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The Relationship Between Displaying Political Yard Signs and Voting Turnout in Omaha, Nebraska: An Exploratory Study

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISPLAYING POLITICAL YARD SIGNS
AND VOTING TURNOUT IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Communication
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Gary Dean Henson
November 1977

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of
Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Thesis Committee

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11/21/77

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INTRODUCTION

In recent studies of voting behavior, few variables have been ignored. These studies have produced a mass of socio-psychological data through which the political scientists, sociologists, and various others have attempted to discover what has influenced voting behavior. Studies have ranged from the macro-influence of national alternatives to micro studies of psychological reasons for preference and turnout. Many of the studies have utilized what is termed the "behavioral approach." This approach, as described by Boskoff and Zeigler, views elections in this way:

. . . the emphasis thus shifts to voting as the culmination of a series of social processes that affect a definable population of impressionable, stubborn, or apathetic persons. In this way, the final vote may be viewed not as an inevitable outcome, but as one of numerous similar and divergent pressures and experiences. Consequently, this viewpoint turns from the vote to the voter, thereby seeking to describe and explain the course by which he and his contemporaries respond to successive appeals for his allegiance. This may be called the behavioral approach to voting, if it is also understood that "voting behavior" refers to the entire set of acts, attitudes, and opinions that persons exhibit in some electoral sequence--not just the act of pulling levers in voting booths.¹

Boskoff and Zeigler's reference to "pressures and experiences" and "successive appeals" indicate broad categories which include one of the variables which was the concern of the present study. One variable was the placement of political yard signs. The relationship between the placement of yard signs and the voting turnout of those with signs was of interest.

¹ Alvin Boskoff and Harmon Zeigler, Voting Patterns in a Local Election (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1964), p. 192.

The goal of the following study was to discover if a relationship existed between these two variables, and if a correlation were found, the strength of the correlation.

Two purposes served by political campaign communicative efforts are voter turnout and candidate preference. The act of voting requires at least two decisions. The eligible voter must decide whether to vote and then must choose between or among candidates and issues. Direction of political action (preference) is more specific to setting and time (a particular election) than whether or not to act.² Voting turnout, however, is more indicative of a political orientation. Voting turnout is the basic form of political participation and has been considered by some political theorists to be the "acid test for interest in the election."³ Of the two purposes of campaign efforts mentioned previously, only voting turnout can be determined from voting records. Of preference, Olds and Salmon stated that it was impossible and undesirable to know how each individual voted.⁴

The measurement of a possible correlation between voting turnout and people who displayed political yard signs and not a relationship

²Lester W. Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 6.

³Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice (New York: Dutton, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), p. 45.

⁴E. B. Olds and D. W. Salmon, "St. Louis Voting Behavior Study" (St. Louis: Metropolitan St. Louis Census Committee of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Statistical Association, 1948), p. A-3, quoted in Austin Ranney, "The Utility and Limitations of Aggregate Data in the Study of Electoral Behavior," in Essays on the Behavioral Study of Politics, ed. by Austin Ranney (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1962), p. 97.

between the signs and candidate preference was chosen for study.

The relationship of political yard signs and the voting turnout of people in households displaying signs was seen as important for both practical and theoretical reasons. First, considering practicality, it was observed that candidates and their workers have, in previous elections, worked diligently to distribute political yard signs. In Omaha, the communication effort became quite visible each election year with the proliferation of signs. Time and money are used to distribute the signs to people willing to display campaign advertising. It would be valuable to know if these people go to the polls. Theoretically, the relationship between the signs and turnout could extend the idea that "Through involvement with and presentation of messages, the source's own attitudes, beliefs and actions are affected."⁵ Inferences could then be made about the self-persuasiveness of displaying a political yard sign.

Therefore, an attempt was made to clarify a relationship of practical and theoretical importance and add to the knowledge of voting and persuasive behavior.

⁵Kenneth E. Andersen, Persuasion Theory and Practice (Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1971), p. 251.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Relevant studies were divided into three areas: political yard signs, voting turnout, and self-persuasion. A survey of the first area resulted in the realization that the professional journals contained no studies of this campaign method. "How to campaign" books produced a few selected comments about the efficiency of the political yard sign. Many of these comments were opinions about "name brand" recognition. One of the earliest of these was a statement by Paul Laxalt. Commenting on his winning campaign for the Governorship of Nevada in 1968 he said:

We also became convinced that this device was worthwhile psychologically for the undecided voter. Just prior to an election it seems to me that the undecided voter is often looking for tangible expressions of grassroots sentiment. Subconsciously, I have a strong suspicion that many of them go around counting car tops and bumper strips. They then form a conclusion and vote accordingly.

The same principle, I believe, applies to highway signs and yard posters--an application of grassroots sentiment.⁶

In 1970 "The Movement for a New Congress" assumed much the same "name brand" rationale. They stated that voting choice was a low priority one, much like buying Colgate toothpaste:

. . . since "Colgate" is the only name that rings a bell, chances are that he will buy Colgate. The voter who gives politics a low priority is similarly inclined to choose the brand-name of the candidate that rings some kind of bell.⁷

⁶Paul Laxalt, "Public Relations in a Winning Campaign," in The Art of Winning Elections Republican National Committee Public Relations Seminar, Ray C. Bliss, chairman (1968), p. 60.

⁷William T. Murphy, Jr. and Edward Schneier, Vote Power (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 29-30.

Nimmo agreed with the function of "display media": "Many campaign managers swear it is effective not only in raising the spirit of the troops but in advancing name recognition."⁸

These assumptions about "name recognition" have not been tested in even semi-rigorous scientific studies in relation to yard signs and no delineation has been made among billboards, placards, bumper strips, and other forms of political advertising. They have been lumped together in various categories such as display media, visual communication and outdoor advertising. As the previous quotations indicated, their effectiveness in the overall campaign has been a matter of personal inference. It was clear that yard signs had not been studied and that suppositions about them were controversial. Schwartzman, a professional campaigner, criticized this "recognition compulsion (or the name game)" and mentioned some of the problems. Included among these problems in Schwartzman's estimation were the ego needs which billboard and poster advertising fulfilled. He stated that these types of advertisements were "gratifying, and they provide physical evidence of expenditures."⁹ Schwartzman summarized: "There is controversy about the beneficial impacts of billboards and posters; there are reasons to believe that few voters determine their choice on the basis of this type of advertising."¹⁰

In summary, political yard signs have not been studied scientifically, their efficiency is controversial, and they have not been

⁸Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 125.

⁹Edward Schwartzman, Campaign Craftsmanship (New York: Universe Books, 1973), pp. 191-192.

¹⁰Ibid.

related to voting turnout by researchers. A study of this unique campaign device seemed justified for the preceding reasons.

Literature in the second area, voting turnout, was more abundant. In order to understand recent studies it was necessary to explore the earlier "classic" studies of political behavior to see the progression of theories and methods as they related to voting turnout. The second area was divided into three sections: four "landmark" studies in political behavior, a review of the significance of voter turnout, and studies measuring the relationship of turnout to variables.

In looking at the literature on voting, the beginning point for almost all present studies was Stuart Rice's Quantitative Methods in Politics published in 1928. Rice's book was the first attempt to apply the "behavioral approach" to the theory that the root of political behavior was in the individual's attitude. According to Rice, attitudes were formed through group identification.) Individual attitudes as formed by group identification were correlated with candidate attitudes to predict elections. The study did not emphasize psychological attributes and was concerned with aggregate data about group differences in both voter turnout and preference with the emphasis on the latter. It differentiated between "urban vote" and "rural vote," indicating identification with one of these groups was indicative of individual choice with the exception of a few deviant voters. Peter H. Rossi's brief statement summed up Rice's concerns which are still most relevant: "In brief, Rice's long-term researches

are concerned primarily with fitting curves to time-series trends in voter turnout and party preference."¹¹

The second classic study of political behavior was published twenty four years later by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet. Their survey study of the 1940 Presidential election, The People's Choice, was one of the important beginnings of survey research in voting. Using the "panel technique" (repeated interviewing of the same people) the study placed emphasis on the individual act, both preference and turnout, as affected by different variables during the campaign. Among these variables were the voter's personality, exposure to mass media and membership in social groups. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet made an assumption similar to Rice's about group consensus when they stated: ". . . a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference."¹² They went beyond Rice, however, in studying the effects of propaganda output in the campaign. Three major effects were discerned: "The campaign activated the indifferent, reinforced the partisan and converted the doubtful."¹³ Of these three they stated: "In any case conversion is, by far, the least frequent result and activation the second most frequent manifest effect of the campaign."¹⁴

¹¹Peter H. Rossi, "Four Landmarks in Voting Research," in American Voting Behavior, ed. by Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodeck (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1959), p. 11.

¹²Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, The People's Choice, p. 29

¹³Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 104.

The beginnings of categorization of turnout was an important part of The People's Choice. Turnout was considered to be a measure of participation. Participation ranged from non-voting (low) to the "opinion leader" (high.)¹⁵ The latter concept, formulated by these authors, was to prove important for many future studies in communication. The variables studied in relationship to participation included economic status, formal education, sex and interest in the election. Rossi stated that the categorization of voters and nonvoters according to many variables was an important step toward handling turnout studies on a more analytic basis.¹⁶ The relationship pointed out here between variables and participation, especially turnout, became an important point of emphasis for later studies.

As a follow-up to The People's Choice Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee studied the 1948 Presidential campaign and election in Elmira, New York and published Voting in 1954. The panel technique was employed to test many more variables, including interaction between the individual and group, issues and community structure, and values. Voting emphasized the interaction process which viewed the environment of group and individual as a mutually influencing system. Berelson, et al. summarized sociological psychological, and political findings in attempting to analyze the "process" of political behavior. The summary of these findings was a major theoretical difference from previous studies. The People's Choice saw the individual conforming to his social characteristics, a major difference. Another difference between The People's

¹⁵Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁶Rossi, "Four Landmarks," p. 21.

Choice and Voting was the emphasis on the relationship between interest and participation. In both studies these variables were considered important. Participation was defined as a continuum from interest in the election to campaigning for a candidate. Voting, however, did not equate participation and interest. Interest effects were important, "But interest is by no means equivalent to such participation, and particularly not to turnout--the crucial act of making one's preference official."¹⁷ Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee rejected the relationship between interest and participation, but acknowledged the importance of turnout.

After Voting, the study of political behavior was greatly influenced by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. As Zeigler described it, "The orientation of the Survey Research Center was, from the beginning, in the direction of social psychology rather than sociology; psychological attitudes were regarded as more reliable predictors of direction of vote than conformity to group standards."¹⁸ The first major work to come from the Survey Research Center was an analysis of the 1952 Eisenhower-Stevenson campaign entitled The Voter Decides. The authors shifted the focus of variables to be used for prediction from ecological to psychological. Ecological variables were not dropped but were not emphasized for predictive use. The shift was important in its inclusion of new variables for political behavior theory. The work suggested a phenomenological macro-political

¹⁷ Bernard B. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, Voting (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 31.

¹⁸ Boskoff and Zeigler, Voting Patterns, p. 8.

theory approach trying to find all the variables, and micro-political theory, attempting to measure relations among the important individual variables. Significant also in The Voter Decides was a construction of an index of political participation. Whereas the authors of Voting had paid little attention to participation, the authors of The Voter Decides were greatly concerned with participation. A trichotomized Index of Participation was developed. The degrees of participation were High (voted, and engaged in other political activity,) Medium (voted, but did not engage in other activity) and Low (did not vote.) A High degree of participation was divided into Organized party activities and Informal participation.¹⁹ Participation was one of four major themes of the study and was related to conflict. It was theorized that voters who had difficulty in choosing between or among candidates felt conflict and were less likely to participate. The authors' underlying concern for participation was expressed thus: "The assumption of a responsive and participating electorate is one of the basic propositions underlying the democratic concept of government."²⁰

The four preceding studies have shown a distinct movement from "pure" sociological to social psychological theories and methods with increasing concern for participation, especially turnout. In the earlier sociological studies turnout for the group was studied and assumptions were made about the voting turnout of the individual from these data. Later social psychological studies suggested that voting

¹⁹ Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin and Warren E. Miller, The Voter Decides (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson and Company, 1954), pp. 30-31.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

turnout was related to a multitude of individual motivations, social stimuli, role prescriptions, and other variables.

Before proceeding to the literature which had studied the relationship of voting turnout to these variables it was necessary to explore the reasons for such a large quantity of studies concerning voter turnout. Various authors suggested reasons for these types of studies.

Milbrath ranked political participation behavior on a scale ranging from least-to-most involvement. He placed "voting" near the bottom of his hierarchy of political involvement with only "exposing oneself to political stimuli" ranked lower.²¹ His use of "involvement" and "participation" were very nearly synonymous. Despite rankings, voting was considered an extremely important mode of participation. Campbell, Gurin and Miller stated: "the act of voting is, except in uncommon circumstances, the sine qua non of political participation for the ordinary citizen. . ."²² Alford and Lee indicated the importance of turnout and its possible relationship to other variables: "Voting turnout in local elections is the most direct measure of participation in the electoral process and possibly an indicator of other forms of political participation."²³ In a multivariate analysis of social participation and voting turnout, Olsen stated the importance of studying turnout: "Why so many people fail to vote is a critical problem for

²¹Milbrath, Political Participation, p. 18.

²²Campbell, Gurin and Miller, The Voter Decides, p. 29.

²³Robert R. Alford and Eugene C. Lee, "Voting Turnout in American Cities," American Political Science Review, LXII (September 1968), 797.

democratic political theory and for understanding political behavior."²⁴

It could be reasonably concluded from these preceding statements that voting turnout was considered by political researchers and theorists to be important for an understanding of the political process and individual political behaviors.

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes gave two more reasons for placing importance on the study of voting turnout. The first reason was related to partisan choice:

Since a partisan decision can be effective only if it is expressed at the polls, people's decisions whether or not to vote have great influence on party fortunes. Indeed, the dramatic turns of our electoral history have accompanied as much by wide changes in turnout as they have by shifts in relative party strength.²⁵

The second was related to attitude correlates of voting and nonvoting. They made the assumption that the act of voting could be interpreted as part of a broader dimension of behavior. Dimensions included the possibility that voting or nonvoting became incorporated as a part of normal behavior. Voting or nonvoting may indicate other correlated behaviors, especially if studied over a length of time. Campbell et al. combined and expanded their reasoning and stated that the partial dependence of turnout on preference was theoretically important because it implicated that whatever influenced the intensity of preference could possibly affect the decision to vote. In summary Campbell et al.

²⁴Marvin E. Olsen, "Social Participation and Voting Turnout: A Multivariate Analysis," American Sociological Review, XXXVII (June 1972), 317.

²⁵Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter: An Abridgement (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964, p. 49.

stated: "No aspect of voting is of more fundamental importance than the individual's decision whether to vote at all."²⁶

Voting turnout was, and is, an important variable for study. As the following studies indicated, voting turnout had an influence on the outcome of elections. These studies correlated voting turnout with variables influencing the intensity of preference and other elements of behavior and attitudes. The relationship of voting turnout to many other factors has been substantiated.

In one of the "classic" studies mentioned previously, The People's Choice, turnout was linked to interest. Those with greater interest were more likely to vote, while those with less interest voted less. Using respondent's self-rating to determine interest the authors found that greater interest was correlated with higher economic status, more education, increased age and other variables.²⁷ In another of the "classics," The Voter Decides, the authors stated that "interested Democrats were somewhat less likely to vote than interested Republicans."²⁸ Paul Van Riper in his Handbook of Practical Politics (1960) stated that in order to get a large turnout of voters, campaign workers would need to work harder at turning out "1. women, particularly housewives, 2. young people, especially those under thirty, 3. persons who never got beyond grade school, and 4. those in the lower income brackets."²⁹ Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes discerned in a study of the 1956

²⁶Ibid., p.14.

²⁷Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, The People's Choice, pp. 42-45.

²⁸Campbell, Gurin and Miller, The Voter Decides, p. 33.

²⁹Paul P. Van Riper, Handbook of Practical Politics (2nd ed.; Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson and Co., 1960), p. 72.

Presidential election campaign that interest in the campaign, concern over the election outcome, sense of political efficacy, and sense of citizen duty were correlated with voter turnout. Greater response in any of these characteristics was found to have a positive relationship to higher turnout.³⁰ In a study of intention and turnout William Glaser found that "Voting is one kind of action that more people 'intend' to perform than do perform."³¹ Using past studies he correlated a long list of variables with intention and turnout. In a 1965 study, Glaser found that "Television owners (and watchers) voted at higher rates than non-owners (and non-watchers.) Newspaper readers voted at higher rates than those who do not read."³² Other research has established that voting turnout is commonly related to race (blacks vote less than whites,)³³ membership and participation in voluntary associations (more memberships and greater participation correlated positively with higher turnout,)³⁴ and social participation. Involvement in voluntary associations, community affairs, and churches seemed to relate to increased political

³⁰Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, The American Voter, PP. 56-60.

³¹William A. Glaser, "Intention and Turnout" in Public Opinion and Congressional Elections, ed. by William N. McPhee and William A. Glaser (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1962), p. 225.

³²William A. Glaser "Television and Voting Turnout," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIX (Spring 1965), 78.

³³Marvin E. Olsen, "Social and Political Participation of Blacks," American Sociological Review, XXXV (August 1970), 696.

³⁴Herbert Maccoby, "The Differential Political Activity of Participants in Voluntary Associations", American Sociological Review, XXIII (October 1958), 531.

activities and greater voter turnout.³⁵ The literature indicated that a great deal of work has been done in the correlation of many variables to voting turnout.

These studies have been the basis for a series of propositions which help to describe voting behavior, especially correlates of participation. Certain of these propositions from Milbrath's Political Participation have implications for the study of yard signs and turnout. First, considering yard signs as stimuli it was important to note that several studies have shown that "the more stimuli about politics a person receives, the greater the likelihood he will participate in politics, and the greater the depth of his participation."³⁶ Milbrath cautioned, however, that causality should not be assumed here because "persons with a positive attraction to politics are more likely to receive stimuli about politics and to participate more."³⁷

The studies of correlation between voting turnout and various social and psychological variables have examined a number of areas in building a profile of those who failed to vote and the characteristics which were correlated with greater turnout. The results of the present study should add to current knowledge. The relationship between political yard signs and voting turnout, if strong, could add to the predictive profile of the difference between voters and nonvoters. Propositions could also be formed about the role of yard signs which, up till now, have been highly speculative.

³⁵Olsen, "Social Participation and Voting Turnout," p. 317.

³⁶Milbrath, Political Participation, p. 39.

³⁷Ibid., p. 41.

The third area surveyed offered insight into the possible role of self-persuasion in the relationship between political yard signs and voting turnout. Andersen stated that "Self-persuasion is one of the effects on the source that results from his participation in the persuasion process."³⁸ The display of yard signs was viewed as "participation in the persuasion process" and, therefore, considered to be potentially self-persuasive in relationship to voting turnout. This assumption about the signs was made after examining "self-persuasion theory" literature.

Andersen stated: "By committing ourselves to a position, we set other people's perceptions in part and we also provide an anchor for our own actions. Having given our word, we are held to it even when others do not hold us to it."³⁹ Andersen's statement reflected Bem's experimental analysis of self-persuasion.⁴⁰ Bem's self-perception interpretation was summarized by Burgoon and Miller in the statement, "people often make inferences about their attitudes by observing their own behavior."⁴¹ Burgoon and Miller also stated that "If Bem is correct in asserting that an individual's attitudes are often inferred from his behaviors, it follows that role-playing behavior should trigger cognitive processes that result in attitude change."⁴²

³⁸Andersen, Persuasion, p. 251.

³⁹Ibid., p. 250.

⁴⁰Daryl J. Bem, "An Experimental Analysis of Self-Persuasion," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, I (1965), 200.

⁴¹Gerald R. Miller and Michael Burgoon, New Techniques of Persuasion (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 71.

⁴²Ibid., p. 56.

Bem stated, "In identifying his own internal states, an individual relies on the same external cues that others use when they infer his internal states."⁴³ Studies involving self-persuasion and self-perception, especially Bem's, appeared to support the inference that displaying a political yard sign would increase the likelihood of voting.

The literature in each area--political yard signs, voting turnout, and self persuasion--indicated both a need for a beginning study of the relationship between political yard signs and voting turnout and insights into this relationship. Political yard sign literature was scant and controversial. Voting turnout studies were numerous, indicating the importance of relationships between turnout and other variables for predictive and theoretical purposes. Research in self-persuasion led this author to infer that a positive correlation was probable between the signs and turnout.

⁴³Daryl J. Bem, Beliefs, Attitudes and Human Affairs (Belmont, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1970), p. 50.

HYPOTHESIS

The predicted relationship was finalized in the following hypothesis:

Persons in households displaying political yard signs will have significantly higher voting turnout than persons in households not displaying political yard signs.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were used:

Political yard signs: Signs which are placed in yards to advertise a particular political candidate. The sign must comply with and conform to the applicable provisions of the Omaha Municipal Code (Ord. 21487-1; October 11, 1960 as amended by Ord. 23482-1; August 3, 1965.)

Voter: All registered persons qualified to vote within the city limits of Omaha, Nebraska, as determined by the Election Commissioner's Office records.

Households: A housing unit is a house, apartment, or other group of rooms, or a single room--any living area where there is either private access or separate cooking facilities. People living in one housing unit constitute a "household."⁴⁴

All other terms will be defined in the following sections.

⁴⁴Charles H. Backstrom and Gerald D. Hursh, Survey Research (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), p. 34.

DESIGN AND METHOD

The purpose of the study required measuring the relationship between voting turnout and registered voters in households which display political yard signs. As a result, careful counting of a qualified and selected sample of households with and without political yard signs was necessary. Three initial design decisions were made. These were: (1) using registrants in households displaying political yard signs, (2) measuring the "available" electorate in households, and (3) using a sample survey.

Registrants residing in houses where a political yard sign was displayed were used to study the relationship. It was impractical to attempt isolation of the individual responsible for displaying the yard sign. Attempting isolation of individuals, if possible, would have severely limited the sample size because of the time required to inquire at each address with a yard sign. Backstrom and Hursh stated that the use of groups of housing units instead of individuals was important for the cost considerations of a survey. Getting representative sample of community attitudes by simple random sample would have required searching out individual respondents spread over the whole community.⁴⁵ Voting turnout was studied, therefore, in relationship to households. It was assumed that the individuals in each household were aware of the political yard sign regardless of who was

⁴⁵Charles H. Backstrom and Gerald D. Hursh, Survey Research (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963, p. 34.

responsible for placement of the sign. "Households" were defined in terms used by the United States Bureau of Census.

Only registered voters, the available electorate, were used. This second decision was important because households with and without political yard signs contained portions of what Eulau and Prewitt called the "eligible electorate":

The eligible electorate are those who meet whatever minimal restrictions are placed on suffrage; these are citizens above the minimum age who have lived in the city long enough to meet registration requirements, whose criminal status does not debar them from voting, and so forth. The available electorate are those who are registered to vote; these are the citizens who have completed the necessary preliminary steps and are able to vote; if they choose, on election day.⁴⁶

Eulau and Prewitt stated that the available electorate is a much more useful indication of participation and turnout than the eligible electorate. Usefulness was one of the reasons the study used the available electorate. Another reason was the difficulty in determining the precise number of people in households categorized as the eligible electorate.

The third decision involved a sampling method for the study. In a city the size of Omaha, an attempt to study every yard sign was highly impractical because of the cost and time required to count yard signs in every neighborhood. Hyman indicated that the sample survey was an efficient and valid method for studying a large heterogeneous population.⁴⁷ A sample survey with carefully limited sampling procedures was

⁴⁶Heinz Eulau and Kenneth Prewitt, Labrynth of Democracy: Adaptions, Linkages, Representation and Policies in Urban Politics (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1973), p. 219.

⁴⁷Herbert H. Hyman, "The Major Types of Surveys," in Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, ed. by Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (2nd ed.; New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 623.

used. The sampling method was divided into four "phases:" Stratification and Clustering, Limitation (Qualification,) Equalization and Proportionality. In order to avoid confusion with other definitions of these "phase" titles each will be operationally defined as they were used in this study.

STRATIFICATION AND CLUSTERING: Backstrom and Hursh emphasized the value of getting a representation of the whole range of certain community attitudes.⁴⁸ A wide range, although not of attitudes, was also desirable for this study. Simple random sampling of households was prohibited by cost considerations. Precints were chosen as the sample units. The precints offered homogeneous samples which were desirable.⁴⁹ After choosing the sample units (clustering) cost became a factor. If a simple random sample of the precints were used many precints would have to be drawn to assure a heterogeneous cross section of the city. Time and money were not available for such an extensive survey. Stratification, therefore, was used to allow fewer precincts to be chosen and yet still have a wide range of socio-economic strata. Stratification along ward lines divided the city. Omaha had fourteen wards which cut across greatly diversified socio-economic areas. Although less geographically representative than using a grid pattern or other division, stratification by wards was the division used by the Election Commission.

The number of precints in each ward ranged from four in a downtown ward to fifty two in a West Omaha ward. After examination of

⁴⁸Backstrom and Hursh, Survey Research, p. 34.

⁴⁹Ibid.

zoning and ward maps it was necessary to drop two downtown wards, the third and fourth, which were highly commercialized and not amenable to political yard signs. Representation was not seriously altered since only nine (approximately two per cent) of the 357 precincts in Omaha were contained in these two wards.

One precinct was randomly selected from each qualified ward. An extra precinct was selected from the two largest wards, the thirteenth and fourteenth. These extra precincts were chosen to compensate for the large number of precincts in these two largest wards. The wards (in Roman numerals,) the number of precincts in each ward and the number of surveyed precincts were indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRECINCTS AND NUMBER
OF PRECINCTS SURVEYED PER WARD

Ward	Number of Precincts	Precincts Surveyed	Ward	Number of Precincts	Precincts Surveyed
I	22	1	VIII	39	1
II	12	1	IX	24	1
III	5	0	X	31	1
IV	4	0	XI	33	1
V	15	1	XII	34	1
VI	12	1	XIII	48	2
VII	26	1	XIV	52	2

LIMITATION (QUALIFICATION): The second phase of sampling was that of limiting the precinct samples to "qualified" households. "Qualifying" was necessary because of different characteristics of the precincts. Some precincts contained registered voters who could not display political yard signs. Included among these were apartment dwellers, business establishments, certain boarders and a few duplexes with no yard space. These differences prompted the decision to dichotomize households as either "qualified" or "unqualified." Qualified households

were those which could have displayed political yard signs. Unqualified households were those which could not have displayed a political yard sign.

EQUALIZATION: The Election Commissioner's Office divided wards into approximately equal population units called precincts. The previous "phase," Limitation (Qualification,) changed the number of households to be surveyed since there were more "qualified" households in some precincts. Since some households were "unqualified" the precincts no longer retained the equality assigned by the Election Commissioner's Office. "Equalization" was needed to assure comparability among units and to equalize the contribution of each unit to the total of all units. Dividing the number of registered persons in qualified households by the least common denominator, the smallest surveyed unit, accomplished equalization. This division created a ratio by which each unit was multiplied. Table 2 indicated the ratio used for each unit. Units were labeled by the ward and precinct from which they were taken.

TABLE 2
EQUALIZATION RATIOS FOR SAMPLE UNITS

Ward and Precinct	Ratio	Ward and Precinct	Ratio
Ward 1/Precinct 9	.64	Ward 10/Precinct 15	.49
Ward 2/Precinct 11	1.--	Ward 11/Precinct 3	.67
Ward 5/Precinct 12	.93	Ward 12/Precinct 8	.59
Ward 6/Precinct 10	.65	Ward 13/Precinct 14	.44
Ward 7/Precinct 24	.58	Ward 13/Precinct 27	.41
Ward 8/Precinct 23	.67	Ward 14/Precinct 20	.89
Ward 9/Precinct 8	.51	Ward 14/Precinct 40	.75

Equalization made the possibility of comparing sampling units feasible but limited the generalizability to the entire city since the units were equal but not proportional to the wards from which they had

been drawn. The goal of the fourth phase was to make the sampling units proportional.

PROPORTIONALITY: Following equalization of the units, another formula was set up to make the equalized units proportional to the number of precinct units in each of the wards from which they had been selected. Blalock stated that "it is not absolutely necessary that all probabilities be equal, since, if the probability of selection is known, it will be possible to adjust for unequal probabilities by a weighting procedure of some kind."⁵⁰ The "weighting procedure" used to make the equalized units proportional was a ratio which would reflect the size of each unit in relation to the ward from which it was taken. The establishment of this ratio involved choosing a ward to use as a basis and dividing the other wards by the number of precincts in the "base ward." The "base ward" would equal one hundred per cent and all other wards could be divided by the number of precincts in the base ward to establish a "reductionary" ratio of less than one hundred per cent.

The term "reductionary" was important for statistical accuracy. "Reductionary" referred to using a portion of less than one hundred per cent of the total registrants who had been surveyed. Facilitating the reductionary ratio required choosing ward number eight. This ward was the largest ward (39 precincts) with only one surveyed precinct. The use of ward eight as the base ward meant the ratio for each ward could be established without an "inflationary" ratio. An "inflationary" ratio would have resulted in making assumptions about a larger sample than had been surveyed.

⁵⁰ Hubert M. Blalock, Jr., Social Statistics (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972). p. 509.

Ward eight equaled one hundred per cent and a ratio was established for the other wards by dividing them by thirty nine, the number of precincts in this base ward. The formula for proportionality was stated as an equation: $X = \frac{Y}{39}$. X was the ratio to be multiplied times the totals of the categories. Y represented the number of precincts in a particular ward and 39 equaled the number of precincts in the base ward. The following table indicated the ratio by which the equalized units were multiplied in this proportioning:

TABLE 3
PROPORTIONAL RATIOS FOR SAMPLE UNITS

Ward and Precinct	Ratio	Ward and Precinct	Ratio
Ward 1/Precinct 9	.56	Ward 10/Precinct 15	.79
Ward 2/Precinct 11	.31	Ward 11/Precinct 3	.85
Ward 5/Precinct 12	.38	Ward 12/Precinct 8	.90
Ward 6/Precinct 10	.31	Ward 13/Precinct 14	1.23
Ward 7/Precinct 24	.69	Ward 13/Precinct 27	1.23
Ward 8/Precinct 23	1.--	Ward 14/Precinct 20	1.23
Ward 9/Precinct 8	.62	Ward 14/Precinct 40	1.23

With the four phases of the sampling method chosen and defined, data collection began. Two days before the November 5, 1974 election in Omaha five teams surveyed the sample precincts. Each team consisted of a driver and a recorder. Zoning maps supplied by the City Planning Department and precinct maps from the Election Commissioner's Office were used to survey each sample precinct. The recorder of each team counted yards which contained signs and recorded a street address for each household in which at least one sign was definitely assigned to that dwelling. Yards in which signs were vandalized or had fallen down were also counted if it could be determined that they were committed to the household where they had fallen. Yards where a sign was on a

property line were not counted unless it could be determined which household was responsible for the sign. Each precinct was surveyed completely checking front, rear and sides of each dwelling. Households consisted of all single family dwellings (zoned R-1 to R-4 by the City Planning Department) and duplexes (zoned R-5 to R-6.) Townhouses and duplexes were counted only if it was clear that the tenants could have displayed a political yard sign.

In a post-election survey all precincts were resurveyed and registered voters were eliminated from any address which could not have displayed political yard signs. Each dwelling was carefully checked for rear entrances, extra mailboxes, and other evidence which indicated more than one family in a residence. "Qualifying" was also verified by checking the Election Commissioner's records for apartment or room numbers which indicated a separate residence. If there was any question about an address with or without a political yard sign, the residents were contacted and questioned about persons eligible to display a political yard sign. The post-survey "qualified" households making the original survey samples more precise.

The results of the pre-election and post-election surveys were taken to the Election Commissioner's Office to record voting turnout results. Using voter registration precinct books the records of the people in households with political yard signs were checked to see if they voted. Registered persons without yard signs were determined by subtracting the number of persons with addresses containing yard signs from the total number of registered persons in each precinct. The number of persons who voted without political yard signs was calculated by subtracting the number of registered persons with signs who voted from the

total number who voted in each precinct. These processes produced the results for the four categories to be tested. The categories, each made up of registrants in qualified households, were: (1) voting with a yard sign, (2) voting without a yard sign, (3) nonvoting with a yard sign and (4) nonvoting without a yard sign.

The number of registered persons in qualified households was obtained by subtracting the number of registrants in unqualified households from the registrants in each precinct in each of the four categories. Subtraction of these registrants changed the sample units from the total registered voters to the total registered voters living in qualified households within each precinct.

The qualified sample units were multiplied by the equalization ratio in Table 2. Then they were proportioned by multiplying by the ratio in Table 3. The four categories of each sampling unit were placed in the 2 X 2 matrix illustrated below:

	Voting	Nonvoting
With Signs		
Without Signs		

The obtained frequencies for each sampling unit were placed in the above matrix. Theoretical frequencies were calculated by multiplying the appropriate row sum times the column sum and dividing by the grand sum. A value of chi-square was calculated based on the difference between each obtained frequency and its corresponding theoretical frequency. The value was interpreted for a value of associated probability in

terms of a sampling distribution. The significance level of the chi square test was set at $p < .05$. Frequencies for each sampling unit were checked in three stages: (1) qualified units, (2) qualified and equalized units and (3) final units. Final units were those which had been qualified, equalized and proportioned. Frequency totals of the sampling units in each stage were also submitted to chi-square analysis. These analyses were the basis for evaluating the hypothesis. A significant chi-square value indicated rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the research hypothesis. The null hypothesis implication was that no voting turnout difference existed between registrants with and without political yard signs.

Blalock stated that a very good indication of the degree of relationship between two dichotomized variables was to compare percentages.⁵¹ Therefore, the percentage differences between voters with signs and voters without signs were also determined for each unit and the total was computed for all units.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 294.

RESULTS

The results of this investigation are summarized in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The chi-square value of the vast majority of individual sample units showed no significant differences among the four categories. Only three of the fourteen individual units showed a significance before equalization and proportioning. After equalizing the sample units, only two had probability levels indicating a significant difference. Equalizing and proportioning resulted in no individual units in which the probability level was less than .05. These results were placed into Tables 4, 5 and 6. Although there were few significant individual sample units, the totals of the individual units in each stage indicated a statistically significant difference.

The Table 4 total, registrants in qualified households without equalization or proportioning, had the highest chi-square value at 12.78. The value indicated a probability value less than the .001 level, very high significance.

Equalization of the sample units reduced the size of the total and the chi-square value. The chi-square value, shown in Table 5, of the equalized total units was 6.22 with a probability value less than .025 but greater than .01. The probability level was far from the significance of the qualified units without equalization, but still significant.

TABLE 4
PROBABILITY VALUES FOR QUALIFIED UNITS

Ward and Precinct ^a	#V/WS ^b	#V/WOS ^c	#NV/WS ^d	#NV/WOS ^e	X ^{2f}	Probability	Sig. ^g
Ward 1 Precinct 9	15	204	30	160	8.31	.001(p).005	S
Ward 2 Precinct 11	2	131	5	122	1.47	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 5 Precinct 12	14	162	3	102	3.-	.05(p).1	NS
Ward 6 Precinct 10	49	240	18	96	.08	p).25	NS
Ward 7 Precinct 24	16	229	3	198	6.86	.005(p).01	S
Ward 8 Precinct 23	22	254	11	102	.33	p).25	NS
Ward 9 Precinct 8	36	299	8	170	5.79	.01(p).025	S
Ward 10 Precinct 15	33	298	11	193	3.51	.05(p).1	NS
Ward 11 Precinct 3	2	193	-	191	1.97	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 12 Precinct 8	11	202	5	223	2.77	.05(p).1	NS
Ward 13 Precinct 14	30	343	10	209	2.65	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 13 Precinct 27	14	364	5	246	1.51	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 14 Precinct 20	14	216	4	59	.005	p).25	NS
Ward 14 Precinct 40	23	218	9	96	.077	p).25	NS
Total	281	3353	122	2167	12.78	p).001	S

^aWard and Precinct from which the qualified unit was taken.

^bNumber of registrants Voting With Signs.

^cNumber of registrants Voting Without Signs.

^dNumber of registrants Not Voting With Signs.

^eNumber of registrants Not Voting Without Signs.

^fChi-square.

^gLevel of Significance set at .05 level (NS=Nonsignificant, S-Significant.)

TABLE 5

PROBABILITY VALUES FOR QUALIFIED AND EQUALIZED UNITS

Ward and Precinct ^a	#V/WS ^b	#V/WOS ^c	#NV/WS ^d	#NV/WOS ^e	X ^{2f}	Probability	Sig. ^g
Ward 1 Precinct 9	9.54	129.68	19.07	101.71	5.27	.01(p).025	S
Ward 2 Precinct 11	2	131.--	5	122.--	1.47	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 5 Precinct 12	12.95	149.9	2.78	94.38	2.78	.05(p).1	NS
Ward 6 Precinct 10	31.61	154.85	11.61	61.94	.048	p).25	NS
Ward 7 Precinct 24	9.32	133.51	1.75	115.43	4.-	.025(p).05	S
Ward 8 Precinct 23	14.7	169.77	7.35	68.18	.22	p).25	NS
Ward 9 Precinct 8	18.24	151.53	4.05	86.16	2.93	.5(p).1	NS
Ward 10 Precinct 15	16.04	144.83	5.35	93.8	1.71	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 11 Precinct 3	1.35	130.-	-.-	128.66	1.34	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 12 Precinct 8	6.49	119.1	2.95	131.48	1.64	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 13 Precinct 14	13.18	150.65	4.39	91.79	1.16	p).25	NS
Ward 13 Precinct 27	5.79	150.48	2.07	101.7	.62	p).25	NS
Ward 14 Precinct 20	12.42	191.68	3.55	52.36	.005	p).25	NS
Ward 14 Precinct 40	17.28	163.81	6.76	72.13	.07	p).25	NS
Total	170.91	2070.79	76.68	1321.72	6.22	.01(p).025	S

^aWard and Precinct from which the qualified unit was taken.

^bNumber of registrants Voting With Signs.

^cNumber of registrants Voting Without Signs.

^dNumber of registrants Not Voting With Signs.

^eNumber of registrants Not Voting Without Signs.

^fChi-square.

^gLevel of Significance set at .05 level (NS=Nonsignificant, S=Significant.)

TABLE 6

PROBABILITY VALUES FOR QUALIFIED, EQUALIZED AND PROPORTIONED UNITS

Ward and Precinct ^a	#V/WS ^b	#V/WOS ^c	#NV/WS ^d	#NV/WOS ^e	X ^{2f}	Probability	Sig. ^g
Ward 1 Precinct 9	5.34	72.62	10.68	59.96	2.95	.05(p).1	NS
Ward 2 Precinct 11	.62	40.61	1.55	37.82	.47	p).25	NS
Ward 5 Precinct 12	4.92	56.96	1.05	35.86	1.05	p).25	NS
Ward 6 Precinct 10	9.8	48.-	3.6	19.2	.016	p).25	NS
Ward 7 Precinct 24	6.44	92.12	1.21	79.65	2.77	.05(p).1	NS
Ward 8 Precinct 23	14.7	169.77	7.35	68.18	.22	p).25	NS
Ward 9 Precinct 8	11.31	93.95	2.51	53.42	1.82	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 10 Precinct 15	12.67	114.41	4.22	74.1	1.35	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 11 Precinct 3	1.15	110.5	-. -	109.36	1.12	p).25	NS
Ward 12 Precinct 8	5.84	107.19	2.65	118.33	1.49	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 13 Precinct 14	16.21	185.29	5.4	112.91	1.43	.1(p).25	NS
Ward 13 Precinct 27	7.12	185.09	2.54	125.09	.77	p).25	NS
Ward 14 Precinct 20	16.52	254.93	4.72	69.63	.007	p).25	NS
Ward 14 Precinct 40	22.99	217.86	8.99	95.94	.078	p).25	NS
Total	135.63	1749.3	56.47	1056.45	5.26	.01(p).025	S

^aWard and Precinct from which the qualified unit was taken.

^bNumber of registrants Voting With Signs.

^cNumber of registrants Voting Without Signs.

^dNumber of registrants Not Voting With Signs.

^eNumber of registrants Not Voting Without Signs.

^fChi-square.

^gLevel of Significance set at .05 level (NS-Nonsignificant, S=Significant.)

TABLE 7

PERCENT OF REGISTRANTS VOTING WITH AND WITHOUT POLITICAL YARD SIGNS

Ward and Precinct	%V/WS ^a	%V/WOS ^b	Difference ^c
Ward 1 Precinct 9	33.33	56.04	-22.71
Ward 2 Precinct 11	28.57	51.77	-23.2
Ward 5 Precinct 12	82.35	61.36	20.99
Ward 6 Precinct 10	73.13	71.42	1.71
Ward 7 Precinct 24	84.21	53.62	30.59
Ward 8 Precinct 23	66.66	71.34	-4.68
Ward 9 Precinct 8	82.01	63.75	18.26
Ward 10 Precinct 15	75.00	60.69	14.31
Ward 11 Precinct 3	100.00	50.26	49.74
Ward 12 Precinct 8	68.75	47.52	21.23
Ward 13 Precinct 14	75.00	62.13	12.87
Ward 13 Precinct 27	73.68	59.67	14.01
Ward 14 Precinct 20	77.77	78.54	-.77
Ward 14 Precinct 40	71.87	69.42	2.45
Total	69.72	60.74	8.98

^aPercent of registrants Voting With Signs.

^bPercent of registrants Voting Without Signs.

^cPercent of registrants voting with signs minus the percent of registrants without signs.

The significance level of the total sample units which had been qualified, equalized and proportioned (Table 6) was similar to that of the units without proportioning. With a chi-square value of 5.26, the probability value of this final total was also less than .025 but

greater than .01.

The combination of a lack of significance for the vast majority of individual sample units in Tables 4, 5 and 6 significance levels for the totaled units was an example of Blalock's generalization:

We must remember, however, that the significance level attained depends on the sizes of the samples used. As indicated previously, if the samples are very large, it is generally easy to establish significance for even a very slight relationship. This means, in effect, that when samples are large, we are saying very little when we have established a 'significant' relationship. For large samples, a much more important question is, 'Given that a relationship exists how strong is it?'⁵²

Significance levels of the totals of individual sampling units were used to determine rejection of the null hypothesis. These totals indicated a better overview of the total population than the individual sampling units. The research hypothesis, then, was supported by these totals. Statistically, there was a significant difference in voting turnout between registrants in households displaying political yard signs and the available electorate in households without signs. The next step was to look at the percentage differences between registrants voting with signs and registrants voting without signs.

A comparison of percentage differences was made between the two variables to gain insight into the strength of this correlation. The percentage differences were placed into Table 7. The Table 7 total indicated a difference of 8.98%. The negative difference of four of the individual units was not disregarded, but this difference of almost 9 per cent was an indication that the relationship between the tested variables was quite strong. An increase in turnout of this magnitude

⁵²Ibid., p. 292

could be decisive in a close election. The results in Tables 4, 5 and 6 were accepted as affirmation that a relationship existed between political yard signs and voter turnout. An indication of the strength of this relationship was the total percentage difference in Table 7. The indication that a greater percentage of people voted who live in households where political yard signs are displayed was and is important. This information can be added to the profile of the voter/nonvoter dichotomy and, combined with other information, it could have predictive value. Further studies are needed and these are outlined in the next chapter.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study indicated that the registered voters living in households with political yard signs during the November 5, 1974 election in Omaha, Nebraska, voted in significantly greater numbers than the registered voters who did not display the signs. The preceding lengthy statement represented the conclusion which affirmed the research hypothesis of this study. Despite the narrow focus of this exploratory study, other factors relative to political yard signs were discovered which could and should stimulate further research into this type of campaign advertising.

The search for answers should be preceded by questions which get to the heart of the important factors to be studied. The present study was valuable in pointing to areas of study and research which need to be explored involving the use of political yard signs and not just for the relationship per se. These areas, as mentioned in the introduction, fall into theoretical and practical considerations.

The theoretical areas were related to studies of self-persuasion and self-perception. A problem with statements made about these areas in relationship to the study was that they would be almost purely theoretical since the study used simple observation and the subjects were unaware of the study. Much more could be determined if reactions from registrants could be measured. The extent of other forms of participation need to be uncovered for persons in households with and without signs.

Gaining information about other forms of participation would have required some form of survey. The number of hypotheses which could be made about self-persuasion would be limited by time and money, but would certainly indicate a great deal about the "binding" of political yard signs to behaviors.

Future studies could not be easily divided into practical and theoretical categories since the two are not mutually exclusive. A list of the many studies which would be labeled "pragmatic" would overlap theoretical studies and vice-versa. The division would be more inferential than substantive and would be based mainly on an assumed difference in orientation between the behavioral scientist and the candidate(s) and/or campaign workers. For example, the behavioral scientist orientation was reflected by preceding statements of "self-theory." Andersen's statement about commitment (page 16) needs to be tested in relationship to yard signs. The questions asked might include: (1) Are political yard signs viewed as a commitment? (2) How strong is this commitment? (3) Does displaying a political yard sign change self-perception? (4) How does displaying a political yard sign affect relationships with neighbors, friends and others?

Bem's assertion that we rely on external cues to infer our internal states (page 17) would also be an area to be explored by more studies of this type of political advertising. Other behavioral scientists would be interested in attitudes which might indicate psychological processes or sociological trends.

The practical orientation of those interested in winning an election was also a concern. The pragmatists, be they campaigner, candidate and/or others, would be interested in the answers to the

following questions: (1) Are political yard signs dysfunctional? (2) Can the cost of production and distribution of these signs be justified? (3) Do political yard signs advance "name recognition" of candidates? (4) Do political yard signs increase "face-to-face communication?"

Questions such as these are based not only on situations presented here, but also by previous studies. The question of yard sign dysfunction was of interest because of the variability of individual precincts and the number of persons in households with signs who did not cast a vote. Also of interest was the fact that in the 1974 Omaha campaign⁵³ and previous campaigns⁵⁴ citizens expressed irritation over political signs. Displeasure has manifested itself in stricter regulation of the signs. Vandalism, complaints about their esthetics, and references to the signs as "pollution" would seem to indicate that the signs might be harmful to a campaign.

The question of cost justification would be more difficult to answer. A cost analysis would be needed to deal with the influence of yard signs in political campaigns.

"Name recognition," the focus of the third question, would be dependent on the election and candidate. National elections for President have received a great deal of media coverage and the candidates in these elections are almost instantly recognizable. Local elections and candidates, however, are covered much more variably. It would seem reasonable to assume that, in some local elections, voters are faced with

⁵³ Editorial, Omaha World Herald, November 14, 1974, p. 10

⁵⁴ Schwartzman, Campaign Craftsmanship, pp. 191-92.

ballots on which they have minimal information about the candidates, perhaps only a list of names. An unknown candidate might need to spread his name in any way possible including the distribution and placement of political yard signs. The Presidential candidate might be wasting money to use political yard signs whereas the district court clerk might need all the recognition he could muster. The assumption about recognition was countered by another important variable in political campaigning, that of the influence of face-to-face campaigning.

Face-to-face campaigning according to a study by Lupfer and Price was "an effective campaign technique." They stated that for a number of reasons "voters are more likely to attend to the party worker's message when it is presented in a face-to-face setting." They concluded, "Responding to the social pressures conveyed by the situation, the undecided are more likely to make a decision, and the undeclared are more likely to make a public commitment."⁵⁵ If political yard signs could increase personalized campaigning, it could prove to be an invaluable tool for the local candidates who "have been left relatively untouched by the shift from printed publicity to radio and television. For them, personal canvassing continues the chief requisite for success."⁵⁶

The answer to these four questions combined with studies suggested previously about responses from the persons living in households displaying signs would be only two very small areas for which other

⁵⁵ Michael Lupfer and David E. Price, "On the Merits of Face-To-Face Campaigning," Social Science Quarterly, LIII (December 1972), 542-543.

⁵⁶ Norman L. Zucker, The American Party Process: Readings and Comments, ed. by Norman L. Zucker (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1968), p. 176.

studies could prove valuable. Such studies might include a compilation of recent laws governing signs, building a model of the "communication flow" of yard signs, or studies of campaign workers involved with these campaign devices. A lengthy list could be made of related questions which might offer insight into our political system for both the theoretician and the pragmatist. Many questions have been raised which could be answered more definitively by future studies.

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