

SEEING IS BELIEVING: THE STRATEGY BEHIND CAMPAIGN IMAGERY AND ITS
IMPACT ON VOTERS

BY

NATHANIEL SWIGGER

B.A., Trinity University, 2001

M.A., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor James Kuklinski, Chair
Associate Professor Scott Althaus
Associate Professor Brian Gaines
Associate Professor Tracy Sulkin

Abstract

As television ads have become the primary tool of communication in American campaigns, research on campaign effects has focused more and more attention on how these ads influence the electorate. Little attention has been paid, however, to the visual content of these ads. Despite a format that delivers an enormous quantity of visual information, most research has focused only on the words spoken during the ad and the little research done on campaign images has focused only on emotional effects. But can voters learn something with the sound turned off? Do voters use campaign images to make inferences about a candidate's issue positions and ideology? I use a multi-method approach to examine how voters use the information contained in campaign imagery to learn about the candidate. While most campaign strategists focus on voters' social identities when designing the look of campaign ads, I find little evidence that viewers respond to campaign images based on identity congruence. Instead, people use the images shown in an ad to make substantive inferences about the candidate, and they incorporate those inferences into their overall evaluation of the candidate in the same way that they would use an explicit verbal statement. Because of the power of images within ads and their relatively low cost (practically and strategically), political candidates can realize enormous benefits by designing campaign images that appeal to voters' policy preferences.

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For Jillian

Chapter 1: Campaigns and Information

1.1: Heather Wilson for Congress!

Located in central New Mexico, the 1st Congressional district offers a textbook example of a swing district with a very slight Democratic lean. The centrally located district includes Albuquerque, by far the largest city in the state, most of its surrounding suburbs, and a small rural stretch to the southeast, making it the only urban district of the three in the state. Al Gore took the district with 50.1% of the two-party vote in 2000, and John Kerry won 50.7% in 2004. As it has in much of the Southwest, the Latino population in this district has grown substantially and, currently, Latinos make up 48% of its population. The Latino residents in this area, like many throughout the Southwest, have voted for and tend to identify with the Democratic Party (Garcia and Sierra 2005).

Given the political make-up of the area, it is somewhat surprising that the 5-term incumbent representing the district was, until 2009, a fairly conservative, Caucasian Republican: Heather Wilson. Unlike many other members of Congress serving in marginal districts, Wilson did not compile a particularly moderate record in office.¹ Furthermore, though she modified her positions somewhat over the course of her career, she was never particularly supportive of Latino political causes, notwithstanding the substantial Latino population in her district.² Her record in Congress, then, should have left her vulnerable to challengers (Canes-Wrone, Brady, and Cogan 2002; Carson 2005). In fact, the Democratic Party targeted Wilson consistently, and her opponents in all five

¹ Wilson's annual ADA scores for her time in Congress from 1999-2009 were: 15, 10, 5, 5, 20, 25, 25, 25, 35, and 25. The overall average for House Republicans during the same period were: 16, 8.5, 7.8, 5.3, 10.8, 10.5, 7.8, 10.1, 16 and 22. Similarly, her common-space nominate scores are consistently near but just to the left of those of the median Republican Representative.

² The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, which tracks legislation and produces annual scorecards similar to those of the Americans for Democratic Action, gave her a rating higher than 15% only twice in 10 years.

of her House elections (a special election in June 1998 plus the general elections of 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006) were all well-connected, well-funded challengers.³ Wilson beat two former New Mexico attorneys general and twice defeated a Latino state legislator from within her own district before she finally lost a contest—the Republican primary for Senate, which she lost narrowly to the Representative from New Mexico’s 2nd district, Steve Pearce.

1.2: Let the pictures tell the story

So how did a conservative white woman win a congressional seat in a slightly Democratic, predominantly Latino district? More generally, how does a candidate successfully win votes if she does not connect with her constituents on substance? In principle, campaigns bring politicians and large numbers of ordinary citizens into contact more directly than any other single political event. The former get to hear what is on voters’ minds, while the latter get to assess the demeanor, personalities, and policy preferences of their prospective representatives. Of course, campaigns are rarely fully informative, which may be why political scientists often seem ambivalent about both the normative role that campaigns play in a democracy and the actual effects that campaigns have on voters. The candidate’s goal is to win an election. Though she presents the voters with information, she does so in a way that favors her candidacy. Often, campaigns attempt to connect candidates with voters by showing that the candidate cares about (and holds the same positions on) issues important to the voter and by demonstrating that the candidate is “one of them” (Burton and Shea 2003; Fenno 2007). For a candidate fighting

³ Wilson never won more than 55% of the popular vote, though she outperformed George W. Bush in both 2000 and 2004 (obviously so, since Bush failed to carry the district). Her opponents in these elections never spent less than \$1.2 million.

for her political life, the campaign is an exercise in information management and distribution. She must highlight her positive qualities, perhaps a strong record of constituency service or an important issue where her views are congruent with her constituents, while downplaying her ideological or personal differences with the voters.

While candidates are concerned with winning elections, researchers also have a strong interest in the information used in political campaigns. The ways that candidates use information as part campaign and voters use information to make voting decisions go to the heart of some of the most important normative questions in campaign research. Do politicians lie in their campaigns? Do they try to tell voters what they will do in office? Do voters account for new information, or do they ignore the campaign, and rely on their own (possibly biased) knowledge of the political world? Primarily, we are interested in the effect and quality of information in political campaigns. When we study how campaigns persuade voters (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948), the relationship between campaigns and behavior in office (Sulkin 2005; Ringquist and Dasse 2004; Geer and Lau 2006), whether campaigns increase issue salience among voters (Druckman, Jacobs, and Ostermeier 2004; Simon 2002), how they improve voter knowledge (Connaughton and Jarvis 2004; Valentino, Hutchings, and Williams 2004; Kam 2006,) or whether or not they encourage voters to go the polls (Finkel and Geer 1998; Freedman, Franz, and Goldstein 2004; Goldstein and Freedman 2002; Wattenberg and Briens 1999; Sides and Karch 2008), we are, fundamentally, asking how information works in political campaigns.

Curiously, though, most political research has looked at one type of information, verbal appeals, while largely ignoring a second source, visual appeals. In spite of the fact

that many of the studies cited above focus on campaign television advertising, an audio/visual medium, most researchers have focused only on the audio content. The result of this oversight is that most campaign research speaks to the content of only one half of the campaign.

My dissertation aims to correct this gap in our understanding of campaign ads by focusing on how campaigns use visual information, and how voters interpret images to make substantive inferences about the candidate. I argue that candidates try to use images to convince their constituents to identify with them affectively—the candidate’s intent is to show that she is just like her constituents by using images congruent with the social identity of the constituents. In general, the candidate’s only goal is to make the people in the campaign ad look like the voters. By and large, the message that voters take away seems to extend beyond just identification, however. Regardless of whether or not a voter is a member of the group pictured, when a candidate pictures a group, some viewers use that image to infer something about the candidate’s level of support for the group as well as a signal about the candidate’s overall ideology. Campaign ads contain a potential wealth of information about a political candidate, and candidates could use their campaign imagery to send voters strong signals about their positions. However, because they often base image decisions solely on social identity groups and beliefs about how those groups respond to self-congruent images, candidates often fail to exploit campaign imagery in ways that would maximize its strategic impact. At the same time, because scholars have largely ignored the informational aspects of campaign imagery, we may often underestimate or mischaracterize the normative quality and substantive impact of political campaigns.

Specifically, I focus my attention on ten demographic and occupational groups whose images could be beneficial to candidates in their political advertising: seniors, children, African-Americans, Latinos, teachers, farmers, blue-collar workers, businesspeople, police officers and military personnel. I chose these groups because each could be classified as “average people” who can fit into a campaign ad unobtrusively. Moreover, each one is visually distinctive and represents an important social identity group.⁴ Focusing on images of people is important because of the role that identity groups play in political evaluations. Individuals often make sense of the world by associating themselves with groups and treating the interests of that group as their own (Converse 1964; Tajfel 1981). Each group represents a constituency that has particular policy interests, and a candidate may wish to strengthen his or her appeal within that constituency without resorting to overt pandering and position taking that could conflict with the candidate’s prior record or personal preferences.

If, for example, a Congresswoman serves a large Latino population that opposes her on a number of racial issues, she might try to use imagery to close the gap between herself and her constituents. She would be ill-advised to explicitly draw attention to those issues (Simon 2002). Indeed, Heather Wilson has avoided making explicit overtures to minorities for the most part.⁵ Instead Wilson has cultivated the appearance of someone who understands and relates to her constituents. The candidate cannot change her race, and she changes her political positions at her peril, but she can change the way she

⁴ There are politically important groups that are not included in this study simply because they are not easily recognizable. For example, I have not attempted to study images of Christians, Jews, gays or environmentalists. It is not at all clear that anyone can distinguish the religion, environmental conscience or sexual orientation of a person simply by looking at a picture.

⁵ In three congressional campaigns (2000, 2002 and 2004) Wilson only had one ad that actually mentioned racial equality, and that ad only made up about 11% of her advertising volume within that campaign. In fact, explicit mentions of civil rights are rare in Congressional campaigns in this sample. See Chapter 4 for information on coding of verbal and visual appeals in campaign advertising.

presents herself. Heather Wilson may not have looked like her constituents, but her campaign ads *did*. Though she may not have explicitly stated her allegiance to Hispanic political causes, the Congresswoman's ads certainly left an impression of support for that group. She rarely ran ads with explicit appeals based on racial issues; however, she did make strong use of visual appeals. After narrowly winning her first re-election bid in 2000, she increased the presence of Latinos in her television ads in the 2002 and 2004 campaigns, when she faced a Latino Democratic state legislator. She went from picturing only whites in her television ads during the 2000 campaign (when she faced a white opponent) to featuring Latinos in more than one-third of her advertisements in 2002 and 2004.⁶ It is probably no coincidence that a successful candidate from a heavily Latino district would picture Latinos. Political campaigns generally attempt to make voters identify with the candidate (Kern 1989; Perloff and Kinsey 1992; Fenno 2007), and political imagery seems to be a perfect tool for the task.

The purpose of this study is to examine the use and impact of imagery in campaign advertisements at both the elite and mass level. I examine individual-level data to gauge the effect of campaign ads on voters, and use the content of campaigns to examine how candidates make decisions about what to include in their campaign advertisements. I use a combination of experiments, survey research, content analysis and interviews with campaign professionals to try and gain a better understanding of imagery in campaigns. This multi-method approach is crucial because of the nature of this study. Research in political campaigns involves understanding not only the psychology of the individual and how average citizens react to the campaign, but also

⁶ Of the 27 distinct ads produced by Wilson in 2002 and 2004, 10 contained an image of a Latino. These ads made up roughly one-third of her ad buy.

elite behavior and motivations. By examining the messages that images send, I hope to create a better understanding of the power of political campaigns.

1.3: Teaching voters?

In the last 50 years television advertising has been one of the primary tools of American political campaigns. In 2004, candidates, issue-advocacy groups and parties spent an estimated \$1.7 billion on television advertising. In 2006, that number increased to \$2.3 billion, and spending for the 2008 campaign exceeded \$3 billion.⁷ Campaign commercials have been one of the primary tools of political campaigns for the last 50 years. These ads reach a broad audience and often become the primary source of information about the campaign, particularly in lower level elections (West 2007). The television ad is the primary strategic tool for candidates, particularly unknown candidates, who want to get a message out to a large number of voters.

Television ads have a particularly strong effect on unengaged voters, who might otherwise hear little or nothing about the campaign (West 1993; Craig 2005). Despite the limitations of the 30-second format, political ads can provide voters with a great deal of information about a candidate's positions and priorities. In their analysis of Congressional promise-keeping on environmental policy, Ringquist and Dasse (2004) found that an overwhelming majority of members of Congress voted on environmental issues in line with their campaign statements. The positions they took in office matched the positions they espoused in their campaign ads. Campaign ads have also been found to be strong predictors of legislative activity. Candidates who make verbal issue appeals during the campaign often follow up on those appeals and concentrate their time and

⁷ Source: Campaign Media Analysis Group

effort in those areas (Sulkin 2009). Campaign ads may not be an ideal venue for extended policy debates or nuanced discussions, but they at least give voters an opportunity to learn where candidates stand and what candidates will do once in office.

Yet for all the money spent on political advertising, and despite the wealth of information contained in that advertising, there is a great deal of doubt about how effective television advertisements are, and how much impact they have on voter perceptions of candidates. The American public is often leery and distrustful of politicians, and particularly mistrusts political advertisements (Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002). There seems to be general agreement among voters that politicians will say anything to get elected and that the positions their ads promise are not to be believed.

Furthermore, voters often interpret campaign ads in line with their own predispositions and beliefs. Analysis of campaign appeals reveals that beliefs about candidates are often predetermined by the partisanship of the candidate. Partisan stereotypes influence voters and change the way they react to information (Petrocik 1996). Voters think they know what a Republican or Democrat stands for, and trust in that knowledge more than they would in a candidate's campaign advertising. For example, Rahn (1993) demonstrated the power of party stereotypes in her experimental study of campaign ads. Without the party label, subjects used the information from advertising to evaluate the candidates, but when given the party label, subjects evaluated candidates based on party, even distorting or ignoring information that seemed to contradict the party stereotype.

Similarly, voters tend to believe that one party or the other is "better" on a particular issue. The issue ownership hypothesis states that candidates have much more

success playing up issues that coincide with their partisan stereotype. Norpoth and Buchanan (1992) studied the 1988 presidential election and showed that attempts to “trespass” onto issues owned by the opposing party did not benefit either candidate. For example, even though George Bush emphasized his commitment to education (an issue traditionally owned by Democratic candidates) many voters believed that it was Michael Dukakis who promised to be “The Education President.” In the same vein, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994) found that Republican advertising on crime was far more effective than Democratic attempts on the same issue. These results suggest that voters’ preconceived notions can be only slightly mitigated by campaigns, and they imply that any attempt to moderate a candidate’s image by running ads counter to a stereotype will achieve limited success at best. Furthermore, Hayes (2005) found that as parties developed issue reputations, the public often used those reputations to infer personal characteristics about the party’s candidates. The Democratic Party’s reputation for aid to the poor, for example, helped to foster the idea that Democrats, in general, were more compassionate. Verbal campaign appeals often have limited utility for a candidate. Much of the discussion of campaign effects over the last two decades has centered on the specific circumstances required for a campaign appeal to have any effect on an individual’s opinions or behavior. When hearing verbal appeals, individuals are less likely to act as passive receivers and more likely to respond based on how they interpret the message in light of their own predispositions.

Although partisan predispositions can minimize campaign effects, campaigns can still change the way voters perceive candidates. However, those effects will be mitigated by the context of the campaign, the partisanship of the voter, and the partisanship of the

candidate. Partisan stereotypes play a role by providing a starting point for evaluations and affecting the way that voters use subsequent information, but the image of the candidate can be “softened” by presenting non-stereotypical issue positions, and candidates can gain a strategic advantage by going against type. Several researchers have found that respondents give more favorable evaluations to candidates of the opposing party when those candidates espouse non-stereotypical positions (Spiliotes and Vavreck 2002; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Sides 2006).

In practice, though, many candidates have trouble making issue appeals that go against their party unless they have a strong reputation on the issue (Sellers 1998). Furthermore, trespassing on an opposing party’s issues comes with a great deal of risk. Politicians who take a controversial stand in a campaign risk alienating voters, and those who attempt to play against type risk alienating their own party’s base. In order to form a campaign strategy and calculate which issues a candidate should focus on, the campaign turns to an increasingly large industry of private campaign consultants.

The dramatic increase in campaign spending over the course of the last 20 years has coincided with tremendous growth in the political consulting industry (Friedenberg 1997). The professionalization of political campaigns has created a new army of political soldiers who spend their lives getting politicians elected at every level of government, and one of the first tasks of any campaign is to figure out exactly what the candidate is going to say. In order to do so, the campaign begins by polling the electorate to find out exactly how the beliefs and qualities of the candidate match up to the voters, and how those predispositions can be used to create a winning coalition on Election Day. One campaign consultant outlined the general process for creating a campaign theme:

“It starts with a benchmark survey where you find out...attitudes about the country, perceptions of issues, perceptions about the candidate (positive and negative). You put all that together and you create a theme that (1) is true (2) takes advantage of your candidate’s strengths and the other guy’s weaknesses and (3) resonates with the electorate.”⁸

Candidates, obviously, should attempt to capitalize on those issues where their positions most closely match the voters’ preferences (Simon 2002; Sellers 1998). While this sounds like a simple, straightforward task, candidates often have trouble implementing this strategy. Simon (2002) found that candidates *tried* to emphasize issues that put them at an advantage, but in close races often abandoned this tactic and engaged the issues that their opponent had raised. He used a formal model to show that candidates acting rationally should never engage their opponent on an issue because it should never be true that talking about the same issue benefits both candidates. Instead, each candidate should focus only on those issues where his or her position is closer to the median voter. In reality, Simon found that candidates often felt they had to respond on a particular issue even when their own position differed substantially from the electorate. This finding was confirmed by Kaplan, Park and Ridout (2006) when they found that Senate candidates tended to engage with one another on the same issues in competitive races. They also argued that candidates will usually ignore their opponents when their opponents fail to raise sufficient funds to mount an effective challenge.

A candidate’s tendency to engage his or her opponent in a close election is puzzling and illustrates some of the limitations of verbal issue appeals. At a time when a candidate should be struggling for any tactical advantage, he or she often pursues a suboptimal strategy because of factors beyond the control of the campaign. Candidates

⁸ This quote comes from one of several post-survey interviews I conducted in the spring of 2008 with professional political consultants. All quotes and responses from these surveys were given on the condition of anonymity. See Chapter 3 for details on interview methodology.

seem to subscribe to the notion that a competitive opponent might be winning because of a particular issue, or they choose to focus on a particular issue because it garners media attention during the campaign. For a variety of reasons, candidates may decide to abandon their own message plan in order to subvert their opponent's issue appeals, even though it seems like this might be a self-defeating strategy.

For political scientists, or any observer making a normative judgment of American democracy, the convergence of issue discussions is usually considered a good democratic practice. For the people running campaigns, of course, the issues discussed in the campaign are not an end unto themselves. Most studies of campaigns reveal that campaign strategists are obsessed with making affective connections with voters (Burton and Shea 2003; Hernson and Patterson 2000; Hernson 2004; Bradshaw 1995), so the issues discussed in the campaign are only useful insofar as they help connect candidates and voters. This may help explain why so many campaigns engage in dialogue even though it seems like an inefficient strategy. Strictly speaking, many of these campaigns probably believe that the substance of the issue discussion is less important than the fact that the discussion is taking place at all. For many campaign strategists, the worst possible tactic is to focus on issues that have no resonance with voters. If an issue is truly important enough, a candidate will have to address it simply to show that he or she is engaged and understands the problems of the constituents.

1.4: Political imagery and emotional appeals

While campaigns may have limited success teaching voters about their issue positions, there is some evidence that they are far more adept at provoking feelings. Just

as many campaign professionals try to attract voters through affective and emotional responses, many scholars have begun to study the role of emotion and affect in political decision making (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). Not surprisingly, emotions can have a strong impact on political opinions and political behavior. Positive or negative emotional responses can cause citizens to re-think their issue positions (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000; Huddy and Gunthorsdottir 2000; Lupia and Menning 2009), learn more about politics (Kam 2006), and possibly increase their level of participation (Brader 2005).

Imagery is one of the primary tools for candidates making an emotional appeal. What research exists on campaign imagery has focused primarily on the emotional impact of various images (with little regard given to the substantive contribution of visual messages). By and large, the effect of advertising images is something that we know little about, but some recent work has highlighted the emotional power of images. Huddy and Gunthorsdottir (2000) showed that images can have a strong impact on politically interested respondents. In their experiments they found emotionally powerful imagery (in this case, adorable, sympathetic animals) had a greater impact on people who already had strong views about the issue discussed (environmental policy), and their emotional responses actually caused the subjects to be more responsive to the ad. For example, supporters of environmental protections became even more enthusiastic in their support after viewing an image of cute mammal.

More recently Brader (2005, 2006) expanded on that research to show how different images can elicit emotional responses that can influence voters. His work focuses on how campaigns use images to set the tone and evoke anxiety and enthusiasm

in voters. Candidates often use gray or grainy black and white images to set a negative mood. In contrast, they picture groups of ordinary people in situations that evoke hope and happiness in order to make positive emotional appeals. For example, pictures of children playing often evoke enthusiastic emotional responses. Brader found that positive emotional appeals strengthened pre-existing views and encouraged participation, while fear-based appeals were more likely to make viewers anxious and, therefore, more likely to seek new information and possibly rethink their opinion of the candidates.

There is little doubt that campaign strategists use emotional appeals within campaigns (Perloff and Kinsey 1992), and Brader correctly points out that many campaigns think of emotional appeals as one of the most important tactics. However, as I discuss further in Chapter 3, campaign strategists do not necessarily think of emotions in terms of the enthusiasm/anxiety framework that Brader uses. Instead, campaigns attempt to forge an affective link with the voter by appealing to the voter's identity. They picture the candidate with a particular group in order to say "I support and care about people like you."

At the same time, political scientists and campaign professionals have largely ignored ideological and substantive messages that can be sent with imagery. There are strong theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that the effects of imagery extend far beyond generating enthusiasm or anxiety. Brader shows how certain images can evoke strong emotions, but that is only one aspect of image effects. This seems to be a consistent blind spot in political research when it comes to campaign ads: researchers believe that substantive messages affect voters (within certain limits), but seem to think that those messages have to be verbalized in order to be substantive. Often the

“substance” of campaign imagery is discussed only when it appears in its ugliest forms (e.g., the notorious Willie Horton ads in 1988 or the Playboy ads used against Harold Ford in 2006, which played on racial attitudes). This bias persists despite evidence that campaign images may be linked to behavior in office (Sulkin and Swigger 2008). If images are information, then the visuals used in a campaign ad may be conveying just as much information (and just as much *useful* information) as the verbal content of the ad.

1.5: Plan of the dissertation

In this dissertation, I argue that campaign imagery carries a substantive message about candidates. Images are information, and voters use the visual messages within an ad to make inferences about a candidate’s positions on the issues and his or her overall ideology. Beginning in the next chapter I lay out a theoretical framework for understanding the impact of imagery. I use dual processing models of persuasion to explain how visual political messages influence voters. Because the visual messages are typically processed without cognitive engagement, they can influence the voters without running into the typical filtering mechanisms that individuals bring to bear on explicit messages. Examining previous research in advertising and psychology, I explain how respondents interpret visual messages and the issue inferences they might make based on campaign imagery.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I investigate the political context and establish how images are used in political advertising. The goal is to see how campaigns view the role of campaign imagery, and how it fits into the overall campaign strategy. Chapter 3 deals with the views of consultants and campaign professionals. We can observe the ads the

campaigns run and produce, but it is helpful to take a step back and actually examine the motivations of the people behind those ads. What do professionals hope to accomplish and why do they choose the images they do? I present evidence from both an online survey of consultants and in-depth interviews to find out how campaign professionals think about ads. Ultimately, it seems that consultants view imagery as a tool for generating affective attachments to the candidate and focus on group-oriented appeals, but they rarely focus on the ideological message of an image or account for how images change perceptions of a candidate's issue positions. Professional consultants seem to believe that imagery is more powerful than verbal statements. There is consistent agreement that images help establish affective bonds, while words are far less likely to attract the voter's attention and alter the voter's perception of the candidate. Curiously, campaign professionals believe that voters use images to make substantive inferences about the candidate, but the consultants do not seem to utilize that belief when designing visual appeals.

While the data in Chapter 3 are useful, the results come from a small, non-random sample. In order to demonstrate the generalizability of these findings and further examine image strategy, I look at Congressional elections in Chapter 4. I present data from the 2000, 2002 and 2004 Congressional campaigns and show how candidates deployed imagery in response to the demographics of their constituents and the changing political environment. Using the storyboards from the Wisconsin Ads Project, I have compiled data on the type of images House candidates used, and how often they were used, as well as the explicit verbal content of their ads. I find that candidates, all else equal, try to make their ads "look like" their constituents, presumably with the intention of generating

an affective connection with their constituents. These data confirm that candidates use ad imagery in their campaigns to forge affective connections with voters and that visual and verbal content are often constructed with different strategic concerns in mind. While there may be a relationship between visual and verbal content, the association between the two tends to be fairly low. Moreover, the images candidates deploy often have a significant effect on Election Day outcomes. I find that candidates who make their ads look like their constituents receive more votes, but that this effect is also contingent on the ideology of the district.

Those initial chapters deal with the way that political candidates use imagery in their campaigns. In Chapter 5, I look at campaign effects at the individual level using survey data. I matched up Congressional campaign data with survey data from the 2000 National Annenberg Election Study. Using cross-sectional data on attitudes toward Congressional candidates, I find strong image effects in real-world campaigns. The individual-level data confirms some of the conclusions from the aggregate analysis in Chapter 4. While affect played a small role, respondents indicated they felt better about candidates who ran ads featuring images that sent a message of support that the respondent agreed with. For example, respondents who supported labor unions (regardless of whether or not they were union members themselves) rated candidates higher when they ran images of blue-collar workers. In contrast, I find little evidence of a similar impact from verbal messages of support for a group. At the same time, I find that candidates benefit from showing bipartisanship through their imagery. Democrats who used conservative imagery and Republicans who used liberal imagery in their advertising performed better among independent voters and voters in the opposite party.

This observational data confirms that respondents receive and interpret the messages that campaigns deliver visually, and alter their perceptions of candidates over time based on the ad strategies that candidates use.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I investigate voter reactions to ad imagery in a controlled setting. I conducted a series of experiments using an adult population and a student subject pool, varying the images shown in a campaign commercial and then gauging voter impressions of the candidates. These experiments are an ideal way to isolate causal mechanisms at the individual level (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002). I find that voters react strongly to campaign imagery, using those images to infer a candidate's positions on issues. The effects of imagery can be altered by the explicit content of the ad; respondents may take more notice of an explicit issue depending on the accompanying image, but the respondents systematically differed in their impressions based on the images they saw. Further, in the absence of a verbal message, subjects used the images in the ad to make the same type of inferences that they might gather from a verbal statement. For example, respondents who saw an ad featuring African-Americans reacted as though the candidate had explicitly supported affirmative action.

Overall, my dissertation shows that voters see images as information and use that information to make judgments about political candidates. In ignoring this effect, we have been underestimating the amount of information transfer that takes place in a political campaign. Candidates may be sending messages to voters visually, and the voters seem to be receiving those messages. Any study of American campaigns that fails to account for this may systematically mischaracterize the nature of persuasion and learning in a campaign and the utility of the campaign in the democratic process.

Chapter 2: How Viewers Process Campaign Images

2.1: Introduction

In this chapter I lay out the ways that imagery can have a direct impact on the voters' perceptions of a candidate. Campaign ad images serve various purposes. An ad that pictures a candidate along with five African-Americans sends a definite message, one different from that conveyed when the same candidate appears with five white citizens. Such messages might affect voters in at least three ways. First of all, voters might develop an affective attachment to a candidate based on how well they identify with the people pictured alongside the candidate. The image tells voters, implicitly, who the candidate identifies as his or her key constituents. Second, picturing a group sends a message of implicit support for that group. For example, a candidate who pictures farmers sends a signal to voters that he will support agricultural subsidies and protect local farming interests. Obviously, if a voter happens to be a farmer, then the image may appeal to him because he identifies with the group; however, the image might also appeal to a voter who supports in agricultural subsidies without being a farmer or otherwise a beneficiary of the policy. Finally, the images that a candidate uses could send a signal about the candidate's ideology. Many groups are linked in the public mind to liberalism or conservatism because of their past allegiances, and a candidate can take advantage of that link to alter perceptions of her own position on the ideological spectrum.

It may seem strange to attribute substance to a candidate's image choices. To some observers, campaign ad imagery probably seems like the most vacuous element in modern campaigns. Many candidates, in the television spots, surround themselves with children (see Chapter 4), for example, and it can be difficult to see baby-kissing as

substantive communication. Political imagery has often been featured in some of the most egregious racial appeals (Mendelberg 2001), taking advantage of negative racial stereotypes to appeal to the basest instincts of the electorate. However, as Philpot (2004) found, images can convey substantive information that alters the way voters perceive a candidate, and campaign images often reflect a candidate's sincere positions and priorities (Sulkin and Swigger 2008). Through their advertising, candidates attempt to say that they care about the voters and that they care about the issues that the voters care about (Rosenberg et al. 1991; Bradshaw 1995). They may do this through their verbal messages, but, whether they realize it or not, they may also transmit these messages through the images they use in their ads.

2.2: How do we think about images?

While political scientists have largely focused on overt verbal messages in ads, other disciplines have looked at more subtle aspects of advertising. Much of the research on the persuasive impact of ads in general, and ad imagery specifically, comes from psychology, advertising, and communication. Although most of this literature focuses on persuasion in a commercial context, many of the ideas born in this literature should transfer to political advertisements as well. Political campaign ads are designed to be persuasive messages. While candidates may not try to change voters' issue beliefs, they are trying to persuade them to buy (vote) for a product (candidate). Overwhelmingly, commercial research shows that all information is not created equal, nor is it absorbed in the same way. People respond to explicit and implicit messages very differently, individuals infer messages from imagery, and those images can heighten or override the

impact of explicit verbal appeals. Ever since Mitchell and Olson (1981) showed that visual cues within an ad have a persuasive effect independent of “verbal attribute claims,” there has been a virtual bonanza of research on images and their persuasive effects.

For the most part, research on persuasive messaging builds on dual processing models of persuasion such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Heuristic-Systematic model (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Chaiken 1987; Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly, 1989). In general, this research focuses on persuasive appeals in a commercial advertising context, although the key ideas and concepts in this research have often been adapted for the study of campaign ads.

Dual processing models posit that persuasive messages are received and interpreted in different ways depending on the motivation and cognitive abilities of the individual and the format of the message. Central or systematic processing consists of cognitive processing in which the individual thinks about the content of the message and weighs the pros and cons. He or she evaluates the content and is persuaded (or not) based on the explicit message and other factors such as prior knowledge and prior experience. This does not necessarily mean that the subject evaluates the message objectively, using only logic and rational thought, but the message garners enough attention from the individual to get some kind of thoughtful response. Peripheral or heuristic processing, in contrast, is impressionistic. The recipient of the message does not cognitively engage the substance of the message; rather, he or she reflectively reacts to cues that might or might not be relevant to the decision-making task.

For the most part, people seem to react to images in a peripheral or heuristic manner (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). As a person becomes more interested and involved

in an advertisement, he or she is more likely to use central processing to think through its message. However, even an attentive respondent may not use central processing to evaluate all of the content of an ad. Lord, Lee and Sauer (1995) argue that both central and peripheral processing take place simultaneously. In their lab experiments they demonstrate that these processes happen not only independently but also simultaneously, so that a respondent can be affected by both the explicit content of the ad, which he or she can analyze, and the peripheral content, which leaves an impression without triggering any cognitive evaluation. Simply put, it is difficult for an individual to pay attention to and evaluate all aspects of a persuasive message (verbal content, images, tone, music, etc.). So images not directly related to the verbal content of a persuasive message may be processed reflexively without receiving much thought or attention.

The individual's response to imagery is important because images are information. The cliché is that a picture is worth a thousand words. Although an image may not say quite that much, it does constitute a metaphorical claim. Pictures can convey ideas and feelings that may or may not be related to the verbal content of the message. When the images and verbal content convey the same message, the verbal content can form an "anchor point" that helps enhance the message contained in the image (Phillips 2000). Advertisements are ideal space for multi-tasking, however, and it may be advantageous to vary the messages conveyed verbally and visually in order to deliver more information. When words and pictures have divergent messages the visual message may overwhelm the verbal. Smith (1991) found that when the imagery of an ad focused on a different message than the verbal content did, subjects responded more strongly to the message in the picture than the one in the verbal claim, often ignoring the latter. On

the other hand, there is some evidence that attractive visuals can enhance verbal messages, even when those visuals are unrelated to the message. McQuarrie and Phillips (2005) showed “that the use of metaphorical claims [like those made in pictures] in ads appears to make consumers receptive to multiple, distinct, positive inferences about the advertised brand (i.e., weak implicatures), while still conveying the main message of the ad (i.e., the strong implicature). Furthermore, metaphors presented in pictorial form are able to elicit these multiple inferences spontaneously at the time of ad exposure” (17).

Images, then, convey information to a respondent. Many investigations into persuasion through the use of imagery focus on commercial advertising; however, the distinctive effects of imagery should carry over from commercial advertising to political advertising because the evaluative system respondents use to deal with commercial messages should be similar to the pathway taken by persuasive political messages. The images contained in a political ad should be received by individuals in the same manner as images in a Coca-Cola commercial. An individual’s low involvement with the Coke ad makes her unlikely to engage cognitively with the pictures of happy people drinking soda. Similarly, most individuals are unlikely to be highly engaged with political television commercials, and so political ads may be able to effectively persuade voters with images.

In that sense, images may be considerably more effective than explicit verbal messages would be in a political ad. While many voters are remarkably good at filtering out the verbal messages (Rahn 1993), they may not do as well when the message is not explicitly articulated. In processing the verbal message the voter brings to bear all of his or her prior experiences and knowledge. The partisan stereotypes, previous knowledge

and past experiences are all ingrained in the voter and used to evaluate and sometimes counter the explicit content of the advertisement. Viewers do not passively accept all of the messages they see in an advertisement; they think about them and use their own knowledge of politics to make sense of the messages. In her experiments Rahn (1993) found that voters relied on their beliefs about Republicans and Democrats and used those beliefs to reject campaign messages that contradicted the stereotypical reputation of the party. Candidates often have trouble successfully trespassing on issues because voters tie them to their partisan identity (Norpoth and Buchanan 1992). In order to process that message and reject (or accept if) a viewer has to cognitively engage with the message and go to the effort of placing that message into context with his or her beliefs.

However, peripheral messages bypass these defenses. The voter may not be motivated enough about the ad to process the visual message in the same way they would contextualize the verbal content of an ad. In effect, peripheral messages like the background images in campaign ads make an impression with the voter because he or she may lack sufficient motivation to pay attention to the visuals and cognitively engage with their message. The magnitude and direction of the effect of background imagery, therefore, should be the same across different partisan groups, and the effect should be consistent regardless of education, political knowledge, or overall cognitive ability.

In fact, political candidates often try to use subtle cues to push voters into making judgments about them. For example, Valentino, Hutchings and White (1999) showed how appeals on crime could often evoke racial feelings among white voters. Ads that mentioned crime could make whites engage in racial thinking without doing so consciously. White candidates who made explicit racial appeals often received

ambivalent responses from whites who may have shared those views, but were conflicted because of their own desire for social acceptability. When processing subtle racial appeals, however, voters did not use central or systematic processing, and therefore did not evaluate the message in the context of social desirability. Subtle cues on race or gender (McDermott 1997) can have a substantial impact on voters without ever drawing explicit attention to racial or gender issues.

Because campaign images also enter the peripheral or heuristic processing system, they should not be subject to partisan bias or any other cognitive defense that could alter the impression left by the imagery. From a strategic standpoint, this also means that the candidate should not feel bound by the restrictions that often limit what he or she might say in a television ad. Typically, candidates stick with issues where they have a strong personal or legislative record (Sellers 1998; Sides 2006). Candidates worry about making statements on issues where they have little or no credibility because, presumably, voters would punish them. On the other hand, if voters process a visual message without cognitively engaging with those messages, then they will be incapable of using any of their pre-existing knowledge of a candidate's record or partisanship in order to judge the message. They would be passive receivers accepting whatever message the candidate chooses to send.

2.3: Three aspects of visual appeals

What exactly does an image in a political ad tell the voter? Images might be information, but the metaphorical claim in a political image might be interpreted in a number of ways. In this dissertation I focus on ten demographic and occupational groups:

children, senior citizens, African-Americans, Latinos, farmers, blue-collar workers, teachers, soldiers, police officers and businessmen. I am particularly interested in the people pictured in an advertisement (as opposed to setting or some other visual aspect) because of the affective ties that exist among and across members of groups. A considerable amount of research, across a number of disciplines, has documented that people's identities with groups strongly influence how they view and react to their worlds. According to social identity theory, an individual identifies with a group if she recognizes her objective membership in a group and has a strong sense of group attachment (Tajfel 1981), and the groups that a citizen identifies with can have a dramatic impact on how he or she views the political world. Converse (1964) argued that a large segment of the voting public had no real political ideology, but simply relied on social identity groups to make sense of politics. So farmers, for example, make political judgments based on issues that affect farmers, union members make judgments based on the interests of labor unions, etc. Social identity can have a strong effect on political attitudes (Price 1989), and group membership may encourage individuals to participate in the political process when their own individual incentives would lead them to opt out (Huddy and Khatib 2007; Fowler and Kam 2007).

Moreover, candidates can take advantage of social identities to craft their appeals to different groups. The issues that a candidate highlights can have a dramatic impact on voting choices, particularly for groups that are immediately affected by the issue being primed (Druckman, Jacobs, and Ostermeier 2004; Hernson and Patterson 2000). For example, in their experiment on priming racial attitudes, Valentino, Hutchings and White (2002) showed that running ads on crime and welfare, which are closely associated with

negative black stereotypes, had a strong impact on white voters. Schaffner (2005) recently used advertising in the 2000 U.S. Senate elections to show that priming on women's issues (education, childcare, etc.) can have a dramatic effect on how women vote.

All of these studies, though, focus on the verbal message within the political advertisement, and candidates are limited in how much they can say in an ad. Playing the race card can be an effective tactic, but only if it goes unnoticed (Mendelberg 2001). Candidates caught talking about issues in order to play on racial tensions face a harsh backlash from the electorate. Even making positive issue statements can prove problematic if a candidate (or his party) lacks a strong reputation on an issue (Rahn 1993; Sellers 1998).

On the other hand, making a visual appeal to a social identity group may require little in the way of campaign resources and does not require any special background or partisanship. Obviously, not all groups lend themselves to visual appeals, however. It is not clear how one would visually identify a middle-class person or a Christian, for example. The groups I examine in this study (seniors, children, African-Americans, Latinos, teachers, farmers, blue-collar workers, businessmen, police officers and military personnel) are all visually recognizable. Therefore, a member of one of these groups can be inserted into an ad without the ad calling attention to or verbally identifying the person as a member of a group. The voter may infer a metaphorical claim from the image (as I hypothesize in the next chapter), but there is no verbalized message that the candidate must justify. Studies in advertising and psychology have shown that respondents are more likely to respond favorably to advertisements featuring people who "look like"

them than ads that do not (Chang 2002). The 30-second political ad is not a good format for explaining nuanced positions; however, it is a perfect opportunity to picture a candidate alongside particular groups. This leads to my first hypothesis about the impact of political ad imagery:

The Identity Hypothesis: When a candidate pictures a visually recognizable member of an occupational or demographic group, voters who are members of that group will notice and respond more favorably to the candidate than when the candidate does not picture such a member.

If candidates want to make a connection to the voter, then it seems clear that they might try to appeal to voters using images that remind the voters of themselves.

Essentially, they are building an affective tie with the constituency and building the idea that the candidate understands them and people like them. In theory, by using an image that reflects the voter, the candidate increases the chance that the voter will notice and remember the candidate's message in the same way that commercial advertisers use self-congruent images to try and reach consumers (Chang 2002). When appealing to a group, candidates frequently try the "I am one of you" tactic (Fenno 2007), but may have problems using this tactic with all of their constituents. A candidate obviously cannot change her racial identification; however, she can gain a substantial advantage by picturing Latinos in her ads in order to reach out to that constituency. Wrapping her arms around Latino voters sends the message that she cares about those voters and stands with them. It also sends the message that Latinos support her, so that Latino voters viewing the ad will have a reason to identify themselves as a member of the candidate's constituency.

In fact, this is how many political operatives use campaign imagery. Campaign professionals tend to design ads with the idea of creating an image that the audience identifies with (Kern 1989; Perloff and Kinsey 1992). Kern found that many campaign

operatives implemented training from advertising research and focused their efforts on building an affective tie with the audience. Though most of the scholarly research on the identity hypothesis was born from commercial advertising research, there was little doubt among operatives that it could be adapted for political campaigns. As I will explore in Chapter 3, the Identity Hypothesis still forms the core of the dominant paradigm among campaign strategists. The campaign's focus on emotion and generating affective ties often leads to the use of images that reflect the demographics of the constituency. This is a very simple view of imagery effects based around the notion of identity politics. The Identity Hypothesis suggests that voters simply want to see a candidate who looks like them or at least supports people who look like them. It also suggests that voters do not necessarily infer a political message from political imagery. Instead, voter reactions come from a basic affective identification with the image shown.

However, imagery may not only affect members of a group but could also have a substantial impact on people who support or oppose that group. When a candidate embraces a recognizable identity group, he is trying to say "I am one of you," but he may also be sending the message, "I support your group and the things it stands for." Social identity groups often have strong political associations (Price 1989; Dawson 1995). The group organizes politically and takes stands on issues or mobilizes for certain causes. Indeed, one of the reasons that many individuals view politics through the prism of group identities is that their groups actually take political stands.

Picturing a group can signal that the candidate cares about that group and that he or she supports the group's political views. There has been some research (usually linked to racial issues) that attempts to connect visual messages with substantive politics. For

example, Tasha Philpot (2004) used the 2000 Republican National Convention as a case study in shaping a party's image on race. She pointed out that the GOP, contrary to the party's reputation, went out of its way to feature African-American speakers during the convention. The result was that those who watched the convention came away believing that the Republicans were making a strong effort to reach out and appeal to minority voters. The implication of Philpot's work and the research on commercial advertising is that candidates should be able to use their ads to communicate with voters through the images they choose. Yet, there has been little follow-up on this kind of research, even though it seems that this finding could be applied to a variety of social identity groups, beyond just African-Americans.

The Group Support Hypothesis: When a candidate pictures a visually recognizable member of an occupational or demographic group in his or her political ad, voters will interpret that image as a message that the candidate favors that group.

Further, although members of a group may be more likely to react to an image of the group, that does not necessarily imply that they must respond positively, and this effect should not be limited only to voters who are members of the group being shown. If the Group Support Hypothesis is correct and an image of a group sends a message of support for that group, then that message should have an impact on all voters. Anyone viewing the ad might come away with the impression that the politician supports the group being pictured. Of course, unlike many heuristics, the effects of imagery may not necessarily be a conscious process. In Lupia's (1994) work on heuristics, voters took what they knew of interest group activities and (presumably) consciously applied that knowledge to their voting decision. It should be no surprise that politically sophisticated individuals often make better use of heuristics (Lau and Redlawsk 2001) since they have

more experience and a better understanding of how to make political decisions. In the case of campaign imagery, however, the voter may not cognitively engage with the images and use them in the same way he or she would explicitly apply a heuristic. It should also be noted that all voters, regardless of their level of political knowledge should be equally capable of grasping the visual metaphor. Understanding the Group Support Hypothesis is not something that should require cognitive attention or prior knowledge of politics.

Whether or not those voters *like* the candidate more or less will vary depending on whether or not they support the group, but all voters could come away with the same substantive impression. Images, therefore, can be a way to reach out to a wide range of voters, not just one particular group. There may be a great deal of overlap between members of a group and voters who support that group, but the two are hardly synonymous. For example, many voters who support workers' rights and labor unions are neither blue-collar workers nor members of a union. Many people outside of a group may still have sympathy for that group and its aims. As Hutchings (2004) argued, support for a group is often offered in order to draw in voters who are outside the immediate group but who may nevertheless hold policy positions that favor the group. Hutchings contended that Republican appeals on race were meant to target female voters, who might be more sympathetic to helping disadvantaged populations. Women were more susceptible to these appeals because their own experiences with sexism made them more likely to empathize with minorities. He specifically focused on race, but many groups in American politics may generate a similar reaction from individuals outside the group for similar reasons.

Unlike the Identity Hypothesis, the Group Support Hypothesis suggests that there is a substantive message conveyed by the images a candidate chooses. Voters are not responding simply based on affective identification, but as a result of a substantive impression left by the image. It is possible that members of a group may be more likely to notice their group in an ad. If that is the case, then we would expect to see stronger ad effects among members of a group than those outside the group. For example, if an ad pictures African-Americans, it may have a stronger impact on African-Americans than whites.

In fact, visual messages can be much stronger than similar verbal messages of support. The Republican Party may have had little success softening its image on racial issues through verbal comments because voters have been conditioned by the party's traditionally conservative stance on race (Petrocik 1996), and voters bring that knowledge to bear when judging verbal messages (Rahn 1993). Regardless of a candidate's sincerity, unless he or she has a strong, personal reputation on a particular issue (Sellers 1998), the candidate often cannot convince voters to look beyond party label using verbal appeals. Campaign imagery is simply a faster, more efficient way of conveying a message of support. In this case, the viewer may actually be getting an accurate picture of the candidate. Sulkin and Swigger (2008) compared images used in Congressional campaigns to subsequent legislative behavior and found significant correlations between picturing a group during the campaign and supporting that group in office.

In addition to signaling a candidate's support for a particular group, showing images of a group in a political ad may convey an even deeper message about the candidate's ideological position. Many segments of American society are strongly linked

with a particular party or ideology because of a long association between certain groups and political parties (Petrocik 1996). Voters typically come to associate parties with certain stereotypes and use them to make inferences about parties' candidates. For example, voters associate African-Americans with the Democratic Party and liberalism because of the longstanding alliance between the party and black voters (Mendelberg 2001; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Valentino, Traugott, and Hutchings 2002; Valention and Sears 2005). Race may be a strong signal of ideology, but it is undoubtedly not the only one. Many groups have strong political ties to one of the major parties and could serve as powerful ideological cues.

In order to gain a better understanding of the ideological content of images, I surveyed Illinois residents about different groups. Using the Illinois sample from the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project⁹, I surveyed respondents and asked them to place various groups on a 7-point liberal–conservative scale. Table 2.1 shows how respondents viewed each group. The first column shows the mean placement (with standard deviation in parentheses) of each group; the other columns show the percentage of the sample that placed that group on the liberal (1-3) or conservative (5-7) sides of the scale.¹⁰

The results indicate that these occupational and demographic groups have strong ideological reputations. Respondents saw African-Americans, teachers, Latinos, and

⁹ The Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project is a multi-university study conducted by You Gov / Polimetrix under the direction of Simon Jackman of Stanford University and Lynn Vavreck of UCLA. While the surveys contained content common to all respondents, individual institutions were allowed to place their own surveys and experiments within each wave of the study. Full details are available from the author.

¹⁰ I am not suggesting that all members of a particular identity group share the same political ideology or even that a majority of a particular group does. It is just that the public, in general, views the group a certain way. There are, undoubtedly, many politically liberal senior citizens, for example, but the general public perception equates seniors with conservatism.

labor unions as liberal groups. On the other hand, police officers, soldiers, senior citizens, businessmen and farmers were all seen as conservative groups.¹¹ In every case, a majority of respondents placed the group on one side of the ideological spectrum, and in 7 out of 9 cases, more than 60% of respondents identified the group as liberal or conservative. Since these groups have ideological reputations it would make sense that picturing a member of one of those groups with a candidate should alter a viewer's perception of the ideology of that candidate.

The Ideology Hypothesis: Picturing groups widely perceived as conservative will cause voters to view the candidate as more conservative and picturing groups perceived as liberal should make voters view the candidate as more liberal.

Of course, just because candidates can send a message with advertising imagery does not necessarily mean that they should. This connection between groups and ideology presents a strategic complication for political candidates. Commercial advertisers do not have to worry about the political implications of a group. When Ford, for example, pictures ranchers and farmers driving trucks the company is merely trying to give the impression that ranchers and farmers like Ford trucks. In contrast, if a political candidate pictures a farmer she may not only be signaling support for farmers, but also signaling that she is more conservative in general, because of the association between rural voters and the Republican Party.

The effect of picturing a group on voter preferences for a candidate should vary in size and direction according to the individual viewing the image. Voters will favor a candidate more when they see what they want to see. When the visual message of the ad coincides with the voter's political beliefs, he or she will be more inclined to support the

¹¹ A similar survey run through the University of Illinois subject pool found virtually identical results using only a student population.

candidate. In this respect, voters should use visual statements in the same manner that they would use verbal issue positions to assess a candidate. In fact, because the visual message is likely to bypass cognitive filters, it should make more of an impact than a verbal message would because the voter is more likely to accept it without evaluation and add it to his or her impressions of the candidate. As noted before, a voter's political beliefs should not affect the message they receive from the image because that visual message may not be processed cognitively, but those pre-existing beliefs should interact with the visual message and have an impact on the voter's ultimate judgment of the candidate. Voters' preferences for a candidate should be mitigated by their own predispositions. If they support the group shown in the ad, then they have a more favorable judgment of the candidate; if they oppose the group, then they are more likely to punish the candidate for expressing that allegiance.

From a strategic viewpoint, candidates have to build a winning coalition on Election Day. That may mean reaching out and sending a message to certain groups within the electorate; however, they would be wise to consider how that message might be received by opposing groups. Candidates in districts heavily populated by organized labor and blue-collar workers could receive benefits by picturing workers within their ads, but candidates with more constituents on the other end of the economic scale would be foolish to try the same tactic. Candidates often craft their verbal appeals to match their constituents' desires (Kahn and Kenney 1999), and they should employ a similar methodology when deciding what images to use.

Of course, in some cases it may be advantageous for a candidate to send a conservative or liberal signal to voters. By sending an ideological signal, a candidate

could ramp up support among her own party base, or reach across the aisle. Undoubtedly, Republican voters would be more responsive to a message of ideological conservatism, while Democrats would react more favorably to liberal political signals. Median voter theory (Downs 1957) suggests that, all else being equal, Republicans have a strategic incentive to try to appear more liberal than their records would indicate, while Democrats should try to appear more conservative. The ideological content could be critical since it speaks to the overall political disposition of a candidate.

The ideological dimension also means that candidates face important trade-offs in trying to reach out to their constituents and must consider the full implications of the messages that they send through their ad imagery. Although the trade-off may be practically complicated, the strategic calculation boils down to basic decision theory: either a candidate would benefit from appearing more liberal or she would not. She either gains votes by picturing blue collar workers, or endures such a backlash that she hurts herself. This calculation does not require accounting for her opponent's image choices. One of the main advantages of visual appeals is that candidates do not have to engage or debate their opponents verbally. A campaign usually starts out with a number of issues and themes in mind, all of which are chosen because they are advantageous to the candidate (Bradshaw 1995). However, candidates frequently have to alter their message over the course of the campaign, often in response to their opponent, even though bringing up an issue may not be to their advantage (Simon 2002). Usually, the candidate feels that he has to answer his opponent and talk about an issue because the issue has become important over the course of the campaign. In fact, they are much more likely to engage their opponent on issues when the race is more competitive (Kahn and

Kenney 1999). As the race gets tighter, many candidates end up employing ineffective strategies that actually hurt them on Election Day. The visual message, by contrast, does not have to respond to the opponent or even acknowledge the opponent. A candidate can appeal to a group, or send an ideological message visually regardless of the verbal content of the ad or the candidate's record. Moreover, because there is nothing substantive to fight, the opponent cannot challenge the credibility of the visual message.

It is obvious, then, how valuable campaign imagery can be as part of an overall strategy, but the strategic choice is complicated by the ways that imagery could affect voters. Candidates could use images to show their constituents that they are "one of them" by running images that reflect the demographics of the electorate. They could also appeal to voters by showing images as a way to demonstrate support for groups and win backing from voters who also substantively support the group being pictured. Finally, they could use images to adjust the perception of their own general political ideology. The challenge for political candidates is to consider the effects of these three dimensions on the voter and incorporate images into their campaign ads that maximize their appeal among the electorate. In order to maximize the effectiveness of their campaign appeals, candidates have to balance group appeals and take their constituents' political views into account. This is not necessarily an easy task, but it is one that could be accomplished with sufficient polling resources, which would generally be available to any quality congressional candidate (Burton and Shea 2003). Without making overt promises or verbal appeals that could be seen as pandering, candidates could use images to make a connection with the voters.

2.4: Summary

The role of imagery that I propose in this chapter suggest that television ads can be a crucial element of any political campaign and have a strong impact on the voter, even if the voter hits the mute button the second the commercial appears. In order to have an accurate understanding of campaign effects we need to look beyond the emotions generated by ad imagery and account for the substantive messages that may be transmitted. If my hypotheses are correct, images encourage voters to identify with the candidate, transmit signals about the candidate's support for groups, and tell voters something about the candidate's ideology. This information may have a substantial impact on how the voters act on Election Day.

At one level, the hypotheses in this chapter are somewhat disturbing. After all, I am suggesting that the images a candidate uses can have a strong impact on voter impressions because, essentially, they bypass the normal cognitive evaluation of political messages. Voters are typically somewhat immune to campaign manipulations because they can engage with verbal appeals and judge the merit of the appeal based on their pre-existing knowledge. They would not be expected to engage visual appeals with the same cognitive vigor. This means that they would be more vulnerable to elite manipulation and visual appeals which may or may not be sincere.

On the other hand, campaign imagery can be a powerful communication tool. Voters' tendency to filter out campaign messages means that they also have a tendency to filter out new information. I argue that the images a campaign uses in its ads, which at first glance could be considered the least substantive part of a political campaign, may actually have the most substantive impact on voters. Campaign imagery may affect voters

on an emotional level by playing on social identities, but it may also convey a substantive impression. Individuals have a tendency to bring their own preconceptions to bear when judging new political information. Candidates who genuinely wish to break free of partisan constraints or advance a new issue agenda could use their ad imagery to communicate with an electorate that might not be receptive to a verbal message. Campaign ads may serve primarily strategic purposes, but that does not mean that they are insincere. If one of the goals of a campaign is to force voters to learn and react to new information, then visual appeals may be a fast and efficient way to make the electorate learn about a candidate.

Chapter 2 Tables and Figures

Table 2.1: CCAP ideological placement of groups

Group	Mean Placement	Liberal placement	Conservative placement	Midpoint placement	N
African-Americans	2.39 (1.27)	81.0	5.4	13.6	1099
Labor unions	2.41 (1.38)	79.1	7.3	13.6	1097
Teachers	2.72 (1.30)	71.7	7.1	21.6	1102
Latinos	3.26 (1.37)	53.7	16.7	29.5	1099
Police officers	4.79 (1.30)	12.6	60.2	27.2	1096
Farmers	4.83 (1.29)	12.1	62.8	25.1	1098
Senior citizens	4.77 (1.38)	15.1	57.7	27.2	1098
Military personnel	5.37 (1.25)	5.7	78.3	16.0	1101
Businessmen	5.46 (1.52)	10.4	77.6	12.0	1101

The first column displays mean placements with standard errors in parentheses. “Liberal placement” refers to the percentage of respondents who placed the group between 1 and 3. “Conservative placement” refers to the percentage of respondents who placed the group between 5 and 7. “Midpoint placement” is the percentage of respondents who placed the group at 4.

Chapter 3: Campaign Imagery in Practice

3.1: Introduction

In this chapter I present evidence from a survey of political consultants and in-depth phone interviews. My focus throughout this dissertation is primarily the kinds of people included in political advertisements. If images of a particular type of person deliver a message to the voter, then it would seem that campaigns should use that message strategically. With a wealth of experience at their disposal, political consultants have strong expectations about how ad imagery should affect voters, and are largely responsible for how political candidates use imagery in campaigns. In the survey and in subsequent interviews I tried to answer 3 basic questions: (1) What do campaigns try to do accomplish with ad imagery? (2) How do consultants think imagery affects voters? (3) How does imagery fit in with the overall campaign strategy and the verbal messages in the campaign?

Not surprisingly, the consulting field does not answer all of these questions with one voice, though there is considerable agreement on several issues. Consultants strongly agree that campaigns influence voters and that images are at least as important (and usually more important) than the verbal content of the ad. The consensus from campaign professionals seems to be that imagery has a strong impact on voters because it helps voters connect with candidates on an emotional level. In the terminology of the last chapter, political campaigns rely heavily on the identity hypothesis. Consultants believe that using images of certain groups helps voters see themselves as part of a candidate's constituency (Kern 1989). Though there is a belief that images transmit more substantive messages, the consultants seem primarily interested in encouraging the voter to identify

with the candidate. On the other hand, there is little agreement on the best way to employ images and combine them with verbal appeals in order to maximize a candidate's appeal, and the multitude of opinions on how visual and verbal appeals can work in concert suggests that campaign strategists may not have a clear theoretical understanding of the effects of imagery.

The validity of consultants' opinions of campaign effects may be debated, of course, but the data presented in this chapter offer a rare insight into how professionals think about campaign tactics. In order to understand the impact of campaign ad images it is important to understand how campaigns actually choose images and how those images are *believed* to affect voters. It seems that campaigns largely focus on generating affective bonds, and that ad imagery provides a powerful opportunity to generate those bonds. By not accounting for the affective ties generated by images in campaigns, political researchers may have missed one of the most crucial persuasive elements of the campaign. To be fair, campaign professionals have been reluctant to share their expertise and offer insights about political strategy, and we know far more about them than we do about the campaigns they produce.

3.2: The “Ballot Box Warriors”

“Last night we learned that the people who make political attack ads actually have their own awards ceremony, which is reassuring since previously they've worked for nothing other than large checks and disproportionate political influence.” –*Jon Stewart, The Daily Show, May 6, 2008*

Campaign consultants may be one of the most maligned groups in American politics, even more disliked than the elected politicians they serve. Over the past three

decades, a rise in campaign coverage has resulted in more and more media attention for the consulting industry (Panagopoulos 2006), though this attention has not brought political consultants much love or respect. As Americans have become more fascinated with the inner workings of campaigns, they have also become more disgusted with consultants. Panagopoulos and Thurber (2003) found that 51% of Americans blamed political consultants for the campaign tactics they found unappealing, such as negative ads and character attacks. When asked about their effectiveness only 23% of those polled ranked consultants as good or excellent, meaning the public finds political consultants both distasteful and incompetent. The public loves to beat up the straw man of the pollster or public relations consultant concerned only with spin and dressing up a candidate while subverting democracy and substantive policy discussions.

While the public sneers at campaign consultants, there is also a healthy professional rivalry between academics and campaign professionals. The relationship is reminiscent of the conflicts between statisticians and baseball scouts. The former group believes in empirical observation, large sample sizes and generalization of findings, and the latter favors first-hand observation and experience while often dismissing numbers as an incomplete (or inaccurate) description of reality. One pollster I spoke with mentioned a sibling, a political scientist working at a university, who often teased that professional pollsters spend their time barely scratching the surface, polling without actually engaging in systematic research or stopping to consider the underlying causal mechanisms. At the same time, professional consultants can be contemptuous of academics. Consultants tend to view academic scholarship as a poor substitute for experience. As Jim Barnett, director of John McCain's political operation in the 2008 New Hampshire primary, said,

"...anything you can learn in a classroom is something that you can learn faster and better on the ground" (D'Aprile 2007).

Despite public animosity and academic skepticism, however, political consultants are, for the most part, dedicated, highly trained, and well paid professionals who spend their entire professional existence trying to win elections (Friedenberg 1997). They build their reputations (and their client lists) by getting people elected to public office. Most consulting firms advertise a list of successful candidates (or issue campaigns) and point to their won-lost record in order to attract potential clients.¹² With the millions spent on campaign fees, it is fair to say that campaign consultants may have more at stake in an election than anyone other than the candidates themselves. While the public may not acknowledge their effectiveness, consultants actually have a strong impact on a candidate's electoral fortunes. Medvic and Lenart (1997) studied non-incumbent candidates in the 1992 Congressional elections and found that hiring polling, media or direct mail consultants had a positive, significant impact on a candidate's vote share even after controlling for candidate quality and campaign spending. In other words, the more professionalized a challenger's campaign, the better he or she did on Election Day. At the same time, there is little evidence that consultants are the bogeymen that the public imagines. Most consultants claim to adhere to strict professional standards and profess a strong reluctance to use unfair personal attacks in a campaign (Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio 2000; Francia and Hernson 2007).

The Medvic and Lenart article is remarkable because it actually attempts to quantify the impact of strategists on a campaign outcome, but it does so only because of

¹² Note that while many firms offer a won-lost record on their websites, there is no easy way of verifying the validity of those records.

an enormous effort spent on data collection. The researchers had to pore through campaign finance reports to identify when a candidate hired a consultant, and, separately, determine what that consultant had been hired to do. Other quantitative studies of consultants' strategic beliefs are hard to come by. Most works on campaign strategy take the form of how-to case studies (see Burton and Shea, 2003, and Magleby, Monson and Patterson, 2007), which provide a broad overview of successful tactics in some campaigns, but are susceptible to the methodological limitations commonly found in case studies. There are always questions about case selection and generalizability of the findings.¹³ Given the considerable difficulties in gathering systematic data on political consultants, it is not surprising that most scholars try to focus on one or two campaigns. As a group, consultants are used to working behind the scenes, and, more importantly, make their living *selling* their expertise and are not necessarily inclined to share it with curious scholars. Our lack of knowledge about these tactical decision-makers leaves a gaping hole in our understanding of campaign strategy. There have been attempts to poll campaign consultants in the past, but these have tended to focus on how consultants view the state of democracy (opinions on media, campaign finance reform, quality of candidates, etc.). These studies are useful for showing who consultants are and what they think about representation, but they do not tell us what consultants think about campaign tactics (Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio 2000; Magleby and Patterson 1998).

¹³ Memoirs and insider accounts from campaigns also suffer drastic limitations. Not only are these accounts limited in the kind of campaigns they study, but the retrospective accounts often suffer from a lack of objectivity, and many of the participants undoubtedly worry about speaking publicly. For example, Harvard University hosts an open discussion among campaign managers following every presidential campaign (The Institute of Politics, Harvard University 2006). The discussion often reveals less about campaign tactics than it does about individual post-hoc rationalizations.

The work on political consultants, though, does show some important tendencies in campaign strategy. Kern (1989) researched political consultants during the 1980's and found that the industry had been overtaken by an advertising paradigm, which emphasized making emotional connections with voters. Perloff and Kinsey (1992) conducted a survey of political consultants on various ad strategies in 1990. They found that consultants overwhelmingly felt that ads affect evaluations of candidates, and consultants believe in the power of emotional appeals and negative advertising. They also found that consultants believed visuals could be more powerful than verbal messages, though they explicitly equated visuals with emotional responses. The mean response to the item, "Making a strong visual statement creates a feeling about a candidate that counts for more than a verbal statement about the issues," was just over 2 (the response scale ran from 1-Strongly agree to 5-Strongly disagree). On the other hand, Perloff and Kinsey found little agreement on whether or not voters learn anything from ads, and on whether or not verbal and visual messages could be effectively separated. Like the consultants they interviewed, their survey asked about the emotional power of images, without really investigating whether or not images might also provide substantive cues. The authors seem to accept the view that appeals have to be verbalized in order to have issue content. Still, this is one of the few studies to investigate how political consultants use political tactics, and how they view the impact of those tactics.

3.3: Polling political consultants

In order to investigate consultant views on campaign imagery I began by assembling a list of political consultants. Unfortunately, a complete database listing

every political professional in the country does not exist, and so I began in December 2007 with the membership directory from the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC), and used this directory to compile the bulk of the list.¹⁴ I then followed links from the AAPC website to individual consulting firms, as well as using Internet communities like LinkedIn in order to add as many names as possible to my list of political consultants. The vast majority of campaign consultants work to make themselves visible, and they make it easy for potential clients (or researchers) to find and contact them. I included all types of consultants: pollsters, general consultants, media consultants, direct mail firms, and grassroots organizers. For each consultant, I recorded the name as well as the name of the firm, gender, office address, office phone number and email address. While the task was labor intensive, I was able to compile a list of 731 names.

I sent an email to each consultant inviting him or her to take the survey online through the University of Illinois Webservices. The email included a brief description of my research, a link to the survey and instructions.¹⁵ Each consultant was given a unique identification number to use in order to log in and complete the survey, which ended by asking the respondent to participate in a follow-up interview. In order to elicit open, honest responses, all participants were guaranteed anonymity for both their survey responses and for any answers they gave during the follow-up interview. In all, 130 took the online survey, and 25 participated in a follow-up interview.

¹⁴ Since the goal of this chapter was to get the views of campaign professionals (as opposed to academic analysts), I omitted any individuals who have academic memberships with the AAPC or a current position at an academic institution.

¹⁵ The full survey can be found in the Appendix A.

Although the sample is not a randomly selected group of political consultants it does constitute a broad range of experience, partisanship and expertise (see Table 1). Of the 130 who took the survey, 53% were Democrats, 41% were Republicans, and most had worked on a variety of campaigns ranging from presidential efforts to local city council elections. Everyone in the sample had worked professionally in politics for at least one year and the vast majority had more than 5 years of experience. The sample is overwhelmingly white and male (93.8% and 71.6%, respectively), though this seems to be true of political consultants in general.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, more than a quarter of the sample is based in Washington, DC or the surrounding area. The majority of the rest of the sample comes from the west coast or the south, and many of the consultants in the sample live or work in some of the most heavily contested political battlegrounds in the country such as Florida, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, etc. Geographically, demographically and experientially, then, the sample seems to be a close representation of political consultants in general.¹⁷

3.4: Imagery and campaign strategy

The first thing many professionals told me is that every campaign is different, and that there is no such thing as a “silver bullet” campaign tactic. As one consultant put it:

“What’s important to remember is that each election is different, each candidate is different, and what worked last year will – almost by rule – not work again this year. Political consultants (at least smart ones) don’t follow hard and fast rules about ads and the images used in them. So as an example: to ask whether or not I find it important to have a celebrity on camera vs. an average American on camera the answer will always be: it

¹⁶ Perloff and Kinsey found similar racial and gender imbalances in their survey of political consultants. Of the names that I gathered on the original list of 731 consultants, 74.1% were male.

¹⁷ The demographic breakdowns in this survey are actually quite similar to Perloff and Kinsey’s (1992) study, although they did not separate out DC consultants from other areas.

depends on the election, the candidate, the district, the survey research, and the national mood, etc.”

To some extent, this belief in the uniqueness of campaigns is self-serving. After all, if every campaign *were* the same, then every candidate could use the same strategy and the need for professionals (and their rather steep fees) would be greatly reduced. Political consultants do seem to sincerely believe in the uniqueness of campaigns, though. As I spoke with them, their answers were often preceded by caveats like, “It depends,” or, “it changes all the time.” One told me, “There are many times when one approach works well for one and not the next even within the same campaign.” It is true, of course, that every campaign *is* different, at least in some respects: issues change, demographics change, and candidates change, but that does not imply that beliefs about what does and doesn’t work, and what does and doesn’t appeal to voters, necessarily change with each new election cycle. Indeed, it seems unreasonable to suggest that consultants have no core beliefs about how to appeal to voters.

In fact, despite the belief that all campaigns are different, there was actually quite a lot of agreement on most of the survey items. The first few questions in the survey dealt with the importance and general impact of ads. I asked the respondents to rate the influences that campaign advertising, issues within campaign ads, and images within campaign ads exert on the voter using a 7-point scale (1-Not at all influential, 7-Very influential). I also asked consultants how much time should be spent scripting and designing the images in ads (1-None at all, 7- A great deal of time and attention). In doing so, I hoped to get a sense of where consultants believe the campaign’s priorities should be: on the visuals or the verbal message. Overall, in all of these questions, there is

a surprising lack of variation. For all of the consultants' talk about how each campaign is different, responses were remarkably consistent.

Not surprisingly, campaign consultants believe in the effectiveness of campaign ads. Like Perloff and Kinsey, I find that consultants strongly believe that campaigns matter and that campaign ads influence voters. On the question of ad influence the mean response was 6.05 on the 7-point scale. The consultants rated the influence of imagery within advertising at 6.07 and the influence of the issues mentioned at 5.48.¹⁸ For most candidates seeking office above the level of school board (and in some areas, even then) television ads are the primary method of communicating with the electorate. Most candidates do not have time to introduce themselves to each potential voter, so most communication must be done through mass media. Consequently, several consultants spoke of the money spent on television ads, which is frequently the single largest expense in a campaign (Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio 2000), as a necessary evil. Indeed, only three respondents in the entire sample gave an answer of 2 or 3 on the question of ad influence.

More importantly, although both verbal and visual elements are considered important, consultants rated the images as more influential. On both the question of influence on the voter, and the amount of time spent on ads, there was a statistically significant (mean differences of .6 and .22, respectively, $p < .05$) difference in favor of the visuals. When talking about influencing the voter, only one person rated the images presented in an ad as unimportant (placing the influence of images below 4), whereas 13 respondents rated the issues discussed in an ad as unimportant. One person summed it up this way, "Words don't work. Pictures work... Words lead to arguments." Though the

¹⁸ In the original survey, the scale ran from 1-Very influential to 7-Not at all influential. I have reversed the values here for ease of interpretation. Larger numbers mean that something was rated more important or more influential.

difference between the importance of verbal and visual content is small, it is statistically significant. This is particularly surprising given the ceiling effect in place on responses. Campaign consultants are clearly predisposed to think that strategic elements of the campaign (like campaign ads) are more important. It is part of their livelihood, after all. They earn their money by producing ads and creating campaign strategies. They are, therefore, not likely to believe that campaign tactics do not influence voters. With that in mind, the small differences between the perceived importance of verbal and visual content become much more important. Even within a very narrow range of variance, images still outranked words in terms of perceived influence.

This difference also shows up consistently across race, gender, region, and partisanship.¹⁹ Figure 3.1 compares the mean value on the importance of verbal visual appeals within ads. The level of agreement is remarkable (though not shown in Figure 3.1, the same differences exist on the issue of time spent crafting verbal and visual appeals). One could imagine very different strategic beliefs between Republicans and Democrats, or those consultants inside Washington vs. the rest of the country, but this is not the case. In every subgroup the difference is always in the same direction:²⁰ images are always rated as being more influential than verbal issue statements, and designing the look of an ad should always take priority over scripting its verbal content.

In some ways, the notion that pictures are more important than words is somewhat surprising given the amount of time and effort spent on choosing those words.

¹⁹ In this case, partisanship refers to the party whose candidates the consultant works with, not necessarily the partisanship of the consultant. Most political consultants serve only one party or only one ideological group.

²⁰ The differences are not statistically significant in all groups, which is to be expected considering that some of these groups are quite small. For example, there are only 13 political consultants in the survey based in the Midwest. Still, even in these cases, the difference is in the expected direction.

Professional campaigns begin every election cycle by taking a benchmark poll and choosing issues to emphasize based on what they find to be important to the voters (Hernson and Patterson 2000). Remember, though, that the survey results presented do not indicate that words are completely unimportant; just that they matter less than the visual elements of the ad. What is said seems to be less important than *how* it is said. I asked consultants whether or not they agreed with the statement that “Voters pay more attention to what is said in a campaign ad than they do to the visuals in an ad,” and here there was a strong level of disagreement. Though the mean was close to neutral (3.34), overall a majority of respondents (68) actually disagreed with the statement while less than a quarter of the sample agreed (30), and no one strongly agreed. During the interviews, consultants often referred to imagery as a way of *making* the voter pay attention to an ad or to the verbal statements in an ad. Though no one I spoke with believed voters to be foolish or unintelligent, many referred to them as uninformed or unengaged. One of the main tasks of the ad is to draw the attention of the voter and make him or her listen. A direct mail consultant told me that images are important because campaigns are constantly competing for attention:

“Especially when it comes to mail, you’re competing with Victoria’s Secret and the gas bill, and the kid’s report card so you have to put something that jumps out. So if you have nice pictures, images that say something, hopefully something deeper [than Mom and apple pie], most of the people tune in and read the issue positions because you’ve got them.”

The words, presumably, have been chosen specifically because polling suggests that the voter will find the issue important and the candidate’s position appealing; however, the voter will never learn that if he doesn’t pay attention. What is true of direct mail may also be true of television ads. There is little reason to believe that viewers pay

close attention to commercials (political or otherwise), so campaigns try to use engaging visuals to capture attention. Moreover, if a voter is not paying close attention, there is a chance that he will not listen to the verbal portion of an ad, but, at the very least, he may still catch the visual message on screen. It is important, therefore, that the visual be engaging and transmit an appealing message on its own.

3.5: Who is pictured?

Of course, this still does not address the question of what images are chosen by campaign consultants and why. Based on my survey results and subsequent interviews, consultants see images as an important tool for forging affective connections with voters, and they choose images that help to achieve that purpose. I asked consultants the following questions:

In general, do you think it is better for a candidate to appear alone in an ad, or do you prefer to have the candidate appear alongside other people?

1. Prefer candidate alone
2. Prefer candidate with other people
3. No preference

Is it more effective to have an ad with “average” Americans or an ad with well-known public figures and celebrities?

1. Ordinary Americans
2. Celebrities and public figures
3. No preference

Both of these questions would seem likely to elicit shrugs and “I don’t know” answers. A reasonable person could say (as the consultant earlier in this chapter responded) that the answer is entirely dependent upon the campaign. Yet even on these two questions, where I expected a great deal of variance, there was still widespread agreement. On the first item only 6 people answered that they would picture the

candidate alone, while a solid majority (70 people) replied that they preferred to picture the candidate with others. For the second item, 71.1% of respondents felt that it is more effective to picture an ordinary American and only 5 people preferred to use a celebrity or public figure.

Picturing a candidate alone (or with another politician) does not signal warmth and caring from the candidate. One consultant told me, “I do believe that a candidate standing alone creates distance—a larger than life figure,” and she did not mean this in a good way. Larger-than-life figures, after all, can’t understand your problems or relate to your situations. Many consultants seem to feel that distance and objectivity are enemies to be fought in a campaign ad, and placing a candidate in isolation implies distance from the voter. “The guy with his family in the church or the soccer field says something different from the guy standing there alone in a suit. The guy with his family says, ‘I am like you.’” Another consultant explained, “When the candidate is by himself...it’s hard to make a personal connection in modern campaigns so you want to convey that this is someone who works well with other people...Logic has very little to do with this. We can overstate the rationality of voters. So much of what you’re doing is creating an emotional connection.”

Every political consultant I talked to used the word emotion when describing how a campaign should appeal to the voter. It was the most consistent topic of discussion during my post-survey interviews. With a little probing, however, I discovered that these professionals were not talking about emotion as a political psychologist would understand it. Though a few mentioned fear appeals of the type that Brader (2006) discussed in his study of campaign imagery, most consultants focused on what political

scientists would deem an affective connection. Rather than making a voter feel enthusiastic or anxious, they seemed focused on making the voters feel that the candidate was one of them. One consultant described how he tried to shape a candidate's image: "Voters don't want candidates who look like candidates. I want the candidate to be listening, talking, learning, being part of the community." It is a concept much more in line with Fenno (1978, 2007) and the idea of appealing to constituents on the basis of being part of a community, rather than an out of touch Washington figure. Essentially, the images in the ad are designed to manufacture authenticity. One campaign strategist said that he judged the effectiveness of an ad by asking, "Does the voter visually get it immediately that I understand him and his problems? If you get that far you're likely to at least get to a neutral point." This affect-driven campaign strategy came into wide usage in the 1980's (Kern 1989), and the consultants I spoke with often referred to campaigns as an exercise in building voter-candidate connections.

Because it is used to create an affective connection, campaign imagery is chosen in a similar manner as the campaign's verbal appeals. Namely, the strategists decide, based on pre-election polling, how to create a winning coalition, and then set about appealing to those voters. This is a process that is frequently described in the campaign literature (Baer 1995; Bradshaw 1995; Burton and Shea 2003; Hernson 2004). Oddly, though, while images are chosen for the affective connections they create and verbal appeals are chosen based on the preferences and priorities of the voters, they are both ultimately a product of the same process. With each tactic, campaigns try to "connect" with the voter by talking about issues important to the voter and showing images that remind the voter of him or herself. Table 4 shows the number of consultants who agreed

with the statements, “When targeting a specific group, a campaign ad should talk about issues important to that group,” and, “When targeting a specific group, a campaign ad should include images of the people in that group.” In each case, I found an overwhelming consensus that images and verbal appeals both work better when they are tailored to a particular part of the electorate (mean agreement of 1.33, and 1.51, respectively). Only two respondents disagreed with the idea of targeting a group with issues, and none disagreed with the notion of targeting a group with images.

Targeting different parts of the electorate through television ads can be somewhat problematic, of course. Unlike direct mail, which is usually tailored to specific groups, television ads reach a wide audience. Though cable advertising has become more prevalent in recent years, it is only starting to match the ad buys that go out through network television (Capone 2006; Blair and Biggs 2005). Still, campaign ads can show different types of people and make the ad look like the electorate, or at least that part of it that the campaign wishes to reach. Consultants stressed, repeatedly, that the ad had to make the candidate seem in touch with the community, and the visuals had to be an accurate reflection of the voters. In simple cases, consultants were quite blunt—“If the district is 98% white voters that will decide the visuals” —and even in more complex ways, campaigns try to match up the ad with the audience. Over and over again, campaigns stress that they have to make the candidate seem close to the voter, because, as one tired campaign manager said, “If nothing else, you do it just to show that you’re part of the community.”

This belief in the importance of affective connections persists, and actually dominates the discussion of the campaign, even when talking about substantive issues.

Nearly every consultant surveyed agreed that imagery transmits substantive information. There was consensus in the survey that ad imagery provides a signal to the voter about the candidate's overall ideology, and several consultants I spoke with mentioned the connection with various images and policy priorities. For example, "[C]andidate with cop equals tough on crime, candidate with children equals good on education, candidate with seniors good on healthcare."

However, when pressed on the subject consultants still brought the subject back to emotion and creating affective ties with voters. A strategist discussing how to get across a candidate's issues said, "[I]f the issue is education you may want to put the candidate in a classroom reading to grade school kids to convey that the candidate cares about education. Whether or not he supports school choice, or teacher testing, or more money or whatever. Part of television is driving home an emotional connection between the candidate and the voter." Even in cases where the point of the image is to create an impression of the candidate's issue priorities, that impression is only important because it creates a connection between the candidate's and the voter's priorities. The issue stance reflected in the image does not seem to be important by itself, nor is there much consideration given to how the image affects the overall ideological perception of the candidate. Everything in the ad campaign is geared toward creating affective ties with the electorate. Whether or not images of African-Americans, for example, make the candidate seem more liberal is irrelevant. If the image makes the candidate look more personable, more connected to the community, then it is useful, regardless of anything else the voter may glean from the image. Consultants do not seem to deny that voters can

take away substantive information from ad imagery, but the images in an advertisement may not be chosen for the substantive message they contribute.

It is also possible that (at least according to political consultants) voters should not be taking substantive messages from political images. I asked the consultants to rate their agreement with two items designed to tap into the sincerity of verbal and visual appeals. Table 3.6 shows the results. On the statement “Candidates, in general, believe the things they say in their campaign ads,” there was widespread agreement.²¹

Consultants were less enthusiastic about the statement, “Candidates, in general, use the images in their ads to paint an accurate picture of themselves.” While a majority of the respondents agreed with the statement, most did so only slightly, and the number of disagreements doubled compared to beliefs about the sincerity of verbal statements.

Undoubtedly, consultants had trouble believing in the sincerity of images because they, generally, do not seem to see images as a signal about policy. If images only exist to form an emotional connection, then there is little reason to believe they reflect a sincere policy belief on the part of the candidate. Based on the survey and interviews I conducted, I doubt many of them even considered whether or not an image honestly portrayed a candidate’s issue positions because they focused so much on the affective impacts of images. Many of the consultants I spoke with were terrified of having a lie exposed during a campaign, particularly since the rise of the Internet, bloggers, and numerous political watchdog groups, but these lies related primarily to things the candidate *said* during the campaign.

²¹ The differences in sincerity of visual and verbal appeals are particularly notable because of the response bias in both of these items. Despite promises of anonymity, professional campaign operators may have felt it necessary to overestimate the sincerity in campaigns, and may not have been comfortable admitting to the amount of truthiness in the average campaign. As such, I expected the agreement on both items to be very high, limiting the possibility of a seeing a statistically significant difference.

In contrast, most seemed comfortable with the idea that the images of the campaign might be somewhat dishonest by their very nature. Because campaign images are often chosen to evoke images or look visually interesting, they often show candidates in action: talking to people, moving around in the world, being part of the community. When asked about the discrepancy in the poll results, one consultant responded acidly, “Most Congressmen don’t spend their time reading to kids. The truth is, most of the job of a politician involves sitting behind a desk.” There seemed to be a general sentiment among the professionals I spoke with that campaign imagery should attract attention and incite emotion. They seemed to take it for granted that these images would be somewhat disingenuous.

3.6: Verbal and visual appeals

The substantive content of the image can create strategic opportunities. Even if campaign imagery is primarily a tool for attracting attention or building an affective connection, it would still seem to have potentially tremendous tactical value. Visually, candidates can behave strategically, and face fewer limits in which groups they can reach out to in a campaign. This is the main advantage of using visual appeals versus verbal issue statements. Campaigns are often reluctant to bring up certain issues, even though they may be important to the electorate. The candidate’s record or beliefs about an issue may put him or her at a disadvantage (Simon 2002; Sellers 1998) or a candidate’s party may have a poor reputation on an issue that the candidate cannot overcome (Petrocik 1996; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Sides 2006). Hypothetically, a candidate could use images to reach out to the electorate or whichever subset is useful to the campaign

while talking about any issue that the candidate may prefer to highlight (for either strategic or sincere reasons).

In practice, though, there seems to be little agreement on whether or not verbal and visual messages can be separated so easily. Moreover, there are a variety of explanations as to why verbal and visual content should or should not be separated, and these explanations tell us how consultants view the effects of visual and verbal content, how each is processed by the voter, and how the messages interact as part of the campaign's strategy. I have divided respondents into four groups based on how they view the connection between visual and verbal content:

Disciplinarians: "The visual message will reinforce what you say and reinforce the message in general...Everything I do will tie into that...If you think about how much the average voter pays attention to politics, it's barely there at all. You have to find one message and hammer it hard to get any kind of impact."

Fabulists: "You typically try to get visuals to work with the message, but it's not necessary. You may have a great visual and if it doesn't work, you go ahead and use it."

Vulcans: "Always match visual and verbal. Say social security is the issue. Last thing you want is a young candidate talking to people his age. If the issue is education we need pictures of the candidate in the classroom with schoolkids. It's logical to have the visual back up the message."

Multi-taskers: "If you're talking about social security, and you picture senior citizens, then only send that to senior citizens. The middle-age voters, the under-25 voters don't care...What is effective are the AARP ads where they have children talking about social security. That makes the parents think about it. It's a way to get people who don't care to care about it. The image does set the tone. Does it have to go along with the message? Not necessarily."²²

²² In other cases I have removed mentions of specific candidates or campaigns in order to protect the anonymity of the respondents. I have left the mention of the AARP intact here because the consultant did not actually work on the AARP campaign and merely referenced it as an example.

The consultants I spoke with in post-survey interviews were split roughly equally between these four camps. First, the Disciplinarians strongly believed in matching the visual and verbal elements on the grounds of creating a more powerful message. Kern (1989) referred to this tactic as dovetailing. The idea is that the ad is the campaign's one shot to get across some persuasive message to the voter. In order to make that as powerful as possible the visuals must reinforce the issues being discussed. These consultants tended to emphasize message discipline in general and supported the idea that a candidate can only make an impact with one message or issue. Everything in the campaign, then—the verbal and visual content of the ad as well as all of the candidate's speeches and public appearances—should center on that one theme.

The Fabulists cared little about connecting verbal issues discussed with the images on screen. The point of the image is to attract attention and make a connection. Once you have the attention of the voter you can say anything you need (or want) to say, but the image is really what drives the influence of the ad. The verbal content is linked to the campaign's overall message (which comes from polling, candidate priorities, etc.), and there is no need to design special verbal content to match an image for a particular ad. Fabulists worry about attracting attention so that the voter will pay attention long enough to hear the verbal message. The question is not what image helps sell the verbal message of the ad; the question is what image will grab the voter.

The Vulcans believed that visual and verbal elements had to be linked, not in order to create a stronger message, but in order to create a coherent one. Some of these strategists referred to the credibility of the message and argued that a candidate could not talk about social security without seniors or crime without police officers. Voters would

see the ad and simply dismiss it. All of the Vulcans believed that an ad with separate visual and verbal messages would ultimately confuse the voter. Not only would the message of the ad be diluted by competing visual and verbal themes, but the voter would be incapable of receiving any coherent message from the ad.²³

The Multi-taskers held exactly the opposite belief. They argued that an ad reaches many different groups within the electorate and should, therefore, seek to engage all of those groups whenever possible. Bringing children into an ad about social security is a perfect example of how an ad could verbally target one group (by talking about an issue important to senior citizens) while visually targeting another (by including images that appeal to young parents). Notice, too, that the Multi-taskers talked about reaching out to constituencies and making them pay attention using imagery. Though the image may send a substantive signal in its own right, the Multi-taskers believed the image's primary import would be to create affective connections with groups who might otherwise be turned off by the verbal message of the ad.

The Vulcans and Disciplinarians are similar in that they both believed that the visual and verbal content of the ad should match; however, their reasons for this belief were very different and reflect different conceptions of how visual and verbal content interact. The Disciplinarians had no trouble with the idea that a voter could receive different messages from visual and verbal content in an ad, and believed that the voter could successfully receive those different messages. For this group, the problem is that the campaign shouldn't have two different messages, or be about more than one issue.

²³ There is a great deal of subjectivity in the Vulcans' worldview. Whether or not an image and verbal appeal go together often seems to depend on the consultant's beliefs. For example, one Republican operative scoffed at ads calling for withdrawal from Iraq that made use of images of soldiers and veterans, believing that these soldiers could not be reasonably associated with an anti-war position. It is not clear why an ad featuring an Iraq War veteran calling for an end to the war in Iraq is inherently illogical.

The Disciplinarians believed that the candidate should find the most effective message and hammer that message repeatedly in order to increase the odds that the voters would associate the candidate with that message. They would view the Multi-taskers as inefficient. In contrast, Vulcans would view the Multi-taskers as incompetent. They believed that verbal and visual content have to be coordinated because the viewer is incapable of processing those messages independently and using both of them to synthesize a view of the candidate.

Here again, notice that Vulcans, Disciplinarians and Multi-taskers each seem to proceed from the belief that images carry a substantive message to voters, and that a substantive visual message exists independent of the verbal content of the ad. Despite their emphasis on the affective attachments created by campaign imagery, each group seemed to indicate (or at least it can be implied) that the image does carry substance as well as emotion. After all, if the image did not carry any substantive connotation, then it would not matter to any of them whether or not the image connected to the verbal message.

The problem is that each of these four views about the verbal-visual connection could be correct. None of these groups' suppositions seem unreasonable. In fact, though the Disciplinarians, Fabulists and Multi-taskers would take different approaches, they all seem to assume the same things about how voters receive visual and verbal stimuli. Disciplinarians only differ because they think the campaign ad is better off with one message, whereas Multi-taskers think the campaign ad should contain multiple themes and Fabulists simply don't put much emphasis on content consistency.

3.7: Summary

The evidence in this chapter paints a clear picture of the importance of campaign ad imagery and the strategic thinking that dictates image choices within a campaign. Verbal issue appeals are certainly not relegated to the dumpster, but they are clearly considered a secondary and much more rigid tool of the campaign. Professional consultants argue that campaigns can't be dishonest without facing blowback from voters, and often focus on only a handful of issues (Burton and Shea 2003; Thurber and Nelson 2000). This tendency is consistent with the survey findings presented here. The campaign is limited in how much it can control the substantive information, because verbal appeals are restricted by concerns about sincerity and believability.

On the other hand, consultants see imagery as a primary tool for grabbing the voter's attention and creating an affective connection between the candidate and voter. The purpose of the image is to deliver the message that the candidate shares the voters' values, is part of their community, and will look out for their interest. What is striking is the lack of interest in the substantive issue content of political images. The consultants who create these ads did not disagree with the idea that images convey information, but they clearly focused on the emotional and affective content of the image, to the point of virtually ignoring the substance. In part, this inattention might be due to a general preoccupation with affective attachments. Certainly, few professionals seem to doubt the importance of campaign images, or the idea that images send a message to the voter. It is strange that political consultants would focus so tightly on the affective appeal of imagery if they believe that the picture tells the voter something about the candidate's issue positions.

Difficulties can arise, however, because images also transmit a substantive signal. Most consultants espouse that belief, but there is considerable dissension as to whether or not the image signal needs to coincide with the verbal message. Despite the near-universal agreement that images provoke feelings, many consultants believed that those images should be tied to the issues discussed in the ad, either because it helped the voter make sense of the campaign message, or because it augmented the strength of the verbal message. This plethora of beliefs about the connection between verbal and visual messages may be partially attributed to a lack of interest in the underlying causal mechanism. Campaign consultants believe that voters react to verbal and visual appeals, but they don't necessarily understand why. Most of the consultants I spoke with mentioned that they liked to test out campaign themes and messages in focus groups or polls, but they also mentioned that time and financial constraints often made this testing an unaffordable luxury. The idea of running controlled experiments did not come up during our discussions. Nearly all competitive candidates conduct polling throughout the campaign in order to track their progress and determine if the campaign's message is getting through to voters (Hamilton 1995). Campaigns can usually observe whether a message succeeds or fails by tracking a candidate's standing in the polls and how viewers see the candidate; however, they lack the empirical evidence to investigate why a message succeeds or fails.²⁴

Of course it is hard to blame consultants for focusing on results instead of developing a broader theoretical understanding. After all, they are paid to produce for their candidates, not spend their time investigating the psychological causes of individual message reception. In fact, since their primary goal is to find a message that works, it

²⁴ This might also feed the perception, discussed earlier in this chapter, that every campaign is unique.

may be more cost effective for them to simply test a variety of visual and verbal appeals, see which one sticks in a particular campaign, and not worry about whether or not the tactic can be generalized.

In the next chapter I turn to Congressional campaigns and show how candidates apply imagery in actual ads and follow the instincts of their consultants. I also show how ad imagery affects election results. Later in the dissertation I will investigate, through experimental and observational methods, the issue of how verbal and visual messages combine within an ad in order to shed some light on this dispute. In addition, I will attempt to separate affective connections and substantive issue and ideological messages within imagery. While political consultants often neglect the ideological impact of imagery, they may not be right to do so.

Chapter 3 Tables and Figures

Table 3.1: Type of Campaign Experience for Consultant Sample

Type of campaign	Percentage of respondents with experience with campaigns for that office
Presidential	59.4
Senate	69.5
Congressional	87.5
Gubernatorial	90.6
State legislature	75.8
Other state office	75.8
Local office	92.2
Ballot initiative	82.8

Table 3.2: Importance of television advertising

Item	Mean (with SD in parentheses)
Overall influence of TV ads	6.05 (1.03)
Influence of issues	5.48 (1.37)
Influence of images	6.07 (.99)
Amount of time on verbal script	6.26 (1.05)
Amount of time on image design	6.48 (.91)

Table 3.3: Voters pay more attention to what is said in a campaign ad than they do to the visuals in an ad

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	32	30	60	8

Cell entries are the number of respondents who gave each answer

Table 3.4: Agreement on targeting groups with ads

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
Target groups with verbal issue appeals	93	33	2	2	0
Target groups with images of that group	71	51	8	0	0
Voters respond more to people who look like themselves	39	68	15	5	1

Cell entries are the number of respondents who gave each answer

Table 3.5: Campaign ad images send voters a signal about the candidate's ideology

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
59	62	5	4	0

Cell entries are the number of respondents who gave each answer

Table 3.6: Agreement on targeting groups with ads

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly Disagree
Candidates believe the things they say in their campaign ads.	56	54	11	7	2
Candidates use the images in their ads to paint an accurate picture of themselves.	22	76	14	14	4

Cell entries are the number of respondents who gave each answer

Figure 3.1: Perceived influence of verbal and visual appeals across groups

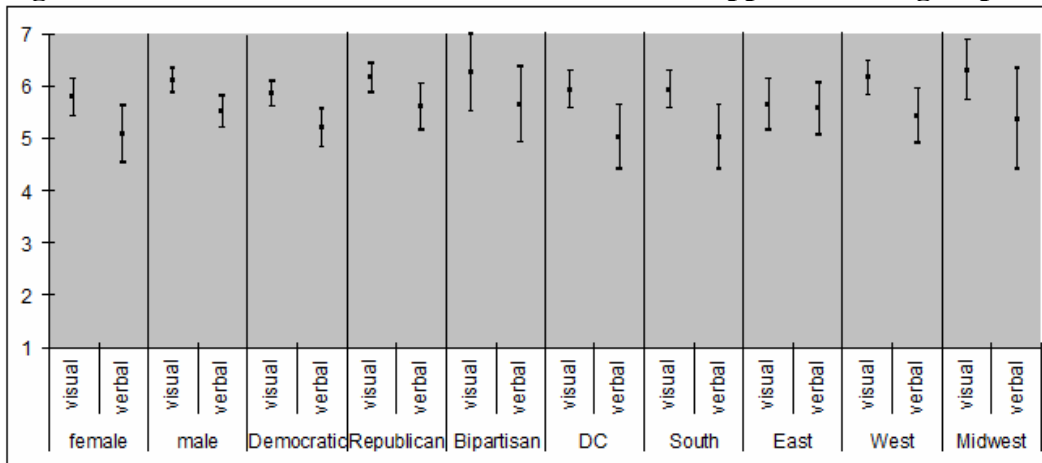


Figure shows the mean response with 95% confidence intervals

Chapter 4: Images in Congressional Campaigns

4.1: Introduction

In this chapter I continue to investigate campaign strategy and examine how images are used in campaigns. Expanding on the results from Chapter 3's survey of campaign professionals, I look at Congressional campaign data from 2000, 2002 and 2004 and analyze how House candidates used ad images during those election cycles, and how those images altered the results on Election Day. I begin by looking at the relationship between campaign imagery and constituent demographics and find strong evidence that the images in campaign ads reflect the demographics of the district. There is little indication, however, that candidates consider the ideological content of their visual messages. There is little association between the ideology of a district and the images used in the campaign. I then move to an analysis of aggregate election results that indicates candidates may benefit from having their ads reflect the demographics of their district, but they may hurt themselves by not considering the ideological content of campaign imagery.

Of course, some images may be less politically charged than others. While the nine groups I have listed carry strong ideological connotations, another group prominently featured in political ads does not. The stereotype of the baby-kissing politician is often overplayed in popular media, but surrounding a candidate with images of children is one of the more popular tactics in political advertising. Children make for a positive image. In fact, Brader (2005) used images of children in his experiments with emotional imagery to evoke positive, enthusiastic responses. Candidates who picture their bright, shiny faces may send the message that they love children and support education or

childcare initiatives (Sulkin and Swigger 2008), but children are not associated with liberalism or conservatism in general. As a contrast to ideological images, they make an excellent test case for a group that should elicit an affective response, but not elicit a response based on ideological predispositions. In fact, I find that the positive effects of picturing children do not change with the ideology of the district; however, images of children have a significant impact only in moderate districts. Images of children do not seem to help candidates in extremely liberal or conservative districts.

For most of the subsequent findings on campaign strategy, my unit of analysis is the congressional candidate within a particular election year. When I shift and examine the impact of ads on voters, I use House districts within election years, and restrict my analysis to only those districts where both Republican and Democratic candidates ran ads. To begin with I explain how I compiled data on Congressional campaigns and district demographics.

4.2: Data and Methods

In order to examine the strategy behind candidate ads, I gathered data from Congressional races during the general election campaigns. The Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) collected all political ads run in the top 75 media markets during the 2000 election and all political ads in the top 100 markets in 2002 and 2004. The ad data and storyboards are organized and made publicly available through the Wisconsin Ads Project,²⁵ which provides a storyboard for each ad as well as data on the

²⁵ The data was obtained from a project of the Wisconsin Advertising Project, under Professor Kenneth Goldstein and Joel Rivlin of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and includes media tracking data from the Campaign Media Analysis Group in Washington, D.C. The Wisconsin Advertising Project was sponsored by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The opinions expressed in this article are those of

sponsor of the ad, the number of times the ad ran, and when and where it aired. The archive is, therefore, an ideal source for gathering information on campaign content.

Not every Congressional candidate runs television advertisements, of course. In the campaigns I examine, 428 House races featured at least one candidate who ran political ads on television, for a total of 521 candidates and 2570 distinct television commercials. This is not a random sample of House candidates, and they differ from typical House members in a number of important ways. Most importantly, the House candidates I examine all had the means (both technical and financial) and the motivation to run television ads. We can assume that Congressional candidates run advertisements to win support among voters, but there is no way of quantifying why, exactly, some candidates choose to run ads while others do not.

Nevertheless, the candidates in this sample compose a wide cross-section of American politics. There are 235 Democrats and 286 Republicans split roughly between challengers and incumbents from every region in the United States. These candidates, ranging from uncontested incumbents to long-shot challengers, received an average of 54.9% of the two-party vote on Election Day with a high of 100% and a low of 28%. At a minimum, the incumbents in these districts felt some motivation to act as though they were in a competitive race and ran campaign advertisements, and the challengers mustered the resources to air ads of their own. While the sample from the Wisconsin Ads Project favors House members in large media markets, I am confident that there is enough variation to make generalizable claims. Most importantly, while there is strong reason to believe that campaign effects differ depending on the demographics of a

the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Wisconsin Advertising Project, Professor Goldstein, Joel Rivlin, or The Pew Charitable Trusts.”

district, there is no reason to suspect that campaign effects should change based solely on the size of a media market.

My data contain information on every ad run by a Congressional candidate in the 2000, 2002, and 2004 general elections in the sampled markets.²⁶ Two separate content analyses were conducted in order to determine the visual and verbal messages within campaign ads. The goal was to get an accurate measure of what issues were talked about and what kind of people were pictured within the ad. First, I coded the images that candidates used to determine whether or not the ad pictured children, seniors, African-Americans, Latinos, blue-collar workers, farmers, businesspeople, police, and military personnel, both active and retired. In order to assess the reliability of my image coding scheme, two coders looked at the storyboards for 819 ads from the 2000 election. In the first round of coding, they went through the ads to determine whether or not the ad pictured anyone other than the sponsoring candidate, members of his or her family, the opponent, or other elected officials.

I used this first step to weed out individuals who are political figures rather than representatives of groups. For example, Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts is a senior citizen; however, it is unlikely that viewers would instantly associate him with senior citizens. Candidates may find it useful to feed off of the status and celebrity of a respected figure like Kennedy, but because he is a famous figure viewers are more likely to react to him as an individual. On the other hand, if a candidate wanted to send a message of support to senior citizens in general, he or she could simply pack the ad with

²⁶ While both interest groups and parties may run ads on behalf of a candidate, federal election laws prohibit coordination between those groups and the candidate's campaign. Since I'm interested in analyzing candidate strategy in this section, it was important to limit the ads to only those that a candidate had direct control over. Moreover, many interest groups produce cookie cutter ads that are shown nationwide, and merely substitute in the name of the local candidate.

average seniors and interact with them on screen. Ordinary people may bring a note of authenticity to a campaign appeal because (presumably) the constituents watching the ad can identify with the people on screen.

For the ads that pictured at least one ordinary citizen, the coders identified those people who fall into one of the social identity groups mentioned above. Coders simply indicated whether or not someone from a particular group was pictured in an ad. Individuals may belong to several groups, and within the coding scheme one person within an ad could count toward multiple categories. For example, if an ad pictured a senior citizen who was also a blue-collar worker, the ad would be coded as picturing both seniors and blue-collar workers. Similarly, if an ad pictured children who were African-Americans, the ad could count as picturing children and African-Americans. Although the coders relied on their judgment in determining whether a person from a given group was pictured, intercoder reliability was very high, ranging from 90-100% raw agreement, with high reliability even after correcting for chance agreement (Cohen's kappa statistic between .7 and .9).

Once all of the ads were coded, I aggregated up to the level of individual candidates and calculated how many of their ads featured each group. The vast majority of candidates produced multiple ads, but those ads were rarely run in equal numbers. I determined the percentage of actual air time that a candidate devoted to picturing a group in his or her ads. For example, a candidate may have pictured blue-collar workers in only one ad, but that one ad may have comprised half of her total ad-buy. If she ran that ad 300 times, out of a total of 600 ads run, then she would receive a score of .5 for the blue collar image variable.

In order to control for the verbal messages within campaigns, I also needed data on the issue content of the ads. While I am not primarily interested in the substantive content of these ads, the issues discussed are, obviously, an important factor in determining the impact of the Congressional ads on the electorate. Also, it is important to differentiate between candidates who send messages through visual appeals, those who do so verbally, and those who combine their verbal and visual appeals. For the 2000 and 2002 elections I used Tracy Sulkin's data on Congressional campaigns. For her work on promise-keeping and campaign/policy congruence, Sulkin created a coding scheme to describe all of the issues mentioned within a particular ad. Her scheme was similar to the issue coding used in the Policy Agendas Project, and categorized verbal content under 18 broad areas: agriculture, budget and spending, campaign finance reform, crime, national defense, education, the environment, healthcare, energy and infrastructure, jobs, Medicare, business regulations, morality (including issues such as abortion, gambling and gay marriage), civil rights, social security, taxes and welfare.

Sulkin's issue coding covers the 2000 and 2002 campaigns. In order to include the final year of House campaign ads, I replicated her coding scheme for the 2004 election. To ensure reliability, I drew a random sample of 100 ads from Sulkin's original dataset and recoded them using the coding rules. Our issue coding matched on each issue between 94 and 100 percent of the ads, depending on the issue in question. Even correcting for chance agreement, our reliability was still remarkably solid (with Cohen's kappa statistics ranging from .65 to 1.0).²⁷ Given our high degree of reliability, I am

²⁷ The lone exception to this level of reliability was found on the issue of welfare. Very few Congressional ads ever mention welfare explicitly, and none of those ads made it into the reliability sample. Though our coding agreement was 100%, a kappa statistic could not be computed because of the lack of variation.

confident that the issue coding in the 2004 campaigns is comparable to the content analysis of the 2000 and 2002 campaigns.

Finally, I used information from the 2000 census to compile data on the demographics of House districts. I gathered data on the urban/rural split of the district, as well as the percentage of senior citizens, blue-collar workers, children, military veterans, African-Americans and Latinos living in the district. I use the Democratic share of the two-party presidential vote as a proxy for the ideological makeup of the district. While this is an imperfect measure of ideology, it does capture the general ideological bent of a district. The higher the Democratic share of the presidential vote, the more liberal the district.

4.3: What do Congressional ads look like?

Figure 1 shows the percentage of candidates who pictured each group. Overall, 86.6% of candidates pictured at least one ordinary person in at least one of their ads. Unsurprisingly, seniors and children are pictured by more candidates than any of the other groups. These two categories, of course, encompass a wider demographic than any other category and, indeed, often include members from several other categories. Image use varied over time, but only rarely varied between parties. There are very few significant differences in image use between Democrats and Republicans. Democratic candidates pictured African-Americans more often (7.8% more Democrats pictured blacks, $p < .05$); otherwise, the parties are remarkably similar.

There are, however, differences that emerge across time. Most importantly, there is a significant increase in the number of Republicans who picture military personnel

between the 2000 and 2002 elections. In 2000 only 5.7% of Republican candidates pictured a soldier in uniform in any of their ads. In the next election cycle, the number of candidates using soldiers almost doubled to 10.5%, and it doubled again in the next election cycle when 21.1% of Republican candidates used soldiers in their ads. This undoubtedly reflects the party's emphasis on national security following September 11th, but there is no corresponding increase in the 2002 cycle for Democratic candidates. Democrats do not use more martial imagery until the 2004 campaign, when they "catch up" to Republicans. By the same token, you can see statistically significant increases in both parties in the use of workers between the 2000 and 2002 elections. The corporate scandals of the early part of the decade appear to have moved both parties' candidates to put themselves next to blue-collar workers. These differences over time suggest that candidates are responding to changes in the political environments and molding their images to appeal to voters on the salient issues of the day.

Like the visual content, the verbal content of advertising does shift somewhat over time. As you can see in Figure 4.2, the changing political landscape did change the way some issues are discussed within campaigns during the period from 2000-2004. Notably, as with the comparison of images, the attacks of September 11th and the opening of the Iraq War fundamentally altered the way candidates discuss national defense within campaign advertisements. Terrorism became a major campaign issue in 2002, whereas it had almost never been mentioned before. Significantly more candidates in both parties mentioned the issue of national defense in 2002 and 2004, although there is a significantly larger increase on the Republican side. Similarly, business regulation became a hot topic in 2002 because of the collapse of Enron and other corporate

accountability scandals. Other issues tend to remain in the political dialogue over time. For example, social security and Medicare are frequently mentioned in Congressional advertising. I have combined these issues into one category (labeled “senior issues”) in order to simplify later analyses, but the two are often mentioned together in the same ad, and many candidates feature this issue appeal to senior citizens.

On the other hand, verbal content seems more influenced by partisanship. Enough has been written on verbal messages in campaigns that strategies and tendencies tend to be clear. Candidates usually eschew specificity and controversy in their verbal appeals unless the race is highly competitive (Kahn and Kenney 1999). They also tend to focus on issues where their party has a strong reputation, unless they have a personal history on an issue that will make them credible (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994; Sides 2006). Some patterns of issue ownership emerge when looking at verbal campaign messages. Overall, more Democratic candidates talk about Medicare, healthcare, and civil rights. This divergence suggests that strategic choices about images may be separate from choices about verbal messages. While candidates may use their party’s reputation to gain credibility with their verbal message, they do not seem to be so constrained when it comes to the visual cues they provide to the electorate.

In fact, there is little evidence of an absolute connection between the issues discussed and the images used in a campaign ad. There are several weak, but statistically significant, correlations between the amount of time candidates spend talking about issues and the amount of time they show images related to those issues. For example, there is a significant correlation between talking about Medicare or Social Security and picturing seniors ($r=.17, p<.05$). However, it is not uncommon for the issue content of

the ad and the imagery to be completely unrelated. Candidates frequently picture soldiers without discussing national defense, or show farmers without talking about agriculture. Less than half of the congressional ads featuring farmers mentioned an agricultural issue. Overall, almost one-third of the candidates in the sample pictured an African-American in at least one ad; however, only 2% actually talked explicitly about civil rights and race related issues. The indication is that the image content of an ad and the explicit content are often created with separate goals in mind.

As my discussions with political consultants revealed, there is no widespread agreement on whether or not a campaign's visual and verbal content should converge on a single message. The weak correlations between visual and verbal content reveal that some campaigns are run by Disciplinarians and Vulcans, while others are run by Fabulists and Multi-Taskers. At the very least, the disjuncture between visual and verbal content is a strong indication that what to show and what to say in an ad are distinct strategic decisions, and it provides further evidence that visual choices are an important part of the campaign.

4.4: Imagery and Campaign Strategy

Issue ownership and questions of future commitments may constrain the verbal messages that candidates use, but those concerns would not seem to apply to visual messages. If, as was the case in the last chapter, images are primarily used to create an affective bond between the candidate and his or her constituency, then the images should reflect the demographics of the district. To a certain extent, using district demographics makes for a weak test of image strategy. Campaigns routinely target specific groups in

an election (Baer 1995; Bradshaw 1995; Burton and Shea 2003; Hernson 2004). Just because a group is well represented in a district, however, does not necessarily mean that the group will be targeted by a political campaign. One can easily imagine a Republican candidate, for example, choosing not to target the 20% of his district that identifies as African-American, and instead only concentrating on white voters. It may, therefore, be difficult to see relationships between the constituency and image choices emerge.

In order to investigate image strategy I gathered data on candidate and constituent characteristics,²⁸ and examine a pooled cross section of the House campaigns. Not all of the candidates in the Wisconsin Ads data set use the same images, of course. To investigate image strategy, it is first necessary to weed out a few campaigns where non-strategic factors exert an unusual amount of influence on image choices. First, using images other than that of the candidate and his or her family is not necessarily a strategic decision; it is also a question of means. In order to use ordinary people a candidate has to have studio space, or the ability to shoot on location, and the ability to hire actors, or available b-roll footage and the means to edit it. Simply producing an ad like this requires capabilities (both technical and financial) that not all candidates possess. Almost all of the political consultants I spoke with prefaced their remarks on campaign strategy by saying something along the lines of, “Ideally, you have the money to do...” I therefore restrict my analysis to those candidates who had the means to produce ads that had at least one other person. I have also left out candidates who did not have a major party opponent. Several Democrats and Republicans ran ad campaigns in spite of the fact

²⁸ All demographic data comes from the 2000 Census. I obtained data at the Congressional district level based on the 2000 lines, as well as updated information for areas that underwent redistricting prior to the 2002 and 2004 Congressional elections.

that they had no opposition. It is highly probable that these candidates' motivations, whatever they were, did not come from the campaign at hand.²⁹

Finally, I have restricted this analysis to white Congressional candidates. In principle, minority candidates may also use imagery to build an affective tie with their constituents, or transmit a message about their policy positions. However, minority candidates present a different visual message when they appear in an ad themselves. Voters simply respond differently to black or Hispanic candidates versus white candidates (McDermott 1998), and minority candidates may need to use different visual strategies to take those reactions into account.

To begin, I looked at the bivariate relationship between the size of a group within a candidate's district and the amount of time a candidate pictures that group. I also examine the ideological makeup of the district and look at correlations between district ideology and image choices. At first glance, it seems that candidates are highly motivated to produce ads that "look like" their constituency. Table 4.3 shows that, for 7 of the 10 groups that I examine, there is a significant correlation between the size of a group and how often the group is pictured within the campaign. Candidates with higher concentrations of African-Americans, Latinos, seniors, veterans, and blue-collar workers in their districts ran more ads picturing these groups. Candidates in rural areas, as expected, tended to picture farmers more often, and candidates in urban areas pictured police officers more often. I should also note that the strong connection between group demographics and image choices appears to be bipartisan. When sending verbal

²⁹ Unopposed candidates may have run ads in order to dissuade future challengers, in which case their campaign strategy should closely mirror of opposed candidates. Both sides would be attempting to build support in the electorate. However, many unopposed House candidates went on to run in subsequent statewide elections, meaning that their campaign ads may have been intended for a wider audience than their own district.

messages candidates may be inhibited by their prior record or their party's reputation. Hence, differences in verbal issue content across parties often emerge in campaigns. It does not appear, however, that candidates are restricted by party reputation in the images they show. Republican candidates may not wish to talk about racial issues, but those with high minority populations in their districts are clearly comfortable running ads with images of minorities.

On the other hand, the link between ideology and image choices seems virtually non-existent. There is little indication of an association between running for office in a liberal district and picturing liberal groups more often, or running in a conservative district and picturing conservative groups more often. For Republican candidates, the only significant correlation between ideology and image choices (for blue-collar workers) is in the wrong direction. Republicans seem more likely to picture this left-leaning group in districts that have a more conservative make-up. Democratic candidates do slightly better at matching images and ideology, but not by much. Candidates in liberal districts tend to run more images of blacks and blue-collar workers, but these are the only significant results for Democratic congressional candidates that are in the correct direction. There is a significant correlation between images of teachers and ideology. Democratic candidates in more conservative districts tend to picture teachers more, which seems to be the opposite of what they should do if picturing teachers makes a candidate seem more liberal. At the same time there is a significant correlation between ideology and picturing children for Democratic candidates, even though there does not seem to be any obvious reason that children would be more appealing to a liberal constituency.

Compare the results in Table 4.3 with the results in Table 4.4. There are more significant bivariate relationships between visual messages and demographics than between verbal messages and constituencies. In theory, it would seem *less* likely to see significant relationships between demographics and verbal appeals. With campaign imagery, the candidate can focus on making the ad look like the constituent with few restrictions on who can reasonably be pictured, but verbal choices may be constricted by the candidate's party or reputation or personal beliefs. When choosing which issues to talk about in their ads, candidates are far more likely to choose issues where their position is close to the median voter (Kahn and Kinney 1999; Simon 2002), or focus on issues with higher salience among the electorate. Those issues may not necessarily be the ones most closely associated with large demographic groups. For example, a candidate may have a large number of seniors in his district, but if he holds an unpopular position on Medicare he would be unwise to bring it up during his campaign. Still, there are actually a number of significant bivariate relationships between demographics and verbal ad content. Once again, though, the differences between Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 lend credence to the idea that visual messages are an independent factor in campaigns, and not merely a by-product of the verbal content of the campaign. If images were merely a result of verbal messages, then there should not be any observable differences between the two. Any correlation between verbal choices and demographics would be matched by correlations between images and demographics.

The results from these simple analyses are informative; however, it may be argued that the correlation between constituency and ad imagery is merely an artifact of other factors. If, for example, female candidates are more likely to picture children or

senior citizens and more likely to come from districts with more seniors or a larger population of children, then the correlation between the district demographics and campaign images could be a spurious result. If images are, indeed, a strategic decision directly related to a candidate's audience, then the relationship between the two should remain significant even after controlling for other factors. At the same time, if image choices are related to the ideology of the candidate or the district, then it should be possible to see a relationship emerge.

To investigate this possibility I estimated a series of regression models. In each case, the dependent variable was the percentage of ads in which a candidate pictured a particular group. I controlled for the verbal messages that a candidate used on issues that are relevant to the group, and included indicator variables for the gender of the candidate, whether or not the candidate was an incumbent, and the year of the election. Female candidates do have a tendency to emphasize different issues and present themselves differently in campaigns (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). At the same time, incumbent candidates tend to picture more people in their ads (possibly as a result of experience or simply having more resources and/or communications consultants). This undoubtedly reflects a better understanding of how to create affective ties with their constituents gained from experience, and increased capabilities and better fundraising in their campaigns. I include indicator variables for the year 2002 and 2004 in order to account for any year-to-year variation in image use. Finally, I estimated separate models for Democratic and Republican candidates in order to account for any differences in how candidates from each party use imagery.

In Table 4.5 you can see as summary of the results of this regression analysis, which confirms the relationship between imagery and constituency make-up while also shedding light on some of the more puzzling results of the bivariate analysis.³⁰ For 7 out of the 10 groups there is a statistically significant relationship between the constituency demographics and the amount of time the group is pictured, and all of these significant results are in the expected direction. Overall, candidates from both parties use imagery to reflect the make-up of their district. The demographics of the district are statistically significant and, in most cases, substantively large. At the same time, the results from Table 4.5 show that there is a consistent distinction between verbal and visual messages. Candidates' verbal messages have some impact on imagery (and, really, it would be bizarre for the two to be completely separate), but a number of factors beyond what an ad says play into the decision about what an ad looks like. The verbal content alone does not drive the visual content. Instead, it seems that candidates make a conscious effort to mirror the demographics of their district, whether or not they are talking about an issue specifically related to a group.

Ideology, in contrast, is almost never a significant factor in image use. Congressional candidates seem to employ liberal and conservative images with no regard for whether the district leans more or less toward Democratic presidential candidates. In only one case is the ideology of the district a significant factor and in the expected direction. Democratic candidates in more liberal districts have a tendency to picture Latinos more often. The other two cases where ideology has a significant impact actually seem to undermine the argument that candidates use ideology to determine their campaign imagery. Ideology is a significant factor for both Democratic and Republican

³⁰ The full regression table is available in Appendix B.

candidates in picturing children and blue-collar workers. In both cases, though ideology is in the opposite direction for candidates of the opposite party. For Democratic candidates, ideology is positive and significant, meaning that the more liberal the district, the more often the candidate pictures children and workers. For Republicans, ideology is negative and significant.

Taken together, these results do not seem to indicate that candidates use imagery to make an ideological appeal that their constituents will find appealing. Instead, it seems that Democrats and Republicans picture children and workers more often when they come from safer districts. It could be that political candidates view children and workers as non-controversial, non-ideological images that will resonate with their whole constituency. Although the public views blue-collar workers as a liberal group, candidates may not share that view, or believe that images of workers send a liberal message. There is ample evidence that candidates from safe districts have a tendency to choose non-controversial verbal appeals (Kahn and Kenney 1999). It would appear that safe candidates take the same view with their image appeals and strive for wholesome, non-threatening campaign images.

It seems, at least at the House level, that there is little evidence that candidates think of their imagery in terms of the ideological signal they might send. If they considered ideological factors, then there should be a significant relationship between their district's position and their own image use. All else equal, candidates in conservative districts should show more images of conservative groups, but there seems to be no evidence that candidates view images as ideological signals. This does not mean that groups such as blacks and farmers do not send an ideological signal to voters;

however, it may be that candidates concentrate on the demographics of their district and ignore the ideological aspects of some images.

4.5: Imagery and election results

The question remains: does using imagery that mirrors the constituency actually affect Election Day totals? There have been a number of arguments in recent years about the normative democratic value of campaigns (Sulkin 2005; Geer 2006), but, fundamentally, campaigns are about winning votes, and (hopefully) altering election outcomes. In order to assess the value of image strategies I ran a series of regressions using an interaction between how often a group was pictured, the ideology of the district, and the size of that group within the electorate. I deal first with children, seniors, farmers, teachers, police officers, workers, businesspeople, Latinos and African-Americans, and then follow that with a look at images of soldiers and how their impact has changed over time.

First, I constructed an estimate of the normal Democratic share of the 2-party vote in each district.³¹ I estimated the normal vote using a regression model with fixed effects for time and congressional district.³² I created three variables to capture the effects of incumbency and challenger quality: *inceo* (Incumbent \times Experienced Opponent) indicates races where a Democratic or Republican incumbent faced an experienced opponent, *incio* (Incumbent \times Inexperienced Opponent) indicates races where a Democratic or Republican incumbent faced an inexperienced opponent, and *dexad* (Experienced

³¹ My thanks to Brian Gaines for suggesting this method and also for providing the data on incumbency, challenger quality and electoral outcomes.

³² In estimating the normal vote for the year 2000 I used indicator variables for time effects: $y_1=1992$, $y_2=1994$, $y_3=1996$, $y_4=1998$. For 2002 and 2004 I used indicators: $y_1=2004$, $y_2=2006$.

Democratic Challenger \times Experienced Republican Challenger) covers open races, indicating the comparative experience of two challengers. Each of these is scaled from 1 to -1, with higher numbers representing a Democratic advantage. By looking at multiple elections within the same district over time and accounting for factors like incumbency and year-to-year party performances, I can use the coefficients on the district indicator variables as an estimate for the normal Democratic vote:³³

$$\text{Normal vote} = \beta_1(\text{AL1}) + \beta_2(\text{AL2}) + \beta_3(\text{AL3}) \dots + \beta_{434}(\text{WV2}) + \beta_{436}(\text{Inceo}) + \beta_{437}(\text{Incio}) + \beta_{438}(\text{dexad}) + \beta_{439}(y1) + \beta_{440}(y2) + \beta_{441}(y3) + \beta_{442}(y4) + e$$

Once I had an estimate of the normal vote, I subtracted the actual Democratic share of the 2-party vote in order to get a measure of how much a particular race deviated from the norm. This deviation is the dependent variable that really interests me. I use a deviation from the normal estimate rather than simply using election totals in order to estimate how much the campaign changed the election outcome from what it *would have been* had it simply been a “typical” year for the district. In this case, positive values for the dependent variable indicate the Democrat did better than expected and negative values indicate that the Democrat’s vote total was lower than expected.

I modeled deviations from the normal vote using a three way interaction between the image used, the size of the group and the ideology of the district. In order to control for the effects of having two candidates in the race, I limited my analysis to only those districts where both candidates ran ads, and where both candidates pictured at least one other “regular” person. Both conditions are imposed in order to avoid conflating the effect of campaign imagery with a different cause. If I included all districts, regardless of

³³ Redistricting, unfortunately, meant that I could not estimate a normal vote for any of the Congressional districts in Texas for the year 2002 because that state redrew Congressional lines following that election. A handful of other districts which were never contested were also dropped from this analysis.

whether or not both candidates ran ads, then image effects might appear inflated. Presumably, if only one candidate ran ads, that candidate probably had greater resources, and what appeared to be image effects would only reflect that resource advantage. Similarly, I restrict my analysis to only those ads where both candidates pictured another person in order to avoid conflating the effect of picturing a group with the effect of picturing *anyone*. When a candidate's score for a group equals zero, that score should reflect that the candidate chose not to picture a particular group, not that the candidate failed to picture any other type of regular person. Even with these conditions, there are still 164 districts across three campaigns in the sample.

I have also controlled for a few other factors that might affect the race in a given election. I included indicator variables for the gender of each candidate as well as an indicator for the 2002 midterms, in which Democrats, in general, underperformed. I included information on the verbal content of the ads as well, in order to distinguish between the effect of picturing a group and talking about an issue. The percentage of the candidate's ads that mentioned an issue was interacted with the size of the group in the district. So, for example, I included the percentage of ads mentioning senior issues interacted with the percentage of seniors in the district. I also included the natural log of the number of ads run by each candidate to account for the effect of advertising volume on the race. I estimated the effect of each type of imagery separately using the model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Deviation from normal vote} = & \beta_1 (\% \text{ of Dem ads picturing group}) + \beta_2 (\% \text{ of group in} \\ & \text{district}) + \beta_3 (\text{district ideology}) + \beta_4 (\text{Dem ads} \times \text{group}) + \beta_5 (\text{Dem ads} \times \text{ideology}) + \beta_6 \\ & (\text{ideology} \times \text{group}) + \beta_7 (\text{Dem ads} \times \text{ideology} \times \text{group}) + \beta_8 (\% \text{ of GOP ads picturing} \\ & \text{group}) + \beta_9 (\text{GOP ads} \times \text{group}) + \beta_{10} (\text{GOP ads} \times \text{ideology}) + \beta_{11} (\text{GOP ads} \times \text{ideology} \times \\ & \text{group}) + \beta_{12} (\% \text{ of Dem ads mentioning issue}) + \beta_{13} (\% \text{ of Dem issue mentions} \times \text{group}) \\ & + \beta_{14} (\% \text{ of GOP ads mentioning issue}) + \beta_{15} (\% \text{ of GOP issue mentions} \times \text{group}) + \beta_{16} \\ & (\text{Dem female}) + \beta_{17} (\text{GOP female}) + \beta_{18} (\text{Dem ads}) + \beta_{19} (\text{GOP ads}) + \beta_{20} (\text{midterm}) + \\ & \beta_0 + e \end{aligned}$$

Though it might appear unwieldy, this model allows me estimate the effect of picturing a group for each candidate, and how those effects change depending on the district. The results indicate that imagery has a significant effect on election results while all of the control variables act in the expected direction.³⁴ Republican women tend to do slightly better than expected, and the number of ads run by each candidate affects the deviation from the normal vote as expected. More importantly, the imagery that candidates use has a strong, significant impact on deviations from the normal vote. For Democratic candidates, picturing children, seniors, police officers, workers, businesspeople, African-Americans and Latinos can have a strong impact on election results. I also find significant results for Republican candidates who use teachers, police officers, workers, businesspeople and Latinos. The results of the three-way image interactions can be difficult to interpret directly from the regression model. Both the coefficients and the standard errors can be somewhat misleading (Kam and Frazese 2005). In order to interpret the results of the model I took a derivative of the regression equation with respect to the imagery run by Democrats (and repeated the process for Republicans) in order to find the conditional effect of picturing a particular group.

Picturing children helps Democratic candidates perform better than the expected normal vote (for Republicans, picturing children never has a statistically significant impact). That impact only exists in a small range of districts, though. Politicians surrounding themselves with children may be one of the most prevalent and time-honored traditions in American politics, but that does not mean that it is always effective. The results of the three-way image interactions can be difficult to interpret directly from the regression model. Both the coefficients and the standard errors can be somewhat

³⁴ The full regression table as well as a table of conditional effects of imagery can be found in Appendix B.

misleading (Kam and Frazese 2005). In order to interpret the results of the model I took a derivative of the regression equation with respect to the imagery run by Democrats (and repeated the process for Republicans) in order to find the conditional effect of picturing a particular group. For nine of the ten groups (children, senior citizens, farmers, blue-collar workers, businesspeople, soldiers, African-Americans, Latinos, and teachers), the imagery of the candidate for at least one party and the ideology of the district combined to produce significant deviations from the expected Democratic vote.

Table 4.6 shows the conditional effects for picturing children. For the top half of the table, I have held district ideology constant at its mean and entered the effect of imagery for different sizes of the demographic group.³⁵ The bottom half shows the effect of imagery as ideology changes and the size of the demographic group is held constant. The results in Table 4.6 show that Democrats benefit from picturing children to a significant degree. Provided that the population of children in the district is near the mean *and* the ideology of the district is between .45 and .52, then picturing children can have a positive impact for Democratic candidates. The effect of picturing children does not change based on the district's ideology. As expected, children are appealing regardless of the liberal or conservative bent of the district. It is only in this middle range, though, that the effect is statistically significant. These conditions may sound extreme, but really it simply means that Democrats benefit from picturing children only in swing districts. These are, of course, exactly the type of districts where campaign effects have the most substantive impact since a change of 2 or 3 points on Election Day will mean the difference between winning and losing.

³⁵ Table 4.7 shows the effects of image within the range of each group's size in the sample. So, for example, I have not displayed the effect of picturing senior citizens in a district with 50% seniors or in a district where the Democratic share of the presidential vote was less than 30% or more than 60%.

However, these are also the races where candidates are *less* likely to picture children. As I showed earlier in the chapter, both Democrats and Republicans picture children more often when they are in extreme liberal and conservative districts, respectively. This trend may reflect the tendency for candidates to become more substantive or more negative in close elections (Kahn and Kenney 1999). Images of children rarely appear in negative ads (Brader 2006), and candidates may resist showing children in close elections for fear of looking vapid. Whatever the cause, it seems that candidate strategy is exactly the opposite of what it should be. Candidates in extreme districts derive virtually no benefit from picturing children. On the other hand, candidates in swing districts, who truly need every edge they can get, don't picture children as often. Moreover, candidates cannot make up a deficit by simply talking about education and childcare issues. For both Republicans and Democrats, the percentage of ads mentioning education and childcare never has a significant impact on deviations from the normal vote.

Indeed, it seems that candidates do not use an efficient advertising strategy in general. Though it can be difficult to make causal generalizations from aggregate data, the trend seems to be that the ideology of the district, not the demographic makeup, alters the impact of campaign imagery. Earlier I showed that the ideology of the district had little impact on the image choices of the candidate. While it may not affect candidates' strategic choices, there is a significant interaction between imagery and ideology that suggests candidates should consider the ideological content of their ad imagery.³⁶

³⁶ For a full layout of the conditional effect of imagery by ideology of district and demographic makeup, see Appendix B.

For example, Democratic and Republican candidates both benefited from picturing soldiers in conservative leaning districts.³⁷ Figure 4.3 shows the effect of picturing soldiers for Republican and Democratic candidates (when viewing these figures, keep in mind that the dependent variable on the Y-axis is deviation from the normal Democratic vote, so for Republican candidates negative effects actually represent an improved electoral performance). The beneficial effects of picturing soldiers only existed, however, in districts with an ideological rating less than .5. In more liberal districts the effect of picturing soldiers was harmful for both candidates, although the effect was not statistically significant. This pattern held for every type of image: the direction of the effect of imagery depended on the ideology of the district. Images of conservative groups helped candidates in conservative districts and images of liberal groups helped candidates in liberal districts.

In contrast, the demographics of the district seem to modify the effect of images in unexpected ways, and no obvious pattern of effects emerges. In one case, images of white-collar businesspeople, the relationship between images and demographics is exactly as anticipated, when the ideology of the district is held constant. For both Democratic and Republican candidates, there is a positive effect of picturing businesspeople in areas with a low percentage of blue-collar workers. As the number of blue-collar workers increases, the effect of picturing businesspeople goes from positive to negative.

For three other groups, police officers, Latinos and African-Americans, there is a positive effect of picturing the group for one or both parties' candidates; however, only

³⁷ This was especially true following the events of 9/11 and the subsequent Iraq War. Although images of soldiers played a minimal role in the 2000 campaign, they increased in frequency beginning in 2002, and were subsequently effective in conservative districts in the 02 and 04 campaigns.

the size of the effect changes with the demographics, not the direction. For example, Republican candidates get a strong boost from picturing police officers in urban districts, and, though this effect diminishes substantially in rural areas, the images still have a positive, statistically significant impact. While these results indicate that the demographics may have some effect on the impact of campaign imagery, they do not really fit with the hypothesis that ads that mirror the demographics of the district are more likely to be effective. Even in cases where Latinos made up 5% of the population, candidates from both parties seemed to get a boost from picturing Latinos.

Other types of images also indicate that any explanation of the effects of ad imagery needs to go beyond the demographics of the district. For example, Republican candidates gain or lose ground by picturing teachers, depending on the nature of the district. When the percentage of children in the district (and, presumably, the percentage of teachers) is low, the effect of picturing teachers is negative for Republicans. As it increases, the effect of picturing teachers becomes positive for Republicans. However, the pattern is reversed among Democrats, who only seem to benefit from picturing teachers in districts with low levels of children. There does not seem to be an obvious reason for a partisan difference in the effects of images. The effects of picturing blue collar workers reflect a similar pattern. Democratic candidates gain ground by showing workers in areas with a high percentage of blue-collar workers and perform worse when they show these images in areas with few workers. Republicans, on the other hand, benefit from showing workers only in areas where less than 20% of the population is blue-collar. They actually perform worse in districts where they show workers and the concentration of blue-collar labor exceeds 20%.

Finally, some types of images seem to defy the expected results for both parties' candidates. For candidates from both parties, the effect of picturing senior citizens and farmers appears to be inversely correlated with the size of these groups within the electorate. Though the effects are not always significant, in these cases candidates benefit from showing the group in their ads only when the group makes up a small portion of their constituency. Republicans and Democrats benefit from showing farmers in urban areas, but actually seem to do worse when they show farmers in their ads in rural areas. Overall, then, the evidence on the relationship of images and demographics is muddled. In some cases image effects seem dependent on demographics, but this relationship is inconsistent across image types, and in some cases is exactly the opposite of what was expected.

4.6: Summary

As in Chapter 3, the evidence suggests that Congressional candidates make a strong effort to have their campaign commercials reflect the make-up of their constituency. Unlike direct mail or phone-banking, television ads are targeted to a more general audience (Thurber and Nelson 2000). Not surprisingly, it appears that candidates try to match the “look” of their constituents as much as possible as they try to make an attachment with the general audience. The correlation between demographics and campaign imagery holds constant across a number of campaign environments.

Also, as expected, though there is some correlation between verbal and visual appeals, this correlation is far from perfect or absolute. Across three different campaign years and many different regions and candidates, there were undoubtedly Vulcans,

Fabulists, Disciplinarians and Multi-taskers designing campaign ads with their own beliefs and goals in mind. There is enough disconnect between verbal and visual content in campaigns that it seems clear that campaign imagery is designed with certain goals in mind that may or may not be related to the verbal content. While concerns about sincerity or the necessity of concentrating on a handful of issues (see Chapter 3) may drive the design of verbal appeals, visual appeals appear to be more strongly influenced by the need to attract favor from certain social identity groups.

Although Congressional candidates clearly try to make their ads look like their constituents, it is not clear that they always should. In the aggregate, there seems to be little evidence to support the notion that voters respond positively to self-congruent imagery in campaign ads. This view is a core belief among professional consultants, and it seems to be generally held in Congressional campaigns, but the aggregate evidence does not support that notion. Making campaign ads that look like the district either hurt the candidate or had no effect for a number of different groups. Any explanation of image effects, it seems, must go beyond the idea that campaign imagery should mirror the demographics of the constituency.

On the other hand, the ideological content of the campaign's ad imagery seemed to have a significant effect on candidates' fortunes. In the aggregate, it seems that candidates have more success matching the ideological department of their constituents and putting aside demographic considerations. It seems that candidates would do well to think about the policy signal that their images send. To the extent that images can change the expected outcome of an election, they appear to do so only when the images send an ideological signal acceptable to the voters.

The lack of attention to the ideological substance of campaign imagery is a surprising oversight among campaign strategists. There is ample evidence in advertising research to suggest that pictures can convey substantive information to the audience (Phillips 2000; McQuarrie and Phillips 2005). In fact, over 92% of the consultants I surveyed in Chapter 3 agreed that images can send a signal about the candidate's ideology. As I showed in Chapter 2, many groups are strongly associated with a particular political ideology. The public, in general, associates senior citizens, businesspeople, soldiers, police officers and farmers with conservative political ideology, while placing African-Americans, Latinos, teachers, and blue-collar workers on the left side of the ideological spectrum. Images are a fast, economical way to deliver information, and deliver it in such a way that it bypasses many of an individual's cognitive filters (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). It might seem that candidates would jump at the chance to use these groups to send an ideological signal to their constituents. Yet, as the previous chapter detailed, campaign strategists appear to focus only on the affective impact of picturing a particular group.

This disconnect between strategy and results is strange, to say the least. Making inferences about individual-level responses using this aggregate data risks the Ecological Fallacy; however, voters as a whole seem to respond to the substantive message of campaign ad imagery. At the same time, most consultants espouse the belief that images do transmit a substantive signal. Yet, when it comes time to actually construct the ad and launch the campaign, these substantive concerns are cast aside in favor of an affective, identity based approach. The information contained in an image is forgotten and any influence that information signal might have as part of the ad campaign seems largely

ignored. If the aggregate evidence in this chapter is any indication, it seems that Congressional campaigns have approached their campaigns with a strategy that is inefficient at best and disastrous at worst. The evidence here indicates that more than a few Congressional candidates have spent a large portion of their resources to run ads that ultimately hurt them on Election Day.

Chapter 4 Tables and Figures

Table 4.1: Candidate characteristics

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Challengers	Incumbents	Challengers	Incumbents
Overall:	183	132	162	194
White	156	116	145	156
Latino	15	4	8	2
African-American	10	10	8	1
Female	47	16	33	24
Winners	37	120	63	185
Ideology ³⁸	--	-.34	--	.47

Table 4.2: District characteristics

	Overall average	Minimum	Maximum
Pct. Urban	74.5 (20.1)	4.0	100
Pct. Over 65	12.5 (3.2)	5.0	28.0
Pct. African-American	10.1 (11.9)	0.1	64.0
Pct. Latino	9.8 (14.0)	1.0	78.0
Pct. Blue-collar	20.2 (8.8)	4.0	42.0
Pct. Veteran	12.2 (2.6)	3.0	22.0
Pct. In school	21.1 (2.2)	13.0	30.0
Ideology ³⁹	47.5 (9.5)	10.0	91.0

³⁸ Ideology here is the average of all candidates as measured by the incumbent's common-space nominate score in the Congress just prior to the election, as compiled by Poole and Rosenthal.

³⁹ Ideology at the district level is measured as the Democratic share of the two-party vote in the presidential election.

Table 4.3: Correlations between constituents and imagery

Group pictured	Demographics	Demographic correlations		Correlations with district ideology	
		DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
Seniors	% over 65	.12*	.12**	.05	-.03
Children	% enrolled in school	.09	-.05	.15**	-.07
Farmers	% rural	.17**	.16**	-.10	-.05
Police	% urban	.11*	-.03	.05	-.08
Teachers	% enrolled in school	.02	.01	-.14**	-.06
Military	% veterans	.10	.13**	-.02	-.03
Blue-collar workers	% blue collar	.19**	.15**	.17**	-.13**
Businesspeople	% blue collar	-.04	-.05	.01	.06
Latinos	% Latino	.49**	.17**	.10	.08
African-Americans	% African-American	.43**	.27**	.19**	-.02

Entries are pairwise correlation coefficients, *p<.1, **p<.05.

Table 4.4: Correlations between constituents and verbal messages

Issue mentioned	Demographics	Demographic correlations	
		DEM	GOP
Senior issues	% over 65	-.00	.14**
Education	% enrolled in school	.03	-.01
Agriculture	% rural	.12*	.14**
Crime	% urban	.09	.10*
Defense	% veterans	.23**	.27**
Jobs	% blue collar	.17**	.16**
Business regulation	% blue collar	.02	.03
Civil rights	% Latino	.21**	.07
Civil rights	% African-American	-.04	.02

Entries are pairwise correlation coefficients, *p<.1, **p<.05

Table 4.5: Summary of effect of demographics and ideology on image choice

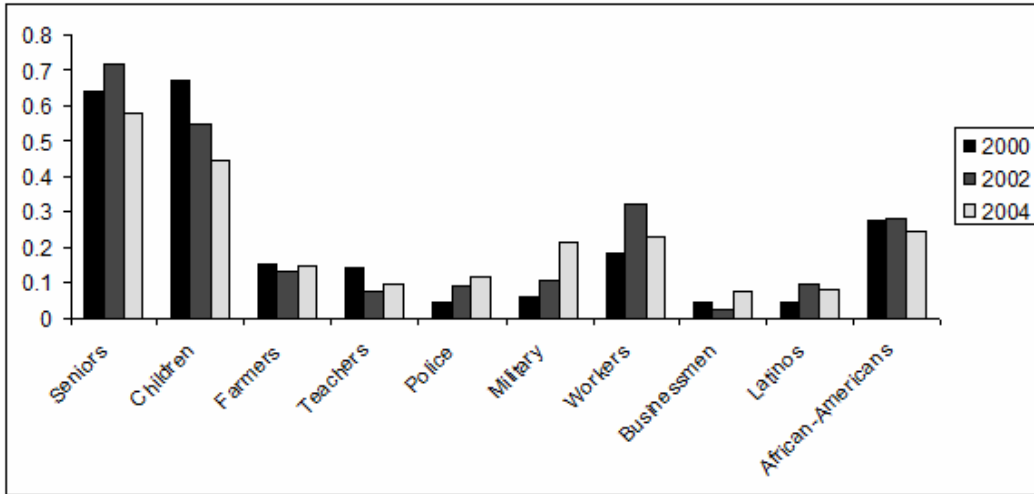
Group Pictured	Demographics	Ideological Impact
Children	Dems--($\beta=2.32$; SE=1.18)	Dems--($\beta=.44$; SE=.21) GOP--($\beta=-.44$; SE=.25)
Senior citizens	Dems--($\beta=1.10$; SE=.62) GOP--($\beta=.72$; SE=.44)	--
Farmers	Dems--($\beta=.09$; SE=.05) GOP--($\beta=.11$; SE=.04)	--
Teachers	--	--
Police officers	Dems--($\beta=.05$; SE=.02)	--
Workers	--	Dems--($\beta=.54$; SE=.19) GOP--($\beta=-.32$; SE=.16)
Businesspeople	Dems--($\beta=-.05$; SE=.03) GOP--($\beta=-.14$; SE=.08)	--
Soldiers	--	--
Latinos	Dems--($\beta=.96$; SE=.21) GOP--($\beta=.21$; SE=.08)	Dems--($\beta=.24$; SE=.13)
African-Americans	Dems--($\beta=1.14$; SE=.20) GOP--($\beta=.66$; SE=.17)	--

Table 4.6: Conditional effect of picturing children

		Children	
	% of children within district	DEM	GOP
Ideology of district held constant at .50	.10	.13 (-.03, .3)	-.04 (-.31, .22)
	.15	.09 (-.01, .17)	.01 (-.04, .06)
	.20	.04 (.01, .08)	.01 (-.03, .06)
	.25	-.00 (-.1, .09)	.06 (-.16, .29)
	Ideology of district	DEM	GOP
Pct. of children held constant at 20%	.35	.07 (-.00, .14)	-.00 (-.06, .05)
	.40	.06 (.00, .11)	.00 (-.04, .04)
	.45	.05 (.01, .09)	.01 (-.03, .04)
	.50	.04 (.00, .08)	.01 (-.04, .06)
	.55	.03 (-.01, .08)	.01 (-.05, .08)
	.60	.02 (-.04, .09)	.02 (-.06, .10)
	.65	.01 (-.07, .10)	.02 (-.08, .12)

Entries in each cell are the effect of picturing a particular group given the ideology and demographic make-up of the district with 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. Note that the dependent variable in the regression is deviations from the normal Democratic share of the 2-party vote. When interpreting effects, therefore, Republican candidates actually benefit when the effect is negative, since this implies that the image is lowering the Democratic vote.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of candidates picturing each group, by year and party
Republican Candidates



Democratic Candidates

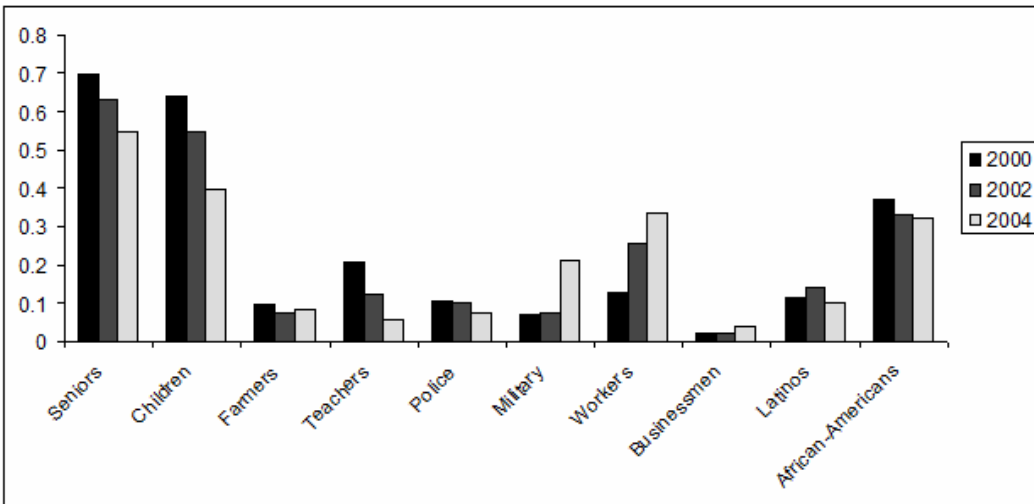
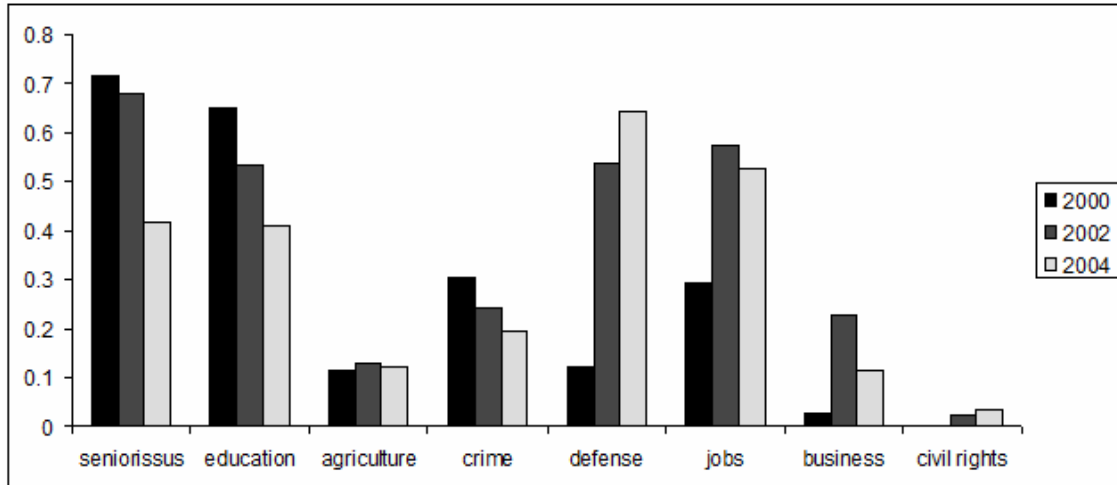


Figure 4.2: Percentage of candidates mentioning each issue, by year and party
Republican candidates



Democratic Candidates

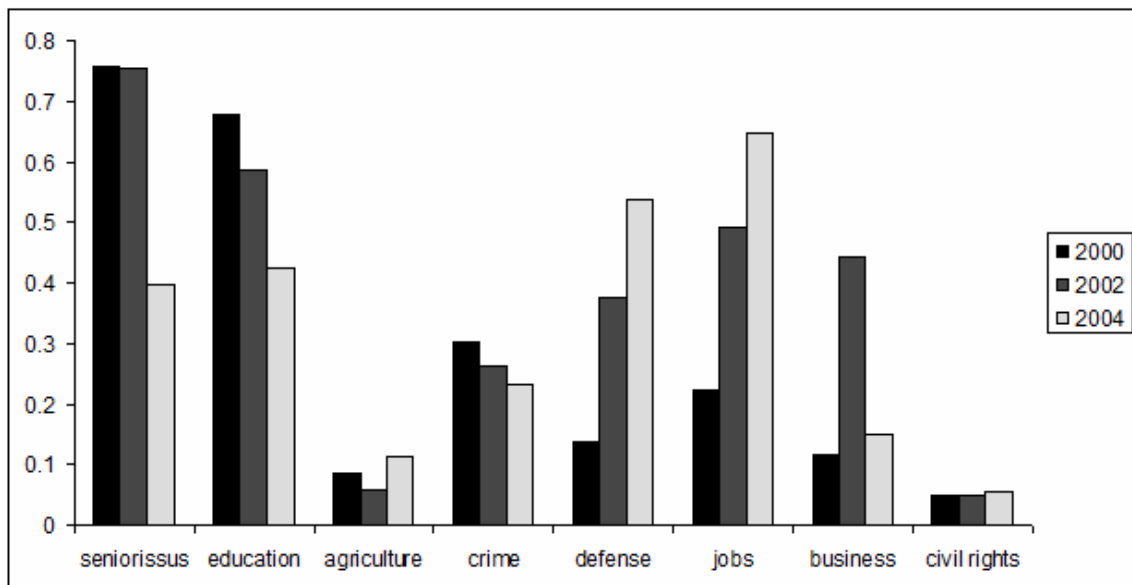
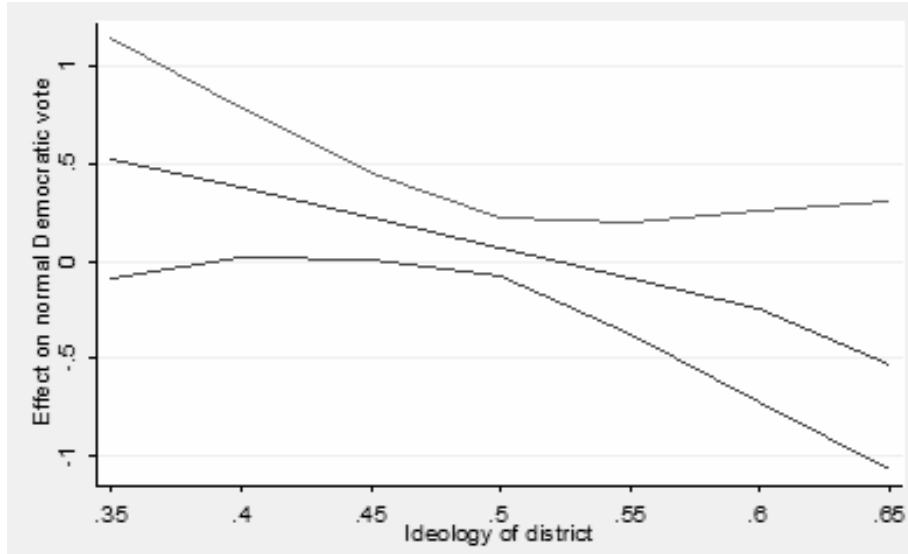


Figure 4.3: Effect of picturing soldiers on normal Democratic vote
Democratic candidates



Republican candidates

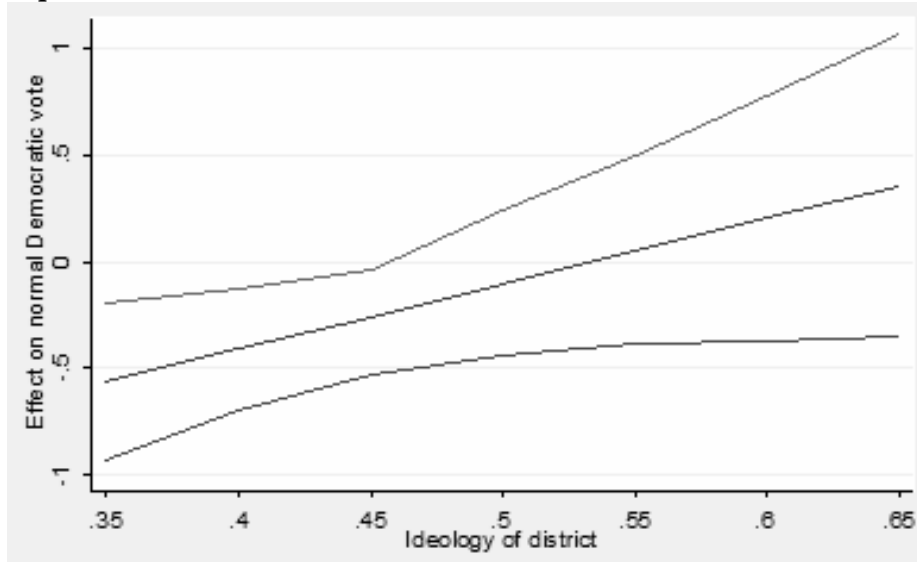


Figure shows effect of picturing soldiers bounded by 95% confidence intervals

Chapter 5: Observed Impact of Imagery at the Individual Level

5.1: Introduction

The evidence from congressional campaigns strongly indicates that campaigns are run with an eye toward identity politics, building affective ties with voters by picturing groups that the voter identifies with. Congressional candidates shape their ads to look like their constituencies in order to build up the idea that they are in touch with their constituents' needs and problems. The question remains, however, how do voters actually use campaign imagery? Do they simply respond positively to self-congruent imagery or do they use images as information and attempt to draw inferences about the candidate based on the candidate's campaign images? In Chapter 2 I outlined three hypotheses of campaign image effects:

- 1) The Identity Hypothesis: When a candidate pictures a visually recognizable member of an occupational or demographic group, voters who are a member of that group will notice and respond more favorably to the candidate than when the candidate does not picture such a member.*
- 2) The Group Support Hypothesis: When a candidate pictures a visually recognizable member of an occupational or demographic group, voters will interpret that image as a message that the candidate favors that group.*
- 3) The Ideology Hypothesis: Picturing groups widely perceived as conservative will cause voters to view the candidate as more conservative and picturing groups perceived as liberal should make voters view the candidate as more liberal.*

The evidence from chapters 3 and 4 suggests that campaign ads are designed to appeal to identity groups by using congruent imagery to build affective bonds between the candidate and the voter. Campaign strategy, for the most part, assumes that the Identity Hypothesis actually works. Campaign consultants, in general, believe that individuals react positively to self-congruent images: Latinos like to see Latinos, farmers like to see farmers, etc. At the end of the last chapter I looked at the effect of advertising

on aggregate election returns. There was strong support for the Ideology Hypothesis, but little support for the Identity Hypothesis, despite the professional belief in the importance of the latter. On the whole, it seems that the effectiveness of campaign images was strongly linked to the ideology of the district, rather than the district's demographics. Though it is not conclusive, the aggregate evidence suggests that voters react to campaign visuals as though they were substantive messages and they supported (or opposed) a candidate based on how they viewed those messages.

In this chapter, I investigate reactions to congressional campaign advertising at the individual level using survey data and campaign data from the 2000 House elections. The aggregate analysis could conceal a number of important relationships at the individual level. Of course, cross-sectional survey analysis cannot definitively prove the causal story I am investigating. Campaigns are a dynamic process, and the process I describe involves voters viewing campaign ads and learning about the candidate over the course of several months worth of ads. However, the observational data in this chapter helps shed light on those how identity, partisanship and policy beliefs affect individual reactions to campaign imagery. Though these data are not without limitations, they provide evidence that voters use images to make judgments about candidates, and that the effects of ad imagery may make it a critical tool within the campaign.

5.2: Imagery in Congressional campaigns

In order to determine how voters responded to these ads, I used data from the 2000, post-election National Annenberg Election Study and the Congressional data from 2000 described in the previous chapter. I matched respondents from the NAES with their

Congressional district, and the media market in which they lived. This survey is ideal for campaign effect research because it has a large national sample with respondents from every district where a candidate ran campaign ads in 2000. The NAES is also useful because it asks questions about a wide range of attitudes and opinions which cover the interests of the groups I am interested in. I have used the demographic and issue questions in the survey in order to estimate the partisan and issue positions of the voter, as well as the groups that he or she might identify with. The attitude and identity variables are laid out in Table 5.1. In each case, the issue variables are measured on a -1 to 1 scale where positive values represent support of the group and negative values represent opposition to the group. Most of these questions deal specifically with spending or direct benefits that favor a group, though a few items are more oblique.⁴⁰ Items tapping support for senior citizens, children, teachers and soldiers all relate directly to support for government spending on programs for these groups. Similarly, support for African-Americans is measured as a respondent's support for preferential hiring practices. While there is no survey item directly capturing benefits for workers, there is a feeling thermometer capturing a respondent's support for labor unions. Finally, for businesspeople, police officers and Latinos, I have used items that ask whether or not a respondent is concerned about a particular problem.

While the Annenberg survey was primarily designed to look at effects from the presidential campaign, it does include several questions about Congressional candidates as well. While it does not ask respondents about candidates' issue positions it does make them rate candidates on a 0-100 feeling thermometer, which will be the primary

⁴⁰ Unfortunately, there were no items on the survey about agricultural issues. In the ensuing analyses I have used an interaction between images and partisanship to analyze the effect of picturing farmers.

dependent variable for all the analyses in this chapter. I am primarily interested in determining how a candidate's campaign images affect respondents' feelings toward the candidate. If my hypotheses about the effect of images are correct, then I should be able to see a measurable difference between reactions from different respondents, based on their identity and political predispositions.

While there is no direct measurement of how a respondent interprets images, the message of the image can be inferred based on the respondent's reaction. All else being equal, respondents should like a candidate more when his visual message matches the respondent's political predispositions. So Republican respondents, all else being equal, should respond more favorably to images of conservative groups, Democrats should respond favorably to images of liberal groups, and individuals, in general, should respond favorably when they support benefits for the group being pictured. The favorability scale is an indirect measure of substantive inferences, but it is also a fairly difficult standard to meet. In order to see significant effects from images, respondents will have to use the images to make an inference about the candidate's positions *and* those positions will have to be important enough to the respondents to see differences in favorability across respondents beyond what might be expected from partisanship and issue beliefs. Moreover, there should be a ceiling effect when examining the effect of campaign images on partisan respondents. Democratic (or Republican) respondents should rank Democratic (or Republican) candidates high on the feeling thermometer on the basis of partisan identification. There is a strict limit, then, on how much more the respondent can like the candidate based on the campaign. Following a procedure outlined by Ridout, et al. (2004), I have separated the sample based on an approximate measure of ad exposure.

This measure is simply the natural log of the product of the number of ads run by a candidate in a respondent's district multiplied by the number of days per week that the respondent watched local and network news coverage. In their paper, Ridout, et. al. find that measuring ad exposure as a function of the respondent's television viewing habits is a far more effective measure than self-reported interest or simply the raw number of ads run in the respondent's area. Unfortunately, the Annenberg survey does not contain information on all of the programs that those authors suggest using; however, I can approximate ad exposure using local and network viewing habits. In 2000, almost two-thirds of House ads ran during local and network news. In addition, programs saturated with ads (such as *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune*) generally air either just before or just after local news programming. I used news viewing habits as a proxy for campaign exposure. After computing the respondents' exposure scores, I grouped all respondents by quartile and labeled the lowest quartile as the minimal exposure group. The difference between the minimal exposure group and the rest of the sample is a dramatic drop in the number of significant ad effects, which is to be expected. In the results section, I drop the minimal exposure group from the analysis and concentrate on the reactions of respondents who had a medium to high level of ad exposure.

5.3: Imagery's effect on Congressional candidates

To begin, I calculated a simple correlation between use of a particular image and favorability ratings of congressional candidates. I examine the effect of campaign imagery separately for Republicans and Democrats in order to determine any partisan differences in the efficacy of images or issues. I also limited my analysis to white, male

candidates in order to avoid conflating the race and gender of the candidate with effects from the campaign ads.⁴¹ Female and minority candidates present a different image than their male counterparts and voters respond differently to women and minority candidates (McDermott 1998), and it is important to keep the candidates in this analysis as uniform as possible. Theoretically, campaign imagery should have similar effects for all candidates regardless of race or gender, but I felt it important to eliminate a potential confound.

Table 5.2 shows the results of the raw correlation.⁴² Each entry in the table is a pairwise correlation coefficient. As the table shows, there is little evidence of a simple correlation between image use and favorability. Out of the 36 correlations, only 6 are statistically significant. More importantly, there is little evidence of a simple affective tie between respondents and campaign imagery. Members of a group do not appear to like a candidate simply because he or she pictures that group. In fact, for Republican candidates the only significant correlations between image use and favorability occur among respondents who are not members of the group being pictured.

Of course, the simple correlation analysis is limited in many ways. A number of factors may play into a respondent's evaluation of the candidate, and many of those factors may be correlated with social identities. However, the lack of a simple

⁴¹ This does cull the sample quite a bit. There were roughly 2200 respondents who actually lived in a district where a House candidate from either major party ran television ads. Looking only at races with male candidates also meant dropping more than 800 respondents, and more respondents were dropped to negligible levels of ad exposure. Fortunately, the NAES post-election data carries enough respondents to eliminate a substantial number of respondents and still be left with a reasonably large sample.

⁴² Unfortunately, the Annenberg survey does not contain a variable for whether or not the respondent or anyone in the respondent's family was a police officer. Though this is included in some of the larger occupation codes, the category for police officers includes a wide variety of service jobs (including waiters and hairdressers) and it would be inappropriate to use this variable as a measure of group identity. Hence, images of police are excluded from Table 5.2. In the subsequent regression analysis, the estimates of the effect of police imagery are modeled alongside other ingroup models, but actually include all respondents.

relationship suggests that something more subtle than just group identification is taking place.

In order to investigate the impact of imagery, I estimated a series of regression models using each type of group imagery as the main independent variable and the favorability rating scale as the dependent variable.⁴³ I model a respondent's feeling toward a candidate as a three-way interaction between the amount of time a candidate pictures a group, the respondent's predisposition toward that group and the respondent's partisan identification. I assume that respondents who favor benefits for a group will react positively to seeing images of that group in a candidate's ad. By the same token, partisans should react to ideological signals that connect with their party identification. Republicans should feel more warmly toward candidates who run conservative images, and Democrats should favor candidates who run liberal images. For example, I interact the percentage of ads where a candidate pictures seniors, the respondent's attitude toward Medicare and Social Security and the respondent's party. Moreover, I model the results separately for members within the group and those outside the group. In theory, those within the group will react differently because they have an affective connection with similar images. At the same time, visual images are almost always accompanied by some kind of verbal message, and these messages may add to, or detract from, the impact of the visual cues. As with the visual messages, I interacted verbal messages with the respondent's beliefs about an issue and his or her partisan identification.

⁴³ In a separate analysis, I modeled favorability with all images and interactions in the same equation, with no substantive change in results.

I also want to control for several factors that may influence a respondent's feelings about a candidate including: incumbency, gender, ideology⁴⁴ of the respondent, whether or not the respondent lives in the south and how much the respondent reads the newspaper.⁴⁵ I have also included a measure of the difference between the sizes of the candidates' ad buys. I subtracted the number of Republican ads from the number of Democratic ads within a given Congressional district. A positive value, then, indicates that the Democratic candidate ran more ads. For Democratic candidates there should be a direct relationship between this variable and the favorability of the candidate; while there should be an inverse relationship between favorability and the ad difference for Republican candidates. In other words, when the Democrat runs more ads he or she should be viewed more favorably, and when the Republican candidate runs more ads he or she should receive higher favorability ratings. In addition to capturing an advertising gap that may allow one candidate's message to resonate with voters, the ad gap variable also serves as a proxy for campaign spending so it is not surprising that the variable indicates that those who spend more on advertising are viewed more favorably by the voters. So, for example, to find the effect of picturing seniors I estimated the model:

$$(1) \text{ Favorability} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \% \text{ of ads with seniors} + \beta_2 \times \text{disposition towards seniors} + \beta_3 \times \text{respondent's party identification} + \beta_4 \times \text{disposition towards seniors} \times \% \text{ senior image} + \beta_5 \times \text{disposition towards seniors} \times \text{partisan id} + \beta_6 \times \text{disposition towards seniors} \times \% \text{ senior image} \times \text{partisan id} + \beta_7 \times \% \text{ of ads mention senior issues} + \beta_8 \times \text{disposition towards seniors} \times \% \text{ senior issue mention} \times \text{partisan id} + \beta_9 \times \text{disposition towards seniors} \times \% \text{ senior issue mention} \times \text{partisan id} + \beta_{10} \times \text{incumbency} + \beta_{11} \times \text{respondent's ideology} + \beta_{12} \times \text{south} + \beta_{13} \times \text{female} + \beta_{14} \times \text{newspaper habits} + \beta_{15} \times \text{relative number of Democratic ads} + e$$

⁴⁴ Partisanship is measured using the standard 7 point scale, while ideology is measured using a five point scale. The scales in the Annenberg study are constructed such that liberal is on the high end of the ideology scale, while Democrats are on the low end of the partisan scale, hence the coefficients on these variables have opposite signs in the regression models that follow.

⁴⁵ Newspaper habits are included as a proxy for general interest in current events.

Unfortunately, the only Democratic candidates who ran images of businesspeople in 2000 were either women or minorities, which means that I cannot estimate the impact of white-collar images in Democratic ads. At the same time, no Republican Congressional candidate mentioned civil rights or explicit racial issues during the 2000 campaign. Accordingly, I have dropped the verbal measures when looking at the effects of racial imagery in Republican ads.

Tables 3a and 3b show the results of the regression analysis. For 9 out of the 10 groups that I examine, the images have a significant conditional effect given the predispositions of the respondent, although the images are not significant for candidates of both parties in some cases. The lone exception seems to be police officers, where I found no significant effects from imagery. It should be noted that this is also the only group where I was unable to control for the affective connection that members of a group might feel. In general, it seems that membership in a group enhances the impact of showing that group in a campaign ad. For all 9 groups where group membership could be established, there is a significant effect of imagery for at least one party's candidate.

There is also some evidence to indicate that images had a substantively larger impact on members of the group, though simply being a member of group does not guarantee a positive response. Within groups the partisanship and issue positions of the respondent mitigated the effect of campaign imagery. While members of a group may have been generally predisposed to respond to an image, their overall response to the image depended on their own political views. Interpreting results from a three-way regression can be difficult, and the standard errors of regression coefficients in such a model can actually be misleading (Kam and Fransenze, 2005). In order to explain the

impact of images, I have calculated predicted values for each image type, varying the images used in the campaign, partisanship and issue position of the respondent while holding all other values at their mean. I have calculated values as image and party vary, while holding the issues position at its neutral point (0), and then calculated predicted values varying images and issue positions while holding party identification constant at an independent value (4) and all other variables at their mean.⁴⁶

To begin with, consider the only group I examine that has no obvious ideological affiliation: children. Images of children are ubiquitous in campaign advertising. The baby-kissing politician is a cliché for a reason (see Chapter 4). Obviously, children cannot vote, but their parents can, and the parental designation is a strong social identity (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973). I find that candidates can benefit from picturing children, but only if the respondent is a parent with children at home, and even then the individual's reaction varies according to his or her beliefs. Figure 5.1 shows predicted feeling thermometer values for Republican candidates picturing children. The first two graphs show the predicted feeling thermometer scores for non-parents. Whether varying the issue position or the partisanship of the respondent along with the imagery the result is basically a flat plane. Partisanship and attitudes on education may affect attitudes toward the candidate, but the campaign images of children seem to have no effect.

Turning to parents, on the other hand, there is a significant difference in the feelings toward the candidate, depending on the predisposition of the parent and the use of children. As I hypothesized in Chapter 2, campaign images do have a stronger effect on members of the group. However, picturing children does not necessarily benefit the

⁴⁶ In all of the subsequent figures, the x axis represents the percentage of time that the group was pictured in a candidate's ads, the z axis represents the predicted value of the feeling thermometer, and the y axis represents either the respondent's partisanship or the respondent's issue position.

candidate. Parents may be more likely to be influenced by imagery of children, but their reactions to a candidate who pictures children are based on their own political predispositions. Simply picturing members of the group, then, is no guarantee of support from the group itself, even with a group as innocuous and inoffensive as children. Children represent a policy signal of spending government resources on aid to children, and parents responded based on their views of those types of programs. A candidate who pictured children in 100% of his ads would see a 22 point drop in support among independent parents who opposed increases in education spending, although this would be offset somewhat by an 11 point increase in support among independent parents who support education spending. The results in Figure 5.3 demonstrate a rational response from voters to an inference made about the candidate based on the images the candidate used in the campaign, not merely an affective one.

Oddly, there is also an apparent partisan effect among parents. When support for education spending is held at 0, the neutral point, Democratic parents react seem to punish candidates for picturing children, while Republicans reward candidates. This partisan result does not seem to be evidence that children provide an ideological signal, though. When the candidate is a Democrat, the partisan pattern for picturing children is reversed. It seems that members of a candidate's own party respond well to the non-ideological, happy image of children (all else being equal), but punish candidates of the opposite party. Democrats like to see Democratic candidates picture children, and Republicans like to see Republican candidates doing the same, but neither type of partisan wants to see the other side picturing children. This may be evidence of an emotional response to imagery. In some ways this is evidence that images of children do

elicit enthusiasm (Brader, 2005), and Brader found that enthusiastic emotional responses often strengthened pre-existing views. Though there is only a significant impact among parents, in the case of an obviously positive image like children it seems there is an emotional, enthusiastic response. The positive image re-enforces an existing partisan connection between the voter and the candidate.

In the last chapter I demonstrated that, in the aggregate, candidates seemed to benefit from picturing children in swing districts. At the individual level, however, it seems that it is partisans, not necessarily swing voters, who are most affected by images of children. Independent voters may respond favorably or unfavorably to images of children, depending on their own political views. In fact, campaign commercials tend to include children when the candidate is running in a favorable ideological environment. In the previous chapter I showed that both Republicans and Democrats pictured children more often in more conservative and more liberal districts, respectively. To the extent that individual partisans respond favorably to their party's candidate using children, it seems that candidates may be correct in using this approach. For candidates in more heavily contested districts, the decision to picture children or not is more complex and depends a great deal on the political predispositions of the voters the candidate is trying to reach. Candidates who need support from independent voters in order to win an election must consider where those voters stand on issues like education spending before deciding whether or not to picture children in their ads.

Of course, children are unique because they are an ideologically neutral group. Groups with an ideological reputation yielded somewhat different results. Images of senior citizens, farmers, teachers, workers, businesspeople, soldiers and African-

Americans provoked positive and negative reactions based on the political views of the respondent. Two important trends stand out for these groups. First, members of a group generally had more extreme reactions to images of the group than non-members, though these reactions were not necessarily positive. Members of a group only reacted positively to self-congruent images if they had a partisan or issue belief in line with the group. Reactions among voters who were not a member of the group being pictured were often statistically insignificant. Second, some voters had a significant reaction to campaign imagery that did not reflect their own identity, but this was almost always a positive reaction. Statistically significant, negative reactions to imagery came among respondents viewing self-congruent images were relatively common. Few respondents who saw an identity group that did not reflect their own identity punished the candidate for picturing that group.

For example, Figure 5.2 shows the predicted values of Republican and Democratic candidates who pictured senior citizens. Seniors are viewed as a conservative group, and picturing this group sends an ideologically conservative signal. As expected, both Republican and Democratic voters respond to a conservative signal by embracing or rejecting the candidate, respectively. For Democratic candidates who show seniors in all of their ads there is a predicted 23 point drop in favorability among strong Democratic seniors and a 16 point increase in favorability among strong Republican seniors.

Those interactions, of course, account for the respondent's partisanship and the ideological signal that the image represents. The image also represents a message of support for the group. For members of the group, the respondent's support for group benefits strongly influences his or her response to an image. To return to Figure 5.2,

independent senior citizen voters who support increased spending on Social Security and Medicare reacted favorably to candidates who pictured seniors, but those who oppose increases actually punished candidates for picturing seniors. Not surprisingly, most seniors in the NAES (62.4%) supported an increase in senior benefits; however, not all members of a group support selective benefits for the group. Senior citizens did not simply respond and blindly identify with candidates who pictured seniors. They responded based on their own policy beliefs. A Republican candidate who pictured senior citizens in all of his ads would expect to see a 22 point drop in favorability among seniors opposed to increased benefits when compared to a candidate who never pictured seniors.⁴⁷

On the other hand, non-senior independent voters maintained the same level of support for candidates who pictured seniors regardless of their own feelings about Social Security and Medicare spending. While the interaction between the respondent's partisanship and the ideological signal was significant, the interaction between feelings toward group benefits and the image was important only when the respondent was a member of the group. At that, images of seniors seemed to help candidates among non-senior citizens, and never had a statistically significant negative impact on candidate favorability. There is only a 1 point decrease among strong Democratic non-seniors for Democratic candidates picturing senior citizens, and a 10 point increase among strong Republican non-seniors.

A similar pattern occurs in Figure 5.3, which shows the effect of picturing African-Americans. White strong Democrats reacted positively to Republican candidates who pictured African-Americans in their ads; otherwise, there was no statistically

⁴⁷ A Democratic candidate would experience a similar 21 point drop in favorability.

significant response among white voters. When Democrats pictured African-Americans, they received a small boost in favorability among white voters who support benefits for African-Americans, but otherwise there was no significant reaction. In other words, while candidates could benefit by showing African-Americans with some respondents, they never seemed to hurt themselves by doing so. Candidates who pictured blacks never saw a backlash from white voters.

On the other hand, African-American voters responded to Republicans and Democrats picturing them in campaign ads in line with their partisan views and beliefs about government aid to blacks. Independent African-Americans opposed to programs like Affirmative Action had a strong negative reaction to images of blacks in campaign ads, while blacks who support government aid favored the candidate more when the campaign ads pictured blacks. Favorability also varied according to partisanship. Democrats who pictured blacks received a 35 point bump in favorability among strong Democrats by picturing African-Americans in all of their ads.

This difference in reactions between members and non-members is puzzling. Either members of the group are interpreting images in a different manner (e.g. Senior citizens see images of seniors as a message about support for seniors, while non-seniors do not), or non-members may not view the visual signal as important enough to change their feelings about the candidate (e.g. Non-seniors view images of seniors as a message of support, but simply don't care about the issues of Social Security and Medicare). While the significant interaction between issue positions and campaign imagery makes it possible to infer that voters used campaign images as a substantive cue, it is more difficult to interpret a null result. Unfortunately, because the NAES does not ask

respondents them to rate the issue positions of Congressional candidates, it is impossible to determine whether voters failed to receive a message from campaign imagery, or simply failed to use it in their overall evaluations of the candidate.

For the most part, the pattern of results with senior and African-American imagery repeats itself with each group pictured: members of the group react to the ideological signal and the policy signal an image represents, while non-members tend to react in a positive manner, or not at all. Few respondents simply reacted positively to an image they identified with. There was one exception to this pattern, however. Latinos responded positively to images that they could identify with regardless of their own political beliefs. In Figure 5.4 you can see the predicted favorability ratings for candidates who picture Latinos.

Regardless of partisanship or political attitudes, Latinos responded favorably to Democratic candidates who pictured Latinos in their ads. Democratic candidates who pictured Latinos in all of their ads could expect a 30 points increase in favorability among Latino voters. Similarly, Latinos responded favorably to Republican candidates who used Latinos in their television ads. There is some indication that strong Democratic Latinos or Latinos with liberal view on immigration responded more to these images, but all Latinos responded positively. Strong Republican Latinos did not warm to Republican candidates who pictured Latinos (the differences in predicted values were not statistically significant), but there is no evidence of the backlash I found among other groups.

Instead, some white respondents seemed to have a negative reaction to campaign images of Latinos. The interaction between images and partisanship is non-significant for both Republican and Democratic candidates, but some respondents had a strong negative

response based on their attitudes on immigration. The interaction between attitudes on immigration and images of Latinos seems to be in the wrong direction for candidates of both parties. Those with liberal attitudes on immigration tended to like the candidate less when the campaign ads pictured Latinos while those with conservative attitudes on the issue liked the candidate more. This odd pattern may simply indicate that attitudes on immigration are a poor proxy for support for policies that favor the Latino community. It may be that I have simply failed to properly identify respondents' attitudes on benefits for Latinos, and therefore the estimates of the effect of Latino imagery should be somewhat suspect. Given that the pattern of responses among both Latinos and non-Latinos does not fit with other group responses to campaign imagery it seems the probability of error due to an invalid measurement seems somewhat high.

While the pattern of effects from visual appeals is fairly straightforward, the verbal content of campaign ads seems to have a much higher variance both in terms of its influential power and its positive and negative results. In the regressions in Table 5.3, few of the verbal messages show a significant impact on a candidate's favorability, and many that did have a significant impact also carried substantial risk for the candidate. In Figure 5.5, I calculated predicted values for Democratic and Republican candidates using mentions of Social Security and Medicare. There are no statistically significant differences as a result of mentioning the issue for either seniors or non-seniors. Each of the figures show flat planes, with changes in favorability due to partisanship or issue position, but not due to the issues mentioned by the candidate. Keep in mind that *showing* senior citizens had a significant effect on feelings toward candidates from both parties with both seniors and non-seniors. On the other hand, merely *talking* about seniors'

issues had no real impact on most respondents. The only significant result seems to be that Democratic candidates who talked about Social Security or Medicare lost ground among Republican voters under 65. It seems that while images of seniors are strongly associated with conservatism and, therefore, appealing to Republican respondents, the issues associated with seniors are actually unpopular with the same group.

The results from the regression analysis on verbal appeals seem to support the consultant notion that “Pictures work... Words lead to arguments.” Unlike the visual messages, verbal appeals frequently elicited negative reactions from some voters. Though a handful of verbal issue appeals may have helped candidates in certain circumstances, many (such as Republican and Democratic appeals on national defense and education) led to a significant backlash among respondents, depending on their beliefs about a particular issue. This backlash extended beyond members of the immediately affected group. For example, Republican appeals on education had a negative effect on candidate favorability among those who oppose education spending, regardless of whether the respondents had children in school.

5.4: Summary

In this chapter, I have presented evidence on the impact of campaign imagery at the individual level. The political attitudes and partisanship of the voter help determine how the voter reacts to an image. At the same time, voters may be learning far more about the candidates than previous research focusing on verbal appeals has demonstrated. Voters view images of groups as an implicit message of support for that group. When the voter likes the group, she rewards the candidate for supporting that group; when she

opposes that group she is more likely to punish the candidate for implicitly supporting it. Images also tell the voter something about the candidate's ideology and partisans respond to signals of liberalism and conservatism consistent with their party identification. Images in congressional campaign ads may actually send a sincere signal about behavior (Sulkin and Swigger 2008), and the results from this chapter indicate that voters use these signals to make judgments, which would indicate that a visual dialogue of sorts between voters and candidates is taking place in congressional campaigns. Intentionally or not, candidates deliver information to the voters in the ad images they use, and voters use that information to make decisions.

The evidence also suggests that campaign strategists have, at best, an incomplete view of how voters respond to campaign images. Identity politics only goes so far. Campaign consultants choose pictures that look like a constituency in order to build an affective connection with the candidate based on group identity. This tactic however could backfire and cost a candidate vote if the candidate does not take into account the political views of his constituents. Congruent imagery may attract a voter's attention, but that attention is only useful if the visual message actually appeals to the voter. Parents may respond more to images of children than non-parents; however, large swaths of those parents (opposing partisans and parents opposed to education spending) will actually be turned off by images of children. A careless candidate who does not account for these factors may baby-kiss his way to a loss on Election Day.

The results here are subject to some important limitations. Most importantly, this chapter uses cross-sectional survey data and only looks at one election cycle. Campaign messages, and views of candidates, may change over time within and between elections.

The campaign is a process, and the post-election data presented here do not necessarily capture that whole process. More importantly, unobserved campaign activities or external factors may also affect voter perceptions of candidates. Ultimately, the regression results here cover a wide range of candidates and campaigns. Though I have restricted the analysis to a relatively homogenous group of candidates (white males), there is undoubtedly a great deal of variance within that group.

With that limitation in mind, the size of substantive imagery effects across candidates and campaigns is substantial, and I am confident that the results here will be robust across subsequent campaign cycles. For most voters, Congressional candidates receive very little attention, and few have the opportunity to learn a great deal about the candidates they vote for (Valentino, Hutchings and Williams 2004). For those voters the campaign images could have an even larger impact since they may very well form the bulk of the information a voter receives about the candidate.

At best, though, the data in this chapter suggests that campaign images affect voter feelings about candidates, and there is indirect evidence that voters are drawing substantive inferences from campaign imagery. It does not tell us, however, why there seems to be a difference in reactions among identity groups. Why would African-Americans respond to self-congruent imagery while whites view images of blacks and only respond positively or not at all? Do different identity groups draw different inferences, or are these inferences just more important to members of the group being pictured?

This seems to be a critical distinction and, unfortunately, the survey data are incapable of deciding the question. If all voters, regardless of social identity use images

to make the same inferences, then the amount of information conveyed in campaign ads has been vastly underestimated in previous examinations of campaign effects. Assuming images convey substantive information to all voters then even relatively shallow positive ads that do not feature a candidate discussing policy issues may actually teach the voter something about the candidate. On the other hand, if different voters vary in how they interpret images, then this would imply that previous research has been correct to focus on the impact of images on social identity groups. If the only people who react to an image are the people represented in that image, then that implies the existence of a strong affective component to interpretations of campaign imagery. If that is true, then it would seem that self-congruence is a necessary condition in order to elicit responses to campaign imagery, though the evidence in this chapter suggests that such congruence is not sufficient on its own to guarantee a positive response from the voter. In the next chapter I present experimental data that investigates and tests the effect of images in a controlled environment in order to get a better sense of how the individual responds to campaign imagery and try to answer these lingering questions.

Chapter 5 Tables and Figures

Table 5.1: measures for dispositions towards groups

Group	Attitude measure	Group variable
Seniors	Spending on Medicare and Social Security	Age
Children	Spending on education	Parents with children living at home
Farmers	--	Living in rural area
Teachers	Spending on education	Parents with children living at home
Police	Concern about crime	--
Soldiers	Spending on national defense	Member of the family in military
Workers	0-100: favorability of unions	Member of the family in labor union
Businesspeople	Concern about regulation of business	White-collar management occupation
Blacks	Preferential hiring for blacks	African-American
Latinos	Concern about immigration	Latino

Table 5.2: Correlations between images and favorability

	Democratic candidates		Republican candidates	
	Ingroup	Outgroup	Ingroup	Outgroup
Seniors	.03 (149)	-.00 (584)	.03 (142)	-.02 (687)
Children	-.03 (277)	.06 (456)	-.00 (293)	.08* (586)
Farmers	-.02 (232)	-.05 (501)	-.04 (218)	-.09** (661)
Teachers	-.03 (277)	-.01 (456)	.07 (293)	.05 (586)
Soldiers	.08 (316)	.03 (417)	.05 (431)	.05 (448)
Workers	.01 (143)	.04 (590)	.11 (150)	.08** (720)
Businesspeople	--	--	.10 (65)	.06 (814)
African-Americans	.40** (30)	.03 (703)	-.05 (41)	.03 (838)
Latinos	.44** (33)	.05 (700)	.05 (31)	.07** (848)

Cell entries are pairwise correlation coefficients. *p<.1, **p<.05 with number of respondents in parentheses

**Table 5.3a: Links between demographic groups and favorability-Ingroups
(continued on next page)**

	Seniors		Children		Farmers		Teachers		Police	
	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP
% w/ Images	-29.77 (24.12)	-35.78 (30.57)	18.45 (17.04)	-33.62* (17.79)	12.97 (36.69)	3.78 (19.00)	10.87 (7.11)	-1.34 (31.40)	28.00 (24.19)	21.60 (26.18)
Disposition towards group	4.53 (15.70)	-24.54 (23.70)	14.97 (9.60)	1.46 (1.77)	--	--	1.89 (6.66)	-.72 (8.72)	-10.15 (6.68)	-20.39** (8.71)
Partisan ID	-6.31** (2.91)	.76 (3.94)	-2.10 (1.58)	-7.65 (10.67)	-2.35** (.98)	2.27** (1.04)	-3.46** (1.18)	3.25** (1.39)	-3.74** (1.58)	5.71** (1.71)
Images×Disposition towards group	36.24 (30.20)	58.12* (40.77)	-37.06* (18.85)	31.75* (20.57)	--	--	-12.49* (7.66)	29.13 (36.84)	34.38 (26.43)	30.32 (22.15)
Images×Party ID	6.51 (4.97)	5.33 (6.01)	-4.03 (3.22)	6.61** (3.22)	-5.31 (9.49)	-1.47 (3.84)	-17.28 (12.20)	.07 (5.38)	-6.09 (4.45)	-8.94 (5.91)
Party ID×Disposition towards group	-.56 (3.86)	4.64 (5.69)	7.91 (3.57)	.87 (2.00)	--	--	.64 (1.31)	-.13 (1.61)	.56 (1.59)	2.87 (1.74)
Images×Disposition towards group×Party ID	-4.75 (6.36)	-9.56 (8.38)	7.91** (3.57)	-4.29 (3.85)	--	--	17.35 (13.60)	-1.11 (7.25)	-11.88** (5.84)	-8.16** (4.90)
% w/ Issue	13.61 (17.85)	-12.46 (27.05)	6.94 (11.63)	11.94 (17.65)	58.26 (57.94)	2.65 (40.37)	-6.75 (14.30)	-8.63 (21.28)	-8.93 (13.11)	23.36 (46.35)
Issue×Disposition towards group	-64.13** (24.38)	18.65 (37.16)	-9.99 (14.82)	-13.23 (21.73)	--	--	2.52 (3.84)	5.57 (24.95)	7.58 (14.08)	72.94 (46.86)
Issue×Party ID	-7.00* (3.17)	3.32 (5.04)	-2.70 (2.67)	-2.66 (2.97)	-15.01 (13.91)	1.07 (7.50)	-.89 (2.94)	.72 (3.57)	1.88 (2.58)	-1.77 (9.79)
Issues×Disposition towards group×Party ID	15.45** (4.94)	-5.95 (8.21)	3.33 (3.17)	-.61 (3.78)	--	--	3.11 (3.84)	-3.37 (4.31)	.71 (3.24)	-10.29 (9.94)
Incumbent	9.97** (4.76)	2.29 (5.43)	6.86** (3.29)	-2.66 (3.31)	9.76** (4.20)	2.16 (10.34)	8.15** (3.30)	-2.29 (3.26)	6.75** (2.05)	-.43 (2.08)
Ideology	4.80** (2.62)	-.13 (3.33)	2.79 (1.84)	-5.41** (1.95)	4.37** (1.93)	-5.12** (2.11)	3.00 (1.82)	-5.35** (1.96)	3.79** (1.18)	-4.67** (1.14)
South	-3.09 (4.57)	-4.64 (3.95)	-4.15 (3.09)	-2.90 (3.10)	-7.72** (3.72)	-1.45 (3.55)	-4.09 (3.14)	-3.06 (3.08)	-3.36 (2.07)	-2.29 (1.75)
Newspaper habits	-.06 (.84)	.86 (.88)	.95* (.55)	-.45 (.56)	.88 (.66)	-.69 (.61)	.86 (.55)	-.47 (.57)	.77** (.33)	-.02 (.30)
Female	3.66 (4.54)	-3.56 (4.11)	-1.41 (3.03)	.45 (3.03)	1.91 (3.77)	5.77* (3.41)	-2.22 (3.02)	.64 (3.07)	2.49 (1.93)	-.56 (1.64)
Ad gap between Dem. And Rep. Candidates	.00 (.00)	-.01* (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01* (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.01* (.00)
Constant	64.40 (14.45)	59.28 (22.77)	46.03 (10.91)	74.63 (12.59)	47.30 (10.56)	68.56 (14.44)	52.29 (8.66)	65.52 (10.68)	45.80 (8.53)	42.52 (9.82)
N	149	192	277	293	232	218	277	293	733	879
R ²	.37	.13	.22	.21	.15	.10	.22	.20	.20	.19

Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$

Each image group is paired with a verbal issue as follows: children and education, senior citizens and Medicare/Social Security, farmers and agriculture, teachers and education, police officers and crime, soldiers and national defense, workers and job creation/employment issues, businesspeople and business regulations, African-Americans and civil rights, Latinos and civil rights

Table 5.3a: Links between groups and favorability-Ingroups (continued from previous page)

	Soldiers		Workers		Businesspeople		African-Americans		Latinos	
	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP
% w/ Images	8.21 (28.69)	9.55 (3.95)	-11.37 (24.84)	14.97 (24.89)		-5.50** (2.09)	11.12* (5.23)	-28.75 (61.98)	64.65 (65.22)	4.48 (4.86)
Disposition towards group	-3.28 (4.78)	9.35 (5.51)	10.89 (7.35)	21.96** (10.25)		9.06 (13.31)	3.55* (1.68)	-2.46 (9.61)	12.10 (15.23)	0.99 (21.90)
Partisan ID	-3.98** (1.14)	5.06** (.97)	-4.08** (1.25)	4.74** (1.14)		5.69** (1.57)	5.77* (2.77)	2.42 (1.67)	-13.39** (3.11)	5.86 (5.09)
Images×Disposition towards group	30.07 (37.88)	-9.15** (4.17)	-40.39 (42.57)	-61.10 (54.54)		1.90 (1.98)	-11.09* (5.24)	-4.04 (69.78)	-33.90 (31.47)	-1.07 (1.45)
Images×Party ID	5.10 (16.63)	-1.93** (.78)	7.27 (6.67)	-2.13 (5.68)		.81** (.29)	-1.79* (.86)	-10.31 (55.46)	4.38 (21.27)	-.93 (1.03)
Party ID×Disposition towards group	.14 (1.27)	-1.15 (1.10)	-1.33 (2.59)	-7.19** (2.38)		-.95 (2.37)	-.58* (.28)	-1.98 (2.29)	-8.18* (4.02)	-3.24 (5.82)
Images×Disposition towards group×Party ID	-11.09 (19.25)	1.90** (.80)	-9.97 (11.21)	19.95* (14.39)		2.93 (2.69)	1.79* (.86)	42.07 (56.71)	9.93 (16.14)	13.50 (919.24)
% w/ Issue	-17.98 (16.48)	-5.39 (9.55)	13.31 (38.85)	77.07* (39.76)		10.25 (8.97)	-.72 (.76)	-- (6.03)	-7.91 (12.76)	-- (9.13)
Issue×Disposition towards group	7.98** (3.28)	7.54 (11.76)	75.49 (83.13)	82.42 (106.44)		1.43 (1.90)	8.50 (9.63)	-- (14.08)	10.70 (14.08)	-- (1.49)
Issue×Party ID	4.57** (2.92)	1.70 (1.90)	1.69 (10.53)	-12.38* (6.89)		-1.96** (.85)	7.52* (3.57)	-- (2.21)	1.49 (2.21)	-- (2.21)
Issues×Disposition towards group×Party ID	-13.41** (6.22)	-23.67 (22.16)	-.19 (23.91)	3.44 (27.74)		3.05 (4.71)	-6.61* (3.25)	-- (3.25)	.76 (1.49)	-- (1.49)
Incumbent	6.93** (3.39)	-1.64 (3.75)	3.76 (5.34)	-5.23 (4.80)		1.93 (8.44)	-4.72 (20.62)	12.10 (9.45)	10.42 (12.76)	1.50 (9.13)
Ideology	2.91 (2.07)	-2.35 (1.96)	6.64** (2.76)	-6.99** (2.81)		-5.06 (3.92)	1.03 (7.82)	-13.34** (5.85)	-.79 (8.07)	15.49** (5.99)
South	-.47 (3.43)	1.98 (2.71)	-5.63 (4.83)	-4.68 (5.86)		-7.02 (7.24)	.65 (19.48)	-16.88 (10.47)	-1.83 (14.61)	-15.49 (19.30)
Newspaper habits	1.35** (.59)	-.35 (.45)	1.33* (.69)	-2.01** (.67)		.27 (1.02)	3.30 (2.43)	1.45 (1.99)	3.87 (2.25)	-4.96** (1.84)
Female	-1.03 (3.23)	-1.05 (2.45)	-4.12 (4.41)	4.28 (3.94)		.28 (6.28)	16.44 (19.84)	-8.21 (8.73)	-10.44 (9.12)	-7.57 (11.37)
Ad gap between Dem. And Rep. Candidates	-.00 (.00)	-.01* (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)		-.01 (.01)	-.00 (.02)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)
Constant	51.86 (9.32)	46.60 (8.82)	49.71 (12.16)	64.24 (11.48)		49.59 (18.05)	35.24 (16.71)	65.31 (25.00)	76.09 (22.64)	12.44 (39.22)
N	316	431	143	150		65	30	41	33	31
R ²	.18	.19	.32	.38		.43	.60	.53	.69	.47

Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$

Each image group is paired with a verbal issue as follows: children and education, senior citizens and Medicare/Social Security, farmers and agriculture, teachers and education, police officers and crime, soldiers and national defense, workers and job creation/employment issues, businesspeople and business regulations, African-Americans and civil rights, Latinos and civil rights

Table 5.3b: Links between groups and favorability-Outgroups (continued on next page)

	Seniors		Children		Farmers		Teachers		Soldiers	
	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP
% w/ Images	-2.49 (12.30)	-14.36 (9.70)	-1.17 (11.15)	10.98 (8.27)	38.06 (44.32)	-35.64 (14.35)	2.65 (28.34)	-9.57 (35.20)	-47.19* (25.66)	63.85 (97.23)
Disposition towards group	-12.92 (8.99)	2.49 (8.81)	-7.97 (6.01)	4.96 (6.10)	--	--	-4.41 (4.48)	-2.03 (4.99)	3.43 (3.51)	.07 (4.46)
Partisan ID	-6.00** (1.31)	3.15** (1.25)	-5.67** (1.00)	3.16** (.94)	-4.54** (.58)	3.63** (.54)	-5.45** (.81)	2.71** (.77)	-3.80** (.80)	2.18** (.89)
Images×Disposition towards group	13.80 (16.24)	.99 (12.59)	12.18 (13.19)	-22.55** (10.56)	--	--	6.18 (34.92)	.66 (44.05)	50.96 (33.25)	-91.92 (139.29)
Images×Party ID	1.72 (2.38)	1.90 (1.81)	1.24 (2.17)	-1.60 (1.62)	-6.62 (8.62)	4.34* (2.78)	1.83 (5.11)	1.36 (5.74)	12.47** (5.22)	.47 (29.06)
Party ID×Disposition towards group	6.07** (1.91)	-1.05 (1.75)	2.86** (1.23)	-2.60** (1.15)	--	--	2.10** (1.00)	-.64 (.93)	-1.01 (.93)	.66 (1.04)
Images×Disposition towards group×Party ID	-5.45 (3.37)	.99 (2.61)	-2.69 (2.64)	5.48** (2.04)	--	--	-1.37 (7.03)	-1.66 (7.19)	-12.09 (7.69)	4.97 (33.71)
% w/ Issue	-12.72 (9.89)	-1.20 (12.48)	-13.22 (9.53)	-42.03** (9.51)	-54.99 (41.61)	1.13 (13.46)	-15.15 (10.27)	-39.81** (9.16)	-34.64** (16.98)	-90.90 (67.94)
Issue×Disposition towards group	13.10 (13.81)	-6.58 (16.35)	13.30 (11.68)	22.85** (10.57)	--	--	14.85 (13.11)	16.53 (10.21)	18.36 (16.09)	137.75 (84.37)
Issue×Party ID	1.29 (1.99)	-.27 (2.32)	.93 (1.95)	6.79** (1.78)	9.31 (8.31)	.58 (2.29)	1.10 (2.04)	6.36** (1.68)	12.22 (8.54)	8.29 (13.21)
Issues×Disposition towards group×Party ID	-3.92 (2.71)	-1.18 (3.18)	-1.14 (2.50)	-3.68* (1.94)	--	--	-1.66 (2.65)	-2.01 (1.83)	-11.23 (7.54)	-16.65 (16.26)
Incumbent	5.52** (2.35)	1.39 (2.46)	6.48** (2.69)	1.09 (2.68)	4.74* (2.49)	.65 (2.21)	6.10** (2.71)	1.91 (2.69)	3.79 (2.72)	1.12 (2.67)
Ideology	1.91 (1.33)	-5.27** (1.23)	1.97 (1.57)	-3.69** (1.43)	2.85* (1.51)	-4.93** (1.34)	2.07 (1.58)	-3.83** (1.47)	3.33** (1.48)	-6.04** (1.45)
South	-4.54** (2.28)	-.39 (1.96)	-2.17 (2.71)	-1.86 (2.15)	.92 (2.60)	-.80 (1.99)	-2.40 (2.74)	-2.01 (2.16)	-3.46 (2.70)	-6.03** (2.61)
Newspaper habits	1.10** (.37)	-.23 (.32)	.82** (.42)	-.07 (.35)	.61 (.39)	.21 (.33)	.80 (.42)	-.03 (.36)	.39 (.40)	.16 (.41)
Female	1.81 (2.12)	1.11 (1.80)	4.90** (2.47)	-.52 (1.95)	3.19 (2.27)	-1.97 (1.85)	5.08 (2.49)	-.71 (1.97)	3.92* (2.43)	2.21 (2.26)
Ad gap between Dem. And Rep. Candidates	-.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)
Constant	64.70 (8.01)	63.66 (8.44)	62.24 (8.03)	59.87 (7.76)	57.39 (6.30)	56.77 (5.90)	62.67 (7.41)	62.94 (7.09)	59.41 (5.99)	63.07 (6.91)
N	584	687	456	586	501	661	456	586	417	448
R ²	.22	.23	.24	.23	.22	.23	.24	.22	.24	.21

Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$

Each image group is paired with a verbal issue as follows: children and education, senior citizens and Medicare/Social Security, farmers and agriculture, teachers and education, police officers and crime, soldiers and national defense, workers and job creation/employment issues, businesspeople and business regulations, African-Americans and civil rights, Latinos and civil rights

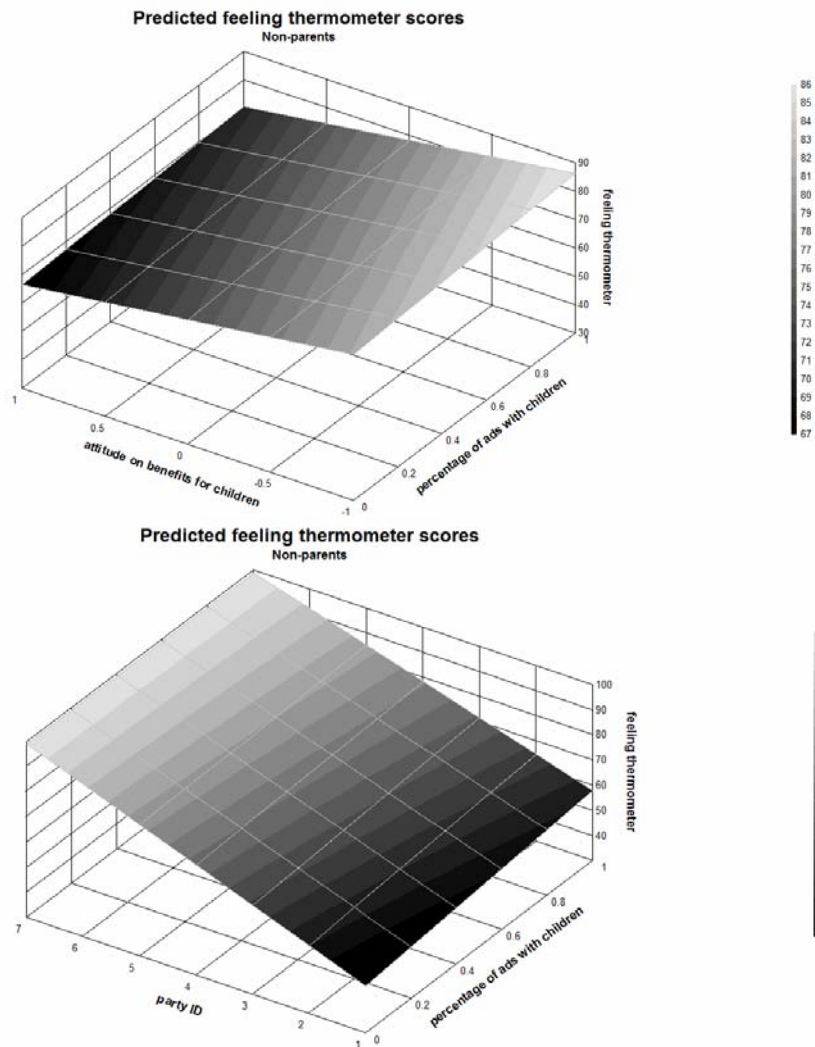
Table 5.3b: Links between demographic groups and favorability-Outgroups

	Workers		Businesspeople		African-Americans		Latinos	
	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP	DEM	REP
% w/ Images	-6.01 (11.12)	1.30 (11.33)		37.03 (15.01)	-7.30 (8.75)	8.50 (10.31)	12.19 (15.48)	-14.57 (15.28)
Disposition towards group	9.83* (5.24)	12.11* (6.44)		-08 (3.11)	-2.09 (3.53)	-3.23 (3.39)	1.41 (3.05)	1.15 (3.60)
Partisan ID	-3.91** (.59)	3.45** (.56)		3.40** (.48)	-4.53** (.61)	3.37** (.54)	-4.28** (.69)	3.35** (.61)
Images×Disposition towards group	72.66* (39.93)	18.86 (27.67)		-23.91 (24.42)	-1.43 (12.03)	-9.31 (13.92)	7.12 (24.59)	-58.39** (20.88)
Images×Party ID	1.35 (3.13)	.42 (2.29)		-5.48* (3.26)	2.26 (1.87)	-1.21 (2.05)	-4.59 (5.44)	3.23 (2.65)
Party ID×Disposition towards group	-2.31* (1.19)	-.66 (1.21)		.39 (.60)	1.20 (.78)	.66 (.69)	-.44 (.75)	-.03 (.72)
Images×Disposition towards group×Party ID	-10.87 (8.50)	-3.86 (5.68)		4.83 (4.93)	1.73 (2.62)	1.52 (3.31)	-7.68 (6.77)	9.88** (4.06)
% w/ Issue	31.44* (16.07)	43.13** (11.21)		4.96 (124.01)	-13.48 (19.09)	--	-46.03 (33.07)	--
Issue×Disposition towards group	-17.69 (33.82)	-45.77* (24.98)		110.72* (64.76)	13.02 (21.60)	--	-45.50 (38.24)	--
Issue×Party ID	-2.16 (3.98)	-4.65* (2.47)		16.00 (25.85)	5.72 (3.93)	--	13.76* (7.60)	--
Issues×Disposition towards group×Party ID	9.15 (5.24)	9.35 (5.88)		-6.99 (15.12)	-3.03 (4.95)	--	16.50* (8.63)	--
Incumbent	6.47** (2.32)	1.29 (2.29)		.66 (2.22)	6.80** (2.10)	.13 (2.19)	6.29** (2.14)	.25 (2.14)
Ideology	2.45* (1.31)	-3.24** (1.22)		-5.00** (1.21)	3.10** (1.23)	-4.62** (1.22)	3.29** (1.23)	-5.61** (1.15)
South	-3.79 (2.32)	-.62 (1.89)		-.29 (1.83)	-1.76 (2.29)	-.94 (1.86)	-1.76 (2.13)	-.82 (1.77)
Newspaper habits	.47 (.37)	.02 (.32)		.00 (.31)	.61 (.34)	-.07 (.30)	.56* (.34)	.08 (.30)
Female	3.62 (2.23)	-1.42 (1.73)		-.38 (1.72)	1.92 (1.98)	.33 (1.70)	2.23 (2.00)	.27 (1.67)
Ad gap between Dem. And Rep. Candidates	.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)		-.01** (.00)	.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.01** (.00)
Constant	56.44 (5.89)	52.54 (5.47)		58.19 (5.40)	57.34 (5.60)	58.44 (5.56)	56.22 (5.98)	60.61 (5.63)
N	590	729		814	703	838	700	848
R ²	.21	.21		.18	.21	.17	.19	.19

Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$

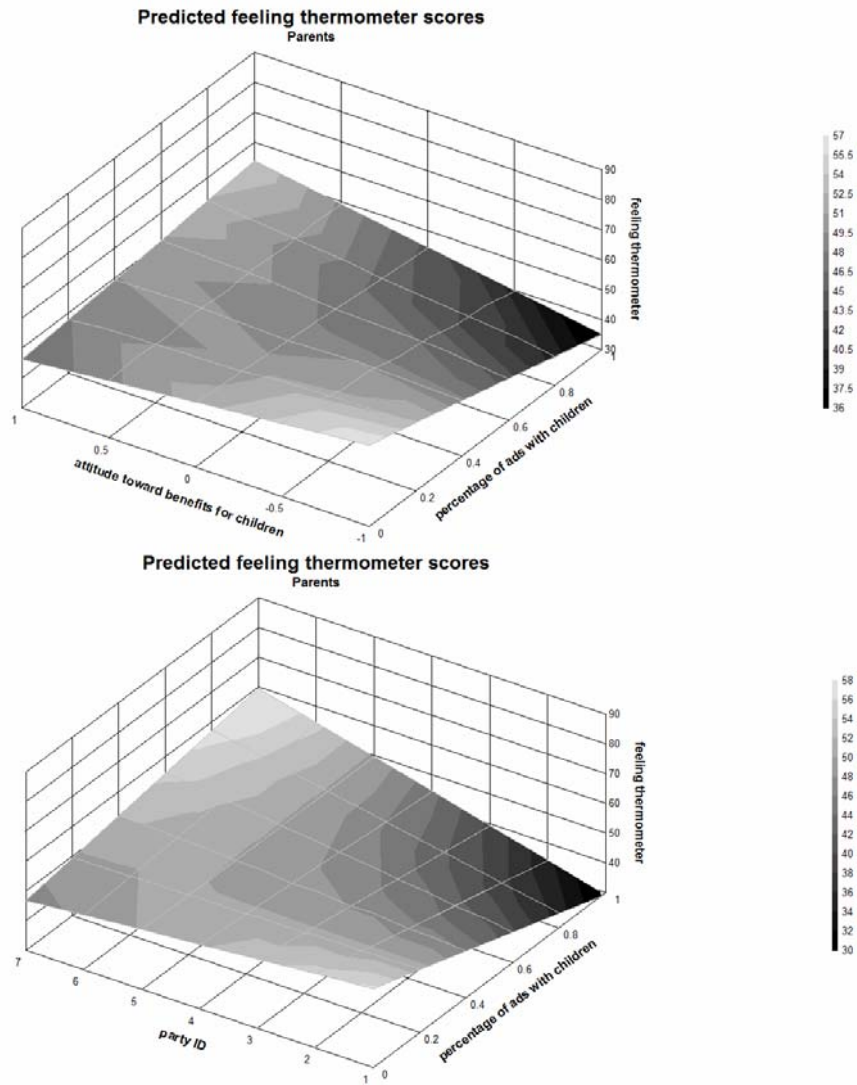
Each image group is paired with a verbal issue as follows: children and education, senior citizens and Medicare/Social Security, farmers and agriculture, teachers and education, police officers and crime, soldiers and national defense, workers and job creation/employment issues, businesspeople and business regulations, African-Americans and civil rights, Latinos and civil rights

Figure 5.1: Predicted favorability for Republicans who pictured children (continued on next page)



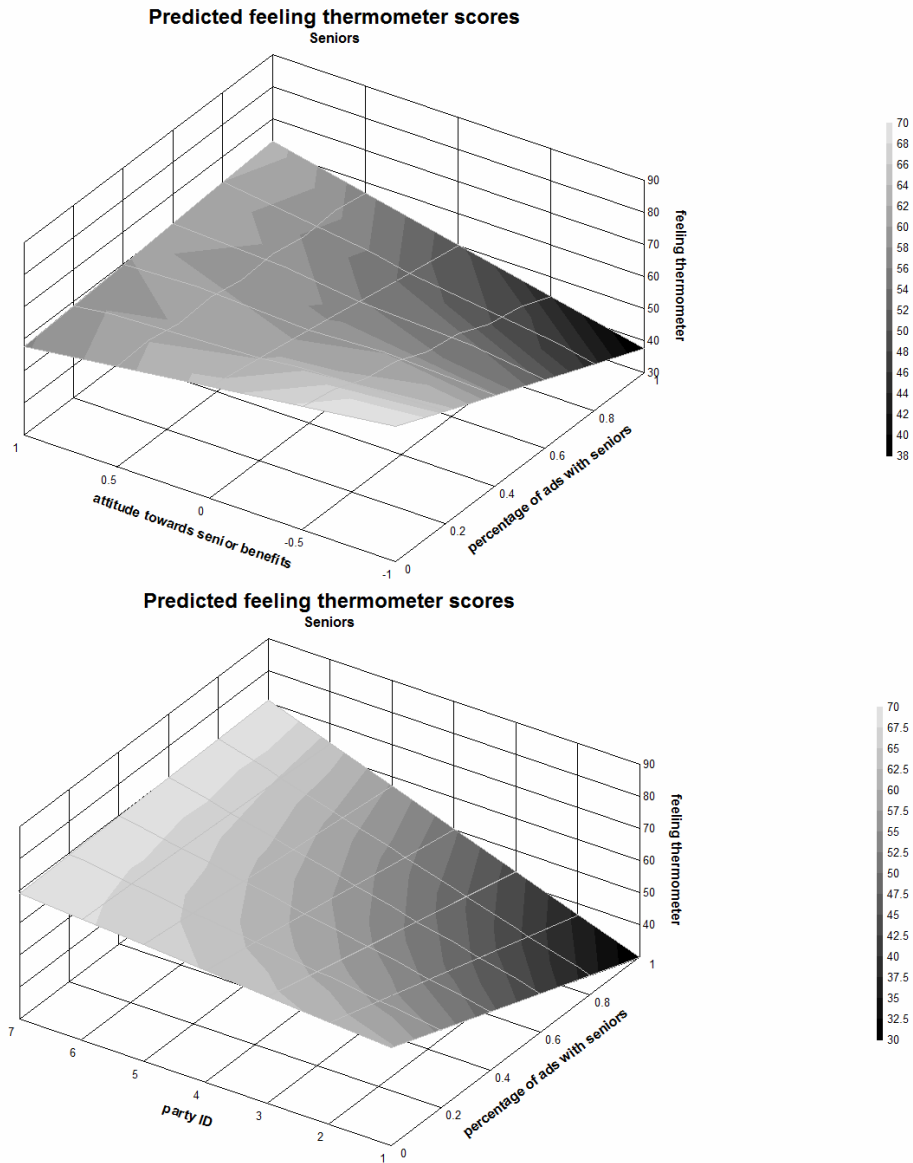
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.1: Predicted favorability for Republicans who pictured children (continued from previous page)



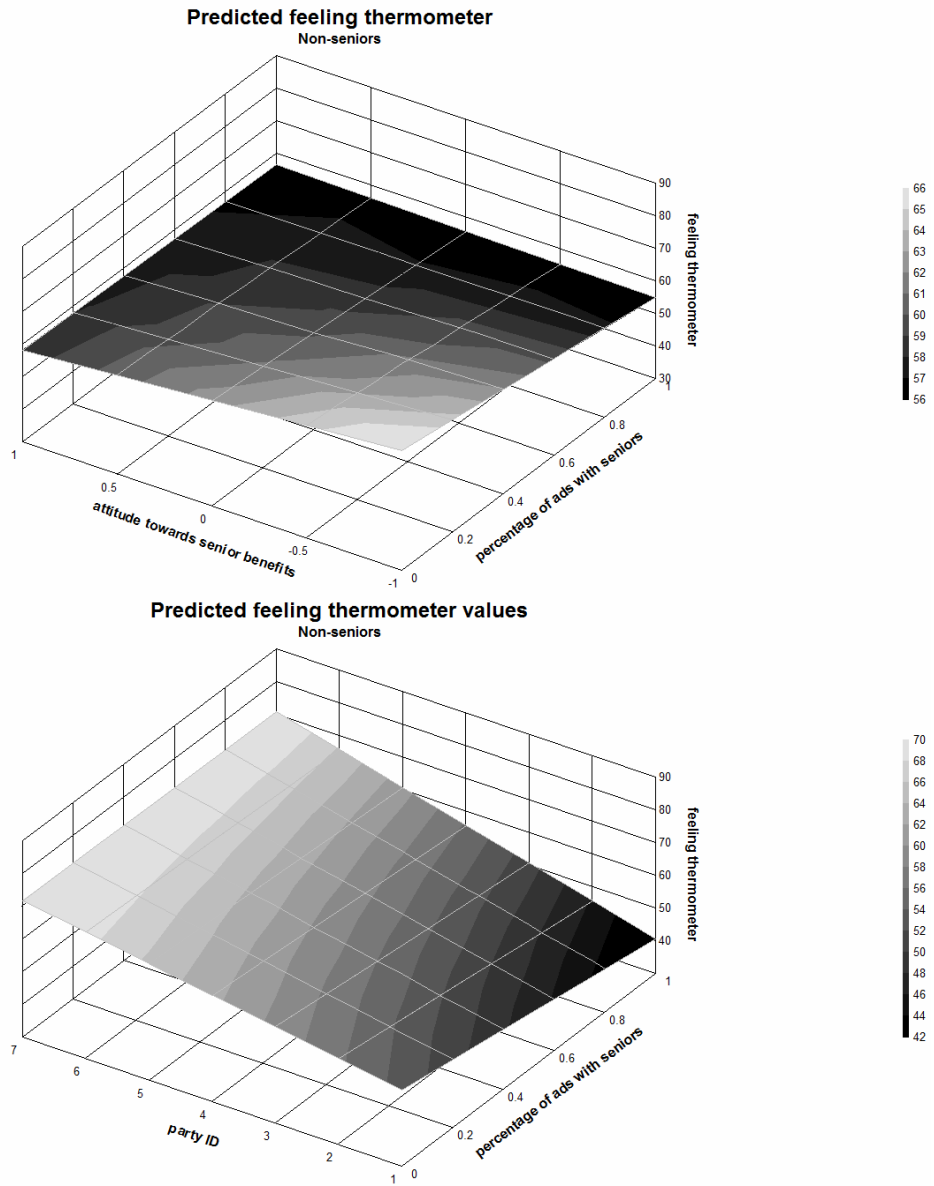
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.2: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing seniors (continued on next 3 pages)
Republican candidates



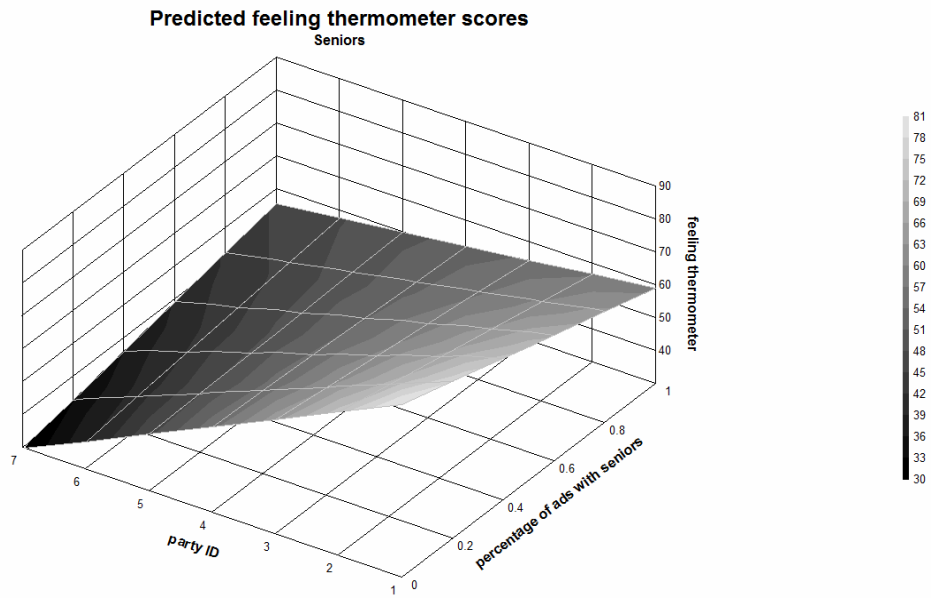
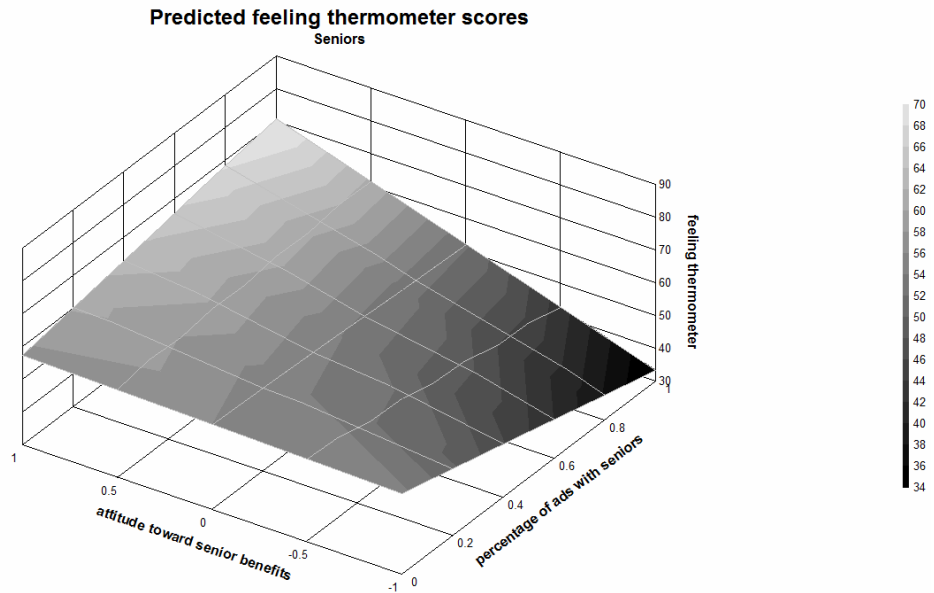
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.2: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing seniors (continued from previous page)
Republican candidates



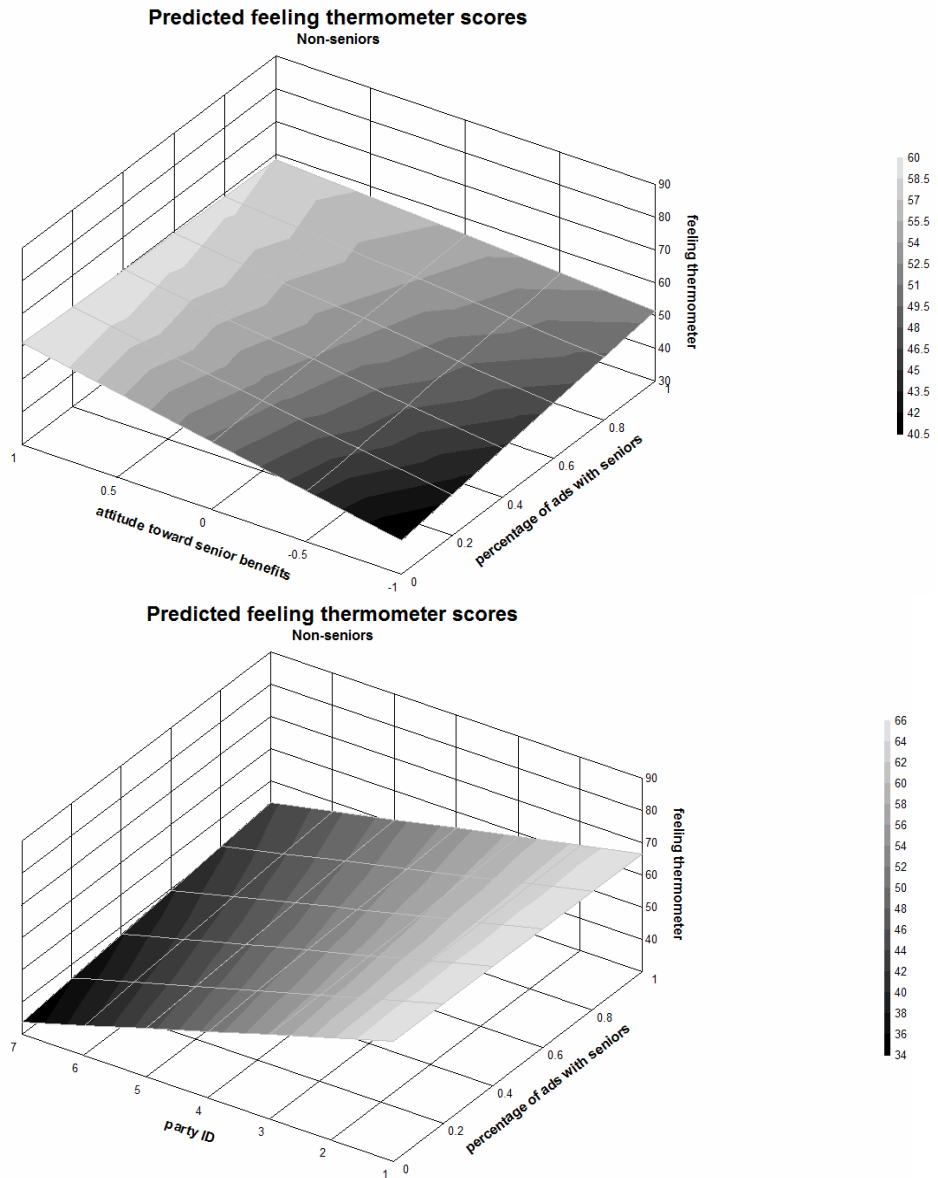
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.2: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing seniors (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



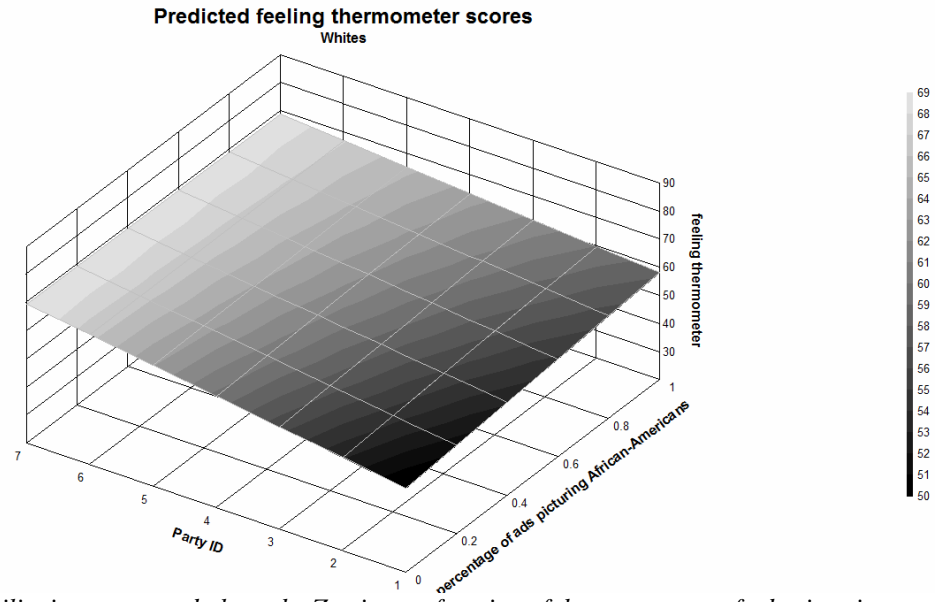
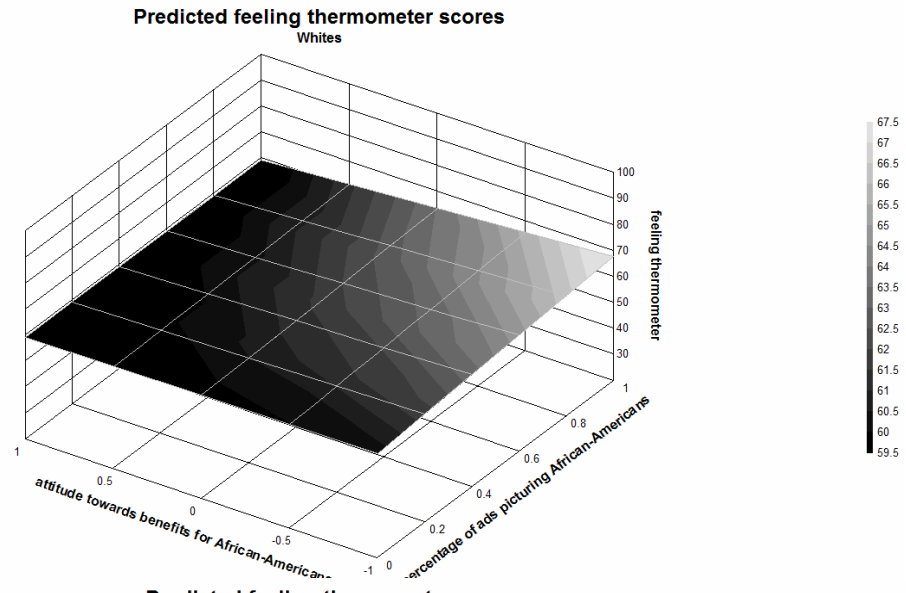
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.2: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing seniors (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



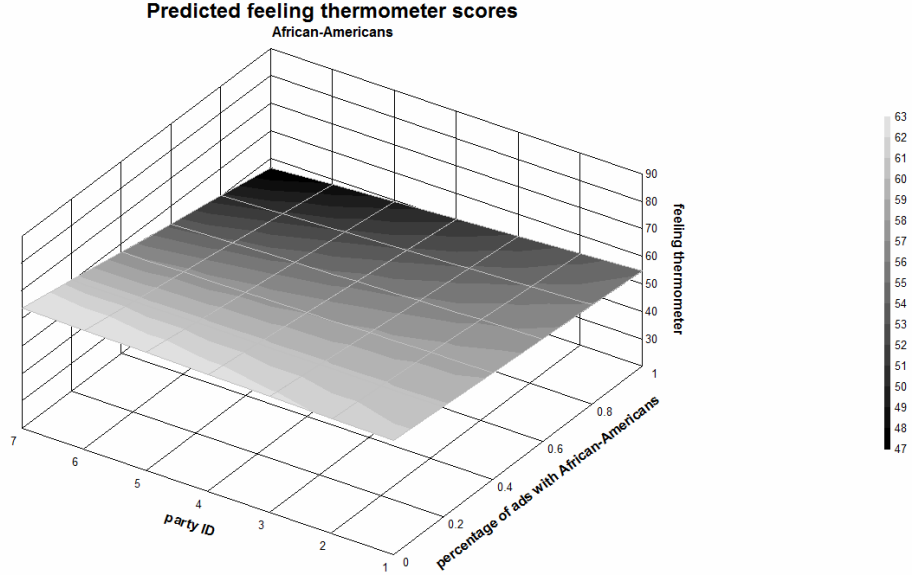
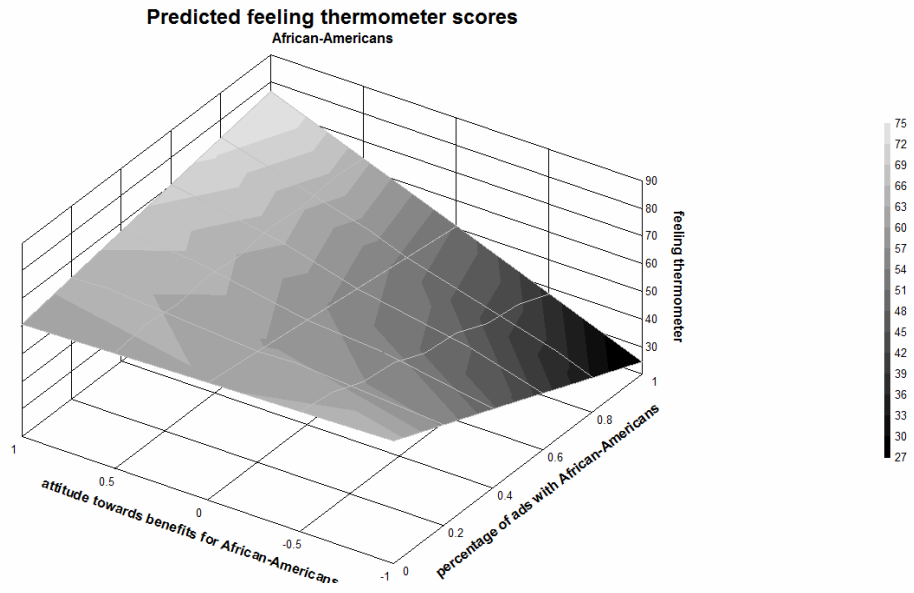
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.3: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing African-Americans
 (continued on next 3 pages)
Republican candidates



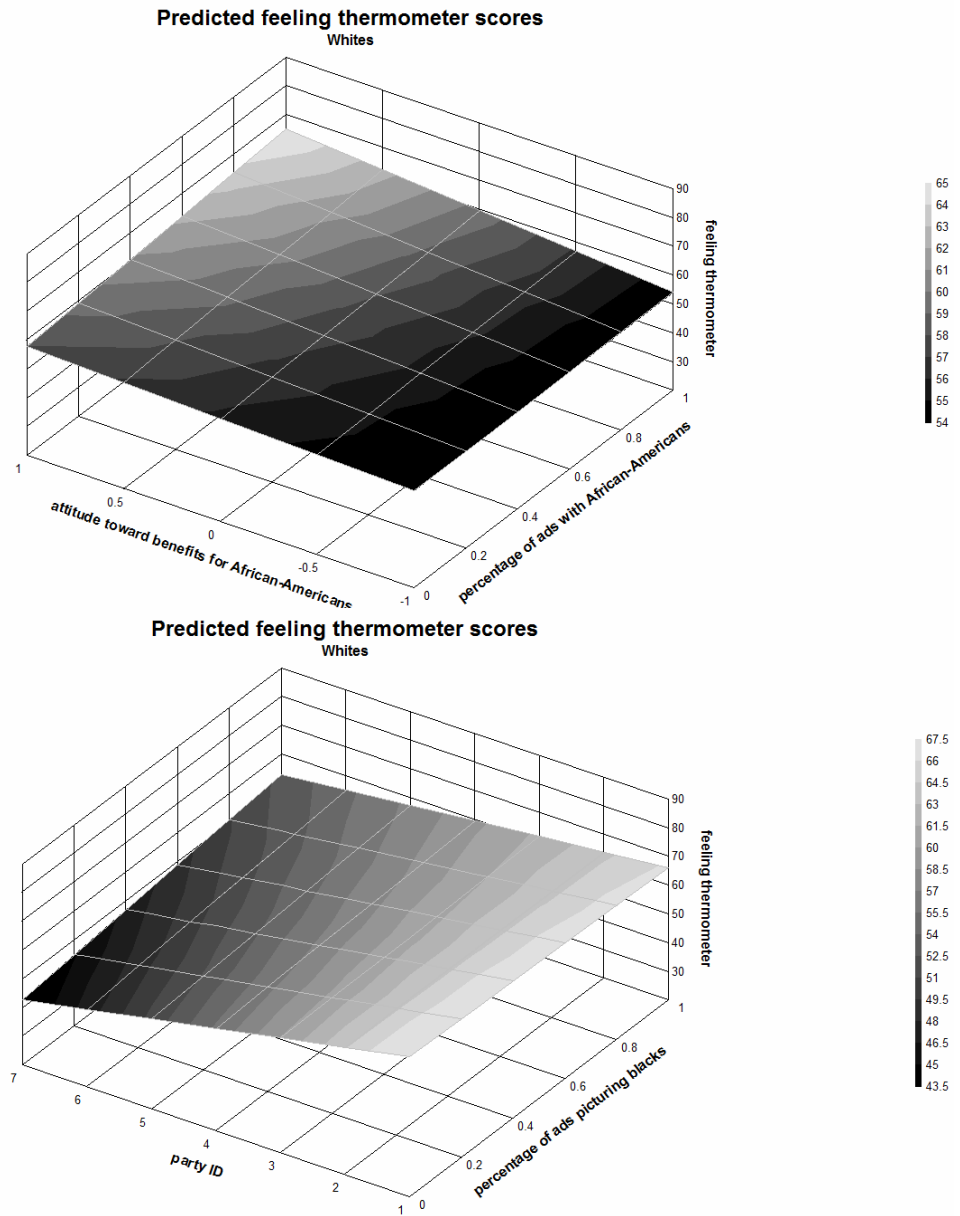
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.3: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing African-Americans
 (continued from previous page)
Republican candidates



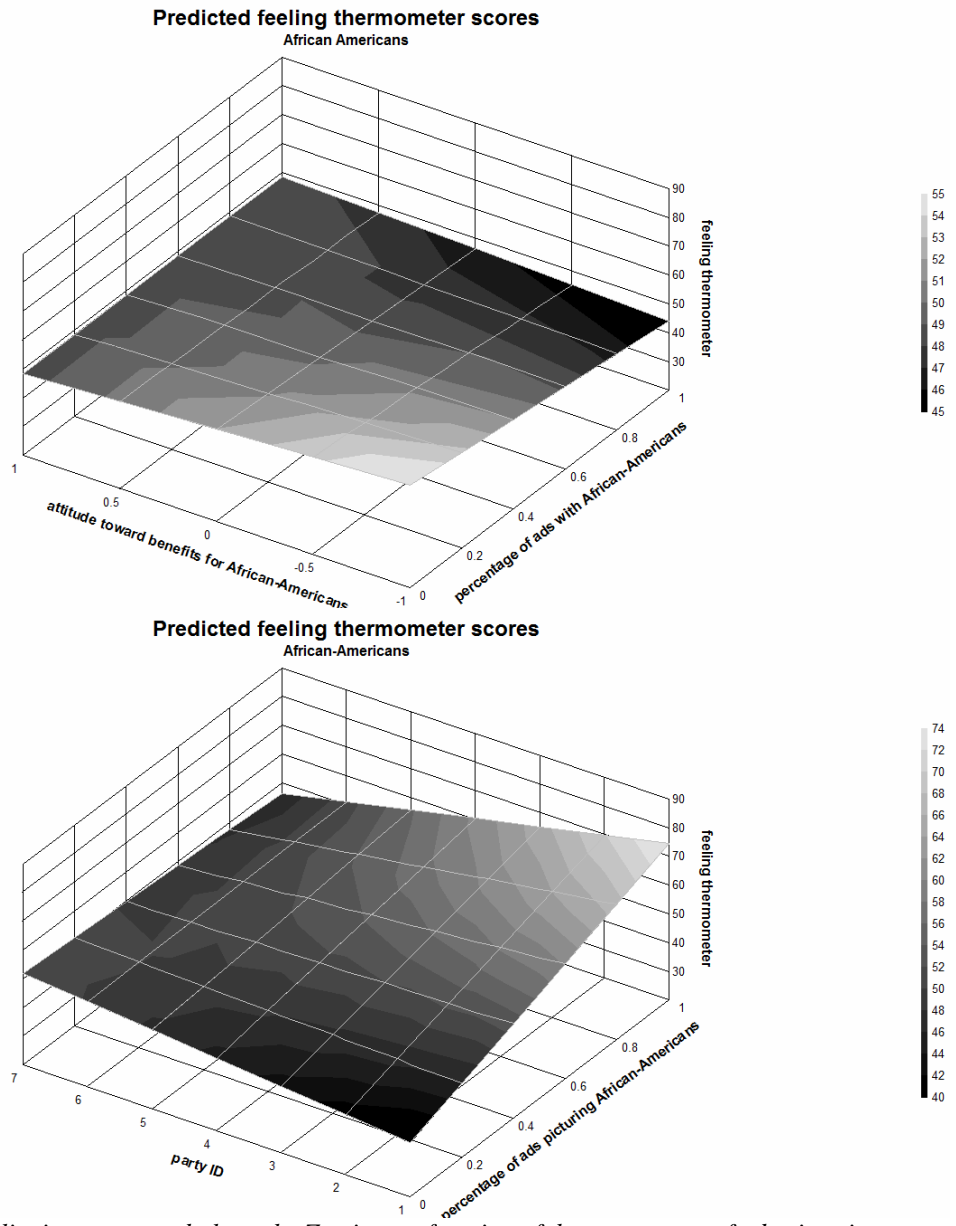
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.3: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing African-Americans
 (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



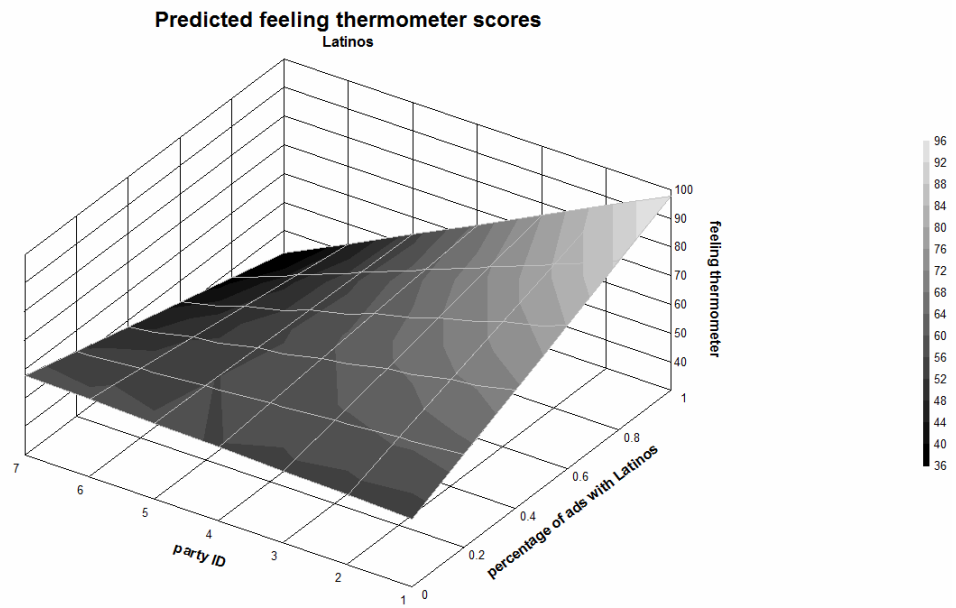
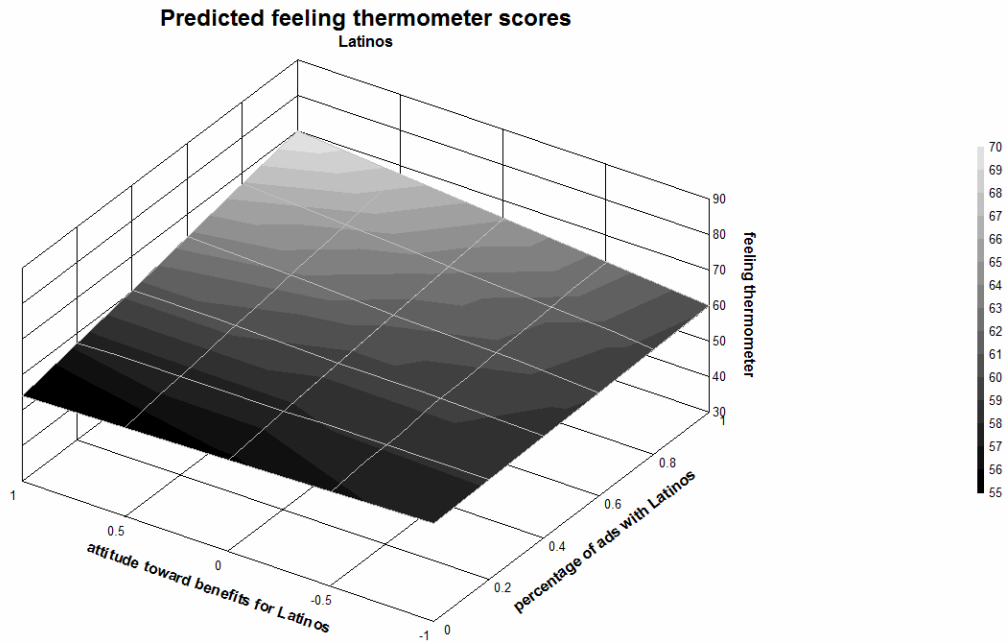
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.3: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing African-Americans
 (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



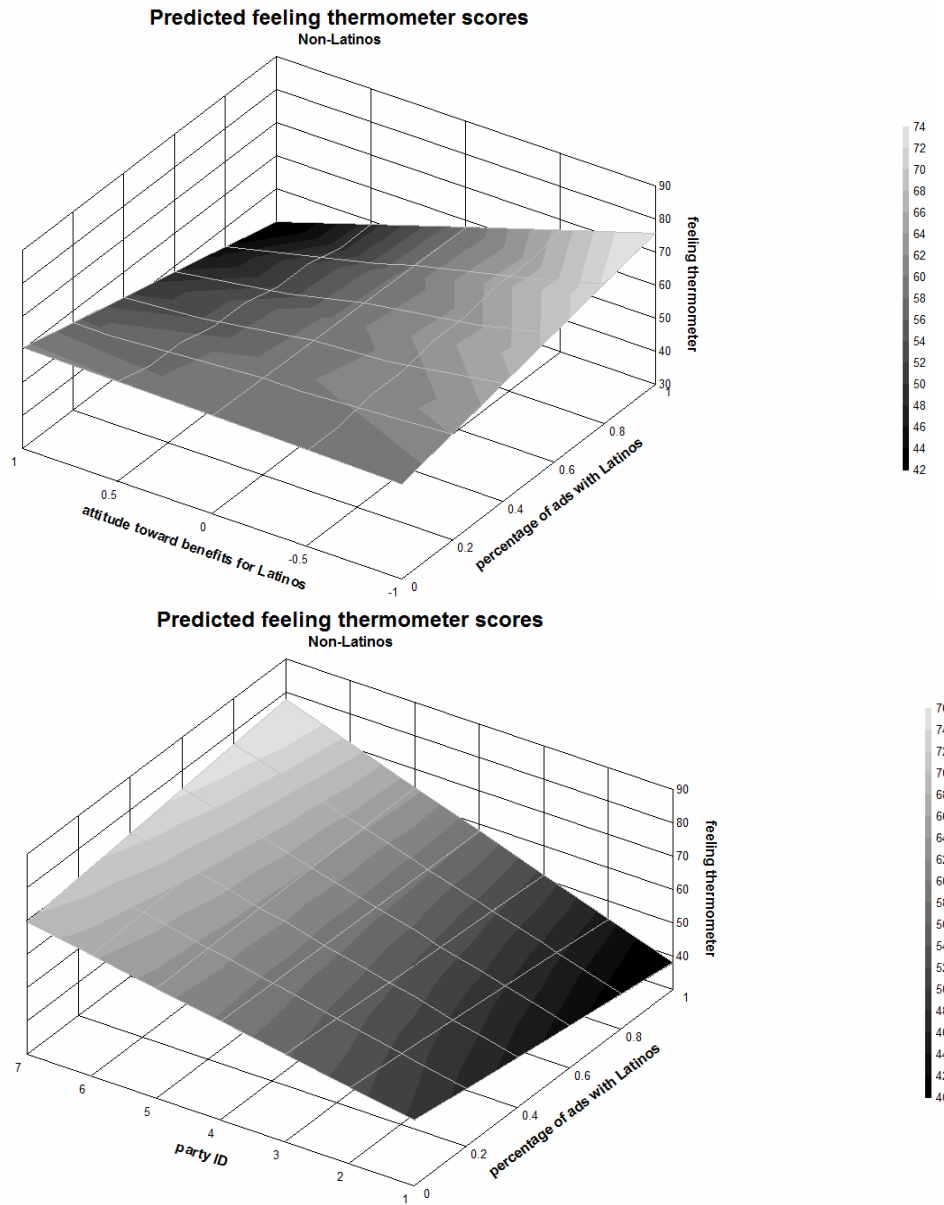
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.4: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing Latinos (continued on next 3 pages)
Republican candidates



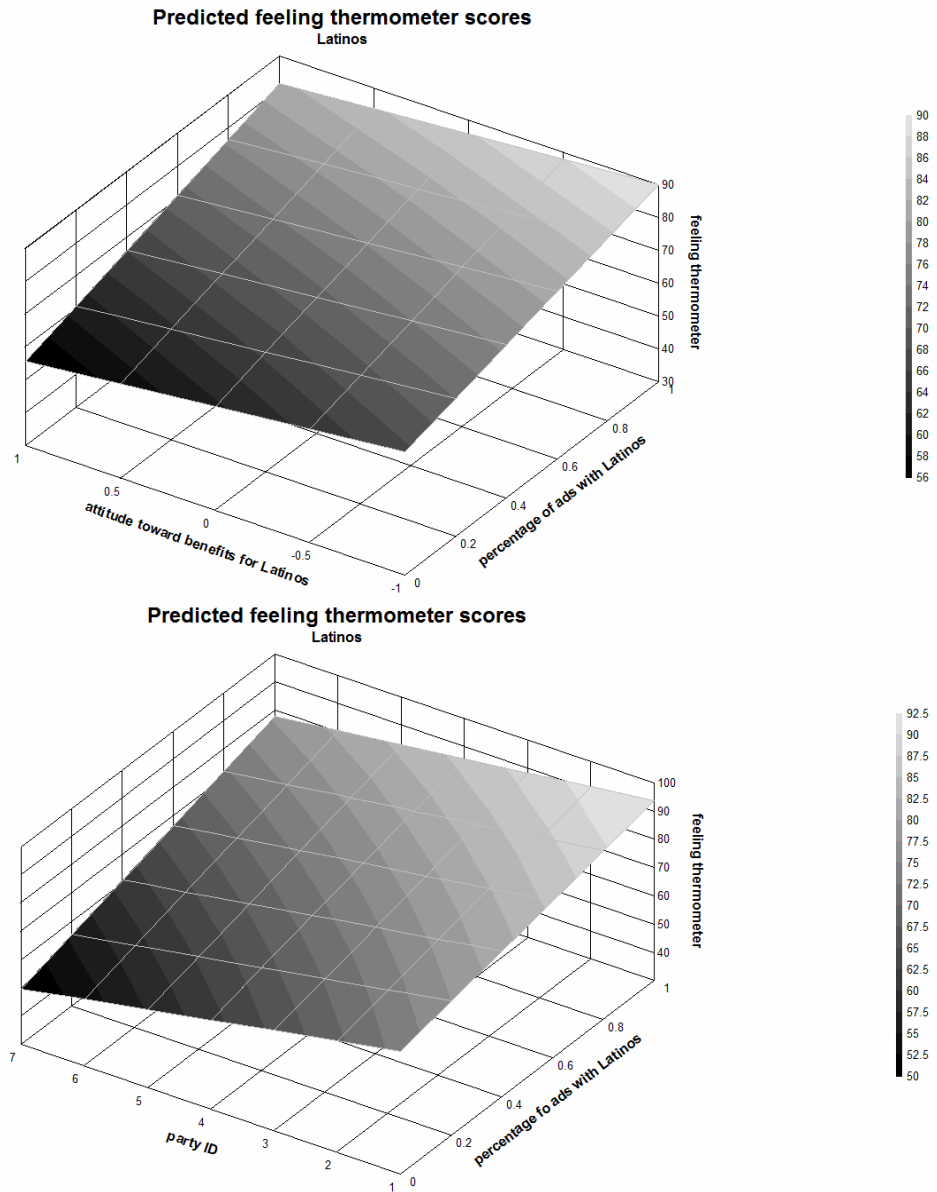
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.4: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing Latinos (continued from previous page)
Republican candidates



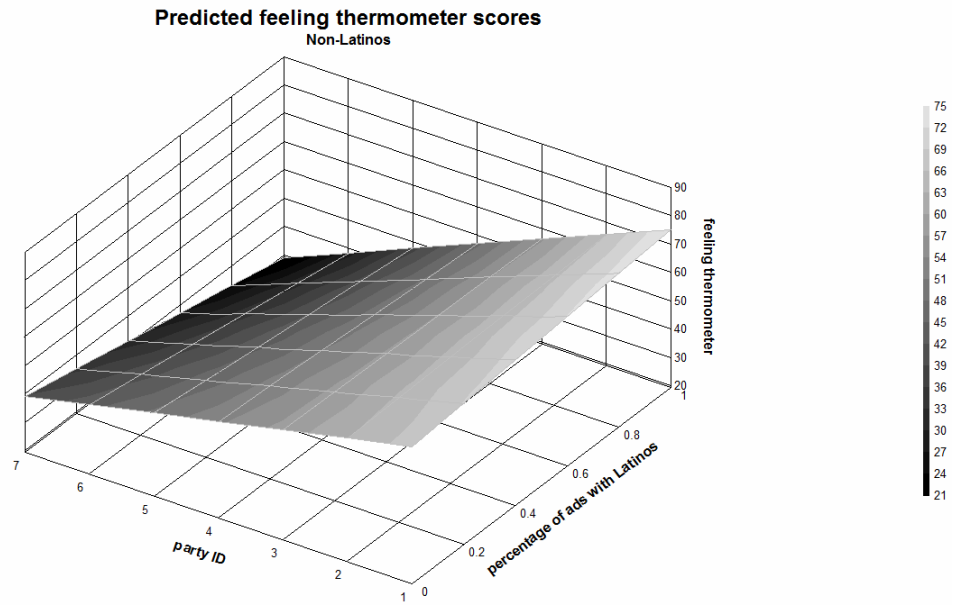
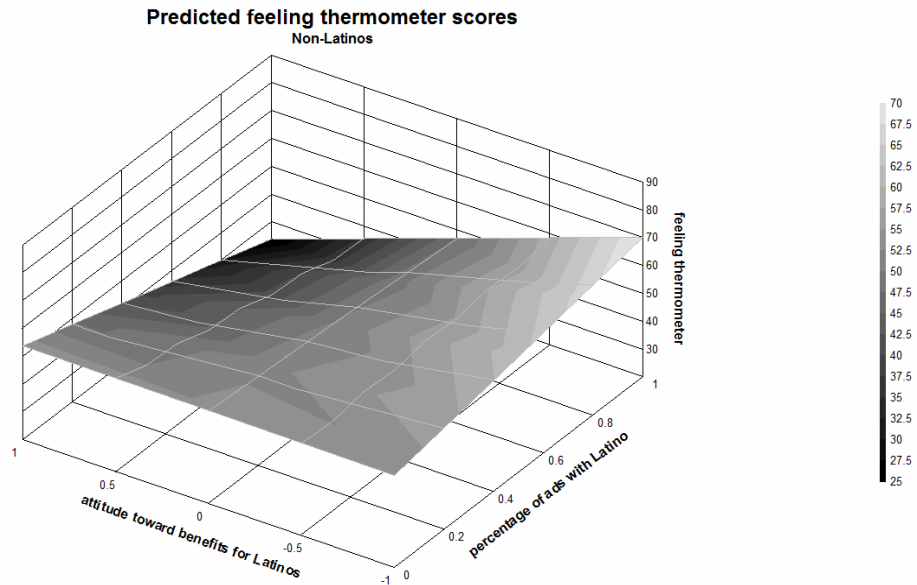
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.4: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing Latinos (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



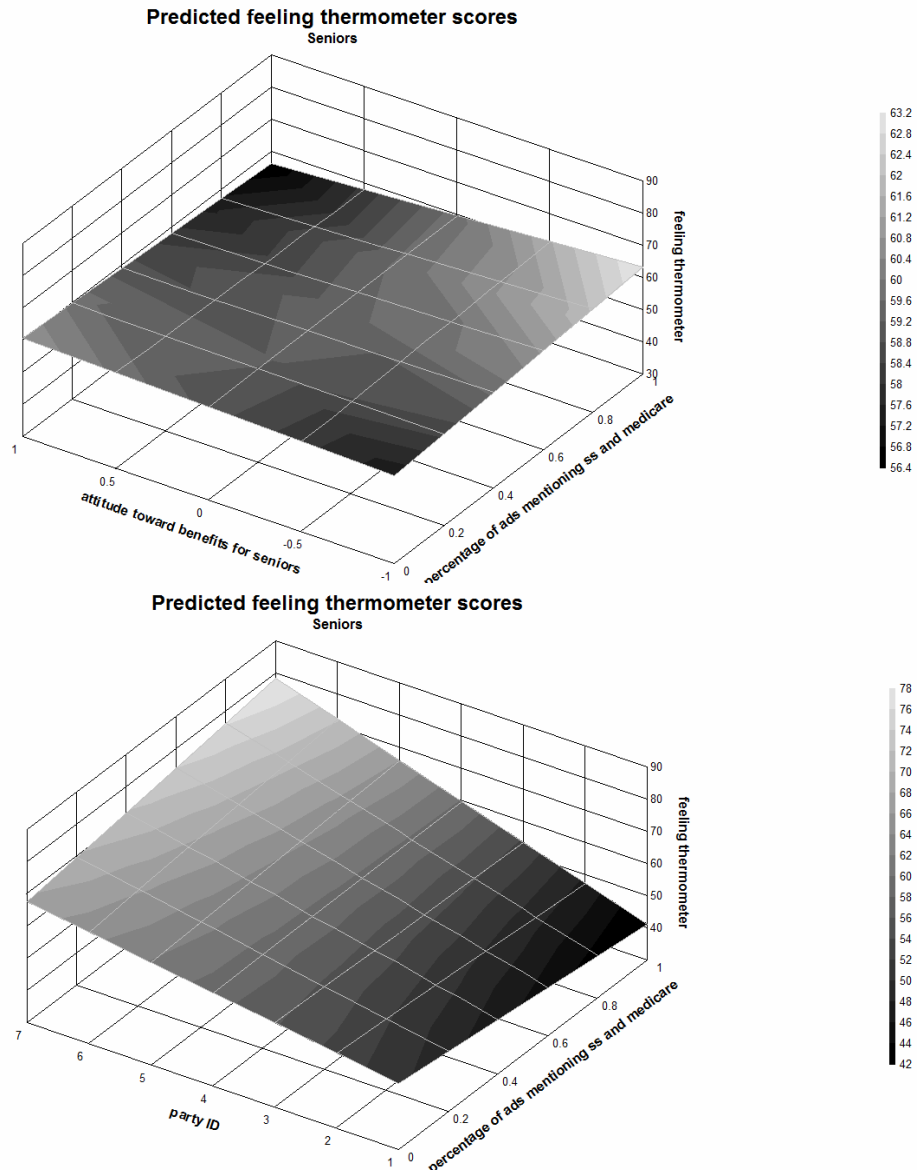
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.4: Predicted favorability for candidates picturing Latinos (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



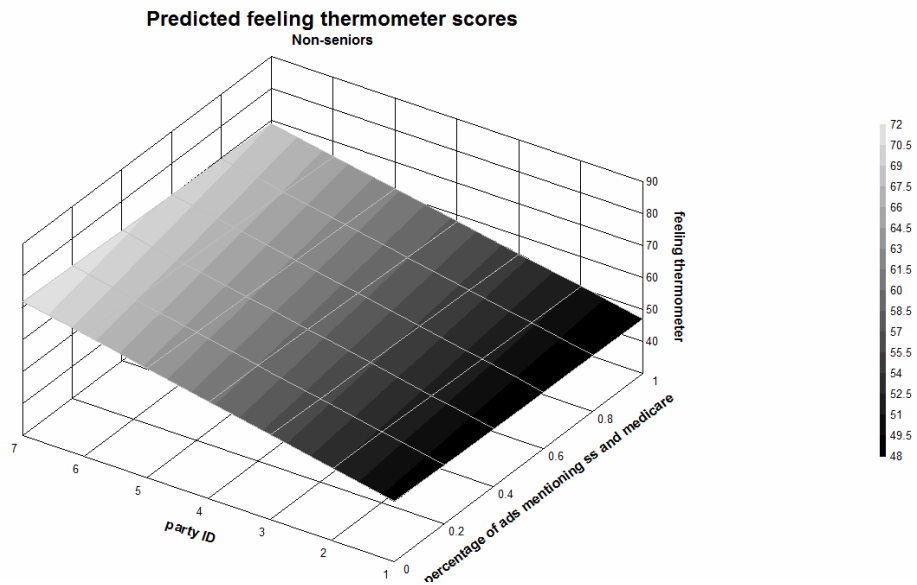
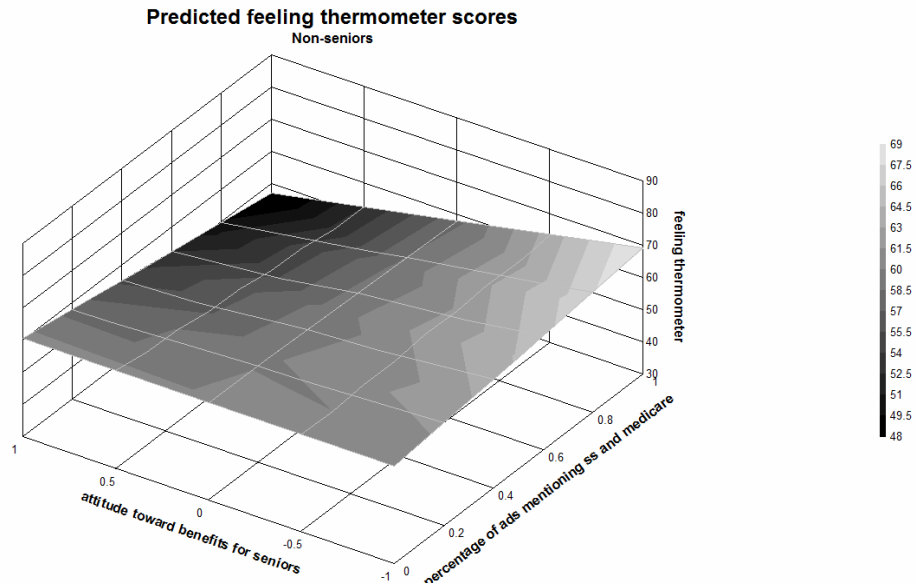
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.5: Predicted favorability for candidates mentioning Social Security and Medicare (continued on the next 3 pages)
Republican candidates



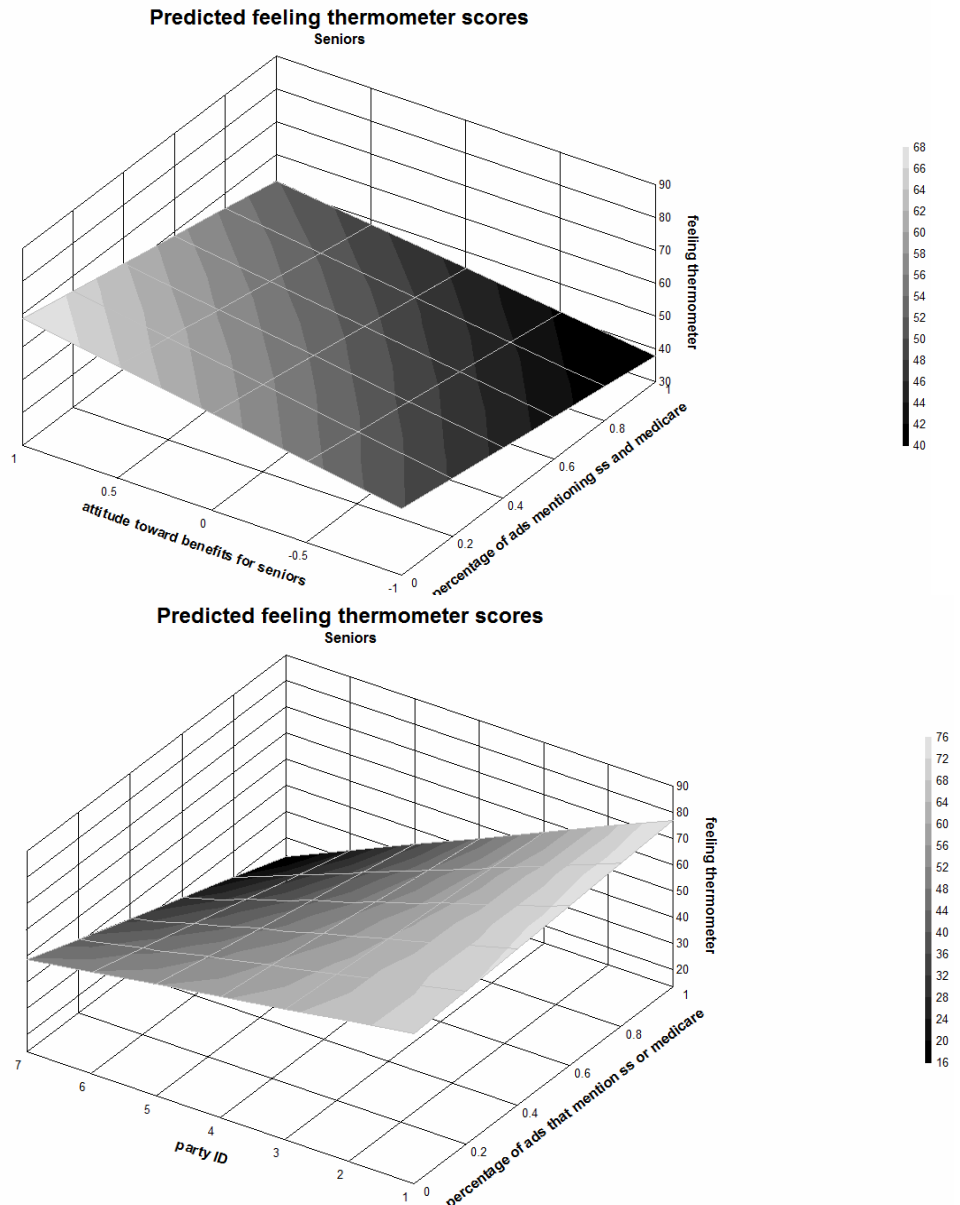
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.5: Predicted favorability for candidates mentioning Social Security and Medicare (continued from previous page)
Republican candidates



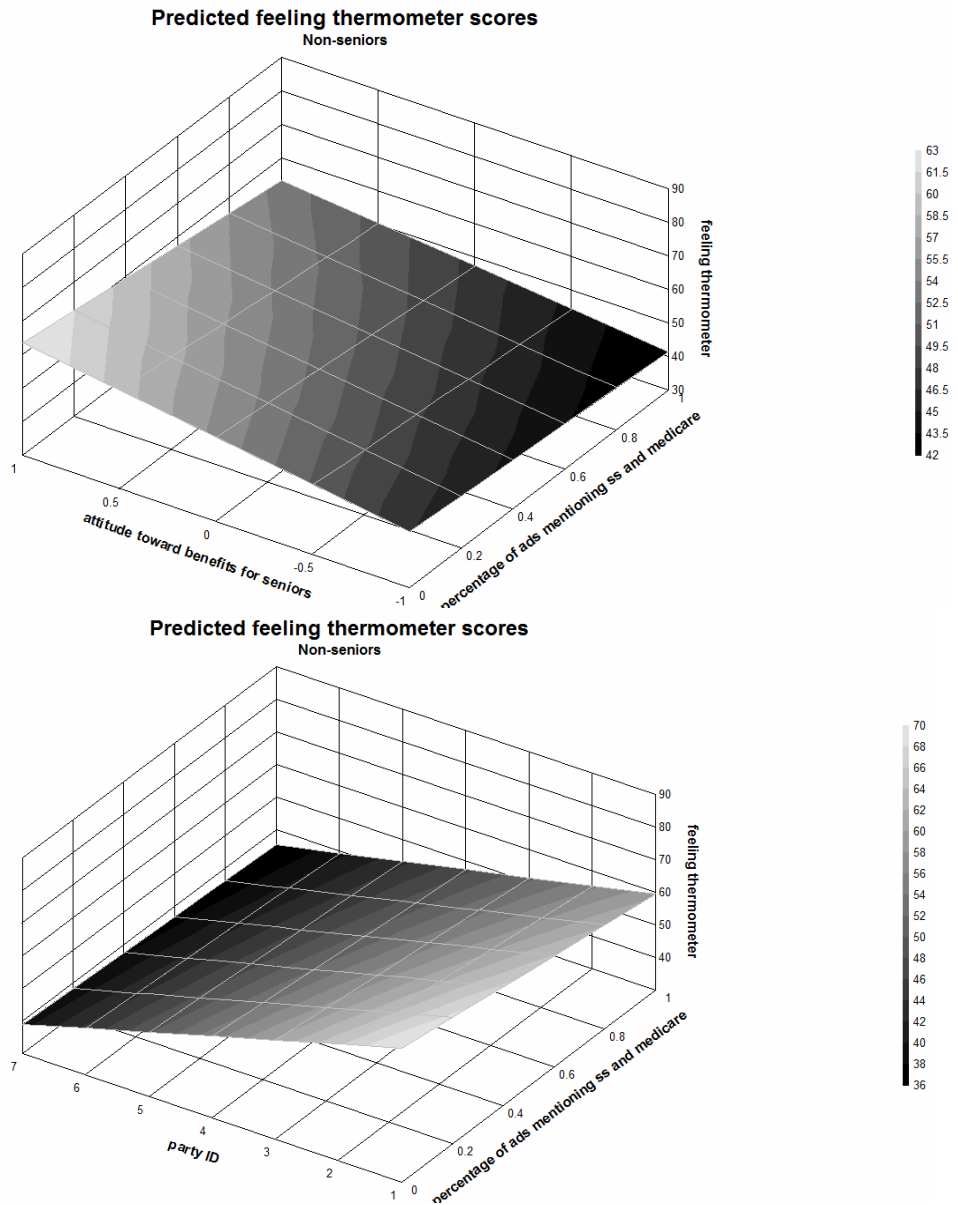
Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.5: Predicted favorability for candidates mentioning Social Security and Medicare (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Figure 5.5: Predicted favorability for candidates mentioning Social Security and Medicare (continued from previous page)
Democratic candidates



Predicted favorability is represented along the Z axis as a function of the percentage of ads picturing a group (Y axis) and either partisanship (with issue position held at the neutral point) or issue position (with partisanship held at constant as Independent) on the X axis.

Chapter 6: Imagery Effects in a Controlled Setting

6.1: Introduction

In this chapter, I present evidence from a series of controlled experiments designed to isolate the influence of verbal and visual campaign appeals and see how those appeals affect voters. The nature of cross-sectional surveys makes it difficult to be confident when making causal inferences. Experiments on campaign effects are, of course, nothing new, and provide an ideal framework to get a handle on the individual components of campaign ads, such as the impact of verbal and visual content. The survey data and aggregate data analysis presented in chapters 4 and 5 indicate that campaign imagery affects voters according to how the images interact with their partisanship and policy beliefs. In this chapter, I use a controlled setting to make inferences about how campaign imagery influences voters, perceptions of candidate positions and ideologies, and how people use those perceptions when making overall evaluations of the candidate.

In the experiments that follow I answer some of the outstanding questions raised elsewhere in this project and run critical tests for the Identity, Group Support and Ideology hypotheses. I will also examine an important question raised in the last chapter: Do different identity groups draw different inferences from ad imagery? My analysis of survey data in the previous chapter indicated that members from different groups had different reactions to ad imagery. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how individuals from different social groups make inferences about a candidate based on ad imagery, and how individuals react (or fail to react) to self-congruent imagery in campaign ads.

Finally, I will show how the groups pictured in a campaign ad affect individuals' overall feelings about the candidate. I find substantial differences in the way that

individuals react to verbal and visual appeals. As in the last chapter, the evidence from these experiments reveals that candidates may make enormous strides with voters using visual appeals, and they may be able to do so without incurring the costs that come with taking an explicit verbal position.

6.2: Creating the campaign

In order to run a controlled experiment, I created a number of campaign ads to present the subjects with realistic, 30-second campaign content. To produce these ads for the experiment I collected audio and video footage from a number of sources and used video-editing software to create a new series of ads.⁴⁸ Many of these scenes come from the Washington Post's campaign video archives, though I also drew video from other publicly available sources such as Youtube to obtain images of individuals belonging to different social identity groups.

In order to field a candidate for the experiments, I used archived campaign commercials from Mark Kennedy's failed 2006 Minnesota senate campaign and presented Kennedy as the candidate in all of the following experiments. Kennedy, a sitting member of Congress at the time, ran many different ads during the campaign, so considerable amount of video of the candidate was publicly available after the campaign. It was important to actually picture the candidate within the experiment in order to maintain the illusion of authenticity. The vast majority of House and Senate campaign ads featured images of the candidate, and usually had the candidate speaking to the camera for at least part of the ad. Kennedy is a white, male Republican, who was in his

⁴⁸ Storyboards and complete scripts for the ads used in these experiments can be found in the appendix of this chapter.

40's at the time of the campaign. As a candidate, he had an ideal generic look since he was not unusually old, young, handsome or from a minority ethnic group.⁴⁹ As a first step, I used selected footage from Kennedy's ads as well as video footage of Minneapolis, St. Paul and the surrounding area to create two thirty-second campaign commercials. I used these commercials, which had similar content, as control ads in the experiments described below. Each commercial's basic format was as follows: about 15 seconds of Minnesota scenery inter-cut with a brief shot of the capital dome and images of Kennedy speaking to the camera or standing next to "average" people. These average people were all white adults. The scenes of the Twin Cities and surrounding areas did not have any footage of people, focusing instead on buildings, highways and rivers. The resulting ads show Kennedy on screen a good portion of the time alone and interacting with a few people, though the people in the control ad do not represent a particular group or constituency. The scenes of Minnesota are split and appear at roughly the 10 and 20 second marks within the ad.⁵⁰

To create image treatment ads, I collected video of children, senior citizens, farmers, teachers, police officers, soldiers, blue-collar workers, businesspeople, Latinos and African-Americans. Demographic types were pictured in a few casual home or office settings, while occupational groups were identified by attire and activity (e.g. Teachers were shown at the blackboard, blue-collar workers were shown working with tools and

⁴⁹ In the future, it may be interesting to investigate how the characteristics of the candidate (race, gender, age, etc.) interact with the other images presented in the campaign ad. In this case, however, I held the candidate constant across different treatments so it was important to have a candidate who did not present an exceptional image, and whose appearance did not conform to the image of any of the groups tested.

⁵⁰ Valentino, Hutchings and White (2003) used a similar approach in their investigation of racial images. They contrasted campaign ads picturing African-Americans with ads featuring x-rays and hospitals without any people present in the image. In an experiment focused on campaign images it is not always clear what the control condition should look like. In this case, I used Minnesota scenery in order to ensure that the images in the control ad presented no kind of substantive cue to the subjects.

wearing hard hats, etc.). I went through the control ad and replaced the footage of Minnesota with footage of a particular group.⁵¹ In each treatment ad, the group appeared on screen from, roughly, the 10 to 15 second and 20-29 second marks within the ads. As a result, the treatment ads still contain footage of Kennedy alone and Kennedy alongside the adults pictured in the control ad as well as pictures of the people I am interested in investigating. The treatments, therefore, effectively mimic real ads⁵² while keeping the intent of the experiment hidden. Note that the treatments are not as strong as they might have been if the ad featured *only* one type of person. For example, in the senior citizen video treatment, the ads contain footage of senior citizens as well as footage of Kennedy with the middle-aged adults pictured in the control ads.

Of course, the ads needed audio as well as visual content. I recorded an audio track for each ad with new music and an actor playing the voice of Mark Kennedy. In the control condition Kennedy talks about the importance of change and working for people rather than special interests (without any policy specifics). His only policy statement concerns the need to balance the federal budget. In the verbal treatment conditions his support for balancing the budget is replaced with an appeal for support for a particular group. For example, in the case of African-Americans, this meant voicing support for affirmative action policies in college admissions.

Once completed, I combined the audio and video content to produce ads in which Kennedy made a verbal appeal to a group, made a visual appeal to a group, did both, or

⁵¹ In the treatment conditions no individual represented more than one group in order to ensure that the treatment was not contaminated. So, for example, all of the farmers pictured were Caucasian rather than African-American or Latino so any difference between the control and treatment conditions must be due to the appearance of an individual as a farmer, rather than his or her ethnicity. I did, however, include male and female members of each group.

⁵² In pilot tests conducted through a student subject pool none of the subjects questioned the authenticity of the ads.

did neither. I also included a final ad that focused on Kennedy's family and personality, which featured Kennedy and his immediate family and contained no policy information at all. The family merely comments on Kennedy's personality and the ad attempts to humanize the candidate. This biographical ad ran after the treatment ads and served as a brief distraction, while also bringing some authenticity to the experiment.

6.3: Experiment #1: Picturing blacks and workers when partisanship is known

In the first experiment, I tested responses to imagery in a situation where the candidate's partisanship was known to the subjects in the experiment. I used the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project (CCAP) as a platform for this experiment in order to collect a sample of 1000 adult residents of the state of Illinois. The CCAP was a multi-institution national panel survey that consisted of 6 waves beginning in December 2007 using a sample of registered voters stratified by battleground and non-battleground states. Respondents were chosen from the YouGov/Polimetrix Polling Point Panel with an eye toward creating a sample representative (by gender, age, race and education) of the state population. The surveys were conducted online and the surveys for each wave took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Though the online format of the experiment lacks the absolute control of a traditional lab, the size and diversity of the sample in the CCAP was absolutely essential in order to investigate how members of different social groups might respond to campaign imagery. Because I was interested in different group responses, and how those responses varied according to political predispositions, it was necessary to limit the number of conditions. In this experiment I tested campaign ads with verbal and visual

messages related to African-Americans and blue-collar workers. In addition to representing strong social identities of race and class, each of these groups is fairly common in campaign ads (see Chapter 4), and both are relatively strong ideological signals (see Chapter 2).

The experiment ran in the September 2008 wave of the CCAP. Subjects were told that Kennedy was a Republican Congressman from Minnesota, and they were asked to view two ads from his Senate campaign. The subjects were also told that they would be asked what they remembered from the ads and about their impressions of the candidate. The first ad contained the experimental treatment, while the second ad was the non-substantive biographical ad. Table 6.1 shows the number of subjects within each condition. Each subject, then, saw two ads, and only one actually contained an experimental treatment. Though the subjects knew that the ads were the focus of the experiment, they were still unaware of the verbal and visual distinctions between conditions, and the actual treatment within each ad amounted to roughly 15 seconds of audio and/or video. Once they had seen the ads, I then asked the subjects to place the candidate on a number of issues (aid to blacks, affirmative action, the minimum wage and free trade), their perception of the candidate's overall ideology and their overall feeling toward the candidate. All of these dependent variables were scaled from 0-100.

Recall that the Group Support Hypothesis suggests that viewers should see images as a message of implicit support for policies that support the group being pictured. The evidence from this experiment strongly supports the Group Support Hypothesis. The results show that the subjects made inferences about the candidate's views based on both the images shown and the verbal content. Figure 6.1 shows where

the subjects placed the candidate on the two race-related issues. As expected, both the visual and verbal content had a strong impact on perceptions of the candidate's positions. The mean placements for both issues were more supportive of benefits for African-Americans in the treatment conditions than the control condition. This gap was both statistically significant and, substantively, quite large. For example, subjects who saw ads with no verbal racial content and no African-American images placed the candidate at 36.09 on the 0-100 scale on the issue of aid to blacks. In the conditions where the subjects viewed an ad with some racial content (verbal, visual, or both) they ranked the candidate between 52.89 and 58.61. Even when the ad contained no verbal racial content, there was an 18 point, statistically significant ($p < .01$) difference in mean placements between the control condition and the treatment with images of African-Americans.

There was also a gap between the racial treatment conditions depending on whether the ad included verbal support for affirmative action. Subjects who heard the candidate verbally support affirmative action rated the candidate as more liberal on affirmative action than subjects who saw only images of African-Americans. Subjects in all racial treatments ranked the candidate as more supportive of affirmative action, than subjects in the control condition did. When the subjects only received the visual message of support for African-Americans, with no verbal message, they placed the candidate at 49.9, or almost precisely at the mid-point. When a verbal message supporting affirmative action was included, the subjects placed the candidate in a significantly more liberal position.

In contrast, there was no difference between racial treatment conditions on the issue of aid to blacks. In the verbal treatment, the candidate took an explicit position on affirmative action, so it is no surprise that this verbal message might have more impact on the specific issue mentioned. However, when it came to a more generic issue of supporting the group's interest there was no statistically significant difference between picturing blacks and verbalizing support for blacks. This finding seems to indicate that picturing a group is sufficient to deliver a generic message of support, and complementing that image with a verbal message does not seem to increase the power of the message. Although a verbal message that addresses a specific issue can be more powerful on that specific issue, it is not necessary in order to express support for a group. Candidates who wish to show support for a group, then, can do so without incurring the backlash (discussed further below) that may come from making a possibly controversial verbal statement.

The partisanship of the candidate may have limited the extent to which subjects were willing to place the candidate on the liberal side of the scale on issue positions, regardless of the candidate's explicit positions within the ad. For example, even those subjects who saw an ad picturing African-Americans where the candidate took an explicit pro-affirmative action stance only placed the candidate at 58.02 (or just slightly to the left of center) on the issue of aid to blacks. It seems that even in these conditions there was a ceiling on the amount of liberal ideology respondents were willing to credit the candidate.⁵³ The significant differences between the treatment and control conditions on racial issue placement came from the subjects' willingness to place the candidate on the

⁵³ Alternatively, it is also possible that many subjects paid so little attention to the ad that they missed both the verbal and visual content and relied to a large degree on the candidate's partisanship on the ensuing questions.

conservative end of the scale in the control condition as much as their willingness to place him toward the liberal end in the treatment conditions. Not surprisingly, the Republican Party's modern history on race and racial issues made it relatively easy for most respondents in the control condition to place the candidate at a fairly conservative point (Carmines and Stimson, 1989; Petrocik, 1996).

As with the racial treatments, subjects in the worker treatment conditions may have been reluctant to place a Republican candidate on the liberal end of an issue, even when given explicit information in the ad. In the condition with images of workers and a verbal statement supporting an increase in the minimum wage, the mean placement of the candidate was 48.21, or almost exactly at the midpoint of the scale. On the other hand, subjects in the control condition did not place the Republican candidate in a conservative position on worker issues. On the issue of the minimum wage, the mean placement of the candidate in the control condition was 46.2, or slightly to the right of center, on the 0-100 scale. Simply put, the subjects in the control condition had already placed the candidate at a fairly moderate position on workers' issues. A post-experiment look at those subjects in the control condition shows that subjects in the control condition actually identified unions as more conservative than those in the worker treatment conditions, so it should be no surprise that those in the control condition may have been predisposed to view the Republican candidate as worker friendly.

The differences between the worker conditions, therefore, were often minimal. Figure 2 shows the mean differences across conditions for ratings of Mark Kennedy on free trade and support for increasing the minimum wage. On both issues, subjects who saw blue-collar workers or heard a message about the minimum wage rated Kennedy as

more liberal on these issues; however, the differences between the treatment conditions and the control condition were small and none of these differences was statistically significant.⁵⁴

In addition to inferences about policy positions, subjects also used the images in the experiment as a signal about the candidate's ideology. The Ideology Hypothesis suggests that viewers should see images as a signal about the candidate's ideology; picturing liberal groups like blacks and workers should leave viewers with the impression that the candidate is more liberal. However, a partisan ceiling effect is also apparent when looking at how the subjects rated the candidate's ideology. Even in conditions with liberal visual and verbal messages the perception of the candidate's ideology never moved much farther than slightly-left-of-center. Figure 3 shows the mean rating of the candidate's ideology within each group. In the control condition subjects rated the candidate at 41.70 on a 100 point scale. In order to achieve a statistically significant difference, subjects in the treatment groups would have had to place a Republican at a substantially more liberal position. Still, all of the treatment groups featuring race based verbal and/or visual appeals placed the candidate at a statistically significant (though substantively small) distance from the control group. Though the mean ideological placements in the worker treatment conditions were always more liberal than the control group, the differences in these group means were negligible.

These analyses of reactions to campaign images treat all respondents within condition as one group. Not all groups *felt* the same way about viewing images, or hearing various campaign appeals; however, it seems that each respondent did get the

⁵⁴ The lack of significant differences between conditions could also be a result of subjects' failure to connect blue-collar images with the issues of the minimum wage and free trade.

same substantive message from both verbal and visual cues within the ad. Figure 6.4 shows placements on aid to blacks and the minimum wage within condition broken down by partisanship. There is a slight tendency, across all conditions, for Republicans to place the candidate in a more conservative position than Democratic respondents. More importantly, the pattern of responses between conditions is the same for Republicans, Democrats and Independents. It never seems to be the case that partisans are interpreting messages differently. Nor does political knowledge play a role. Previous research on political heuristics has shown that politically knowledgeable citizens are actually better at using heuristics to make decisions (Lau and Redlawsk 2001); however, in this experiment politically sophisticated respondents did not differ in their reactions to the political ads in the experiment.

Further, to return to one of the main questions unanswered in the last chapter, there is no evidence that members of a group drew substantively different inferences from the campaign ads. Figure 6.5 shows a comparison of mean placements, within each condition, among union and non-union respondents. There are no statistically significant differences. In fact, union and non-union placements of the candidate were virtually identical. Similarly, there are no statistically significant differences within conditions between black and white respondents. This result speaks directly to one of the questions raised in the last chapter. Observational evidence from Congressional campaigns indicated that members of a social identity group had stronger reactions to images of the group than non-members did. Based on this experiment we can rule out any explanation that suggests that differences between groups would arise due to differences in interpretations of imagery (at least with regard to images of African-Americans and

workers). To the extent that images provide information, they appear to provide that information equally to all groups, not just those pictured in the ad. All respondents seemed to take away the same political message about the candidate's support for policies and overall ideology regardless of demographic background, partisanship or level of political knowledge.

How the voters used that information when making an overall judgment of the candidate varied according to the characteristics and predispositions of the candidate. In addition to placing Kennedy on various issues, I also asked the subjects how warmly they felt toward the candidate. The Identity Hypothesis suggests that individuals are more likely to notice self-congruent images, and, rather than making a substantive inference about the candidate, images should simply generate warm feelings among the subjects who see images congruent with their own identity in the ad. The results of the experiment show little support for the Identity Hypothesis. The images used and the verbal appeals in the ad had a strong influence on how subjects felt about the candidate, but these subjects' feelings were contingent upon their own political predispositions. There is nothing to suggest that members of a group being pictured reacted positively, without regard to their own beliefs. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that members of an identity drew different inferences from political imagery. However, there is some indication that respondents who identified with the group pictured might have had stronger positive reactions than other respondents if their political predispositions led them to like the visual message presented.

Table 6.2 compares subjects who identified as African-American and blue-collar workers. These groups rated how they felt about the candidate, and I have grouped them

by whether or not the treatment campaign ad pictured a member of the group (ignoring verbal treatment effects for the moment).⁵⁵ Among African-American subjects and union members, there were no statistically significant differences between conditions. Simply picturing members of a group did nothing to increase affection for the candidate.

Instead, it was the respondent's political predispositions that determined how he or she felt about the candidate after viewing the ads. In fact, breaking down respondents by partisanship and issue positions reveals an interesting pattern in their responses. In order to understand how issue positions affected reactions I used some of the attitude measures found in the common content of the CCAP. The CCAP has a number of attitudinal measures, including a racial resentment scale, which measures a respondent's attitudes about economic benefits for blacks, and a question about government's role in creating jobs and guaranteeing a standard of living, which I used as a proxy of support for government intervention and support for the working class.⁵⁶

Unsurprisingly, Republican respondents had generally warm feelings toward the Republican candidate depicted, and these feelings are constant across conditions for the

⁵⁵ Results are not substantively different when the groups are merged by video condition with no regard to audio content. The mean placement among black subjects who saw ads with African-Americans was only 49.85.

⁵⁶ The item measuring support for the working class is asked, "Some people feel that government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his or her own. Where would you place yourself on this scale?" The racial resentment scale is actually four items, which I have condensed to a 1-5 scale. I also inverted the response scale on items 1 and 3 so that higher numbers always mean increased resentment. Subjects were asked how much they agree or disagree (on a 5 point scale) with the following statements: (1) Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for African Americans to work their way out of the lower class, (2) Many other minority groups have overcome prejudice and worked their way up. African Americans should do the same without any special favors, (3) Over the past few years, African Americans have gotten less than they deserve, (4) It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if African Americans would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

most part.⁵⁷ Republicans did not seem disappointed in the candidate supporting an increase in the minimum wage; however, there was a significant backlash when the candidate verbally supported affirmative action. Compared to the control condition, Republican respondents rated the candidate 18 points lower when he expressed support for affirmative action. Interestingly, this backlash was not mirrored in the experimental condition that only featured images of African-Americans. When the candidate pictured blacks, but made no verbal statement of support for them, there was no statistically significant drop in favorability.

Democrats and Independents varied more in their favorability toward the candidate, responding based on how they viewed the verbal and visual messages the candidate displayed. Table 6.3 shows a breakdown of respondents' feelings toward Kennedy based on partisanship, support for government intervention in the economy and experimental condition. There is a marginally significant increase in favorability among pro-worker Democrats when the candidate either shows workers or talks about increasing the minimum wage. On the other hand, the effects among independent voters were quite substantial. Independents who favored government support for jobs increased their feelings toward the candidate by 12 points when he mentioned raising the minimum wage and 21 points when he pictured workers. Just as important, picturing workers caused no significant changes in favorability among anti-worker respondents. Though anti-worker

⁵⁷ Republicans also varied little in their issue positions on racial resentment and guaranteed standard of living. Only 5.6% (or 14 total respondents) of Republicans placed themselves on the liberal end of the racial resentment scale, and only 15 Republicans placed themselves on the liberal end of the guaranteed standard of living scale. As a result, I can say little about how a pro-affirmative action republican or a pro-economic intervention Republican might react to campaign images. Thus, while I report Republican reactions as a whole, there is little point into delving into the affect of varying issue positions might have modified Republican reactions.

Democrats rated the candidate 8 points lower when the candidate mentioned raising the minimum wage, their support was unaffected by the images of blue-collar workers.

This pattern repeats itself in Table 6.4, which shows favorability among respondents in the racial treatment conditions. When the candidate makes a verbal statement, he increases support among respondents favorable toward that policy, but also decreases his favorability among respondents opposed to the policy. In contrast, picturing African-Americans increased the candidate's favorability ratings among respondents who support benefits for African-Americans, but it had no effect on those who oppose such benefits. In other words, the candidate could reach out to some voters through the images used in the campaign without experiencing any kind of backlash.

These results mirror the observational findings in the previous chapter. My analysis of image effects in Congressional campaigns showed that members of the group being pictured may react negatively to campaign imagery. Voters who did not identify with the image shown either reacted positively or had no significant reaction to the group pictured. The major difference in the experimental findings is the lack of a backlash among the group being pictured. Union members and African-Americans did not respond negatively to self-congruent images even if they disagreed with the benefits for their identity group. Table 6.5 shows differences between conditions for union respondents. Democratic union members supporting government intervention actually had a much stronger positive response than non-union Democrats. While support among pro-benefit Democrats as a whole only increased by 7 points when the candidate pictured workers, support among union members with this predisposition increased 20 points. However, even among union respondents, there was no significant negative reaction to images of

workers. Across partisanship, regardless of a respondents issue positions, there simply was no backlash for picturing workers.

While the results in Table 6.5 might indicate some support for the Identity Hypothesis, these results did not carry over to ads picturing African-Americans. In that instance, African-Americans never showed a significant reaction between conditions regardless of issue position or partisanship.⁵⁸ Differences in favorability between conditions are driven instead by racially liberal, Democratic white respondents, who reacted positively to the candidate when he pictured African-Americans.

Overall, then, the results of the CCAP experiment show substantial support for the Group Support and Ideology hypotheses. Subjects were able to use images to make inferences about the candidates issue positions and ideology, regardless of their own political predispositions or social identity. At the same time, those inferences clearly had an impact on feelings toward the candidate, with respondents reacting positively when they saw images in line with their own political beliefs. On the other hand, the support for the Identity Hypothesis is extremely weak. As with the observational results, there is no evidence to support the idea that individuals have a positive affective reaction to images based on their social identity. Though union Democrats responded more positively than non-union Democrats, this is the only instance in which there is any substantial difference based on social identity. Union, non-union, African-American and white respondents all made the same substantive inferences based on campaign imagery, and overall impressions of the candidate changed in line with respondents' predispositions.

⁵⁸ The low number of African-Americans in the sample limited variation in partisanship and issue positions, and made it difficult to see significant results; however, even among those Democratic, pro-affirmative action African-Americans in the experiment, the difference in favorability between the control condition and "picturing African-Americans" condition is insignificant and in the wrong direction.

It is not entirely clear why images would result in only positive feelings, without any kind of backlash, and here I can only speculate. I can safely conclude that any difference in favorability is not due to a difference in interpretation of campaign imagery. The unanimity among partisans and social identity groups when viewing images safely rules out that explanation. It may be that, rather than responding to self-congruent imagery, individuals respond more favorably to visual messages that line-up with their own political beliefs, ignoring those that contradict those beliefs. It is also possible that individuals can use campaign imagery to make an inference about the candidate, but, in the absence of a verbal statement, they may not be certain about those inferences. Images of workers and African-Americans may lead respondents to believe that a Republican candidate (as depicted in this experiment) is more moderate than a typical Republican. Median voter theory would suggest that Democrats and Independent voters would prefer a moderate Republican to a conservative one (Downs 1957). When the candidate verbalize an issue position respondents, particularly in an experiment like this with limited information, may latch on to this issue position and alter their feelings according to their own predispositions. Without the verbal statement, respondents may fall back on their partisan beliefs (as many respondents clearly did) in order to make a judgment about the candidate.

It should also be noted that there were no substantive differences between conditions that verbally supported a group and conditions that offered verbal support and pictured the group. In Figure 6.3 (as well as previous figures) you can see that the placement of the candidate on issues and on overall ideology is virtually identical when the candidate makes a verbal statement, regardless of whether or not a visual message is

included. It does not seem that adding the visual cues to the ad strengthens the impact of the visual message. Though the candidate was placed in a slightly more liberal position when he pictured *and* talked about blacks and workers than when he just talked about them, these differences are negligible.

6.4: Experiment #2: Campaign ads with no partisan reference

While the CCAP experiment showed the effects of picturing African-Americans and blue-collar workers in campaign ads, there are many other types of groups that can be pictured within a campaign ad. I followed up on the results of the CCAP experiment in the fall of 2008 and spring of 2009 with an experiment using the University of Illinois subject pool to test the effects of African-Americans and workers, but also senior citizens, children, farmers, police officers, soldiers, teachers, businesspeople, and Latinos. The subject pool uses undergraduate students recruited from introductory courses in political science. Thus, the sample is far too homogenous to look at the effect of different social identities; however, the flexibility of the pool did offer the chance to test numerous image types and see whether or not subjects could use images of different groups to make inferences about the candidate. Given that social identity did not play a role in these inferences in the CCAP experiment, the homogeneity of the subject pool sample should not inhibit conclusions about the Group Support or Ideology Hypotheses.

The number of subjects within each treatment group was much smaller in these experiments (roughly 15-30 subjects per cell), so I strengthened the treatment in the experiment. Subjects were still told that Mark Kennedy was a candidate for Senate from Minnesota and were told that they would view three campaign ads and be asked about

their impressions afterward, but were not given his party identity, nor was Kennedy's partisanship mentioned in the subsequent ads. Without the party label to provide an anchor for perceptions of the candidate, subjects should be far more likely to be influenced by the ad content (Rahn 1993).⁵⁹ Subjects saw two 30-second ads featuring either visual or verbal content supporting a particular group (or neutral images and verbal content in the control condition). In verbal treatment conditions the first ad contained a specific policy statement (e.g. "I want to increase the Medicare prescription drug benefit.") The second ad contained a more generic message of support for the group (e.g. "I'll work to help seniors.") As in the CCAP experiment, the neutral images depicted Minnesota scenery, and were replaced in treatment ads by images of a particular group. Following the two substantive ads, the subjects viewed the Kennedy biographical ad and then answered questions about the issue positions, ideology and partisanship of the candidate.⁶⁰

As in the previous experiment, the results from the subject pool provide a strong indication that viewers use images to make substantive inferences about the candidate. Table 6.6 presents a summary of comparisons between conditions on issue placements related to the group pictured. For each type of imagery I have used two different issue items to measure support for the group. Most of these focus on economic benefits (ex. aid to Latinos, support for teacher and police pay increases) or health benefits (ex. Medicare and veterans' healthcare). For police and soldiers, I have included measures on harsher

⁵⁹ Whether or not the candidate's partisanship should have been mentioned the ads and whether or not it should have been given to the subjects are still open questions. While some candidates will specifically identify their partisanship in their ad, many do not, and it is not clear which approach increases the external validity of the experiment.

⁶⁰ For technical reasons the issue and ideological scales in the subject pool ran from 1-7, rather than 0-100 as they had in the CCAP experiment.

punishment for criminals and defense spending, respectively, because respondents may draw policy inferences from these images that are not strictly related to benefits for the group. All of the significant differences reported in Table 6.6 are in the expected direction. In 8 out of 10 cases, subjects who viewed a campaign picturing a particular group believed that the candidate was more supportive of that group than those that did not view an ad that pictured a group.

The only exceptions to this pattern were children and blue-collar workers. As in the CCAP experiment, it is possible that subjects simply did not make a connection between blue-collar workers and wages or trade issues. Furthermore, the students in the subject pool are not parents, and, therefore, may not have been as susceptible to images of children. In the observational analysis in the previous chapter I found that non-parents had little or no reaction to images of children in campaign advertising.

Those exceptions aside, for the most part imagery did seem to have an impact on how the subjects viewed the candidate. Ads picturing a group had a similar effect to ads that verbally expressed support for a group. With the exception of children, there were no groups tested in which the verbal support ad had an effect on perceptions of the candidate, but the image alone had no effect. Substantively, it seems that talking about a group and showing that group led respondents to the same inferences. At the same time, as in the CCAP experiment, there appears to be no added benefit to picturing a group *and* expressing verbal support for the group. Usually, a verbal or visual message alone was sufficient to convey a message of support. There is only one issue (teacher pay raises) where a combined verbal and visual message had an effect where the audio and image content were insufficient on their own. More often than not, combining verbal and visual

messages yielded an effect similar to verbal messages alone, and responses in these conditions were not significantly different from each other.

I also asked respondents to place the candidate on the more general question of government support for jobs and a standard of living in order to see how images affected respondent views of a candidate at a more general level. While the different groups used in this experiment may carry different ideological connotations, most of them seem to send a message of government support for a particular group, as seen in Table 6.6. These group support questions are almost all linked to support for a standard of living (Medicare, aid to farmers, aid to African-Americans, etc.) It would seem that all of the groups pictured should lead respondents to infer that the candidate supports government aid in general. In order to see how campaign ads affected perceptions of the candidate on this issue I estimated an ordered logit model with the 7 point standard of living question as the dependent variable coded so that higher numbers indicated the candidate was strongly in favor of government support. I used indicator variables to show whether or not a respondent viewed a particular image or heard a particular appeal. In a separate model I also controlled for other factors, such as the respondent's self placement on the issue, partisanship, ideology, gender and race.

The results in the first two columns of Table 6.7 show that images had an impact on respondents' views of the candidate on a more general economic issue, beyond support for one group. Five of the group image types used in these ads, African-Americans, Latinos, blue-collar workers, farmers and soldiers, had a significant, positive impact on respondent placements of the candidate, while none had a statistically significant negative effect. These results show that respondents used imagery to make

general inferences about the candidate's economic views. While these groups may have carried different ideological connotations (see below), they all conveyed the message that the candidate would use government power to help its citizens.

On the other hand, there was much more variance among the verbal treatments. Verbal support for Latinos and African-Americans increased the candidates perceived support for a guaranteed standard of living, but messages relating to soldiers, police officers and businesspeople had a significant negative effect. For this last group, the negative effect was expected because the verbal message related to business includes lessening government regulation, essentially arguing for less government involvement in the economy. The effect for soldiers and police officers is more unusual, since neither of the verbal appeals in those cases would seem to have anything to do with a guaranteed standard of living. It is possible that subjects view the verbal support for police and soldiers as a signal of the candidate's conservatism, and used that conservative signal to make inferences about his support for a guaranteed standard of living.

I repeated this analysis using gun control as the dependent variable (also on a 7 point scale with lower values favoring increased gun control measures). Unlike the standard of living variable, there is no reason to believe that any of the images used in the experimental ads would have an effect on perceptions of the candidate's position on gun control.⁶¹ The results are in the last two columns in Table 6.7 and show that the images from the experiment ads had little effect on how respondents perceived the candidate on gun control. Only one coefficient (for images of African-Americans) is statistically significant, and even this coefficient ceases to be statistically significant when other

⁶¹ It is possible that images of police officers might influence perceptions of the candidate on this issue since both are related to criminal policy. It is not clear, however, what inference a viewer would draw from an image of a police officer.

control variables are introduced. The absence of significant results suggests that used the people pictured in ads to make inferences about the candidate's policy positions, but only when the images actually conveyed relevant information. For an issue like gun control, where we would not expect images to have an impact on perceptions of the candidate, there is no evidence that campaign images had an effect, which would indicate that the results from the first two columns in Table 6.7 are not simply a spurious artifact.

In addition to drawing inferences about support for a group, it seems that subjects also used the images in the ads to make a judgment about the candidate's ideology. Figure 6.7 shows where respondents placed the candidate on a 7-point ideological scale. In the control condition, with non-ideological images and relatively banal policy promises, respondents placed the candidate at 3.76 on the scale, or just slightly to the left of center. For almost every group pictured, respondents in the image treatment placed the candidate to the left or right of the control condition as expected. Due to the small sample, not all of these differences are statistically significant, but the overall pattern is still remarkable. For example, while subjects who viewed campaign ads with images of blue-collar workers did not see the candidate as more supportive on substantive issues, they did see him as significantly more liberal than those in the control condition. Images of workers, African-Americans and Latinos all led the subjects to place the candidate to the liberal side of the control condition, while images of senior citizens, police officers, soldiers, farmers and business led respondents to assume that the candidate was more conservative. This is the precise pattern expected, based on the ideological reputations of each of these groups.

There is one odd instance of a group being pictured and leading subjects to a conclusion about the candidate's ideology that is the opposite of what I expected. When the candidate pictured teachers, apparently, subjects viewed him as more conservative than they did in the control condition. This is the only case of a candidate picturing a group and *not* placing the candidate in the correct ideological direction. Notice, however, that respondents did not really interpret *verbal* support for teachers as a liberal signal, nor did they interpret the combination of verbal and visual support as an indication of the candidate's ideology. Verbal support for teachers and the combined verbal and visual support yielded a perception of ideology that was almost identical to perceptions in the control condition. For whatever reason, it seems that subjects within the experiment did not regard teachers as a liberal group.

In fact, for each group pictured the pattern of responses across all three types of treatments (verbal, visual, verbal and visual combined) is remarkably similar. It seems that, in general, subjects interpreted visual cues about the candidate's ideology in exactly the same way that they would interpret verbal statements about policy positions. When the candidate supported police officers verbally subjects gave him a mean ideological rating of 4.35. When the candidate pictured police officers without mentioning crime as an issue subjects gave him a rating of 4.29. The response pattern, and in many cases the actual mean ratings, between subjects who only saw an image of a group and subjects who heard a verbal message of support is identical. Support for conservative groups, be it verbal or visual, led to perceptions of the candidate as more conservative and support for liberal groups led subjects to believe the candidate was more liberal.

6.5: Summary

These experiments provide strong evidence of the importance of campaign imagery, and the way that voters use images to make substantive inferences. Visual information from the campaign ad had a strong impact on voter perceptions. This chapter confirms much of the previous, indirect evidence in earlier chapters while explaining some of the discrepancies in those observational analyses. In these experiments I have shown that images can influence perceptions of candidate's issue positions and ideological reputation. Further, voters draw the same inferences from campaign ad imagery regardless of their own personal characteristics: Democrats, Republicans, and members of different social groups all seem to interpret visual information in the same manner.

Campaign images can also be used to increase a candidate's favorability among voters who are predisposed to like the visual message presented in the ad, and there is little evidence that these image appeals will hurt the candidate with other voters. Combining verbal and visual appeals did not noticeably strengthen the candidate's message. When the candidate made a verbal appeal, perceptions of the candidate were unaffected by whether or not this verbal appeal was matched with a visual appeal. The advantage of using a visual appeal is not that it strengthens verbal messages. Instead, candidates can make similar appeals using images or words, but it seems that images do not result in the kind of negative reaction that verbal appeals elicit among voters who disagree with the issue position taken by the candidate.

As with any experiment, there should be questions about the external validity of these results. Most notably, while no respondents had a negative reaction to images in the

lab, the CCAP experiment only measured reactions after viewing one ad with an unknown candidate. In a real-world campaign setting, with repeated exposure to an ad, it is entirely possible that campaign images would start to elicit a negative response. If respondents had a chance to repeatedly view a candidate's advertisement and develop a stronger impression of the candidate, they might well react to imagery with the same negativity that they had when presented with a verbal message they disliked. The results from the previous chapter's survey analysis would seem to indicate that, over the course of the campaign, images can create a negative impression among some respondents. It may be that repeated exposure over the course of the campaign either increases a voter's certainty about a candidate's positions or simply increases the importance of a particular issue. In either case, a voter opposed to the candidate's visual signal would be more likely to punish that candidate.

With that caveat aside, however, the results from these experiments show a strong connection between image and substance. Regardless of whether or not citizens in an actual campaign would feel the same way about the candidate as the subjects in this experiment, there seems little reason to think that they would not learn the same things about the candidate from his campaign ad imagery. It now seems clear that individuals form substantive impressions about a candidate based on the visual information presented in a campaign ad. This information signal exists independent of the verbal information in the ad and affects overall perceptions of the candidate. If anything, it seems that repeated exposure over the course of the campaign would increase the strength of this information signal. Candidates looking to manipulate voters, then, might do well to remember that voters believe their eyes as well as their ears. Candidates should take care and examine

exactly what story the pictures in their ads tell about them.

Chapter 6 Tables and Figures

Table 6.1: Design of the CCAP experiment

		Video condition		
		Generic video	African-American video	Worker video
Audio condition	Generic audio	159	155	169
	Pro-min. wage audio	155	--	161
	Pro-affirmative action audio	152	140	--

Cells indicate the number of subjects randomly assigned to each condition

Table 6.2: Testing affective responses-Blacks

Group	Condition	Mean placement on feeling thermometer	N
African-Americans	Video pictured blacks	49.00 (7.66)	13
	Control	57.00 (7.11)	7
Union members	Video pictured workers	58.41 (2.99)	58
	Control	59.21 (3.17)	53

Cells are mean values with standard errors in parentheses

Table 6.3: Feelings toward Kennedy among Democrats and Independents, by issue beliefs

Partisanship	Attitude	Ad pictured workers	Ad mentioned min. wage	Control
Democrat	Pro benefit	56.80 (4.82) N=15	55.67 (7.85) N=15	49.54 (7.37) N=11
	Anti Benefit	65.24 (4.67) N=21	56.45 (5.12) N=20	64.18 (3.81) N=17
Independent	Pro benefit	62.67 (3.50) N=9	53.25 (8.53) N=4	41.22 (7.44) N=9
	Anti benefit	66.77 (2.83) N=31	69.26 (3.17) N=19	63.26 (3.85) N=27

Cells are mean values with standard errors in parentheses

Table 6.4: Feelings toward Kennedy among Democrats and Independents, by issue beliefs

Partisanship	Attitude	Ad pictured African-Americans	Ad mentioned affirmative action	Control
Democrat	Pro benefit	60.31 (4.09) N=26	63.42 (4.38) N=31	50.91 (5.38) N=24
	Anti Benefit	60.59 (4.67) N=17	54.60 (7.86) N=10	61.13 (3.42) N=15
Independent	Pro benefit	55.13 (6.92) N=15	65.86 (6.33) N=8	46.75 (7.34) N=8
	Anti benefit	56.58 (3.28) N=19	54.00 (6.68) N=17	65.13 (3.63) N=31

Cells are mean values with standard errors in parentheses

Table 6.5: Feelings about Kennedy among union members

Partisanship	Attitude	Ad pictured workers	Control	Difference
Democrat	Pro benefit	57.38 (8.06) N=8	36.6 (11.12) N=5	20.78* (13.44)
	Anti Benefit	55.90 (5.15) N=20	54.71 (6.09) N=14	1.19 (7.99)
Independent	Pro benefit	72.67 (4.33) N=13	49.75 (7.36) N=14	22.92** (9.44)
	Anti benefit	58.78 (4.30) N=18	64.92 (5.52) N=13	-6.15 (6.90)
Republican	--	66.63 (10.01) N=8	67.41 (5.50) N=17	-.79 (10.52)

Cells are mean values with standard errors in parentheses. *p<.1, **p<.05

Table 6.6: Summary of differences in mean value of issue placements

Group	Issues	Differences
Teachers	Education spending	Verbal only** Image* Image and verbal**
	Teacher pay	Image and verbal*
Blue-collar workers	Minimum wage	--
	Free trade	--
Businesspeople	Gov't regulation	Verbal only** Image* Image and verbal**
	Free trade	Verbal only*
Farmer	Farm subsidies	Image only* Verbal only** Image and verbal**
	Ethanol subsidies	Image only** Verbal only** Image and verbal**
Police	Police hiring	Verbal only** Image only* Image and verbal**
	Tough on crime	Verbal only** Image only* Image and verbal**
Soldiers	Defense spending	Verbal only** Image*
	Veteran healthcare	Image only** Verbal only**
Senior citizens	Medicare	Image only* Verbal only** Image and verbal**
	Social Security	--
African-Americans	Affirmative Action	Image only** Verbal only** Image and verbal**
	Aid to blacks	Image only* Verbal only** Image and verbal**
Latinos	Aid to Latinos	Image only* Verbal only** Image and verbal**
	Immigration	Verbal only** Image and verbal**
Children	Education spending	Verbal only** Image only* Image and verbal**
	Children's healthcare	--

*p<.1, **p<.05, indicate statistically significant differences between treatment and control groups

Table 6.7: Effects of video and audio treatments on perceptions of candidate

	DV=standard of living (7 point scale)	DV=standard of living (7 point scale)	DV=support for gun control (7 point scale)	DV=support for gun control (7 point scale)
Video				
Children	-.37 (.34)	.00 (.35)	-.17 (.34)	-.14 (.35)
Senior citizens	-.26 (.45)	-.40 (.44)	.36 (.46)	.32 (.46)
Teachers	.25 (.41)	.33 (.42)	.10 (.44)	.24 (.44)
Farmers	1.10** (.40)	.96** (.41)	.01 (.41)	-.10 (.42)
Blue-collar workers	.63* (.39)	.96** (.40)	.04 (.37)	-.15 (.38)
Businesspeople	-.28 (.37)	-.17 (.37)	-.41 (.36)	-.52 (.36)
Soldiers	.77** (.30)	.60** (.30)	-.39 (.31)	-.41 (.31)
Police officers	.46 (.34)	.43 (.34)	.41 (.34)	.42 (.35)
African-Americans	.98** (.40)	1.08** (.41)	-.80** (.38)	-.66 (.41)
Latinos	.75* (.44)	.75* (.44)	-.30 (.42)	-.27 (.44)
Audio				
Children	-.13 (.34)	-.29 (.34)	-.26 (.34)	-.32 (.34)
Senior citizens	-.82 (.66)	-.56 (.47)	-.09 (.47)	-.13 (.48)
Teachers	-.45 (.42)	-.58 (.43)	-.87* (.45)	-1.02** (.47)
Farmers	.08 (.39)	.25 (.40)	.02 (.40)	.02 (.41)
Blue-collar workers	.12 (.39)	.01 (.39)	-1.01** (.38)	-1.06** (.38)
Businesspeople	-.92** (.41)	-.83** (.41)	-.04 (.39)	-.06 (.38)
Soldiers	-.96** (.29)	-.80 (.30)	.42 (.47)	.12 (.30)
Police officers	-.73** (.36)	-.63* (.36)	-1.01** (.37)	-1.16** (.38)
African-Americans	.69* (.38)	.65* (.38)	-.48 (.36)	-.48 (.37)
Latinos	1.15** (.39)	1.20** (.39)	-.64* (.36)	-.64* (.38)
Partisanship		.00 (.04)		-.03 (.04)
Ideology		.03 (.08)		-.12 (.08)
Self-placement		.44** (.06)		.20** (.05)
African-American		.11 (.33)		-.39 (.32)
Latino		-.34 (.29)		.24 (.29)
Female		.23 (.16)		-.08 (.16)
Log Likelihood	-982.19	-942.80	-972.43	-961.89
N	547	547	547	547

Cell entries are ordered logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<.1, **p<.05

Figure 6.1: Mean placement of Kennedy on racial issues

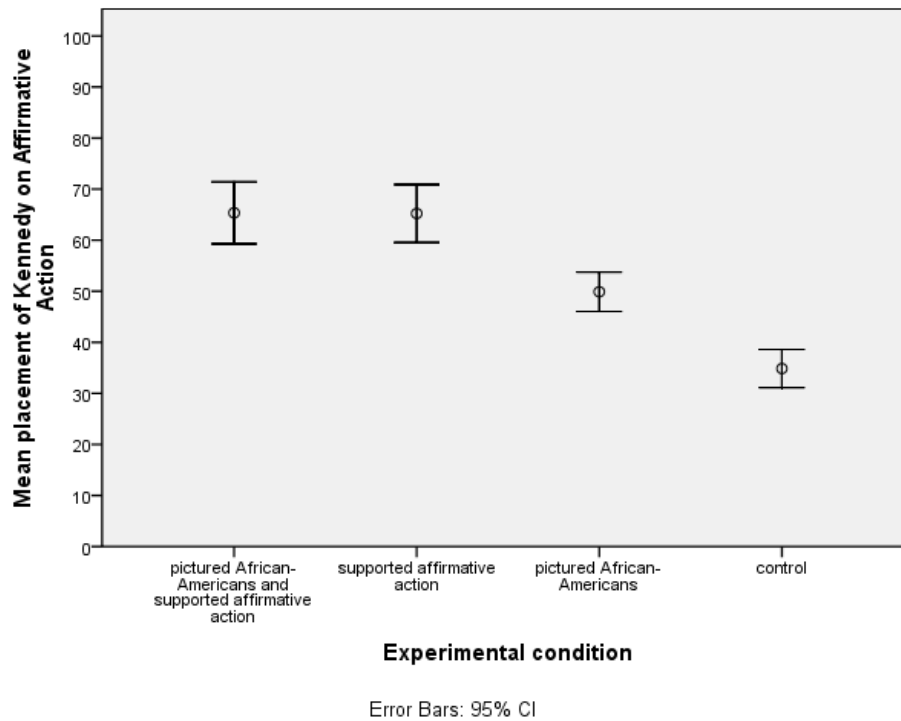
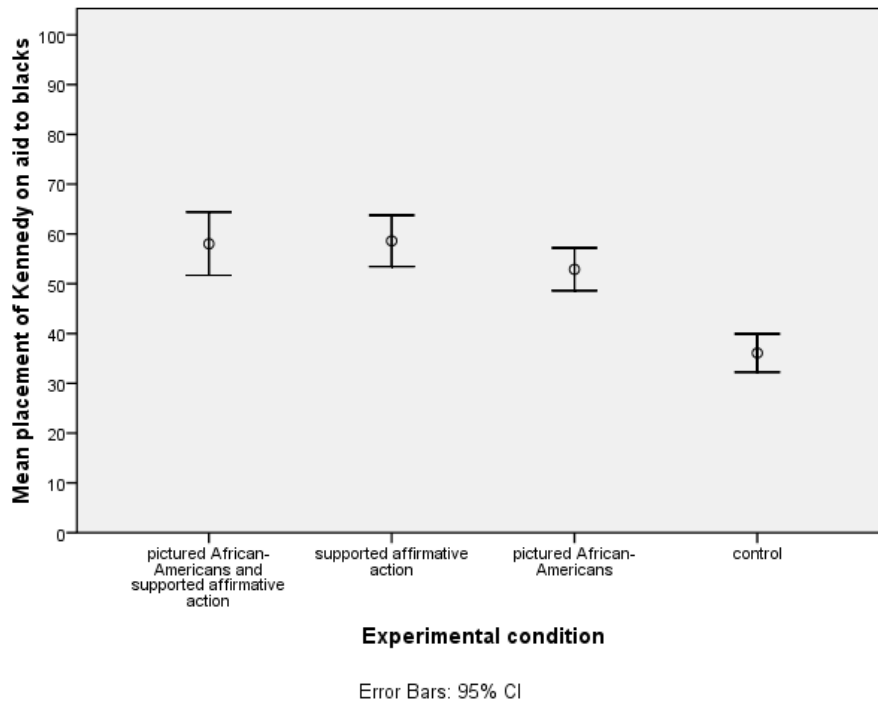


Figure 6.2: Mean placement of Kennedy on worker issues

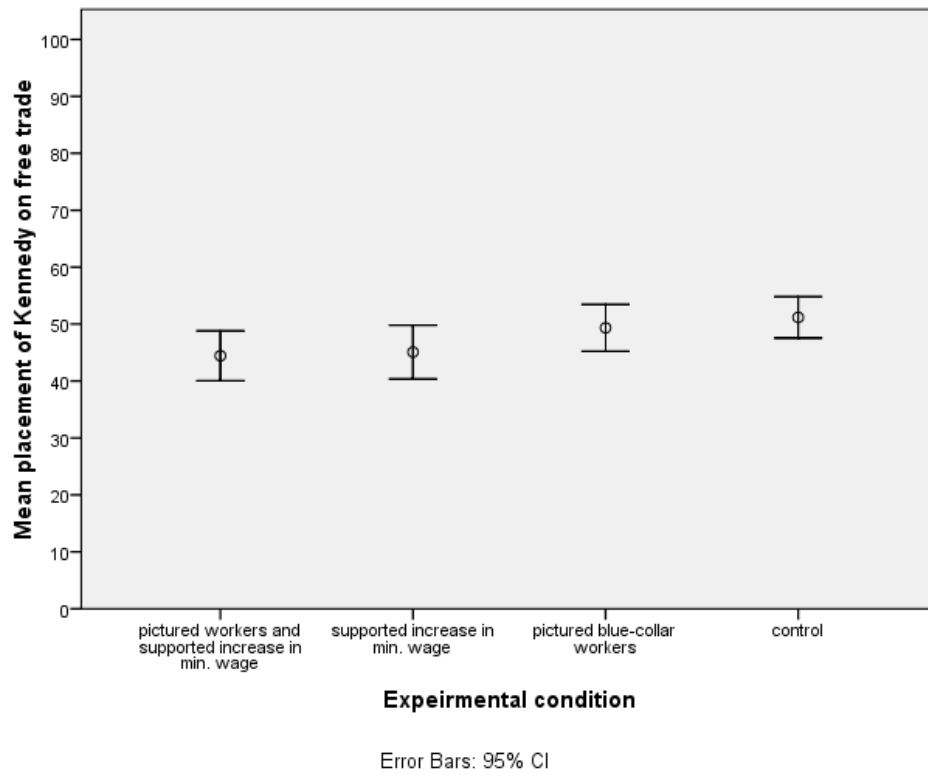
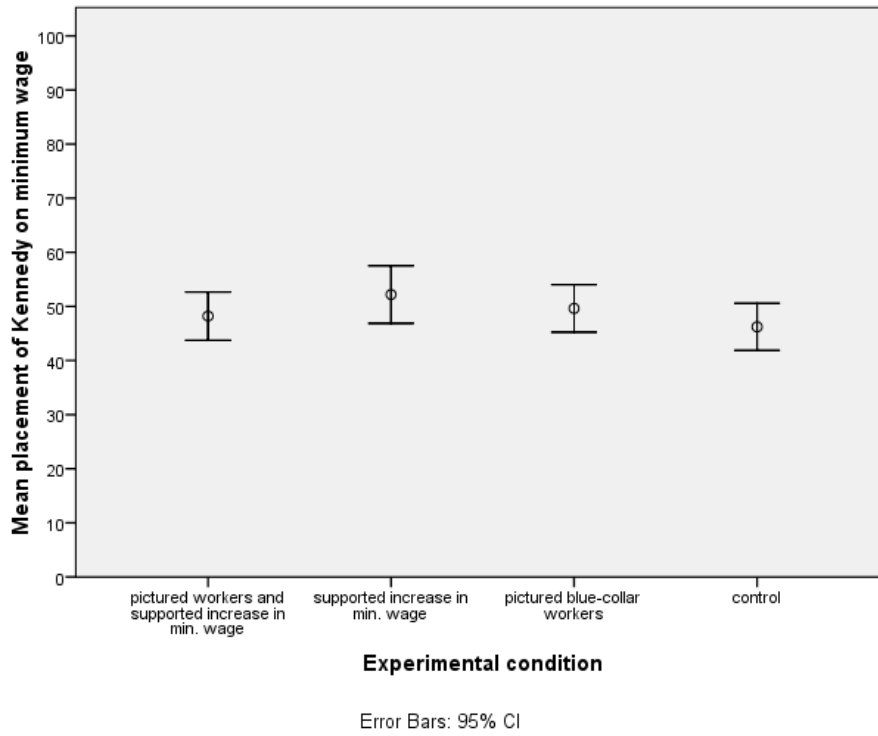


Figure 6.3: Mean placement of Kennedy on ideology

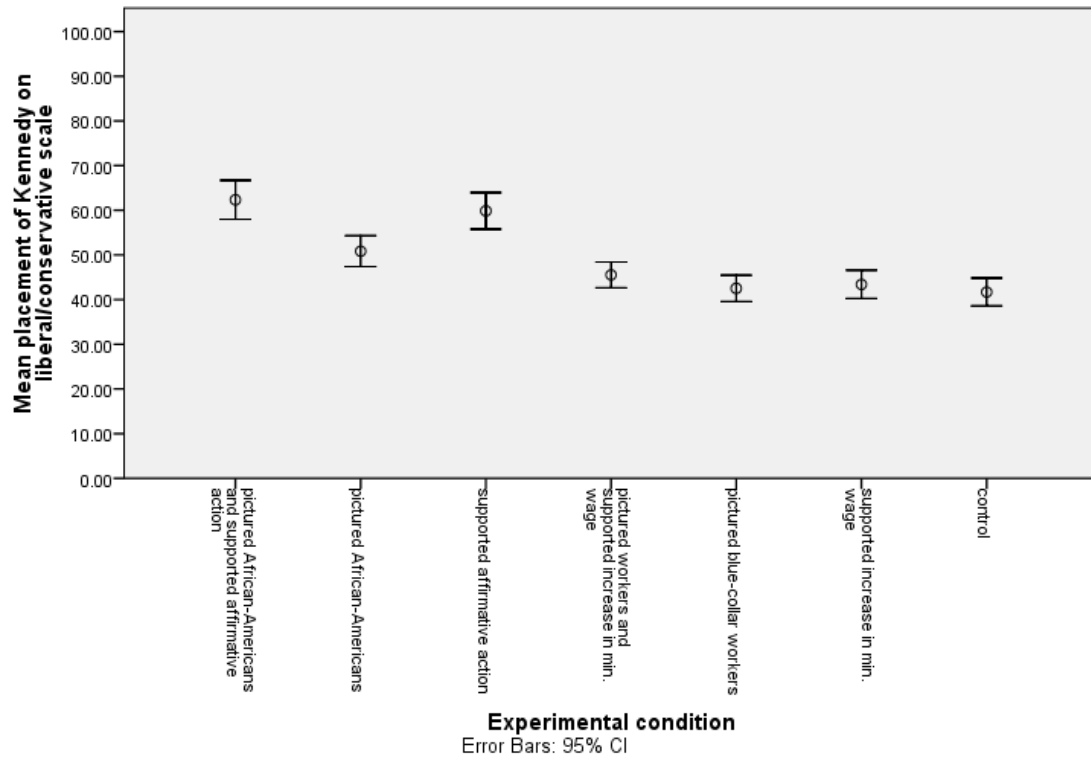


Figure 6.4: Perceptions of Kennedy, by partisanship

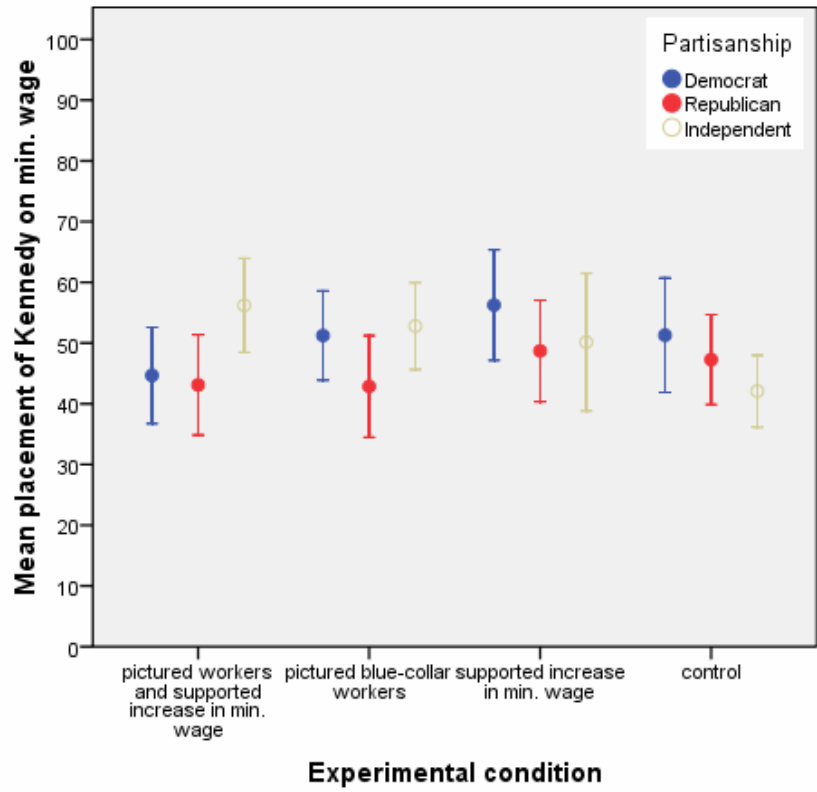
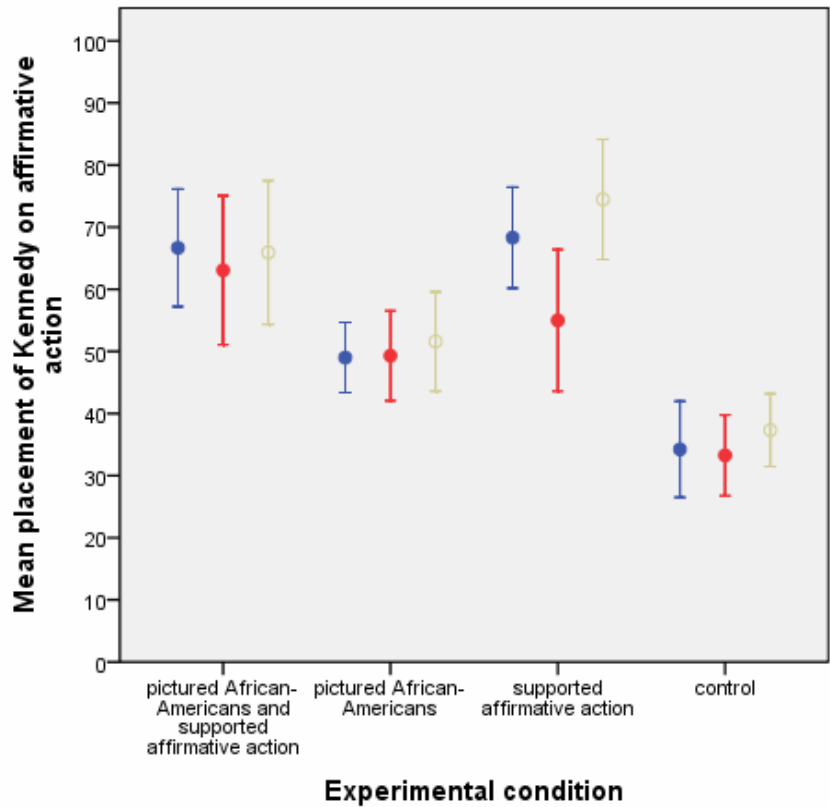


Figure 6.5: Perceptions of Kennedy among union and non-union respondents

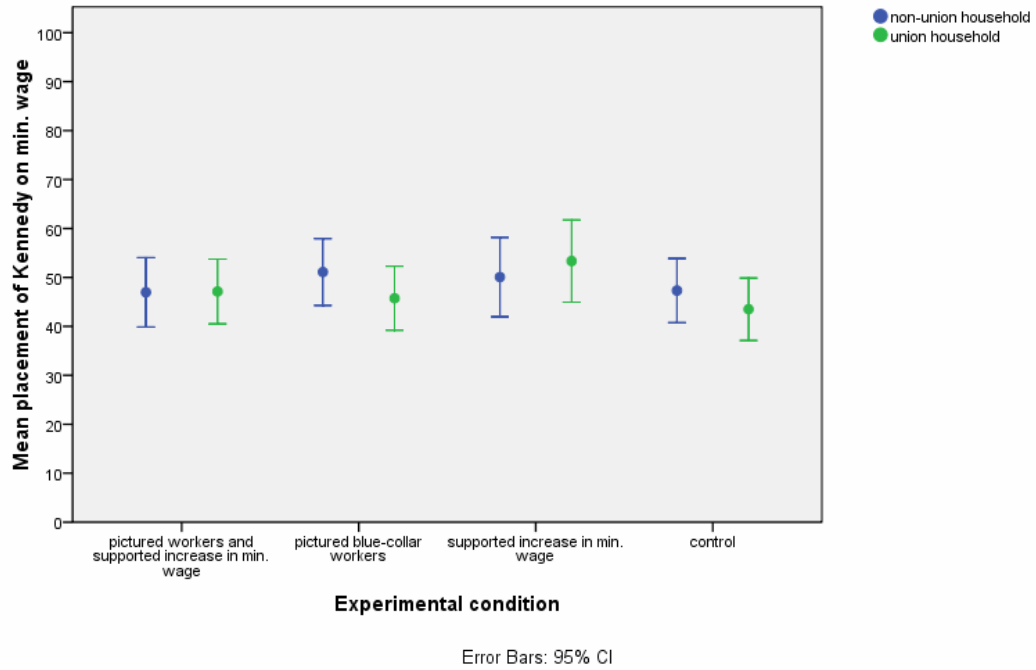


Figure 6.6: Feelings toward Kennedy-Republicans only

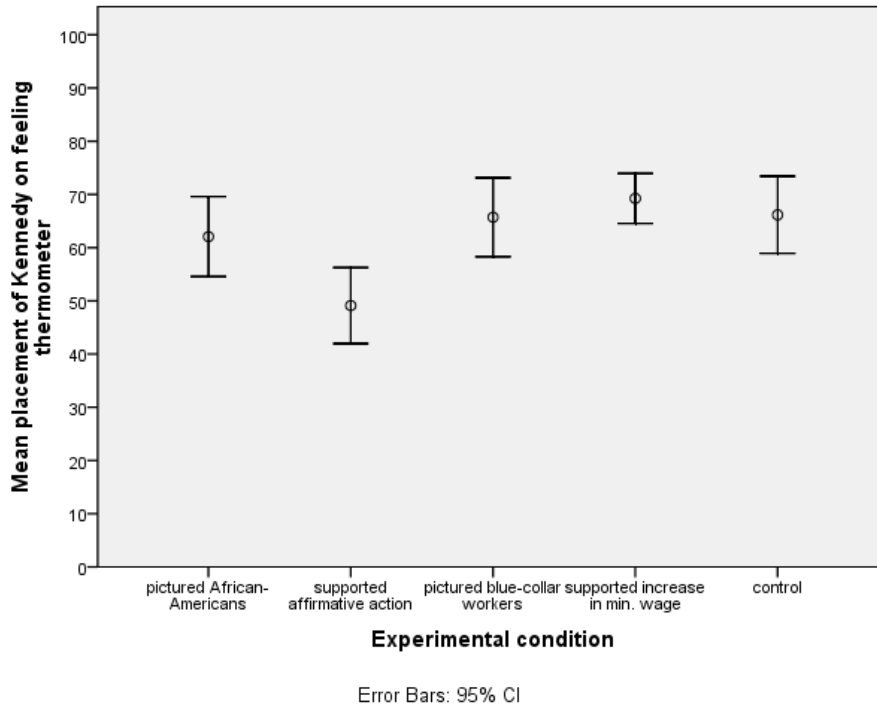
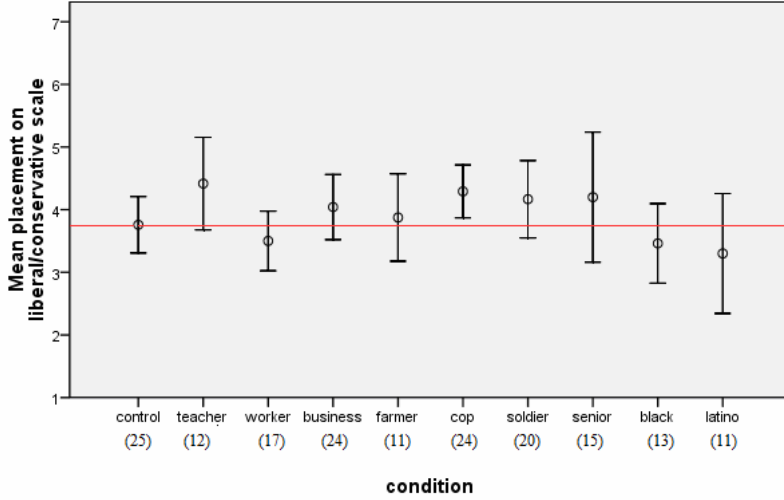
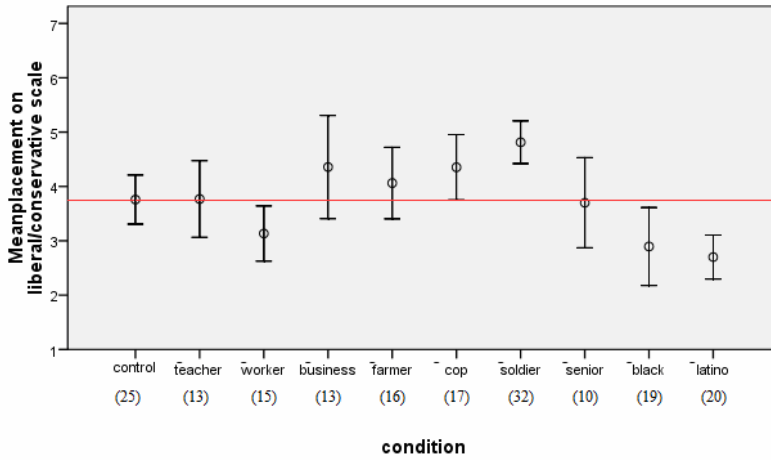


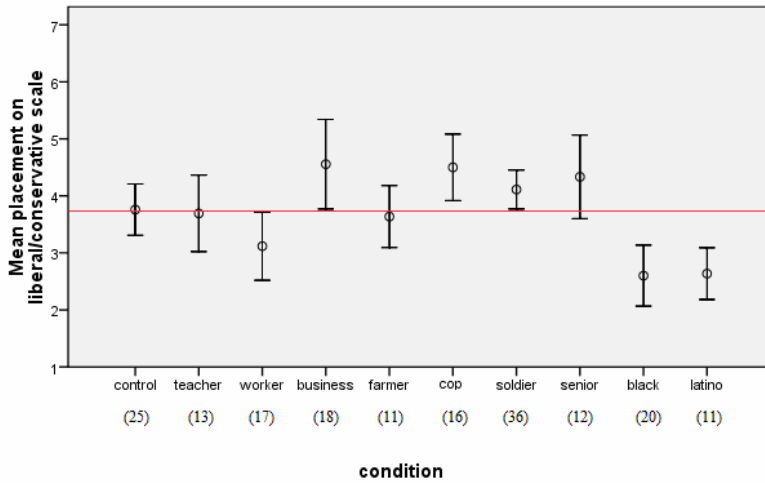
Figure 6.7: Placement on liberal/conservative scale
Image only



Verbal message only



Verbal and Visual Message



Each graph shows the mean placement, within condition, on a liberal/conservative scale with 95% confidence intervals shown (the number of subjects in each cell is indicated in parentheses). Higher values indicate a more conservative placement. The red line on each graph represents ideological placement in the control condition

Chapter 7: Seeing is Believing

7.1: Summary

In this chapter, I will summarize my main findings and discuss their implications for campaign research and campaign practices. The aim of this dissertation has been to show how voters use visual information in campaign ads to make inferences about candidates, and, ultimately, use those inferences to make judgments about the candidate. In Chapter 2 I used research in advertising and psychology to derive three hypotheses about the effects of campaign imagery: the Identity Hypothesis stated that responses should be affective and a function of the match between the identity of the viewer and the identity of the people pictured in the ad, the Group Support Hypothesis stated that viewers would use images of groups to make inferences about the candidate's issue positions, and the Ideology Hypothesis stated that viewers would use images to make inferences about a candidate's overall ideology.

I found strong evidence that campaign images are often treated as substantive information. I have shown that the groups pictured in campaign ads (children, senior citizens, farmers, teachers, soldiers, police officers, blue-collar workers, businesspeople, African-Americans, and Latinos) often affect voter perceptions of a candidate. While the approaches used in each chapter are subject to important limitation on their own, the analysis in each chapter supports the same basic conclusion. The multi-method approach in this dissertation ensures that the results of the analysis are not merely a by-product of one research design. Experimental and observational evidence consistently supported the Group Support and Ideology hypotheses. Voters can use visual information to make inferences about candidates, and the people pictured within a campaign ad can lead

individuals to make judgments about a candidate in the same way that they would use a candidate's verbal statements. In contrast, I found little evidence that individuals respond positively to self-congruent campaign imagery. While there was some indication that picturing a group may be more likely to affect members of that group, those individuals who reacted to the image did not do so according to their social identity. Instead, they liked or disliked the candidate based on how well the implicit message of the image aligned with their own political views. Overall it seems clear that voters draw a great deal of substantive information from campaign ad images, and the affective impact of picturing a group within a campaign ad on members of that group is vastly overrated.

Considering the prevalence (and expense) of audio/visual appeals in television advertising and, recently, in online campaign videos, it is imperative that we understand how both audio and visual stimuli affect individuals. My findings suggest that there is a strong informational undercurrent in political advertisements that campaign researchers have not addressed. There is a strong body of literature on the verbal information contained in campaign ads (Sulkin 2009; Geer 2006; Kaplan, Park, and Ridout 2006) and the effect of that verbal information on voters (Huckfeldt et al. 2007; Hutchings et al. 2004; Druckman, Jacobs, and Ostermeier 2004; Kam 2006; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Sides and Karch 2008; Valentino, Hutchings, and Williams 2004); however, until now there has been little discussion of the visual information in campaign ads. As a result, we have systematically mischaracterized the informational content of political campaigns, and many observational studies that only analyzed verbal appeals may need to be revisited. Though there may be a correlation between verbal and visual appeals within

some campaigns, these represent different information streams and both must be accounted for in order to understand how the campaign affects the voter.

7.2: How are images used in campaign ads?

While campaign research has been slow to pick up on the informational content of campaign imagery, campaign strategists have also been slow to realize its importance. In Chapter 3 I used surveys and qualitative data to get a sense of what campaigns try to accomplish with ad imagery. Images are treated as a high priority when designing campaign materials, and it is generally believed that the images in the ad may actually have more of an impact than its explicit verbal content. On the other hand, strategists' beliefs about the effects of images indicate that the Identity Hypothesis drives decision-making in political campaigns. The survey data and subsequent interviews with campaign consultants revealed that the people who make campaign ads often try to play on social identity cues to generate affective ties between the candidate and the voters. These findings fit with previous literature on campaign consultants (Perloff and Kinsey 1992; Kern 1989), and the perception that affect is most important persists even though professionals seem to believe that imagery also has a substantive component. Though many agreed that images transmit a signal about the candidate's issue positions or ideology, few believed that these signals mattered. In interviews, when I attempted to bring up the substantive component of ad images, many consultants redirected the conversation back to affect and emotion. When consultants talk about the impact of ad imagery they talk about it primarily in terms of how it makes voters feel. The prevailing

view seems to be that campaign imagery is best utilized as a way to show voters that the candidate is “one of them” by using images that remind voters of themselves.

Importantly, the considerations that drive image choices seem to be very different from those that drive the verbal content of the campaign ad. Campaign consultants, in both the survey and follow-up interviews, indicated that insincere verbal appeals have little chance of being effective in campaigns. Further, every consultant I spoke with believed that the candidate’s own sincere views and priorities would help decide the issues discussed and the general direction of the campaign. One campaign manager told me, “If a candidate doesn’t believe it’s difficult to get the message across. It’s hard to fake it. On any campaign a candidate cares about 3 or 4 issues. Those are the ones he fights for, those are the one he will not compromise on.” In contrast, most consultants believed that image choices could be more pliable and designed to meet the needs of the campaign regardless of the sincerity of the implicit message in the image.

It seems that visual and verbal messages are designed with very different goals in mind, so there was little agreement among consultants on whether or not visual messages should match the verbal content within a campaign ad. Some believed that the visual and verbal content should match in order to maximize the impact of the message or to make it easier for the voter to understand. Others argued that the ad should multi-task and use varying visual and verbal content to reach out to as many different constituents as possible. Notice, though, that both of these groups implied that campaign ad images do send a substantive message.

This disagreement on congruence can be seen in congressional campaigns. In Chapter 4, I presented findings from the 2000, 2002 and 2004 Congressional campaigns.

These data showed a strong association between the demographics of the district and the groups pictured in campaign ads, confirming the strategic role of images described in Chapter 3. Importantly, the data also showed the disconnect between visual and verbal appeals within campaigns. There was often a significant correlation between picturing a group and talking about issues related to that group, but this relationship was far from perfect. Campaign ads frequently picture groups like blue-collar workers, soldiers, or African-Americans without verbally addressing issues such as job training, military spending, or Affirmative Action. This lack of congruence between visual and verbal appeals is particularly important for observational campaign research since it demonstrates that researchers cannot simply assume that visual information is redundant. My analysis of these three election cycles indicates that the verbal and visual content of campaign ads often present viewers with different information.

7.3: How does ad imagery affect voters?

Furthermore, that visual information affects how voters judge candidates and how they vote on Election Day. Chapter 4 shows that candidates rely on district demographics to make image choices, but it also shows that, in the aggregate, this may be an inefficient use of campaign imagery. My analysis of election returns and congressional campaigns show that the utility of picturing groups in campaign ads varied according to how well the group matched the ideological make-up of the district. Picturing liberal groups had a positive effect on candidates' fortunes in liberal districts and a negative effect in conservative districts, and vice versa for picturing conservative groups.

This aggregate data is backed up by the results of individual-level analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5 I used data from the 2000 congressional campaigns and the National Annenberg Election Study to show that individual feelings about candidates varied as a function of the groups pictured in the campaign and the individual's own predispositions. Individuals who supported benefits for a group, or whose partisanship coincided with the ideological reputation of the group, felt more favorable toward a candidate who pictured that group. Those who were opposed to the group and its ideology reacted negatively to the group. The difference in feelings indicated that respondents were using visual messages to make substantive inferences about the candidate. This evidence was confirmed with a direct test in the experiments discussed in Chapter 6. Subjects who viewed an ad picturing a group believed the candidate to be more supportive of that group, and more liberal or conservative, depending on the ideological reputation of the group.

Like the aggregate analysis, the results from Chapters 5 and 6 provide strong evidence that a campaign strategy based solely on the Identity Hypothesis is a tactical mistake. The observational analysis in Chapter 5 provided some evidence that individuals were more likely to respond to a self-congruent image, but those responses were conditioned by the respondent's political predispositions. Senior citizens, for example, had stronger reactions to images of seniors than respondents below age 65; however, liberal seniors liked candidates less when they pictured senior citizens in their ads. Similarly, seniors opposed to increased Medicare and Social Security benefits reacted negatively to candidates who pictured seniors, while those who favored such policies reacted positively to candidates who pictured seniors. Respondents who were not a

member of the group pictured tended to respond favorably or not at all to a group image. If the group pictured had an ideological reputation consistent with the respondent's political views, he or she might like the candidate more, but there was little evidence that the respondent would punish a candidate for picturing a group he or she did not like.

While individual political predispositions dictated voters' feelings about candidates, they did not prevent voters from making similar inferences about a candidate's ideology and issue positions. In Chapter 6 I showed that image-based inferences do not vary across different groups. In an experimental setting, subjects made the same inferences about the candidate based on the images in the ad regardless of whether or not they were members of the group being pictured. This would seem to indicate that candidates' ads can have a strong impact on how they are viewed by the voters. Republicans, Democrats, African-Americans, whites, and so on all received the same message from campaign imagery.

While all individuals drew the same inferences from campaign imagery, there were substantial differences in how they felt about the candidate. For example, in the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project experiment, union members were more likely to have positive feelings about a candidate who showed blue-collar workers if they were Democrats and favored government benefits for workers. On the other hand, white subjects actually had strong positive reactions to images of African-Americans (provided they were Democrats in favor of government aid to blacks), but there was little change in the feelings of African-American subjects toward the candidate regardless of the images in the campaign ad. In this experiment, there was never a significant negative reaction to the candidate among respondents opposed to benefits for workers or blacks.

This absence of a backlash, which was mirrored among many respondents in the NAES, is somewhat puzzling. All individuals got the same information from campaign images, so why didn't subjects opposed to benefits for the group pictured react negatively? Here I can only speculate. It is possible that individuals who favor a group benefit may also feel more strongly about the issue than those who oppose it, and, therefore, are more likely to alter their overall feelings about a candidate based on their beliefs about where the candidate stands on that issue. It is also possible that individuals are willing to give candidates the benefit of the doubt. Picturing a group is an implied message of support for the group, but not one explicitly stated, and opponents of group benefits may be reluctant to punish candidates for an inference made based on visuals.

The experimental and observational results indicate that campaign imagery can be a powerful tool for influencing voters. By providing cues about candidate policy positions, it alters the perceived issue positions and ideology of candidates and can change the way voters feel about the candidates in a way that offers enormous benefits to candidates with few costs. The observational evidence indicates that picturing a group may lead to negative feelings among members of the group who oppose benefits or who stand in opposition to the group's reputed ideology. If that is true, then a candidate who makes an image appeal may receive some negative reaction from a small subset of the electorate, but this would likely be offset by positive reactions from voters both within the group and in the electorate as a whole who support the group being pictured. At the very least, it seems unlikely that the image appeal would harm the candidate, and it may work to his or her benefit. Campaign images may be especially useful for candidates who need to broaden their appeal while avoiding a backlash among their key supporters. In the

CCAP experiment, a Republican candidate received much higher ratings from white Democrats in favor of Affirmative Action when he pictured African-Americans in his ads without suffering any negative effects among Republican subjects.

Campaign strategists are incorrect to focus solely on social identity factors when they choose campaign images, but they may have an accurate view of the flexibility and utility of campaign images. It would seem difficult to question the sincerity of a candidate's image choices. That is, it is difficult to imagine a scenario where a candidate would be called disingenuous because he or she pictured Latinos, for example, but failed to act to benefit Latinos in office. If imagery can be used to shape voter perceptions with little negative impact, then it would be an important campaign tool with low cost, low risk, and high reward. Given that campaigns generally prefer to picture people in their ads anyway (see Chapter 3), it would not be difficult to retool, shift away from an identity-based approach to campaign imagery, and choose people based on how well they match up with the issue beliefs and partisanship of the constituency.

7.4: Accounting for visual information

While campaign strategists may need to rethink their approach to using campaign imagery, political scientists may also need to change their approach to studying campaigns. If campaign images are providing information to voters, then we must account for that information signal when trying to determine campaign effects. To some extent, the findings from this dissertation are very intuitive. It is not surprising that viewers would be able to see an image of African-Americans and associate that image with an issue position, and because many of the findings in this study are intuitive, it may

be easy to dismiss their importance. Although there has been other research on racial images (Philpot 2004), this is the first study to confirm the idea that viewers use images of different social identity groups to make inferences about candidates. These findings indicate that all research on campaign effects should take verbal and visual appeals into account. Failure to do so results in a research design where the researcher has not properly identified the total content of the campaign.

For example, in their study on mobilizing issue publics, Sides and Karch (2007) studied the effect of campaign appeals on voter turnout among issue publics in 1998, 2000, and 2002 by matching campaign data from the Wisconsin Ads Project with survey data from the Current Population Survey. They studied how appeals on education and childcare, Social Security and Medicare, and veterans' issues affected turnout rates among parents, senior citizens, and military veterans, respectively. They hypothesized that these groups should be more likely to turn out to vote if they viewed campaign ads that talked about issues important to them, and found little evidence that these issues motivated these groups to go to the polls. They report a modest turnout effect among parents and null results for seniors and veterans.

Naturally, the Sides and Karch study focused only on what candidates talked about in their ads, neglecting any visual information that may have been present. The present study focuses on how images change attitudes about candidates, rather than whether or not images might motivate participation; however, it seems many of my findings on campaign imagery could apply here. Sides and Karch hypothesize that issue publics should participate when campaigns make issues important to them salient. Essentially, by giving people information, the campaign sends a signal that the election

will be of particular importance to a group. The evidence presented here shows that images of groups (like children and senior citizens) are also signals about candidate positions. Since voters treat campaign images as information, they may also be encouraged to participate (or not) based on whether or not that visual information is present in the campaign. What if visual messages (or some combination of visual and verbal cues) actually motivate issue publics to vote? Children and seniors are often pictured in campaign ads (see Chapter 4), and it is not hard to imagine voters using visual as well as verbal cues when deciding to turn out to vote.

The example of senior citizens is particularly illustrative. In 2002, according to my coding of Senate and House campaigns, candidates aired 659 distinct ads that either pictured a senior citizen or mentioned Medicare or Social Security. Of those ads, 320 simply pictured a senior without ever mentioning the issues, 139 mentioned an issue without ever picturing seniors, and 200 did both. Recall from Chapter 5 that seniors varied in their feelings toward candidates based on whether or not the candidate pictured seniors and their own political predispositions. On the other hand, the amount of time candidates spend talking about Medicare and Social Security seemed to have no impact on feelings about congressional candidates. This does not necessarily imply that visual appeals increase turnout, but it does demonstrate that visual appeals have an effect on voter judgments and provide the kind of information that Sides and Karch suggest should increase turnout. They reported that campaigns featuring increased discussion of Social Security had no impact on turnout among senior citizens; however, it seems entirely plausible that campaign ads that picture seniors increase issue salience. At the least, it seems like an empirical question worthy of study.

I use this example not to scold particular scholars but to point to a larger gap in the existing study of political campaigns. Political scientists study a large number of campaign effects (persuasion, mobilization, learning, etc.) that require measures of the information present in the campaign and how voters receive and interpret that information. By and large, though, the discipline has only focused on verbal information and ignored visual information. In doing so, observational studies of campaign appeals have been using incomplete measures of the campaign. As I showed in Chapter 4, verbal and visual content in campaign ads may be correlated, but the two are hardly synonymous. One measure cannot be substituted or serve as a proxy for the other. Political scientists have generally accounted for verbal information, but my findings make it clear that voters derive both verbal and visual information from campaign ads.

7.5: Puzzles and future research

In this dissertation, I have attempted to highlight the importance of visual information and its role in shaping voter perceptions. The findings presented here are important, but they should hardly be considered the last word on campaign images. This dissertation provides some answers about the role of visual information in political campaigns but also raises important questions about campaign strategy and campaign effects.

For example, in my discussions with campaign consultants and in the data on congressional campaigns, it became clear that campaign ad images are chosen based on how well those images match the identity of the voters. This brings up an interesting puzzle: Campaign ad images are chosen simply for their ability to generate affective

bonds between candidates and voters. Campaign managers believe that images are a tactical tool and not subject to constraints like a candidate's record or issue positions. In short, there is no reason to believe that campaign images would serve as a valid signal about behavior in office. Yet, there is a strong correlation between picturing a group and supporting it in office (Sulkin and Swigger 2008).

It is entirely reasonable to believe that candidates might face penalties with disappointed voters for failing to live up to the verbal promises they made in campaign ads—indeed, the evidence suggests that candidates work to live up to their verbal appeals (Sulkin 2009)—but one of the main advantages of visual appeals is that, seemingly, there would be no incentive to follow-up on the campaign appeal. Campaign consultants were quite open about their perception of campaign imagery as flexible, and they felt no need to worry about congruence between the image appeal and either past or future behavior in office. Why, then, does empirical evidence suggest there is a connection between campaign imagery and behavior in office? The correlation may be spurious. Candidates who base their image strategy on the Identity Hypothesis presumably choose to picture certain groups because those groups have a large presence in the district, and the candidate then acts on behalf of the group when in office in order to maintain a policy record congruent with the beliefs of an important constituency. Alternatively, candidates may use campaign images to send a signal to voters who may be resistant to verbal appeals (Rahn 1993) or are uninformed about a candidate's actual issue positions. Given that voters actually use images as a signal about candidate positions, it seems vital to understand the normative quality of visual information in campaigns and the possible reasons why images may serve as an effective signal about legislative behavior.

Questions about campaign strategy and the interaction of campaigns and policy behavior aside, there are also unanswered questions surrounding the effect of campaign images on voters. In this dissertation I have dealt with only one type of campaign imagery: the people pictured in the campaign ad. Other factors, such as setting or symbols of religion and patriotism, may also contribute important signals that voters may use to judge candidates. Typically, these symbols are talked about in terms of the emotions generated (Brader 2006), but they may also contribute to the substantive evaluation of a candidate. I have also focused on how image appeals affect perceptions of a white, male candidate. Females and minorities present a different image, and voters make different inferences based on the appearance of the candidate (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Todorov et al. 2004). In this study, I kept the appearance of the candidate constant in order to establish the effects of other images within the ad. In principle, the effects of those images should remain constant even as the appearance of the candidate changes. It is possible that there may be some interactions if the social identity of the candidate coincides with the images shown (e.g., an African-American candidate picturing African-Americans), but it is equally feasible that the effect of the images would stay constant and only the baseline impact of the candidate's appearance would vary.

More importantly, my dissertation has not really touched on the interaction between emotional reactions and substantive inferences. Past research on political imagery has found that ads can elicit emotional reactions (Brader 2006; Brader 2005; Huddy and Gunthorsdottir 2000). In this study, I have looked at how viewers use images to make a judgment about the candidate. To some degree, ads probably elicit emotional

responses and transmit substantive signals simultaneously. Not all ads may provoke strong emotional responses; by the same token, not all ads provide a great deal of visual information. Undoubtedly, though, there are instances where an ad provokes a strong emotional reaction and provides substantive visual cues, and it is not clear how a viewer would be affected by the combination of those appeals. For example, Brader (2006) found that fear-based appeals provoked anxiety in viewers. Because of that anxiety, viewers paid more attention and remembered more from a subsequent news segment. What would happen if an ad provoked anxiety and provided a visual policy cue? It is not clear if the anxiety response would make voters more likely to pay attention and pick up the policy cue, or if the emotional content of the ad would make it less likely that viewers would detect the visual cue, assuming that the emotional appeal and policy cue would interact at all.

Ultimately, if we intend to understand how campaign ads affect voters we need to move toward a synthesis of all of the components of the ads. Campaigns are about information. What did the candidate say and what did the voters hear? What did the candidate show and what did the voters see? How did what the candidate said and showed make the voters feel? Because political scientists have not taken visual and verbal information into account, it is difficult to say whether American campaigns manipulate helpless voters, or if a savvy public resists the influence of political charlatans. If we want to understand the effects and normative quality of campaigns, then it is imperative that we account for verbal and visual information and how voters make sense of that information and use it to make decisions. By examining the visual appeals, I have shown that candidates can have a strong influence on voter perceptions, and further

investigation could reveal that voters and candidates have been communicating in ways that a narrow focus on verbal appeals overlooks. The pictures may not tell the whole story, but they are certainly part of it. Like the viewers who drew inferences from these ads, political scientists can learn a great deal by being watchful and keeping our eyes open.

Appendix A: Online Survey of Political Consultants

[Introduction and instruction page]

The survey involves answering some general demographics questions and some questions about your attitudes toward campaign advertisements. I am particularly interested in your opinion of the use and impact of the verbal and visual elements of a television ad. The survey takes about 5 minutes to complete and must be done in one sitting. If you wish to skip a question, you may leave it blank and continue with the survey. If, at any point prior to the end of the survey, you wish to end your participation, simply close your Internet browser. This is a research project being conducted by Nathaniel Swigger under the direction of Dr. Kuklinski at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. The results of this survey will be disseminated in Mr. Swigger's doctoral dissertation.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and your responses will be completely anonymous. The ID code you were given in the introductory email is the only identifying information collected, and this code is known only to you and the project administrator. The data I collect will be analyzed at the group level only. You do not have to answer any question you'd rather not answer. There are no consequences if you decide not to complete the survey. The decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your status at, or future relations with the University of Illinois. There are no tangible risks in taking the survey beyond those incurred with normal use of a computer, and your opinions will be invaluable to me as I try to understand the dynamics of campaign advertising.

If you have any questions about the study you may contact Nathaniel Swigger at the University of Illinois department of political science either by phone (217-766-2270) or email (swigger@uiuc.edu).

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 (collect calls accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant) or via email at irb@uiuc.edu.

If you would like to make a copy of this page for your records you may do so using the print function on your browser prior to beginning the survey.

1. In the past, what type of campaigns have you worked on? (check all that apply)
 1. Presidential
 2. U.S. Senate
 3. U.S. House of Representatives
 4. Governor
 5. State legislature
 6. Other statewide offices (Attorney General, Treasurer, etc.)
 7. Local offices (Mayor, City Council member, etc.)
 8. Ballot initiatives and voter referendums

2. Many campaign professionals only work with one particular party. Which (if any) party's candidates do you tend to work with?
 1. Democrat
 2. Republican
 3. Green
 4. Reform
 5. Some other political party
 6. Non-partisan only
 7. I work with candidates from any party

3. How long have you worked as a professional on political on political campaigns
 1. Less than a year
 2. 1-4 years
 3. 5-10
 4. 10-20
 5. More than 20 years

4. How influential do you think television ads are in shaping voter perceptions of a candidate?
 1. Very influential
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 7. Not at all influential

5. How influential do you think the issues discussed in a TV ad are in shaping voter perceptions of a candidate?
 1. Very important
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 7. Not at all important

6. How influential do you think the visuals shown in a TV ad are in shaping voter perceptions of a candidate?

1. Very important
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. Not at all important

7. How much time and attention do you think a campaign should devote to scripting the verbal content of a TV ad?

1. A great deal of time and attention
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. None at all

8. How much time and attention do you think a campaign should devote to selecting or designing the visual look of a TV ad?

1. A great deal of time and attention
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. None at all

9. In general, do you think it is better for a candidate to appear alone in an ad, or do you prefer to have the candidate appear alongside other people?

1. Prefer candidate alone
2. Prefer candidate with other people
3. No preference

10. Is it more effective to have an ad with “average” Americans or an ad with well-known public figures and celebrities?

1. Ordinary Americans
2. Celebrities and public figures
3. No preference

11. Are ads usually targeted at a specific demographic group or population, or do campaign ads usually try to appeal to the electorate as a whole?

1. Usually target specific group

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. Usually appeal to constituency as a whole

12. How important is it that a television ad feature images of people from different racial backgrounds?

1. Very important
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. Not at all important

13. How would you describe the production capabilities of the typical campaign? Is the campaign fully capable of producing the ads you want, or do you face a lot of practical limitations?

1. Full capabilities
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. Very limited production capability.

Based on your experience and knowledge as a campaign professional, please mark whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the following statements:

14. Voters pay more attention to what is said in a campaign ad than they do to the visuals in an ad.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

15. Voters respond more to ads with people who “look like” themselves.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

16. When targeting a specific group, a campaign ad should talk about issues important to that group.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

17. When targeting a specific group, a campaign ad should include images of the people in that that group.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

18. Candidates, in general, believe the things they say in their campaign ads.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

19. Candidates, in general, use the images in their ads to paint an accurate picture of themselves.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

20. Campaign ad images send voters a signal about the candidate's ideology.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

21. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
4. Other

5. No preference

22. What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you? Please mark up to three of the following choices.

1. African American/Black
2. Asian
3. Native American
4. Hispanic or Latino
5. Caucasian/White
6. Other
7. Don't know

23. Finally, would you be willing to sit down for a follow-up interview at a later date? If so, we may contact you to set up an appointment to discuss your experiences as a campaign professional. This could be done at your office or some other location, and at a time that would be convenient for you.

1. Yes, I would be willing to conduct a follow-up interview
2. No, I would not be willing to conduct a follow-up interview

Appendix B: Complete Tables from Aggregate Data Analysis

Table B.1: Image choices in Congressional elections (continued on next page)

	Children		Seniors		Latinos		Blacks	
	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
% of district in demographic group	2.32** (1.18)	-.77 (.94)	1.10* (.62)	.72* (.44)	.96** (.21)	.21** (.08)	1.14** (.20)	.66** (.17)
District ideology	.44** (.21)	-.44** (.25)	.11 (.24)	-.18 (.27)	.24* (.13)	.10 (.08)	.33 (.22)	.02 (.18)
% of ads mentioning issue	.31** (.08)	.43** (.09)	.41** (.08)	.28** (.10)	.50** (.18)	-.01 (.04)	-.07 (.10)	-.13** (.05)
Incumbency	.10** (.04)	.03 (.04)	.11** (.04)	.10** (.04)	.02 (.02)	.03** (.01)	.06* (.03)	.04 (.03)
Female	.13** (.06)	-.05 (.05)	.01 (.06)	.06 (.05)	-.03 (.02)	-.00 (.01)	.07 (.04)	.04 (.04)
2002	-.03 (.05)	-.04 (.05)	.05 (.05)	.09* (.05)	.03 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.04 (.04)	.02 (.03)
2004	-.17** (.05)	-.14** (.05)	.02 (.05)	-.03 (.05)	.04* (.02)	-.00 (.02)	-.05 (.04)	.02 (.03)
Constant	-.45 (.26)	.66 (.24)	.04 (.15)	.26 (.16)	-.16 (.07)	-.06 (.03)	-.10 (.11)	-.01 (.09)
R ²	.20	.14	.16	.09	.37	.06	.22	.09
N	235	285	235	285	235	286	235	286

*Note: Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable in each of the models is the percentage of ads where the candidate pictured the group. Independent variables include the percentage of the group within the candidate's constituency, the percentage of their ad runs that discussed related issues (listed below), the ideology of the district and candidate, and demographic characteristics of the legislator (also listed below). The analyses are limited to candidates who pictured at least one ordinary person in their ads. ** = p < .05; * = p < .10*
Issue: For the seniors model, Medicare; for the children and teacher models, education; for the black and Latino models, civil rights; for the blue collar workers model, jobs; for the businesspeople model, business and regulation; for the military model, national defense; for the police model, crime; and for the farmers model, agriculture.

Table B.1: Image choices in Congressional elections (continued from previous page)

	Farmers		Teachers		Police		Workers		Businesspeople		Soldiers	
	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
% of district in demographic group	.09* (.05)	.11** (.04)	-.05 (.36)	.06 (.28)	.05* (.02)	-.03 (.03)	.13 (.37)	.28 (.25)	-.05* (.03)	-.14* (.08)	.14 (.75)	.26 (.44)
District ideology	-.09 (.06)	.01 (.12)	-.25 (.11)	-.11 (.12)	.02 (.12)	-.08 (.06)	.54** (.19)	-.32** (.16)	-.01 (.03)	.06 (.07)	-.03 (.14)	-.03 (.09)
% of ads mentioning issue	.17 (.13)	.26* (.14)	.11 (.05)	.05* (.03)	.15** (.06)	.21* (.12)	.22** (.10)	.17 (.07)	.02 (.01)	.10* (.06)	.18** (.08)	.19** (.07)
Incumbency	-.00 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.04** (.02)	.03* (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.01 (.01)	.03 (.03)	.03 (.02)	.01 (.01)	.03** (.01)	.04* (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Female	-.01 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	-.03* (.01)	-.03* (.01)	-.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	-.02 (.03)	.03 (.04)	.02 (.02)	-.02** (.01)	-.03* (.02)	-.02 (.02)
2002	-.00 (.02)	-.03 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.08* (.04)	.03 (.04)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	-.00 (.03)	.01 (.01)
2004	.00 (.02)	.01 (.03)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.10* (.06)	-.03 (.03)	-.00 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.03 (.03)	-.00 (.02)
Constant	.05 (.04)	.01 (.06)	.13 (.10)	.06 (.09)	-.04 (.06)	.07 (.04)	-.26 (.11)	.14 (.10)	.01 (.02)	-.01 (.04)	.01 (.08)	.01 (.07)
R ²	.06	.09	.12	.03	.09	.09	.16	.08	.04	.08	.13	.14
N	235	286	235	286	235	286	235	285	235	286	235	285

*Note: Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable in each of the models is the percentage of ads where the candidate pictured the group. Independent variables include the percentage of the group within the candidate's constituency, the percentage of their ad runs that discussed related issues (listed below), the ideology of the district and candidate, and demographic characteristics of the legislator (also listed below). The analyses are limited to candidates who pictured at least one ordinary person in their ads. ** = p < .05; * = p < .10*
Issue: For the seniors model, Medicare; for the children and teacher models, education; for the black and Latino models, civil rights; for the blue collar workers model, jobs; for the businesspeople model, business and regulation; for the military model, national defense; for the police model, crime; and for the farmers model, agriculture.

Table B.2: Modeling deviation from normal vote (continued on next page)

	Children	Seniors	Latinos	Blacks
Dem candidate				
% of ads with group image	-.19 (1.37)	.36 (.55)	.62 (1.90)	-.21 (.35)
Image × group in district	1.62 (6.45)	-1.14 (4.22)	-25.06** (12.01)	1.43 (2.19)
Image × district ideology	.83 (2.75)	-.46 (1.25)	-.72 (3.45)	.60 (.75)
Image × group × ideology	-5.07 (13.14)	-.46 (9.71)	52.09** (23.40)	-3.25 (4.77)
% of ads mentioning issue	-.11 (.36)	.11** (.03)	.82** (.19)	.54** (.24)
Verbal × group in district	.74 (1.72)	-.03 (.04)	-6.47** (1.70)	-1.06 (2.04)
GOP candidate				
% of ads with group image	.24 (1.70)	-.41 (.37)	-5.12 (4.53)	.11 (.35)
Image × group in district	-1.38 (8.19)	3.63 (2.79)	80.08** (32.43)	-1.41 (2.98)
Image × district ideology	-.67 (3.74)	.47 (.76)	7.92 (8.51)	-.24 (.89)
Image × group × ideology	3.84 (18.02)	-5.35 (5.77)	-170.04** (64.58)	2.63 (6.74)
% of ads mentioning issue	-.03 (.34)	.04 (.05)	-.62* (.34)	.22 (.81)
Verbal × group in district	.09 (1.54)	-.13 (.09)	16.13 (4.28)	-10.84 (13.24)
% of district in demographic group	-3.56 (3.44)	-.83 (1.81)	-1.26** (.42)	.23 (.53)
District ideology	-1.03 (1.65)	.20 (.55)	-.03 (.10)	.11 (.14)
Group in district × district ideology	5.90 (8.06)	1.81 (4.41)	3.50 (3.45)	-.19 (1.14)
Democratic female candidate	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Republican female candidate	-.04* (.02)	-.05** (.02)	-.04** (.02)	-.03* (.02)
Number of Democratic ads (LN)	.01* (.00)	.02** (.01)	.01** (.00)	.02** (.01)
Number of Republican ads (LN)	-.02** (.01)	-.02** (.01)	-.02** (.01)	-.03** (.01)
Midterm election	-.10** (.02)	-.08** (.02)	-.09** (.01)	-10** (.01)
Constant	.60 (.70)	-.15 (.24)	-.01 (.06)	-.10 (.07)
R ²	.35	.42	.44	.36
N	164	164	164	164

Note: Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable in each of the models is the deviation from the normal Democratic share of the 2-party vote. The analyses are limited to candidates who pictured at least one ordinary person in their ads.

*** = p < .05; * = p < .10*

Issue: For the seniors model, Medicare; for the children and teacher models, education; for the black and Latino models, civil rights; for the blue collar workers model, jobs; for the businesspeople model, business and regulation; for the military model, national defense; for the police model, crime; and for the farmers model, agriculture.

Table B.2: Modeling deviation from normal vote (continued from previous page)

	Farmers	Teachers	Police	Workers	Businesspeople	Soldiers
Dem candidate						
% of ads with group image	-2.34 (1.47)	.23 (6.10)	.42 (.98)	.87** (.31)	4.51** (.90)	.32 (.35)
Image × group in district	5.46 (3.35)	2.25 (28.57)	-2.55 (2.39)	-3.36** (1.11)	19.48** (3.89)	.03 (.53)
Image × district ideology	5.63* (3.01)	2.26 (11.76)	-.96 (2.19)	-2.18** (.67)	10.61** (2.12)	-1.50 (1.00)
Image × group × ideology	-13.51* (7.57)	-17.16 (55.10)	6.21 (5.78)	8.34** (2.54)	-45.81** (9.16)	4.90 (4.26)
% of ads mentioning issue	-.10 (.13)	.02 (.32)	.07 (.05)	-.08 (.09)	-.04 (.11)	.21 (.22)
Verbal × group in district	.24 (.47)	.10 (1.55)	-.22 (.12)	-.02 (.38)	-.19 (.40)	-1.52 (1.58)
GOP candidate						
% of ads with group image	.77 (1.54)	-.41** (.10)	1.45 (1.07)	.75** (.26)	-.76 (1.85)	.06 (.26)
Image × group in district	-1.91 (3.88)	2.05** (.48)	-4.52* (2.63)	-3.33** (.85)	.76 (6.35)	-.13 (.39)
Image × district ideology	-2.28 (3.77)	.87** (.21)	-4.31 (2.74)	-2.79** (.77)	.66 (3.65)	-1.78 (1.29)
Image × group × ideology	5.64 (9.77)	-4.24** (1.01)	12.72* (7.01)	11.80** (2.71)	1.66 (13.59)	12.73* (8.15)
% of ads mentioning issue	.07 (.41)	-.21 (.23)	.11 (.16)	-.25* (.13)	-.38** (.12)	-.03 (.29)
Verbal × group in district	-.09 (1.10)	.96 (1.10)	-.29 (.47)	.93* (.50)	1.35** (.45)	-.27 (2.23)
% of district in demographic group	.08 (.22)	-4.61** (2.20)	.27 (.25)	1.16** (.60)	.67 (.61)	2.68 (1.68)
District ideology	.22 (.18)	-1.43 (1.02)	.31 (.19)	.94** (.28)	.66** (.29)	1.34** (.45)
Group in district × district ideology	-.25 (.48)	8.02 (4.99)	-.63 (.53)	-4.00** (1.20)	-2.62** (1.26)	-9.75** (3.60)
Democratic female candidate	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.00 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)
Republican female candidate	-.03* (.02)	-.05** (.02)	-.03* (.02)	-.03* (.02)	-.04** (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Number of Democratic ads (LN)	.01** (.00)	.01 (.01)	.02** (.01)	.01** (.00)	.01 (.01)	.01* (.00)
Number of Republican ads (LN)	-.03** (.01)	-.02** (.01)	-.03** (.01)	-.02** (.01)	-.02** (.01)	-.01* (.00)
Midterm election	-.10** (.01)	-.10** (.02)	-.09** (.02)	-.08** (.02)	-.09** (.02)	-.09** (.01)
Constant	-.08 (.09)	.84 (.46)	-.13 (.09)	-.30 (.15)	-.16 (.15)	-.45 (.22)
R ²	.33	.38	.36	.61	.56	.56
N	164	164	164	164	164	164

Note: Cell entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable in each of the models is the deviation from the normal Democratic share of the 2-party vote. The analyses are limited to candidates who pictured at least one ordinary person in their ads.

*** = p < .05; * = p < .10*

Issue: For the seniors model, Medicare; for the children and teacher models, education; for the black and Latino models, civil rights; for the blue collar workers model, jobs; for the businesspeople model, business and regulation; for the military model, national defense; for the police model, crime; and for the farmers model, agriculture.

Table B.3: Effect of campaign ad imagery in Congressional elections (continued on next page)

	Workers		Businesspeople		Latinos		Blacks	
Ideology held constant at .5, while % of group varies								
	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
.05	-.18 (-.29, -.06)	-.52 (-.70, -.34)	.62 (.46, .79)	-.35 (-.64, -.06)	.31 (.10, .52)	-1.41 (-2.03, -.79)	.08 (.01, .15)	-.01 (-.15, .11)
.10	-.14 (-.22, -.05)	-.39 (-.53, -.25)	.45 (.33, .58)	-.27 (-.49, -.05)	.36 (.18, .54)	-.79 (-1.66, -.22)	.07 (.02, .13)	-.02 (-.13, .09)
.15	-.09 (-.15, -.04)	-.26 (-.37, -.16)	.11 (.82, .14)	-.19 (-.36, -.03)	.46 (.29, .62)	-1.91 (-2.46, -1.36)	.06 (.01, .12)	-.03 (-.13, .07)
.20	-.05 (-.09, -.02)	-.13 (-.16, -.10)	-.23 (-.07, -.04)	-.11 (-.27, -.05)	.56 (.36, .75)	-2.15 (-2.73, -1.57)	.05 (-.01, .12)	-.03 (-.14, .08)
.25	.11 (.01, .20)	.06 (-.05, .04)	.06 (-.29, -.17)	-.03 (-.24, .18)	.05 (.05, .05)	-2.40 (-3.04, -1.76)	.04 (-.03, .12)	-.04 (-.16, .08)
.30		.12 (.06, .18)		.05 (-.24, .33)		-2.65 (-3.38, -1.91)	.03 (-.06, .13)	-.04 (-.19, .11)
% of group within district is held at mean while district ideology varies								
.35	-.04 (-.11, .02)	-.07 (-.13, -.00)	.07 (.05, .09)	-.19 (-.40, .01)	-.65 (-.89, -.41)	1.76 (1.07, 2.45)	.03 (-.06, .12)	.02 (-.07, .12)
.40	-.01 (-.06, .05)	-.09 (-.14, -.04)	.02 (.02, .04)	-.14 (-.26, -.02)	-.30 (-.49, -.11)	.46 (-.84, .11)	.05 (-.02, .11)	.01 (-.07, .10)
.45	.03 (-.03, .09)	-.11 (-.17, -.05)	-.06 (-.08, -.04)	-.09 (-.21, .03)	.06 (-.11, .63)	-1.06 (-1.06, -.06)	.06 (.00, .12)	.00 (-.11, .11)
.50	.07 (.01, .20)	.06 (-.13, -.07)	-.10 (-.13, -.07)	.03 (-.03, .41)	.22 (.24, .58)	-2.15 (-2.73, -1.57)	.12 (.07, .17)	.11 (-.01, .17)
.55	.14 (.02, .26)	-.13 (-.20, -.06)	-.14 (-.18, -.11)	-.25 (-.44, .18)	.18 (.56, .96)	-3.46 (-4.44, -2.48)	.13 (.09, .17)	.14 (-.02, .23)
.60	.18 (.04, .32)	-.15 (-.25, -.06)	-.19 (-.23, -.14)	.02 (-.31, .34)	.12 (.87, .97)	2.48 (-4.76, 1.37)	.09 (.02, .15)	-.02 (-.18, .14)
.65		-.18 (-.29, -.06)		.07 (-.37, .52)		1.37 (1.16, 1.79)	-.10 (.01, .19)	-.04 (-.30, .23)
		-.20 (-.34, -.05)		.13 (-.44, .69)		3.38 (-7.86, 4.27)	.12 (.01, .22)	-.05 (-.37, .27)

Entries in each cell are the effect of picturing a particular group given the ideology and demographic make-up of the district with 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. The first set of numbers shows how the effect of imagery changes according to the percentage of the group pictured within the district when the ideology of the district is .5. The second set of numbers shows how the effect of imagery changes as the ideology of the district varies when the percentage of the group within the district is equal to the mean percentage of the group across all districts within the sample.

Note that the dependent variable in the regression is deviations from the normal Democratic share of the 2-party vote. When interpreting effects, therefore, Republican candidates actually benefit when the effect is negative, since this implies that the image is lowering the Democratic vote.

Table B.3: Effect of campaign ad imagery in Congressional elections (continued from previous page)

	Soldiers		Seniors		Farmers		Teachers		Police	
Ideology held constant at .5, while % of group varies										
	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP	DEM	GOP
.00	--	--	--	--	.48	-.37	--	--	-.06	-.70
					(.14, .81)	(-.94, .20)			(-.32, .20)	(-1.16, -.24)
.05	-.31	-.52	.06	-.12	.41	-.32	--	--	-.03	-.61
	(-.65, .04)	(-2.34, 1.30)	(-.05, .08)	(-.22, -.02)	(.11, .71)	(-.81, .17)			(-.26, .20)	(-1.01, -.21)
.10	-.18	-.20	-.01	-.07	.35	-.28	.73	1.37	-.00	-.52
	(-.38, .02)	(-1.95, 1.54)	(-.06, .05)	(-.13, -.02)	(.08, .62)	(-.69, .14)	(.14, 1.32)	(.46, 2.27)	(-.19, .19)	(-.85, -.18)
.15	-.06	.11	-.07	-.03	.28	-.23	.41	.79	.02	-.43
	(-.22, .10)	(-1.62, 1.84)	(-.13, -.02)	(-.09, .03)	(.04, .53)	(-.56, .10)	(.08, .75)	(.26, 1.32)	(-.13, .18)	(-.70, -.16)
.20	.07	.42	-.14	.02	.22	-.19	.10	.21	.05	-.33
	(-.20, .34)	(-1.35, 2.19)	(-.26, -.03)	(-.09, .13)	(-.00, .44)	(-.44, .07)	(-.01, .20)	(.04, .37)	(-.07, .18)	(-.54, -.13)
.25	.19	.73	-.21	.07	.15	-.14	-.22	-.37	.08	-.24
	(-.24, .62)	(-1.13, 2.59)	(-.40, -.02)	(-.10, .24)	(-.05, .36)	(-.33, .05)	(-.42, -.02)	(-.63, -.11)	(-.02, .18)	(-.39, -.09)
.30	--	--	-.28	.12	.09	-.10	--	--	.11	-.15
			(-.54, -.02)	(-.12, .35)	(-.12, .30)	(-.22, .03)			(.01, .20)	(-.24, -.06)
% of group within district is held at mean while district ideology varies										
.35	.53	-.56	.06	.11	.49	-.01	.46	2.43	.07	-.08
	(-.08, 1.15)	(-.93, -.19)	(.01, .13)	(-.01, .22)	(.04, .95)	(-.19, .17)	(-.63, 1.55)	(1.59, 3.27)	(-.24, .37)	(-.19, .03)
.40	.38	-.41	.04	.08	.38	-.05	.44	1.50	.03	-.04
	(.03, .79)	(-.70, -.12)	(.00, .09)	(-.01, .17)	(.03, .73)	(-.17, .06)	(-.37, 1.26)	(.92, 2.07)	(-.18, .25)	(-.13, .04)
.45	.23	-.25	.02	.05	.27	-.10	.43	.56	.00	-.00
	(.01, .45)	(-.53, -.03)	(-.02, .06)	(-.02, .13)	(.00, .53)	(-.22, .02)	(-.15, 1.01)	(.22, .91)	(-.18, .18)	(-.08, .07)
.50	.08	-.10	-.01	.02	.15	-.14	.41	-.37	-.03	.03
	(-.07, .23)	(-.44, .24)	(-.06, .05)	(-.07, .11)	(-.05, .36)	(-.33, .05)	(-.02, .85)	(-.62, -1.11)	(-.25, .20)	(-.06, .12)
.55	-.08	.06	-.03	-.01	.04	-.18	.40	-.130	-.06	.07
	(-.37, .21)	(-.39, .50)	(-.10, .04)	(-.11, .09)	(-.17, .26)	(-.45, .09)	(-.08, .88)	(-1.72, -.89)	(-.39, .26)	(-.05, .28)
.60	-.23	.21	-.06	-.04	-.07	-.23	.38	-.224	-.10	.11
	(-.72, .26)	(-.36, .78)	(-.14, .03)	(-.16, .09)	(-.35, .21)	(-.59, .13)	(-.29, 1.06)	(-2.90, -1.57)	(-.53, .34)	(-.06, .36)
.65	-.53	.36	-.08	-.07	-.18	-.27	.37	-.317	-.12	.15
	(-1.07, .31)	(-.34, 1.07)	(-.19, .03)	(-.22, .08)	(-.55, .19)	(-.72, .18)	(-.56, 1.29)	(-4.10, -2.23)	(-.68, .43)	(-.06, .44)

Entries in each cell are the effect of picturing a particular group given the ideology and demographic make-up of the district with 95% confidence intervals in parentheses. The first set of numbers shows how the effect of imagery changes according to the percentage of the group pictured within the district when the ideology of the district is .5. The second set of numbers shows how the effect of imagery changes as the ideology of the district varies when the percentage of the group within the district is equal to the mean percentage of the group across all districts within the sample.

Note that the dependent variable in the regression is deviations from the normal Democratic share of the 2-party vote. When interpreting effects, therefore, Republican candidates actually benefit when the effect is negative, since this implies that the image is lowering the Democratic vote.

Appendix C: Storyboards for Mark Kennedy ads

Campaign ads for the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project Experiment

Control ad



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now too many Americans are suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

And our leaders in Washington need to recognize that and take steps to help ordinary families. We need to balance the budget so that we can get our country moving on the right track.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

African-Americans ad



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now the African-American community is suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

We need Affirmative Action in our universities to make sure that African-Americans have a chance to get the education they need.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Blue-collar workers ad



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

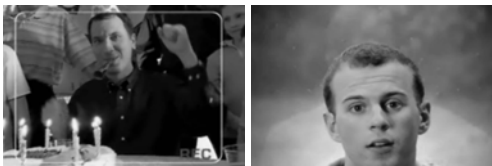
My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now working Americans are suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

We need to increase job training, increase the minimum wage, crack down on unfair trade and make sure that we keep America’s manufacturing base strong.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Biographical ad



[Various]

"I'm Mark Kennedy and I don't know why, but I approved this message."

"Mark was always close to his brothers."

"They slept 4 to a room."

"I met Mark in 4H at the state fair."

"Mark fell for her first."

"Debbie took a little longer. I'm not sure why. Mark was always such a snazzy dresser."

"Dad likes to help people."

"He's principled, independent."

"Just not much of a party guy...I meant he doesn't do whatever the party says to."

"The bottom line?"

"He's smart."

"Independent."

"A little different."

"And he'll make a great senator."

"I can't believe you did that party hat thing."

"I know."

*Campaign ads for the Subject Pool
experiment
Control ad 1*



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now too many Americans are suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

And our leaders in Washington need to recognize that and take steps to help ordinary families. We need to balance the budget so that we can get our country moving on the right track.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Control ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesotans work hard and deserve to keep more of their money. We need to balance the budget and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

African-Americans ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now the African-American community is suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

We need Affirmative Action in our universities to make sure that African-Americans have a chance to get the education they need.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

African-American ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota’s African-American community is struggling. I’ll work to help African-Americans and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Blue-collar workers ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now working Americans are suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

We need to increase job training, increase the minimum wage, crack down on unfair trade and make sure that we keep America’s manufacturing base strong.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Blue collar workers ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota workers are struggling and they need our help. I’ll help Minnesota’s workers and make the tough choices.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Businesspeople ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now American businesses are suffering and struggling under the weight of too many government taxes and regulations.

I’ll work to make sure that American businesses can prosper and keep our economy moving forward.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Businesspeople ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota businesses are struggling and they need our help. I’ll work to help businesses and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Children ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now too many children are suffering and struggling to make the grade. I want to increase federal funding of public schools and help our children learn.

Giving our kids a good education will help us ensure a safe and prosperous future.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Children ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota’s children and they need our help. I’ll work to help students and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Farmers ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now too many family farms are suffering and struggling to make ends meet, and I want to increase federal aid to help our farmers

We need to increase federal support for ethanol production so that we can get our country moving on the right track.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Farmers ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota farmers are struggling and they need our help. I’ll work to help family farms and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Latinos ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now the Latino community is struggling and some Americans are getting left behind.

I want to make sure that all Americans have the same opportunities regardless of race. We need bilingual education in our schools.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Latinos ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota’s Latino community is struggling and needs our help. I’ll work to help Latinos and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Police ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now our police officers are struggling to keep the peace and protect our communities.

I want to devote our resources to training more police officers and cracking down on crime to ensure a safe and prosperous future.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Police ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota police officers are struggling and they need our help. I’ll work to help the police and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Senior citizens ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now too many seniors are suffering and struggling to make ends meet.

I want to increase the Medicare prescription drug benefit so that our seniors can enjoy the quality of life that they deserve.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Senior citizens ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota seniors are struggling and they need our help. I’ll work to help seniors and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Soldiers ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now American soldiers are struggling to win the war on terror and keep all of us safe.

Our troops are doing their part to keep America safe and we need to do our part to increase funding for the military so that our troops know they have support here at home.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Soldiers ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

American soldiers are struggling and they need our help. I’ll work to help our troops and make the tough choices.

People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Teachers ad 1



“I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.

My passion is the American dream because I really had an opportunity to live the American dream. My parents taught me that America never guarantees success; it’s up to each of us.

Right now too many teachers are struggling to teach our kids in overcrowded classes with out of date materials.

We need to increase teacher pay and teacher training. Our kids should get the best education they can.

We need to make sure that all our citizens have the same chance at the American dream.”

Teachers ad 2



“Change and lots of it, that’s what Washington needs. The key is what kind?”

Minnesota teachers are struggling and they need our help. I’ll work to help teachers and make the tough choices for Minnesota.

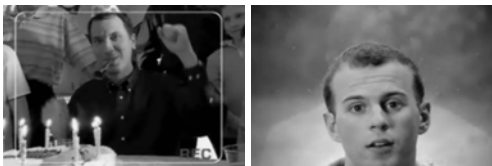
People expect you to face the tough issues head on and vote based on your principles, not party or president or special interests that are moving you one way or another.

I want to be a leader that all Minnesotans can look to.

The bottom line? We need a leader who puts principle ahead of party.

I’m Mark Kennedy and I approved this message.”

Biographical ad



[Various]

"I'm Mark Kennedy and I don't know why, but I approved this message."

"Mark was always close to his brothers."

"They slept 4 to a room."

"I met Mark in 4H at the state fair."

"Mark fell for her first."

"Debbie took a little longer. I'm not sure why. Mark was always such a snazzy dresser."

"Dad likes to help people."

"He's principled, independent."

"Just not much of a party guy...I meant he doesn't do whatever the party says to."

"The bottom line?"

"He's smart."

"Independent."

"A little different."

"And he'll make a great senator."

"I can't believe you did that party hat thing."

"I know."

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Curriculum Vitae

Nathaniel Swigger

Department of Political Science
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
361 Lincoln Hall
702 South Wright Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801
e-mail: swigger@illinois.edu
phone: (217) 766-2270

Education

The University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign

- Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science
Dissertation Title: *“Seeing is Believing: The Strategy behind Campaign Imagery and its Impact on Voters”*

Committee:
Chair: Dr. James Kuklinski
Dr. Scott Althaus, Dr. Brian Gaines, Dr. Tracy Sulkin
- Subfield Qualifying Exam, January, 2006
Fields: Campaigns and Elections, Political Psychology
- Master of Arts, Political Science, 2005
- General Qualifying Exam, August, 2004
Field: American Politics

Trinity University

B.A., History, 2001

Peer Reviewed Publications

- “Is There Truth in Advertising? Campaign Ad Images as Signals about Legislative Behavior” with Tracy Sulkin. 2008. *Journal of Politics*. 70(1): 232-244

Fellowships and Awards

- 2009 Paul Lazarsfeld Award for best paper in Political Communication at the 2008 meeting of the American Political Science Association for “Uplifting Manhood to Wonderful Heights: Newspaper Framing of Casualties and Combat from World War One to Gulf War Two , ” with Scott Althaus, Chris Tiwald, David Hendry, Svitlana Chernyhk and Sergio Wals
- Named to University of Illinois’ List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent, Spring 2009, Fall 2008, Spring 2005
- 2008 Peter F. Nardulli award for research related travel for graduate students
- 2008 Marvin G. Wienbaum award for excellence in undergraduate teaching as an independent instructor

- 2001 Philip K. Detweiler Prize for, “*The Failure of Greatness: Daniel Webster and the Second Generation of American Politics*”

Papers under review

- “Uplifting Manhood to Wonderful Heights: Newspaper Framing of Casualties and Combat from World War One to Gulf War Two , ” with Scott Althaus, Chris Tiwald, David Hendry, Svitlana Chernykh and Sergio Wals.

Conferences

- “Picture Perfect: Influencing Voters with Imagery in Congressional Campaigns” Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Boston 2008
- “Uplifting Manhood to Wonderful Heights: Newspaper Framing of Casualties and Combat from World War One to Gulf War Two , ” with Scott Althaus, Chris Tiwald, David Hendry, Svitlana Chernykh and Sergio Wals. Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Boston 2008
- “Picture Perfect: Influencing Voters with Imagery in Congressional Elections” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2008
- "The Tone of American War News from Verdun to Baghdad,” with Scott Althaus, Chris Tiwald, David Hendry, Svitlana Chernykh and Sergio Wals. Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2008
- “Teaching Graduate Students to Teach,” with Dick Weldon Simpson, Eric Juenke and Constance Mixon. Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2008
- "Is a Picture Worth a Dozen Roll Calls? Campaign Ad Images and Interest Group Voting Scores," with Tracy Sulkin. Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia 2006
- “Points for Subtlety: Influencing Voter Perceptions with Background Imagery.” Presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia 2006
- "Campaign Ad Images as Signals about Legislative Voting Behavior,” with Tracy Sulkin. Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2006
- “Points for Subtlety: Influencing Voter Perceptions with Background Imagery.” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago 2006

Teaching Experience

- *Independent Instructor*
 “Introduction to American Politics-Transition Program,” Fall 2007-Spring 2009
 “Introduction to Political Science,” Summer 2007
 “Introduction to American Politics,” Summer 2004, Summer 2006
 “Introduction to Political Behavior,” Summer 2009

- *Teaching Assistant*
“Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Politics,” Fall 2004, Fall 2005
“Introduction to American Politics,” Spring 2005

Professional Activities

- Member, Midwest Political Science Association
- Member, American Political Science Association
- Member, American Association of Political Consultants
- Member, Western Political Science Association
- Reviewer, Journal of Politics
- Reviewer, Perspectives on Politics