements to form attitudes about them.

Positive messages contain explicit information about the sponsoring candidate. The explicit informational content of negative messages, on the other hand, is centered on the target of the message. While some research has examined the impact of positive messages on citizens' views of the sponsoring candidate (e.g. Banda 2010), little work has focused on the possible effects of negative messages on public opinion. Negative messages should be particularly useful for citizens because they may allow citizens to form attitudes about both the target of the message along with the sponsor.

Citizens should respond to negative messages by altering their views of the targeted candidate. This process is relatively straightforward: the negative appeal contains new information about the target of the message which citizens then use to update their attitudes

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[3]Consider, for example, the ideological difference between Democratic Senators Ben Nelson and Elizabeth Warren and Republican Senators Olympia Snow and Ted Cruz.

about her. For example, a message may attack a candidate for being too liberal. Citizens then process this information and update their opinions about the candidate, thus viewing them as more liberal than they did before.[4]

Because of citizens' motivation to draw as much as possible from small bits of information, they should also make inferences about the sponsors of negative messages based on the information conveyed in those messages about the target. Citizens should therefore assess the sponsor of an attack in the opposite way that they do the target of that attack. While citizens should respond to negative messages in this way during all types of campaigns, this process may be magnified in general election campaigns because people in the U.S. generally view Democrats and Republicans as being the opposites of one another (see for example Heit and Nicholson 2010). Citizens' views of the target of a message should be pushed in one direction while their views of the sponsor should be pushed in the other direction. In this sense, negative messages can be said to contain *two-way information cues* — cues which contain information relevant to the assessment of both the targets and the sponsors of such messages.[5]

3.2.1   Two-Way Information Cues and Candidate Assessment

Two-way information cues can be broken down into two different types of cues. First, *explicit cues* refer to the information that should be attributed to the target of a negative message. These are similar to the information cues embedded in positive messages; the information should be attributed directly to the target of the message. In the case of positive messages, the sponsor herself is the target while her opponent is the target of negative messages. Second, *implicit cues* convey subtle information about the sponsor of a negative

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[4]It is likely that partisanship plays a key role in determining the likelihood that citizens accept information communicated by negative messages. I discuss this possibility later in this research.

[5]Positive messages also convey information about the candidate. They should not, however, inform citizens' views of the candidate's opponent. This is because both the sponsor and the target of a positive message are the same: the candidate herself. Given these limitations, citizens do not have a compelling reason to draw inferences about one candidate after they have been exposed to a message sponsored by and about a different candidate.

message which suggest that the candidate is dissimilar to her opponent.

Citizens who are exposed to two-way information cues should update their views of both the target and the sponsor of the message. For example, if *Candidate A* accuses *Candidate B* of holding excessively liberal positions on an issue, citizens' attitudes about *Candidate A* and *Candidate B* should be affected in two different ways. First, the explicit cue communicated by this message is that *Candidate B* is liberal. Citizens should respond to this cue by assessing *Candidate B* as being more liberal than they might have had they not been exposed to the negative message. Stated more formally:

> H_1: *Candidates who are attacked for holding an extremely liberal (conservative) issue position will be assessed as being more liberal (conservative) ideologically than candidates who are not attacked.*

The second way in which *Candidate A's* message about *Candidate B* should matter is by altering the views citizens hold about the former. *Candidate A* communicates additional information to citizens about herself by attacking *Candidate B* for having liberal positions on an issue. The implicit cue suggests that *Candidate A* is *not* like *Candidate B*, who is a liberal candidate. In other words, the implicit cue implies that *Candidate A* is conservative. Put more formally:

> H_2: *Candidates who attack their opponents for holding an extremely liberal (conservative) issue position will be assessed as being more conservative (liberal) ideologically than candidates who do not attack.*

Citizens evaluate candidates on dimensions beyond ideology; they also assess their positions on issues. The way in which citizens respond to negative messages when forming attitudes about issue positions should be similar to the process citizens go through when forming attitudes about candidates ideologies. Attitudes about candidates' ideologies, therefore, should extend to citizens' views of the candidate's issue positions. Using

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the earlier example of *Candidate A's* attack on *Candidate B*, the explicit cue should lead citizens to assess *Candidate B* as holding more liberal positions on the issues on which *Candidate A* attacked them.

> H$_3$: *Candidates who are attacked for holding an extremely liberal (conservative) issue position will be assessed as being more liberal (conservative) on that issue than candidates who are not attacked.*

The implicit cue should shift citizens' assessments of the sponsoring candidate's positions on the issues mentioned in the opposite direction. In other words:

> H$_4$: *Candidates who attack their opponents for holding an extremely liberal (conservative) issue position will be assessed as being more conservative (liberal) on that issue than candidates who do not attack.*

Candidates do not necessarily discuss all of the issues that may be of interest to citizens. This can be due both to strategic behavior — candidates may wish to avoid certain issues or those issues may not be salient — and to limited resources — candidates may lack the time and money to explicate their positions on all issues. Despite little to no information about the candidates' positions on issues that are not discussed, citizens should still be able to make reasonable inferences about these issue positions (see Banda 2010). When faced with two-way information cues, citizens will use the information they have available to them to generate assessments of candidates' positions on issues that are not mentioned. In other words, citizens should use explicit and implicit cues when assessing candidates' positions on unmentioned issues in the same ways they use them to assess candidates ideologies and positions on the issues that were discussed. People tend to cluster issues together by party or candidate, so a position on one issue may be correlated with a position on another Layman and Carsey (e.g. 2002). Put in formal terms:

H$_5$: *Candidates who are attacked for holding an extremely liberal (conservative) issue position will be assessed as being more liberal (conservative) on other issues than candidates who are not attacked.*

H$_6$: *Candidates who attack their opponents for holding an extremely liberal (conservative) issue position will be assessed as being more conservative (liberal) on other issues than candidates who do not attack.*

3.2.2 Shared Partisanship as a Source Cue

Partisanship is a central concept that powerfully influences public opinion and mass behavior in American politics (Campbell et al. 1960; Jacoby 1988; Rahn 1993). It is viewed by many scholars as either a form of social identity (e.g. Huddy 2001; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002) or as a psychological attachment (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Bartels 2002; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Many scholars in the former group argue that citizens tend to categorize people as members of in and out-groups. In politics, citizens' conceptions of in and out-groups tend to center on partisanship (e.g. Huddy 2001; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). Citizens thus identify themselves with copartisans while differentiating themselves from people who are not copartisans (Tajfel 1982; Brewer 2007). Proponents of this formulation of social identity theory posit that people experience strong biases that favor in-groups relative to out-groups. Partisans are therefore more positively predisposed towards members of their own parties than they are towards members of other parties. This predisposition helps to satisfy partisans' innate need for a positive social identity and maintain the distinctiveness of members of a group (see Brewer 1991).

This perspective suggests that the likelihood that citizens respond to political information should be affected by the way those citizens view the source of that information. They should be more likely to accept - and thus be responsive to - information that originates from a source they view as credible than from a source they do not view as credible

(Druckman 2001). In other words, citizens should be more likely to respond to information cues embedded in candidates' messages when citizens and candidates identify with the same party relative to when they do not. Citizens who view the messages of a candidate from the opposing party should discount the cue when forming an attitude and may go so far as to ignore it entirely. The source of the information — i.e. the source cue — should matter when citizens form or alter attitudes about candidates in response to the political messages to which they are exposed. Put more formally:

> H_7: *Citizens will be more responsive to two-way information cues when they share the same partisanship with a candidate than they will when they do not.*

The psychological perspective is less clear on the effects of partisanship on citizen response to these kinds of source cues, but implies a different set of expectations. Citizens may be Bayesian updaters who alter their views of political objects as they are exposed to new information. Some research suggests that an observable gap may exist in public opinion between partisan groups, but both groups still respond to new information in similar ways even if the gap remains (Bartels 2002). In other words, party may condition the baseline views that citizens hold towards candidates, but it should not influence the way they respond to the information cues embedded in candidates' messages. [6] This perspective, then, predicts that citizens will respond to two-way information cues regardless of whether or not they share their party identification with a given candidate. The previous perspective, on the other hand, predicts that citizens who share their partisanship with candidates will respond more powerfully to these cues than will citizens who do not.

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[6](Fiorina 1981) offers a third perspective on partisanship's potential for conditioning citizen response to candidates' information cues. This perspective rests on the notion that partisanship is a cumulative tally of a citizen's previous evaluations of the political parties. This argument is similar to Bartels' in that it allows for differences in public opinion between Democrats and Republicans. However, this perspective leads to the expectation that opinion among members of both parties converges over time as people update their views in response to objective political information. "Objective information" is the key phrase here; if citizens do not view information as credible, they have little reason to respond to it.

3.3 Research Design

I designed a web-based survey experiment to test my theory of candidate assessment. Participants were undergraduates recruited from an introductory political science course at a large southeastern public university. While some scholars fear that nonrepresentative samples in experimental research lead to findings that cannot be generalized, McDermott (2002) argues that this is not always the case. Druckman and Kam (2011) extends this research by convincingly showing that nonrepresentative samples pose a threat to generalizeable results only if two conditions are met: heterogeneous treatment effects exist in the population and there is little to no variance on the moderating variable in the sample. Neither of these concerns are relevant to this research because my sample exhibits variance in partisanship among participants: out of 417 participants, 222 identified as Democrats while the remaining 195 identified as Republicans.[7] Additionally, Barabas and Jerit (2010) argue that the effects observed in a survey experiment may not translate to the population as a whole because they are driven primarily by responses among members of certain subgroups. The results that I describe should be interpreted as the effects of two-way information cues on the views held by those citizens who might be exposed to similar political messages in the real world, not necessarily on all citizens regardless of their proclivity to become exposed to political information.

The survey instrument was administered online. Participants completed the experiment at a time and place convenient to them during the collection period. Subjects first completed a pretest, part of which was devoted to collecting demographic information such as ethnicity, partisanship, level of education, and ideological disposition. Participants were also asked a series of political knowledge questions and were asked to rate their feelings towards a number of individuals and groups.

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[7]I omitted 30 participants from the analysis because they failed to identify with a political party. These participants on average respond to the treatments in the ways predicted by my theory, but due to the limitations of a sample of this size, the effects of two-way information cues are less consistent than they are among partisans.

Table 3.1: Treatment Assignment

Treatment	N
Control treatment	99
Experimental treatments	
Democrat attacks	116
Republican attacks	110
Both candidates attack	92

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of four treatment conditions, the cell sizes for which are presented in Table 3.1.[8] Each treatment was made up of four statements attributed to two Senatorial candidates running for an open seat who were identified as being a Democrat and a Republican.[9] The partisanship of the candidates was explicitly identified in all treatments, including the control. In order to allow for a baseline for comparison among the assessments made about the candidates by treatment, the control treatment was made up of statements that did not contain references to issues or ideology. These kinds of statements were noncontroversial and were designed to limit the transmission of political information to as great an extent as possible. The candidates did not talk about issues and did not talk about their opponents. Instead, they talked about themselves.

I varied the target of the candidates' statements in the remaining treatments. In the treatments in which one or both candidates attacked, they did so on the basis of their opponent's positions on health care and taxes. When the Democrat attacked their Republican opponent, they claimed that the latter held extremely conservative positions on the issues. Similarly, when the Republican attacked the Democrat, he did so on the basis of his opponent's extremely liberal positions on the issues.

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[8]I report the full text of each treatment in the appendix.

[9]While the candidates were fictional, participants were not informed that this was the case until after the posttest.

I created three experimental treatments. In the first, the Democrat attacks the Republican while the latter avoided issues as in the control treatment. In the second, the Democrat did not discuss issues while the Republican attacked him. In the final experimental treatment, both candidates attacked each other. Comparing the effects of the experimental treatments to those generated by the control will allow me to test the effects of two-way informational cues on the formation of ideological and issue position assessments.

After reading the statements made by the Senators, participants were asked to assess the ideologies and issue positions of the candidates. Ideology was coded from one to seven, with one meaning "very liberal" and seven meaning "very conservative." Issue positions were measured on a one to eleven point scale with low values indicating very strong Democratic positions and high values indicating staunch Republican positions.[10] In addition to questions asking participants to evaluate the positions of the candidates on the two issues that they may have talked about — health care and taxes — subjects were also asked to place the candidates on four issues that were never discussed: government aid to blacks, defense spending, abortion, and government services. Including these issues in the survey experiment allows me to test the degree to which citizens infer the positions candidates hold on issues that are not discussed in response to two-way informational cues.

3.3.1 Model

I use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to model participants' assessments of the candidates' ideologies and positions on six issues — two of which could have been discussed in the treatments and four of which never were — as a function of three dummy variables indicating whether or not each participant received one of the experimental treatments reported in Table 3.1, a dummy variable indicating whether or not a given respondent identified as a Democrat, and interactions between the Democratic identifier and each of

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[10]See the appendix for question wordings.

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the dummies for the experimental treatments.[11] I estimate models for both candidates separately.[12]

3.3.2 Expectations

I expect to observe negative coefficients for each of the treatment indicators in the models estimating participants' views of the Democratic candidate's ideology and issue positions. This is because each of the experimental treatments should on average lead participants to assess the Democrat as being more liberal or holding positions that are more congruent with the Democratic Party relative to the control group regardless of whether they are making an assessment on the basis of an explicit cue — as in the treatment in which the Republican attacks the Democrat — or an implicit cue — as in the treatment in which the Democrat attacks the Republican. I similarly expect to observe positive coefficients — indicating that participants view the candidate as being more conservative and as holding positions more congruent with the Republican Party — for all of the experimental treatment indicators in each of my statistical models estimating participants' ideological and issue position assessments of the Republican candidate. Last, I expect to observe larger treatment effects among participants whose partisanship is aligned with the source of a message. In other words, I expect Democrats (Republicans) to respond more powerfully to both the implicit and explicit cues embedded in an attack sponsored by a Democratic (Republican) candidate than Republicans (Democrats).

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[11]Though the dependent variable in the ideological evaluation model is ordinal rather than continuous, I use OLS for two reasons. First, linear models with dummy variables are substantively equivalent to a series of difference of means tests. Second, results generated by a linear model are easier to present in a straightforward manner than are those from an ordered model. I replicated my analyses using ordered logistic regression and found the same substantive results as the linear models I report below. I report these alternative specifications in the appendix.

[12]I do not include any additional covariates in my models because I am only interested in the effects of the treatments by partisanship. Participants where randomly assigned to a treatment, so the effects of other controls should be orthogonal to those of the treatments.

3.4 Results

I report the marginal effect of each experimental treatment on Democrats and Republicans separately rather than presenting a convoluted table containing a large number of interaction terms.[13] I use the method described by (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006) to estimate these marginal effects and standard errors. In each of the following tables, an asterisk next to a marginal effect should be interpreted as meaning that effect differs significantly from zero (one tailed $p \leq .05$). In other words, that treatment systematically influences the opinions of in or out-party participants who received that treatment. A dagger indicates that a given treatment's effect differs significantly between in and out-party partisans.

3.4.1 Ideological Perceptions

I present the results of two models estimating participants' ideological assessments of the candidates in Table C.1.[14] On the whole, these results suggest that participants responded to two-way information cues in the ways predicted by my theory.

The first two columns of results show the effects of each experimental treatment on Democrats' and Republicans' assessments of the Democratic candidate's ideology. As expected, all of these marginal effects are negative, indicating that, on average, partisans of both types who received an experimental treatment viewed the Democrat as being more liberal than did those who were exposed to the control treatment. As shown by the marginal effects reported in the first column, Democrats on average responded to all three of the experimental treatments by viewing the Democratic candidate as being significantly ($p \leq$ .05) more liberal than did Democrats who received the control treatment. The second column of results shows that Republican citizens also respond to the treatments by viewing

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[13]I report the raw results of each of my statistical models in the appendix.

[14]I report the results of identically specified ordered logistic regression models in the appendix. The results of both sets of models are substantively identical.

Table 3.2: Ideological Assessments

Candidate PID	Democratic		Republican	
Participant PID	D	R	D	R
Democrat attacks	-1.00*	-1.06*	0.09	0.16
	(0.20)	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.19)
Republican attacks	-0.39*	-0.16	1.01*	1.11*
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.20)
Both attack	-1.03*	-0.84*	0.80*	0.93*
	(0.21)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.20)
BIC	1,206.45		1,240.72	
N	414		413	

Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
* = significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) treatment effect relative to control
†= significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) difference in effect size between Democrats and Republicans

the Democrat as being more liberal, though the marginal effect for the "Republican attacks" treatment do not differ significantly from the effect of the control treatment. These effects are substantively meaningful: three of the five significant marginal effects average about a full point on the seven point ideological scale and a fourth — Republican participants' response to the "both attack" treatment — is greater than 0.8. None of the marginal effects of the treatments on Democratic participants differed significantly from those for Republicans.

The third and fourth columns of Table C.1 present the effects of the experimental treatments on Democrats' and Republicans' views of the Republican candidate's ideology. All of the marginal effects are positive as expected, which indicates that participants on average perceived of the Republican as being more conservative when they were exposed to an experimental treatment relative to when they were not. The "Democrat attacks" treatment, however, failed to induce evaluations of the Republican candidate that were significantly

different from those generated by the control treatment among both Democrats and Republicans. Both Democrats and Republicans who received the "Republican attacks" treatment viewed the Republican as being about one point on the seven point ideology scale more conservative than did members of the control group. The "both attacks" treatment also induced more conservative views of the Republican that approached a full point among both partisan groups.

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that participants responded to two-way information cues in the ways predicted by my theory. All four of the tests of implicit cues — the "Democrat attacks" treatment for the Democratic candidate and the "Republican attacks" treatment for the Republican candidate — produced powerful and robust effects on participants' views of the candidates' ideological dispositions. Additionally, all four of the tests of the treatment including attacks sponsored by both candidates also produced substantively interesting effects in the expected direction. On the other hand, the evidence for the effectiveness of explicit cues — the "Republican attacks" treatment for the Democrat and the "Democrat attacks" treatment for the Republican candidate — appears to be limited; only one of the four marginal effects produced by these cues differed significantly from zero.

3.4.2   Perceptions of Positions on Discussed Issues

Next, I report the effects of the experimental treatments on participants' views of the candidates' positions on the two issues that were discussed: health insurance and taxes. The marginal effects are shown in Table C.2.[15] The effects of the treatments on participants' assessments of the Democratic candidate are presented in the first four columns while those of the Republican candidate are shown in the last four columns. 'D' and 'R' stand for Democratic and Republican respondents respectively. These results are not as compelling as those outlined in the previous section, but they are highly suggestive.

While three of the 24 marginal effects presented in the table exhibit an unexpected sign,

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[15]The raw output of the regressions that generated these effects can be found in Table 2 in the appendix.

Table 3.3: Perceived Positions on Mentioned Issues

Candidate PID	Democratic				Republican			
Issue	Health insurance		Taxes		Health insurance		Taxes	
Participant PID	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
Democrat attacks	-0.93*	-0.36	-1.12*	-1.20*	0.29	-0.21	0.53	0.17
	(0.56)	(0.52)	(0.56)	(0.52)	(0.54)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.46)
Republican attacks	-0.58	-0.16	-0.47	0.63	0.94*	1.46*	0.83*	0.69
	(0.56)	(0.53)	(0.55)	(0.52)	(0.53)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.46)
Both attack	-0.99*	-0.87	-0.54	-1.38*	0.95*	1.32*	-0.04	0.24
	(0.60)	(0.54)	(0.59)	(0.53)	(0.57)	(0.51)	(0.52)	(0.47)
BIC	2,049.74		2,038.01		1,950.55		1,936.71	
N	412		411		406		411	

Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
* = significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) treatment effect relative to control
†= significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) difference in effect size between Democrats and Republicans

note that none of these three effects differs significantly from zero. For the most part, both Democrats and Republicans who are exposed to one of the experimental treatments view the Democratic candidate as holding positions that are more congruent with the Democratic Party and the Republican candidate as holding positions that are more similar to those espoused by the Republican Party.

Implicit cues again appear to carry greater weight than explicit cues when citizens express their views of the candidates' positions on these issues. The "Democrat attacks" treatment produces negative marginal effects — three of which differ significantly (p ≤ .05) from zero — among both types of partisans when participants report their perceptions of the Democratic candidate. Similarly, the "Republican attacks" treatment produces positive marginal effects among both Democrats and Republicans when assessing the Republican candidate's positions on health insurance and taxes, three of which again differ significantly from zero. Recall that the scale of the issue position variables runs from one to eleven. The size of these marginal effects — many of which are greater than one unit —

suggest that the treatments induce substantively meaningful shifts in the opinions participants hold about the candidates' positions on these issues.

Participants, both Democrats and Republicans, appear to ignore the explicit cues embedded in negative messages when reporting their views of the candidates' positions on the issues that were mentioned. Consider the marginal effects produced by the "Republican attacks" treatment for the Democratic candidate and those estimated for the "Democrat attacks" treatment for the Republican candidate. Six of the eight marginal effects have the predicted sign, but none of them differ significantly from zero. These explicit cues, then, do not appear to be very effective in shaping public opinion about the targets' positions on the issues that are discussed.

The "both attack" treatment generates marginal effects that exhibit the expected sign seven out of eight times, but only half differ significantly from zero. The sizes of the significant marginal effects range from about one unit to nearly 1.4, again substantively meaningful effects on an eleven point scale. Given the apparent inability of explicit cues to influence participants' views of the candidates' positions on these mentioned issues, it may be the case that the implicit cues embedded within the "both attack" treatment is the primary force driving these marginal effects.

Finally, note that as was the case in the analysis of participants' views of the candidates' ideologies, none of the marginal effects generated by a given treatment differed significantly between Democrats and Republicans. Shared partisanship, then, does not appear to condition the degree to which participants' responded to the treatments when forming attitudes about the candidates' positions on health insurance and taxes.

3.4.3 Perceptions of Positions on Unmentioned Issues

I present the results of my final set of analyses — those centering on participants' views of the candidates' positions on issues that were not discussed in the treatments — in Tables

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Table 3.4: Perceived Positions of the Democratic Candidate on Unmentioned Issues

Participant PID	Affirmative action		National defense		Government services		Abortion	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
Democrat attacks	-0.33	0.59	-0.07	-0.17	-1.16*	-0.75*	-0.50	-0.35
	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.48)	(0.44)	(0.47)	(0.44)	(0.48)	(0.45)
Republican attacks	-0.68†	0.87*	-0.43	0.26	-1.13*	-0.43	-0.92*†	0.39
	(0.50)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.45)	(0.49)	(0.45)
Both attack	0.13	0.10	-0.64	-0.34	-0.43	-0.86*	-0.26	-0.29
	(0.54)	(0.47)	(0.51)	(0.45)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.52)	(0.46)
BIC	1,935.25		1,884.03		1,882.70		1,913.11	
N	409		406		407		409	

Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
* = significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) treatment effect relative to control
†= significant (p ≤ .05 one tailed) difference in effect size between Democrats and Republicans

3.4 and 3.5.[16] Two-way information cues do not appear to consistently inform citizens' perceptions of the candidates' positions on the unmentioned issues of affirmative action, national defense, the provision of government services, or abortion. The effects of negative messages that focus on some set of issues, then, may not extend to citizens' opinions about candidates' positions on other issues. Given that participants were never exposed to any information about these four issues, it should not be surprising that these results are weaker than those of the previous analyses.

Table 3.4 contains the marginal effects generated by each of the experimental treatments on the views participants expressed about the Democratic candidate's positions on each of the four unmentioned issues. Eighteen of the 24 marginal effects are negative as expected, but few — just six — are statistically distinguishable from zero. Of these six, one exhibits a positive rather than a negative sign: the "Republican attacks" treatment shifts Republican participants' views of the Democratic candidate's position on affirmative action 0.87 units towards congruence with the Republican Party. There does not appear to be a strong pattern

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[16]The raw output of the regressions that generated these effects can be found in Table 3 in the appendix.

Table 3.5: Perceived Positions of the Republican Candidate on Unmentioned Issues

Participant PID	Affirmative action		National defense		Government services		Abortion	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
Democrat attacks	-0.23	-0.15	-0.34	0.43	0.21	0.22	0.18	0.60
	(0.49)	(0.45)	(0.45)	(0.42)	(0.44)	(0.41)	(0.46)	(0.43)
Republican attacks	0.90*	0.69	0.74*	0.39	0.29	0.55	0.90*	-0.15
	(0.49)	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.44)	(0.41)	(0.46)	(0.44)
Both attack	0.24	0.68	0.28	0.63	0.33	0.67	-0.09	0.49
	(0.52)	(0.46)	(0.48)	(0.43)	(0.47)	(0.42)	(0.49)	(0.44)
BIC	1,935.25		1,884.03		1,882.70		1,913.11	
N	409		406		407		409	

Note: cell entries are marginal effects generated from the ordinary least squares regression reported in Table 1 in the appendix. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
* = significant (p $\leq$ .05 one tailed) treatment effect relative to control
†= significant (p $\leq$ .05 one tailed) difference in effect size between Democrats and Republicans

among these results suggesting that any of the experimental treatments generated consistent effects among Democrats' and Republicans' views of the Democratic candidate's positions on these issues.

Additionally, two pairs of marginal effects — both generated in response to the "Republican attacks" treatment — among partisan groups differ significantly from one another: those generated for the Democrat's positions on affirmative action and abortion. Note that in both cases Democratic participants responded by viewing the Democrat as holding positions more in line with the Democratic Party while Republicans viewed the candidate as being more similar to the Republican Party, a finding that does not fit the expectations generated by the theory put forth in this research.

I present an analysis of participants' views of the Republican candidate's positions on four unmentioned issues in Table 3.5. These results are similarly inconsistent. Nineteen of the 24 marginal effects are positive as expected, but only three differ significantly (p $\leq$ .05) from zero. All three significant marginal effects are observed among Democrats in response to the "Republican attacks" treatment. In other words, Democratic participants

responded to the implicit cue embedded in Republican-sponsored attacks and shifted their view of the Republican to be increasingly congruent with the Republican Party on affirmative action, national defense, and abortion. The size of these effects ranged from nearly 0.75 to 0.9 unit increases, substantively meaningful shifts on an eleven point scale. None of the marginal effects generated by the treatments differed significantly between Democratic and Republican respondents.

To summarize, these results suggest that the effects of two-way information cues may not extend from the issues candidates talk about to those they do not. I do, however, find limited evidence that the implicit portion of these cues may stimulate participants to alter their perceptions of candidates' positions on unmentioned issues. That said, these effects are not particularly consistent.

3.5 Conclusions

Taken as a whole, the results of this research suggest that citizens respond to the two-way informational cues embedded in negative messages when forming attitudes about candidates contesting elections. In other words, the results of my analyses suggest that citizens use the information about the target of an attack in negative campaign messages to inform their attitudes about both the target of the attack and the message's sponsor. This further suggests that citizens respond to both explicit and implicit cues in negative messages.

These findings lead to an important implication about the formation of attitudes about candidates. Despite being generally disinterested in, inattentive to, and having low levels of knowledge about politics, citizens appear to be able to draw inferences about the ideologies of the candidates they must choose between on election day. They do this in part on the basis of exposure to the two-way information cues embedded within negative campaign messages. Ideological location is key to theories of spatial voting; proximity theories assume that the perceived distance between a citizen and candidates determines vote choice (Downs 1957) while directional theory predicts that citizens support the candidate

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who sends the clearest signal that they are on the same side as a given citizen (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989). Ideological location matters for both theories, though in different ways. Negative messages inform citizens' perceptions of where the candidates are located in ideological space and this knowledge allows citizens to make better informed choices.

Another implication of this research speaks to the negative advertising and mobilization literature. The results I present in this research suggest that negative messages on average contain more information than do positive messages, at least in the sense that citizens can learn about both the target and the sponsor of an attack from these messages. Scholars who argue that negative campaigns provide more information than do predominantly positive campaigns (e.g. Freedman, Franz, and Goldstein 2004) appear to be correct; negative messages tell citizens about both candidates while positive messages only provide individuals with information about the sponsoring candidate. The additional information provided to voters by negative messages may in part explain the increase in turnout that appears to correspond with increasingly negative campaigns.

This research also produces four implications about candidate behavior. First, candidates may be able to influence citizens' views about their opponent by utilizing negative messages. By defining their opponents as holding positions outside of the mainstream of American politics, candidates can induce citizens to alter their perceptions of their opponents in a way that may be advantageous. If a candidate successfully frames their opponent as being ideologically extreme or as holding extremist positions on issues, they may be able to reduce their opponent's electoral support, strengthen support for their own candidacy, or some combination of the two. All of these possible outcomes increase the likelihood of victory for the attacking candidate.

The second implication is related to my finding that citizens' ideological and issue position assessments of candidates are responsive to implicit cues. Candidates want to control the campaign information environment. They can attempt to exert control by defining the

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way that citizens view both themselves and their opponent. Because the primary way that candidates communicate with voters is through television advertisements and they have limited resources, it is reasonable for candidates to attempt to define both themselves and their opponents simultaneously.

The third implication is that candidates may use negative rather than positive messages in order to alter public opinion about themselves because citizens tend to give greater weight to negative information (Kernell 1977; Lau 1982, 1985) and negative messages may lead to strong emotional responses among voters (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Finkel and Geer 1998). In this sense, negative message may be more valuable — offering candidates more "bang for their buck" — for candidates than positive messages because they are more likely to draw the attention of citizens and more likely to affect their views. Positive messages may be less effective in this way.

The final implication for the behavior of candidates is that candidates may be able to alter citizens' views of their positions on issues that they do not want to address. A candidate may, for example, hold a position that is unpopular with members of her party. Rather than remind her supporters that she holds an unpopular position that is more congruent with the opposing party than her own, she may instead opt to attack her opponent on other issues. Given the finding that implicit cues can be effective in shifting citizens' assessments of candidates' positions on issues they do not discuss, it is possible that candidates may be able to alter citizens' views on their own positions on these issues without directly engaging the issues at all.

A APPENDIX FOR CHAPTER 1

A.1 Additional Analysis from Chapter 1

While the total effects presented in Figure 2 of the paper are the main quantities of interest generated by my model, scholars should also be interested in how the endogenous covariates affect the outcome variables over time. I plot the distributed lag effects generated by my model for Democratic and Republican candidates in both noncompetitive and competitive elections in Figure A.1 of this appendix.[1] The plots show the effects of a one standard deviation increase in the number of party-owned advertisements run by a candidate's opponent on the candidate's advertising behavior across a five week period in both noncompetitive and competitive campaign environments. The figure shows that the preponderance of candidates' responsive behavior to the advertising strategies of their opponents occurs contemporaneously, i.e. in the same week in which the change occurs — time t. While candidates' advertising strategy appears to shift to some degree in future weeks, these effects are for the most part quite small compared to the contemporaneous effect.

The left column of plots in Figure A.1 shows the effects of the opposing candidate's advertising strategy on Democratic candidates' Democratic-owned issue agendas. The top left panel shows that a one standard deviation increase in the number of advertisements aired by a Republican candidate mentioning Democratic-owned issues in a noncompetitive election leads Democratic candidates on average to immediately (time t) air about 37 additional ads that mention issues associated with the Democratic Party. In competitive elections, this contemporaneous effect is an increase of about 39 ads. In future weeks, Democrats in both competitive and noncompetitive candidates decrease the number of airings of advertisements mentioning Democratic-owned issues, but by small amounts.[2] The bottom left

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[1]See DeBoef and Keele (2008) for more on how to generate distributed lags effects.

[2]In noncompetitive elections, Democrats air 0.67, 0.37, 0.21, and 0.11 fewer advertisements in the following four weeks in response to the initial change in their opponents' advertising behavior. In competitive

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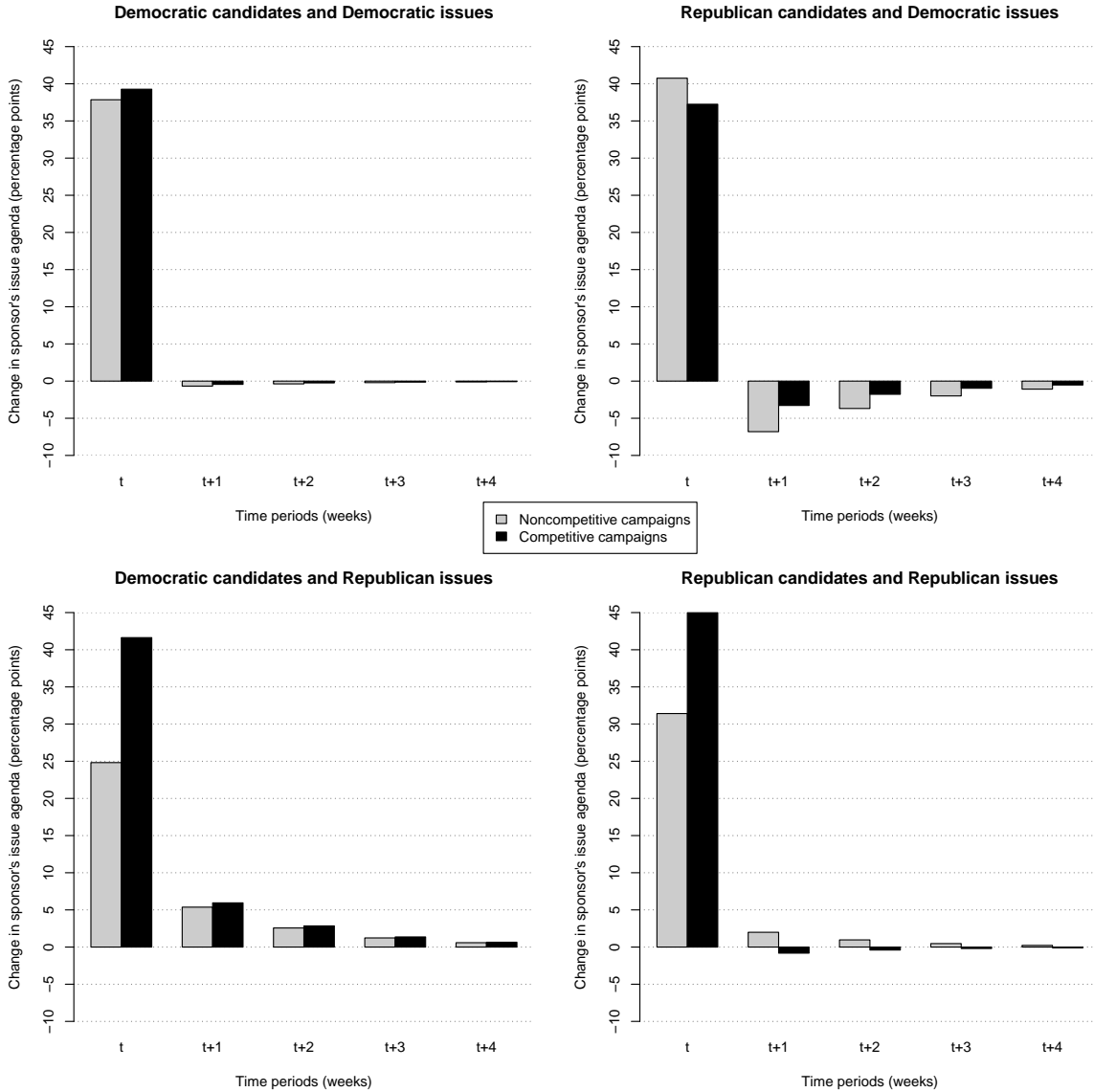
Note: The effects plotted here are generated by one standard deviation increases of a candidate's opponent's party-owned issue emphasis.

Figure A.1: Distributed Effects of Candidates' Volume of Party-Owned Issue Ads on the Advertising Behavior of their Opponents

panel shows that a one standard deviation unit increase in the number of airings mentioning Republican-owned issues by Republican candidates on average leads Democrats to air 25 more ads in noncompetitive and 42 more advertisements in competitive elections in time t. In the following weeks (times $t + 1$ through $t + 4$), the Democrat airs on average 5.4, 2.6, 1.2, and 0.6 more ads in noncompetitive campaigns and 6, 2.8, 1.4, and 0.7 more ads in competitive campaigns.

The top right panel of Figure A.1 shows that a one standard deviation unit increase in the number of ads mentioning Democratic-owned issues aired by Democratic candidates on average leads Republicans to air an additional 40.8 ads in noncompetitive elections and 37.3 more ads in competitive elections in the week during which the change occurs (time t). While this may seem at odds with the findings presented in Figure 2, a closer look at the effects over the following four weeks shows that this is not the case — because Republicans in noncompetitive elections reduce the number of ads they air mentioning Democratic-owned issues over future time weeks than do Republicans in competitive elections. In noncompetitive elections, Republican candidates run 6.8, 3.7, 2, add 1.1 fewer ads in each of the next four weeks. Republicans in competitive environments, on the other hand, air 3.3, 1.8, 1, and 0.5 fewer ads during the following four weeks.

Finally, the bottom right panel of Figure A.1 shows that the advertising behavior of Republican candidates is responsive to that of their Democratic opponents on Republican-owned issues. A one standard deviation increase in the number of advertisements aired by Democrats focused on Republican-owned issues on average leads Republicans to air 31.4 and 45 more ads mentioning the same set of issues immediately in noncompetitive and competitive campaigns respectively. In noncompetitive campaigns, Republicans continue to respond over future weeks to this behavior by running more ads mentioning issues associated with the Republican Party — 2, 1, 0.5, and 0.2 additional advertisements in each

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elections, these values are estimated to be 0.43, 0.24, 0.13, and 0.07 fewer ads aired in each of the next four weeks.

of the next four weeks. Republicans in competitive elections, on the other hand, run fewer advertisements about Republican-owned issues over the course of the following weeks — 0.8, 0.4, 0.2, and 0.1 fewer ads in each week.

B APPENDIX FOR CHAPTER 2

B.1 Experimental Design

Participants read the following block of text before being exposed to one of the following treatments:

We would like you reaction to some comments made at a recent re-election campaign appearance by a Senator from a different state, [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin, who said:

- **Control group**

  - Franklin is identified as either a Democrat or a Republican

    * "America is the greatest country in the world, and I intend to keep it that way. Send me back to Washington so I can keep fighting for you and our families. I have been a successful leader for my entire life, and I will continue to be a leader in the United States Senate well into the next decade."

- **In-party ownership cues**

  - Franklin is identified as a Democrat

    * "Affirmative action is an important issue in this campaign. I will be devoting a great deal of attention to it in the coming months. Health care is also high on my agenda. I can assure you that I will devote a great deal of attention to this issue in the future as well."

  - Franklin is identified as a Republican

    * "We have serious problems with our system of taxation in this country. I know that this is a key issue in the minds of many in this great state and I want you all to know that I will make fixing these problems a priority.

Also, nothing is more important to me than national security. The safety of American citizens is always at the forefront of my mind."

- **Out-party ownership cues**

  - Franklin is identified as a Democrat

    * "We have serious problems with our system of taxation in this country. I know that this is a key issue in the minds of many in this great state and I want you all to know that I will make fixing these problems a priority. Also, nothing is more important to me than national security. The safety of American citizens is always at the forefront of my mind."

  - Franklin is identified as a Republican

    * "Affirmative action is an important issue in this campaign. I will be devoting a great deal of attention to it in the coming months. Health care is also high on my agenda. I can assure you that I will devote a great deal of attention to this issue in the future as well."

- **In-party ownership, congruent positions**

  - Franklin is identified as a Democrat

    * "Affirmative action is an important issue in this campaign. The government must ensure that affirmative action policies are enforced so that we may continue to redress the problems caused by slavery and racism during America's past. Healthcare is also high on my agenda. I can assure you that I will introduce and support legislation seeking to ensure that all Americans are provided adequate medial care through a public option regardless of their financial situations."

  - Franklin is identified as a Republican

* "We have serious problems with our system of taxation in this country. Our system is complicated and our tax rates are far too high. I will make reducing the burden of taxes on all Americans and simplifying our tax code my priorities. Also, nothing is more important to me than national security. Because the safety of American citizens is always at the forefront of my mind, I will continue to support a strong and well funded military capable of defending us from foreign threats."

- **Out-party ownership, congruent positions**

  – Franklin is identified as a Democrat

    * "We have serious problems with our system of taxation in this country. Our system is complicated and our tax rates for the rich are far too low. I will make reducing the burden of taxes on ordinary Americans and simplifying our tax code my priorities. Also, nothing is more important to me that national security. Because the safety of American citizens is always at the forefront of my mind, I will press for a greater diplomatic engagement with the international community. Some of the military's budget could be better spent in other ways."

  – Franklin is identified as a Republican

    * "Affirmative action is an important issue in this campaign. The government must end these policies as they have long since become unfair. Health care is also high on my agenda. I can assure you that I will introduce and support legislation seeking to protect our current system of privatized health care. Competition is key and a government sponsored health care system would interfere with the private market."

- **In-party ownership, incongruent positions**

- Franklin is identified as a Democrat

  * "Affirmative action is an important issue in this campaign. The government must end these policies as they have long since become unfair. Health care is also high on my agenda. I can assure you that I will introduce and support legislation seeking to protect our current system of privatized health care. Competition is key and a government sponsored health care system would interfere with the private market."

- Franklin is identified as a Republican

  * "We have serious problems with our system of taxation in this country. Our system is complicated and our tax rates for the rich are far too low. I will make reducing the burden of taxes on ordinary Americans and simplifying our tax code my priorities. Also, nothing is more important to me that national security. Because the safety of American citizens is always at the forefront of my mind, I will press for a greater diplomatic engagement with the international community. Some of the military's budget could be better spent in other ways."

- **Out-party ownership, incongruent positions**

  - Franklin is identified as a Democrat

    * "We have serious problems with our system of taxation in this country. Our system is complicated and our tax rates are far too high. I will make reducing the burden of taxes on all Americans and simplifying our tax code my priorities. Also, nothing is more important to me than national security. Because the safety of American citizens is always at the forefront of my mind, I will continue to support a strong and well funded military capable of defending us from foreign threats."

– Franklin is identified as a Republican

  ∗ "Affirmative action is an important issue in this campaign. The government must ensure that affirmative action policies are enforced so that we may continue to redress the problems caused by slavery and racism during America's past. Healthcare is also high on my agenda. I can assure you that I will introduce and support legislation seeking to ensure that all Americans are provided adequate medial care through a public option regardless of their financial situations."

Participants were then asked the following questions and were tasked with placing Senator Franklin using a ruler widget:

- Where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin's political ideology on the following scale?

  – Response: a ruler widget with the following labels equally spaced: Very Liberal, Liberal, Somewhat Liberal, Moderate, Somewhat Conservative, Conservative, Very Conservative.

- Using the following scale where the one end means "the government should provide health insurance to all citizens including a public option" and the other end means "health insurance should be provided through the private sector," where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin on health care reform?

  – Response: a ruler widget with the lower end of the scale labeled "Govt. provision of insurance" and the higher end of the scale labeled "Private provision of insurance."

- Using the following scale where one ends means "the government should help blacks" and the other end means "blacks should help themselves," where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin on the issue of aid to blacks?

– Response: a ruler widget with the lower end of the scale labeled "Govt. help blacks" and the higher end of the scale labeled "blacks help themselves."

- Using the following scale where one ends means "taxes on the wealthy should be greatly increased" and the other end means "taxes on the wealthy should be greatly decreased," where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin on the issue of taxing the wealthy?

  – Response: a ruler widget with the lower end of the scale labeled "Greatly Increase Taxes on Rich" and the higher end of the scale labeled "Greatly Reduce Taxes on Rich."

- Using the following scale where one end means "defense spending should be greatly decreased" and the other end means "defense spending should be greatly increased," where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin on the issue of defense spending?

  – Response: a ruler widget with the lower end of the scale labeled "greatly decrease defense spending" and the higher end of the scale labeled "greatly increase defense spending."

- Using the following scale where one end means "the government should provide many more services" and the other end means "the government should provide many fewer services," where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin on the issue of government services?

  – Response: a ruler widget with the lower end of the scale labeled "provide many more services" and the higher end labeled "provide many fewer services."

- Using the following scale where one end means "by law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice" and the other end

means "by law, abortion should never be permitted," where would you place [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin on the issue of abortion?

- – Response: a ruler widget with the lower end of the scale labeled "by law, abortion available by choice" and the higher end labeled "by law, abortion never permitted."

- Please rate [Democratic/Republican] Senator Franklin using what we call a feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 and 100 mean that you feel favorable and warm toward Senator Franklin. Ratings between 0 and 50 mean you feel unfavorable and cool toward Senator Franklin.

C   APPENDIX FOR CHAPTER 3

C.1   Treatments and Questions

The text of the treatments and questions is presented below exactly as participants in the pilot study saw them. Participants first saw the following text:

> We are going to show you a number of statements made by two candidates running for an open Senate seat during their recent election campaigns. Steve Franklin is a Democrat and Jeff Perkins is a Republican. Please read the statements on the following page carefully. When you are finished, please move on to the next section.

They were then randomly assigned with equal probability to one of the four treatment groups, after which they were be exposed to the text of their treatment. The text of each treatment follows:

C.1.1   Control treatment

- Democratic candidate Steve Franklin

    - "America is the greatest country in the world, and I intend to keep it that way. Send me back to Washington so I can keep fighting for you and our families."

    - "My record of public service is second to none. I have served this great state for many years and, with your blessing, will continue to uphold our ideals in Washington."

- Republican candidate Jeff Perkins

    - "I'm on your side and always have been. I have and will continue to fight against special interests and Washington's culture of corruption and incompetence."

    - "I have been a successful leader for my entire life and I will continue to be a leader in the United States Senate well into the next decade."

C.1.2   Treatment A: Democrat attacks, Republican does not

- Democratic candidate Steve Franklin

    - "My opponent doesn't want you to notice his record on health care. He talks a lot about fostering competition, but what he really wants to do is eliminate all federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid. He may not come out and say it like that, but it's one of his goals."

- "Jeff Perkins would have you believe that he wants to cut taxes for all of you. Nothing could be further from the truth; he only wants to cut taxes for corporations and the richest one percent of the country. That won't stimulate economic growth; it'll just make the rich richer."

- Republican candidate Jeff Perkins

  - "I'm on your side and always have been. I have and will continue to fight against special interests and Washington's culture of corruption and incompetence."

  - "I have been a successful leader for my entire life and I will continue to be a leader in the United States Senate well into the next decade."

C.1.3 Treatment B: Republican attacks, Democrat does not

- Democratic candidate Steve Franklin

  - "America is the greatest country in the world, and I intend to keep it that way. Send me back to Washington so I can keep fighting for you and our families."

  - "My record of public service is second to none. I have served this great state for many years and, with your blessing, will continue to uphold our ideals in Washington."

- Republican candidate Jeff Perkins

  - "Ladies and gentlemen, my opponent talks a good game about providing health care to everyone, but he skips over all of the most important parts of his plan. He's doesn't want to tell you that he supports an expensive and wasteful federal takeover of our health care system."

  - "If you look at his record, you'll see that Steve Franklin always supports raising your taxes, not just for the rich but for everyone! He doesn't think you know what to do with your money. He thinks the government knows how to spend it better than you do. He wants to take your hard earned money and give it to other people."

C.1.4 Treatment C: Both candidates attack

- Democratic candidate Steve Franklin

  - "My opponent doesn't want you to notice his record on health care. He talks a lot about fostering competition, but what he really wants to do is eliminate all federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid. He may not come out and say it like that, but it's one of his goals."

  - "Jeff Perkins would have you believe that he wants to cut taxes for all of you. Nothing could be further from the truth; he only wants to cut taxes for corporations and the richest one percent of the country. That won't stimulate economic growth; it'll just make the rich richer."

- Republican candidate Jeff Perkins

    - "Ladies and gentlemen, my opponent talks a good game about providing health care to everyone, but he skips over all of the most important parts of his plan. He's doesn't want to tell you that he supports an expensive and wasteful federal takeover of our health care system."

    - "If you look at his record, you'll see that Steve Franklin always supports raising your taxes, not just for the rich but for everyone! He doesn't think you know what to do with your money. He thinks the government knows how to spend it better than you do. He wants to take your hard earned money and give it to other people."

After participants finished reading their treatment, they were asked fourteen questions. First they were asked to assess each candidate's ideology and then their positions on six different political issues. The text and for the former were as follows:

Question 1 and 2: Where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin's/Republican candidate Jeff Perkins'] political ideology on the following scale?

Very liberal
Liberal
Somewhat liberal
Moderate
Somewhat conservative
Conservative
Very conservative

There were eleven possible responses to each of the issue position questions, each of which were labeled numerically from 1 through 11. The text of the questions were as follows:

Questions 3 and 4: On a scale of one to eleven, with one meaning the government should provide health insurance to all citizens and eleven meaning the government should ensure that health care is available to its citizens through private insurers, where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin/Republican candidate Jeff Franklin] on the issue of health care reform?

Questions 5 and 6: On a scale of one to eleven, with one meaning the government should help blacks and eleven meaning blacks should help themselves, where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin/Republican candidate Jeff Franklin] on the issue of aid to blacks?

Questions 7 and 8: On a scale of one to eleven, with one meaning taxes on the wealthy should be greatly increased and eleven meaning taxes on the wealthy should be greatly decreased, where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin/Republican candidate Jeff Franklin] on the issue of taxation of the wealthy?

Questions 9 and 10: On a scale of one to eleven, with one meaning defense spending should be greatly decreased and eleven meaning defense spending should be greatly increased, where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin/Republican candidate Jeff Franklin] on the issue of defense spending?

Questions 11 and 12: On a scale of one to eleven, with one meaning the government should provide many more services and eleven meaning the government should provide many fewer services, where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin/Republican candidate Jeff Franklin] on the issue of government services?

Questions 13 and 14: On a scale of one to eleven, with one meaning by law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice and eleven meaning by law, abortion should never be permitted, where would you place [Democratic candidate Steve Franklin/Republican candidate Jeff Franklin] on the issue of abortion?

Table C.1: Ideological Assessments

	Democratic candidate				Republican candidate			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Democrat attacks	-1.05*	-2.06*	-1.01*	-2.16*	0.10	0.19	0.13	0.24
	(0.13)	(0.26)	(0.20)	(0.40)	(0.14)	(0.24)	(0.21)	(0.35)
Democrat attacks X Democratic PID			-0.05	0.15			0.03	0.02
			(0.27)	(0.52)			(0.28)	(0.49)
Republican attacks	-0.32*	-0.67*	-0.40*	-0.74*	1.07*	2.13*	1.05*	2.06*
	(0.13)	(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.37)	(0.14)	(0.27)	(0.21)	(0.38)
Republican attacks X Democratic PID			0.23	0.26			0.05	0.32
			(0.27)	(0.50)			(0.28)	(0.52)
Both attack	-0.95*	-1.92*	-1.04*	-2.08*	0.87*	1.66*	0.84*	1.62*
	(0.14)	(0.27)	(0.21)	(0.41)	(0.15)	(0.27)	(0.22)	(0.40)
Both attack X Democratic PID			0.19	0.29			0.09	0.24
			(0.28)	(0.54)			(0.30)	(0.54)
Democratic PID			-0.03	-0.03			-0.02	0.04
			(0.20)	(0.36)			(0.21)	(0.36)
Intercept	3.33*		3.30*		4.87*		4.89*	
	(0.09)		(0.14)		(0.10)		(0.15)	
Cutpoint 1-2		-3.96*		-4.01*		-5.47*		-3.13*
		(0.27)		(0.34)		(1.01)		(0.41)
Cutpoint 2-3		-1.26*		-1.19*		-3.15*		-2.36*
		(0.19)		(0.28)		(0.35)		(0.33)
Cutpoint 3-4		0.32†		0.39		-2.27*		-0.54*
		(0.18)		(0.27)		(0.25)		(0.27)
Cutpoint 4-5		1.80*		1.84*		-0.53*		0.79*
		(0.22)		(0.31)		(0.18)		(0.27)
Cutpoint 5-6		3.19*		3.12*		0.77*		3.22*
		(0.38)		(0.43)		(0.19)		(0.32)
Cutpoint 6-7						3.10*		
						(0.24)		
BIC	1272.14	1234.20	1204.64	1161.00	1328.53	1275.50	1240.09	1181.22
N	446	446	416	416	445	445	415	415

Note: Estimated OLS and ordered logit coefficients are reported along with standard errors in parentheses.
† = p ≤ .1 and * = p ≤ .05 (two tailed)

Table C.2: Assessments of the Candidates' Positions on Mentioned Issues

	Democrat		Republican	
	Health insurance	Taxes	Health insurance	Taxes
Democrat attacks	-0.98†	-1.17*	0.38	0.56
	(0.55)	(0.55)	(0.53)	(0.48)
Democrat attacks	0.63	-0.03	-0.59	-0.38
X Democratic PID	(0.75)	(0.75)	(0.72)	(0.66)
Republican attacks	-0.63	-0.52	1.03*	0.85†
	(0.55)	(0.54)	(0.52)	(0.48)
Republican attacks	0.47	1.16	0.43	-0.17
X Democratic PID	(0.76)	(0.75)	(0.72)	(0.67)
Both attack	-1.04†	-0.60	1.03†	-0.01
	(0.59)	(0.59)	(0.56)	(0.52)
Both attack	0.18	-0.79	0.28	0.25
X Democratic PID	(0.80)	(0.79)	(0.76)	(0.70)
Democratic PID	0.02	-0.17	0.01	0.91†
	(0.55)	(0.55)	(0.52)	(0.48)
Intercept	4.87*	4.30*	7.25*	7.11*
	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.39)	(0.36)
BIC	2051.80	2040.16	1953.07	1938.11
N	414.00	413.00	405.00	413.00

 Note: Estimated OLS coefficients are reported along with standard errors in parentheses.

 * = p $\leq$ .05 (two tailed)

Table C.3: Assessments of the Candidates' Positions on Unmentioned Issues

	Democrat				Republican			
	Affirmative action	National defense	Government services	Abortion	Affirmative action	National defense	Government services	Abortion
Democrat attacks	-0.42	-0.16	-1.26*	-0.65	-0.21	-0.27	0.27	0.22
	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.45)	(0.44)	(0.46)
Democrat attacks	1.00	-0.01	0.51	0.30	0.06	0.70	-0.05	0.38
X Democratic PID	(0.67)	(0.64)	(0.64)	(0.66)	(0.66)	(0.61)	(0.60)	(0.63)
Republican attacks	-0.77	-0.52	-1.23*	-1.07*	0.92†	0.81†	0.34	0.93*
	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.46)
Republican attacks	1.64*	0.79	0.80	1.46*	-0.23	-0.42	0.20	-1.09†
X Democratic PID	(0.68)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.66)	(0.67)	(0.61)	(0.60)	(0.63)
Both attack	0.04	-0.74	-0.53	-0.42	0.26	0.35	0.39	-0.05
	(0.53)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.51)	(0.52)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.49)
Both attack	0.06	0.40	-0.33	0.13	0.42	0.29	0.28	0.54
X Democratic PID	(0.71)	(0.68)	(0.67)	(0.69)	(0.70)	(0.64)	(0.63)	(0.66)
Democratic PID	-0.49	0.05	-0.17	-0.17	0.29	0.11	0.07	-0.02
	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.45)	(0.43)	(0.45)
Intercept	4.51*	4.91*	4.28*	4.24*	6.93*	7.04*	7.71*	7.78*
	(0.36)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.35)	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.34)
BIC	1937.98	1887.17	1885.77	1919.05	1931.42	1853.65	1848.53	1881.85
N	411.00	408.00	409.00	411.00	413.00	410.00	413.00	411.00

Note: Estimated OLS coefficients are reported along with standard errors in parentheses.

† = $p \leq .1$ and * = $p \leq .05$ (two tailed)

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