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The Battleground State: Conceptualizing Geographic Contestation in American Presidential Elections, 1960-2004

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The Battleground State: Conceptualizing Geographic Contestation in American Presidential Elections, 1960-2004

By

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Abstract

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The battleground state is ubiquitous in the discourse and scholarship surrounding American presidential campaigns, but the concept remains poorly understood, measured, and operationalized. The nature of presidential geographic targeting carries potentially significant consequences for the nation's issue agenda, political institutions, and voter behavior, and this dissertation details the need to re-conceptualize the battleground state as both an explanatory and dependent variable if these consequences are to be better understood.

Beginning with the 1960 presidential election, I use an original archival data set collected at the nation's presidential libraries to confront the myths that exist in both popular coverage and much of the existing political science literature about battleground states, and I work to correct the record. Media content analysis establishes the significant increase in attention paid to battleground strategies over time in the press. A conceptual analysis highlights both the stability and the evolution of the battleground state concept. The archival records reveal the presidential campaigns' multiple goals, the various geographic strategies adopted to meet those goals, and the elements campaigns use to prioritize geographic areas. The findings challenge many leading assumptions and expose misconceptions made about battleground strategies, and I suggest ways to improve our understanding of the concept. Next, a constitutive analysis using multiplicative interaction models explores the preconditions that guide campaign classification and campaign resource allocation patterns in presidential elections. This analysis demonstrates a fundamental shift in the factors that predict state battleground status and offers more evidence of why it is necessary to more rigorously conceptualize the battleground state. Finally, a causal analysis of the effects of the battleground state on voter evaluations of the candidates reveals the critical link between conceptualization and measurement validity. I demonstrate that different levels of measurement tell us very different stories about the causal processes of campaign effects, and I argue for the increased use of a categorical dummy variable to measure battleground status. Finally, using a block recursive model, I demonstrate that the inclusion of multiple campaign mechanisms and campaign classifications of the states in battleground effects models clarifies the direct effects of different strategies on voter behavior. In presenting these and other findings, I improve our understanding of the battleground concept and enhance its usefulness as a tool for future research.

For my family.

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Chapter 1

The Battleground State

Every four years, as Americans gather on the couches in their living rooms, perch on desks in their offices, or mill about their favorite pub on the first Tuesday evening of November to watch the presidential election results on their television screens or computer monitors, they see laid out before them a now familiar image. A map of the United States glowing red and blue reminds voters theirs must be a country divided by social, economic and political concerns. The TV commentators remark with ennui as election results from these predictably partisan strongholds roll in. We can now call Massachusetts for the Democrat they intone, Georgia has voted for Bush. Ho-hum.

But then there are the battleground states. For weeks the pundits have reminded Americans of every nuance of these media darlings - the downtrodden union workers of the north and their conservative southern neighbors in Ohio, the unpredictability of the communities arrayed along Florida's I-4 corridor, the population boom that shifted Nevada from a Republican stronghold in to a more liberal and diverse electorate. As the polls close, excitement builds. What was the turnout in the key precincts in that state? Did the last visit by the vice presidential candidate to that county make a difference? Can we color this state red or blue? Who will call it first? CNN? ABC?

Despite the ubiquity of battleground states in presidential election coverage, until recently state-level presidential campaign strategies were mostly absent from the study of presidential elections in the United States. The Electoral College and the "unit rule," which together give the candidate who wins the popular vote in most states all of that state's electoral votes, ensure the primacy of the state as a geographic target.[1] But, our knowledge of the causal mechanisms driving state-level presidential campaign strategies or the effects of those strategies on individuals and political institutions is limited.

A closer look at how campaigns prioritize the states and the implications of those strategic decisions reveals the danger of having overlooked a critical aspect of campaign strategy for so long. In paying so little attention to cross-sectional variation in presidential campaign strategy, the field of political science has failed to develop consistent measures or theories about this fundamental aspect of presidential campaigns. Consequently, many of the assumptions made about battleground states by both the media and scholars are incorrect and misleading. Using archival analysis of elections over the past 50 years, I show that despite the popular perception, battleground strategies are a longstanding campaign practice, and the states should rarely, if ever, be classified according to a dichotomous battleground/non-battleground measure. I present evidence that undermines the popular academic theory that media market strategies in presidential campaigns are a relatively recent phenomenon. I demonstrate that while the battleground status applied to states by the campaigns is consequential for resource allocation strategies, the relationship cannot be assumed to be linear or consistent across states or levels of classification. I show that while winning elections is the primary goal of the presidential campaigns, a host of other campaign goals influence campaign strategies in meaningful and substantive ways. In presenting these and other findings, I improve our understanding of the battleground concept.

[1] Maine and Nebraska allocate electoral votes by the district system.

In the following chapters, I confront the myths that exist in both popular coverage and much of the existing political science literature about battleground states, and I work to correct the record. Using an original archival data set collected through my research at the presidential libraries I illuminate the need for more careful analysis of the battleground concept and its implications. First, I explore the social conceptualization of the battleground idea. What are the commonly agreed to elements of the battleground concept? Where is there disagreement? What role does the battleground concept fulfill? Next, constitutive analysis reveals the shifting nature of the relationship between the core elements of the battleground concept. Finally, a causal analysis demonstrates the importance of measurement validity to understanding the impact of battleground strategies.

A chief goal of this dissertation will be to challenge and improve how we identify and measure the battleground state. As with all campaigns, presidential strategists face limited resources and a series of campaign goals. Winning elections is the primary goal, but other forces, like building political capital or establishing a national mandate also factor in to decisionmaking. The means campaign strategists have at their disposal to meet these goals are numerous, including candidate visits; television, radio, and newspaper advertising; earned media coverage; direct mail; phone banks; get-out-the-vote drives; campaign materials like lawn signs, bumper stickers, and campaign buttons; volunteers; campaign staff and state organizational funds. Each of these resources has its own strengths and limitations and presidential campaign strategists may choose to allocate them across the states in different ways. The battleground strategies they design help to guide these resource allocations. Throughout the dissertation, both direct measures of resource allocations and indirect measures of campaign strategies, like state classifications and polling will be used. As I will show, each, in its own way, contributes to the battleground state concept. Conceptualizations that ignore any of these elements are not wrong, but they are only partial conceptualizations and should be acknowledged as such.

The story of the battleground state cannot be understood without recognizing how the concept has evolved over time. Thus, my analysis begins with the 1960 presidential election and continues on through the 2004 election. The Kennedy-Nixon election marks a useful starting point for the geographic analysis of modern campaigns because it was the first year in which the campaigns took advantage of travel by private campaign plane to send the candidates around the country (Baumgartner 2000). But, as others have shown, this was certainly not the first year that the campaigns prioritized some states over others (Holbrook 2002). On the other hand, as I show in the following pages, the idea of battleground states is relatively new to both academic and popular discourse, emerging with consistency in the press and academic journals in the 1990s and 2000s as a key indicator of the presidential campaigns. The basic elements of the battleground state have shown very little change over time. The defining institution within which presidential campaigns operate, the Electoral College, has not changed. The centrality of states with winner-take-all systems remains.[2] And, as I detail in Chapter 3, the campaigns themselves have long prioritized some states over others. But, while states have always decided presidential outcomes, other political institutions surrounding presidential elections have drastically changed. With these changes, the utility of the battleground state concept for the media, campaign strategists, political scientists, and even the public has emerged.

[2] Maine and Nebraska are the exceptions, moving to district systems in 1972 and 1992, respectively. Neither state has ever split its electoral votes in practice.

1.1 The Changing Institutional Landscape

Among the key changes affecting presidential campaigns has been the transition from party- to candidate-centered campaigns and the subsequent growth of the professional campaign industry. Long gone are the days of the "front porch" campaign popularized by Republican James Garfield in 1880 (and copied later by Benjamin Harrison in 1888 and William McKinley in 1896) who met with thousands of voters from the front porch of his Ohio home (Baumgartner 2000). For most of the 19th century, it was considered inappropriate for candidates to engage in electioneering activities, and the parties carried the burden of campaign organization, fundraising, mobilization, and communication around the country. While states were certainly electoral targets, state and national parties, whose long-term interests included more than the current electoral contest, did the bulk of the electioneering. In the case of the Garfield campaign, for example, the Republican Party accounted for most of the campaign's costs and efforts, spending as much as $70,000 in Indiana alone to capture 30,000 votes reportedly for sale there (Baumgartner 2000).

Several factors led presidential campaigns away from a reliance on party to a reliance on candidate-centered campaign organizations. Candidates' ability to appeal directly to voters, without relying on party networks, was strengthened by the use of the radio in 1924, and by 1952 election spending on television ads equaled spending on radio ads (Baumgartner 2000). Campaign finance reform, the nominating reforms of the early 1970s, and the growth in television only exacerbated the trend away from party-dominated campaigns.

Following the violence and upheaval of the 1968 Democratic convention, the national party, through the McGovern-Fraser Commission, introduced new guidelines for the presidential nominating process. These guidelines were intended to increase participation and to mitigate the perception that party leaders could ignore the wishes of a mobilized segment of their membership. Just a few years later, in the post-Watergate era, campaign finance regulations were created to limit contributions to candidates, increase disclosure requirements and provide federal funding for campaigns. Both sets of reforms limited the role of the state and national parties and increased the role of candidate-centered campaign organizations (Polsby 1983).

When the McGovern-Fraser Commission centralized the nomination process, giving the national party final say over the eligibility of states' delegates to the nominating convention, state party leaders gravitated to the statewide primary process, hoping it would yield delegates beyond the national party's challenge. The direct primary removed delegate selection from the hands of state party leaders. These leaders had formerly operated at an elite level weighing the candidates according to their campaign performance, experience, and ability to create a viable coalition of elite support. The shift in decision-making control from party leaders to the voters weakened the state parties and elevated candidate-centered campaigns. It also influenced the types of candidates who were nominated.

Before the nominating reforms, potential candidates from large urban states were favored by state party leaders because of the electoral votes they were presumed to bring to the general election by carrying their home state (Polsby and Wildavsky 1964). This electoral strategy no longer plays a prominent role in the nomination process because unlike the party leaders of the past, primary voters are more concerned with other candidate characteristics. Even in the 2004 primary race, in which stories about John Kerry's "electability" predominated, the focus was on the strength of his war record and not on the number of electoral votes his home state of Massachusetts would bring to the general election. From this perspective, the reforms have

meant a substantial change in the potential Electoral College advantage a candidate may bring to the general election campaign. Certainly once the nominations are in place Electoral College strategies come back in to play, but in the past they played a role in the nomination process as well (Polsby and Wildavsky 2000).

The campaign finance reform of the 1970s coupled with nominating reforms meant candidates now must conduct their own fundraising campaigns, mobilize their own supporters, and decide for themselves the best way to allocate their resources. Candidates increasingly turned to professional consultants to do much of the organizing work formerly done by the party (Thurber and Nelson 2000). Campaign consultants, who first emerged from the world of public relations to organize nonpartisan initiative campaigns, stepped in to fill the void (Nimmo 1970). Describing political consultants in the 1960s, Nimmo notes, "Their major contribution to a campaign is rationality in allocating scarce resources – time, money, and talent. A serious candidate desires to maximize his electoral strength through efficient expenditure of each resource." As private businesses, campaign consultants are responsible for every penny of the hard earned campaign dollars they spend. Running successful and efficient campaigns brings steady work. Concerns about party building become a distraction.

Notably, the development of soft money in the 1980s and 1990s brought with it an increased role for the national parties both through their ability to pay for statewide advertising and through party building activities, which can be targeted at the battleground states for get-out-the-vote activities (GOTV) and other grassroots efforts (LaRaja 2003). In the 1996 and 2000 elections, the national parties increasingly used soft money to support both advertising and other party-building activities on behalf of the presidential candidates in key states

There was another crucial change to the political landscape during this era – the changing role of the media. As state parties weakened and traditional interest groups with natural or geographic constituencies diminished in importance, the media came to fill the intermediary role between the public and the candidate or officeholder. Media today operate not only as reporters of campaign news, but also as interpreters, analyzing the import of campaign events and strategies for their audience (Jamieson 1992). Media took to the dramatic competition of early primaries creating a buzz, which candidates who are generally strapped for cash and looking to mobilize voters, work hard to win. This reliance on the media to spread the word has spilled over from the nomination process as a core part of the presidential campaigns' "earned media" strategies in the general election, as well. Moreover, as I detail in Chapter 2, the evolution of the relationship between the media and political candidates has led journalists to increasingly apply a strategic frame to campaign coverage (Patterson 1993). This focus on campaign strategy naturally extends to the geography of the presidential campaign. It is within the context of increasingly candidate-centered campaigns and evolving media norms that the battleground state concept began to emerge.

1.2 A Shifting Electorate

As the institutions surrounding presidential election campaigns experienced major changes, the electorate to which the candidates were reaching out also evolved. Formerly stable electoral blocs dissolved, and new blocs emerged. Changes in the electoral map meant candidates, their staff, and their consultants had to rethink the most efficient way to allocate their resources and to reconsider where they would find the majority of electoral votes needed to win.

From Reconstruction until the 1960s, the Solid South was considered a solid bloc of Democratic electoral votes. The South remained mostly a one-party system until technological change produced demographic shifts that facilitated the growth of a two-party system (Polsby 2003). When technological advances in the mechanization of the agricultural industry decreased the need for human laborers, farm workers moved to find work in urban centers and in the manufacturing centers of the North. Concurrently, air conditioning encouraged wealthy Republican northerners to move south when they retired and corporations to establish headquarters in areas like Atlanta and Houston. The steady influx of wealthy retirees and white collar workers brought with them their Republican loyalties. The Voting Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent Civil Rights Act also changed the political landscape of the South as new black voters registered as Democrats, and even more new white voters registered as Republicans. These trends facilitated the growth of the Republican Party in the South. Traditional Southern Democrats began to see the Republican Party as being more ideologically consistent with their own preferences than the Democratic Party.

As the Southern states gradually became two-party states, Republican presidential candidates increasingly targeted them. Indeed, with George Wallace's third party candidacy attracting conservative southerners, the "New South" became central to Richard Nixon's electoral strategy. While he campaigned heavily in traditional large industrial states like Pennsylvania and Ohio, he also focused on "upper tier Dixie" including, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and Florida (Broder 1971). Wallace's popularity in the South proved to have long term implications, breaking loose all but 10-15 percent of white southern voters (Polsby and Wildavsky 1971). Migration to the South was accompanied by increasing growth in the West. By 1984, Reagan strategist Lee Atwater centered Reagan's re-election campaign on the so-called Sunbelt, certain that Mondale's choice of a northern liberal running mate had sealed Reagan's reelection hopes (Goldman and Fuller 1985). These demographic shifts and changes in partisan geographic strongholds opened up both parties' Electoral College strategies.

1.3 The Battleground State in Campaign Histories

Until recently, most of the work describing state targeting was atheoretical and consisted mostly of asides in first-person accounts of the presidential campaigns. These accounts hint at the geographic calculations strategists make in designing their Electoral College strategies and begin to highlight the core elements of the battleground state concept. A quick review of these campaign histories demonstrates the genesis of the battleground concept and confirms why we should already be skeptical about the current conventional wisdom surrounding battleground states.

In 1960, both campaigns identified the so-called "big seven" states in the Midwest and industrial northeast as being key to electoral victory according to campaign biographer Theodore H. White (1961). So California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas were the focus of intense campaign activity, especially by Kennedy. Nixon, who had committed himself to a "fifty-state" strategy, was spread more thinly, but his campaign did consider these states central to their strategy (White 1961). Four years later, with a Texan incumbent, the list of battleground states remained mostly intact with only Texas and New Jersey excluded (White 1965).

In 1968, with the third party candidacy of George Wallace and an increasingly competitive set of southern states, campaign accounts report Nixon recognized an opportunity to

expand the targeted state list. The "big seven" were still key sites for the campaigns, but to this list Nixon added the states of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia (Broder 1971). In 1972, Nixon was comfortable he would attract the southern Wallace voters, according to White (1973). His 1972 electoral strategy focused on a more limited number of the northeastern industrial states, plus California and Texas. Interestingly he pulled back from the day-to-day of campaign tactics in 1972 noting, "My role from the standpoint of operations is limited until the last two to three weeks, both by necessity and politics, and then only the big states" (White 1973). Like Nixon, McGovern also identified Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania as key states but he added New Jersey, New York and Ohio to the list.

The Republican gains in the South were far from solid as southerner and Democratic candidate Carter demonstrated. Carter considered the South his base and again turned to the industrial northeastern states and California as target states. Wayne (1980) reports that the Ford campaign acknowledged Carter's strength in the South and targeted California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, adding only Florida and Texas to their list of targeted states in 1976. And, four years later, White (1982) reports these same states were targeted by both the Carter and Reagan campaigns with Carter adding Missouri, New Jersey and Wisconsin. That year Reagan also successfully set out to capture back the Old South from Carter.

The 1984 campaign stands out for the unique strategy employed by Democratic candidate Walter Mondale. Goldman and Fuller (1985) report that Mondale was convinced he needed the support of the South, even if he was able to capture the New England and Midwestern states. Mondale chose to focus first on a handful of competitive southern states rather than on securing his base. Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas and California were the core of Mondale's Electoral College strategy. This unsuccessful strategy was controversial within the Mondale campaign and ridiculed by others.

> The Reagan management hooted privately during the campaign and publicly afterward at the decision to have him chase Reagan around the South and West instead of first solidifying his own natural base in the industrial northern tier. Neither Mondale nor his handlers agreed; losing was losing, whether he got 30 electoral votes or 150, he told them, and he wanted a geopolitical design that would maximize the slight chance he might win (Goldman and Fuller 1985).

In contrast, according to Goldman and Fuller, the Reagan camp was comfortable with their lead in the southern and western states and chose to target mainly Michigan and Ohio. Narratives of the 1984 campaign highlight the emerging role of campaign strategies in the press. For example, Germond and Witcover (1985) suggest the Mondale strategy was particularly unsuccessful because it led to stories about his campaign being behind and playing catch-up. Had he solidified his base first, the stories might have been cast through a more positive frame, which would, they argue, have led to more success coming into the South. In contrast, the Reagan camp specifically chose Michigan and Ohio as target states because they knew these were considered "must win" states for Mondale. Losing ground in these states would only contribute to the negative coverage of the Mondale campaign. As Germond and Witcover report, "Why not pick just one of Mondale's big northern 'must' states and *carpet* bomb it – saturate it with mail, media, surrogates, and presidential visits as if Reagan were campaigning for governor instead of president?"

According to Germond and Witcover (1989), in 1988, both the Bush and Dukakis campaigns targeted California, Missouri, Ohio and Texas. To this list, Dukakis added Illinois, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania, while Bush added New Jersey and Oregon. In this campaign, Dukakis strategists actively played up an "18 state strategy" to the press, while actually focusing on these eight states. The journalists report this media strategy was enacted after a disappointing second debate to pull "the election out of the fire" and to convince other Democrats the election had not been lost. Polls showed them that to win, they had to focus their attentions on the industrial belt, the West and the Northeast, and these are the states that received the bulk of the candidate's visits in the last few weeks of the campaign

According to campaign observers, in 1992, the Democrats took advantage of its two southern candidates expanding the list of battleground states beyond the industrial "big states" to a list of fourteen states including four southern states and Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico (Arterton 1993; Ifill 1992; Shaw 1999a; Toner 1992). The Bush campaign also focused on Georgia, Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio and added Pennsylvania to the list. From his place as a Republican campaign consultant, Professor Daron Shaw (1999a) reports that in 1996, both campaigns focused on Louisiana, Nevada, and New Mexico. Clinton added Florida and Tennessee to his list of southern targets along with Arizona and Nevada. Dole added only California to his list of four battleground states.

This review of first-hand accounts of geographic strategies over time reveals a few intriguing aspects to the battleground state concept. First, this analysis suggests campaigns have long prioritized some states over others. Second, these accounts hint at the importance of electoral vote size and state competitiveness in determining state targets. Additionally, attention should be given to the complexity of candidate goals. Clinton, for example is said to have focused on Texas in 1992 because of competitive House races there, and Nixon's strategy in 1972 was widely described as a search for a national electoral mandate. Similarly, the campaigns' own accounts of state strategies should be independently verified whenever possible (especially when post hoc reports may be revised to reflect well on the strategists). Sometimes, as with Dukakis's reported "18 state strategy" in 1988, states are described as "battleground states" to influence how the state of the campaign is being perceived overall.

1.4 The Theory and Science of the Battleground State

The idea that campaign strategists prioritize some states over others is a longstanding, albeit minor, component of campaign biographies. In contrast, the study of geographic contestation in presidential elections has been sporadic and inconsistent in the political science literature. Scholarly attention to this facet of presidential campaigning appears in two waves.

The first wave emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s. Using data on candidate appearances, Brams and Davis (1974) propose a model in which "rational" campaigners allocate resources in proportion to the states' electoral votes raised to the 3/2s power, so that the distribution of campaign resources is biased to states with the most Electoral College votes. Other formal models take issue with this approach and suggest campaigns also weigh the competitiveness of a state and their opponents' activities in devising strategies of resource distribution (Colantoni et al. 1975). While Colantoni et al. agree the Electoral College does bias campaign allocations in favor of the big states in competitive, non-incumbent, elections (where the alternative hypothesis is that resources are allocated proportionally with no bias to big states), they also show the rule derived by Brams and Davis reflects the competitiveness of large states

in two of the specific elections covered by their data (1960 and 1968). They conclude there is no "single simple formula" that can be used to explain the effect of the Electoral College on all presidential campaigns, but rather that candidate information, assumptions about the opponent, and the campaign's willingness to change strategy over the course of the campaign are key to understanding the true effects of the Electoral College.

In a related piece, Bartels (1985) applies the rule devised by Brams and Davis to examine the proportionality of the Carter campaign's resource allocations in 1976. Bartels, who does not consider the competitiveness of the states, distinguishes between ornamental and instrumental resource allocation in the 1976 Carter presidential campaign. He defines ornamental resources as state-level organizational funds and personnel and instrumental resources as advertising and campaign appearances. He finds instrumental resources are heavily concentrated in the most populous states and ornamental resources, while also concentrated in the most populous states, are not as disproportionately allocated.

The second wave of academic attention, in which the battleground state concept is first explicitly employed, begins in the late 1990s. This new wave marks an important addition to the study of presidential campaigns and political behavior because it asks not just what explains geographic strategy but also how that strategy affects voter behavior. The development of this new branch of political science literature stems in large part from the work of Professor Daron Shaw, who as a member of the Republican presidential election teams in the late 1990s and early 2000s was able to collect and share the campaigns' battleground state strategies and distributions of candidate visits and television advertising dollars (2006, 1999a-c). The recognition that presidential campaign resources are not distributed uniformly across the nation marks an important step in our study of campaigns. Previous research looking for campaign effects, for example, tended to group voters at the national level thus combining residents of states inundated with campaign activities with those living in states that barely merited a candidate visit and obscuring many potential effects. This latest wave of research addresses both the constitutive and causal impacts of the battleground state. The former, and more limited, branch of analysis, asks what variables predict how the campaigns prioritize the states and how they determine the allocation of campaign resources. Causal analyses are more prolific in the literature looking for relationships between battleground state priorities and voter behavior.

In an analysis that incorporates electoral votes, state competitiveness, and television advertising costs Shaw (1999a) argues the interaction of TV ad costs and competitiveness were the greatest determinants of how campaigns prioritized the states between 1988 and 1996. Methodological critiques have raised questions about these conclusions (Reeves, Chen and Nagano 2004). Althaus et al. (2002) examine campaign appearances over time and find that from 1972-2000 presidential campaigns have tended to send their candidates on more visits and to more locales. Candidate appearances since the early 1970s have been concentrated in the most populous states and the most populous media markets, but the correlation between size and candidate visits has been declining. Similarly, candidate visits are concentrated in competitive states, but these competitive states don't receive proportionately more visits than they did in the 1970s. Moreover, they show that candidates continue to visit states that are considered safe for their opponent. Finally, using national data as a baseline and theory about campaign incentives, Geer and Lau (2005) simulate strategies across states and election years to explain variations in presidential advertising strategies from that baseline. They take state competitiveness (measured in various ways) and the Electoral College (both in terms of size, winnability, and number of votes needed to win a majority) as key components in their analysis.

In the last 15 years, students of campaign effects have increasingly moved away from the question of whether or not campaigns matter, instead asking when do they matter, to whom do they matter, and how do they matter. The potential for differences in battleground status across the states to answer some of these questions has been adopted in a number of studies. Scholars interested in explaining differences in political participation across space and time have adopted battleground state measures (Lipsitz 2009, Gimpel et al. 2007, Wolak 2006, Bergan et al. 2005, Holbrook and McClurg 2005, Hill and McKee 2005). Levels of political knowledge, interest and party contact during presidential elections have also been compared across the states (Lipsitz 2009, Gimpel et al. 2007, Wolak 2006, Benoit et al. 2004). Others consider how differences across the states might affect vote choice (McClurg and Holbrook 2009, Panagopolous 2009, Shaw 1999c).

1.5 A Conceptual Analysis

Sartori famously notes that concept misformation is frequently the product of asking 'how much' before asking 'what is' (Sartori 1970, Collier and Gerring 2009). This is an apt description of the state of the battleground concept in the political science literature. The battleground state concept has only explicitly emerged in political science in the last 10 years, and as I demonstrate in Chapter 2, the "battleground state" recently gained mainstream prominence in the media. Today, a hodgepodge of explanations, definitions, and measurements marks our current understanding of the battleground state concept. None of these definitions is necessarily wrong. Indeed, each illuminates different elements of the battleground state. But, there is confusion and the beginning of some contestation (Gallie 1956) about how to define and measure this concept. In order for this concept to advance our understanding of presidential campaigns in a useful way, it is necessary to establish a minimal definition of the battleground state and then to identify those elements that characterize different levels of "battleground-ness" (Sartori 1970).

The recognition that presidential campaign resources are not distributed uniformly across the nation marks an important step in political science, especially for those interested in understanding campaign effects. Previous research tended to group voters at the national level, thus combining residents of states inundated with campaign activities with those living in states that barely merited a candidate visit and obscuring many potential effects. New data sources like the advertising data supplied by the University of Wisconsin and the campaign allocation data supplied by Shaw (1999a and c, 2006) have facilitated this branch of research. However, the enthusiasm to measure battleground effects has left very little room for theory about the concept to emerge and different definitions and measurements appear in the literature with very little discussion of why one set of definitions and measurements is preferred or to what effect (for an exception see Lipsitz 2009).

Table 1.1 Examples of the Battleground State Concept in the Literature

Author	Indicator	Definition
Shaw (1999, 2006)	Campaign classification Television Advertising Candidate Visits	- "those states most at risk *and* most critical to wining 270 electoral votes"
Hill and McKee (2005)	Campaign classification (Shaw 1999)	- States with uncertain outcome where campaigns wage the war for the presidency
McClurg and Holbrook (2009)	Television advertising (Shaw 1999) Candidate Visits (Shaw 1999)	- differences in campaign context
Wolak (2006)	Television advertising (CMAG) Candidate visits Competitiveness for State Legislature Presence of Independents in the state	- campaign intensity - partisan diversity
Gimpel (2007)	Campaign classification (Shaw 1999)	- disproportionately high percentage of campaign resources
Panagopolous (2009)	CNN classification (2000)	- measure of state competition reflects concentration of allocations
Benoit (2004)	*National Journal* list of television advertising states	- strategy of concentrating campaign resources in key states
Lipsitz 2009	Campaign classification (Shaw 1999)	- full effects of state competitiveness

For example, in their study of media effects, Gilens et al. (2007) control for "exposure to other kinds of campaign activity including news coverage and campaign outreach efforts" by using a dichotomous battleground state indicator adapted from the *Cook Political Report's* state classifications for the 2000 election. In contrast, in her exploration of the effects of state competitiveness on political participation Lipsitz (2009) creates a five category ordinal variable based on Shaw's classifications as a measure of "the full effect of state competitiveness on voters." A reader may wonder - does battleground state status reflect competitiveness or campaign activity or both in a state? Do the labels attached to the states by campaign operatives really measure competitiveness or do they reflect other underlying variables as well? Does level of competitiveness necessarily lead to level of resource allocations?

Questions about the battleground state concept are illuminated by the multiplicity of indicators used to measure the battleground state (Table 1.1). For example, some political scientists adopt the classifications presented by the media or by professional political observers like Charlie Cook or CNN to identify battleground states (Panagopolous 2009, Gilens et al. 2007, Bergan et al. 2005, Wolfinger et al. 2005, Benoit et al. 2004, Freedman et al. 2004). Others rely on classifications provided by campaign actors (Lipsitz 2009, Gimpel et al. 2007, Hill and McKee 2005, Shaw 2006, 1999a). All of these conceptualizations are top-down observations characterized by media or political elites "in the know." Other scholars use independently observable activity of the presidential campaigns, like advertising, candidate visits, and national party transfers, to determine what, if any, geographic-based characteristics underlie campaign

strategies (McClurg and Holbrook 2009; Wolak 2006, Holbrook and McClurg 2005, Althaus et al. 2002, Shaw 1999c).

But what is the benefit of using these different measures? Do they all capture the same concept? When is a dichotomous measure more appropriate than a graded measure of the concept? The characteristics used by popular media and political pundits to classify states into these categories – the categorizations many political scientists then adopt – tend to be inconsistent or weakly explicated (Table 1.2). The categorizations vary from dichotomous measures to seven-category classifications, with little explanation for the level of categorization or the cut-off points that distinguish each category. Even the linguistic labels vary, as the phrases "swing state," battleground state," and even "purple state, " are interchangeably applied. Too often, the scholars who rely on evidence of campaign activity to measure the battleground concept let the data determine their list of battleground and non-battleground states. Does the presence of one or two activities like advertising and candidate visits in a state means that state is a battleground? As Sartori (1970) notes, "We cannot measure unless we know first what it is that we are measuring."

What then is the battleground state concept? Among the proliferation of meanings and measurements employed is there some common ground that will allow us to bring these different characteristics together in an organized way that promotes logical analysis? A minimal definition helps us bound the concept, identifying the "bare essentials" of a battleground state and excluding any accompanying properties that may or may not be present in a battleground state (Gerring and Barresi 2009, Sartori 1970, 1984). A minimal definition should make it very clear what a battleground state is *not*. This dichotomy is necessarily broad and will likely not apply to the most frequent or even obvious examples of battleground states but it should include those defining properties that all battleground states share (Gerring and Barresi 2009, Sartori 1984). We can imagine ways that future research will benefit from such a definition. For example, while most battleground effects research to date has focused on large-N analyses, case studies of battleground states would add to our understanding of presidential campaigns. Why is Ohio a persistent battleground state? What are the campaign experiences of voters in one battleground state versus another? To select individual case studies we must have some common criteria by which to distinguish battleground from non-battleground states.

Drawing from the definitions in Tables 1.1 and 1.2, there is common consensus that battleground states are the states to which the presidential campaigns choose to allocate scarce resources because they fulfill some part of the campaign's overall strategy (for this minimal definition or root concept, I take Campaign Strategy as an overarching concept). Thus, any state to which neither campaign allocates any resources is a non-battleground state. By non-battleground states, I do not necessarily mean those states characterized as non-battleground states by the media. I also do not necessarily mean those states designated as "safe" (non-competitive) states. As I show in later chapters, the presidential campaigns allocate scarce resources to many of the so-called safe and "non-battleground" states. If we are to characterize states that receive some campaign resources as "non-battleground" states we must also ask how many resources are enough to switch categories? What would be an acceptable cut-point between these variously targeted states? The point is that they do receive some resources and the campaigns distribute those resources in order to fulfill some campaign goal. The differences between these states is a matter of degree and can not be answered by a simple yes or no to the question, "Is that state a battleground state?"

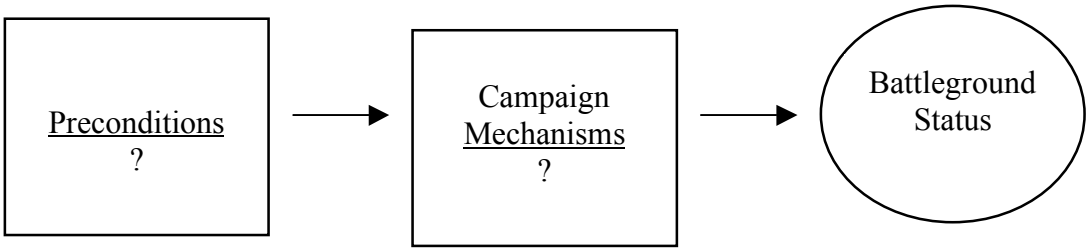
Table 1.2 Examples of the Battleground Concept in Presidential Campaigns by Media and Commentators

Resource	Terms and Levels of Measurement	Definition
The Cook Political Report (2000)	Ordinal (7 categories) Solid Democratic Likely Democratic Lean Democratic Toss Up Lean Republican Likely Republican Solid Republican	None given.
The New York Times (2004)	Dichotomous Swing States	"Based on *New York Times* Analysis"
CNN (2000)	Dichotomous Battleground States	"the states most closely watched and highly contested in the final weeks of the campaign"
The Economist (2004)	Dichotomous Swing States	"where the two parties will devote almost all of their extraordinary reserves of treasure and energy"

With this broad conception of the term in place we can now specify other elements or properties associated with this concept and ask whether a state is relatively more or less of a battleground (Sartori 1970). In other words, what is the Level of Battleground Status (LBS) we can apply to those states that receive campaign resource allocations (Figure 1.1)? High LBS states will likely be those states most commonly identified as battleground states by the media and in popular discourse. Low LBS states will include some states that might popularly be considered non-battleground states because they receive fewer resources from the campaigns. The properties associated with the battleground state fall in to two subtypes – preconditions and campaign mechanisms. Preconditions are those constitutive elements that lead campaign strategists to choose to allocate scarce resources to a state in the first place, like electoral votes or competitiveness, and campaign mechanisms are those contextual elements that offer evidence that a state is a battleground state, like advertising dollars or the presence of grassroots volunteers.[3] Too often discussions of the battleground state gloss over the differences between these subtypes and assume the elements of one subtype are proof of the other (like the assumption that a battleground state is a competitive state and therefore must experience intense campaign activity). Specifying different levels of abstraction allows us to analytically differentiate between different types of battleground states without losing the meaning of the battleground concept.

[3] These lower levels of abstraction (Sartori 1970) are what Collier and Levistky (2009) might call diminished subtypes (2009). They help us to identify not just what is part of a given battleground state but also what may be missing without conceptual stretching or the loss of analytic differentiation.

Figure 1.1



Before moving on, let me address a certain critique of this conceptual formation. Why is competitiveness absent from the minimal definition offered above when it seems to be such a key part of the battleground state concept among scholars and media? I argue that state competition or the partisan divide within states is an *accompanying* and not a *defining* property of the battleground state concept. As I show later in this dissertation (Chapter 4), while state competition is a core attribute associated with the battleground concept today, it has not always been so. On the other hand, the presidential campaigns have long chosen to allocate scarce resources to some states and not to others to fulfill some part of their campaign strategy.

In making this distinction, I am also distinguishing between the popular conceptions of "swing states" and "battleground states." I argue "swing state" is the most appropriate classification when the focus of the discussion involves both a historical perspective on the voting patterns of the past and a predictive element, as in the uncertainty of electoral outcomes in the future. Level of competition, then, is a defining property of a swing state. In contrast, the phrase "battleground state" implies a field of combat and seems most appropriate to a discussion of the actual tactical deployment of campaign resources on the ground and over the airwaves. This concept is multidimensional, including the allocation of candidate visits, television and radio ad buy dollars, campaign staff, volunteers, direct mail, and party finances. Under this distinction, a state is likely to be identified as a "swing state," or precondition, by one or more of the campaigns before it can become a "battleground state." As I will show, level of competition is only one of the factors that may attract the attention of the presidential campaigns. Of course, there is substantial overlap between the "battleground" and "swing" designations, but researchers should distinguish between *why* one state is the site of more presidential campaign activity than another state and measures of *what* that campaign activity is or *how much* activity there is.

This dissertation will focus on examining the elements that fit within the precondition and campaign mechanism subtypes, and we will return to Figure 1.1 in the conclusion. Tables 1.1. and 1.2 offer some suggestions as to the what these elements will include, like electoral votes and state competition as preconditions and television advertising and candidate visits as campaign mechanisms. But, are there other elements as well? As we will see, different elements of the battleground state preconditions and campaign mechanisms have taken precedence in different campaigns and over time. This conceptual structure reminds us that the prominence of one element in one election does not negate the potential of other elements to contribute to our understanding of battleground state concept.

1.6 Organization of this dissertation

In order to address the confusion surrounding the battleground concept, I employ both constitutive and causal analyses (Gofas and Hay 2008) in the following chapters. I ask what social constructions underlie the battleground concept? What interests (or perceived interests) have been served by the emergence of the battleground concept in recent years? How does employing this concept improve our understanding of presidential elections in the United States?

To answer these questions and to refine the battleground concept I have collected a new data set (see Appendix A). A chief complaint of campaign scholars has been the lack of "good, detailed data about the behaviour of candidates" (Geer and Lau 2006, Shaw 2006, Hillygus and Jackman 2003). The wealth of data now being collected through efforts like the Wisconsin Advertising Project and the National Annenberg Election Survey are crucial efforts to overcoming the paucity of data on campaign dynamics over both time and space. While these efforts have produced great improvements in our understanding of contemporary electoral strategies and modern campaign effects, they tell us little about how presidential campaign strategies have evolved over time or how these differences might affect voters. If advertising strategies in 2000 produced mobilization effects (Goldstein 2002) can we assume the same effect in every presidential campaign? Perhaps, but the ability to analyze data on battleground states over time would give us more confidence in this conclusion. Variations in candidate quality, different political, economic, technological and social realities suggest to the common sense observer that a battleground state strategy undertaken in 1960 might look quite different from a strategy today. The data collected by Shaw for the 1988-2004 elections on campaign classifications, television advertising, and candidate visits are an important step in this direction, but they, too, are temporally limited.

Using an original archival data set collected through my research at the presidential libraries of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush, I illuminate the need for more careful analysis of the battleground concept and its implications.[4] Like any archival research, there are limitations to this data.[5] Records may be incomplete and vary by each election. Data are clearly biased to candidates who have won elections, although this problem is diminished by the inclusion of the unsuccessful campaign plans for Ford 1976, Carter 1980, Dukakis 1988, Bush 1992, Dole 1996, Gore 2000, and Kerry 2004. Wherever possible the data has been supplemented by other sources (Runyon et al. 1971; Shaw 1999a and 2006). Coupled with these additional data sources, the full dataset covers elections from 1960 to 2004 and includes data on the campaigns' electoral college strategies and state level allocations in the areas of field (voter registration, get-out-the-vote, volunteers, state budgets, phone banks), advertising (tabloid, newspaper, radio and television), mail, party transfers, and candidate visits. Despite deficiencies, this dataset represents the most comprehensive set of presidential campaign activity assembled, and thus provides a useful starting point for this research.

A key aspect of the battleground state concept has been its articulation and adoption by the mainstream media. In Chapter 2, media content analysis establishes the significant increase in attention paid to battleground strategies over time in the press. I hypothesize that changes in

[4] Special thanks to Brendan Doherty for sharing campaign records collected at the Reagan Library.

[5] Obviously, materials from some archives are missing from this dataset. The resources required to visit the archives are costly and many materials have yet to be processed by archivists. Data collection is an ongoing process.

media norms help to explain the emergence of this concept in popular discourse and discuss the potential challenges the concept poses for the democratic process.

The archival data lend themselves to both qualitative and quantitative analyses, offering a rich portrait of presidential election strategies over nearly 50 years. In Chapter 3, a conceptual analysis highlights both the stability and the evolution of the battleground state concept. The archival records reveal the presidential campaigns' multiple goals, the various battleground strategies adopted to meet those goals, and the elements campaigns use to prioritize battleground states. In doing so, I challenge many of the leading assumptions and expose misconceptions made about battleground strategies and suggest ways to improve our understanding of the concept.

Building on the qualitative analysis and descriptive statistics of the previous chapter, in Chapter 4, I conduct a constitutive analysis using multiplicative interaction models to explore the preconditions that guide campaign classification and campaign resource allocation patterns in presidential elections. This analysis demonstrates a fundamental shift in the significance of the factors that predict state battleground status and offers more evidence of why it is necessary to more rigorously conceptualize the battleground state.

In Chapter 5, the final empirical chapter, a causal analysis of the effects of the battleground state on voter evaluations of the candidates reveals the critical link between careful conceptualization and measurement. I demonstrate that different levels of measurement tell us very different stories about the causal processes of campaign effects, and I argue for the increased use of a categorical dummy variable to measure battleground status. Finally, using a block recursive model, I demonstrate that the inclusion of multiple campaign mechanisms and campaign classifications of the states in a battleground effects models clarifies the direct effects of different strategies on voter behavior.

Chapter 2

Mapping the Battleground:
Media Presentations of Political Reality

> *The 2004 election is likely to become the first $1 billion campaign in American history, with John Kerry and various leftish groups raising money at the same furious rate as George Bush. And yet in large swathes of the country the result is a foregone conclusion. Texas and most of the South will vote for Bush come what may; New York and California will vote for Mr. Kerry. The two parties will devote almost all their extraordinary reserves of treasure and energy to wooing voters in 18 swing states. We begin a series on these states with one of the tightest contests…*
>
> *Ohio is the very definition of a swing state. Its economy has been dominated by heavy industries that have been battered by global competition. But the culture is thoroughly conservative: the state legislature recently voted to ban gay marriage and to allow people to carry concealed weapons. The Democrats are strong in the cities and in the industrial north. The Republicans dominate the suburbs and exurbs and most of the south.* [6]

Thus began coverage of the "crucial swing states" in the 2004 general presidential election campaign in *The Economist*. Like other news sources in recent election years, the magazine devoted valuable space (in this case multiple pages over the weeks and months of the campaign) detailing the economic, political, and social intricacies of a handful of states deemed crucial to the election outcome. According to this media reality, the remaining states, neatly categorized and illuminated as red or blue on interactive maps, serve only to highlight the electoral vote advantages and disadvantages of the presidential candidates. While the campaign activities in and residents of battleground states attract substantial media attention in presidential election years, their neighboring states, as noted above, are written off as a "foregone conclusion."

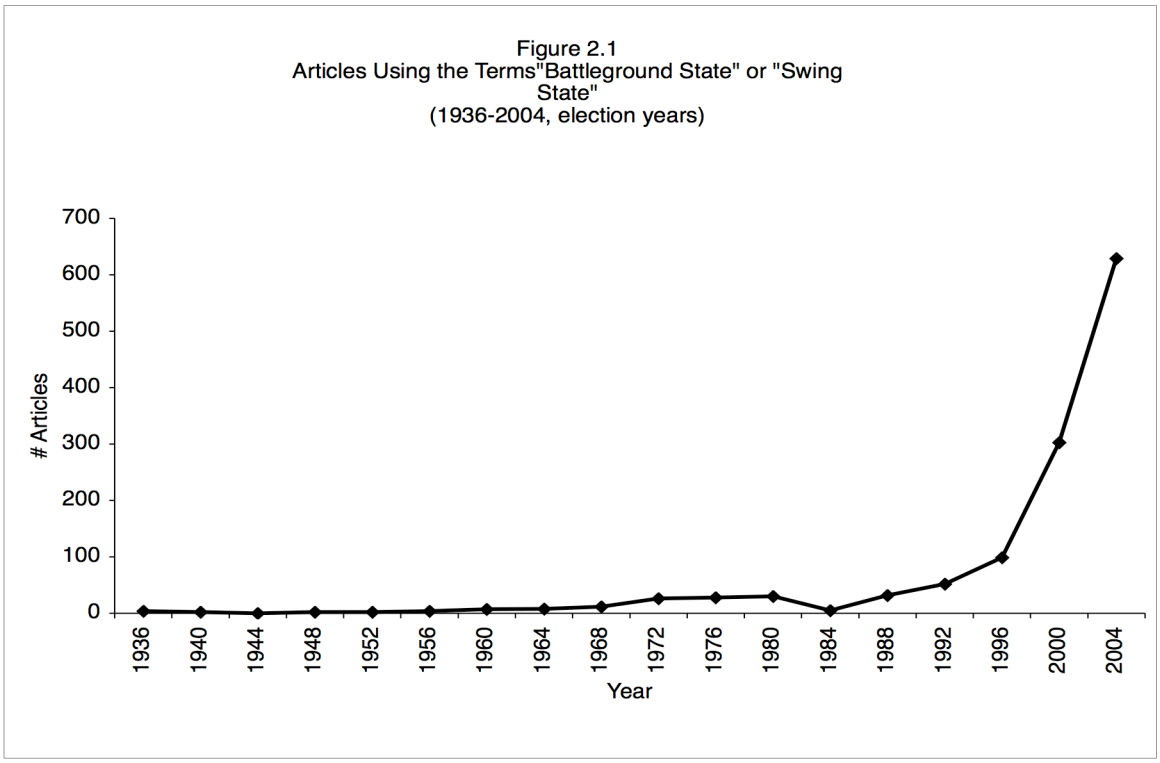
It is no wonder then that every four years debate about the democratic nature of the presidential election process becomes more pitched. Commentators and activists decry a set of institutions that leave many states with "little evidence that a presidential campaign even existed" (Polsby and Wildavsky 2000)." Media remind minority party voters in non-battleground states that their votes are inconsequential. In 2008, writing in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, columnist Dick Polman noted,

> "Only the 'swing state' citizens get to feel important at election time - which explains, for instance, why candidates typically lavish far more attention on Florida than on Massachusetts. The first principle of democracy is that all votes should be equal. But if you live in a state where the outcome seems foreordained, why bother to vote?"[7]

[6] "Welcome to Ohio-and the Heart of the Election Battle," *The Economist*. May 8, 2004, p. 27.
[7] "Electoral College is Not a System for Democracy," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. December 8, 2008, p. CO1

In highlighting the importance of battleground states and their voters, media diminish the value of voters in other states. Residents of non-battleground states, especially those not identifying with the state's majority party, become cast as observers of not participants in the presidential election process (Lipsitz 2009, Patterson 1993, Jamieson 1992).

As commonplace as battleground state coverage seems today, media attention to the centrality of certain states and their populations is a relatively new phenomenon. A simple content search of *The New York Times* reveals that labels like "battleground state" and "swing state" were utilized by that paper to describe states in a presidential election year at least as early as 1936 (four mentions), but the frequency of the terms' usage has skyrocketed in recent years increasing by almost 20 times between 1988 and 2004 (from 32 to 629 mentions, Figure 1).



What accounts for the increasing use of these terms? Does the spike in the use of phrases like "battleground state" or "swing state" really indicate increased media attention to the presidential campaigns' geographic strategies? Perhaps media have always covered the geographic elements of presidential campaigns and these labels merely indicate the media adoption of new terminology. Alternatively, media coverage could reflect real changes in presidential campaign strategies or in the nature of presidential elections. Is it possible that increased attention to geographic strategy reflects a change in the nature of U.S. presidential elections, like more competitive elections? Or does the increased media focus on battleground states reflect changes in media norms?

Whatever the answer, our definition and understanding of the battleground state concept and the implications of that concept for both popular and academic discourse reflects its use by the media. For citizens, the division of states into red, blue and "battleground," powerfully illustrates and promotes the idea of a divided nation. The use of the war metaphor by the media may alienate potential voters from the electoral process (Patterson 1993, Jamieson 1992),

especially when that metaphor explicitly tells millions of potential voters that their votes are meaningless because of where they live. Further, media categorizations dichotomize the electoral map into battleground and non-battleground classifications, regardless of the actual gradations of competitiveness or campaign activity within states. As noted in Chapter 1, the increasing utilization of the battleground state concept in political science research frequently reflects media estimations of the political playing field.

In this chapter, I investigate media attention to geographic contestation in presidential elections over time in order to answer the questions above and to illuminate our conception of the battleground state. I find that media today do pay more attention to geographic strategy and that changes in media norms, not in the nature of presidential elections or campaigns are the best predictors of this attention.

2.1 The Strategic Schema

Media coverage of presidential campaigns is extensive, and the media's increasing focus on the gamesmanship of political campaigns is well documented (Graber 2002, Lichter and Noyes 1995; Patterson 1993, Jamieson 1992, Anderson and Thorson 1989). Increasingly, media cover the horserace and strategic aspects of political campaigns, focusing on stories of who is winning and why. The media need to portray simple, objective, dramatic stories that are considered newsworthy tends to overwhelm issue-based campaign coverage. Even as media attention to the strategic elements of horserace politics has increased in recent decades, the role of news analysis and political pundits has increased (West 2001). In this context, polls, campaign strategy, and the personal and salacious details of candidates' lives receive more coverage than in the past.

The gamesmanship of politics is not a new news frame. The partisan press of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries promoted their own candidacies and agendas. But, the demise of the partisan press and the rise of professional norms of objectivity in the twentieth-century energized the focus on the horserace in election coverage (West 2001, Patterson 1993). As Patterson notes in the first half of the twentieth-century, "Attention to the game kept reporters in the political fray without requiring them to take sides." (1993, p.66) Until the 1960s, the framing of election coverage remained mainly within the control of candidates featuring the content of campaign speeches, descriptions of campaign events, and objective reports of who was winning.

When the relationship between reporter and political leader shifted to an adversarial one in the aftermath of the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, media attention to the machinations of political campaigning also shifted from a singular focus on who was winning and who was losing to a broader focus that included the strategic activities of political campaigns. In his content analysis of presidential election coverage from 1960 to 1992, Patterson details the shift from election coverage based on a policy schema, in which issues dominated, to coverage dominated by the game schema (1993, p.74). "The strategic game is embedded in virtually every aspect of election news, dominating and driving it. The game sets the context" (p.69). By 1984, he concludes election coverage was more likely to reflect interpretive accounts of the strategic context behind campaign events and policy initiatives, with less space allotted to candidates in their own words.

The shift to interpretive coverage focused on candidates' strategic motivations does more than reflect the adversarial nature of the relationship between candidates and their

campaigns with the media. In campaigns that now stretch over years, the game offers reporters a consistent source of new information for reporters and their audiences – who is up, who is down, and why is a constantly evolving storyline (Iyengar et al. 2004, Patterson 1993). Similarly, advances in polling technology allow media sources to create and publish their own news with each new survey (Traugott and Lavrakas 2000). And, media coverage of the horserace and strategic aspects of the campaign reflect consumer demand. Given access to news coverage of the candidates, the issues, the road to the nomination, and strategic/horserace coverage of the campaign, the latter dominate reader preferences (Iyengar et al. 2004). Finally, the growth of the consultant class as a professional body has both supplied media with the sources they need to meet their interpretive news frames and offered these consultants the opportunity to promote their clients and themselves (Sabato 1981, Thurber and Nelson 2000).

One consequence of the strategic frame around election coverage has been the increasing use of the war metaphor to describe campaign activity. Jamieson (1992) tracks the emergence of war language in the 1988 campaign and argues that by employing the language of war, reporters and commentators have been able to couple both horserace and strategic frames under one metaphor. "Where the strategy schema relied on the language of appearance, scripts and performance, the polling (horserace) schema centered on winning and losing votes. The language of war transcended this metaphoric divide." The concept of a battleground state then falls neatly within the new schema, particularly in an age in which interactive graphics increasingly organize election coverage. With their natural boundaries, the states offer a convenient set of visual and organizational aids by which the strategic maneuvers of the campaign war may be evaluated and tracked. Nowhere is this more evident than in election night coverage when television commentators eagerly await the state returns so that they may be the first to anoint a battleground state as red or blue.

Despite its commercial appeal, one consequence of the strategic framework and language of war is the potential alienation of citizens from the democratic process. As noted above, media frequently remind voters in non-battleground states of the insignificance of their votes either explicitly or by omission (despite of course, the presence of down ballot races). Moreover, the use of the strategic schema and war metaphor by the media align the reader or viewer as a spectator rather than a participant in the election process (Patterson 1993, Jamieson 1992). The audience feels less involved in a story framed within the strategic schema than within the governing schema, which elicits individuals' questions about issues and governance (Patterson 1993). In effect, by focusing the public on campaign strategy, the media cast the electorate as an audience who may critique the merits of a candidate's strategy and the implementation of that strategy without learning about candidate issues or qualifications and without taking on anymore responsibility in the political process (Jamieson 1992, p. 187).

2.2 Methodology

I conduct a content analysis to better understand media coverage of the geography of campaign strategy over time. Figure 1.1 and other anecdotal evidence suggest media attention to battleground state strategies is relatively new. Why should this be? The institution within which presidential campaigns operate, the Electoral College, has not changed significantly in recent

years.[8] There may in fact be nothing new about this coverage, and media may only have changed the language they use to describe geographic contestation between the presidential campaigns. Alternatively, analysis by media scholars shows an increase in the application of the strategic schema to campaign coverage beginning in the 1970s and 1980s. According to this hypothesis, an increase in media attention to the geography of campaign strategy would reflect an increase in the attention paid to strategy in general. Media attention to multiple aspects of geographic strategy should then have increased over time, including coverage of the geographic distribution of resources, the competitiveness of different geographic areas (the horserace), and the relative significance of different geographic areas to the outcome of the presidential race (the battleground).

> H_{0a}: Media references to the presidential campaigns' geographic strategies have been relatively constant over time.
>
> H_{1a}: Media references to the presidential campaigns' geographic strategies have increased over time.

What else might account for variation in media attention to geographic strategy? In competitive election years, media may pay more attention to the electoral map highlighting the potential impact of geographic targets. Similarly, after a close election like the 1960 and 2000 elections media may look to see if the same pattern will apply in the next election cycle. Coverage of geographic strategy may increase in the cycle following a close election. Perhaps media coverage reflects changes in the ways campaigns themselves operate. If battleground coverage has increased perhaps it reflects the adoption of battleground state strategies by the campaigns. Finally, it is possible that the geographic location of the news sources themselves account for differences in battleground coverage, especially if that newspaper is nestled within a battleground area or if reporters are looking to explain the strategic importance of a state or city to its residents.

> H_{0b}: Media references to the presidential campaigns' geographic strategies have increased over time, regardless of competitiveness or the number of electoral votes in play.
>
> H_{1b}: Media references to the presidential campaigns' geographic strategies increase when elections are more competitive or more electoral votes are up for grabs.
>
> H_{2b}: Media references to the presidential campaigns' geographic strategies reflect the use of battleground strategies by campaign operatives.

The material coded for this project is a simple random sample of media coverage of the presidential campaigns from 1960-2004. For each of the 12 elections in this analysis, I drew a random sample of articles from *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Chicago Tribune* from Labor Day through Election Day. I drew a sample of 30 articles from *The New York Times* and 15 articles each from the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* for a total population of 720 articles. Articles were collected through LexisNexis Academic and ProQuest. I created a pool of news articles in each election year for each newspaper with the

[8] The exceptions, of course, being Maine and Nebraska.

search terms "election," "campaign," "president" or "presidential," and the names of the presidential candidates and selected the articles using a random number generator from that pool.[9] When a selected article was irrelevant to the presidential election campaign, it was discarded and the next article in the pool was selected.

The author and one other coder, coded all 720 articles. Each coder coded a random sample of 36 articles from the total sample (5 percent) to test for coder reliability. The reliability statistics range from .88 to .90, thereby exceeding the .80 standard (Neuendorf 2002).[10] The sampling unit of analysis was each news article and the recording unit was geographic mention. That is every reference to a state, region, town or other geographic entity (precinct, county, etc.) was coded.

The coding scheme was designed to measure changes in both the quantity and quality of geographic mentions over time. Geographic mentions were categorized according to the character of the geographic mention, political characterization, size, and campaign resource allocation.

Coding Scheme

Geographic Characterization

Regional – the geographic mention groups areas of the United States together according to location (e.g. Northeast, South, etc.).

State – the geographic mention is of a state.

Local – geographic the mention is of some unit smaller than a state e.g., town or city, county, congressional district, etc.

Battleground

The geographic mention characterizes the area as central to a presidential campaign's overall strategy or as key to the presidential election outcome.

Political Characterization

Horserace – the geographic mention describes the state of the election in that area e.g., safe for one candidate, up-for-grabs, local poll results, could swing either way, etc.

Previous Performance - the geographic mention describes how the area has voted in the past.

Electorate – the geographic mention describes the area's voters by party or some other characteristic that the author argues is related to how they are expected to vote (i.e. race, religion, union member)

Size

The geographic mention refers to the size of the area e.g., number of

[9] In years where there was a strong third-party candidate, like 1992, I included that candidate's name in the search, as well.

[10] Percent agreement for battleground mentions was 95 percent with Cohen's kappa of .88. Percent agreement for horserace mentions was 95 percent with Cohen's kappa of .89. Percent agreement for all political characterizations 95 percent with Cohen's kappa of .90.

Electoral College votes, population size, "a big state," "the Big Nine," etc.

Resource Allocation

The geographic mention refers to the distribution of campaign resources in that area e.g. visits, fundraising events, media buys, field, money, etc.

Local Angle

The article carries a local angle. This is loosely coded, so that any mention of a state, city, etc. within the newspaper's geographic base merits the local angle characterization, coded 0-1 as a dummy variable. For example, with a mention of California in a *Los Angeles Times* article the article is coded 1.

I distinguish between the description of an area as competitive (horserace) and strategically important (battleground). Of course, each of these categorizations may overlap, but a competitive state is not necessarily crucial to an election strategy or election outcome. Competitive states with a higher electoral vote count, for example, might be expected to be more strategically important than competitive states with few electoral votes. I address the incidence of both characterizations, but I am particularly interested in media attention to the strategic aspects of geographic areas or the battleground.

2.3 Results

Table 2.1 References to Geographic Strategy 1960-2004 (ANOVA)
Source: *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*

	Battleground		Horserace		Resource Allocations		
	Mean	**St. Dev.**	**Mean**	**St. Dev**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**N**
1960s	.12	0.74	1.72	7.93	2.69	4.03	180
1970s	.27	0.89	1.14	3.59	2.94	4.39	120
1980s	.28	0.86	.76	2.01	2.46	3.18	180
1990s	.52	1.51	1.13	2.54	2.44	3.83	120
2000s	1.85	4.24	2.7	8.23	3.59	3.59	120
Total	.54	2.04	1.45	5.61	2.78	4.24	720
F	16.91***	2.04	2.49*		1.62		720

Cell entries are mean mentions per article.
*p<.05, **p<.01, **p<.001

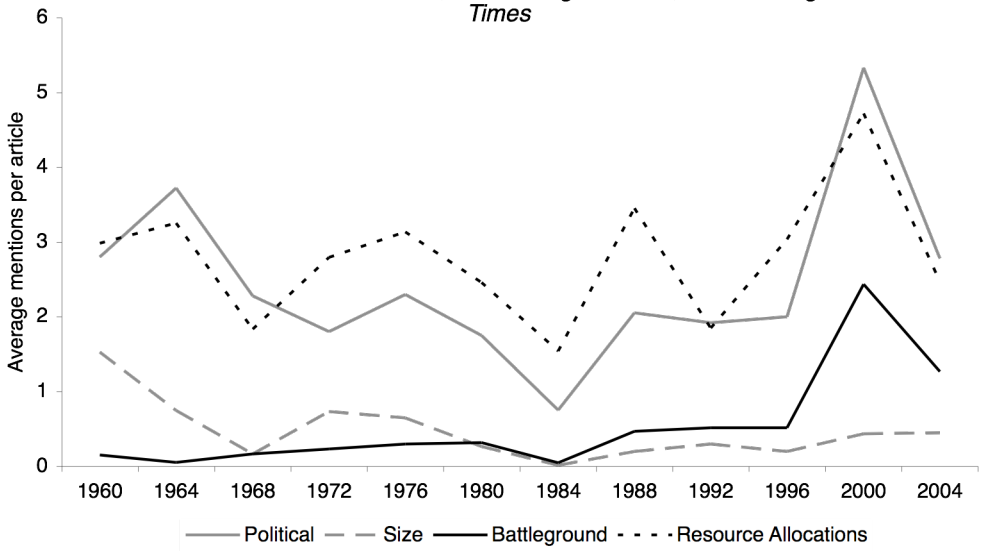
Media Coverage of Geographic Strategy[11]

The content analysis supports the hypothesis that media coverage of the presidential campaigns' battleground strategies has increased over time (Table 2.1). Mean mentions of battleground strategy, that is mean mentions of the strategic importance of particular geographic areas to presidential election outcomes, have increased over time growing from less than .12 mentions per article in the 1960s to almost two mentions per article in the last decade (μ =1.85). Media attention to battleground strategy doubled between the 1970s (μ= .27)and 1990s (μ= .52) and more than tripled for the 2000 and 2004presidential elections. Analysis of

[11] For difference of means tests by source see appendix. T-tests show no significant difference in coverage of battleground status between *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune* over time.

variance shows a significant increase (F=16.91, $p<.001$) in attention to battleground strategy over time.

Figure 2.2
Average Mentions per Article
1960-2004
Source: The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, The Los Angeles Times



In contrast, we can not reject the null hypothesis that coverage of how the campaigns allocate resources across geographic areas has also increased over time. There was on average nearly one more mention per article of a campaign's resource distributions in the last decade than in the 1960s, but coverage fluctuated over this time period and an analysis of variance is not statistically significant. This result is surprising. We would expect that as attention to the strategic schema has increased, so has attention to resource allocation strategies. However, because the measure is only of the geography of resource allocations (i.e. any reference to resource allocations that specifically described a geographic unit), we can not say that all coverage of campaign resources has not increased. Attention to the horserace aspects of campaign geography also fluctuated over time with a minimum amount of coverage in the 1980s ($\mu = .76$) and a high in the 2000 and 2004 elections ($\mu = 2.7$). We can reject the null hypothesis that horserace coverage has not increased over time (F=2.49, $p<.05$), but coverage was at its highest on average in the 1960s ($\mu=1.72$). This finding is consistent with the work of both Patterson (1993) and Jamieson (1992), who show that media norms of objectivity made horserace coverage a popular frame among journalists before the strategic schema emerged in the last few decades of the twentieth century.

Figure 2.2 depicts media coverage of the geography of presidential elections over time. Here coverage of the horserace, electorate, and previous vote history are combined in the "political" category. Geographic mentions that are framed politically fluctuated from a low in the 1984 election ($\mu =.75$ mentions per article) to an average of more than five mentions per article in 2000 ($\mu = 5.33$). Before 2000, political characterizations of geographic areas in the media were at their height in the 1964 election ($\mu=3.72$).

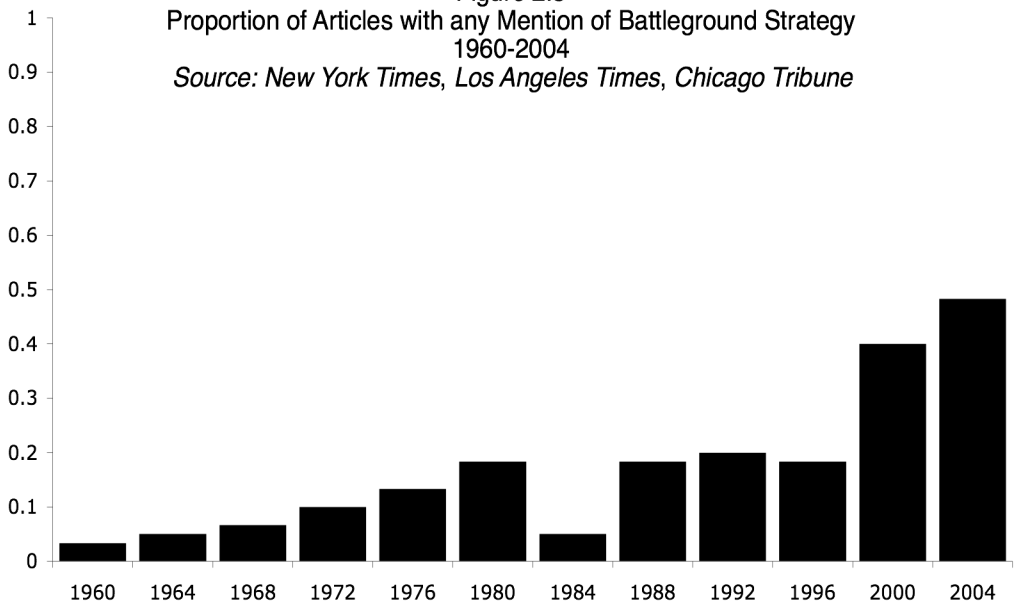
In contrast, the graph shows the decline in media attention to the size of geographic areas (e.g. electoral votes, number of voters) over time from nearly 1.5 mentions per article in the 1960

election to only .43 mentions per article in 2000. (As shown in Chapter 4, this coincides with changes in actual campaign strategies which have shifted from a focus on state size to a focus on the competitiveness of states.) Congruently, Figure 2.2 shows an increase in the attention paid to the strategic value or battleground status of various geographic areas over time, with a minimum of .05 mentions per article in 1964 and more than two mentions per article (μ=2.43) in 2000. Indeed, the proportion of articles with any mention of battleground strategy (Figure 2.3) has increased steadily over time.

In 1960, only 3 percent of articles about the presidential race contained any reference to the strategic importance of a battleground area. By 2004, 48 percent of all articles about the presidential election contained such a reference. References to battleground status increased steadily until 1980, when just over 18 percent of all articles included such a mention. After a dip in the landslide election of 1984 (only 5 percent of articles mentioned battleground status), attention to the battleground nature of a geographic area remained steady hovering between 18 and 20 percent of all articles until 2000. In that election year, coverage doubled with 40 percent of all stories about the presidential race including descriptions of the strategic importance of a geographic area.

These data suggest that the increased use of strategic schema by the media to frame presidential campaigns has increased the attention paid to the importance of particular geographic areas to presidential election outcomes. In particular, it is clear that the increased use of terms like "battleground state" and "swing state" shown in Figure 2.1 do not simply reflect a linguistic change. Media today do pay more attention to geographic strategy than they did in the past. However, it is not clear that media norms alone explain this change. Other potential explanations exist. It may be that media coverage reflects real changes in the presidential election process. The two most likely alternative explanations are that there has been some

Figure 2.3
Proportion of Articles with any Mention of Battleground Strategy
1960-2004
Source: New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune



change in the nature of presidential elections themselves or that campaigns behave differently

than they did in the past – identifying geographic areas in a more targeted manner.

2.4 Multivariate Analysis

To investigate the first alternative hypothesis, I conduct a negative binomial regression analysis to control for differences in presidential election years. The dependent variable is a count of the number of battleground mentions in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Chicago Tribune* between 1960 and 2004. Because there is strong evidence of overdispersion in the data (G^2= 229.36, p<.01) the negative binomial regression model is preferred to the Poisson regression model.

To control for differences in the nature of the presidential election I include several independent variables.

Open seat

Given the incumbency advantage, we might expect presidential candidates to be more active in more areas in an open seat race than in a race with a sitting president. Media coverage of battleground areas would increase to reflect this presidential activity (dummy variable, coded 0-1).

Geographic closeness

We might expect media attention to battleground areas to vary as the vote margin and number of electoral votes in play varies. This variable is the proportion of states whose margin was five percent or less in the previous election, weighted by Electoral College votes. Coded as [(Margin*Electoral Votes)/Total Electoral Votes], where the numerator represents states with a margin of five percentage points or less in the last presidential election.

Early polling

Media may take their cues from the pollsters. When polling in late August indicates the election will be close, we might expect the media to pay more attention to the battleground areas. This measure is the absolute two-party vote margin as indicated by polls taken in late August (see Appendix B for complete list of polls).

The regression analysis also includes controls for characteristics of the articles themselves. A journalist describing the competitiveness (horserace), campaign activity (resource allocations), or size of an area might also be more likely to describe its strategic importance. I also include a control for any local angle included in a story. That is, journalists describing their own city or state might be more likely to describe the relative strategic importance of that area to their readers. As the race tightens, the importance of particular geographic areas to election outcomes becomes more obvious, therefore I control for when an article was written. I expect that as Election Day approaches there will be more references to battleground status. I include dummy variables for each of the newspapers to control for differences between news sources.

Finally, I include measures to track changes in media attention to battleground status over time. Dummy variables for the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (with the 1960s withheld) are included in the analysis (Model 1). In a separate model (Model 2), I include a

measure for time (t-2004, where t=election year). By grouping articles by decade in Model 1 I achieve more statistical power, but in both cases, we expect a positive effect on the number of battleground mentions,

Results

Election characteristics show no significant effect on media coverage of battleground areas. We cannot reject the null hypothesis that media are no more likely to mention the strategic importance of geographic areas when there is an open seat race, when the election is close, or when the proportion of previously competitive states (weighted by electoral votes) increases.[12]

Table 2.2 Covering the Campaigns: Total Battleground References in the Media (Labor Day – Election Day, 1960-2004)

Source: *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*

	Model 1	(se)	Model 2	(se)
Article Characteristics				
Horserace Mentions	0.12***	(0.04)	.12***	(.04)
Resource Mentions	0.13***	(0.02)	.13***	(.02)
Size Mentions	0.005	(0.07)	.02	(.07)
Local Angle	1.12**	(.37)	.97***	(.35)
Proximity to Election	0.02**	(0.01)	-.02**	(.01)
Los Angeles Times	-0.63	(0.34)	-.65	(.34)
New York Times	0.24	(0.27)	.25	(.27)
Election Characteristics				
Open Seat	0.11	(0.32)	.08	(.30)
Current Polling	-0.02	(0.01)	-.02	(.01)
Past Geographic Closeness	-0.06	(0.34)	-.12	(.31)
Time				
1970s	0.82	(0.51)	-	
1980s	0.97*	(0.40)	-	
1990s	1.55***	(0.45)	-	
2000s	1.84***	(0.44)	-	
Time by year	-		.05***	(.01)
Constant	-2.30***	(0.56)	-.47***	(.44)
Pseudo R^2	.16		.16	
N	720		720	

Effects are significant at *p<.05, **p<.01, **p<.001

[a] 1960s and *Chicago Tribune* excluded.

On the other hand, we can reject the hypothesis that media mentions of battleground areas have not increased over time, *ceteris paribus*. Media coverage of battleground areas has increased in stories about the presidential elections over time. Coefficients for the 1980s (p<.05), 1990s (p<.001), and 2000s (p<.01) in Model 1 are statistically significant. For Model 1, holding all other variables constant, battleground mentions in articles written during the 1980s are expected to increase by a factor of 2.64, by a factor of 4.73 in the 1990s, and by a factor of 6.31 in the early part of this decade, holding all other variables constant. During the 2000 and 2004 campaigns, the probability that an article about the presidential campaign would contain no battleground mention dropped to .75 (95% c.i. .67 to .83) from .88 in the 1970s (95% c.i. .81 to .95). While there is still a significant probability that campaign articles will contain no mention

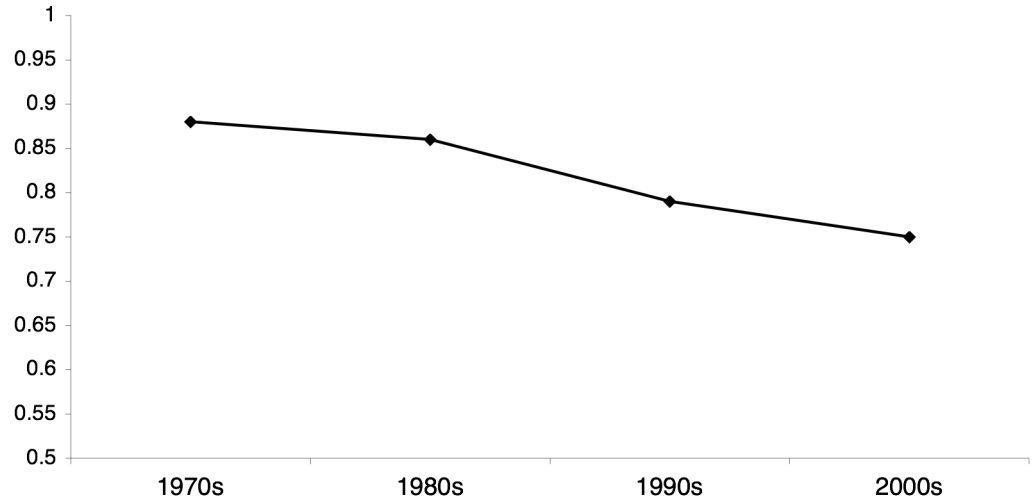
[12] Analyses of alternative measures of current and past competitiveness, like absolute two-party vote margin, found none of these measures was significant.

of the strategic importance of a geographic area, that probability has been decreasing over time.

When election years are not grouped together by decade (Model 2), time remains a significant predictor of battleground mentions ($p<.01$). For each consecutive election cycle the mean number of battleground mentions per election article is expected to increase by 4 percent. Put another way, the probability that an election article would contain no description of the strategic importance of a state, city or other geographic area in 1960 was 95 percent (95% c.i. 91 to .97) (Figure 2.4). By 2000 that probability had dropped to 76 percent (95% c.i. .70 to .83).

This analysis also shows the positive effect of horserace and resource allocation mentions on the number of battleground mentions in an article. When a journalist takes the time to

Figure 2.4
Pr(No Battleground Mentions)
Source: New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune



describe the competitiveness of an area or the allocation of campaign resources to an area, she is more likely to also include a description of the strategic importance of a geographic area to the election outcome. For example, for Model 2, holding all other variables at their means, increasing the mention of geographic competition or horserace from 0 to one mention increases the probability that there will be a battleground mention by .02. While this is a modest relationship, it does support Jamieson's argument that the horserace and strategic schema are related. Similarly, the probability of a battleground mention in a campaign article increases by 6.8 from .12 to 6.93 when mentions of resource distributions increase from 0 to the maximum recorded resource allocation mentions per article, 31.

2.5 Conclusion

The content analysis of presidential campaign coverage by three of the nation's largest newspapers shows that there has been a significant increase in the attention paid to the campaign battleground. Media today are more likely to discuss the strategic importance of particular geographic areas. Election characteristics do not explain this change. Journalists are more likely to describe the strategic importance of a geographic area when they are writing about their local

area, and they are more likely to describe battleground areas when mentioning the other political characteristics of an area (like competitiveness or resource allocations made to an area).

The data show that even in the most recent elections, each story about the presidential campaign does not necessarily include a battleground state mention. But such mentions are on the rise, and the potential for such coverage to alienate voters suggests it is important to understand the root of this trend. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 1, media characterizations of battleground states have carried over in to the political science literature.

The significant increase in battleground mentions over time, *ceteris paribus*, suggests that media use of the strategic schema extends to the geography of presidential campaigns. Alternatively, it is possible that media coverage reflects changes in the ways campaigns operate. Perhaps battleground states are a new phenomenon, reflecting a shift from national to state or even media market based strategies. In this case, the findings above can only be interpreted as a mirror of real changes in the way presidential campaigns in the United States are conducted. It is to this question, and our emerging understanding of the battleground state concept that I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

(Re)-Conceptualizing the Battleground State

The media and academic focus on the battleground state is relatively new, and the dearth of attention paid to battleground states leaves both many questions unanswered and a host of misconceptions. A more precise and valid battleground concept requires that we assess these vulnerabilities.

For example, what explains the recent increase in attention to cross-sectional variation in presidential campaign strategies? Is this simply more evidence of increased media attention to campaign strategy in general? Is the battleground state really a new phenomenon or is the concept finally getting the attention it deserves? Are battleground strategies dichotomous as the battleground/non-battleground labels suggest? Why should we care if presidential campaigns pay more attention to some states than to others? Do campaign battleground strategies really mirror each other in any given election year as many formal models assume? Does battleground status tell us how resources are allocated to a state? Should scholars trust the battleground labels publicly assigned to states by the media and campaign operatives?

In this chapter, I address these questions and examine the misconceptions and assumptions about battleground states that are frequently promoted by scholars, the media, and the public. Archival data, coupled with data collected by other scholars, illuminate the need for more careful analysis of the battleground concept and its implications.[13]

The data show that even today the true nature of state-level presidential strategies has been mostly overlooked and oversimplified, nullifying many of the basic assumptions used to explain campaign behavior and its effects. By ignoring the geographic aspects of campaign strategy, the field has failed to develop consistent measures or theories about this fundamental aspect of presidential campaigns. Consequently, scholars still know remarkably little about the causal mechanisms driving campaign strategies, how strategies evolve or the effects of those strategies on individuals and political institutions. Key to measuring campaign effects is recognizing when campaigns matter and to whom, but to do this we need to better understand what the campaigns are doing when, where, and why.

This chapter details both the geographic strategies designed by the campaigns and the subsequent state-level distribution of presidential campaign resources, beginning in 1960 with John F. Kennedy's presidential bid. In doing so, I explore both the preconditions and campaign mechanisms associated with different levels of battleground status. Chapter 4 analyzes the preconditions and explanatory variables that guide these campaign strategies and allocation patterns.

3.1 The enduring nature of the battleground state

The battleground/non-battleground classification may be new to the media and to presidential campaign effects models, but the archival records indicate the presidential campaigns have long prioritized some states over others (Table 3.1) and that these prioritizations are consequential. Even the "battleground" label is old hat to presidential campaign strategists, although every campaign adopts its own rhetoric.

[13] For a complete description of the archival data, see Appendix A.

For example, in a memo describing California's potential impact to the Kennedy campaign in 1960, campaign pollster Lou Harris wrote the state "must be considered one of the prime battlegrounds."[14] And, in June 1964, an internal campaign memo for the Johnson campaign notes, "On close examination it is clear that the key 1964 battleground will be the Midwest."[15]

According to original campaign plans for the 1976 Ford and Carter campaigns, strategists clearly identified some states as being more important to the election outcome than others. Strategy memos for both campaigns identified key target states. The Ford campaign labeled California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas as "Priority I" targets, which are "large swing states" to which "maximum resources" will be devoted.[16] And, Carter's strategy included singling out California, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan as "Super Battleground" states.

The prioritization of some states over others maintained strategic prominence in the 1980s and 1990s. Planning the "GOP Presidential Coalition of 1984," James Baker classified 17 states as "marginal" states, noting specific characteristics that would make those states easy or difficult targets for Reagan.[17] In 1988, the Bush campaign identified ten "Top Priority" states, including California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington. [18]

Accounts of campaign decisionmaking suggest the basic strategy – identify the safe states for each party, the states that lean toward each party, and the states that will require the most campaign attention – has changed little over time. Drawing from his own role in designing the Bush 2000 campaign's strategy, political scientist Daron Shaw (2006) writes that the Republicans rank ordered states according to Republican potential, and then broke up this ordering into five categories Base Democrat or Republican, Lean Democrat or Republican and Battleground states.

The electoral calculus strategists employ encompasses both an understanding of the geographic bases of both candidates and a plan by which to build a majority in the Electoral College. It is notable that many of the early campaign memos analyzed tend to loosely aggregate states for this calculus by region.

> "The first decision is whether to concentrate total effort on the northern industrial States from New Jersey to Wisconsin, plus California, or to devote some effort to peripheral southern States, plus California."[19] (1976 Ford Campaign)

[14] "A Study of the Presidential Election in California," September 1960, Box 46, Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, JFK Library.
[15] "A Johnson-Goldwater Campaign," June 17, 1964, Box 351, Public Relations, White House Central Files, LBJ Library.
[16] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.
[17] Memo from James Baker, Political Affairs 1/84-7/84 (5/5), Box 9, Baker, James A. III Files, Reagan Library.
[18] Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, Box 16, RNC Bowman Report on State and Political Operations, Memo from Christopher Bowman to Terry Wade (RNC Chief of Staff) April 1, 1988, George Bush Presidential Library.
[19] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.

The categorization of states according to their relative importance to the election outcome is a key building block for the entire campaign. Decisions about message and level of resource allocations all derive from these core rankings (See section 3.3 below).

> "You are really focused then on how you are going to campaign. You're focused on the budget. You're focused on the allocation of resources by state, what type of an electoral coalition are you going to put together to get the two hundred seventy electoral votes you need to win…and how you go out and solidify the strongest area first. And then you go to the marginal states and have to worry about the big marginal states---California and these big Midwestern states Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois."[20] (1976 Ford Campaign)

The first step in creating a geographic strategy is to identify each campaign's base of support. The size of this base determines how much campaign energy needs to be expended on more competitive states. For each election, party and candidate the size of the base will vary and so too will the number of states that are harder to win but necessary for electoral victory (Table 3.1).

Notably, even in the same election year, the campaigns may evaluate the landscape in different ways. For example, in 1976 the Ford team believed they started the election with 18 states (93 EVs) that were sure to vote or lean Republican.[21] In contrast, they gave the Democrats 16 states (114 EVs) and categorized 17 states (331 EVs) as high level of battleground states. In the same election, Carter strategists believed 20 states (224 EVs) were safe or leaning Democratic, 15 states (61 EVs) safe or leaning to the Republicans, and 15 states (243 EVs) were high level of battleground states.[22] While it is theoretically possible, none of the records examined by this reviewer indicate that a campaign entered the presidential race with the presumption of a majority in the Electoral College.

The prioritization of states is a longstanding strategic practice, affecting every aspect of the presidential campaign, as detailed below. While rhetorically convenient, these state prioritizations should not be classified as simple dichotomies, however. As section 3.2 explains, campaigns frequently assign complex ranking systems to organize the states.

[20] Interview with Robert Teeter by David Horrocks, May 5, 1997, Ford Presidential Library.
[21] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library
[22] Memo from Pat Caddell, August 1976, Powell Personal Papers, Box 37, Survey General Election, Carter Library.

Table 3.1 Examples of State Classifications by the Campaign s

1976 Ford[a]		1976 Carter[b]		1980 Carter[c]		1984 Reagan[d]		1988 Bush[e]		2000 Bush[f]	
Strategy	EVs	Strategy	EVs	Strategy	EVs	Strategy	EVs	Strategy	EVs	Strategy	EVs
Priority I: Large swing states- maximum resources	245	Battleground	82	Swing	189	Marginal	231	Top Priority: States we MUST take and will do anything to win	177	Battleground	158
Priority II: Swing states – heavy resources	86	Super Battleground	161	Marginal+	176	Reagan	176	High Priority: Important to our winning, but includes states we could lose	175	Lean Republican	50
Priority IIIA: Republican states – need some attention	50	Big State Likely D	67	Marginal-	69	Democrat	131	Medium Priority: States we should after, are not essential	30	Lean Democrat	76
Priority IIIB: Democratic States – need some attention	21	Likely D	50	Safe	69			Chip Shots: States we should win with minimal effort	91	Safe Republican	159
Priority IV: Safe Republican States – minimal resources	43	Possible R	32	Lost	104			Write-offs: States that should go Democratic	50	Safe Democrat	95
Priority V: Safe Democratic States – minimal resources	93	Safe D	107					Taxi Squads: States not targeted that could end up on our list	15		
		Likely/Safe R	29								

a. " Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library
b. Memo from Pat Caddell to Governor Carter, August 9, 1976, Survey General Election, Box 36, Powell Personal Papers, Carter Library
c. Memo from Pat Caddell, Campaign Strategy Caddell General Election File, Box 77, White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan, Carter Library
d. "The GOP Presidential Coalition of 1984," Box 9, James A. Baker Files, Reagan Library
e. Memo from Christopher Bowman to Terry Wade (RNC Chief of Staff) April 1, 1988, RNC Bowman Report on State and Political Operations, Box 16, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, George H.W. Bush Library
f. Shaw, Daron (2006)

3.2 Campaign strategies are not dichotomous

Presidential campaign strategists prioritize some states over others, and those priorities are multi-tiered and complex calculations. Despite the frequent dichotomization of battleground and non-battleground states, archival records indicate presidential campaign strategists actually categorize states into multiple categories, or levels of battleground (LBS) (for examples of campaign classifications see Table 3.1). The levels of battleground campaigns assign are consequential because they reflect both the distribution of resources to a state and the multiple outcomes campaigns work to attain. Dichotomizing strategy oversimplifies campaign decisionmaking, does not account for the true variation in geographic variables, and leads to poorly specified models.

Campaign strategists often rhetorically dichotomize their plans, talking about which states are "in play" and which are not (Shaw 2006), but this rhetoric oversimplifies campaign practices. For example, as Table 3.1 indicates, the 1976 Ford campaign, consultants and staff categorized the states into six categories (Priority I – Priority V, with two levels of Priority V states). In 1988, the plan for the Bush campaign utilized four categories (Top priority, High priority, Medium priority, No priority). "No Priority" states were further divided into three categories (Chip shots, Write-offs, and Taxi squads).

None of the campaign plans studied here was dichotomous, varying instead from three to seven categories. Shaw (2006) notes that in 2000 the Bush team decided, "States that Dole had carried would get minimal resources, while states that had gone Democratic in 1996 but were designated battlegrounds for 2000 would get significant attention." Importantly, Shaw (2006) says, the Bush team then prioritized battleground states according to a "complex algorithm" (which he does not share with the reader) that accounted for past statewide voting history, current poll numbers, organizational development, the existence of other races in the region, issues and native-son effects. This first person account of the creation of the Bush plan exemplifies three points. First, campaigns may allocate resources to so-called safe states, so scholars should not assume base states see no campaign activity (see more below). Second, all states categorized as high priority targets are not necessarily equal, but are also ranked in importance. Third, campaign strategists consider more than just state size and competition in devising level of battleground priorities.

The Bush algorithm is not new. Earlier presidential campaigns also used formulas to prioritize the states. For example, in 1976 Hamilton Jordan devised a point system to rank order the states.[23] Jordan's formula accounted for each state's size, Democratic potential, and "need" or the "relative amount of time, resources and energies that we should invest in a particular state" in 1976.

$$\underline{\text{Size + Democratic Potential + Need = Total Points}}$$
$$50\% \quad + \quad 25\% \quad + \quad 25\% \quad = \quad 100\%$$

OR

538 pts. + 280 pts. + 265 pts. = 1083 pts.

[23] Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter and Senator Mondale, July 1976, Box 199, Director's Office, Campaign '76, Carter Library.

Under Jordan's plan a state's size or Electoral College vote weighed twice as much as the other variables (Table 3.2). The Democratic Potential of a state, the states "most likely to vote Democratic if worked effectively," was derived by an additional formula that weighted statewide elected officials, congressional delegations, state legislatures, and 1972 presidential election results. Finally, Jordan grouped the states into four categories according to "need." As Jordan noted, these groupings required the "most arbitrary judgments." For example, the states with the highest needs were those states Carter lost or won narrowly in the primaries, states given little attention in the primaries, and states that campaign polling showed were very competitive. In contrast, states designated as having the lowest level of need were the candidates' home states (GA and MN), the smallest states (RI, DE, and DC), the hardest to reach states (AK and HI), and states that "deserve very little of our resources" (NB, KS, AZ, WY, and SD).

Table 3.2 1976 Carter Presidential Campaign State Prioritization Formula[a]

State	Size (3-45 EVs)		Democratic Potential (2.2-9.0 pts.)		Need (2.0-6.2 pts.)		Total	Total ÷ 1083		% of Effort
AK	3.0	+	2.2	+	2.0	=	7.2	7.2 ÷ 1083	=	0.6%
CA	45.0	+	9.0	+	9.8	=	63.8	63.8 ÷ 1083	=	5.9%
GA	12.0	+	4.5	+	2.0	=	18.5	18.5 ÷ 1083	=	1.7%
MD	10.0	+	4.5	+	9.8	=	24.3	24.3 ÷ 1083	=	2.2%
PA	27.0	+	6.7	+	6.2	=	39.9	39.9 ÷ 1083	=	3.6%

[a] Excerpt from memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter, Table IV, July 1976, Box 199, Campaign 76 Director's Office, Carter Library.

Presidential campaign accounts that dichotomize strategy by referring to battleground and non-battleground states overlook the complexity of strategists' calculations. Unfortunately, scholars often adopt the media's simplistic rhetoric to both describe and quantify presidential campaigns and their effects. Dichotomous measures of battleground status are now frequently introduced, for example, as a proxy measure for campaign intensity (Gilens et al. 2007; Freedman et al. 2004). As the next section shows, this simplification not only misrepresents strategic practice it also blurs the consequences of campaign priorities.

3.3 Level of battleground strategies matter

> "A key state list which will allow us to: allocate resources effectively, select and manage issues pinpointed at winning constituencies, develop electoral criterion for selecting a Vice President, schedule the President, Vice President and advocates, take advantage of media markets."[24] (1976 Ford Campaign)

The decisions presidential campaign strategists make about state prioritizations consequential. Battleground strategies influence how resources are allocated over the course of a campaign, the campaign issue agenda, and the tone of the campaign. This seems like an obvious point, but until recently few campaign effects scholars considered cross-sectional variation in the allocation of campaign resources as explanatory variables, and reviews of the literature reveal no

[24] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.

studies that consider the impact of state prioritization strategies on campaign issue agendas or message development, except for the most recent elections. Scholars today are more likely to consider state prioritization, but this practice is by no means universal and is often over-simplified. Commentators and scholars should remember that winning the election is the primary but not the only goal of presidential campaigns. Establishing a congressional coalition, building a presidential mandate, and meeting the demands of interest groups and supporters all contribute to the geography of presidential campaigns. While the discipline has developed standards regarding the use and measurement of individual level explanatory variables in presidential campaign effects models, there has been very little dialogue about the appropriate measurement and use of geographic level variables.

Evidence of the relationship between the LBS assigned to the states by a presidential campaign and the subsequent resource allocation patterns provides further evidence that researchers looking for campaign effects should investigate beyond the strategic rhetoric that simplifies state importance into dichotomous categories. As noted above, Carter's campaign director Hamilton Jordan prioritized states in 1976 according to a complex calculation that assigned each state a unique ranking called "per cent of effort." That calculation was used to provide "a framework for the allocation of our major resources" over the course of the campaign (Table 3.2).[25] The level of Carter campaign activity in any state derived directly from this calculation. For example, to determine where to send the candidates and their surrogates, Jordan multiplied the "per cent of effort" assigned to a state by the total number of scheduling points (947 pts.) available during the campaign.[26] Jordan determined Indiana earned 24 scheduling points (2.5 per cent effort x 947 points). This might result in three visits from Carter (7 points per visit) during the fall campaign and one visit from Joan Mondale (3 points per visit).

The details of the decision-making campaigns use to apply their state priorities to allocation patterns are not always so clear or openly documented. But personal accounts and allocation data suggest the relationship is similar across campaigns. For the George W. Bush 2000 campaign, "States at the top of the list were the highest priority with respect to resource allocation, while states at the bottom were on the 'watch list'…the middle tier battleground states would receive some campaign resources." (Shaw 2006) As expected, the Bush team's resource allocations were concentrated in their high level of battleground states and less concentrated in lower priority states.

Campaign data indicate a similar pattern in other presidential campaigns. In 1988, the mean number of visits George H.W. Bush made to a state varied according to the level of prioritization assigned to a state (Table 3.3). On average, Bush visited his campaign's top priority states 5.1 times, and mean visits to lower priority states were significantly lower. In 1976, the Ford campaign ran an average of 3.8 spot television ads in the states assigned top priority, and states deemed a lower priority received significantly less advertising.

Utilizing dichotomous state priority levels may be an improvement over ignoring cross-sectional variation altogether, but the simplistic characterization carries its own shortcomings. Implicit in the assumption that states are either a battleground or a non-battleground are two other misconceptions – first, that so-called "non-battleground" states receive no or meaningless resource allocations, and second that once assigned a level of priority all states within that

[25] Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter and Senator Mondale, July 1976, Box 199, Director's Office, Campaign '76, Carter Library.

[26] Total scheduling points was the sum of the assigned numerical value of a visit by each candidate or surrogate, multiplied by the number of days that person would travel, for a total of 947 scheduling points to be disseminated.

category are treated the same. On the first point, archival evidence demonstrates that even states that are low priority targets may receive campaign attention and resources (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Allocation of Resources by State Prioritization

State Prioritization			
Bush 1988	**Mean Bush Visits[a]**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
No Priority	.56	.92	25
Medium Priority	1	.71	5
High Priority	1.1	1.6	10
Top Priority	5.1	4.4	9
F = 10.67***			
Ford 1976	**Mean Weeks TV Spot Advertising[b]**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
Safe Democrat	1.42	1.31	12
Safe Republican	.4	.84	10
Lean Democrat/Republican	2.17	.83	12
Swing States	2.63	.52	8
Large Swing States	3.78	.67	9
F = 18.44***			

ANOVA analysis

a. Taken from Teeter: Box 56, "The Week that Was/To Come," Box 56, Robert Teeter Papers and "Bush's 1988 Campaign (October)," Box 5, 1988 Campaign Files, Hoffman, George H.W. Bush Library.

b. Compiled from multiple records, see "Budget Exhibits," Box E42, President Ford Committee General Election: Deardourff Files, Sound Roll, Ford Library.

For example, so-called safe states may garner attention to shore up the base, keep the opposition off balance, or build party strength. In 1976, the Ford campaign ran an average of 3.8 spot television ads in the states assigned top priority, and states deemed a lower priority received significantly less advertising, but Safe Democratic states saw significantly more advertising than Safe Republican states from Ford. Of the safe Democratic states in 1976, the Ford strategy memo noted, "Our strategy in these States would be to force Carter to devote resources here to keep his base. We should have one PFC official devoted full-time to creating "paper" organizations (Hollywood fronts) in these States."[27] Democrats, too, use resource allocations to try to weaken opposition strongholds. The goal in these cases is not to win a plurality in a state likely to vote for the opposition, but to force the opposition to divert valuable and limited resources away from more competitive states.

> "We should spend a small amount of time early in the campaign challenging Ford in states that are traditionally Republican states in a Presidential election. Ford lacks a base of support – there is not a region of the country nor a political grouping of states that he can count on in November…we can

[27] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," p. 55, August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.

effectively put Ford on the defensive, making him spend time and money in states he should carry."[28] (1976 Carter Campaign)

Campaigns may also expend resources in states not deemed essential to Electoral College outcomes because they have other interests in the state. In particular, records indicate strategists consider long-term goals like shoring up their Congressional delegation and increasing the national popular vote to enable them to claim a national mandate. These may be secondary goals that are more pronounced in landslide elections, but the archival data indicate some campaign activity even in some low LBS states in all the elections reviewed.

"It would seem that [Johnson's] campaign will thus be directed at not only tying down such big electoral states as New York…but also at gaining the 'contested' Midwestern states. Such a strategy would not only deny these electoral votes to Goldwater, but would be expected to aid the campaigns of other Democratic candidates there. The result would be not only a sizeable electoral victory for President Johnson, but also sizeable Democratic majorities in Senate, House, and Governorships, providing the President with a strong power base for the term ahead."[29] (1964 Johnson Campaign)

"If by mid-October we have a commanding lead and have the flexibility previously advocated, the goals and objectives of the campaign can be appropriately broadened…we can begin to spend an appropriate amount of time and resources trying to win the mandate we will need to bring real change to this country."[30] (1976 Carter Campaign)

Clearly, state priorities influence resource allocations in complex and multi-tiered ways, but these priorities also influence the issues and tone emphasized in a campaign. Strategists identify the issues key to voters in high priority states (and the target markets within those states, see below) and craft language about these issues into messages that resonate with these voters.

Polling and focus groups are a key component in developing targeted issues and messages (Table 3.4). In the 1960 and 1964 races, campaigns tended to poll several times in a key state over the course of a campaign. By the 1970s and 1980s, tracking polls that extend over weeks were commonly used in key states. In 1960, the Kennedy campaign conducted 85 per cent of its polling in just 19 states (337 EVs). Ford's 1976 campaign conducted 54 per cent of its statewide polling in 10 states (234 EVs) and tracking polls in just 6 states. And, in 1988 the Bush campaign ran 61.7 per cent of its statewide polls in only 11 states (206 EVs, with tracking polls in 26 states).

Polling patterns are key because in addition to measuring candidates' levels of support in a specific state, the polls track the strength of different messages and issues within key voter groups within a state. Campaign poll records indicate what geographic areas the campaigns were

[28] Hamilton Jordan, Box 199, Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter, July 1976, Campaign '76 Director's Office, Carter Presidential Library.
[29] "A Johnson-Goldwater Campaign," June 17, 1964, p.3, Box 351, Public Relations, White House Central Files, LBJ Library.
[30] Hamilton Jordan, Box 199, Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter, July 1976, Campaign '76 Director's Office, Carter Presidential Library.

most concerned about. Poll results directly influence the messages and resources targeted at a given state and voter bloc within that state, and they have done so since at least 1960.

Table 3.4 Examples of Campaign Polling Across the States

1960 Kennedy

Polls	States	EVs	Total Polls	Per Cent Polls
0	24	140	0	0.00
1	8	60	8	15.38
2	13	152	26	50.00
3	6	185	18	34.62

1976 Ford

Polls	States	EVs	Total Polls	Per Cent Polls
0	20	106	0	0.00
1	11	91	11	16.42
2	10	102	20	29.85
3	5	103	15	22.39
4	4	111	16	23.88
5	1	25	5	7.46
Tracking Polls	6	-	-	-

1988 Bush

Polls	States	EVs	Total Polls	Per Cent Polls
0	19	155	0	0.00
1	7	48	7	6.09
2	5	40	10	8.70
3	5	61	15	13.04
4	3	28	12	10.43
5	6	102	30	26.09
6	3	34	18	15.65
7	1	47	7	6.09
8	2	23	16	13.91
Tracking Polls	26	334	-	-

a. JFK polls - Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Administration Political Papers Boxes 44-46
b. Ford polls –
c. Bush polls - Robert Teeter Collection Boxes 14-19, George H.W. Bush Library

For example, in 1960, the Kennedy campaign prioritized states into six categories. Using polling, they identified different issues and themes to promote in television spot advertising according to the different populations of each state and television market. In Cleveland, Ohio the campaign chose to emphasize unemployment, civil rights, protecting domestic industry, and medical care for the aged. While in Columbus, Ohio their ads were to emphasize religion, conservative themes, anti-communism, and education.[31]

[31] Memo from Steve Smith to Campaign Coordinators, October 19, 1960, Box 37, Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Kennedy Library.

In a 1988 memo analyzing tracking poll results in Michigan for George H.W. Bush, one strategist noted, "Bush trails among older women" and "the economy and crime/drugs are the top two issues with 50+ constituencies."[32] Similarly, in 1992, Bush campaign strategists, who worried about Bill Clinton's strength in Washington state, advocated that Bush force his opponent into a discussion about NAFTA. Educating Washington state voters about Clinton's positions on the Endangered Species Act and the Spotted Owl controversy would "enhance the President's chance of winning the state" but would "not be enough." Instead, "the campaign should also focus on making Clinton choose a side on the NAFTA issue. If Clinton sides with those who say that dropping trade restrictions will result in job loss, his support in the state could decrease."[33]

The 1976 Ford campaign agreed the goal in targeted states was to "build on [Ford's] base of rural and small town majorities with suburban Independents and ticket splitters. All successful Republican candidates in these states have won with the same constituency."[34] To do so, strategists wrote, the campaign should "develop positions on specific issues designed to appeal to the [Independent] voter bloc (such as 'quality of life' issue)," while messages targeting ticket splitters should "position the President as strongly concerned with religious and ethnic groups" and "show a strong opposition to government programs which equalize people rather than let people help themselves."

Strategists not only determine which issues to emphasize based on their appeal to specific key state and local audiences, they also identify voter preferences within specific geographic targets to develop the tone of the campaign. In 1976, Ford's strategists argued the campaign should work in targeted states with key blocs of Independents to develop the perception of Carter as an inexperienced, highly partisan, liberal unknown, who, like Nixon, was too slick and media-oriented. Meanwhile, in targeted areas with a high concentration of ticket splitters, the campaign should present Carter as a flip flopper and force him to "take positions on issues (break up his coalition)."[35]

3.4 Within the states, the media market as battleground

As Section 3.3 indicates, presidential campaign strategists do not stop their prioritization of geographic areas at state borders. Rather, this is simply the first step in the process of identifying geographic targets. Strategists similarly prioritize regions within a state, identifying strongholds and the areas that are most competitive. While campaigns may allocate relatively fewer resources to low versus high level of battleground states, this is not necessarily the pattern followed within states. Rather, strategists recognize that they must turnout high numbers of voters in safe regions in a state as well as persuade and mobilize voters in competitive regions in order to win the plurality of a state's popular vote and all of its Electoral College votes.

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[32] Memo from Fred Steeper to Bob Teeter and Vince Breglio, Nov. 2, 1988, Box 18, US Tracking and Rolling National Survey, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, George H.W. Bush Library.
[33] Memo from Karen Schaefer and Jake Jacobson to David Hansen and Fred Steeper, Sept. 21, 1992., Box 85, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, George H.W. Bush Library.
[34] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.
[35] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.

For example, in 1964, voter registration was a key component of the Johnson campaign's strategy. But, campaign officials did not target swing districts among the highest level of battleground states. Rather they targeted Democratic strongholds in those states, setting up registration drives where the 1960 vote had been "60 per cent [or more] for Kennedy."

> "A private poll ordered taken by President John F. Kennedy in the precincts or wards he carried by sixty percent or better, indicated hat seven out of ten non-registered citizens of voting age would have voted for Democratic candidates…the Division has aided local registration programs in twelve target states and more than 50 target areas. More than eighteen thousand precincts out of the nation's total of 175,000 have or will be worked in this effort."[36] (1964 Johnson Campaign)

Archival records indicate two common regional breakdowns strategists use within state borders are county and media market boundaries, which overlap. Some scholars and campaign strategists suggest targeting media markets is a relatively recent approach (West 2010, Geer and Lau 2005, Shaw 1999c), but the archival data indicate such targeting is a long-standing campaign practice. For example, in 1960, the Kennedy campaign created a prioritized state list and then used media market level data to design their television and radio ad plan.[37] The team organized advertising in the states by categorizing the states into six categories (Priority 1, Priority 2, etc.) and then identified key cities within each state, the number of television homes in each of these cities, and a detailed plan for the quantity and type of advertising each city was to receive. For example, the campaign identified six major markets in Ohio (a top priority state). Strategists planned to spend $33,658 on TV ads in Cleveland, the largest market with 1.3 million television homes, and just $4,740 in Youngstown, the smallest market with 144,500 television homes. According to campaign records, the cost difference between these markets reflected not just the cost of advertising in each market, but also the campaign's plan to air fewer television ads in Youngstown. In 1976, the Carter campaign chose to run spot television ads in 29 states.[38] Within those states, the campaign aired a different number of spot ads in each market. For example, the campaign planned to run 66 spot ads in the Los Angeles market and only 26 ads in the Monterey/Salinas market during the final week of the campaign.

Early campaign records also indicate that strategists did consider media market contributions to their total vote goals within a state as early as 1960, but the combination of polling and turnout analysis at the media market level first appear in the campaign records of the 1980s. Both the 1988 and 1992 Bush campaign records show how the campaigns used county/media market targets (Table 3.5). In each campaign, the Bush team identified media markets or Areas of Dominant Influence (ADIs).[39] For example, in 1992, each state was broken down into its ADIs, and each ADI was analyzed for number of existing Republican votes, the expected contribution of Republican votes to the total statewide Republican vote, the total

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[36] Statement of Matthew A. Reese and Kenneth O'Donnell to the press, October 2, 1964, Box 33, White House Aides: Moyers, Johnson Library.

[37] Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 38, Memo from Guild, Bascom & Bonfigli, August 29, 1960, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

[38] Media buy data, Boxes 273-274, Situation Room Administrative Assistant, Bill Simon, 1976 Campaign Files, Carter Library.

[39] In 1988 these were referred to as MWCAs, today they are more commonly referred to as Designated Markets Areas (DMA).

statewide expected vote, the Bush percentage of the vote in 1988, the minimum Bush vote needed to win in 1992, how well Bush did in 1988 (under- or over vote) and the number of electoral votes contributed to the total state vote per media market. For example, Cleveland (ADI 35) with nearly 1.6 million voters was estimated to contain 734,000 Republican votes, representing 33 per cent of the total statewide Republican vote and 6.9 of the state's 21 electoral votes. The analysis indicates 48.6 per cent of voters in the Cleveland market voted Republican in 1988, while the Bush team estimated they needed a minimum vote (MVA) of 46.1 per cent of the market's votes in 1992 to win the state. A memo to pollster Robert Teeter noted, "This political data is now being fitting (*sic)* into a media allocation model with media market and census data."[40] Polling analysis for Bush throughout the 1988 and 1992 elections included graphs comparing target two-party vote margins in specific media markets with the two-party vote margins recorded in surveys (Figure 3.1).

The notion that media market strategies are a new practice contributes to the misconception that targeted media market strategies have replaced national advertising strategies. Recent presidential campaigns are not the first to favor advertising campaigns targeted at specific markets and specific audiences within those markets (Table 3.6) over national ad buys. For example, in 1960, the Kennedy campaign allocated more advertising dollars to targeted spot advertising than to their national ad buys. The Kennedy plan allocated $1,247,350 to network television, including half-hour programs, and shorter five-minute announcements. In contrast, the campaign developed a highly targeted spot television plan, allocating $2,155,349 to spot television announcements in individual states. Notably, the plan allocated $1.4 million (64.2 percent of total spot ad spending) on just eight states.

[40] Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 32, Memo from Frank Thompson to Robert F. Kennedy, September 1960, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

Table 3.5 Minimum Vote Analysis (MVA) Goal and Bush 1988 Vote by ADI's Within States: Ohio (Sorted by State)

State	ADI	*ADI Name*	Electoral Votes	Republican Votes	Contribution to State Republican Vote	Total ADI Votes	Bush Pct in 88	MVA in ADI	1988 Under- or Over- Performance
OH	35	Cleveland	6.9	734,010	33.0	1,593,113	48.6	46.1	-8.1
	121	Columbus, OH	3.7	39,0029	17.5	710,235	63.0	54.9	5.7
	93	Cincinnati	3.3	35,3257	15.9	626,244	64.8	56.4	7.1
	95	Dayton	2.5	26,1608	11.8	494,906	62.5	52.9	7.3
	55	Toledo	2.0	20,9147	9.4	411,806	55.5	50.8	-2.3
	31	Youngstown	1.0	10,8200	4.9	268,877	39.9	40.2	-15.0
	257	Charleston-Huntington	.5	56,450	2.5	116,397	53.6	48.5	1.1
	103	Wheeling-Steubenville	.4	42,449	1.9	104,989	43.1	40.4	-7.9
	101	Lima	.3	26,745	1.2	45,109	69.3	59.3	11.6
	125	Zanesville	.2	17,406	.8	32,096	62.8	54.2	8.1
	259	Parkersburg	.1	13,473	.6	24,528	59.7	54.9	1.1
	91	Ft. Wayne	.1	12,523	.6	21,700	68.0	57.7	11.8

Source: "1992 Guide to Targeting," George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, Box 85

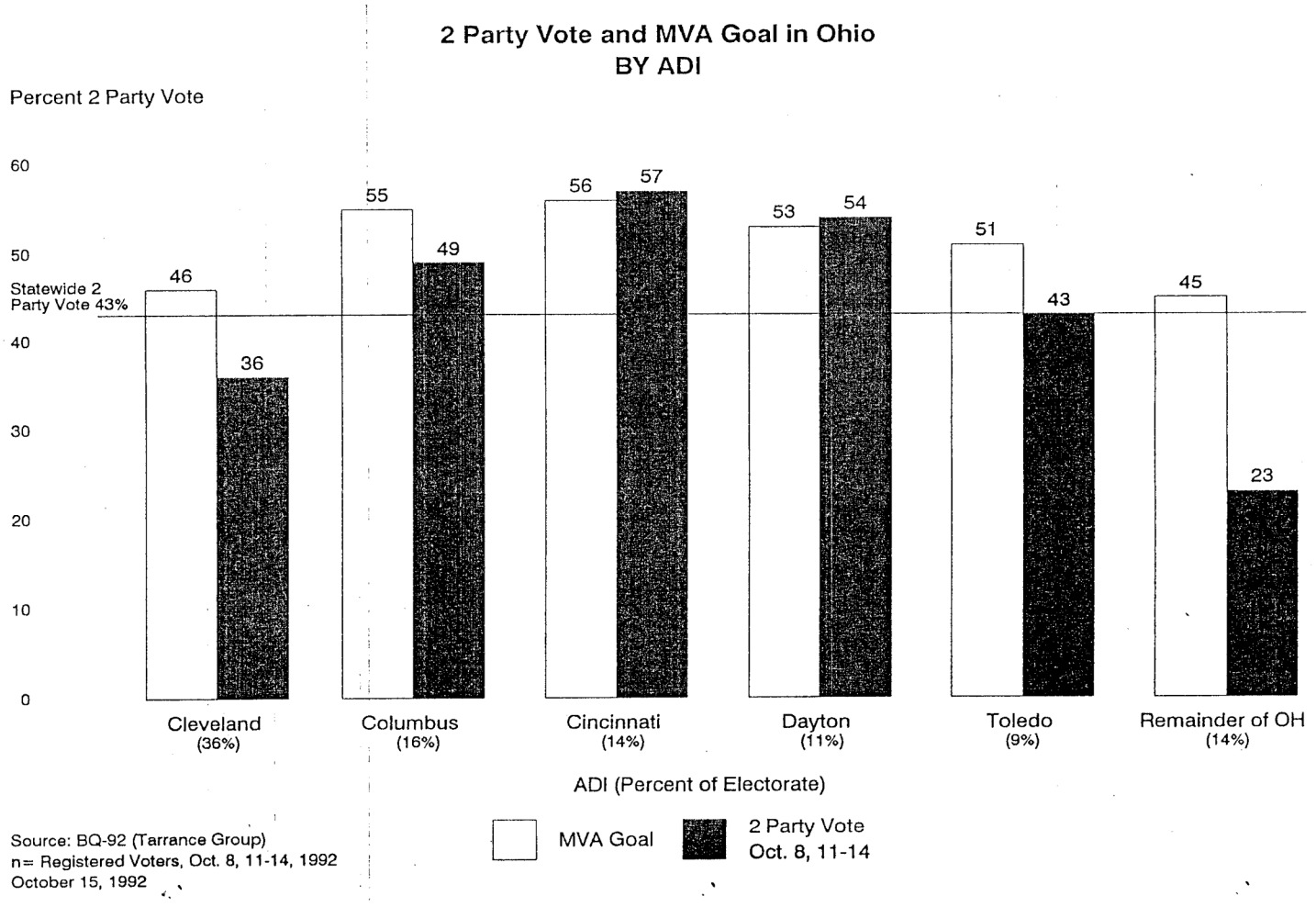


Figure 3.1 Excerpt from "1992 Guide to Targeting: Minimum Vote Analysis Goals and 1988 Vote at the ADI Level," April 28, 1992, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, Box 85 , George H.W. Bush Library.

Table 3.6 1960 JFK Campaign Media Market Priorities

	Priority Level	States	EVs	Per Cent Total Spot Ad Spending	Dollars Spent (1960 dollars)
Network Ad Buys	-	-	-	-	$1,247,350.00
Spot Ad Buys by State					
	No Spending	15	118	0	$ 0.00
	Alaska and Hawaii	2	6	0.13	$2,772.00
	Priority #4 States	6	30	4.48	$96,408.00
	Priority #3 States	7	37	4.52	$97,233.00
	Priority #2 States	12	125	26.67	$573,282.00
	Priority #1 States	8	221	64.2	$1,380,083.00
	Total	50	537	-	$2,149,778.00
Market Ad Buys	**(Example: 1960 JFK Priority 1 States, excerpt of Ohio Plan)**				
	Day Mins.	Night 20’	Night ID	Night 5-Min	
Cleveland	23	27	27	12	$33,658
Youngstown	15	23	21	8	$4,740

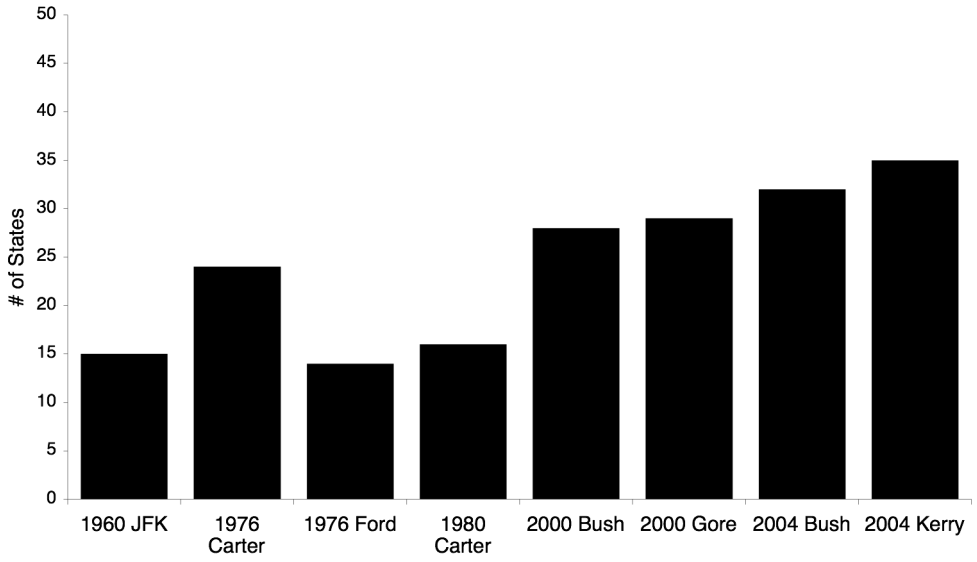
Source: RFK Pre-Administration papers, 1960 Campaign and Transition, Box 38, Guild, Bascom & Bonfigli, Inc., August 17, 1960, “Spot TV Prioritization,” JFK Library

What seems to have changed over time is not that the campaigns only recently discovered media market strategies or even that they previously allocated more resources to national than spot ad buys. Indeed, comparing TV ad strategies over time shows that a number of states have long gone without targeted spot advertising (Figure 3.2). In 1960, the Kennedy campaign did not run spot ads in 15 states. Similarly, in 1976, Carter’s spot ad plan ignored 24 states. In 2000, Bush and Gore did not run spot ads in slightly more states (28 and 29 states, respectively). This trend seems to have peaked in 2004 when Bush and Kerry did not advertise in 32 and 35 states, respectively. Historical trends suggest 2004 was an anomaly. Notably, in 2008, the Obama campaign, flush with funds, having opted out of the public financing system, and running ahead in the polls implemented a broader national ad strategy and used targeted television advertising in more states than seen in 2000 or 2004.

A similar pattern is found in candidate travel. Combining county level vote patterns, candidate appearances and media market data from 1972-2000, Althaus et al. (2002) examine campaign appearances and find that over time presidential campaigns have tended to send their candidates on more visits and to more locales. They find that the percentage of counties and media markets to host five or more visits more than doubled between 1972 and 2000 – so that the percentage of voters exposed to multiple campaign events has grown, especially beginning in 1996 and 2000. These counties and media markets tend to be located in the most competitive states, but the authors also show that these competitive states don’t receive proportionately more visits than they did in the 1970s, rather there has been an increase in overall presidential campaign intensity.

In the most recent years, campaigns seemed to be moving away from national ad buys, but 2008 reveals that this move was not permanent and may be short-lived. In contrast, the presidential campaign emphasis on state and media market driven strategies is by no means a new phenomenon. The experience of the Obama campaign points to a potential new trend. Released from the constraints of the public financing system the Obama team had the ability to expand the electoral battlefield. Outspent, the McCain team had no such opportunity. If, as seems likely, 2008 marks the end of the public financing system, then future presidential campaigns will also have the opportunity to expand the electoral map and similarities between the strategies employed by opposing campaigns may decline. As section 3.5 shows the presidential campaigns in any given year are not perfect mirrors of each other, and given greater resources differences may become even more apparent.

Figure 3.2
States with No Spot Television Advertising



Source: Archival campaign records and (Shaw 1999a, 2006) see Appendix A.

3.5 Presidential campaigns not perfect mirrors

A common assumption used by political scientists to explain the finding of minimal campaign effects (Holbrook 1996) or in creating formal models to explain presidential campaign allocations (Brams and Davis 1974) is that rational campaign opponents will target the same geographic areas and voters. In this way, they argue, campaigns mirror each other, canceling out each other's effects.

I argue presidential campaign allocations should not necessarily be construed as "mirrors" of each other. Models that assume that campaign resource distributions reflect each other perfectly over space, time and intensity miss potentially important differences, chiefly in how campaigns treat their so-called base states.[41] Very little attention has been paid in the

[41] For example, scholars tend to cluster both Safe Republican and Safe Democratic states together and Lean Republican and Lean Democratic states together for analysis (Lipsitz 2008, Wolak 2006, Shaw 2006). In fact, there

literature to how low level of battleground states are treated by the campaigns. As noted above, strategists can be compelled to allocate resources to a safe state, especially when elections are not close, for multiple reasons, but most models assume both campaigns ignore states at the other end of the spectrum because they have no incentive to do otherwise.

The assumption that the two major party campaigns operate as mirror images is difficult to test because campaign data are rarely available from both campaigns and because the data that are available rarely measure the same resource in the same way. An exception has been the study of campaign visits, data that are more easily collected and verified. Scholars find major party candidates have long concentrated the bulk of their travel in the same states (Althaus et al. 2002). However, looking at travel according to how the campaigns prioritized the states reveals a more complex story (Table 3.7). Data for travel by both major party candidates and their battleground strategies are available for both the 2000 and 2004 elections (from Shaw 2006). Again, looking at travel to all states there was a strong, positive and highly significant correlation between both candidates in 2000 and 2004. Looking only at what the Bush campaign identified as battleground states in 2000 and 2004, travel to the battleground states was correlated at .74 ($p<.01$) and .91 ($p<.001$), respectively. But, among the so-called safe states, there was no significant correlation between candidate travel in 2000 and only a weak correlation (.41, $p<.05$) in 2004. These data suggest campaigns may mirror each other's activities in battleground states, but not necessarily outside of those states. And, it is a misconception that they ignore the safe states altogether (if both candidates ignored these states by not visiting them at all there would be a high degree of correlation).

Table 3.7 Examples of Campaigns as "Mirrors": Candidate Travel

	All States (n=50)	Battleground States only[a]	Safe States only
2000 Bush/Gore	.79***	.74**	.29
		n=15	n=29
2004 Bush/Kerry	.91***	.90***	.41*
		n=15	n=32

Cell entries represent correlation coefficients.
$p<.05$ $p<.01$ $p<.001$
[a] Battleground and Safe state categories according to Bush campaign classifications from Shaw (2006)

As noted above, data availability makes it difficult to fully explore to what extent campaigns mirror each other in practice. The possibility that campaigns are not perfect mirrors raises several important questions for scholars to consider. How much overlap in campaign resources constitutes a balance or mirror? At what point do campaign activities fail to "balance" each other out? Does it matter what kinds of resources are being considered?

In 1976, the Carter and Ford campaigns mirrored each other closely in some activities but not in others (Table 3.8). There is a positive and significant association between the campaigns' resource allocations for all cases in which comparable data is available, but the strength of those associations differ. The correlation between the dollars the campaigns spent in each state is high (r=.91, $p<.001$). But, the association between the campaigns' level of battleground

is no reason to assume so-called safe states for either party receive the same level of attention from both campaigns and campaign records indicate they do not (see Table 3.7, for example).

categorizations is low (gamma = .54). Four of the 17 states the Ford team identified as battleground states, Carter's strategists identified as being safe for either the Republicans or Democrats. Similarly, six of the 15 states Carter prioritized as battleground states, Ford labeled Lean Democrat or Republican, and the associations between the campaigns' phone bank operations (gamma=.78) and the weeks of spot advertising allocated to each state (gamma=.61) vary considerably.

Table 3.8 Similarity of 1976 Carter/Ford Campaign Allocations by State

Phone Banks	.78^{+}
Weeks TV	.61^{+}
Dollars per State	.91***
Level of Battleground Strategy	.54^{+}

Source: Archival campaign records, see Appendix A.
Resource allocations vary between interval and ordinal measures. Cell entries are gamma or correlation coefficients.
$^{+}$ indicates χ^2 significant at .01 level
****p*<.001

Campaigns do not necessarily mirror each other's activities. The relationship between opponents' resource allocations varies in strength across election and resource type. And, even when the correlation between activities is strong and significant overall, it is not necessarily true that these positive relationships reflect matching state prioritizations or that the correlation reflects similar levels of the same activity among different categories of states. Even activities in the highest priority states do not necessarily coincide.

If one assumes that winning is not the only, but of course the primary, campaign priority, then it becomes clear that there are a number of reasons campaign allocations and state priorities may not mirror each other, including the desire to win a national mandate, to build a congressional coalition, and to meet the demands of powerful interest groups with regional interests. These pressures, as well as differences in the strategic calculations made by individual candidates and their teams all contribute to unique campaign strategies and allocation patterns. And as the campaign season progresses, campaign plans also evolve in response to these pressure and changes in the polls. Section 3.6 describes how the campaign plans laid down by strategists come to diverge from the allocations eventually made to the states.

3.6 The plan doesn't always match the allocations

Campaign resource allocations neither perfectly mirror each other nor the battleground strategies devised by the campaign team. While the strategies campaigns design have real impact on the ways in which resources are allocated (see section 3.3), campaigns update those lists over the course of a campaign to reflect opposition strategy and current events, allocate resources to meet goals beyond winning the election, and often choose to treat different states that fall within the same category in different ways. Simply because a campaign adopts a plan that labels a handful of states key targets, does not mean the proportion of every campaign activity within each of those states looks the same or that the list of battleground states will be the same at the beginning as at the end of the campaign.

The ability to adapt to the campaign environment has changed over time. Clearly, technology makes it possible for strategists today to more closely track opponent activities and to

respond to those activities and current events during the fall campaign, but strategy has long begun development months if not years ahead of time. In a November 1947 memo to President Truman, adviser Clark Clifford wrote, "It is my conviction that we must chart a course at this time which will contain the basic elements of our policy…what steps the Administration should now initiate so that it, rather than the opposition party, will direct…the decision of the American people on Election Day [1948]."[42] Describing his own experience with the George H.W. Bush campaign for the 2000 election, Shaw (2006) writes that he and the other strategists began designing the Republican Electoral College strategy in the summer of 1999.

The struggle between devising a plan, sticking to it, and being able to respond quickly to current events has long been a tension in campaign circles. Advertising consultants for Johnson in 1964 urged the campaign to begin making spot advertising buys in August, before the Democratic convention, noting, "In the case of spot television and radio, any delay in giving us the authority to start purchasing time will hamper our ability to achieve our goals."[43] As the campaign was slow to approve the advertising consultants' plans, tensions between the groups grew heated.

> "If a decision isn't taken immediately to activate the television advertising plans, there might be serious consequences for the campaign. This is no time for me to be tactful with you. There is too much at stake…We are ardent Democrats who are deadly afraid of Goldwater…we are dedicated people and our recommendations have a singular motivation, not how much money can Doyle Dane Bernbach make, but what is necessary to do the job well…The need for <u>immediate</u> action can't be expressed to strongly. Assuming agreement on a spot TV and spot radio schedule next week, and assuming the necessary money being released for use at that time, the earliest nationwide air date we can make would be the third week of September. This is inflexible."[44] (1964 Johnson Campaign)

Campaign operatives often resist committing resources until the last moment. Fear of spending limited resources and being left without the means to respond to current events means strategists have an incentive to dole out resources only when necessary.

> "We must resist tremendous pressures and always retain a high degree of flexibility in the allocation of our resources and the objectives of our strategy…we will probably not know until mid-October if the election is going to be close or if there is potential for a big victory. Either way, flexibility is critical and necessary and will be maintained at all costs."[45] (1976 Carter Campaign)

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[42] Memorandum from Clark Clifford to President Truman, November 1947,

[43] Memo from G. Abraham of Doyle, Dane and Bernbach to Bill Moyers, Aug. 6, 1964, "Advertising – Network" file, Box 224, Democratic National Committee 2, LBJ Library.

[44] Memo from William Bernbach to Bill Moyers, August 17, 1964, "Advertising – Network" file, Box 224, Democratic National Committee 2, LBJ Library.

[45] Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter, July 1976, Box 199, Hamilton Jordan, Campaign 76 Director's Office, Carter Library.

Tracking polls, surveys conducted nightly by the campaigns, became commonplace in the late 1970s giving strategists tools to quickly map changes in public opinion and divert resources accordingly.[46] Changes in the advertising industry mean media buyers can now place and change media buys at the last minute. For political scientists, new data sources for the most recent elections, like the data collected by the National Annenberg Election Surveys and by Knowledge Networks, make it possible to analyze aggregate and individual level time series over the course of a campaign (see Johnston, Hagen and Jamieson 2004; Hillygus and Jackman 2003).

Table 3.9a Ford 1976: Campaign Classifications and Allocations to the States

	Campaign Classification of the States
TV	.69^{+}
Radio (October 11)	.82^{+}
Newspaper (October 11)	.96^{+}
Phone Banks	.53^{+}
Tracking Polls	.68^{+}
Mail	.53^{+}
Tabloids	.68^{+}

Source: Archival campaign records, see Appendix A.
Cell entries are gamma coefficients. $^{+}$ indicates χ^2 signficant at .01 level

Table 3.9b 1976 Carter: Campaign Classifications Over Time

	August	September	October
August	1.00		
September	.25	1.00	
October	.12	.32*	1.00

Source: Archival campaign records, see Appendix A.
Cell entries are correlation coefficients. $p<.05$ $p<.01$ $p<.001$

Unfortunately, the absence of these academic data resources for earlier elections makes such analysis of early elections impossible. But, a review of the relationship between early and late campaign plans and between campaign plans and actual resource allocations shows that accounting for the evolution of campaign strategy and subsequent allocations should be included in studies of even the earliest campaigns whenever possible. For example, the 1976 Ford campaign's state priority list as written in August of that year, coincides more closely with some allocations made by the campaign than others (Table 3.9a). There is a close association between the early state prioritizations or classifications and spending on newspaper ads in the states (gamma=.96) throughout the campaign. In contrast the association between the early state prioritizations and television ad spending is not as strongly associated (gamma=.69). Plans can change radically as a campaign progresses (Table 3.9b). In 1976, archival records show the Carter team's prioritization of the states fluctuated as the campaign progressed. Only the September and October prioritization lists are significantly correlated and even that relationship is weak (r=.32 $p<.05$). Between August and early October four states dropped from top

[46] There is some disagreement over the first campaign to utilize tracking polls. Some reports suggest Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin first employed them in the 1980 campaign (Wayne 1997), but my search of the archival records show the Ford campaign used tracking polls as early as the 1976 contest.

battleground to lower level status, and the number of states categorized as leaning Democratic increased from seven to 14.

The prioritization of states is not necessarily closely related with how resources are actually disbursed to the states. This has important implications for how scholars utilize the battleground state concept, and this is especially true for those scholars looking for campaign effects.[47] First, campaign plans evolve. Second, as the table above demonstrates the allocation of resources does not necessarily follow in a linear fashion the battleground classifications assigned to the states. Section 3.7 explores how various resources come to be distributed in different ways.

3.7 Different resources are allocated in different ways

The priorities campaigns assign to the states influence how resources are allocated. But, just as different messages are designed to appeal to specific audiences in different states, the campaigns allocate different resources in different ways. One top level of battleground state may be targeted with radio and television ads but little grassroots activity, while another may see intense grassroots activity, but little radio advertising. These differences reflect various campaign goals, strategists' understanding that different campaign resources have different effects, and differences within the states (urban versus rural, etc.). We should not assume that resources are distributed in an increasing linear fashion according to state classification.

Too often scholars looking for battleground effects fail to acknowledge that different resources may have different impacts on the very dependent variables they are studying. Instead, scholars select as independent variables one or two measures of campaign activity as evidence of an overall battleground strategy or use battleground status as a proxy for all campaign activity. In fact, analysis of campaign records across states and election cycles reveals scholars cannot assume that one campaign activity is representative of all campaign activity in a state (Table 3.10). For example, in 1964, the correlation between the states Johnson and his surrogates visited was quite weak (r=.35 $p<.01$), whereas the relationship between the campaign's state-based advertising and party activities was quite high (gamma=.99). There was no significant association between the distribution of campaign materials and advertising or party activity in the states. Similarly, for the Carter campaign in 1980, there was a strong and significant relationship between the states Carter visited and the campaign's get-out-the-vote efforts (gamma=.85), but the correlation between Carter visits and spot radio advertising was much lower (r=.41, $p<.001$).

Any significant effects scholars find (or do not find) in battleground effects models that only include one or two campaign activities should therefore be interpreted to reflect the impact of only those specific activities and not necessarily of other campaign activities or of a battleground strategy in general. Additionally, it is worth remembering that messages are also designed to vary by audience. Voters in one state targeted with spot advertising may not hear the same message as voters in another target state and some messages may prove more effective than others.

Campaign strategists themselves are careful to distinguish between resources. Some research suggests campaigns concentrate instrumental resources like advertising and campaign

[47] Any study looking for battleground effects on voter behavior, for example, must delineate which type of campaign activity is represented or demonstrate that different campaign resources were allocated in similar ways to each of the states.

appearances in the most populous states, while resources like personnel and state organizational funds, while also concentrated in the most populous states, are not as disproportionately allocated (Bartels 1985). I look more closely at how decisions to allocate different resources across the states are reached in Chapter 4.

Table 3.10 Similarity of Resource Allocations to the States

1964: Johnson

	Johnson Visits	Surrogate Visits	Campaign Materials	TV Advertising	DNC Targets
Johnson Visits	1.00				
Surrogate Visits	.35** (49)	1.00			
Campaign Materials	.63*** (49)	.72*** (49)	1.00		
TV Advertising	.66^{+}	.71^{+}	.93	1.00	
DNC Targets	.51^{+}	.87^{+}	.86	.99^{+}	1.00

1980: Carter

	Carter Visits	GOTV	Spot TV	Spot Radio	DNC Targets
Carter Visits	1.00				
GOTV	.85^{+}	1.00			
Spot TV	.54***	.88^{+}	1.00		
Spot Radio	.41***	.57^{+}	.77^{+}	1.00	
DNC Targets	.78^{+}	.75^{+}	.93^{+}	.72^{+}	1.00

Source: Archival campaign records, see Appendix A.
Resource allocations vary between interval and ordinal measures. Cell entries are gamma or correlation coefficients.
$^{+}$ indicates χ^2 signficant at .01 level for gamma measures
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 for correlations measures

Campaign records indicate strategists both within and across election cycles have different ideas about the relative effectiveness of different campaign activities. Some years, field and organizational strategies are at the fore of strategic planning. In other years advertising or earned media predominate.

> "Campaign procedure is of the utmost importance. A few extra votes in each precinct can be decisive. Intensive campaign organizational work can make the difference… Beyond [publicizing the Kennedy campaign], our initial efforts should be aimed toward a very concrete goal – the registration of the unregistered voters. This can make a major difference in the results of the campaign."[48] (1960 Kennedy Campaign)

> "We have had a number of internal debates about the kind of campaign we run and the components of such a campaign: media vs. field, strategy vs. tactics,

[48]1960 Campaign After the Convention, July-September, 1960, Box 33, RFK Pre-Administration Political Files, JFK Library.

> Presidential activity vs. Presidential campaigning, etc…First, we must recognize that we face a complicated and risky General Election for President. It will be resolved by big images, big events, big decisions…Free media (hard news) will be far more important than paid media which in turn will be light years more important than field operations which will be infinitely more crucial than special groups."[49] (1976 Carter Campaign)

> "However, for the general election, presidential campaign events are not significant in terms of their impact on the people who attend. These people are mainly important as backdrops for the television viewer."[50] (1976 Ford Campaign)

Recently, and due likely to the relative ease of data availability, presidential campaign travel and television advertising have become popular indicators of the geography of campaign strategy. These are certainly useful measures that require a majority of candidate time and financial resources, but by themselves these resources do not paint a full picture of campaign activity. The organization and distribution of resources like direct mail, volunteers, phone banks, radio ads, newspaper ads, tabloid distribution, campaign offices, yard signs and bumper stickers account for a significant portion of campaign activities. Often these resources are used to reach specific audiences and to fulfill specific goals. For example, in 1976, the Ford campaign set up phone banks in 10 states. In contrast, the campaign designed a direct mail program targeted at specific interest groups as follows: farm mailings to 12 states, ethnic mailings to six states, Black mailings to 13 states, Jewish mailings to 18 states, and Spanish mailings to just four states.

> "[Newspapers] should be…used only occasionally and primarily to generate confidence among workers. Ethnic groups may be appropriate target for newspapers."[51] (1964 Johnson Campaign)

> "The major reasons for [spot radio's] use is to reach light television viewers and to reach that population segment not accessible at all to evening television."[52] (1964 Johnson Campaign)

> "We feel that radio is an extremely important part of this campaign. We feel that it can be an effective way to reach specific target audiences – young adults; businessmen; black voters; housewives. We can target messages according to program content and specific geographic locations."[53] (1976 Ford Campaign)

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[49] Campaign Strategy-Caddell General Election, White House Chief of Staff, Jordan Box 77, Carter Presidential Library.
[50] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.
[51] Memo from Jim Graham to Lloyd Wright, July 1964, Box 224, Democratic National Committee 2, LBJ Library.
[52] Memo from G. Abraham of Doyle, Dane and Bernbach to Bill Moyers, Aug. 6, 1964, "Advertising – Network" file, Box 224, Democratic National Committee 2, LBJ Library.
[53] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign 76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.

Whenever possible, those who study presidential elections should acknowledge that multiple resources and activities are in play with each election cycle and should account for the different potential effects of those different resources. Just as care should be taken in specifying which campaign resources are in question, so too should scholars and commentators take care in reporting battleground strategies. As section 3.8 shows, getting at the true underlying geography of campaign strategy can be a complicated process.

3.8 Getting the playing field right…

Table 3.11 Presidential Campaign Strategies: State Priorities in 1988

1988
Secondary Source
(Germond and Witcover 1989)

Target States
California, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas

1988
Bush Campaign Targets (RNC campaign plan)
Source: Archival campaign records, see Appendix A.

Top Priority: States we MUST take and will do anything to win
California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Washington

High Priority: Important to our winning, but includes states we could lose
Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin

Medium Priority: States we should after, are not essential
Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Oregon

Chip Shots: States we should win with minimal effort
Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia, Wyoming

Write-offs: States that should go Democratic
District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island, West Virginia

Taxi Squads: States not targeted that could end up on our list
Arkansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont

Accepting media evaluations and second hand accounts of campaign strategy at face value can be misleading. Table 3.11 shows the danger of relying on secondary sources to identify the level of battleground to assign to states. The list of states noted as targets by campaign observers (secondary sources) of the 1988 campaign are not fully accurate and miss the nuanced targeting of actual campaign strategies. While the secondary sources do get most of the top priority states right, they miss a few key states altogether. With a sample size of only 50 states, a handful of mistakes can have a significant impact on any quantitative results. For example, the state target list supplied by authors Germond and Witcover (1989) for 1988 includes five of the target states identified by the Republican plan, misses four states, and includes four states not on the Bush list. Of course, this does not mean the secondary sources are inaccurate. It could be that the campaigns change their targets over the course of the campaign or that the secondary source lists include states targeted by the other side. The accuracy of this information also relies on the forthrightness and knowledge of campaign actors and on the

certainty that media sources know the full range of campaign activities, and as noted in Chapter 1 media versions of campaign classifications can vary widely and inexplicably (Table 1.2). The differences between the targeting lists supplied by the secondary sources and campaign records, highlight the need for researchers to look beyond media lists and second-hand accounts to measure campaign strategy.

Additionally, cursory analysis of media and political pundits' characterizations of the presidential elections in a given year reveals significant variation both in which states are called "battleground" states and in how many states are identified (See Appendix C, Table 3A). For example while Delaware made *CNN*'s list of battleground states in 2000, it did not rate with *The Cook Political Report*. So should Delaware be considered a battleground state? Scholars interested in studying presidential campaign effects and in learning why and how campaigns disburse resources cannot solely rely on media or even the campaigns themselves to understand how states are prioritized. Rather, the level of battleground of a state is better measured through independently observable measures of campaign activity over time.

3.9 The Persistent Players, Ohio, etc.

Finally, evaluating campaign prioritizations of the states over the last half-century reveals an interesting picture of geographic electoral power. Some states have been central to the race for the most powerful seat in the country for decades, while others have come and gone or never held much presidential sway. The partisan solidification of New York, Texas, and California plays a role in the story, but the tale is more complex. The nation's politics may swing from left to right to center, but, even amidst the shift of the one-party South, the rise of Reagan Democrats, the Vietnam and Iraq wars, campaign finance reform, and the decline of party organizations a handful of states remains central to presidential campaign strategists year after year.

Because levels of campaign targeting in each state vary by resource, there is no simple list that encompasses all strategy in each year. By looking at multiple activities in each election a clearer picture emerges.[54] For example, in 1960, the five largest states were the only states to receive maximum campaign allocations in advertising, polling, JFK visits and field expenditures – those states were California, Illinois, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Four years later, strategists for President Johnson, enjoying a double digit lead (59 percent Johnson, 32 percent Goldwater)[55] as they entered the fall campaign broadened the field, but certain large states California, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas remained the top travel destinations for President Johnson and his surrogates. Top advertising and field targets included these six states and Maryland, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.

In 1976, California, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas were top targets of field, advertising and polling for the Ford campaign. Florida, New Jersey, Virginia, and Wisconsin also saw extensive campaign activity. As with Ford, California, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas saw the most Carter campaign activity in 1976, but so, too did Michigan and Missouri. Florida, Indiana, Virginia and Wisconsin also received intense, if slightly less, Carter campaign attention.

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[54] The data for this section are drawn from the presidential archives, see Appendix A for a list of sources.

[55] From a poll conducted by Louis Harris & Associates, August, 1964. Data provided by The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

Carter strategists again allocated maximum resources to California, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas in 1980, and Florida, Michigan, and Missouri were also top targets for the Carter campaign that year. Records indicate Illinois, Ohio, California and Missouri were key targets for Reagan in 1984. In 1988, California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, and Washington were all targets of extensive GOP activity. Four years later, Florida, Michigan, Missouri, New, Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin all received intense attention from the Bush campaign.

Key targets in the 2000 presidential election are well-known today (Shaw 2006). Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin all saw extensive activity from both the Gore and Bush campaigns, as did Arkansas, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, and West Virginia. In 2004, the candidates again prioritized advertising and candidate visits in similar states with Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin hosting high levels of presidential campaign activity (Shaw 2006).

The data indicate that Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin have long been central targets of the presidential campaigns. In contrast, former cornerstones of presidential strategies like California, Illinois, New York, and Texas likely find little trace of candidate activity within their borders today, with perhaps a rare visit for fundraising or debate purposes as the exception. Similarly, states once unlikely to see extensive presidential campaign activity in the general election - like Colorado, Iowa, New Mexico, and Nevada have emerged as loci of presidential politics in the last two elections. It is worth noting several states that seem to come and go as high priority targets for the campaigns. Kentucky, Maine, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington states have attracted intense but inconsistent campaign attention over the years. It remains to be seen whether some of the newest campaign targets will come and go from the campaign radar or fuse with the existing foundation of electoral strategies.

Several key questions arise from this analysis. What impact, if any, does prioritizing some states over others have on the nature of messages and methods of campaigning? Does the pattern of resource disbursements change as different states move up and down the list of campaign prioritization? Interestingly, campaign spending has increased, not diminished, over time even as the biggest states have moved down in level of battleground status. What impact does being a principal geographic target year after year have on the voters and political institutions within those states? Why do states move up and down in priority, and does the interaction of electoral votes and competitiveness fully explain the level of battleground assigned to a state? I turn to this final question in the next chapter.

3.10 Conclusion

For too long, state-level presidential strategies have been absent from the study of presidential elections in the United States. A closer look at how campaigns prioritize the states and the implications of those strategic decisions reveals the danger of having overlooked a critical aspect of campaign strategy for so long. In paying so little attention to cross-sectional variation in presidential campaign strategy, the field of political science has failed to develop consistent measures or theories about this fundamental aspect of presidential campaigns. Today, our knowledge of the causal mechanisms driving campaign strategies or the effects of those strategies on individuals and political institutions is limited.

Archival campaign records offer some insight into the factors that should be considered in future studies of presidential campaigns. First, the idea of "battleground states" or the prioritization of some states over others is not new to presidential campaigns. Campaigns have long targeted some states over others, and a majority of campaign resources have been allocated to those states. The campaigns invoke complex measures to assign what I call a level of battleground status to each state along a multi-tiered set of categorizations. I find no cases in which campaigns rely on the simple dichotomous battleground/non-battleground label to organize campaign activities. The presence of a "national strategy" has diminished in recent elections, but campaigns have long prioritized some states and some locales within those states over others. The notion that campaigns used to rely on a "national strategy" is simply false.

Moreover, we can not assume that the level of battleground assigned to one state means that activity in that state will look exactly like campaign activity in a like-labeled state or that the presence of one campaign activity in a state means all campaign activities will be proportionally distributed to that state. Campaign classifications do influence the distribution of resources but not necessarily in a linear manner. Resources, messages, and campaign activities in each state are designed to meet the specific needs and populations of that state. Researchers are better off acknowledging that the level of battleground assigned to the states is a starting point for strategists, which evolves over the course of the campaign. Finally, winning a majority of electoral votes is the primary goal of a campaign but other goals from throwing off the competition to building a national mandate also affect campaign strategy.

The findings reported here may seem obvious to the reader, and like any new field of research they raise more questions than they answer. How do campaigns determine the level of battleground of a state? When and why do states move up and down this prioritization list? Why are some resources allocated to some states and not others? Why would one campaign identify a state as a key target and not the other campaign? Is the distribution of some resources to the states more effective than others? What effect does the presence or absence of each resource have on voters? Do voters in states that have long been presidential targets behave differently than voters new to the battlefield? Do the political institutions in states that have long been presidential targets look different than those in states that have not? For too long, the fundamentals of decision-making in presidential campaigns have been ignored. The complexity of presidential campaign strategies and the potential effects of those strategies on voters and the nation's political institutions merit thoughtful and measured analysis. In the next chapter, I begin this task by considering how campaigns come to assign a level of battleground to each state.

Chapter 4

What Constitutes a Battleground State?
The Changing Role of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness

> "Our clear and single goal must be to simply win 270 electoral votes. We cannot become so enamoured of our own survey results and the prospects of a landslide that we lose sight of the 270 electoral votes we will need. To expend our limited resources trying to win 400 electoral votes, we could very easily fall short of the 270 we need to win."[56] (1976 Carter Campaign)

As the last chapter makes clear, there is still a lot to learn about the so-called battleground state. Key to improving the battleground concept is identifying the factors that make some states a higher campaign priority than others. What are the preconditions that lead campaign strategists to assign a high level of battleground status to a states? There are a host of potential variables to consider, but central to most popular and academic conceptualizations of the battleground state are the Electoral College and the popular vote margin in each state. And yet, the true influence of state size and competitiveness on campaign strategists' decisionmaking remains inadequately understood.

This chapter explores the influence of these two core components on the strategic campaign classification of the states and campaign resource allocations using archival campaign data. By looking at different strategies over time and reexamining the conditional nature of the variables' relationship, I find the influence of electoral votes and state level competitiveness is not static but varies by campaign and over time. Importantly, the data reveal a dramatic shift over time in the relative power of these two independent variables on strategic decisionmaking. This shift offers clues to the recent manifestation of the battleground concept in political discourse.

4.1 Electoral Votes and State Level Competitiveness

Considerable research suggests the Electoral College plays a central role in the design and implementation of presidential campaign strategies (Brams and Davis 1974; Colantoni, et.al 1975; Bartels 1985; Johnston et al. 2004; Shaw 2006). Certainly, the use of a system that determines a national election outcome via state-level rather than individual votes must and does influence the units of analysis strategists employ in crafting a presidential campaign (see Chapter 3). But, some scholars suggest the Electoral College plays a more subtle role, disproportionately advantaging large states (Brams and Davis 1974; Longley and Dana 1992) or prioritizing states according to some combination of electoral votes, state competitiveness, campaign costs, opponent activity, and voter population (Colantoni, et.al 1975; Shaw 1999, 2006; Holbrook 2002; Wolak 2006). Notably, of these independent variables, only electoral votes and state-level competitiveness are included with any frequency in models of presidential campaign strategy. Even so, the literature investigating the impact of these two variables on strategies has been sporadic, and the empirical results regarding their impact are inconsistent. After a surge of formal modeling and analysis in the 1970s, the debate remained largely untouched until recent

[56] Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter, July 1976, Box 199, Campaign 76 Director's Office, Carter Library.

years, when interest in battleground states emerged in the political science field and popular press.

The uneven attention paid to the geographic aspects of campaign strategy means key questions have been overlooked. For example, how has the role of the Electoral College evolved over time as states become more or less competitive and as campaign tools evolve? Is it true, as scholars of the early 1970s suggested, that the Electoral College makes the big states the central targets of presidential campaign strategies? Or was this premise purely a result of large states being more competitive in the years analyzed, the 1960s (Colantoni, et. al 1975)? Would a rational strategist really lavish precious resources on a large state even if that state consistently votes for the other party in presidential elections? Is the competitiveness of a state a better predictor of the battleground status a campaign assigns to a state? How should we measure state competitiveness? Is some other variable a better predictor of campaign strategy? Do electoral votes and competitiveness together predict how resources will be distributed to a state? Do the same explanatory variables explain how all resources are distributed?

Formal models developed in the early 1970s addressed the allocation of presidential campaign resources. Using data on candidate appearances, Brams and Davis (1974) propose a model in which "rational" campaigners allocate resources in proportion to the states' electoral votes raised to the 3/2s power, so that the distribution of campaign resources is biased to states with the most Electoral College votes. Unrealistic assumptions, limit the application of this model to real world decisionmaking (Green and Shapiro 1994). The model rests largely on two assumptions, first that committed voters are split 50-50 within every state at the beginning of the campaign and that larger states have more uncommitted voters making them more desirable campaign targets. And, the model assumes that campaigns mirror each other's activity, a premise that we have already seen does not hold across all elections (Chapter 3). Colantoni et al. (1975) take issue with these assumptions and conclude there is no "single simple formula" that can be used to explain the effect of the Electoral College on all presidential campaigns, but rather that candidate information, state competitiveness, assumptions about the opponent, and the campaign's willingness to change strategy over the course of the campaign are key to understanding the true effects of the Electoral College.

Until recently, the debate over these models was mostly mute. One exception, a review of Carter's 1976 strategy (Bartels 1985), finds different kinds of resources were distributed differently across the states. In 1976, instrumental resources like advertising and campaign appearances were heavily concentrated in the most populous states, and resources like personnel and state organizational funds, which the author calls ornamental resources, while also concentrated in the most populous states, were not as disproportionately allocated. Like the Brams and Davis (1974) approach, this model does not account for actual levels of competitiveness within each state.

More recently, a branch of the campaign effects literature has investigated what might explain presidential campaigns' geographic strategies. Analysis of the Truman, Dewey, and Wallace campaigns in 1948, shows state competitiveness, electoral votes and their interaction term each significantly predict Truman's campaign visits (Holbrook 2002). However, only state competitiveness was significant in explaining Dewey's travel, and state size was the sole significant predictor of Wallace's travel. Data from the 1988, 1992, and 1996 elections, suggests opponent campaign activity and the interaction of TV ad costs, competitiveness, and electoral votes are significant predictors of how campaigns categorize the states (Shaw 1999c), but methodological critiques have called these findings into question (Reeves, Chen and Nagano

2004). Travel data from 1972 to 2000, shows a decline in the relationship between state size and candidate visits and a stable allocation of candidate visits to the most competitive states over time (Althaus et. al 2002). Johnston et al. (2004) consider the impact of state size and competitiveness using the model proposed by Colantoni et al. (1975), on television advertising and candidate travel in the 2000 presidential election.[57] They find that state size had a disproportionate effect on the allocation of candidate travel, while state competitiveness had a disproportionate effect on the allocation of TV ads. Importantly, of the research that includes a multiplicative interaction term (between electoral votes and state competitiveness) I am unable to find any analysis that evaluates the marginal effect of either variable on campaign strategy at different values of the conditioning variable, leaving the interpretations of the findings extremely limited (Brambor et al. 2006).

These results suggest the role of state size and competitiveness in determining the campaign classification of the states and in the subsequent allocation of resources may vary by opponent and may have shifted over time. Clearly, a longer timeline of presidential campaign strategies and a richer set of allocation measures are needed to determine whether or not the significant explanatory variables observed in one election cycle hold across multiple elections. Television advertising and candidate appearances have been the focus of most previous research on presidential campaign strategies (for an exception see Bartels 1985). These are key resources, but formal campaign plans, the location of field staff, national party financial transfers, interest group activity, non-television advertising efforts, direct mail programs and campaign research programs, also reflect important campaign decisions.

The presidential archives for Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Ford, Reagan and George H.W. Bush and first-person accounts of the 2000 and 2004 Bush campaigns all include evidence that the campaigns prioritized the states according to competitiveness and electoral votes. The state priority lists of battleground classifications uncovered in the archives, for example, frequently include the number of electoral votes for each category of state (see Table 3.1). And, as described in Chapter 3, the 1976 Carter team prioritized states according to a formula that included electoral votes, state need and democratic potential weighting size twice as much as the other factors. Records show strategists closely track state level competitiveness.[58]

> "Florida is thus a state in flux, definitely trending away from its long-time one-party system, but by no means moving irrevocably into the Republican camp…Florida is a state which could go either way on November 8th." (1960 Kennedy Campaign)

4.2 Descriptive Analysis: State Size and Competition in the Campaigns

If campaign records and historical accounts show that state competitiveness and electoral votes are key factors to strategists, why do scholars find conflicting evidence that these variables influence presidential campaign strategies? Campaign accounts of presidential elections in the 1960s and 1970s frequently refer to the prominence of the "Big States" or the Big 7 – California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas (White 1961, White 1965, Broder 1971, White 1973). These expressions suggest states received more campaign attention because of their size, but were they only bigger or also more competitive than other states? In this

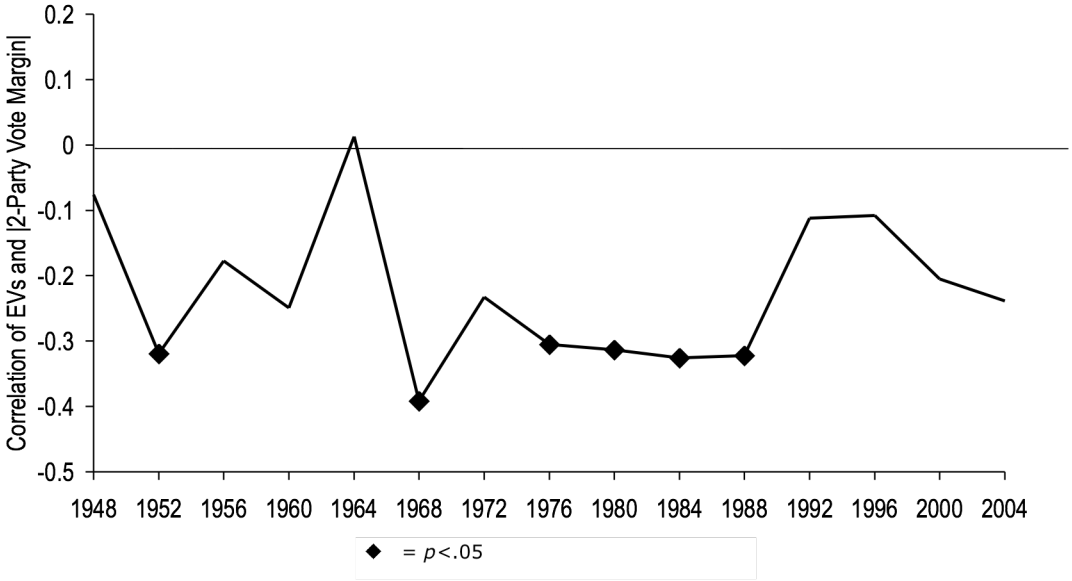
[57] Where $R_i = \alpha EV_i^{\beta} Comp_i^{\gamma}$ (R_i = resource allocations to state i), Colantoni et al. (1975).

[58] Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Governor Carter and Senator Mondale, July 1976, Box 199, Director's Office, Campaign '76, Carter Library.

section, I examine the relationship between campaign strategy and state size and competitiveness. The archival records indicate these two variables are both key to campaign decisionmaking, and they have been central to most academic models, as noted above.[59]

If big states are, or ever have been, more competitive than other states, we would expect smaller presidential vote margins in bigger states – a negative correlation between competition and electoral votes. Between 1948 and 2004, the correlation between the absolute value of the final two-party presidential vote margin in each state and that state's electoral votes fluctuates between .01 and -.39 (Figure 4.1). Correlation coefficients are negative for all but one year (1964, r=.01), as expected, but only in 1952, 1968 and for the elections from 1976-1988 is there a statistically significant relationship between state size and the competitiveness of states. Even the strongest correlation between electoral votes and final vote margin in the post-World War II era was only -.39 ($p<.05$, 1968).

Figure 4.1
Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness
(1948-2004)



Despite the fluctuating relationship between state-level competitiveness and electoral votes, the archival records indicate campaigns in the 1960s did prioritize big states over smaller states. In 1960, the five largest states were the only states to receive maximum campaign allocations in advertising, polling, Kennedy visits and field expenditures. Those states were California, Illinois, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Electoral vote heavy Texas, vice presidential candidate Lyndon Johnson's home state, was a top target for spot television advertising, polling and visits from Kennedy, but received minimal phone banking and no voter registration or tabloid distributions according to campaign records. Michigan (20 electoral votes) and New Jersey (16 electoral votes) were also chief targets for spot television advertising, Kennedy visits, and field activities. Together, these states represent 8 of the 9 states with the

[59] The descriptions of campaign allocations for 1960, 1964, 1976 and 1980 included in this descriptive analysis come from the data collected in the presidential archives, see Appendix A, Tables 1A and 1B.

most electoral votes in 1960. Kennedy's home state, Massachusetts, with 16 electoral votes saw no spot advertising or polling and minimal field activity.

But, of the ten states with the most competitive voting histories in 1960 (states with the smallest average two-party vote margin for the last three presidential election cycles), only four were among the top ten campaign targets as measured by allocations (California, Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania). Among another four of the most historically competitive states (Tennessee Missouri, Kentucky and Washington), the campaign polled only twice and assigned second tier ad priority.

Notably, if the Kennedy campaign had only considered the 1956 election results in devising a strategy, none of the ten most competitive states in 1956 (by 2-party vote margin) was among the top ten states to receive campaign allocations. Among the biggest states, the average two-party vote margin ranged from 8.45 to 21.33 points across the three previous elections and from 1.32 to 30.8 points in the 1956 election. This does not mean the Kennedy campaign was necessarily inefficient. The targeted big states were close in the final vote in 1960, ranging from a two-party margin of .18 points (Illinois) to 6.6 points (Ohio). Five of the top ten targeted states were among the ten states with the closest popular vote margins in 1960 (California, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, and Texas). These along with Pennsylvania and North Carolina had five-point or less vote margins. But, there were five states with a final vote margin of less than two points and eleven states within a five-point margin that received minimal Kennedy campaign attention.

Did the campaign believe the big states were more competitive in 1960 than the other states? The campaign polled no more than three times in any state during the general election. Kennedy pollsters polled three times in three of the states with the closest final vote in 1960, which also happened to be among the largest states (California, Illinois and Texas). But, the campaign also polled three times in large states that were not among the closest states in the final 1960 vote (New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania). The campaign polled twice in four states that were among the eleven most competitive states (by final vote) in 1960 (Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and New Jersey). But, the campaign also polled twice among nine states that were not among the most competitive states (by final vote), and four of the states with the closest final vote in 1960, also happened to be among the smallest states (Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii and New Mexico) and saw no polling whatsoever.

Similarly, in 1964, state size appears to have played a more significant role in determining campaign allocations than the historical competitiveness of a state. President Johnson was more likely to visit large states, and more dollars for advertising and campaign materials were allocated to the large states. Of the states with the most competitive voting history in 1964 (with an average two-party vote margin in the past three presidential races of less than seven points), only Johnson's home state, Texas, was among the ten states with the most electoral votes. Of the campaign's top 13 advertising targets, only Texas and Minnesota (notably Humphrey and Johnson's home states) were also among the top ten most historically competitive states. The other principal advertising targets ranged in average vote margin from 7 to 19 points. The story with field is similar. The campaign spent only $500 on campaign materials in Alaska where the vote margin in 1960 had been 1.9 points, and among the campaign's top twelve voter registration targets, only Missouri was among the ten most historically competitive states (with a less than 1 percent vote margin on average). Only four of the 18 get-out-the-vote targets were among the most historically competitive states. In 1964, the final vote margin in the ten biggest states ranged from 2.3 points (Florida) to 33.7 points (Michigan). With the exception of Florida,

none of the ten closest state vote outcomes (ranging from 1 to 11 point margins) was also among the ten largest states.

Records from subsequent campaigns tell a similar story. The 1976 Carter campaign weighted electoral votes more than any other factor in prioritizing the states (Chapter 3), and in 1980, the biggest states were more likely to see Carter voter registration activity, television advertising, DNC activity or a visit from the President. And yet, in 1980, of the 16 most historically competitive states only four (California, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania) were also among the ten states with the most electoral votes. Notably, the Carter campaign did not necessarily choose between campaigning in big non-competitive states and smaller more competitive states. Rather, unlike the campaigns of the 1960s the Carter campaign prioritized both big states and some smaller more historically competitive states. So, for example, Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, Washington and Wisconsin (four of the most historically competitive but not the largest states in 1980) were highly targeted with advertising and DNC activity. These four states were not a high priority for GOTV efforts or candidate appearances. But, historically competitive states like Arkansas, Hawaii, Maine, Oregon, and West Virginia saw minimal campaign activity. Was the 1980 Carter campaign paying more attention to current polls than past voting history or electoral votes? Of the ten states with the closest popular vote outcome in 1980, only five (Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, North Carolina and Delaware) were among Carter's top television ad targets, and only one, Tennessee, was frequently visited by the President (with five trips).

The campaign allocation patterns at the beginning of the twenty-first century look remarkably different. Of the 15 states prioritized as battleground states by the Bush campaign in 2000, only three (Florida, Michigan, and Pennsylvania) were also among the ten largest states, and only three states (Minnesota, New Mexico and Tennessee) were among the most historically competitive. Similarly, only three of the Bush campaign's top targets were among the closest states in 1996 (Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire). But, all 15 Bush battleground states were ultimately among the 17 closest states in 2000 with popular two-party vote margins of less than 6.5 points. This suggests the campaign was more concerned with current polling numbers than state size or immediate voting history.

These data suggest the influence of electoral votes and competitiveness on campaign strategy is dynamic and that whenever possible, researchers should distinguish between historic levels of competitiveness and campaign specific levels of competition in a state.

4.3 Models and Data

Under the Electoral College and the unit rule, rational campaign strategists work to win a plurality of individual votes in a state because (in all but Maine and Nebraska) that will earn them all of that state's electoral votes. Their goal is a majority of electoral votes, and so states become the key unit of analysis for strategists. In contrast, a system like the popular vote system, in which a candidate wins the presidency with a plurality of individual votes, gives strategists an incentive to maximize individual votes. The benefit of each vote, under a popular vote system, is the same in the final tally, assuming the cost of reaching voters is constant nationwide, regardless of state boundaries. Strategists seek only to maximize turnout for their candidate. As the 2000 election reminded us all, under the current Electoral College system, one need not win a majority of the popular vote to win in the Electoral College.

What effect does an institution that relies on state-level outcomes have on presidential election strategy? Does it bias campaign strategies so that some states receive more emphasis than others? How can strategists most effectively compete in a system where individual-level popularity does not ensure a successful outcome?

As noted above, some scholars suggest state size advantages the most populous states in the presidential contest, and the qualitative archival data discussed above give some support for this theory. Big states are attractive presidential campaign targets because of their cache of electoral votes, but their size also makes it more expensive, in an absolute sense, to compete within them. Brams and Davis (1974) go farther and argue that the Electoral College leads campaigns to place a disproportionate emphasis on the large states. In effect, this large state hypothesis holds that beyond the absolutely higher cost of reaching every voter in a big state, campaigns will spend relatively more to reach each voter in a big state than they will in a smaller state because, assuming equally competitive states, the expected payoff for a big state is so much higher.[60] Per capita (or per voter) spending in a big state should thus be higher than in a smaller state. Two principal hypotheses emerge to explain the role of large states in Electoral College strategies.

> **Absolute Large State Hypothesis**: Campaign allocations to the states are proportionate to population size, so big states necessarily receive more emphasis from presidential campaigns.
>
> **Disproportionate Large State Hypothesis**: Campaign allocations to the states are not proportionate to population size, but are weighted to reflect the higher expected payoff of winning a large state. Presidential campaign strategists disproportionately target large states.

The problem, of course, is that these hypotheses explicitly assume that the cost of competition is constant across the states. If the cost of reaching voters is not constant across states, and of course it is not, then the strategic decisions campaigns must make becomes more complicated. The cost of winning a state that strongly favors your opponent is higher than the cost of winning a state in which you are the more popular candidate. While the presidential campaigns do have vast resources at their disposal they are not infinite, which requires strategists to allocate their resources to states where the expected value of the outcome is greatest. They must weigh both the cost of competing and their probability of winning in each state.

If a candidate entered a general election contest with a strong majority in enough states to give him a majority in the Electoral College, then he could allocate resources to those safe states assured of his victory. In fact, even in the least competitive national elections over the past 50 years candidates have not had this luxury. Candidates must look beyond their base to build an Electoral College majority, and rather than wasting scarce resources on states that will likely vote for them or their opponent regardless of spending levels, candidates may look to those states

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[60] Brams and Davis (1974) assume the proportion of undecided voters is the same in all states, and so the raw number of undecided voters is higher in bigger states. A tie-splitting vote from a big state has a greater effect in the Electoral College. "In other words while an individual voter has a reduced chance of influencing the outcome in a large state because of the greater number of people voting, this reduction is more than offset by the larger number of electoral votes he can potentially influence." (p. 122) Using $R_i = \alpha EV_i^{\beta\mu I}$ (R= campaign resource, EV=electoral votes), they conclude $\beta = 1.5$.

where their resources have a greater probability of affecting the outcome of the vote. That is, they look to those states where each additional dollar they spend or volunteer they mobilize or lawn sign they plant has a higher probability of making the difference in their quest for a plurality of the state's presidential vote.

The relationship between state size and competitiveness is a complicated one. Just as the cost of competing may be high in some big states, the benefit may be low in some small states. Are some states just too small to elicit campaign attention regardless of how competitive they are? Is the cost of setting up campaign offices and organizing a get-out-the-vote drive in a geographically large but sparsely populated state a smart use of resources even if that state is very competitive? Is the expected payoff sufficient? What if the cost of earning a plurality of votes in a large state becomes too high? Is there some cut-point at which campaign strategists decide the relative cost of winning a plurality in a large state becomes too disproportionate? How do strategists weigh the relationship between state size and state competitiveness? Shouldn't any disproportionate allocation of resources to a state be modified by the competitiveness of a state? Indeed, given the limited nature of campaign funds, state competitiveness may even limit the absolute allocations campaigns are willing to make to a state.

> **Absolute Efficiency Strategy:** Presidential campaign strategists target large states, conditional on the competitiveness of a state.
>
> **Disproportionate Efficiency Strategy:** Presidential campaign strategists disproportionately target large states, conditional on the competitiveness of a state.

An efficiency strategy that seeks a balance between size and competition is hardly new, but while others have implicitly employed conditional hypotheses in analyzing the impact of electoral votes and state level competitiveness on campaign strategies and allocations, none has analyzed the results of these models beyond a simple analysis of the model parameters.[61] As Brambor et al. (2005) note, "It is perfectly possible for the marginal effect of X on Y to be significant for substantively relevant values of the modifying variable Z even if the coefficient on the interaction term is insignificant." In other words, while the electoral vote coefficient in a model may be insignificant, it does not mean electoral votes do not have a significant effect on campaign strategies at some level of state competition. Thus, in the results I include not just a table of the model parameters, but also analysis that considers the marginal effect of electoral votes on campaign strategy across a range of levels of state competitiveness.

The direction and size of any marginal effect of electoral votes likely vary by campaign, strategist, resource type, and information levels.

> Example 1) A strategist might assign all the most competitive states high priority status regardless of size if the states' average vote margin is less than five points, reasoning all of these states merit intense campaign attention. But, with limited resources, a strategist decides he must then differentiate between the less competitive states. He decides that all

[61] As noted above, Johnston et al. (2004) examine the impact of size and competition on resource allocations using the model derived by Colantoni et al. (1975), $R_i = \alpha EV_i^{\beta} Comp_i^{\gamma}$ for the 2000 election. However, this model does not include the individual constituent terms, and the analysis only examines the parameters of the interaction model, not the modifying effects of competition on state size. I address this model further in section 4.4.

else equal, larger states merit higher relative priority when the average vote margin is greater than five points, but at vote margins of 25 points or greater he determines that no state, regardless of size, is high priority. Here the marginal effect of electoral votes on relative spending amounts is insignificant among the most competitive states but is increasing and significant for states with an average vote margin of five to 25 points.

Example 2) A strategist identifies the most competitive states as campaign targets, but decides even among those states a big state should take a disproportionate priority over a small state. At equal levels of competition, a big state will receive disproportionately more resources than a smaller state. As the level of competition in a state decreases, the strategist is more and more likely to prioritize big states over small states, because the potential benefit of winning is greater. The marginal effect of electoral votes is increasing and significant for states at all levels of competition.

Example 3) A strategist identifies large states as key targets but has limited campaign resources. While he must allocate more in absolute dollars to big states in order to compete, he does not allocate a disproportionate amount of resources to those states. The competitiveness of a state modifies how much he is willing to allocate in an absolute sense to a state.

These scenarios represent only three of a range of potential options under the efficiency strategies. And, strategists' ability to make these types of judgments has evolved over time as the information available to them has improved (Eisinger 2003). Technological advancements have given campaigns the tools they need to better identify competitive state targets and to more efficiently allocate resources. In particular, modern polling techniques allow campaign decisionmakers to identify not just which states have a history favorable or unfavorable to their party, but also to track specific levels of support for their candidate in each state throughout the campaign. As technologies have improved, strategists should no longer decide, as James Baker did of New Jersey in 1984, that a state is "simply too big and too heterogeneous to consider safe" unless their internal poll numbers tell them it is a good bet.[62]

As the archival records discussed in Chapter 3 and in section 4.2 show, the campaigns classify the states according to different levels of priority. The states we have come to think of as battleground states are those high priority states that receive the greatest amount of campaign attention because strategists believe they are key to the election outcome. What is not clear is to what extent size and to what extent competitiveness guide these campaign plans. In other words what are the preconditions of battleground status? High level of battleground status reflects a campaign's belief that a state is of more absolute importance to the Electoral College outcome. In practice, some argue those states are likely to receive more absolute campaign allocations than lower priority states. They may even receive disproportionately more campaign allocations. This analysis will include measures of both absolute and per capita allocations to the states. The campaigns' classifications of Level of Battleground Status should be interpreted as a measure of absolute importance. The campaigns' classifications of battleground status and measures of resource allocations to the states represent different but equally critical components of the LBS concept.

[62] Memo from James Baker, Political Affairs 1/84-7/84 (5/5), Box 9, Baker, James A. III Files, Reagan Library

The efficiency hypotheses can be assessed using the following model:

Campaign Classification of LBS =
$\beta_0 + \beta_1 EV + \beta_2 StateCompetitiveness + \beta_3\ EV$ X $StateCompetitiveness + \varepsilon$

or

Resource Allocations (Absolute or Relative) =
$\beta_0 + \beta_1 EV + \beta_2 StateCompetitiveness + \beta_3\ EV$ X $StateCompetitiveness + \varepsilon$

The dependent variable in the first equation measures the Level of Battleground Status, or absolute importance, assigned to a state by a campaign according to campaign records. Campaign LBS is an ordinal measure of state prioritization (available from archival records for 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, and from Shaw (1999, 2006) for 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004). The categories assigned the states vary by the archival materials available and are specified in Appendix A. All campaign LBS classifications are coded 0-1.

In the second equation, the dependent variables used are the resources allocated to each state by a campaign. Resource allocation measures also vary by the archival materials available for each election year (see Appendix A). For example, the Carter archives tell us how many weeks of television advertising ran in each state, while the Kennedy archives tell us how much money was spent on television ads in each state. Therefore, individual campaigns cannot be collapsed into a single model. Rather, a model for each year and resource is estimated.

As campaign appearances over time have received extensive attention in the literature, for the second model I focus in this chapter on campaign advertising and field efforts. Data on these allocations are consistently included in the archival records and represent different resource types and potentially different goals. Advertising allocations represent significant financial allocations and message or persuasion goals. While the television advertising strategies have received some attention in recent years, less attention has been paid to the early years of television advertising or to non-TV advertising. The data used here begins to correct that. Field strategy represents the allocation of human resources and grassroots goals, like mobilization. With the exception of Bartels (1985), I know of no research that examines the factors that explain field strategies across the states or over time. Whenever possible, I use measures of both absolute and relative resource allocations to the states to determine whether the campaigns pay disproportionate attention to some states over others.[63]

EV is a continuous measure of the number of electoral votes assigned to a state in each election year. Under the efficiency strategy model, β_1 cannot be interpreted as having an independent effect on campaign strategy, but rather as the effect of electoral votes when *StateCompetitiveness* is equal to zero.

StateCompetitiveness is a measure of each state's historic level of state competitiveness. It is calculated as the absolute value of the 2-party vote margin in a state for the last three election cycles.[64] As the average vote margin approaches zero, a state becomes more competitive. Variations of this measure of state competition (specifically a party's average share of the two-party vote) are frequently used in battleground state analyses (Shaw 1999, Holbrook

[63] To assess the disproportionality of resource allocations, I divide absolute resource allocations to a state by the voting age population of a state.
[64] State data for years in which a third party candidate captured a majority of that state's popular vote are omitted.

2002), and the archives show the campaigns also utilize past presidential vote history. Scholars differ over the number of election cycles to include in calculating this measurement. I focus on the past three election cycles because doing so accounts for both open seat and incumbent elections, no candidate can have prevailed in all three elections, and the time frame is not so broad that it reflects obsolete voting patterns. One could also use the states' final vote margins as a measure of competitiveness, but this post hoc measure reflects the effect of campaign activity and decisionmaking that is of interest here. Ideally, state competition would be measured using survey data on candidate preferences from just before the start of the general election in each state. Such data is only available for the most recent elections and analysis using this data is included when possible. In this multiplicative interaction model *StateCompetitiveness* modifies the effect of electoral votes on the dependent variable. Under the efficiency strategy model, β_2 cannot be interpreted as having an independent effect on campaign strategy, but rather as the effect of state competitiveness when *EVs* are equal to zero, a substantively meaningless finding.

To analyze the efficiency strategy models I consider the marginal effect of electoral votes on the level of battleground status, ∂Level of Battleground/∂EVs = $\beta_1 + \beta_3$*StateCompetitiveness*. The efficiency strategy indicates that larger states should have a positive effect on the level of battleground (or resources) assigned to a state. So β_1 should be positive. The hypothesis also states that this effect should change as the competitiveness of a state changes. I expect that as levels of campaign information have increased over time, the influence of competitiveness has become more significant because campaigns are better able to identify competitive states.

The dataset covers elections from 1960 to 2004. In most cases, data were collected by the author from the archival records housed at the presidential libraries of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and George H.W. Bush.[65] Wherever possible the data has been supplemented by other sources, including data collected by scholars in recent years (especially Shaw 1999c and 2006). Below, I estimate the conditional effects of Electoral College votes and state competitiveness on campaign LBS classifications, advertising, and field activities. Due to measurement differences across the dependent variable, I test my hypotheses using ordinary least squares, probit, and ordered probit**.**

Following Brambor, Clarks, and Golder (2006) I include all the constituent terms of the multiplicative interaction model for the efficiency strategy. Further, I include plots that demonstrate the marginal effect of a change in the number of electoral votes on the dependent variable as the modifying variable, state competitiveness, changes.[66] I can find no other examples in the literature in which the interaction between electoral votes and state competitiveness meet the interpretive requirements of conditional hypotheses (Brambor et. al 2006). Rather, as noted above, while the literature does tend to include both constituent and interactive independent variables, it also tends to interpret constituent coefficients as measuring unconditional or average effects and to exclude a description of the substantively meaningful marginal effects of electoral votes.

[65] Special thanks to Brendan Doherty for sharing campaign records collected at the Reagan Library.
[66] In the case of the limited dependent variables, the plots are of the first difference effect on the change in probability of the dependent variable.

4.4 Results

A. Efficiency Strategy: The Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Absolute Level of Battleground Status

Estimates of the effect of electoral votes on battleground strategies, as state competitiveness changes are shown in Table 4.1. The multiplicative interaction model means the coefficients for *Electoral Votes* and *StateCompetitiveness* (β_1 and β_2) can only be interpreted when the other constituent term is equal to zero. In other words, if β_1 is significant, it is only significant when *StateCompetitiveness* is equal to 0 (when the average vote margin of a state is perfectly competitive). And if β_2 is significant, it is only significant when a state's *Electoral Votes* are equal to 0. No such case exists for any variable in the dataset, making these findings substantively irrelevant.

The table results provide mixed support for the efficiency strategy. As predicted, state size does not necessarily have a significant or positive effect on the level of battleground status assigned to a state by a campaign when electoral competition is strongest (i.e. in the unlikely case that the average vote margin in a state was equal to 0). The coefficient on *Electoral Votes* is significant and positive only for the Ford 1976, Carter 1980, and Dukakis 1988 election campaigns, and in 1984 and 1992 state size diminishes the LBS classification the Reagan and Bush teams assigned to a state with an average vote margin of zero points. In most cases, any positive impact of electoral votes declines as the average vote margin in a state declines, i.e. the coefficient on *Electoral VotesXCompetitiveness* is negative in eight cases, but only negative and significant in two cases. For Republican candidates in 1984, 1988 and 1992, the coefficient is positive and significant. Taken together, the parameters offer mixed support for the efficiency strategy.

Figure 4.2 graphically depicts the change in the probability that a state will be assigned the highest level of battleground status by a campaign when it grows from a small to a large state (increasing from five to 25 electoral votes), at decreasing levels of competitiveness (an increasing average vote margin). All measures of the dependent variable, campaign LBS, are ordinal, and the graphs in Figure 4.2 reflect the effect of a large increase in electoral votes (20 EVs) on the probability that a state is prioritized as a top battleground target by a campaign. The solid line indicates the change in probability, and the slashed lines denote the 95% confidence intervals.[67] When the upper and lower confidence intervals are both above or below the zero line, the marginal effect of electoral votes is significant. If competitiveness increases the importance of state size state for a state's level of battleground status, the line should fall above the x-axis.

For all of the campaigns prior to 1988, there is support for the efficiency strategy. With two exceptions, Bush 1992 and Dole 1996, support for the efficiency strategy disappears after the 1988 election. For the most part, competitiveness does not appear to modify the importance of state size on campaign strategies over the last 20 years.

The graphs for the Ford 1976 and Carter 1980 campaigns indicate that even the most historically competitive states were more likely to be top campaign targets if they carried more electoral votes. For example, in 1980, the probability that the Carter campaign would target a state with five electoral votes and an average two-point vote margin was .17 (95% c.i. .00, .71). Increasing that state's vote share to 25 electoral votes significantly increased the probability of being a top target by .82 (95% c.i. .19, .99) to .98 (95% c.i. .81, 1.0). In 1980, competitiveness

[67] Data simulation of 10,000 draws from the ordered probit variance-covariance matrix.

increases the effect of electoral votes on battleground status up to an average vote margin of 24 points. For states with a vote margin between 25 and 27 points there is still a positive and significant effect of increasing electoral votes although that effect begins to decline. But, for states with a greater than 28-point average vote margin the effect of electoral votes is insignificant. It seems that for the 1980 Carter campaign large states became less desirable targets only when their average vote margin was nearly 30 points.

For Carter in 1976, the conditional effect of electoral votes is not significant for the most or least competitive states. Instead, increasing a state's electoral vote share from five to 25 significantly increased the probability that Carter campaign strategists assigned top priority to that state when its average vote margin ranged from 7 to 24 points, although the change in probability grows steadily smaller for states with a greater than 14-point margin. For states with a 25-point or greater historic vote margin or a 6-point or less historic vote margin, the change in probability given an increase in electoral votes is insignificant. States with a 6-point or less historic vote margin were already significantly likely to be top campaign targets (state size did not significantly increase this probability), and for states with a greater than average 25-point margin increasing electoral votes didn't significantly increase their appeal to campaign strategists.

In 1984, the conditional effect of electoral votes on campaign strategy was higher if a state's average vote margin was greater than 18 points. States with five electoral votes and an 18-point vote margin or less were significantly likely to be top targets, and increasing a state's electoral share to 25 votes did not significantly increase this probability at lower vote margins. In 1988, increasing electoral votes diminished the likelihood that the most competitive states (0 to 5 point margin) were primary Dukakis campaign targets. Electoral votes had no conditional effect on battleground status for less competitive states.

The story is quite different in later campaigns, and support for the efficiency strategy is minimal. The Bush 1992 and Dole 1996 campaigns are the exception to this new pattern. For these two campaigns, evidence of a conditional effect of electoral votes on battleground status is apparent at various levels of competition. For the Bush campaign in 1992, competitiveness actually diminished the importance of state size for the most competitive states. In contrast, competitiveness increased the importance of state size for less competitive states for the Bush campaign in 1992 and for Dole in 1996.

Figures for Bush 1988, Clinton1992, Clinton 1996, and for both candidates in the 2000 and 2004 campaigns show no significant change in the probability that a state was assigned the highest level of battleground status when its Electoral College share shifted from five to 25 electoral votes, regardless of the level of competition in a state. Levels of historical competitiveness did not make state size more or less important to campaign strategies for these campaigns.

Table 4.1 Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Campaign LBS Classification

(DV = Level of Battleground Status assigned to a state by the campaign)

	1976 Carter	1976 Ford	1980 Carter	1984 Reagan	1988 Bush	1988 Dukakis	1992 Bush	1992 Clinton	1996 Dole	1996 Clinton	2000 Bush	2000 Gore	2004 Bush
Electoral Votes	0.16	0.67**	0.30*	-0.10*	-0.04	.29***	-.10*	-.02	-.06	-.02	.08	.03	0.09
	(0.09)	(0.23)	(0.14)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(.08)	(.04)	(.04)	(.06)	(.06)	(.06)	(.05)	(0.07)
Competitiveness	-0.004	-0.01	-0.022	-0.05*	-0.16**	.04	-.05*	-.05**	-.03	-.04	-.03	-.00	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(.03)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.04)	(.02)	(0.05)
Electoral Votes X Competitiveness	-0.01	-0.02*	-0.007	0.008*	0.01*	-.01**	.01**	.001	.01	.003	-.01	-.001	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.01)	(.01)	(.002)	(.002)	(.11)	(.005)	(.05)	(.004)	(0.01)
N	51	51	50[a]	51	51	51	48[b]	48[b]	51	51	51	51	51
χ^2	20.52[+]	69.77[+]	43.65[+]	6.94	35.4[+]	34.96[+]	8.05	9.73	6.02	7.52	12.93[+]	1.05	30.93[+]
Pseudo R^2	.13	.43	.34	0.07	.29	.27	.05	.06	.04	.05	.09	.01	0.24

Ordered probit estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

[+] indicates chi^{2}signficant at .01 level

For measures of Battleground status, see Appendix A, Table 1A, all coded 0-1.

a. DC missing from data

b. DC, MI, HI, and MS missing from dataset.

Figure 4.2
Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on the
Change in the Probability of Battleground Status

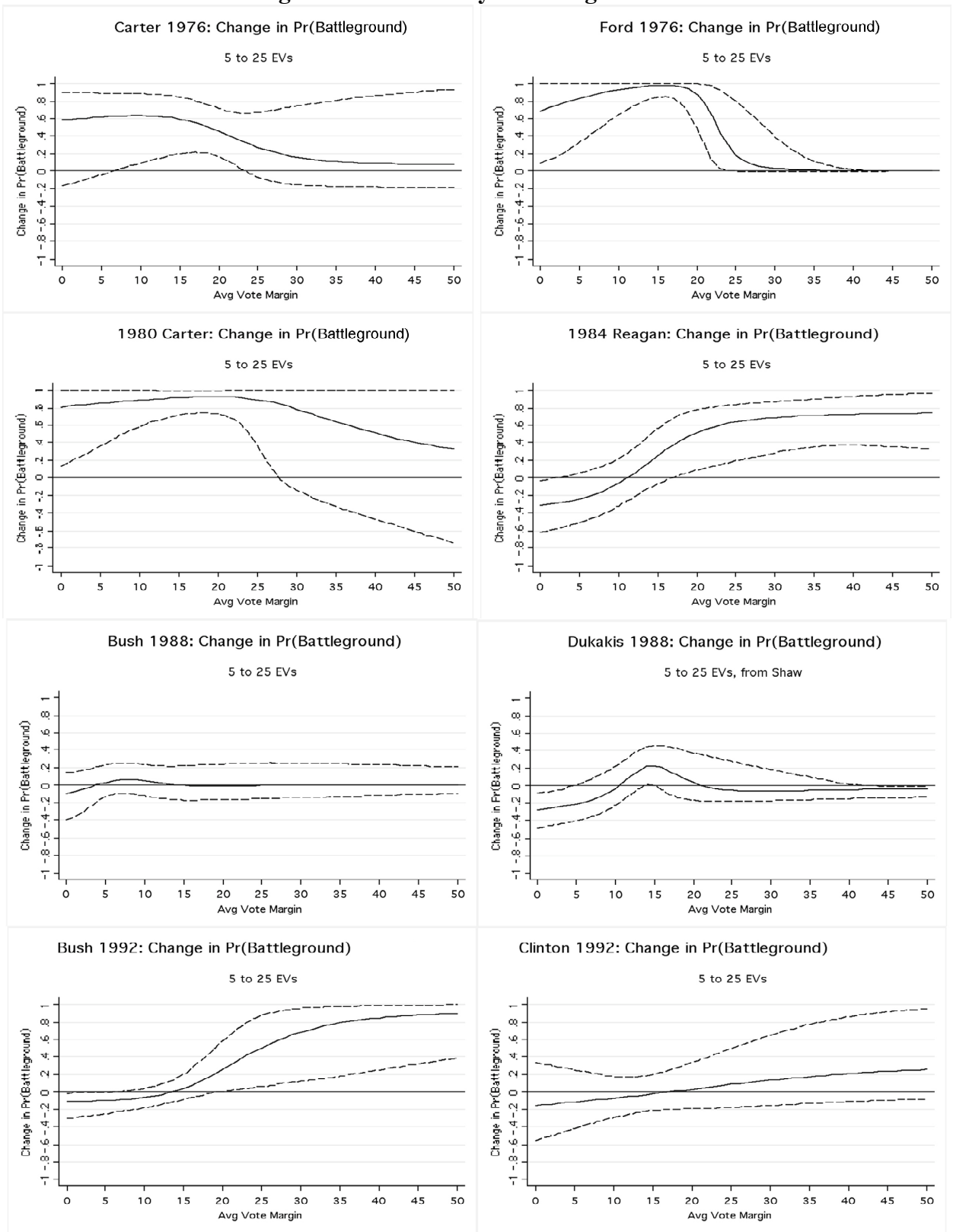
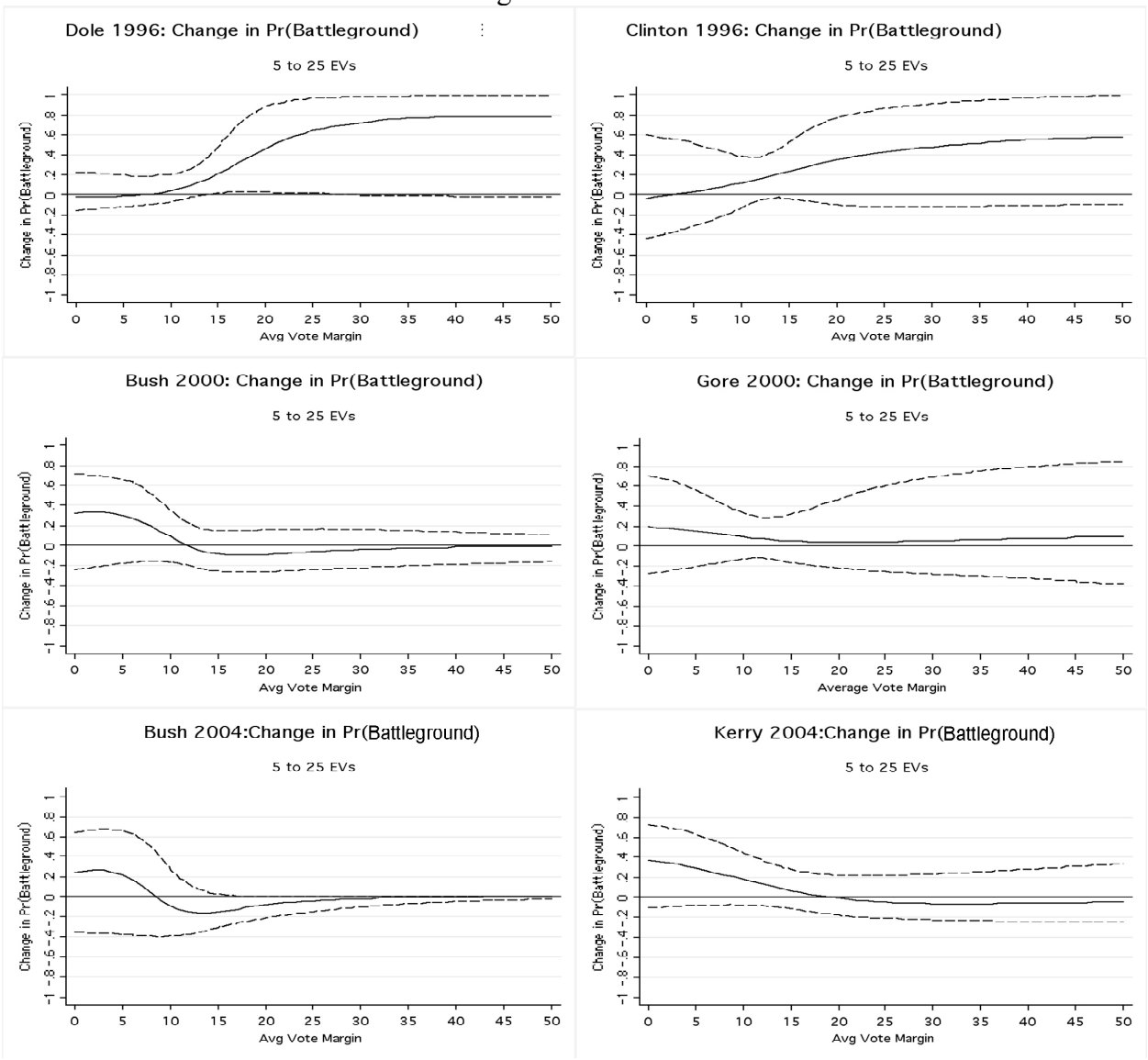


Figure 4.2 cont'd



Graphs show the change in the probability of top battleground status from an electoral vote increase of 20 votes across an increasing average vote margin.
--- 95% confidence interval
Measures of campaign assessments of Battleground status see Appendix A, all coded 0-1

For example, in 1988 the probability that a state with five electoral votes and an average historic two-party vote margin of three points was assigned top battleground status was .20 (95% c.i: .03, .53). If that state was assigned 25 electoral votes but maintained its average three-point margin the probability that it would be assigned top battleground status was .23 (95% c.i.: .02, .66), a change in probability of only .03 with an insignificant confidence interval across an increasing vote margin. Note that in both cases a state with an average three-point vote margin did have a significant probability of being a top battleground state, but increasing the size of that

state did not significantly increase that probability. Electoral votes had no significant conditional effect among less competitive states either.

The conditional effect of electoral votes is similar for both Clinton campaigns and for the 2000 and 2004 election cycles. In 2000, a state with an average vote margin of one point and five electoral votes had a .56 probability (95% c.i. 25, .81) of being labeled a top battleground state by the Bush campaign. If the same state had 25 electoral votes the probability that it would be a top battleground state was .86 (95% c.i. .36, 1.0) an insignificant change in probability of .33 (95% c.i. -.25, .70). According to the last four graphs in Figure 4.2, increasing electoral votes did not significantly increase the probability that a state would be a top target at any level of competitiveness.

In the early elections analyzed, competitiveness does impact the importance of electoral votes on level of battleground status. In other words, at least for early elections there is support for the efficiency strategy. This finding is consistent among those states that were not among the most or the least competitive states. In 1976, 1980 and 1984, increases in electoral votes did consistently increase the probability that a state was a high priority target if the average vote margin was greater than 10 points and less than 25 points. The conditional effect of electoral votes on level of battleground status was less consistent among states with an average vote margin of less than ten points or greater than 25 points. In the earliest elections analyzed, there is evidence that competition increased the importance of state size in the development of campaign strategies. In later years, the data suggest competitiveness does not modify the importance of state size for campaign plans.[68]

[68] All findings presented in this chapter are robust to tests for outlier effects. Eliminating large states California, New York and Texas from the data yields the same pattern of results.

Table 4.2 Direct Effect of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Campaign LBS Classifications

(DV = Level of Battleground Status assigned to a state by the campaign)

	1976 Carter[a]	1976 Ford[a]	1980 Carter[b]	1984 Reagan[c]	1988 Bush[d]	1988 Dukakis[a]	1992 Bush[a]	1992 Clinton[a]	1996 Dole[a]	1996 Clinton[a]	2000 Bush[a]	2000 Gore[a]	2004 Bush[a]	2004 Kerry[a]
Electoral Votes	.06**	.20***	.27***	.01	.09***	.10***	.00	-.01	.03	.03	.00	.01	-.04	.01
	(.02)	(.04)	(.06)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Competitiveness	-.03	-.16***	-.04	-.004	-.05*	-.03	-.00	-.04**	.00	-.03	-.08**	-.01	-.12**	-.02
	(.01)	(.04)	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.01)	(.03)	(.01)
N	51	51	50[a]	51	51	51	48[b]	48[b]	51	51	51	51	51	51
χ^2	19.45[+]	65.0[+]	43.6[+]	.48	27.68[+]	27.07[+]	.18	9.43[+]	3.48	6.92	10.87[+]	.91	26.47[+]	4.39[+]
Pseudo R^2	.10	.40	.34	.00	.22	.21	.001	.06	.02	.04	.08	.01	.20	.03

Ordered probit estimates. Standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

[+] indicates chi^{2}signficant at .01 level

For measures of Battleground status, see Appendix A, Table 1A, all coded 0-1.

a. DC missing from data

b. DC, MI, HI, and MS missing from dataset.

B. A Direct Effect of Competitiveness on Absolute Level of Battleground Status?

When competitiveness does not modify the impact of state size on campaign battleground classifications, does it play any role in campaign decisionmaking? Together the coefficients in Table 4.1 and the graphs in Figure 4.2 offer diminishing support for the efficiency hypothesis in the most recent elections analyzed. Models containing only the constituent (and not the interaction) terms support the same conclusion (Table 4.2) and suggest that rather than modifying the effect of state size, competition has come to impact battleground status independent of a state's electoral vote. This simplified model shows that for many of the most recent campaigns in the dataset (Bush1988, Clinton 1992, Bush 2000, Bush 2004) the historic competitiveness of a state has a significant effect on the level of battleground assigned to a state in the direction predicted (an increasing average vote margin diminishes the probability a state will be a battleground state). In contrast, state size stops showing a significant direct effect on campaign LBS classifications for any campaign after 1992. In other words, for many of the campaigns in which there is no evidence that competition modified the effect of state size on campaign strategy, there is ample evidence that state level competition carried an effect that operated independently of size altogether.

An alternative explanation is that strategists use current polling data and not historic voting history, as this analysis does, to devise strategies. Unfortunately, state level measures of early election candidate support are not available for most years. Analysis for 2000 and 2004 using data from the National Annenberg Election Survey of early election year vote margins in the states, however, show the same pattern of results (see Appendix D, Table 4A). For five of the eight campaign plans from 2000 and 2004, state competition had a significant effect on level of battleground status, while state size had a significant effect on only one battleground strategy.

These findings correspond with qualitative data from the archives and historical accounts of the campaigns. Both early campaign records and journalistic accounts reference the import of state size to early presidential campaign strategies. For example, as noted above, Reagan strategists in 1984 were concerned that some states were too big to ignore, regardless of competitiveness, and Carter's 1980 resource allocations prioritized both large and competitive states. Theodore H. White's descriptions of campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s reference the priority of the "big states" (see above). In contrast, Shaw's first-hand account of strategists' thinking in the Bush 2000 and 2004 campaigns suggest state size was secondary to state competitiveness (Shaw 2006).

C. Efficiency Strategy: Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Absolute Advertising Allocations

Analysis of how the campaigns categorized states supports the efficiency strategy in all but the most recent elections, but the level of battleground categorization represents only one aspect of the LBS concept. Do the above findings hold up when it comes to campaign resource allocations? Tables 4.3 and 4.4 present estimates of the effect of electoral votes on campaign resource allocations to the states, conditional upon the level of competitiveness of a state. I begin the analysis with advertising strategies. In both cases, these data are the absolute level of allocations made to a state.[69] We expect that allocations to big states will be higher because the

[69] Many scholars have noted that the expenditure of television advertising dollars per state is a fraught measure. Ad time bought in the Philadelphia market will be seen in New Jersey for example. And, gross rating points are a better

population in big states is larger. I will analyze per capita allocations in a later section to determine if electoral votes have a disproportionate effect on campaign allocations.
The parameter estimates support the efficiency hypothesis (Table 4.3). State size has a significant and positive effect on advertising in the states when electoral competition is strongest (when the average vote margin in a state is equal to 0). The coefficient on *Electoral Votes* is significant and positive in every case. In all but one case, the impact of electoral votes declines as the average vote margin in a state declines, i.e. the coefficient on *ElectoralVotesXCompetitiveness* is negative. But, the coefficient is only negative and significant in five cases. Unlike the results for the campaign LBS classifications, the coefficients for the most recent campaigns support the efficiency hypothesis. Figure 4.3 graphically depicts the marginal effect of electoral votes on *absolute* television advertising strategy across a 50-point vote margin.

Campaign records from the presidential archives and those provided by Shaw (2006) contain detailed television advertising plans. In every case, competition increases the importance of state size among the most competitive states. For equally competitive states, campaigns will spend more on advertising in big states than they will in smaller states. Graphs for the 1960 JFK campaign, the 1976 Ford campaign, and the 2000-2004 campaigns present the marginal effect of electoral votes (continuous dependent variable is dollars spent per state in thousands of dollars). Graphs for the Johnson 1964, Carter 1976, and Carter 1980 campaigns depict the change in probability of becoming a top television advertising target for states increasing from five to 25 electoral votes (limited dependent variable).[70]

In 1960, state competitiveness increased the importance of electoral votes on dollars spent on television advertising in a state. This positive effect diminished as the historic level of competition in a state declined. Electoral votes stopped having a significant marginal effect on television spot advertising spending once the average vote margin in a state reached 28 points. The figure for the 1976 Ford campaign looks remarkably similar. In 1976, the marginal effect of electoral votes on Ford's television ad spending was positive and diminished as state competitiveness declined. Electoral votes stopped having a significant marginal effect on spot ad spending when the average state vote margin reached 41 points.

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measure of the intensity of actual advertising in a state. But, for the purposes of this analysis total dollars spent per state reflect the decisions campaigns made about how to divvy up their resources. Notably, this is how ad data is organized in the early campaign records analyzed. Dollars spent also make comparisons over time and across resource types possible, as data on GRPs is not available for earlier campaigns. Alone TV dollars might be a questionable measure of campaign priorities, but included with so many other measures of battleground status we can comfortably include this measure here.

[70] Inconsistent measures of the dependent variable do offer some benefits. The measures include both total dollars spent, weeks of advertising, and rank categorizations. The consistency of results across these very different measures provides additional support for my conclusions.

Table 4.3 Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Absolute Advertising Allocations

(DV = Advertising)

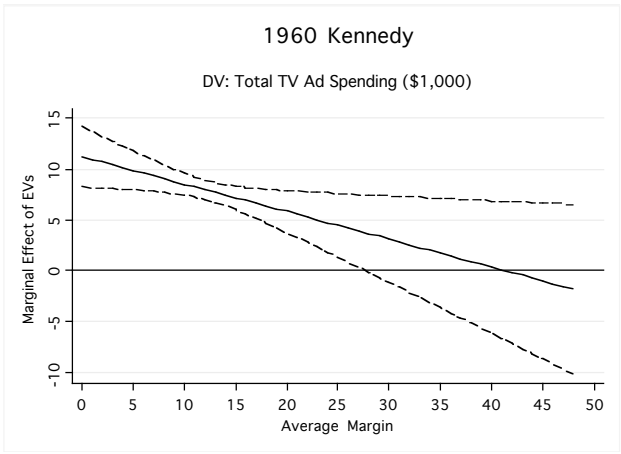
	1960 Kennedy[a] TV	1964 Johnson[b] TV	1976 Carter TV[c]	1976 Carter Radio[d]	1976 Ford TV[e]	1976 Ford Radio[f]	1976 Ford Newspapers[g]	1980 Carter TV[h]	1980 Carter Radio[i]
Electoral Votes	11.22***	.43	.52***	.48*	18.88***	2.88***	.76*	.31*	-.09*
	(1.51)	(.29)	(.14)	(.22)	(2.49)	(.41)	(.38)	(.02)	(.04)
Competitiveness	1.74	-.08	.12**	.07	2.43*	.18	.05	-.03	-.14***
	(1.32)	(.21)	(.04)	(.06)	(1.09)	(.18)	(.14)	(.05)	(.04)
Electoral Votes X Competitiveness	-.27*	.01	-.02**	-.02	-.32*	-.04	-.03	-.002	.01**
	(.12)	(.02)	(.01)	(.01)	(.14)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.00)
Constant	-62.69**	-	-	-3.59**	-109.68***	-10.38	-	-	-
	(20.43)			(1.38)	(25.04)	(4.12)			
N	46	49	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
χ^2	-	57.55[+]	35.26[+]	27.56[+]	-	-	52.38[+]	42.66[+]	19.34[+]
Pseudo R^2	-	.65	.27	.46	-	-	.58	.32	.14
Adj R^2	.86	-	-	-	.86	.87	-	-	-

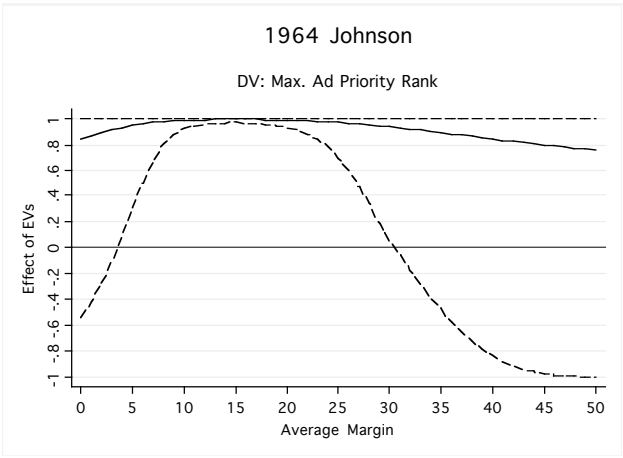
Table 4.3 (cont'd)

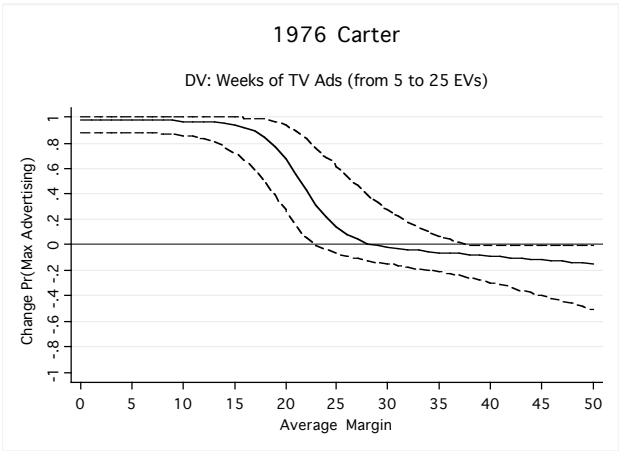
	2000 Bush TV[j]	2000 Gore TV[j]	2004 Bush TV[j]	2004 Kerry TV[j]
Electoral Vote s	454.96*	303.53*	520.32***	355.85***
	(174.99)	(138.95)	(123.61)	(82.53)
Competitiveness	28.59	11.93	113.99	355.85
	(142.84)	(113.42)	(98.17)	(65.54)
Electoral Votes X Competitiveness	-25.05	-19.76	-29.69***	-20.36***
	(13.91)	(11.05)	(7.92)	(5.29)
Consta n t	172.92	634.01	-1493.30	-1124.31
	(2021.98)	(1605.58)	(1631.53)	(1089.29)
N	4 9	4 9	4 9	4 9
χ^2		-		
Pseudo R^2		-		
Adj R^2	. 2 3	.14	.34	. 3 5

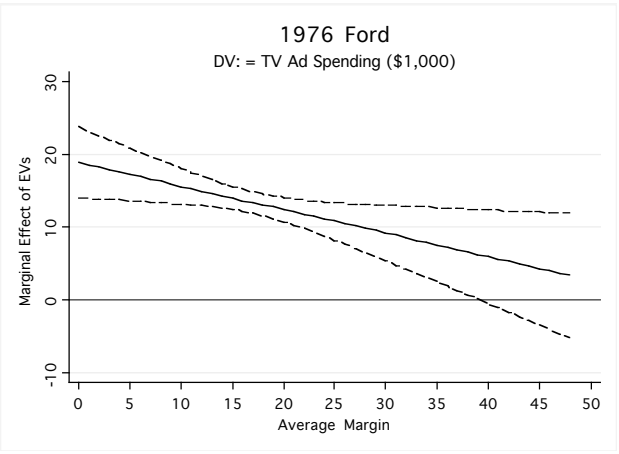
OLS estimates, Columns 1, 5, 6, 10-13.
Ordered probit estimates, Columns 2, 3, 7-9.
Probit estimates Column 4.
Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 + indicates Chi^{2}signficant at .01 level
a. 1960 DV= Television ad spending per state (DC, NJ and VT missing), b. 1964 DV= Ad spending per state 0=$150K, 1=$150-299K, 2=$300K+ (DC and FL missing), c. 1976 Carter DV= Weeks TV ads per state 0=No TV, 1= 3 weeks, 2=4 weeks, 3=5-6 weeks, d. 1976 Carter DV= 0= None, 1=Radio ads, e. 1976 Ford DV= Total TV spending per state ($1,000), f. 1976 Ford DV= Total Radio spending per state ($1,000), g. 1976 Ford DV= Newspaper ads per state 0=No priority, 1= Medium priority, 2=High Priority, h. 1980 Carter DV = Weeks TV ads per state 0=No TV, 1= 4 weeks, 2=5 weeks, 3=6 weeks, i. 1980 Carter DV = Weeks Radio ads per state 0=No radio, 1= 1 week, 2=2 weeks, 3=3 weeks, 4=4 weeks, j. 2000/2004 DV = Dollars spent per state on television advertising (Shaw 2006).

Figure 4.3 Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Television Advertising









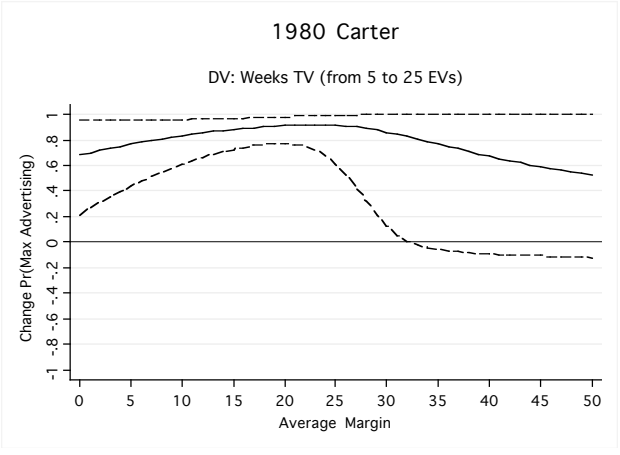
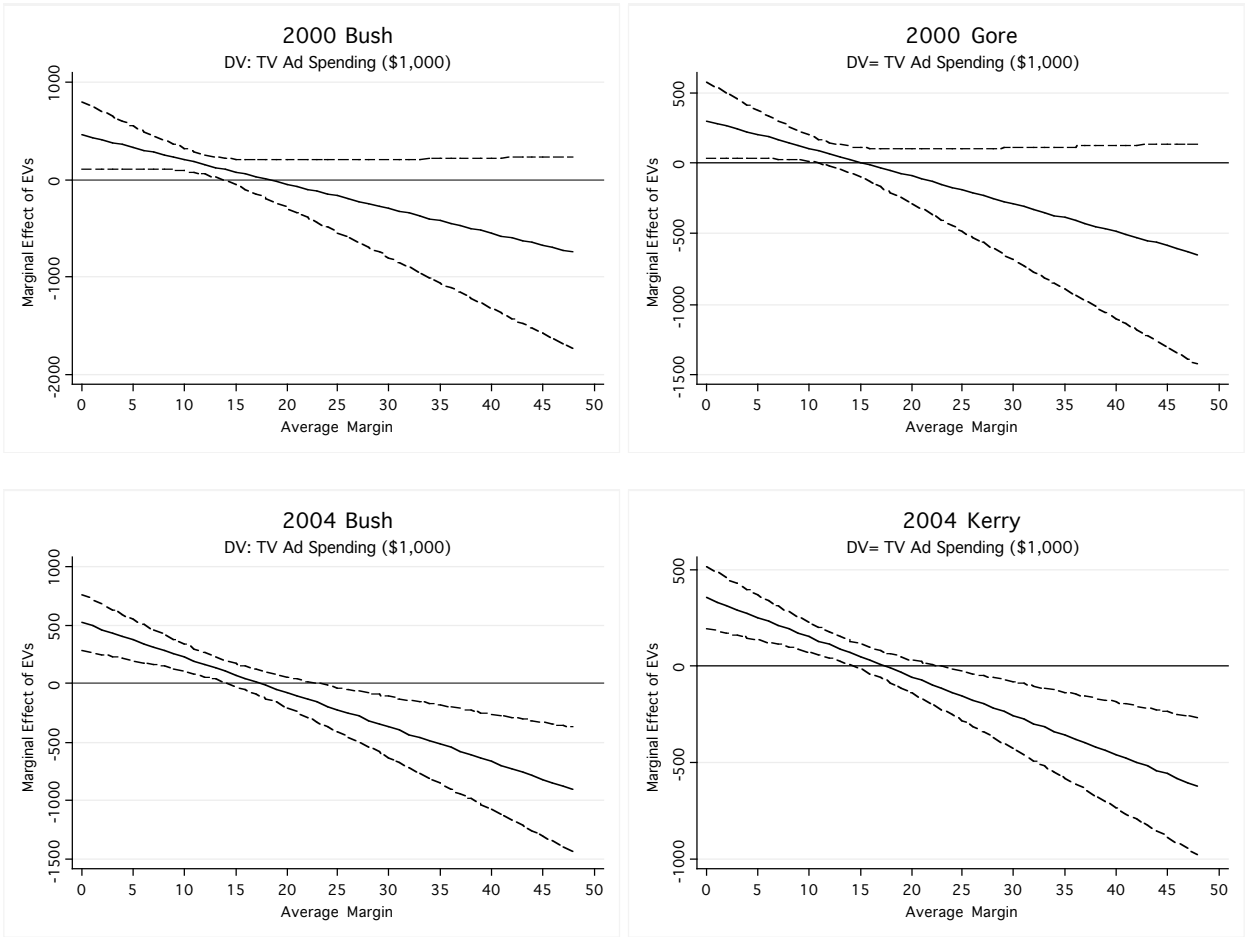


Figure 4.3 (cont'd) Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Television Advertising



--- 95% confidence interval

The graph for the 1964 Johnson television campaign depicts a slightly different pattern. In this case, the dependent variable is a three category ordinal variable of low, medium, and high priority advertising states based on the amount of money spent in each state. The probability that a state was categorized as a high priority ad target significantly increased as a state's electoral share increased from five to 25 votes if the state's average historic vote margin ranged between four and 30 percent. The change in probability was positive within this vote margin, but unlike the previous examples, the change in probability increased rapidly for the most competitive states and then declined rapidly as states became less competitive.

A similar pattern appears for the 1976 and 1980 Carter campaigns. In 1976, the Carter campaign ran spot TV ads for up to six weeks in any given state. The probability that the maximum number of weeks of spot TV ads aired in a state significantly increased if a state's electoral share increased from five to 25 votes, for states with an average vote margin of zero to 23 points. In 1980, the Carter campaign again ran spot TV ads for up to six weeks in a state. The probability that growing from a small to a large state (5 to 25 electoral votes) meant the Carter

campaign ran a maximum number of spot TV ads significantly increased for states with an average vote margin of zero to 33 points. In both cases, the change in probability associated with an increase in electoral votes was high and remained steady for the most competitive states, but the effect diminished as states grew less competitive.

The results for the Carter campaigns are important because they show that the absolute importance the campaigns placed on the large states does not just reflect the absolute dollars the campaign had to spend to compete in large states. The campaign must certainly have spent more money to advertise in big states, but they decided to air more ads in these states as well.

For all of the early campaigns in this study, competitiveness increased the importance of state size even at fairly uncompetitive levels. Big states with an average 40-point vote margin were likely to attract more campaign dollars in 1976 than smaller states with the same average vote margin. Even with limited campaign resources, campaigns were willing to pay to compete in fairly uncompetitive big states.

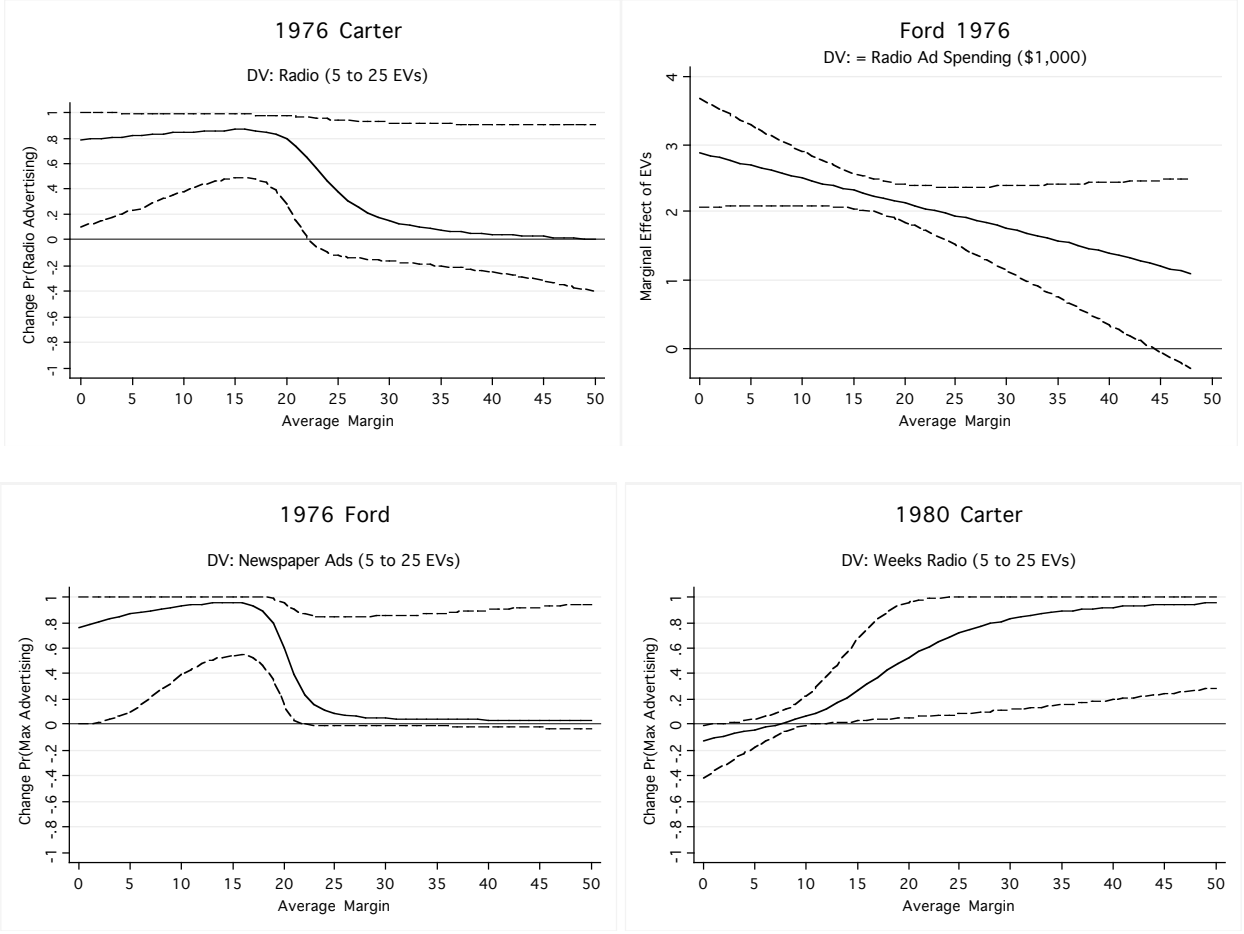
State competitiveness increased the importance of electoral votes on total dollars spent in the states in the most recent elections, as well. In 2000 and 2004, there is a positive marginal effect of electoral votes across the most competitive states for all of the campaigns. But, in these later elections, competition only increases the importance of state size on absolute spending for states with an average vote margin of about 15 points or less. In 2000, for example, the Bush campaign was willing to spend more to advertise in a big state with an average vote margin of 10 points than in a smaller state with an average vote margin of 10 points. But, the campaign did not spend more to advertise in big states if the average vote margin was greater than 13 points. For less competitive states, the importance of electoral votes actually diminished in 2004. The graphs in Figure 4.3 show that the competitive cut-point at which campaigns today decide they are unwilling to pay the high price required to compete in large states has dropped.

Unlike the campaign LBS classifications described above, there is support for the absolute efficiency hypothesis in even the most recent elections. Campaigns are willing to spend more to advertise on TV in a big state than in a small state with the same average vote margin. But, campaigns today are less willing to make these large investments in states that are not very competitive.

Turning to non-television forms of advertising, the graphs in Figure 4.4 depict the effect of electoral votes on radio and newspaper advertising across varying levels of state competition. While data for non-television advertising are not as widely available as data for television advertising in the presidential archives, the data that are available show electoral votes do carry a significant marginal effect at certain values of state competition. Strategies for the Carter 1976 and 1980 radio plans and for the Ford 1976 newspaper plan are each measured with limited dependent variables, and these graphs show the effect an increase in electoral votes had on the probability that a state was a top target across a 50 point vote margin. The marginal effect of electoral votes on spot radio advertising across a 50 point vote margin is displayed for the Ford 1976 radio plan.

Graphs for the Carter and Ford 1976 radio strategies appear similar to the graphs for their 1976 television plans in Figure 4.3. The probability that the Carter campaign ran radio ads in a state significantly increased if a state moved from five to 25 electoral votes and had an average historical vote margin of zero to 23 percent – the same cutoff point for maximum television advertising by the Carter campaign. For the Ford campaign, the effect of electoral votes on spot radio spending per state is positive and significant for states with an average vote margin of zero to 45 points, just four points higher than the cutoff for Ford's 1976 television advertising.

Figure 4.4 Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Non-TV Advertising



--- 95% confidence margin

When it came to newspaper advertising, the Ford campaign organized states into categories of no priority, medium priority and high priority status. The probability that increasing a state's electoral share from five to 25 votes would lead the campaign to give a state high priority newspaper status is positive and significant again for states with an average vote margin of zero to 23 points. The marginal effect of electoral votes on Ford's television, radio and newspaper spending all fall within the same average vote margin range.

But, the similarity of the various ad strategies for the 1976 campaigns does not mean all campaigns allocate all advertising in the same ways. For example, in 1980, the probability that a state was targeted with the maximum four weeks of Carter radio ads did significantly increase if a state grew from five to 25 electoral votes. However, the positive increase in probability was only significant in a state with an average vote margin of greater than 12 points. Unlike the change in probability on Carter television advertising in 1980, which was significant for states with an average vote margin of 0 to 33 points, the effect of electoral votes on the probability of radio ads was not significant for the most competitive states and remained significant for the least competitive states. Strategists did not distinguish between large and small competitive

states (they advertised extensively on the radio in all competitive states), but among the less competitive states they prioritized radio advertising in the most populated states.

D. Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes: Campaign Field Activities

Table 4.4 contains estimates of the effect of electoral votes on eight field activities by six candidates, with the level of state competition as the modifying variable. The table presents models for phone bank targets, voter registration, voter mobilization, state budgets, mail campaigns, the distribution of campaign materials, and the disbursement of volunteers.

The coefficient on *Electoral Votes* is significant and positive in six of the thirteen cases. This indicates that even among the most competitive states (average vote margin of zero), strategists would be expected to prioritize the big states in fewer than half of the examples analyzed. Substantively, this finding is not particularly useful because there are no perfectly competitive states. The table alone offers little support for the efficiency strategy, with the coefficient on *Electoral VotesXCompetitiveness* negative and significant in only three of the 13 models. The impact of electoral votes declines as the average vote margin in a state declines for the Carter 1976 phone strategy and for the 1976 Ford and Carter state budgets. The graphs in Figures 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 tell a more complex story and demonstrate the value of including different types of resources when evaluating the battleground concept within and across elections.

Turning first to the 1960 Kennedy campaign (Figure 4.5), the graphs demonstrate mixed support for the absolute efficiency hypothesis. The probability that a state would be a key phone bank target for the Kennedy campaign did increase significantly among states with a zero to 16-point average vote margin, when electoral votes increase from five to 25. Among less competitive states, changes in electoral vote share carried no significant effect on the probability of targeting. On the other hand, the campaign's voter registration drive (dummy variable) reflected no such effect. The Kennedy campaign was no more likely to organize voter registration efforts in big states than in small states regardless of the level of state competition.

Increasing electoral votes only shows a significant effect on the probability a state was a voter registration target for states with an average vote margin of between seven and 21 percent. In most cases, the field strategies for both the Carter and Ford campaigns in 1976, offer further support to an efficiency strategy (Figure 4.6). The campaigns spent more on campaign materials in big states than in small states at the same level of competition. For the Carter campaign, the marginal effect of electoral votes on state campaign budgets is significant across a 50-point range of competitiveness. The marginal effect of electoral votes becomes insignificant for the Ford campaign for states with an average vote margin of 28 points or more.

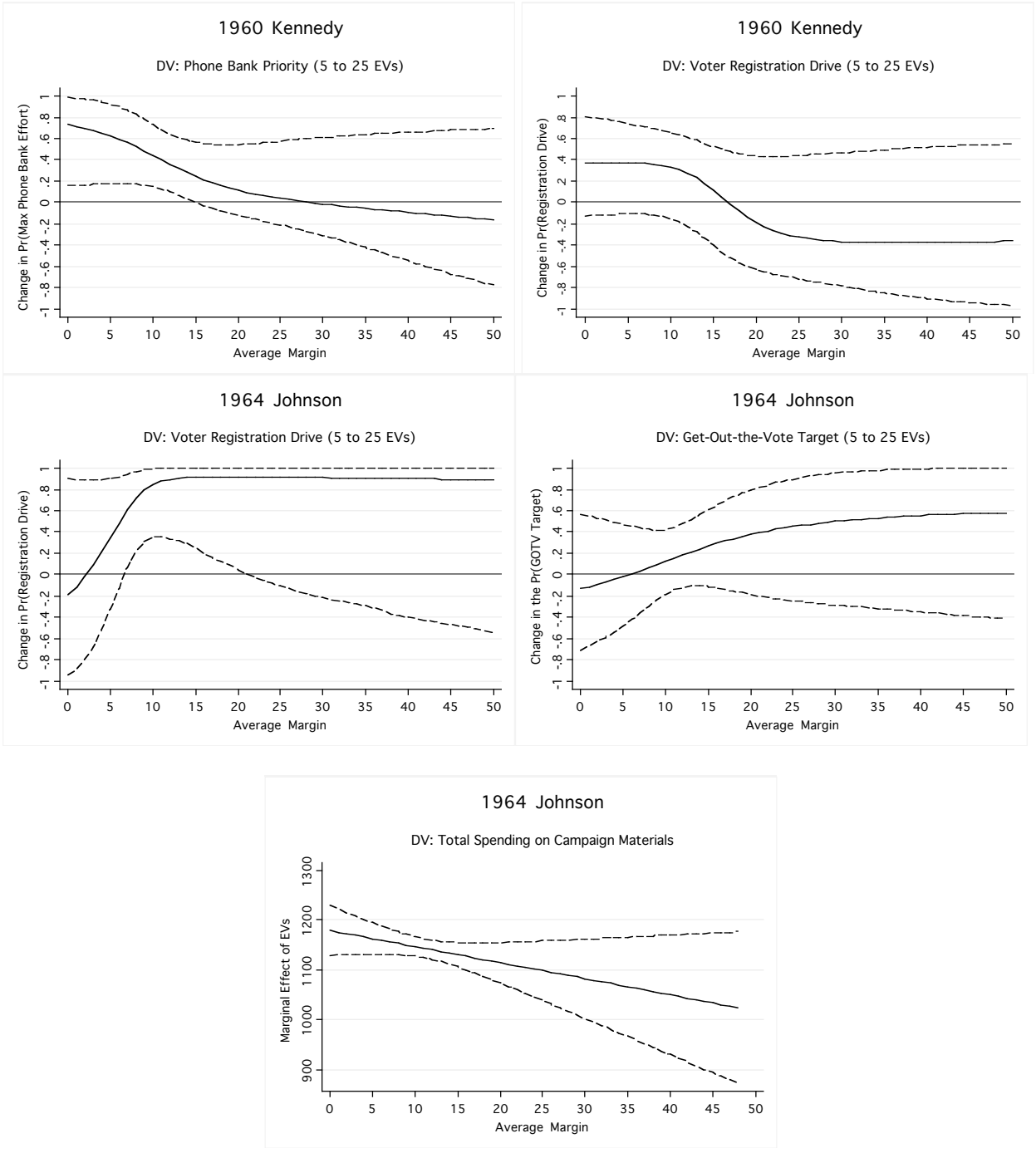
Electoral votes also had a significant conditional effect on the probability a state was a phone bank target for both the Carter and Ford campaigns. The probability that the Carter team used phone banks in a state significantly increased in states with an average vote margin of 0 to 25 percent, if a state's electoral votes grow from 5 to 25. A similar electoral vote increase significantly increased the probability a state was a Ford phone bank target, among states with an average vote margin of 15 to 21 points. And, the marginal effect of electoral votes was positive and significant on the Ford team's mail plan, although that effect did decline as competitiveness declined and became insignificant for states with an average vote margin of greater than 24 percent. Only the Carter volunteer program showed no significant change in probability from an increase in electoral votes regardless of level of state competition.

Table 4.4 Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Field Activities
(DV = Field Activities)

	1960 Phone Bank[a]	1960 Voter Reg.[b]	1964 Voter Reg[d]	1964 GOTV[e]	1964 Campaign Materials[f]	1976 Phone[g]	1976 Carter State Budget[h]	1976 Vols.[i]	1976 Ford State Budget[j]	1976 Mail[k]	1976 Phone[l]	1980 GOTV[m]	1984 GOTV[n]
Electoral Votes	.14*	.17	-.06	-.03	1179.28**	.80**	15.08***	-.01	12.85***	9.67	.02	.19*	-.06
	(.06)	(.10)	(.13)	(.06)	(25.59)	(.30)	(1.32)	(.07)	(1.13)	(5.10)	(.11)	(.08)	(.09)
Competitiveness	.05	.04	-.28	-.05	28.07	.10	1.23*	-.01	2.19***	.42	-.06	.03	-.11*
	(.04)	(.05)	(.18)	(.04)	(18.36)	(.08)	(.58)	(.03)	(.49)	(2.24)	(.08)	(.04)	(.06)
Electoral Votes X Competitiveness	(-.01)	-.01	.02	.00	-3.24	-.02*	-.27***	.00	-.41***	-.19	.00	.00	.01
	(.00)	(.01)	(.02)	(.00)	(2.11)	(.01)	(.07)	(.00)	(.06)	(.28)	.01	(.00)	(.01)
Constant	-	-.56	.08	.10	-2843.85***	-5.77*	47.65***	-.67	53.35***	-15.19	-.37	-	.92
		(.96)	(1.49)	(.68)	(297.07)	(2.30)	(13.33)	.72	(11.40)	(51.37)	(1.54)		(.88)
N	48	48	50	50	50	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
χ^2	13.10[+]	8.91	28.35[+]	3.28	-	41.8[+]	-	1.28	-	-	11.43[+]	33.29[+]	17.54[+]
Pseudo R^2	.13	.14	.51	.05	-	.66	-	.02	-	-	.23	.37	.25
Adj R^2	-	-	-	-	.99	-	.94	-	.87	.25	-	-	-

Ordered probit estimates, Columns 1, 13. Probit estimates Columns 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12. OLS estimates Columns 6, 8, 10, 11.
Standard errors in parentheses. ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 [+] indicates Chi^{2}signficant at .01 level
a. JFK 1960, DV= Phone banks 0=No phone banks, .5=Some phone banks, 1=Maximum phone banks (AK, HI missing), b. JFK 1960, DV= Voter Registration 0=Not a target 1=Voter registration target (AK, HI missing), c. JFK 1960, DV= Tabloid Distribution 0=No tabloids 1=Tabloids distributed in state (AK, HI missing), d. Johnson 1964, DV= Voter Registration 0=Not a target 1=Voter registration target (DC missing), e. Johnson 1964, DV = Get-Out-the-Vote 0=Not a target 1=Voter registration target (DC missing), f. Johnson 1964, DV = Total spending on campaign materials per state ($)(DC missing), g. Carter 1976, DV= phone banks 0=No phone banks, 1=Phone banks, h. Carter 1976, DV=State budgets ($), i. Carter 1976, DV=Volunteers 0=No volunteers, 1=Volunteers, j. Ford 1976, DV=State budgets ($), k. Ford 1976, DV=State mail budgets ($), l. Ford 1976, DV= phone banks 0=No phone banks, 1=Phone banks, m. Carter 1980, DV= Get-Out-the-Vote 0=No priority, .5=Medium priority, 1=High priority, n. Reagan 1984, DV= Get-Out-the-Vote 0=No GOTV, 1=GOTV

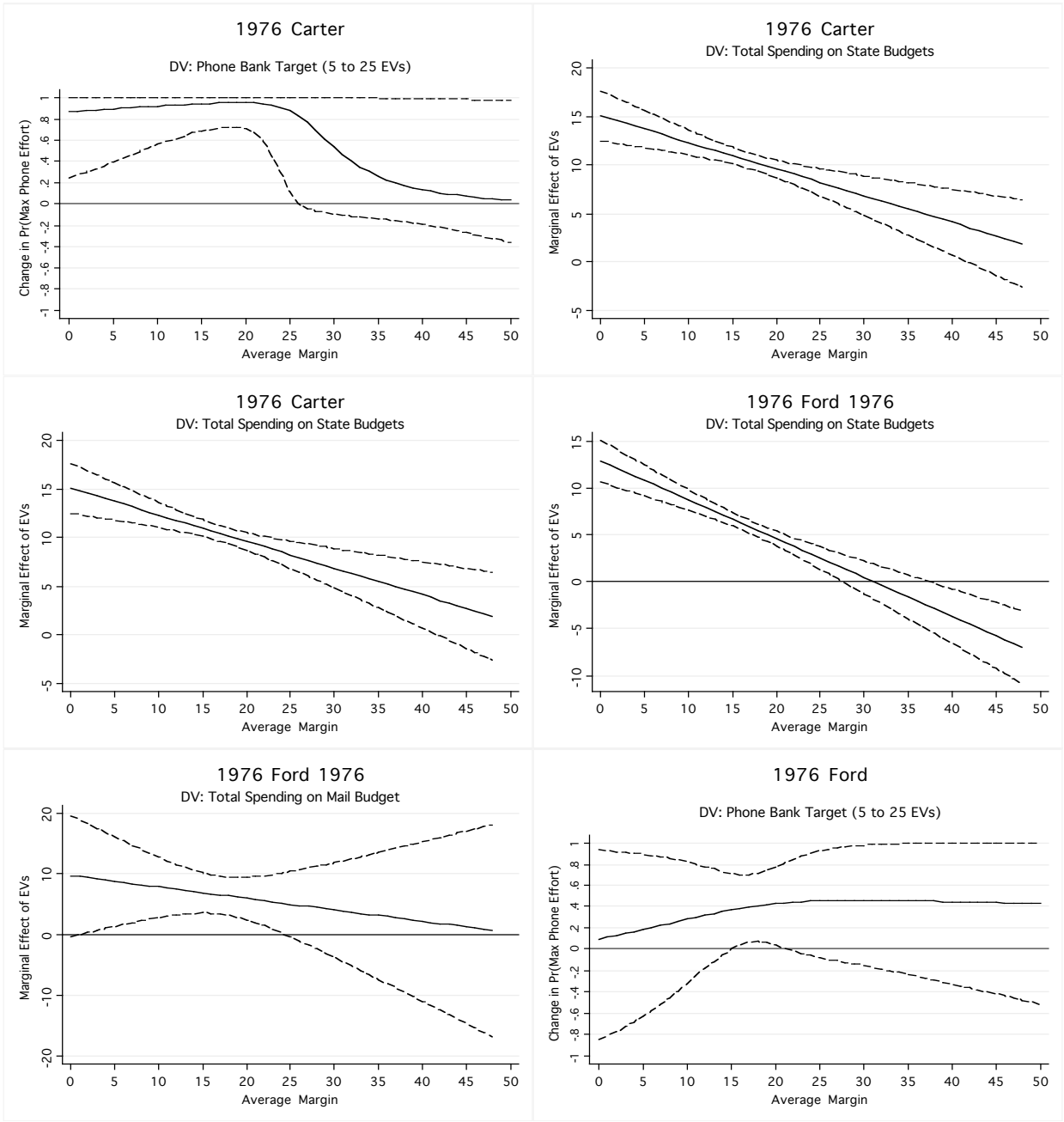
Figure 4.5 Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Field Strategies: Kennedy (1960) and Johnson (1964)



--- 95% confidence interval

Results for the 1964 Johnson field strategy are similarly mixed. Increasing a state's electoral share does not significantly increase the probability that a state was a key target of the campaign's voter mobilization (GOTV) efforts across any level of competition. In contrast, the marginal effect of electoral votes on total dollars spent on campaign materials in a state is positive and significant, and that effect declines as the competitiveness of a state declines.

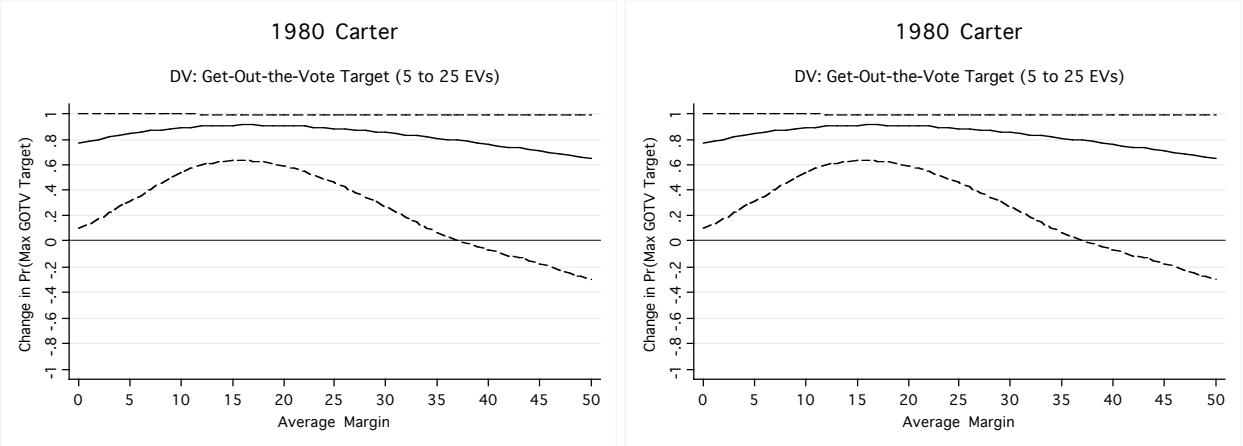
Figure 4.6 Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Field Strategies: 1976 Carter and Ford



--- 95% confidence interval

Finally, the graphs in Figure 4.7 further support the efficiency strategy. The graphs represent the get-out-the-vote strategies implemented by the Carter (1980) and Reagan (1984) teams. In 1980, increasing electoral votes (5 to 25 votes) significantly increased the probability that a state was a top priority of the Carter GOTV drive. The change in probability increased slightly for the most competitive states (with 0 to 17 point average margin) and then declined slightly, becoming insignificant for states with a greater than 38 point margin. In the case of the Reagan GOTV strategy, increasing electoral votes has a significant and positive effect on states with an average vote margin of 12 to 46 percent. The positive change in probability is significant and increasing up to that cutoff.

Figure 4.7 Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Field Strategies: Carter (1980) and Reagan (1984)



- - - 95% c.i.

As with analysis of advertising allocations, analysis of presidential campaign field activity shows mixed support for the efficiency strategy. Unfortunately, data on field strategy is unavailable for elections after 1984. It is impossible to tell from this data whether support for the use of the efficiency strategy in designing field plans has declined in the most recent elections as it has for battleground status. Notably, in no case does running the models for field strategy without an interaction term show competitiveness to have a significant direct effect on field strategy (see Appendix D, Table 4B). And, even in the cases for which there is no support for the efficiency strategy, running the field strategy models without an interaction term shows neither electoral votes nor competitiveness have an independent effect on field strategy. In these cases, some other independent variable appears to determine field strategy.

E. Relative Effects of Electoral Votes on Campaign Allocations

The above analyses all explore the *absolute* effects of electoral votes on campaign strategy and resource allocations across different levels of state competition. State competitiveness does appear to modify the absolute allocation of total television advertising dollars to the states and to modify the level or presence of many field activities. But, in recent elections, competitiveness replaces state size as a predictor of the campaigns' classifications of battleground status. And, the data suggest campaigns today are less willing to make big investments in large states unless they are very competitive. It is not clear from the above

analysis whether campaigns are willing to spend relatively more to reach a voter in a large state than in a small state or whether state competitiveness makes them more or less willing to do so.

In this section, I examine the relationship between relative, or per capita, allocations to the states, state size, and competitiveness. I use the voting age population in a state to determine per capita spending levels.[71] Table 4.5 presents the direct and conditional effects of state size and state competition on both absolute and relative spot ad spending in the states in 1960, 1976, 2000 and 2004.[72] Figure 4.8 shows the marginal effect of electoral votes on per capita TV ad spending in the states at diminishing levels of state competitiveness.[73]

In 1960 and 1976, state competitiveness modified the effect of electoral votes on per capita (or per voter) spending. Competition increased the importance of state size on the Kennedy campaign's per capita spending levels in states with an average vote margin of 12 points or less in 1960. In these very competitive states, the campaign spent more per person to advertise in big states than in smaller states. In 1976, electoral votes had a significant positive marginal effect on TV ad spending in the states with average vote margins between 8 and 26 points. For these two campaigns, state competition modified the effect of both absolute and relative television ad budgets. Campaigns were willing to spend disproportionate amounts to reach voters in big states. Table 4.5 shows that leaving out the potential of interaction effects, state size had a significant and positive effect on the Kennedy and Ford campaigns' per capita ad spending in the states, while state competition did not.

In contrast, there is no evidence of significant marginal effects from state size on per capita spot ad spending by the Democratic or the Republican campaigns in 2000 and 2004 at any level of competition.[74] Competitiveness did not modify the effect of state size on relative ad spending in the states. Looking at the models without interaction terms, electoral votes show no significant effect on per capita ad budgets for the states. There is no evidence to support the hypothesis that the campaigns today spend disproportionate amounts on spot advertising in large states. On the other hand, state competitiveness shows a significant direct effect on relative spot ad spending in the states whether that is measured in per capita spending (Figure 4.8) or in gross rating points (see Appendix D, Figure 4A). The campaigns were willing to spend relatively more to reach voters in competitive states but not in large states.

In sum, while electoral votes had a significant marginal effect on absolute ad spending levels among very competitive states in 2000 and 2004, they had no such effect on per capita spending. State size may explain absolute differences in ad spending by today's campaigns, but competition appears to explain differences in relative spending levels. In the past, electoral votes showed a significant marginal effect on both absolute and relative ad spending levels across a broad range of levels of state competition.

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[71] Voting Age Population determined using decennial US Census statistics. State VAP in non-census years is an estimate of the average increase per year between enumerations. Data from Haines, Michael R., and the ICPSR. "Historical, Demographic, Economic and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2000." [Computer file]. ICPSR 02896-v2. Hamilton, NY: Colgate University/Ann Arbor: MI: ICPSR [producers], 2004. Ann Arbor, MI: ICPSR [distributor], 2005-04-29.doi:10.3886/ICPSR02896

[72] These are the years for which I have data on absolute spending levels.

[73] For analysis showing the marginal effect of electoral votes modified by state competition on relative spending on field activities see Appendix D, Table 4C and Figure 4B.

[74] For analysis showing the marginal effect of electoral votes modified by state competition on gross ratings points per state from 1988-2004, see Appendix D, Figure 4A.

Table 4.5 Absolute versus Relative Ad Spending: Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Spot TV Advertising

	1960 Kennedy				1976 Ford				2000 Bush			
	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)
Electoral Votes	7.92***	11.22***	.0005*	.002**	13.35***	18.88***	.001***	.0008	154.41**	454.96*	-.004	.013
	(.54)	(1.51)	(.0002)	(.001)	(.80)	(2.49)	(.0001)	(.0007)	(53.69)	(174.99)	(.01)	(.04)
Competitiveness	-.96	1.74	-.0002	.001	.40	2.43*	-.0001	-.0001	-166.51	28.59	-.04*	-.03)
	(.65)	(1.32)	(.0002)	(.114)	(.70)	(1.09)	(.0002)	(.0004)	(95.29)	142.84	(.02)	(.03)
Electoral Votes X Competitiveness		-.27*	-	-.0001*		-.32*	-	.0000		-25.05		-.001
		(.12)		(.00004)		(.14)		(.00004)		13.91		(.003)
Constant	-26.58	-62.69**	.01**	.0006	-75.80***	-109.68**	.01	.01	2713.04	172.92	1.10***	.95*
	(13.86)	(20.43)	(.005)	(.008)	(21.36)	(25.04)	(.01)	(.01)	(1483.17)	2021.98	(.30)	(.42)
N	46	46	46	46	51	51	50	50	49	49	49	49
R^2	.85	.87	.16	.26	.86	.87	.33	.33				
Adj R^2	.85	.86	.12	.21	.85	.86	.30	.29	.19	.23	.05	.03

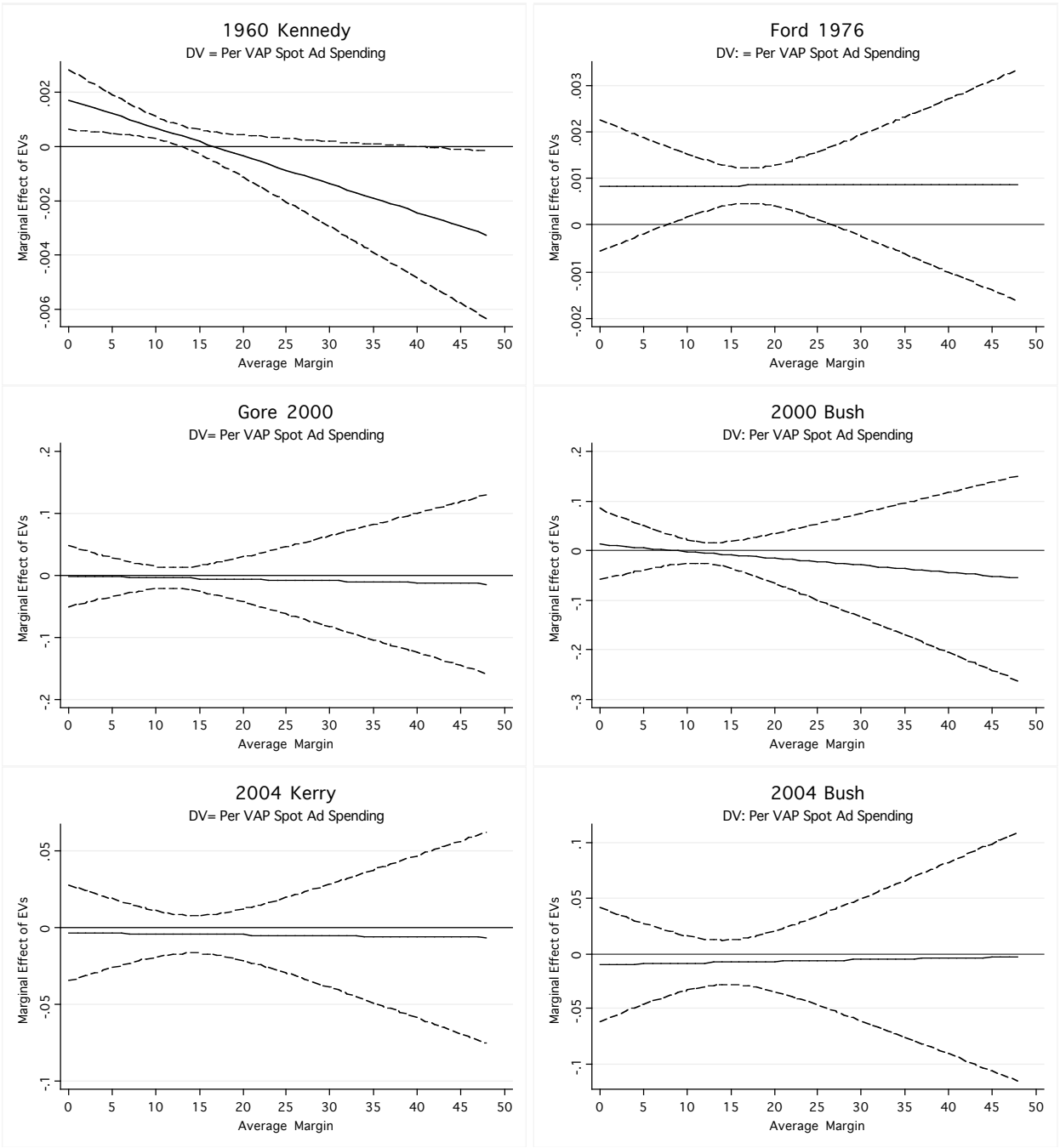
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05
OLS regression coefficients.

Table 4.5 (continued) Absolute versus Relative Ad Spending Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Spot TV Advertising

	2000 Gore				2004 Bush				2004 Kerry			
	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)
Electoral Votes	66.39	303.53*	-.003	.01	94.16	520.32***	-.008	-.01	63.69	355.85***	-.004	-.003
	(42.62)	(138.95)	(.008)	(.03)	(54.88)	(123.61)	(.01)	(.03)	(36.88)	(82.53)	(.006)	(.016)
Competitiveness	-142.00	11.93	-.03*	-.02	-176.10*	113.99	-.04***	-.04	-117.85*	355.85	-.03***	-.03*
	(75.63)	(113.42)	(.01)	(.02)	(68.39)	(98.17)	(.01)	(.02)	(45.95)	(65.54)	(.008)	(.01)
Electoral Votes X Competitiveness		-19.76	-	.-001	-	-29.69***	-	-.0001		-20.36***	-	-.00006
		(11.05)		(.002)		(7.92)		(.002)		(5.29)		(.00102)
Constant	2638.22	634.01	.80***	.66*	3018.90*	-1493.30	1.09***	1.11**	1969.12*	-1124.31	.69***	.68**
	(1177.23)	(1605.58)	(.23)	(.33)	(1247.2)	(1631.53)	(.23)	(.35)	(838.08)	(1089.29)	(.14)	(.21)
N	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
Adj R^2	.10	.14	.04	.03	.16	.34	.17	.15	.16	.35	.19	.17

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05
OLS regression coefficients.

Figure 4.8 Television Spot Ad Spending per Voting Age Population



- - - 95% c.i.

F. Looking for Disproportionate Effects with the Exponential Model

As noted above, Colantoni et al. (1975) revise the model set forth by Brams and Davis (1974) by including a measure of state competition. Both theories hold that the relationship between state size and state competition with presidential campaign resource allocations can best

be described through an exponential model that accounts for the allocation of resources out of proportion to state size. That model is,

$$R_i = \alpha EV_i^{\beta} Comp_i^{y} \quad \text{where } (R_i^{75} = \text{resource allocations to state i})$$

More recently, Johnston et al. (2004) incorporate the Colantoni model in looking for the effects of size and competitiveness on visit and advertising allocations in the 2000 election. They find that candidate time was allocated disproportionately to the big states, while television advertising (as measured by gross ratings points, not total dollars) was allocated more by competitiveness.

Table 4.6 applies the exponential model to the archival campaign data and the data provided by show. There are two shortcomings to this model. First, although it is an interaction model it does not include the constituent terms (Brambor et al. 2005). Second, due to the exponential nature of the model only interval level data can be used for this analysis. This limits the archival data that can be included in this analysis.

Several findings emerge from the exponential analysis in Table 4.6. First, campaigns in the early campaigns in this analysis were more likely to make disproportionate allocations to the big states. In 1960, Kennedy television advertising dollars and visits were both disproportionately allocated to the large states. As might be expected, given his pledge to visit all 50 states, Nixon's travel was not so disproportionately allocated. In 1964, the Johnson campaign did spend relatively more on campaign materials in the big states, but they allocated both polling and their candidate's time less than proportionately. Goldwater's travel was almost perfectly proportionate to state size. In 1976, Carter's travel was relatively high in the big states. But, the campaign had a less than proportional allocation of offices across the states and state budgets were close to proportional with size. Similarly, the Ford 1976 campaign had almost perfectly proportionate allocations of polling, state budgets, and total spending on tabloids. In contrast, the campaign allocations to big states were biased by significant amounts for direct mail, a special letter to undecided voters, and total spending on television and radio.

In contrast, the role of competition in these early elections is minor. In 1960 and 1964, competition only showed a significant effect on Kennedy's travel, and that coefficient was less than proportional. In 1976, competition had a significant effect on Carter and Ford's state budgets, but that relationship was less than proportional. In contrast, Ford's mail and tabloid expenditures were significant and more than proportional to state size.

In the 1988 and 1992 Bush campaigns, polling in the states was significant but less than proportional to state size and showed no significant relationship with state competition. Bush travel in 1988 was proportional to state size and more than proportional in 1992. Television strategy for these two elections is only available in measures of gross ratings points, not in absolute dollars (in effect it is already a per capita measure). Bush GRPs in 1988 size has a significant but less than proportional effect, while competition showed a significant but less than proportional effect on Dukakis' advertising. There is no sign of a size or competition effect for Clinton or Bush's 1992 advertising plans as measured by GRPs.

The 2000 election results show a less than proportional effect of size on travel by both candidates. No size or competition effect is shown for the campaigns' ad plans. The missing size

[75] A minor adjustment is added to R_i to account for cases when R_i=0.

Table 4.6 Relative Allocation of Campaign Resources, Exponential Modeling

	EVs	se	Comp	se	R^2	n		EVs	Se	Comp	se	R^2	n
Kennedy 1960							**Bush 1988**						
Ad spending (total$)	1.73***	0.49	-1.16	0.73	0.32	46	Polls	.72*	0.29	.18	0.33	0.13	51
JFK travel	1.26***	0.18	-.67*	0.27	0.61	48	Bush TV (GRPs)	.70**	0.24	-.06	0.27	0.2	51
Nixon travel	1.02***	0.17	-.41	0.25	0.52	48	Duke TV (GRPs)	0.08	0.08	-.27**	0.09	0.26	51
Johnson 1964							Bush travel	1.05***	0.25	-.14	0.29	0.35	49
Campaign Materials (total $)	1.47***	0.05	.07	0.05	0.95	50	**Bush 1992**						
Johnson travel	.70***	0.17	-.03	0.16	0.3		Polls	.73***	0.2	0.15	0.22	0.23	51
Goldwater travel	.97***	0.19	.14	0.18	0.36	48	Bush travel	1.54***	0.26	0.16	0.29	0.45	49
Polls	.70***	0.16	.21	0.15	0.3	50	Clinton TV (GRPs)	0.22	0.21	-0.41	0.23	0.13	51
Carter 1976							Bush TV (GRPs)	0.18	0.11	0.07	0.12	0.05	51
Carter travel	1.24***	0.18	-0.41	0.41	0.55	48	**2000**						
Surrogate travel	1.45***	0.21	-0.74	0.48	0.56	48	Bush TV (GRPs)	1.16	1.07	-2.6	1.81	0.08	49
Total travel	1.5***	0.16	-0.56	0.37	0.69	48	Bush TV (total$)	2.68	1.58	-5.07	2.66	0.15	49
Offices	.61***	0.16	-0.72	0.32	0.36	51	Gore TV (GRPs)	0.48	1.05	-2.69	1.76	0.06	49
State Budgets	1.14***	0.09	-.40*	0.18	0.81	51	Gore TV(total$)	-5.07	2.66	2.68	1.58	0.15	49
Ford 1976							Bush travel	.79**	.29	-0.66	0.49	0.19	50
Polls	1.1***	0.16	0.01	0.33	0.51	51	Gore travel	.67*	.26	-0.86	0.44	0.22	50
State budget (total$)	1.07***	0.07	-.57***	0.15	0.85	51	**2004**						
Mail (total$)	1.28**	0.41	-1.49#	0.85	0.26	51	Bush TV (GRPs)	-.45	.89	-4.30***	1.01	.29	49
Undecided letters (total$)	1.62***	0.45	-1.53#	0.92	0.3	51	Bush TV (total$)	-.19	.82	-3.92***	.93	.29	49
Tabloids (total$)	.91*	0.4	-1.87*	0.83	0.23	51	Kerry TV (GRPs)	-.38	.88	-3.69***	1.00	.24	49
Total Media (total$)	2.57***	0.59	-.06	1.23	0.3	51	Kerry TV (total$)	-.12	.81	-3.36***	.91	.24	49
TV (total$)	2.15***	0.46	.02	0.94	0.33	51	Kerry Travel	.21	.23	-1.36***	.27	.41	50
Radio (total$)	1.66***	0.31	-.29	0.64	0.4	51	Bush Travel	.46	.26	-1.20***	.29	.36	50

Cell entries are OLS estimates, with standard errors, of parameters from the Colantoni, Levesque and Ordeshook (1975) model $R_i = \alpha EV_i^B Comp_i^y$. R_i = resources allocated to state i and competition is the average two party vote margin in each state for the last three election cycles. Following Colantoni et al., a small adjustment of .25 is added to R_i to account for instances where $R_i = 0$

effect is not surprising given the results of the marginal effects analysis above. However, in light of the marginal effects analysis and the findings of Johnston et al., I suspect the missing competitiveness effect is a reflection of the measure of competition used. Substituting the historic level of state competition measure with an election year measure of state level competition (Table 4.7), I find no size effect and a significant and more than proportionate competition effect on both total advertising dollars spent and on gross ratings points by Bush and Gore. The competition and size effects on candidate travel are both significant but less than proportional.

In 2004, competition shows a significant and more than proportional effect on total advertising dollars spent, gross ratings points, and travel for both campaigns. Size again shows no effect. Not only does competition replace size as having a disproportionate effect on campaign allocations in recent elections, in many cases, the size of the competition effect is much greater than ever observed for state size. In 2004, the competition effect hovered between 3.36 and 4.30 for the candidates' television advertising strategies. In contrast, size showed the largest effect on Ford's television campaign in 1976, measuring only 2.15.

Table 4.7 Relative Allocation of Campaign Resources 2000
Competition = Average Two-Party Vote Margin, April-Labor Day 2000
(Source: National Annenberg Election Study)

	EVs	se	Comp	se	R^2	N
Bush TV (GRPs)	.44	1.05	-2.89***	.86	.23	46
Bush TV (total$)	1.84	1.57	-4.26**	1.29	.27	46
Gore TV (GRPs)	-.26	1.04	-2.76***	.85	.20	46
Gore TV(total$)	-.12	1.57	-4.37**	1.29	.22	46
Bush travel	.65*	.29	-.69**	.24	.29	
Gore travel	.57*	.27	-.61**	.22	.27	47

Cell entries are OLS estimates, with standard errors, of parameters from the Colantoni, Levesque and Ordeshook (1975) model $R_i = \alpha EV_i^{\beta} Comp_i^{\gamma}$. R_i = resources allocated to state i. Following Colantoni et al., a small adjustment of .25 is added to R_i to account for instances where $R_i = 0$

4.5 Discussion

In an exploration of the battleground concept and an effort to understand the factors that might explain the recent emergence of the concept in popular and academic discourse, this chapter, represents an attempt to explicate the fundamentals of the battleground state. What are the preconditions to battleground status? Despite presumptions about the role of state size and competition on battleground status no systematic effort has been made, until now, to examine how and if these variables truly serve as the backbone of the concept.

Several key points emerge from this analysis, as do a range of new questions. First, students of presidential elections have been remiss in assuming the consistent influence of electoral votes and state level competition on the battleground status of a state. This error assumes consistency in strategists' thinking both within and across campaigns. Similarly, too little attention has been paid to the relationship between these basic explanatory variables. Clearly, the influence of both variables varies both by the type of resource being allocated and by the particular campaign in question. For example, some strategists have prioritized big states

regardless of state competitiveness, while others elevate the status of big states only among less competitive states. The range of potential strategies adopted is endless. A key area of future research will be explaining when and why campaign operatives adopt these different strategies.

Second, by concentrating only on the most recent elections or on one resource type, scholars have overlooked the changing nature of the relationship between these two basic components of the battleground concept. In the earliest elections analyzed, state competitiveness significantly modified the effect of electoral votes on the campaign classification of LBS. No such effect is seen in the most recent elections. In contrast, beginning in the late 1980s, strategists appear to have shifted from a preference for strategies that rely principally on state size, with some competitive modifying effect, to strategies that rely principally on state competitiveness alone. Per capita spending on TV spot advertising follows a similar pattern. Electoral votes have long carried a significant marginal effect on absolute spending on spot TV ads, but the level of state competition for which strategists are willing to spend more in big states has diminished. While campaigns used to spend more on spot ads in big state across a broad range of state vote margins, today, the marginal effect of electoral votes on absolute spot ad spending is insignificant for states with an average vote margin of about 15 points or higher.

Similarly, exponential modeling shows state size used to carry a significant and often more than proportional effect on the allocation of campaign resources. In more recent campaigns, the influence of state size is less likely to be significant, and when size is significant the effect is always less than proportional. In contrast, state competition emerges with a significant and much more than proportional effect on campaign allocations in recent elections.

Data on more recent field strategies will be paramount to establishing this strategic shift, as would an analysis of campaign finance activity. While it would be easy to assume that the strategic shift simply reflects the increasingly loyal status of the big states, like California, Texas and New York to one party, these findings hold even when the big states are eliminated from the models.

The obvious question to emerge from this analysis is what has caused the shift in strategic campaign behavior? Multiple potential explanations emerge, and it is not immediately obvious which bears sole responsibility. Does the change in strategic emphasis reflect the increased role of professional campaign operatives and the decline of the party as a campaign organization? Certainly, as has been chronicled elsewhere, the growth of the consultant class and the attendant sets of standard campaign operating procedures and professional standards must play a role in the increasingly disciplined nature of presidential campaign strategy (Sabato 1981). But, the increased professionalism of campaign staff began long before the strategic shift detailed above.

Similarly, the information available to campaign professionals has improved over the time period in question. Polling, database, media buying and earned media (public relations tools) technologies each have exponentially increased the amount and specificity of information available to campaign strategists. Describing the 1992 Clinton campaign one author writes,

> The Clinton Campaign used a sophisticated data mapping operation to systematize its scheduling, media-buying, and get-out-the-vote operations. It began by superimposing media markets on the map of the United States. Week by week, each media market was ranked in terms of the number of persuadable voters in the market weighted by the Electoral College votes and the perceived

> strategic importance of the states reached in that market. The resulting map, in which the media markets were arrayed on an eight-point, color-coded scale quickly revealed where the campaign needed to place its emphasis in travel, field organization and, and media buys.[76]

Accounts of the 1988 Bush campaign and 1988 campaign records (see Chapter 3) similarly emphasize the adaptation of technologies that combined media market data with voter databases and polling information. Notably, these technologies were not new to the 1988 and 1992 campaigns, but technology had improved such that they could be more seamlessly combined. For example, rolling surveys were first used in the 1976 campaign and evidence of targeted voter databases, appear in the 1976, and especially the 1980 campaigns.[77] The 1976 Ford plan notes the campaign must first choose target states in the Electoral College and then choose a "swing constituency" in those selected states. The plan describes these decisions as being "interrelated" and notes the selection of a vice presidential nominee could alter the state strategy.

> "The first decision is whether to concentrate total effort on the northern industrial States from New Jersey to Wisconsin, plus California, or to devote some effort to peripheral southern States, plus California.
>
> The second decision is whether to develop a constituency of Republicans, Independents and ticket splitters, or go after the New Majority coalition of Republicans and disgruntled conservative Democrats.
>
> We recommend concentration on the northern industrial States, but do not have sufficient data at this time to determine whether Pennsylvania is winnable. If it is not we make up for it in the peripheral South…under all conceivable scenarios, California is essential."[78] (1976 Ford Presidential Campaign)

In contrast, an early version of the 1988 Bush plan, written in April 1988 by staff at the Republican National Committee, notes targeted states were selected according to "previous vote history."[79] The plan also ranks counties within the target states as "those that are needed mathematically to win the given state."

Even as campaign technologies and professionals emerged, so too, did the nature of electoral coalitions in the United States shift. With the end of the Solid South and the increasingly polarized nature of partisanship among Americans, the electoral map strategists face at the outset of each general election has also evolved. And, the rules that govern their decisionmaking, through campaign finance reform also shifted. Indeed, the shift in strategic

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[76] (Arterton 1993) p. 87

[77] "1980 General Election Voter Contact Plan," Carter/Mondale Campaign Book and Budget, June 3, 1980 Briefing, White House Chief of Staff, Butler, Box 143, Carter Library.

[78] "Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," August 1976, Box E42, Campaign '76 Office, General Election, John Deardourff Files, Ford Library.

[79] Memo from Christopher Bowman to Terry Wade (RNC Chief of Staff) April 1, 1988, RNC Bowman Report on State and Political Operations, Box 16, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, George H.W. Bush Library

emphasis to a focus on competitive states coincides closely with the increasing use of soft money in presidential campaign activities.

It seems the recent emergence of the battleground state in media and popular discourse (Chapter 2), reflects a real change in the explanatory variables of the battleground state. It is not that battleground states are something new, but rather that the preconditions that determine those states has changed. The strategic shift away from uncompetitive populated states, necessarily means fewer and fewer voters are exposed to the intense campaigning inherent to a presidential election contest. This change carries a potentially important effect on voter behaviors like turnout, knowledge, and feelings of efficacy – all of which have been shown to differ between battleground and non-battleground state residents. Further, as observed in Chapter 3, if, as the archival evidence suggests, the messages and issue agendas adopted by the presidential campaigns reflect the interests of battleground state voters, then a smaller and smaller group of voters is being represented. This is one of many areas of potential future research illuminated by these findings.

Future research in to the preconditions of battleground status should also consider the range of explanatory variables beyond state size and competition. From the home states of the candidates, to the presence of other statewide and Congressional races, to the specific conditions and voter blocs present in each state, the archival records show a host of explanatory variables have been included in campaign strategists' thinking. In 1984, for example, the Reagan team identified 24 "core Republican states," worth 176 electoral votes, nine Democratic states with 131 electoral votes, and 17 marginal states worth 231 electoral votes. The Reagan team looked closely at past voting history and state size but considered the dynamics on the ground as well.

> "Four Republican presidential states deviated to Kennedy in 1960. Reagan did well enough in New Mexico and Nevada to place them in his column for 1984. New Jersey and Illinois, the other Kennedy states, are placed in the marginal list because of the pockets of high unemployment in downstate Illinois and because New Jersey is simply too big and too heterogeneous to consider safe…the six cotton or redneck conservative states, worth 52 electoral votes are all placed in the marginal column for 1984…The battle for these six states may be decided more by the black and white registration drives in each state than any other factor."[80] (1984 Reagan Campaign)

Records from the 1964 Johnson campaign indicate the media firm hired by the campaign, Doyle, Dane and Bernbach, originally identified 12 key target states. Campaign memoranda indicate the campaign staff were unhappy with this simplistic categorization and insisted the media firm come back with a plan that incorporated spot television advertising across more states in recognition of down ballot races.

> "[The media plan] fails to emphasize adequately the importance of coordinating the media campaign with congressional candidates…O'Brien said [the plan], 'sounded like a saturation plan for a new product and failed to reflect the recognition factor of the President…Not since the 1930s…have we had such an

[80] "The GOP Presidential Coalition of 1984," Box 9, James A. Baker Files, Reagan Library

> opportunity to conduct a campaign with total coordination, tying-in the Presidential effort to other candidates'."[81]

According to campaign records, the media firm went on to propose, and the campaign to adopt, a plan that targeted three categories of states, including 28 top priority states, nine states of secondary importance, and eight states of lesser importance.[82]

This chapter began by asking why some states garner more attention from the presidential campaigns than others. In Chapter 5, I turn to the effects state targeting has on voters and critically assess how the battleground state concept should be operationalized.

[81] Memo from Lloyd Wright to Jim Graham, mid-summer 1964, DNC2: Box 224; Advertising Network, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

[82] Memo from G. Abraham (DDB) to Bill Moyers, August 6, 1964, DNC2: Box 224; Doyle, Dane and Bernbach, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.

Chapter 5

Operationalizing the Battleground: Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations

The above qualitative and quantitative analyses demonstrate the need to re-conceptualize our understanding of the battleground state. Poor data, false assumptions, and methodologically limited analysis contribute to an inadequate understanding of states' level of battleground status (LBS). Similar shortcomings limit our knowledge of the potential impact of the concept. While the previous chapters revealed the importance of understanding the factors that constitute LBS, this chapter examines the individual level effects of state battleground status, in this case as an explanatory variable of candidate evaluations. The analysis provides further evidence for the more rigorous conceptualization and measurement of LBS. In particular, I show that the different levels of measurement used to empiricize LBS stem from very different conceptual definitions. And, these alternative measures can lead to vastly different conclusions about campaign effects.

We have already seen that in practice LBS is not, as some suggest, a new dichotomous construct that can be operationalized as a proxy measure for all cross-sectional campaign variation.[83] Rather, LBS is a long-standing, multi-tiered, and dynamic concept that signals, but is not necessarily representative of, state-level competitiveness and all presidential campaign activity. Going back to the minimal definition introduced in Chapter 1, a battleground state is any state in which the presidential campaigns choose to be active because doing so fulfills some part of the campaign's overall strategy. Among those states, there are various levels of campaign activity that determine a state's level of battleground status. I argue LBS is a multidimensional concept whose component parts should be separated out in to unidimensional concepts and operationalized separately. Strategists have long prioritized all the states in to some category of LBS according to strategic need, but this is only the first stage of campaign decisionmaking. These campaign categorizations are only one dimension of the LBS concept, each state presents its own unique set of challenges and opportunities, and campaign activity within each state reflects these differences. Recognizing the complexity of LBS measurement is critical to both the validity and the reliability of campaign effects models.

Different campaign activities represent different campaign goals, and different campaign activities explain different elements of voter behavior. Bartels (1985), for example, distinguishes between campaigns' instrumental (vote winning strategies) and ornamental (public relations strategies) allocations. Field activities contribute to higher turnout (Gerber and Green 2004). The content of television ads primes how candidates are evaluated (Gilens et al. 2007). Every campaign activity is deployed to fulfill a specific goal, and political scientists increasingly recognize the different effects different resources carry. The nature of presidential campaigning, where resources are allocated at different levels across the states creates a natural experiment for investigating campaign effects (Johnston et al. 2004). If the quantity and quality of campaign activity in the states varies, then so must the effects of these activities on individuals within these states. And, the enduring nature of battleground strategies, as presented in Chapter 2, suggests

[83] This dissertation has taken the state as the appropriate unit of analysis because the incentives generated by the Electoral College and the unit rule together mean the campaigns must consider state-level outcomes. Units within states, especially media markets are also suitable units of analysis for presidential campaign activity, but are mostly beyond the scope of this paper.

cross-sectional differences in campaign activity have been present for decades. With archival data, then, we can investigate campaign effects over decades.

This chapter demonstrates why analysts should take care in hypothesizing about what campaigns actually do with their resources once campaign prioritizations have been assigned to a state and about what effect specific resource allocations can be expected to carry. Unfortunately, a review of the campaign effects literature shows that too often analysis does not adequately support the LBS measurement employed or sufficiently explicate hypotheses about the effects of specific LBS measures.

5.1 The impact of cross-sectional variation on voter behavior, early results

Consider, for example, the potential impact of LBS on voter behavior. Until recently, most studies of campaign effects grouped voters at the national level. Studies of presidential vote choice interested in uncovering individual level campaign effects typically aggregated survey responses from across the United States and drew limited, if any, distinction between regions or states (Funk 1999; Finkel 1993; Markus 1992). In recent presidential elections, for example, such models assume voters in Florida and Ohio are exposed to the same quality and quantity of campaign activities as voters in Massachusetts and North Dakota. Similar levels of aggregation were common in turnout, political participation, and other voting behavior models. Not surprisingly, studies grouping voters with almost no exposure to presidential campaigns with voters who experience intense campaign exposure, often find only minimal if any campaign effects.

More recently, cross-sectional differences in campaign exposure have been accounted for by incorporating a variety of measures of LBS. Most of the work on battleground effects focuses on voter behavior in the most recent elections (1988-2004). For these elections, evidence suggests residents of battleground states are significantly more likely than residents of other states to turnout to vote and to attend political meetings (Lipsitz 2009; Hill and McKee 2003). Other research finds that residents of states with more presidential advertising are more likely to report advertising exposure, campaign contact, and to have more information about the candidates, while residents of states with more candidate visits also report significantly higher exposure to campaign advertising (Wolak 2006). In contrast, the same research suggests that residents of states with intense television advertising efforts and the states visited most often by the candidates are no more likely than residents of other states to be interested in or to discuss the campaign or politics, or to donate to the candidates (Lipsitz 2009; Wolak 2006). Some aggregate evidence suggests the intensity of campaign television advertising and candidate visits may also influence candidate support (Shaw 1999c). One study examining candidate travel in the 1948 presidential election finds candidate appearances did have an effect on vote outcomes in those states (Holbrook 2002).

Unfortunately, a dearth of data has limited the ability to extrapolate these results. Data shared by Shaw (1999a, 2006), a consultant for Republican presidential campaigns in the 1990s and early 2000s, tracks Republican campaigns' battleground strategies, television advertising buys, and candidate travel since 1988, as well as the Republicans' best estimates of Democratic strategy and advertising activity. The other data source most utilized by scholars in the study of battleground effects is the advertising data collected since 1996 by the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG) through the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project.

Coupled with counts of candidate travel collected from the campaigns and media sources, these new cross-sectional measures are a breakthrough for the study of campaign effects, but they carry their own limitations. First, the time frame is limited to only the most recent elections (Holbrook 2002 is the exception); a period we have already seen represents a substantial shift in the factors that predict LBS (Chapter 4). Second, many of the LBS measures that appear in the literature are dichotomous (see for example Gilens et al. 2007; Freedman et al. 2004) or based on ordinal variables that group states labeled as safe or as leaning to one of the campaigns together (see for example Shaw 1999c, Lipsitz 2009) (Table 5.1).[84] As I will show, just as national aggregation masks differences in cross-sectional campaign effects, these measures may hide the true effects of battleground status.

5.2 Toward better measures of LBS

Table 5.1 Representations of State Level of Battleground Status (LBS)

Dummy Variable	Ordinal Variable	Categorical Dummy Variable
Non-Battleground	Safe Democrat/Republican	Safe Democrat
Battleground	Lean Democrat/Republican	Safe Republican
	Battleground	Lean Dem
		Lean Republican
		Battleground

Alternative levels of measurement imply different battleground conceptualizations, which authors rarely explicate. The battleground concept has been empirically realized in two ways, first according to the categorizations made by the campaigns and media (Table 5.1) and second according to the allocation of campaign resources. I will address both approaches in this chapter, beginning with the former.

States are frequently organized within a simple battleground/non-battleground classification scheme. The use of a dichotomous measure reflects the assumption that non-battleground states see no meaningful campaign activity and that these states are in practice "ignored" by the campaigns. In fact, this is similar to the minimal definition adopted in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The difference between the minimal definition presented earlier and the dichotomous indicator so often used by scholars is threefold. First, the authors who adopt a nominal definition often do so implicitly. They fail to define a cut-point between battleground and non-battleground states. Second, these authors generally adopt a media supplied classification as an indicator (CNN's list of battleground states is a popular source). Earlier chapters demonstrated there is often extensive campaign activity in these so-called 'non-battleground' states for a number of reasons (building a national mandate, lower ticket races, native son status, etc.). Either these indicators have weak content validity or the authors have failed to offer a sufficient conceptual definition, or both. Finally, the simple dichotomous conceptualization fails to account for the heterogeneity of campaign activities among battleground states. As noted throughout this dissertation, there are various levels of campaign activity across the states. By grouping states in to as few as two categories, analysts are

[84] Lipsitz (2009) for example uses LBS categories from the two competing campaigns, and sums these ordinal measures to create a 5-point scale in which a 0 means both campaigns saw the state as Safe and 4 means both campaigns identified a state as a battleground.

needlessly throwing out potentially meaningful data, leading to potentially unreliable measures (Elkins 1999).

The use of an ordinal measure of battleground status, which is often treated as an interval level variable in practice, offers more variation and more reliability (Table 5.1). This indicator reflects two differing conceptualizations of presidential battleground strategies. The first conceptualization is that campaign activity increases in a positive and linear fashion from one category of LBS to the next (e.g. advertising must be more intense in "Lean" states than in "Safe" states and more intense in "Battleground" states than in "Lean" states). We have already seen (Chapter 3 above) that the disbursement of resources does not necessarily follow this linear model, especially among the lower priority states. By coupling Safe Republican with Safe Democratic states and Lean Republican with Lean Democratic states the ordinal measure also implies that the quality of campaign activity within these states must be similar. In fact, we can easily imagine that a campaign would choose to behave differently in states that lean to their candidate (by encouraging turnout, using grassroots organization) than in states that lean to their opposition (may wish to discourage turnout, raise doubts about their opponent with negative ads). Similar strategic differences may describe campaign activity in states that are safe for one or the other candidate.

The second LBS conceptualization implied by the use of an ordinal measure is that the categories in which the campaigns place the states are a reflection of the level of competitiveness of a state (see Lipsitz 2009). Thus, these categories are a good indication of increasing levels of competition. As we saw in Chapter 4, this conceptualization has more validity in light of recent campaigns than in the past, where state size was a powerful predictor of battleground status.

I argue a categorical dummy variable measure of campaign classifications of the states is a better measure of the battleground concept. Under this conceptualization, the battleground status assigned to the states by the campaigns is not necessarily a linear measure. Rather, it allows analysts to identify the different activities within each category without assuming a linear relationship or similarities in campaign quality across state categories. This measure also offers stronger content validity, as the campaigns themselves differentiate between states that lean to or are safe for one side or the other.

As Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) note in unpacking Socioeconomic Status (SES) as a predictor of voter turnout into its constituent parts, coupling multiple variables into an omnibus or proxy measure disguises the individual effects of each underlying variable. This is the danger of using only the LBS classifications assigned to the states by the campaigns or the media. But, even the most highly specified of the cross-sectional models in the literature include only campaign or media classifications and data on television advertising and travel.[85] They do not account for the multitude of other campaign activities like radio, newspaper, and bus advertising; get-out-the-vote and voter registration drives; phone banks; volunteers; campaign offices; the distribution of campaign materials; and party financial transfers which also might account for differences in voter behavior. As I will show, although these other campaign activities have received less attention, they contribute their own explanatory power to campaign effects models by representing different aspects of the battleground concept.

While far from perfect itself, the dataset created for this study represents an opportunity to expand both temporally and substantively the study of campaign effects. Coupling datasets like those from CMAG and Shaw with the archival data collected at the presidential libraries for

[85] A recent article by McClurg and Holbrook (2009) does employ data on national party transfers to the states in looking for battleground effects.

this project broadens the potential area of research to a range of campaign activities beginning with the 1960 election.

5.3 The Campaign Environment and Candidate Evaluations

To demonstrate the need to more rigorously conceptualize the Level of Battleground Status as an explanatory variable, I turn to an analysis of voter information levels. The quantity and quality of top-of-mind information about the presidential candidates offered by survey respondents' may well reflect individuals' campaign environment (Wolak 2006). More information will be available to residents of states receiving more attention from the campaigns, and respondents' positive and negative evaluations of the candidates will vary according to the quality of campaign activity in a state. To test my hypotheses, I use the National Elections Studies measure of the number of likes, dislikes, and total mentions respondents offer about each of the presidential candidates as the dependent variable.[86]

Recent studies suggest both the quantity and quality of advertising that voters are exposed to increases the amount of information they draw upon to evaluate the presidential candidates. In the 2000 presidential election, increasing levels of campaign advertising exposure significantly influenced individuals' ability to articulate likes and dislikes about the presidential candidates (Freedman et al. 2004). Pooled time series analysis for the 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections supports the impact of increasing levels of television advertising on the recall of positive and negative characteristics about the candidates (Wolak 2006). Evidence also suggests that positive differences in the amount of policy versus character considerations that Americans give for supporting a candidate can be explained by increases in the policy content of candidate advertising over time (Gilens et al. 2007). In each of these articles, control variables for LBS are included (with no significant findings) to account for the possibility that campaign activity other than television advertising might really explain observed differences. In two cases, battleground status is measured as a dummy variable based on the perceived competitiveness of the state by *The Cook Political Report*. As noted in Chapter 3, media reports of battleground status may not reflect real campaign activities or attention, and the classifications often vary substantially by media source. In the third case, the battleground environment is measured through three explanatory variables: television advertising intensity, candidate appearances, and level of electoral competition for the state legislature.

Does a single campaign or media LBS classification variable really control for cross-sectional differences in campaign intensity? Is such a measure a satisfactory proxy for multiple campaign activities? Likewise, should we expect that advertising and candidate visits are necessarily the campaign resources most likely to influence Americans' recall of presidential candidate qualities? Couldn't one-on-one contact with volunteers and targeted direct mail pieces also be expected, for example, to explain differences in the quantity and quality of information about the candidates? Most likely the quantity and quality of information Americans use to evaluate the candidates varies with the campaign environment, and as we have seen above, the campaign environment varies according to the multiple resources allocated in a presidential campaign.

The analysis is presented in three stages. First, I consider what level of measurement is most appropriate for the battleground classifications assigned to the states by the campaigns and

[86] The National Election Study asks respondents if there is anything they like or dislike about a candidate that would influence their decision to vote for that candidate. Respondents can offer up to five responses in each category.

show that a categorical dummy variable both offers better face validity and a more nuanced understanding of campaign effects than the dichotomous and ordinal measures typically used. Second, I show that by only focusing on one or two resource types in LBS effects models, scholars are in danger of both attributing explanatory power to the wrong resources and of failing to recognize the quality of the effects different resources may carry. Finally, using a block recursive model I demonstrate the potential explanatory power of models that unpack LBS, include a range of the activities that presidential campaigns use, and distinguish between the direct effects of campaign classifications and those effects mediated through specific campaign activities.

Drawing from my archival data set, I test the hypothesis that information about the presidential candidates increases with LBS, *ceteris paribus*, across multiple election years, multiple candidates, and different campaign resource types. Because the data available for any given campaign vary according to the archival evidence available, I choose not to use time series analysis that would require standardizing campaign practices across election years according to some arbitrary set of rules. Rather, I look at each election year or campaign individually. The consistency of my findings across multiple years and campaigns, despite differences in the explanatory variables employed, I believe offers even more evidence in support of my argument.

A full description of the variables is included in Appendix A and Appendix E. The dependent variable Candidate Mentions ranges from 0 to 20 according to how many total positive and negative evaluations each respondent offered about the two leading candidates. This measure also allows us to measure the affective impact of campaign activity by breaking the measure down in to the total likes and total dislikes listed by respondents about the two candidates. In this case, mentions range from 0 to 10, according to how many specifically positive or negative evaluations were offered by the respondent. The independent variable campaign LBS classification represents the actual categories assigned to each state by the campaigns (for consistency I have chosen to use a common nomenclature). The independent variables for resource allocations reflect the campaigns' own records of resource disbursements across the states (Appendix A). In addition to measures of campaign LBS classifications and various campaign resource allocations, I include measures of individual level characteristics that might also account for differing levels of information about the candidates including age, education, income, political interest, newspaper readership, and strength of partisanship (Appendix E). Following Gilens et al. (2007), I include a measure for interview date, as we expect information about the candidates to increase as Election Day approaches.

5.4 Level of Measurement

Most hypotheses in the battleground effects literature hold that the dependent variable in question should increase in a linear fashion across subsequent categories of LBS as levels of competitiveness, and therefore, the reasoning goes, campaign activities increase. In the case of candidate evaluations, the average number of mentions by respondent should vary according to the level of battleground state in which they live. High LBS states will have more campaign activity and so the mean number of mentions in these states should be higher. I use data from the Ford 1976 campaign records to evaluate these hypotheses.[87]

[87] The inclusion of the Ford 1976 campaign here is arbitrary. My analysis of other campaigns in other election years shows similar results to those of Table 5.2

Table 5.2 Ford 1976: Total Candidate Mentions

	Mean	SD	N
Dummy Classification			
Non-Battleground State	4.51	3.08	1254
Battleground State	5.09	3.25	994
F test	18.51***		
Ordinal Classification			
Safe Dem/Rep States	4.39	2.95	570
Lean Dem/Rep States	4.61	3.18	684
Battleground State	5.09	3.25	994
F test	10.03***		
Categorical Classification			
Safe Dem	4.16	2.90	442
Safe Rep State	5.17	2.99	128
Lean Dem State	5.21	3.46	278
Lean Rep State	4.19	2.89	406
Battleground State	5.09	3.25	994
F test	11.97***		

Cell entries from ANOVA. ***p<.001
Survey data from the 1976 National Election Studies. Campaign Classification measures from campaign materials collected at the Ford Presidential Library by the author.

A comparison of means across both dichotomous and ordinal measures of campaign LBS classifications shows that total candidate mentions do seem to increase as one moves from lower to higher levels of LBS (Table 5.2). For the dichotomous measure, mean candidate mentions offered by respondents in non-battleground states (4.51) was lower than the mean number of candidate mentions offered respondents in battleground states (5.09), and we can safely reject the null hypothesis of equal group means. Similarly, the mean candidate mentions made by respondents increases from safe to lean to battleground states in the three category ordinal measure, and these differences are again statistically significant.

However, breaking up the safe and lean state categories in to their partisan parts reveals the flaw in assuming a linear relationship. Again, we can reject the null hypothesis with confidence. Mean candidate mentions are significantly different across the campaign LBS classification categories, but the average number of candidate mentions does not increase in a linear manner. Respondents living in Safe Democratic (4.16 mentions) and Lean Republican states (4.19 mentions) offer on average one less reason to support or oppose the candidates than respondents in Safe Republican (5.17 mentions), Lean Democratic (5.21 mentions), or Battleground states (5.09 mentions). Notably, the average number of reasons offered to support or oppose the candidates was actually lower among Battleground residents than residents of Safe Republican or Lean Democratic states. By grouping categories together, we miss potential variation in campaign effects, especially among lower priority states, and we risk making the inaccurate conclusion that total information about the candidates varies in the same way between both lean/safe Democratic and lean/safe Republican states.

Controlling for individual level factors which might systematically explain differences among individuals across the groups of states, further supports my argument for the use of categorical dummy variables rather than measures that presume a rank order relationship among LBS categories (Table 5.3). Because respondents are nested in states it is necessary to control for any correlation in errors at the state level, so the following models are all estimated using hierarchical linear models calculated in HLM 6. For Models 1 and 2, we cannot reject the null

Table 5.3 LBS Effects on Candidate Evaluations Total Candidate Mentions (1976)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Dummy LBS						
Battleground State	.297	(.248)	-		-	
Ordinal LBS						
Battleground State	-		.239	.129	-	
Categorical LBS						
Safe Rep State	-		-		.950**	(.291)
Lean Dem State	-		-		.954	(.527)
Lean Rep State	-		-		.378	(.254)
Battleground State	-		-		.811**	(.231)
Age	.227	(.332)	.240	.330	.227	(.335)
Education	.545***	(.065)	.545***	.065	.543***	(.065)
Income	.044#	(.026)	.044#	.026	.041	(.026)
Partisanship	.130	(.219)	.129	.219	.120	(.222)
Political Interest	1.78***	(.208)	1.79***	.209	1.80***	(.210)
Newspaper Reader	1.36***	(.214)	1.35***	.212	1.32***	(.210)
Date of Interview	.900**	(.303)	.902**	.302	.916**	(.299)
Constant	.364	(.384)	.209	.390	-.118	(.362)
# Level 1 units	2138		2138		2138	
# Level 2 units	35		35		35	

Cell entries are coefficients from a hierarchical linear model, with robust standard errors in parentheses, calculated in HLM 6.
***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05, # p<.10
Survey data from the 1976 National Election Studies. LBS measures from campaign materials collected at the Ford Presidential Library by the author, see Appendix B.

hypothesis that the average number of mentions made about the candidates is the same across different LBS states. In both the dichotomous and three-category ordinal models, living in a high LBS state does not significantly increase the amount of information respondents offer for supporting or opposing the presidential candidates, all else equal.

In contrast, Model 3, which uses a categorical dummy variable to measure the campaign LBS classification, shows that respondents in Safe Republican and Battleground states offer significantly more reasons to support or oppose the candidates than respondents living in Safe Democratic states. And, *ceteris paribus*, the effect of living in a Safe Republican state is even greater than that of living in a battleground state. Respondents in states leaning to the Republicans or Democrats do not offer significantly more or fewer reasons for supporting or opposing the candidates. There are many possible explanations for this particular finding. For example, it may be that Ford strategists deployed more resources designed to educate voters about the candidates in Safe Republican states and Battleground states than in Safe Democratic states. The Ford focus on battleground states would fit standard hypotheses about increased

campaign attention leading to higher information levels among high LBS state residents. And, a campaign focus on Safe Republican states may have been necessary to shore up the base after a tough primary battle with Ronald Reagan in early 1976.

The level of measurement used to support hypotheses about the impact of LBS on voter behavior can lead to dramatically different results. Analysts who choose to group together low LBS categories risk combining respondents who live in very different campaign environments. This may not only mask campaign effects but also misrepresents the quantity and quality of actual campaign behavior.

5.5 Unpacking LBS: Campaign Resource Allocations

It is commonplace among battleground effects models to introduce one or two measures of campaign activity within the states as either indirect measures of LBS or as representative of the intensity of all campaign activity in a state (see for example Wolak 2006, Lipsitz 2009). As noted above, data availability makes television advertising and candidate visits the most readily available and utilized measures. While these models are an important improvement in the study of cross-sectional effects on individual behavior, more precise models would include a broader range of the activities presidential campaigns actually undertake. The archival data collected from the presidential archives makes this possible. LBS is a multidimensional concept, that reflects multiple goals (like persuading, mobilizing, educating voters; party building, etc.). Separating out the multiple resources allocated to meet these goals presents a more accurate measure of the concept.

Just as we recognize the limitations of an omnibus measure of individual level socioeconomic status (SES) in political behavior models, so must we unpack LBS to understand cross-sectional differences in campaign effects. Thinking about candidate evaluations, do respondents in states with the highest exposure to television advertising have more to say about the candidates or do field strategies carry a greater effect? Does targeted mail inform voters more effectively than a visit from a campaign volunteer? What are the independent effects of other campaign resources? How do these resource allocations interact with each other and with individual level characteristics?

To demonstrate the validity of unpacking LBS into its constituent parts I use data from the Kennedy 1960, Johnson 1964, Carter 1976 and Carter 1980 campaigns. I selected these examples because the range of activities reported on in the presidential library materials for these campaigns is more detailed and widespread than that of other campaign years. My analyses of other campaigns not included here, which include fewer measures of resource allocations, reveal similar results.

A hierarchical linear model with robust standard errors shows that the information environment surrounding respondents does impact candidate evaluations (Table 5.4A-D).[88] In each of these campaigns, different resource allocations carry independent effects on the quantity and quality of candidate evaluations.

Several key findings emerge from this analysis. First, as expected, different resources carry significant effects on levels of respondent information about the candidates in each of the elections analyzed. Simply using campaign or media classifications of LBS would fail to identify these differences. In some years, candidate visits (1980) show a positive independent effect,

[88] Using archival materials means the data available from each campaign varies considerably. Thus, for example, I can include data on radio advertising in some years but not others.

while in other years levels of field activities (1960, 1964, 1976) or advertising (1960, 1964, 1976) efforts impact total candidate evaluations. In several campaigns, multiple resources affected the quantity and quality (likes and dislikes) of candidate evaluations. These results remind us that looking at only one election year does tell us something about that campaign, but relatively little about effects in other years. They also demonstrate that including only one or two measures of campaign resource allocations leads to under-specified campaign effects models.

Second, resource allocations don't necessarily have a positive influence on respondents' levels of information about the candidates. In 1976, for example, Carter spot radio ads and visits by surrogates diminished the total number of candidate evaluations. Carter's radio is also associated with diminished negative evaluations of the candidates in 1980. This finding is unexpected in most campaign effects models (which hold that more resources lead to more of the dependent variable in question), but there are a variety of potential explanations that deserve further inquiry, including the possibility that respondents being exposed to multiple messages and campaign activities become overwhelmed by the amount of information available and, finding it difficult to align competing messages, offer fewer evaluations overall. It is also possible that specific campaign activities actually undermine some of the negative or positive perceptions of the candidates. In 1980, for example, Carter's radio advertising significantly decreased the doubts respondents had about the candidate thereby diminishing total evaluations.

Finally, we should consider what campaign goal radio allocations were intended to fulfill. That is for what aspect of the battleground strategy was radio used? In 1976, Carter ran radio ads in 23 states. Twelve of those states were among the 20 states identified as safe or leaning Democratic by the campaign. The remaining 10 states were among the 14 states the campaign identified as battleground states. The campaign did not

Table 5.4 Resource Allocations and Candidate Evaluations

A. Kennedy 1960

	Total Mentions		Total Likes		Total Dislikes	
Polls	-.084	(.121)	-.096	.089)	.015	.275
Advertising						
Total Ad Spending	.000004**	(.000001)	.000003**	(.000001)	.000001	(.000001)
Visits						
Kennedy Visits	.016	(.022)	.002	(.017)	.014	(.013)
Nixon Visits	-.093*	(.039)	-.050#	(.029)	-.043#	(.022)
Field						
Total Field	.379**	(.121)	.310**	(.088)	.068	(.068)
Age	-.313	(.602)	-.078	(.427)	-.238	(.340)
Education	.254***	(.254)	.209***	(.051)	.045	(.041)
Income	.106**	(.039)	.052#	(.028)	.053*	(.022)
Partisanship	.655**	(.246)	.246	(.175)	.409**	(.139)
Political Interest	2.44***	(.288)	1.52***	(.205)	.927***	(.163)
Newspaper Reader	1.10***	(.224)	.653***	(.159)	.452***	(.127)
Date of Interview	1.39***	(.328)	1.08***	(.233)	.307	(.185)
Constant	-.868	(.487)	-.134	(.347)	.048	(.275)
# Level 1 units	1109		1109		1109	
# Level 2 units	32		32		32	

B. Johnson 1964

	Total Mentions		Total Likes		Total Dislikes	
Advertising						
TV Ad Priority	-.665**	(.244)	-.364**	(.129)	-.305*	(.141)
Visits						
Johnson Visits	.098	(.139)	.032	(.062)	.053	(.065)
Field						
Voter Registration	1.15*	(.518)	.831***	(.238)	.482	(.288)
Get-Out-theVote	-.170	(.297)	-.247#	(.139)	-.031	(.162)
Age	-.808	(.485)	-.296	(.355)	-.484#	(.272)
Education	.462***	(.061)	.156***	(.047)	.321***	(.037)
Income	-.007	(.028)	-.006	(.020)	.011	(.019)
Strength of Partisanship	.322	(.214)	.283*	(.140)	.0004	(.113)
Political Interest	2.12***	(.352)	1.10***	(.178)	1.02***	(.231)
Newspaper Reader	.466	(.182)	.238#	(.127)	.250*	(.110)
Date of Interview	-.084	(.375)	.106	(.212)	-.143	(.220)
Constant	3.01***	(.744)	1.64***	(.386)	1.25**	(.388)
# Level 1 units	1692		1692		1692	
# Level 2 units	34		34		34	

Table 5.4 (cont'd) Resource Allocations and Candidate Evaluations

C. Carter 1976

	Total Mentions		Total Likes		Total Dislikes	
Advertising						
Weeks TV Ads	.062	(.060)	.024	(.033)	.036	(.035)
Radio	-.794**	(.243)	-.420**	(.145)	-.374*	(.140)
Visits						
Carter visits	.120	(.076)	.022	(.036)	.094*	(.046)
Surrogate visits	-.102*	(.043)	-.075***	(.020)	-.028	(.027)
Field						
Volunteers	.678*	(.324)	.502**	(.176)	.173	(.198)
Phone Bank	.545	(.433)	.290	(.179)	.247	(.314)
DNC Target	.742#	(.444)	.382	(.253)	.377	(.267)
Offices	.030#	(.017)	.012	(.009)	.018*	(.009)
State Budget	-.001	(.003)	.001	(.001)	-.002	(.002)
Age	.250	(.328)	.163	(.190)	.090	(.258)
Education	.549***	(.065)	.265***	(.038)	.285***	(.038)
Income	.046#	(.025)	.006	(.014)	.039*	(.018)
Strength of Partisanship	.134	(.219)	.161	(.144)	-.035*	(.018)
Political Interest	1.77***	(.207)	.861***	(.168)	.911***	(.101)
Newspaper Reader	1.34***	(.209)	.603***	(.160)	.745***	(.150)
Date of Interview	.894**	(.310)	.364#	(.209)	.529***	(.155)
Constant	.348	(.409)	.561*	(.236)	-.211	(.251)
# Level 1 units	2138		2138		2138	
# Level 2 units	35		35		35	

Table 5.4 (cont'd) Resource Allocations and Candidate Evaluations

	D. Carter 1980					
	Total Mentions		**Total Likes**		**Total Dislikes**	
Advertising						
Weeks TV Ads	.124	(.564)	.011	(.051)	.110	(.073)
Radio	-.199	(.159)	.015	(.092)	-.207#	(.113)
Visits						
Carter visits	.069**	(.021)	.032*	(.015)	.040*	(.016)
Field						
GOTV	-.932**	(.339)	-.080	(.195)	-.873***	(.244)
DNC Target	-.228	(.409)	-.374#	(.220)	.129	(.276)
Age	-.312	(.483)	.317	(.315)	-.635*	(.288)
Education	.605***	(.091)	.241***	(.053)	.363***	(.046)
Income	.143***	(.036)	.035	(.225)	.107***	(.024)
Partisanship	.785*	(.352)	.645***	(.196)	.150	(.221)
Political Interest	1.81***	(.242)	.723***	(.138)	1.09***	(.149)
Newspaper Reader	.694***	(.173)	.326**	(.106)	.364***	(.111)
Date of Interview	.001	(.004)	.001	(.002)	-.0003	(.003)
Constant	.492	(.564)	.003	(.328)	.507	(.325)
# Level 1 units	1574		1574		1574	
# Level 2 units	38		38		38	

Source for data: 1960, 1964, 1976 and 1980 American National Election Studies. Cell entries are from a hierarchical linear model with robust standard errors run in HLM6. Resource measures from campaign materials collected at the Kennedy, Johnson, Ford and Carter Presidential Libraries by the author, see Appendix A.
Cell entries are OLS coefficients with clustered robust standard errors.
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, # p<.10

run radio ads in any state they considered a Safe Republican state and only ran radio ads in one state identified as leaning Republican. This pattern suggests the campaign's radio ads were targeted at shoring up the base and winning over the battleground. Radio would be a relatively low cost way of reaching out to voters in Safe and Leaning Democratic states. The messages the campaign disseminated over the airwaves may have had little to do with educating people about the candidates and more to do with, for example, encouraging them to turnout to vote. Results that indicate a resource allocation is associated with fewer candidate evaluations deserve further investigation, and radio advertising represents an important area for future research.

Looking at the quality of candidate mentions suggests campaigns do use specific resources to disburse positive and negative messages. For example, respondents in the states most visited by Carter in 1976 and states with more campaign offices were more likely to offer negative evaluations about the candidates. In contrast, states with a greater volunteer presence listed more positive evaluations of the candidates, *ceteris paribus*.

Notably, the data also show television advertising does not necessarily increase candidate information among respondents, as recent research suggests. No independent effect of television advertising is shown in 1976 or 1980. In 1960, for every $100,000 spent in a state on spot television advertising there were .4 more mentions of the candidates. In 1964, total mentions, total likes, and total dislikes about the candidates were actually lower in states with more targeted television spot advertising. As noted in Chapter 4, the Johnson media plan was designed to build a congressional coalition, and advertising content may have reflected these goals rather

than an interest in educating voters about the presidential candidates. Alone, these findings do not prove that advertising diminishes or has no effect on candidate evaluations, but combined with the research on more recent elections noted above, they do suggest the influence of television advertising on voter information levels may have shifted over time or that it may be mediated through other campaign activities.[89]

Finally, this analysis demonstrates the importance of including field activities in analyses of battleground effects. Field activities increased the total number of candidate evaluations made by respondents in 1960, 1964, and 1976. These effects were not captured by advertising measures or candidate visits. Face-to-face contact may be a better means of ensuring information is received than an anonymous campaign commercial, just as personal canvassing has been shown to be more effective at turning voters out than direct mail or phone calls (Gerber and Green 2004).

Battleground status is a complex and multidimensional concept reflecting not just the classification assigned to it by a campaign, but also all of the goals strategists seek to achieve through the allocation of different resources. Incorporating multiple indicators of battleground status in to campaign effects models is critical to developing the battleground concept.

5.6 Campaign classifications or resource allocations? A block recursive model

In some cases, it is possible to include both the campaign or media classification assigned to a state and the subsequent resource allocations made by the campaign in to LBS effects models. Ideally, it should even be possible to include measures of a variety of campaign activities by multiple presidential candidates in order to sort out the independent effects of the different campaign efforts. The Carter and Ford presidential libraries include extensive records from both 1976 campaigns making such analysis possible.

The NES data coupled with the archival dataset show the value of considering both the campaign classifications and the resource allocations made by multiple candidates (Table 5.5). In each case, I present the results with the campaign LBS classification alone (Model 1) and then with campaign allocations (Model 2). This block recursive approach allows us to separate the direct effects of campaign classifications and resource allocations on candidate evaluations and to better understand the extent to which the effects of LBS are mediated through specific campaign activities.[90]

In 1976, the significant effect on candidate evaluations of living in a state prioritized as Safe Republican or Lean Democratic by the Ford campaign disappears when campaign activities are included in the model. In contrast, controlling for campaign resource allocations shows there is still a positive direct effect of living in a battleground state or a Lean Republican state on total candidate evaluations (Safe Democratic states are the excluded variable). Respondents are significantly more likely to offer positive evaluations of the candidates in battleground states, controlling for campaign activity,

[89] One explanation provided by Gilens et al. (2007) is the increase in the policy content of advertising over time.
[90] See Miller and Shanks (1996) for more on the block recursive approach.

Table 5.5 1976 Candidate Evaluations

	Total Mentions		Total Likes		Total Dislikes	
Ford Campaign Classification	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Safe Rep State	.950** (.291)	.779 (.605)	.483* (.189)	.367 (.356)	.469*** (.110)	.408 (.338)
Lean Dem State	.954# (.527)	.643 (.490)	.490# (.289)	.313 (.286)	.453# (.267)	.327 (.272)
Lean Rep State	.378 (.254)	.978# (.504)	.134 (.154)	.399 (.293)	.237 (.153)	.587* (.280)
Battleground State	.811** (.231)	1.68# (.904)	.307# (.154)	1.08* (.521)	.497*** (.131)	.612 (.498)
Ford Allocations						
TV, Radio & Newspaper Budget	-	-.001 (.002)	-	.0004 (.001)	-	-.001 (.001)
Mail	-	-.003 (.003)	-	-.001 (.002)	-	-.001 (.002)
Phone Banks	-	-.078 (.475)	-	.052 (.280)	-	-.104 (.002)
Tabloid Budget	-	-.015 (.233)	-	-.002 (.007)	-	-.013# (.007)
Carter Allocations						
Weeks TV Ads	-	.121 (.107)	-	.029 (.063)	-	.088 (.060)
Radio	-	-.773# (.402)	-	-.459# (.234)	-	-.337 (.223)
Carter visits	-	.093 (.110)	-	.001 (.064)	-	.095 (.060)
Surrogate visits	-	-.094# (.053)	-	-.073* (.031)	-	-.020 (.029)
Volunteers	-	1.10* (.450)	-	.731** (.263)	-	.384 (.250)
Phone Banks	-	.109 (.580)	-	.123 (.341)	-	-.037 (.324)
DNC Target	-	.199 (.680)	-	.082 (.394)	-	.140 (.376)
Campaign Offices	-	.052 (.049)	-	.024 (.029)	-	.031 (.027)
Age	.227 (.335)	.265 (.435)	.153 (.195)	.167 (.283)	.069 (.259)	.103 (.264)
Education	.543*** (.065)	.551*** (.060)	.261*** (.038)	.267*** (.039)	.282*** (.038)	.285*** (.037)
Income	.041 (.026)	.045# (.027)	.002 (.015)	.005 (.017)	.037* (.019)	.039* (.016)
Partisanship	.120 (.222)	.135 (.197)	.154 (.195)	.159 (.128)	-.047 (.107)	-.031 (.120)
Political Interest	1.80*** (.210)	1.78*** (.233)	.878*** (.172)	.868*** (.151)	.925*** (.100)	.913*** (.141)
Newspaper Reader	1.32*** (.210)	1.31*** (.232)	.587*** (.163)	.577*** (.151)	.742*** (.150)	.737*** (.140)
Date of Interview	.916** (.299)	.869** (.269)	.380# (.199)	.355* (.174)	.541*** (.154)	.510** (.163)

Table 5.5 (cont'd) 1976 Candidate Evaluations

Ford Campaign Classification	Total Mentions		Total Likes		Total Dislikes	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-.118 (.362)	-.173 (.508)	.336# (.189)	.382 (.312)	-.434# (.248)	-.548# (.294
# Level 1 units	2138	2138	2138	2138	2138	2138
# Level 2 units	35	35	35	35	35	35

Cell entries are hierarchical linear model coefficients run in HLM 6. Model 1 with robust standard errors because there are sufficient level 2 units. ***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05, # p<.10

Survey data from the 1976 American National Election Studies. Campaign classifications and resource measures from campaign materials collected at the Ford and Carter Presidential Libraries by the author, see Appendix A and E.

and they are significantly more likely to offer negative evaluations of the candidates in states that lean Republican, controlling for campaign activities.

The environment in 1976 in states classified as high LBS states by the campaigns did increase the amount of information respondents used to evaluate the candidates, *ceteris paribus*, even controlling for multiple campaign activities. This suggests the campaign LBS classifications reflect more than just campaign activities. For example, local media coverage of the campaigns likely differs between high and low LBS states.

The more fully specified model also alters our interpretation of some resource allocation effects. In the Carter 1976 resource model (Table 5.4C), volunteers, DNC targeting efforts, and the number of campaign offices all increased the total number of candidate evaluations, while surrogate visits and radio ads decreased the total number of evaluations. Controlling for the campaign classification and Ford's activities, shows Carter's radio advertising and visits by surrogates were negatively associated with candidate evaluations, while volunteer efforts had a significant positive effect on the total number of candidate evaluations offered by the respondents. Controlling for the campaign classification of the states and Ford activities shows none of Carter's activities had a significant effect on the number of negative evaluations made about the candidates. In contrast, states where the Ford campaign distributed tabloids as part of their field efforts diminished negative evaluations about the candidates, and residents of states with Carter volunteers had significantly more positive things to say about the candidates.

The battleground effects models presented in Table 5.5 include multiple measures of campaign activity and include some findings that do not fit with most hypotheses about battleground state effects on voter information levels. More campaign activity may actually lead to fewer candidate evaluations, and increases in the total number of candidate evaluations may actually reflect a change in the negative or positive quality of the messages being circulated by the campaigns. Of primary interest to those who study voter behavior, this analysis demonstrates the importance of moving beyond simple dichotomous or ordinal proxy measures of LBS. Models that incorporate LBS and multiple measures of campaign activity by multiple candidates can offer a more nuanced understanding of direct and indirect campaign effects.

5.7 Final Thoughts

The various measures used to empiricize LBS lead to different conclusions about the impact of battleground status on voters. None of these measures is necessarily wrong, but each reflects on different aspects of the battleground concept. Scholars should take care when selecting battleground measures and clarify their conceptual definition of battleground status before choosing indicators of that status.

While it is a convenient linguistic device, there is little evidence to support the dichotomization of states into simply battleground and non-battleground categories. Needlessly grouping states together in to two categories limits the validity of battleground measures by restricting heterogeneity. When this measure is employed, scholars must take care in selecting and justifying which cut-points should be used to distinguish between the groups.

Using the state battleground classifications designed by the campaigns as ordinal measures adds validity to an LBS measure, but this measure also implies assumptions about the quality and quantity of efforts within states. Do we expect a campaign to behave the same in a state that is safe for their candidate as in a state that is safe for the opposition? If not, should these states be grouped togetr? Does it really make sense for campaigns to have the fewest of all their resources in their safe states? Carter's 1976 radio strategy, for example was deployed in

safe Democratic, leaning Democratic, and battleground states, while his campaign trips were mostly targeted at battleground states. And, he had more active volunteer efforts in states identified as likely Republican states than in states identified as safe Democratic or leaning Democratic. The above analysis shows it is sometimes inappropriate to assume resources are allocated in an increasing fashion across the ordinal campaign classification categories even if states are progressively more competitive across those categories.

Using categorical dummy variables as a measure of LBS demonstrates how campaign effects may appear within groups of states, but not necessarily according to a linear pattern. Finally, when possible, including actual campaign allocations offers another set of indicators of LBS. As a complex construct, sorting out and separately measuring multiple aspects of the concept increases both the validity and the reliability of campaign effects models. Allocations allow us to distinguish between the relative explanatory power of different resources and to determine to what extent campaign classifications of the states are realized through specific campaign activities.

Battleground states are neither a new phenomenon, nor representative of a simple dichotomous campaign strategy. The designation of a state as a battleground by a presidential campaign does not in itself mean that state is competitive, or big, or home to equally intense levels of campaign activity across multiple types of resource allocations. Just as we must take more care in considering what constitutes a battleground state, so too must we think more critically about how to measure the potential effects of this concept. Until now, most research has been concerned with what effect battleground status has on voter behavior. But, as this area of research expands, the possibility of other repercussions will likely emerge. How for example does battleground status affect state parties? The national issue agenda? Down ballot races? As these questions emerge, valid, reliable and consistent measures of LBS will become even more critical. In the final chapter, I turn to potential areas for future research and synthesize our revised conceptualization of the battleground state.

Chapter 6

Level of Battleground Status, An Emerging Concept

The battleground state emerged as a popular concept in the media in the 1990s. The simple dichotomization of states into battleground and non-battleground classifications is a useful heuristic for any discussion of presidential campaign strategy, but as this dissertation has shown, the battleground state concept deserves more refined conceptualization and operationalization when adopted by political scientists.

Until now, a dearth of campaign data limited progress in that direction. The extensive campaign records uncovered for this project at the nation's presidential archives provide a valuable resource for improving our understanding of American presidential campaigns. The data lend themselves to both qualitative and quantitative analysis, which shows the complexity of presidential campaigns' geographic strategies over the last half-century. Among other developments, this period includes the rise of the Republican party in the South, the increasing partisanship of American voters, the weakening and rebuilding of party organizations, fundamental reforms to the presidential nominating process, the evolution of campaign finance regulations, major changes in the form and practices of the news media, the growth in the political consultant class, and the emergence of candidate-centered campaigns. Given these extensive changes it is remarkable how stable the fundamentals underlying the geography of presidential campaign strategies have been.

In this final chapter, I summarize the key findings to emerge from this research, complete the conceptual analysis started in Chapter 1, and conclude with a discussion of potential areas for future research. The archival data show that many of the basic assumptions about battleground states and presidential campaign strategies oversimplify political reality. The field of battleground state research is marked by inconsistent measurements, conflicting conceptualizations, and limited theory. Despite the longevity of geographic targeting in presidential campaigns, scholars still know remarkably little about the causal mechanisms driving campaign strategies, how strategies evolve or the effects of those strategies on individuals and political institutions. This dissertation is a first step in addressing those deficiencies.

6.1 Explaining the emergence of the battleground concept

Many ideas emerge from this research that should reorient discussion about the battleground concept. Understanding the history and evolution of the battleground state in contemporary American presidential elections helps us to recognize its complexity and to explain why the concept has only recently emerged as a central component of public discourse about the campaigns.

First, battleground states are not a new campaign phenomenon. Presidential strategists have long used classification systems to prioritize the states and to determine how and where to allocate their valuable resources. As early as 1960, the Kennedy campaign ran television spot advertising in specific states and within specific media markets in those states. Moreover those spot ads were written to specifically appeal to the voters living in those cities. Even within the same state, spot ads varied according to the city in which they aired. Similarly, while Kennedy visited some states, the campaign sent his wife, sisters, and mother to campaign in different

locales. Voter registration drives in specific states were central to the Kennedy strategy. There was some overlap among these states but it was not perfect. The campaign targeted different states with different resources to fulfill different goals.

It is conventional wisdom in the field of political science that media market targeting within the states is something new. It is not. As the Kennedy example makes clear, strategists have long designed campaigns targeted at specific media markets and even precincts. Presidential campaign advertising messages have long been designed to resonate with targeted voters in key markets, and field efforts have long identified areas where unregistered voters represent important potential electoral gains. Candidates and their surrogates have long visited different locations and met with different audiences. Phone banks have long been called upon to reach voters in specific areas. So why do we believe battleground states are something new?

I believe the current cultural prominence of battleground states can be attributed to three trends. First, changes in media norms have made coverage of campaign strategy commonplace (Chapter 2). In particular, the use of strategic schema to frame election news means journalists and the public today know more about how the campaigns operate and why. The battleground state is a natural element of strategic coverage. Strategic schema first emerged in the late 1980s, and I have shown that media attention to battleground strategy, that is the strategic value of different geographic areas to presidential election outcomes, has increased significantly since the 1960s. The increased use of the "battleground state" term reflects more than linguistic fashion or some characteristic of elections themselves, the underlying concept receives more attention today than it did in the past.

Media norms explain some of the increased attention given to battleground states, but campaign behavior also accounts for the current prominence of the concept. In particular, as I showed in Chapter 4, two of the core preconditions that determine battleground status have shifted over the last two decades. State size used to carry a significant and even greater than proportional effect on both the campaign classifications of the states and the allocation of resources to the states. In contrast, state competition had very little direct effect on either state classifications or resource allocations, acting instead to modify (most often increasing) the effects of state size. In more recent elections, competition shows a direct effect on campaign state classifications and on both absolute and relative resource allocations. Today, state competition often directly explains the disproportionate allocation of resources to some states. Size carries some effect on the absolute allocation of resources, but only among very competitive states. It is beyond the scope of this research to determine absolutely what drove this shift, but the data indicate that better measures of state level competition, especially improvements in polling technology, explain these changes.

Finally, the presidential campaigns today have changed their television advertising strategies in one key way. While it is not true, as some suggest, that spot television advertising in presidential elections emerged for the first time in the late 1980s, it is true that the presidential campaigns have moved away from national advertising campaigns. The absence of national advertising on the networks makes the prominence of targeted spot advertising more obvious, especially to those voters living in states that now see no television ads. As noted above, it is unclear whether this campaign trend will continue. In 2008, the Obama campaign, which opted out of the public financing system, had the resources to develop a national ad campaign. If, as seems likely, future candidates also opt out, they may have the resources to re-discover the national ad campaign. So long as their national focus is limited, campaigns have no incentive to

develop a message for a national audience. Messages and campaigning will remain targeted at specific audiences in specific states.

6.2 A complex concept

In addition to clarifying the longstanding centrality of the battleground state to American presidential elections, this research also demonstrates the complexity of the concept. The battleground concept reflects more than just the campaign assignment of the states to one category or another. A minimal definition of the battleground construct (Chapter 1) is those states to which the presidential campaigns choose to allocate scarce resources because they fulfill some part of the campaign's overall strategy. Building from this definition we can specify other elements or properties associated with this concept and ask whether a state is relatively more or less of a battleground. What is a state's level of battleground status (LBS)? Expanding the concept beyond a simple dichotomy shows the reach of presidential campaigns is not necessarily as limited as some commentators believe. Campaigns may well be active in so-called "safe" states, but the types of activity looks different and may not be s balanced as it is in the most contested states.

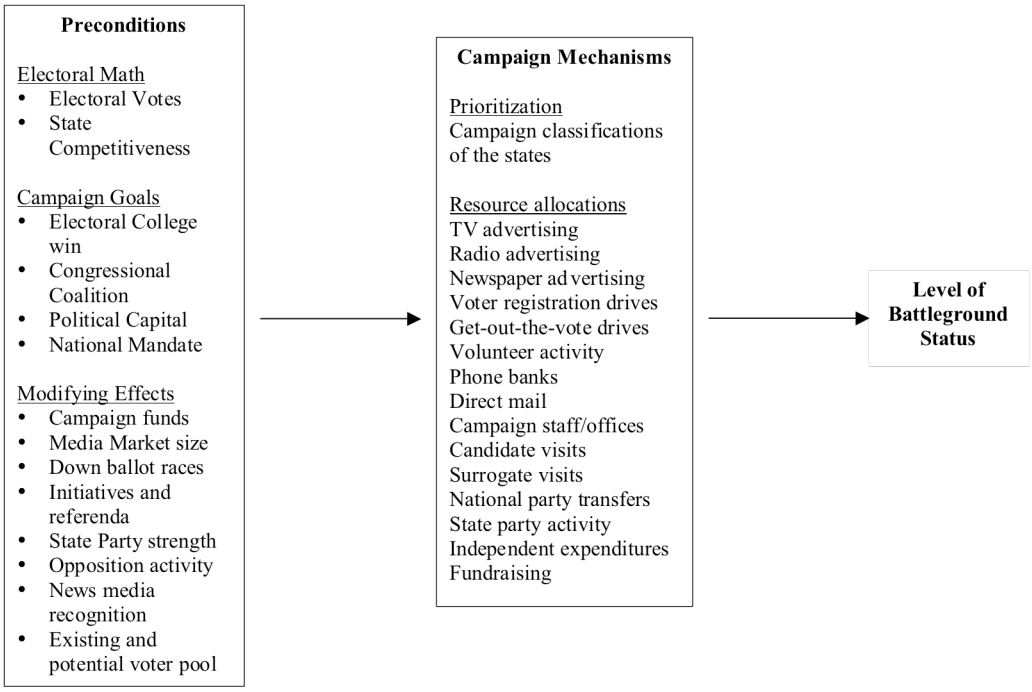
Figure 1.1 presented two basic elements that signify LBS. We saw throughout theis project that preconditions reflect both electoral math and campaign goals. These constitutive elements guide strategists in both deciding how to classify the states and how to allocate resources to the states. Campaign mechanisms are those contextual elements that offer evidence that a state is a battleground state, like advertising dollars or the presence of grassroots. All of these elements represent different facets of the battleground concept.

The archival data help us flesh out these battleground elements (Figure 6.1). The electoral math of course is central to determining LBS. What states can a candidate win with relatively little effort and what states will take more work? As noted above, the electoral math, or the balance between electoral vote size and competitiveness, has shifted over time. The preconditions of LBS also reflect multiple campaign goals. Campaign memos described throughout the project highlight the many competing goals presidential campaigns work to fulfill.

While winning in the Electoral College is the chief goal, other considerations impact strategic planning. In 1964, the Johnson campaign was fairly sure of a victory and worked hard to build a congressional coalition and the national mandate they would need to execute Johnson's legislative agenda. Far less assured of a victory, the Carter campaign in 1976 also closely tracked down ballot races (see Appendix F, Figure 5A for excerpt of a Carter memo describing the 1976 Senate and House races). Campaigning and fundraising for down ballot races, like state governors, help candidates build political capital to be used when they are in the White House.

The archival data and personal campaign accounts also clarify some of the variables that modify the strategic value of a state. Drawing from his own experiences with Republican campaigns, Shaw (2006) describes the importance of media market size and media market costs on the strategic value of states. The campaigns also closely track opposition activity and even work to throw off the competition (Chapter 3). Campaign strategists consider not just registered voters but also the potential voting pool. The archival data detail the voter registration efforts put forth by the Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter campaigns. In each case, strategists believed new voters could make a difference in the final state outcome. Finally, media coverage surely modifies campaign strategy. Media alert one campaign of another campaign's activity in a state.

Figure 6.1
The Battleground Concept



And, the likelihood and potential effect of local news coverage is a key determinant of some resource allocations (like travel).

Campaign mechanisms are a reaction to the preconditions listed above. And, the relative prioritization of the states in to different battleground categorizations is a principal element of the states' overall LBS. The archival data show that campaign categorizations are not dichotomous. Indeed, many campaigns use formulas to develop their state classifications. For example, in 1976, Carter's campaign adopted a complex formula to assign each state its own priority level (Chapter 3). The classification systems vary in both nomenclature and levels of categorization across campaigns and elections. Shaw's (1999, 2006) research has made the Safe Democrat/Republican, Lean Democrat/Republican, and Battleground state taxonomy commonplace in the political science literature, but the archives show campaigns each design their own unique systems.

Campaign battleground classifications guide resource allocations, but different resources are allocated to meet different needs. Winning a plurality of votes in a safe state requires mobilizing the base. Winning a plurality of votes in a competitive close state requires persuasion and mobilization. Strategists notoriously disagree about what is most effective – a ground war or an air war. And, differences of opinion multiply with every campaign tactic. What is the most effective way to disseminate negative messages radio, television, or direct mail? How best to reach rural voters? Which states merit nightly tracking polls and which do not? Is candidate time better spent fundraising or meeting with voters?

Imagine these differences magnified across all of the campaign goals and potential modifying variables and the complexity of the battleground concept begins to take shape. Establishing a national mandate and building a congressional coalition requires coordinated messages. Building political capital means targeted candidate travel. A controversial ballot initiative may make one state a less attractive campaign stop, while a fundraising event in one city may lead to other campaign events there. Campaigns allocate different resources to meet fulfill different goals and a range of variables modify those decisions.

The complexity of a concept complicates the measurement of that concept. I argue that weak conceptualizations have led political scientists to make two key mistakes when operationalizing the battleground concept. First, dichotomizing the states into battleground and non-battleground categorizations masks the heterogeneity of both the preconditions and campaign mechanisms detailed above. Dichotomizing without specifying or justifying a cut-point demonstrates a poor understanding of both presidential campaign strategy and measurement error.

Second, for all of the reasons outlined above, we cannot assume that resource allocations follow a linear pattern. That is, to choose just one typical campaign nomenclature, we cannot assume Lean Democratic states get more resources than Safe Democratic states or that Battleground states get more resources than Lean Democratic states. Allocations may fall along a linear path, but we have seen multiple examples in this work when they have not. Why then should we assume that LBS measures should necessarily predict a linear relationship with whatever dependent variable is in question? Similarly, we cannot assume that introducing one or two resource allocation measures or a campaign's LBS categorizations into a model will control for all campaign effects. As we saw (Chapter 5), how we measure LBS will influence our results.

6.3 Future Research

The battleground state has held a central place in campaign strategies for many years. Given its strategic prominence it is remarkable how little we know about the concept or its potential effects. The longevity of state level geographic targeting means researchers have decades of presidential campaigns to reconsider. The archival data reveal a range of potential areas for future research and make the case for better campaign data collection efforts now. While candidate visits and television advertising give us some indication of LBS across the states, efforts to track field efforts, other forms of advertising, mail, the allocation of party funds, and all of the other resources presidential campaigns have at their disposal will illuminate not just where and why campaigns are active but also to what effect. The data collected at the archives are vast, and this project only begins to explore the potential research questions this data can be used to address.

Better theory

As this project makes clear, while many scholars have been eager to include battleground variables in their models, the theory behind these empirical tests has been weak. Why do the campaigns allocate some resources to their own "safe" states and others to states that favor their competitors? Why are some resources allocated only to the most competitive states and not others? Answering these questions will require better theory about campaign goals, especially in states that are considered "safe" for or leaning towards one side or the other. Is a dichotomous

measure ever appropriate for studying the battleground state, and if so, what are the appropriate cut-points?

Additionally, while discussed only briefly in Chapter 3, the campaign records indicate that the battleground concept is both a complex and a dynamic measure. Campaign classifications of the states shift as the election progresses as do resource allocations. Future research should attempt to capture and explain these dynamics. In some cases, the archival records offer an opportunity to do so. For example, the Carter and Ford 1976 records each include multiple memos showing how state classifications shifted over time, and the Ford records include both early and late ad buy plans.

Better data

While the archival data set already created is vast, research at other presidential archives will add to that resource. In particular, I was unable to visit the Nixon archives or to personally visit the Reagan library. These resources include important records on the campaign activity of these two campaigns, and I hope to be able visit these libraries in the future. Similarly, the data on the most recent elections is extremely limited. Data on field activity by the campaigns, soft money, and on activity by the independent expenditure campaigns will contribute greatly to our understanding of the battleground state concept.

Similarly, while this dissertation explores the perspectives of campaign staff and consultants through their own memos and historical accounts of the campaigns, an important next step in this research project will be to interview those consultants and staff first hand. The dissertation illuminates a number of misconceptions among media and political scientists about the battleground concept in practice. Interviews with those who design and implement those strategies would both clarify the concept and suggest other areas for research.

The role of campaign finance reform

The popular emergence of the battleground state coincides with the introduction and evolution of campaign finance reforms. Is this coincidence? Did the implementation of campaign finance regulations contribute to the move from size-centered to competition-centered battleground strategies? Did the rise of soft money magnify the battleground effect for the public and the media by making the differences between highly targeted states and the rest of the country more obvious? The Obama campaign's decision to opt out of the public financing system facilitated their ability to air a national TV ad campaign for the first time in several election cycles. Will other campaigns follow suit, and if so, what will this mean for the battleground concept in the future?

Case studies

According to the archival data a handful of states, like Ohio, have held top LBS for decades even as the explanatory power of size and competition have changed. What persistent elements make these states so different than the rest? And, what effect does being a resident of a state targeted by the presidential campaigns election year after election year have on voters? The presidential campaigns and national parties disburse more volunteers, advertising dollars, and party money to some states than others. Does this weaken, strengthen or have no impact on state

party organizational strength? Case studies within individual states would help to answer these questions and to clarify the resource allocation decisions campaign make.

Role and influence of campaign issues

Presidential campaigns target specific media markets with specific messages and have done so for decades. The archival data include multiple records showing the polling data campaigns used to determine which issues should be emphasized in which states. The campaigns rely on nightly polls and focus groups in top LBS states to craft their advertising and speeches. How does this process influence what gets talked about? Does message targeting affect the national issue agenda when a candidate takes office? Does the presidential issue agenda reflect battleground pressures? Would we be discussing different issues if Washington or Oregon were as central to election outcomes as Ohio and Pennsylvania?

Political behavior

To date, much of the research surrounding battleground states focuses on political behavior. The models typically hold that campaign intensity increases with battleground status, and that we should see everything from voter turnout, to political discussion, activism, campaign contact, and knowledge about the candidates increase accordingly. This research has had mixed results, in part, I would argue, because of the measures used to operationalize the concept. A promising new line of research looks at differences within different categories of states to see which predispositions are activated in top battleground versus the other states (McClurg and Holbrook 2009).

As we saw above (Chapter 5), including multiple indicators of the battleground state concept may refine our understanding of campaign effects. Are the campaigns right to allocate different resources to some states than others? Does sending surrogates to safe states have any behavioral effect or does it purely fill a symbolic goal? What resources do get people out to vote in safe states? What messages resonate in states that lean to one side or the other versus in top LBS states? Once we question the assumption that campaign intensity increases in a linear fashion, the list of potential questions about campaign effects expands quickly.

Another branch of behavioral research might focus on voter awareness of their role within the battleground construct. Do voters in top LBS target states know the campaigns are focused on their states? Are voters today more likely to know this than in the past? For example, in 1976, 68 percent of voters living in a state classified as a top battleground state by the Carter campaign said they believed the results in their state would be close, but, more than half of those voters living in a state classified as "safe" by the campaign believed the same thing. It is not surprising then that voters' sense of civic duty and their belief that individual votes matter don't appear to be significantly higher in battleground states. If campaign intensity doesn't increase feelings of individual efficacy, does it have some other effect?

Perhaps, the effects of living in a top battleground state are not positive at all. As anyone who has lived through a general election campaign in a top LBS state can attest, there may in fact be such a thing as too much politics. The phone rings incessantly with pre-recorded messages or out-of-state activists soliciting your vote. Pollsters and volunteers knock on the door, call your phone, and target your email. Campaign volunteers stalk you at the grocery store. The television, the radio and your mailbox overflow with campaign messages from the

candidates and their supporters. More than one voter has been heard to say during the campaign season, "I really hate political ads." Research into brand marketing being done in the cognitive sciences suggests there is an "exposure effect" that I believe should be extended to studies of the presidential candidates' use of targeted saturation marketing.

Changizi and Shimojo (2008) suggest that our preferences for an object are piqued by brief exposure and diminish the more we are visually exposed to it. Excessive exposure to an object makes us feel the object is less valuable through what they call the "novelty preference." The authors argue their research supports the move by corporate advertisers to place products in TV shows and movies, because ads that don't reach our conscious brains work best. Could the same effect be at work with presidential campaigns? Does over-saturation turn off the very voters campaigns are trying to reach? Applying cognitive science to battleground research might answer these questions.

The battleground state is a longstanding component of American presidential elections. This dissertation demonstrates that political science has just begun to explore the potential explanatory power of this concept for American voter behavior, our nation's political institutions, and the national issue agenda, and as American campaign practices continue to spread to other nations, our understanding of this concept may extend to comparative politics research as well.

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Appendix A: Archival Data

The archival data used in this project were collected at the presidential libraries of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush. Research at the Kennedy Library was made possible by the Theodore C. Sorensen Fellowship from the John F. Kennedy Library. The archival data are a rich and untapped source of campaign records. Thousands of pages of campaign documents were collected, organized, and coded by the author. The data presented in this dissertation represent only a portion of that research.

Data that were collected and coded for specific quantitative analyses are presented in the appendices here. The sources of all other references to the archival data are included as footnotes in the text. I present the data coded for this project in two tables. Table 1A includes the battleground or electoral strategies specified by the campaigns.[91] These strategies demonstrate how the presidential campaigns prioritized the states according to their own records. Table 1A presents the classifications used by the campaigns and the coding adopted by the author for the analyses presented in this dissertation. Table 1B presents resource allocations made by the campaigns according to their own internal records. For the most recent campaigns, the data also include the battleground strategies, television advertising data, and candidate visits made by the campaigns as collected and shared by Professor Daron Shaw (1999a, 2006).

[91] The exceptions are the Democratic strategies from Shaw (1999a, 2006), which represent the Republicans' best estimates of their opponents' strategies.

Table 1A. Campaign Classifications of Level of Battleground Status

Campaign	Classification System Used	Source
Kennedy 1960	Priority V = 0 Priority IV = .25 Priority III = .5 Priority II = .75 Priority I = 1	RFK Pre-Administration papers, 1960 Campaign and Transition, Box 38, Guild, Bascom & Bonfigli, Inc., August 17, 1960, "Spot TV Prioritization," JFK Library
Carter 1976	Likely/Safe R = 0 Safe D = .25 Possible Rep = .5 Likely D = .75 Battleground/Super Battleground = 1	Jody Powell Personal Papers, Box 36, Survey, General Election, August 1976 memo, Carter Library.
Ford 1976	Priority V, Safe Dem = 0 Priority IV, Safe Rep = .25 Priority IIIB, Lean Dem = .5 Priority IIIA, Lean Rep = .75 Priority I&II, Swing States = 1	"Campaign Strategy for President Ford 1976," Aug. 1976, Box E42, Campaign '76 Office, General Election, Box 36, Powell Personal Papers, Carter Library.
Carter 1980	Lost = 0 Safe =.25 Marginal- =.5 Marginal+ = .75 Swing = 1	Memo from Pat Caddell, Campaign Strategy, Caddell General Election File, Box 77, White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan, Carter Library.
Reagan 1984	Safe Dem=0 Safe Rep=.5 Marginal=1	"The GOP Presidential Coalition of 1984," Box 9, James A. Baker Filed, Reagan Library.
Bush 1988	No priority=0 Medium Priority=.5 High Priority=.75 Top priority=1	Memo from Christopher Bowman to Terry Wade (RNC Cief of Staff) April 1, 1988, RNC Bowman Report on State and Political Operations, Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, Box 16, George H.W. Bush Library.
Dukakis 1988 Bush 1992 Clinton/Dole 1996 Bush Gore 2000, Bush Kerry 2004	Safe Rep=0 Safe Dem = .25 Lean Rep = .5 Lean Dem = .75 Battleground = 1	(Shaw 1999a and 2006). Values for Lean and Safe States reversed in Republican contests

Table 1B. Resource Allocations by the Presidential Campaigns (Archival Variable Descriptions)

Kennedy 1960	Advertising	TV Ad Priority	Priority assigned each state for spot (local) advertising.	Priority V = 0 Priority IV = .25 Priority III = .5 Priority II = .75 Priority I = 1	RFK Pre-Administration papers, 1960 Campaign and Transition, Box 38, Guild, Bascom & Bonfigli, Inc., August 17, 1960, "Spot TV Prioritization," JFK Library
	Advertising	TV Ad Spending	State level spending on Spot Ads and 1/2 hour ads	In dollars	Ibid.
	Travel	JFK visits	JFK days visited each state.	Count	RFK, Pre-Administration Papers, Box 37, Kennedy Library.
	Travel	Surrogate visits	Surrogate days visited each state (RFK, JBF, family members)	Count	RFK Pre-Administration papers, 1960 Campaign and Transition, Box 37, "Kennedy Ladies Final Report 9/29-11/5," JFK Library
	Field	Phone campaign records	Level of phone bank targeting	0 = no phone banks .5 = minimal phone banks 1= max phone banks	DNC,1960 Campaign, Citizens for Kennedy/Johnson, Byron White Box 128
	Field	Tabloid distribution	Level of tabloid distribution	0 = not a targeted state, 0.5 = targeted state 1 = priority targeted state	DNC,1960 Campaign/Citizens for Kennedy/Johnson, Byron White Box 128
	Field	Voter Registration	Site of voter registration drives	0 = not a targeted state 1 = targeted state	Memo from Frank Thompson, Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Administration Political Papers, Box 32
	Polls	Polling	# Polls per month by week	Count	Robert F. Kennedy Pre-Administration Political Papers Boxes 44-46
Johnson 1964	Advertising	TV Ad Priority	Recommended spending levels in states.	1=$0-149K 2=$150-299K 3=$300K+	DNC 2; Box 224; Doyle, Dane, and Bernbach
	Travel	LBJ visits	LBJ days visited each state.	Count	Daily Diary of the President, Sept-Nov., 1964, Johnson Library.
	Travel	Surrogate visits	Humphrey days visited each state.	Count	DNC 2, Box 47, Campaign 1964, Travel Expenses for Charter Transportation. Johnson Library.
	Field	DNC Target	State was party voter registration target.	Dummy	White House Aides, Moyers, Boxes 20 and 33, Johnson Library.

Table 1B. (continued) Resource Allocations by the Presidential Campaigns (Archival Variable Descriptions)

Johnson 1964	Field	Campaign Materials	Total spending on campaign materials per state.	$(Thousands)	DNC 2, Box 54, New Hampshire: Region 1, Johnson Library.
	Field	GOTV	State was targeted for GOTV	Dummy	White House Central File, PL2, Box 85, 10/14/64-10/18/64
	Polls	Polling target	Any polling done in stat e	Dummy	Poor measure, Incomplete data. White House Aide, Califano, Box 7, Office Files of Joseph Califano, Polls White House Aides: Bill Moyers: Box 30: Office Files of Bill Moyers: Schedules
Carter 1976	Advertising	TV Ads	TV spot advertising per state.	# Weeks per state	1976 Campaign Files, Situation Room Administrative Assistant, Bill Simon, Boxes 273-274, Carter Library.
	Advertising	Radio Ads	Radio spot advertising per state.	# Weeks per state	1976 Campaign Files, Situation Room Administrative Assistant, Bill Simon, Boxes 273-274, Oct. 25, 1976, Carter Library.
	Travel	Carter visits	Days Carter visited each state.	#visits	1976 Campaign Files, Special Projects, Becky Hendrix/Carey Smith Subject File, Box 238, Carter Library.
	Travel	Surrogate visits	Days visited each state, Mondale and Mrs. Carter	#visits	1976 Campaign Files, Special Projects, Becky Hendrix/Carey Smith Subject File, Box 238, Carter Library.
	Field	Volunteers	Volunteers sent to state.	Dummy	1976 Campaign Files, Situation Room Administrative Assistant, Bill Simon, Box 239 & 273, Carter Library.
	Field	Phone Bank	Phone banks targted state.	Dummy	1976 Presidential Campaign, Hutcheson, Box 210, GOTV telephone bank operation, Carter Library.
	Field	DNC Target	Party voter registration target.	Dummy	1976 Campaign Files, Director's Office, Hamilton Jordan, Box 199, Memo from Hamilton Jordan to Carter 6/76, Carter Library.
	Field	Offices	Campaign offices.	# offices per state	1976 Campaign Files, National Campaign Coordinator - Rick Hutcheson,Box 211 , General Election II, Carter Library.

Table 1B. (continued) Resource Allocations by the Presidential Campaigns (Archival Variable Descriptions)

Carter 1976	Field	State Budget	Dollars spent per state.	$(thousands)	WH Chief of Staff, Butler, Box 142, 1980 Campaign Book, "1976 Democratic Presidential Committee: State Expenditure Summary," Carter Library.
Ford 1976	Field	State Budget	State Budget (Payroll, overhead, rent, supplies, telegrams, travel)	Dollars (in thousands)	President Ford Committee, Box B13, Administrative Office – Cochran Budget File, State Budgets
	Mail	Regular Mailings	Total spent on regular mailings per state.	Dollars	President Ford Committee, Box B13, Administrative Office – Cochran Budget File, State Budgets
	Mail	Special Mail (Ethnic groups)	Total spent on mailings to targeted groups (black, catholic, farm, etc.) per state.	Dollars (in thousands)	President Ford Committee, Box B13, Administrative Office – Cochran Budget File, State Budgets
	Mail	Undecided Letters	Total spent on special mailing to undecided voters per state.	Dollars (in hundreds)	President Ford Committee, Box B13, Administrative Office – Cochran Budget File, State Budgets
	Advertising	Tabloids	Total spent on tabloids per state.	Dollars (in thousands)	President Ford Committee, Box B13, Administrative Office – Cochran Budget File, State Budgets
	Advertising	Television	Total spent on spot TV advertising per state.	Dollars (in thousands)	Compiled from multiple records, see President Ford Committee: Campaign '76: General Election: Barry Lafer: PC Invoice File: Paid Invoices SFM Pending and Follow-up, Box E116 – February 3, 1977, and "Budget Exhibits" Box E42, President Ford Committee General Election: Deardourff Files, Sound Roll, Ford Library
	Advertising	Radio	Total spent on spot Radio ads per state.	Dollars (in thousands)	Ibid.
	Advertising	Television	Weeks of TV advertising per state.	Weeks of Spot advertising	Ibid.
	Advertising	Radio	Weeks of Radio advertising per state.	Weeks of radio advertising	Ibid.
	Advertising	Total	Advertising priority assigned by the campaign.	Coded 0-4, 4=Top priority.	Ibid.

Table 1B. (continued) Resource Allocations by the Presidential Campaigns (Archival Variable Descriptions)

Ford 1976	Polls	Polling	Total polls and tracking polls done per state.	Count	
Carter 1980	Advertising	Television	Weeks of TV advertising per state, Spot TV plan (early).	Weeks of TV ads	WH Chief of Staff, Jordan, 1980 Campaign Files, Box 79, General Election Media Plan 5/29/1980, Carter Library.
	Advertising	Radio	Weeks of rdaio advertising per state, Spot radio plan (early)	Weeks of Radio ads	WH Chief of Staff, Jordan, 1980 Campaign Files, Box 79, General Election Media Plan 5/29/1980, Carter Library.
	Travel	Carter visits	Days in each state.	Visits per state	Presidential Daily Diary, Sept.-Nov., 1980, Carter Library
	Field	GOTV	Voter registration target	Dummy	White House Chief of Staff, Butler, Box 142, General Campaign Information 7/1-30/1980, Carter Library.
	Field	DNC Target	Party target for staffing/offices.	Dummy	White House Chief of Staff, Butler, Box 142, 1980 Campaign Book April 22, 1980, "Staffing of Key States for the General Election," Carter Library.
Reagan 1984	Travel	Reagan visits	Days spent in each state.	Count	
	Field	GOTV	Targeted for get-out-the-vote-efforts	Dummy	
Bush 1988	Field	Voter Registration	Site of RNC Voter Registration Drive	Dummy	Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, Box 16, RNC Bowman Report on State and Political Operations, Memo from Christopher Bowman to Terry Wade April 1, 1988, George H.W. Bush Library.
	Field	State organizational funds	Federal Funds allocated to the states 4/1/1988	In dollars	Robert Teeter Collection 1972-1992, Box 16, RNC Bowman Report on State and Political Operations, Memo from Christopher Bowman to Terry Wade April 1, 1988, George H.W. Bush Library..
	Polls	Individual polls	Number polls per state	Count	Robert Teeter Collection Boxes 14-19, George H.W. Bush Library.
	Polls	Tracking polls	Tracking poll in state	Dummy	Robert Teeter Collection Boxes 14-19, George H.W. Bush Library.
	Travel	Bush visits	Bush visits per state	Count	Robert Teeter Collection Box 56, "The Week that Was/To Come," George H.W. Bush Library.

Table 1B. (continued) Resource Allocations by the Presidential Campaigns (Archival Variable Descriptions)

Bush 1992	Travel	Bush visits	Bush visits per state	Count	Appointments and Scheduling, Presidential Daily Diary
	Polls	Individual polls	Number polls per state	Count	Robert Teeter Collection Box 82, George H.W. Bush Library.
	Polls	Tracking polls	Tracking poll in state	Dummy	Robert Teeter Collection Box 82, George H.W. Bush Library.

Appendix B

Table 2A **References to Battleground Strategy by Source 1960-2004**

	Mean Mentions per article	Std Dev	N	t *	d.f
New York Times	.63	2.07	360	-	
Los Angeles Times	.36	1.99	180	1.41	538
Chicago Tribune	.54	2.02	180	.43	538

Results are measuring difference of means with *The New York Times*. A test between the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* also revealed no significant difference of means.
*p<.05, **p<.01, **p<.001

Table 2B. The Horserace, Early Measures of Campaign Competitiveness

1960

If the (1960) presidential election were being held today, which candidates would you vote – Kennedy and Johnson or Nixon and Lodge? (If "undecided or refused' ask:) As of today would you lean more to Kennedy and Johnson or more to Nixon and Lodge?

Nixon-Lodge	43%
Kennedy-Johnson	42
Leans more to Nixon-Lodge	3
Leans more to Kennedy-Johnson	4
Undecided or refused	8

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 25-30, 1960, 1,645 respondents.

1964

Suppose you were voting today for president of the United States. Here is a Gallup Poll Ballot listing the (1964) candidates for this office. Will you please mark that ballot for the candidate you favor as you would in a real election if it were being held today--and then drop the folded ballot into this box.

Goldwater	26%
Johnson	68
Undecided/Refused	6

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 27 – Sept. 1, 1964. 1,569 respondents.

Table 2B. (cont'd) The Horserace, Early Measures of Campaign Competitiveness

1968

If the (1968) presidential election were being held today, which candidate would you vote for--Nixon, the Republican, Humphrey, the Democrat, or Wallace, the candidate of the American Independent party? (If 'Undecided or Refused,' ask:) As of today, do you lean more to Nixon, to Humphrey, or to Wallace?

Nixon, including leaners	41%
Humphrey, including leaners	31
Wallace, including leaners	20
Undecided	7

Source: Gallup Organization, Sept. 1-6, 1968. 1,507 respondents.

1972

If the (1972) presidential election were being held today, which candidate would you vote for----McGovern, the Democrat, or for Nixon, the Republican? (If 'Undecided or Refused,' ask:) As of today, do you lean more to McGovern, the Democrat, or for Nixon, the Republican?

McGovern, including leaners	27%
Nixon, including leaners	66
Other	1
Undecided	5

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 25-28, 1972. 1,533 respondents.

1976

If the (1976) Presidential election were being held TODAY which candidate would you vote for--Ford, the Republican, Carter, the Democrat, or Eugene McCarthy, an Independent candidate?

Ford	31%
Carter	49
McCarthy	4
Other (vol.)	2
Undecided/Refused/No answer	15

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 27-30, 1976. 1,553 respondents.

Table 2B. (cont'd) The Horserace, Early Measures of Campaign Competitiveness

1980

If the presidential election were being held TODAY which candidate would you vote for, Carter the Democrat, Reagan the Republican, or Anderson, the Independent? (If other or undecided, ask:) As of today, do you lean more to Carter the Democrat, to Reagan, the Republican, or to Anderson, the Independent?

Carter, including leaners	40%
Reagan, including leaners	35
Anderson, including leaners	13
Other (vol.)	2
Undecided	10

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 15, 1980. respondents.

1984

If the November (1984) general election for president were being held today and these were the candidates, which one, if either, would you vote for: Former Vice President Walter Mondale, the Democrat, or President Ronald Reagan, the Republican? (If Not Sure or Refused) Well, as of today, do you lean more toward Mondale, or Reagan?

Mondale, including leaners	32%
Reagan, including leaners	60
Other (Vol.)	1
Don't know	7

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 25-30, 1984. 2,056 respondents.

1988

If the 1988 Presidential election were being held today and the candidates were George Bush, the Republican, and Michael Dukakis, the Democrat, for whom would you vote? (If 'No opinion,' ask:) Well, do you lean to Bush or Dukakis?

Bush, including leaners	51%
Dukakis, including leaners	43
No opinion	5

Source: ABC News, Washington Post, Aug. 31- Sept. 6, 1988. 1104 respondents.

Table 2B. (cont'd) The Horserace, Early Measures of Campaign Competitiveness

1992

If the presidential election were being held today, would you vote for the Republican ticket of George Bush and Dan Quayle or for the Democratic ticket of Bill Clinton and Al Gore?

Bush/Quayle	35%
Clinton/Gore	49
Perot (vol.)	1
Other (vol.)	3
Don't know/Refused	13

Source: Gallup Organization/CNN, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 1992. 1,243 respondents.

1996

If the 1996 presidential election were being held today and the candidates were Bill Clinton, the Democratic candidate, Bob Dole, the Republican, and Ross Perot, the independent, for whom would you vote?

Clinton	51%
Dole	32
Perot	7
None (vol.)	2
Other (vol.)	1
Don't know/No opinion	7

Source: ABC News, Washington Post, Aug. 28-29, 1996. 1,017 respondents.

2000

(I'm going to read a list of six candidates for president who may appear on the ballot in a significant number of states this November (2000). Supposing that all of these candidates were on the ballot in your state, which one would you be most likely to vote for--Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, the Democratic candidates, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republican candidates, Harry Browne, the Libertarian Party candidate, Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke, the Green Party candidates, John Hagelin, the Reform Party candidate, Howard Phillips, the Constitution Party candidate, or will you be voting for someone else?) (If no opinion, ask:) As of today which one of these candidates do you lean toward—Al Gore and Joe Lieberman, the Democratic candidates, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republican candidates, Harry Browne, the Libertarian Party candidate, Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke, the Green Party candidates, John Hagelin, the Reform Party candidate, Howard Phillips, the Constitution Party candidate, or will you be voting for someone else?

Gore and Lieberman including leaners	45%
Bush and Cheney including leaners	44
Browne including leaners	1
Nader and LaDuke including leaners	3
No opinion	7

Source: Gallup Organization, Aug. 29-Sept.5, 2000. 1,012 respondents.

2004

(If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republicans, John Kerry and John Edwards,the Democrats, or Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo, the Independents?) (If Other/Neither/No opinion, ask:) Which candidate are you leaning toward?

Bush including leaners	48%
Kerry including leaners	47
Nader including leaners	2
Neither (Vol.)	1
No opinion	2

Source: ABC News, Washington Post, Aug. 26-29, 2004. 1,207 respondents.

Appendix C

Table 3A. **Media Categorizations of Battleground States 2000**

CNN	Cook Political Report 10/25/00	Rothenberg Political Report 10/11/00	RhodesCook.com
AZ	AZ	AZ	AZ
AR	*AR*	*AR*	
		CO	
DE		DE	
FL	*FL*	*FL*	FL
	GA	*GA*	
IL	IL	IL	
IA	IA	IA	
		KY	KY
LA	LA	*LA*	
ME	*ME*	ME	
MI	*MI*	*MI*	
	MN	*MN*	
MO	*MO*	*MO*	MO
		MT	
NV	*NV*	*NV*	NV
NH	*NH*	*NH*	NH
NM	*NM*	*NM*	NM
	NC	NC	
OH		OH	OH
OR	*OR*	*OR*	OR
PA	*PA*	*PA*	PA
TN	*TN*	TN	TN
WA	WA	*WA*	WA
WV	*WV*	*WV*	
WI	*WI*	*WI*	WI
N=20	N = 21	N = 26	N = 13

Italics = Toss-up

Appendix D

Table 4A Influence of Electoral Votes and Early Vote Margin on Battleground Status*

(DV = Campaign Classification of LBS)

	2000 Bush	2000 Bush	2000 Gore	2000 Gore	2004 Bush	2004 Bush	2004 Kerry	2004 Kerry
Electoral Votes	-.002	.0002	-.01	.03	.02	.03	.004	.08*
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(-.04)	(.04)	(.02)	(.03)
Competitiveness	-.03**	-.03	-.07***	-.04	-.08***	-.05*	-.05***	-.02
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.02)	(.02)	(.01)	(.02)
EVsXComp	-	-.0002	-	-.005	-	-.005	-	-.005
		(.001)		(.004)		(.003)		(.002)
N	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
χ^2	5.89	5.91	17.51$^+$	19.31$^+$	26.92	30.81	13.38$^+$	19.06$^+$
Pseudo R^2	.04	.04	.12	.14	.22	.25	.09	.13

Ordered probit estimates. Standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

$^+$ indicates χ^2signficant at .01 level

a. Battleground=1, Likely Dem=.75, Likely Rep = .5, Safe Dem=.25, Safe Rep=0. Values for Lean and Safe States reversed in Republican contests, Shaw (1999c, 2006).

*Early Vote Margin for each state was calculated using the National Annenberg Election Survey and vote choice responses taken from April 1 to three days after the final party convention. Similar pattern of results for models using the Bush and Gore 2000 and 2004 advertising strategies, except that competitiveness is not significant for either of the mutilplicative interaction models.

Table 4B. Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Field Activities

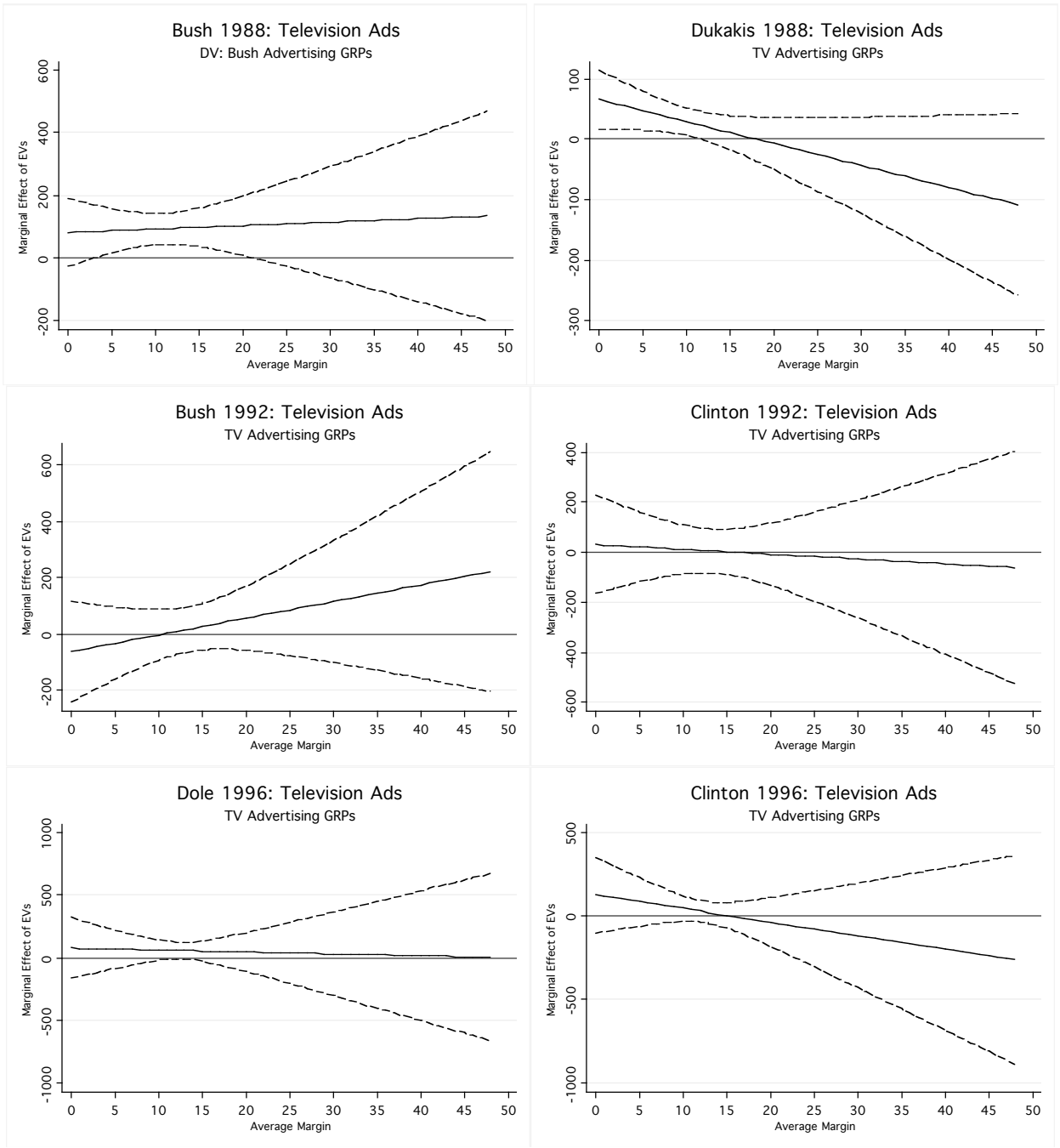
(DV = Field Activities)

	1960 Phone Bank[a]	1960 Voter Reg.[b]	1964 Voter Reg[d]	1964 GOTV[e]	1964 Campaign Materials[f]	1976 Phone[g]	1976 Carter State Budget[h]	1976 Vols.[i]	1976 Ford State Budget[j]	1976 Mail[k]	1976 Phone[l]	1980 GOTV[m]	1984 GOTV[n]
Electoral Votes	.07**	.03	.14***	.02	1142.87***	.30**	10.40***	.02	5.80***	6.46***	.06*	.20***	.10*
	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)	(.02)	(9.82)	(.10)	(.46)	(.02)	(.48)	(1.57)	(.03)	(.05)	(.04)
Competitiveness	-.00	-.04	-.02	-.02	4.76	-.09	-.48	.00	-.39	-.76	-.04	.03	-.03
	(.02)	(.03)	(.04)	(.02)	(10.50)	(.06)	(.40)	(.02)	(.42)	(1.36)	(.04)	(.02)	(.02)
Constant	-	.61	-2.09**	-.29	-2550.08***	-1.55	-18.99	-.85	-10.17	4.41	-.81	-	-.20
		(.59(	(.79)	(.50)	(230.70)	(1.39)	(12.24)	(.56)	(12.73)	(41.67)	(1.05)		(.63)
N	48	48	50	50	50	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
χ^2	10.66[+]	5.47	24.92[+]	2.51	-	39.05[+]	-	-	-	-	11.27[+]	33.27[+]	14.14[+]
Pseudo R^2	.11	.09	.45	.04	-	.62	-	-	-	-	.22	.37	.20
Adj R^2	-	-	-	-	.99	-	.92	.02	.76	.26	-	-	-

Ordered probit estimates, Columns 1, 13. Probit estimates Columns 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12. OLS estimates Columns 6, 8, 10, 11. Standard errors in parentheses.
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05 [+] indicates Chi^2signficant at .01 level

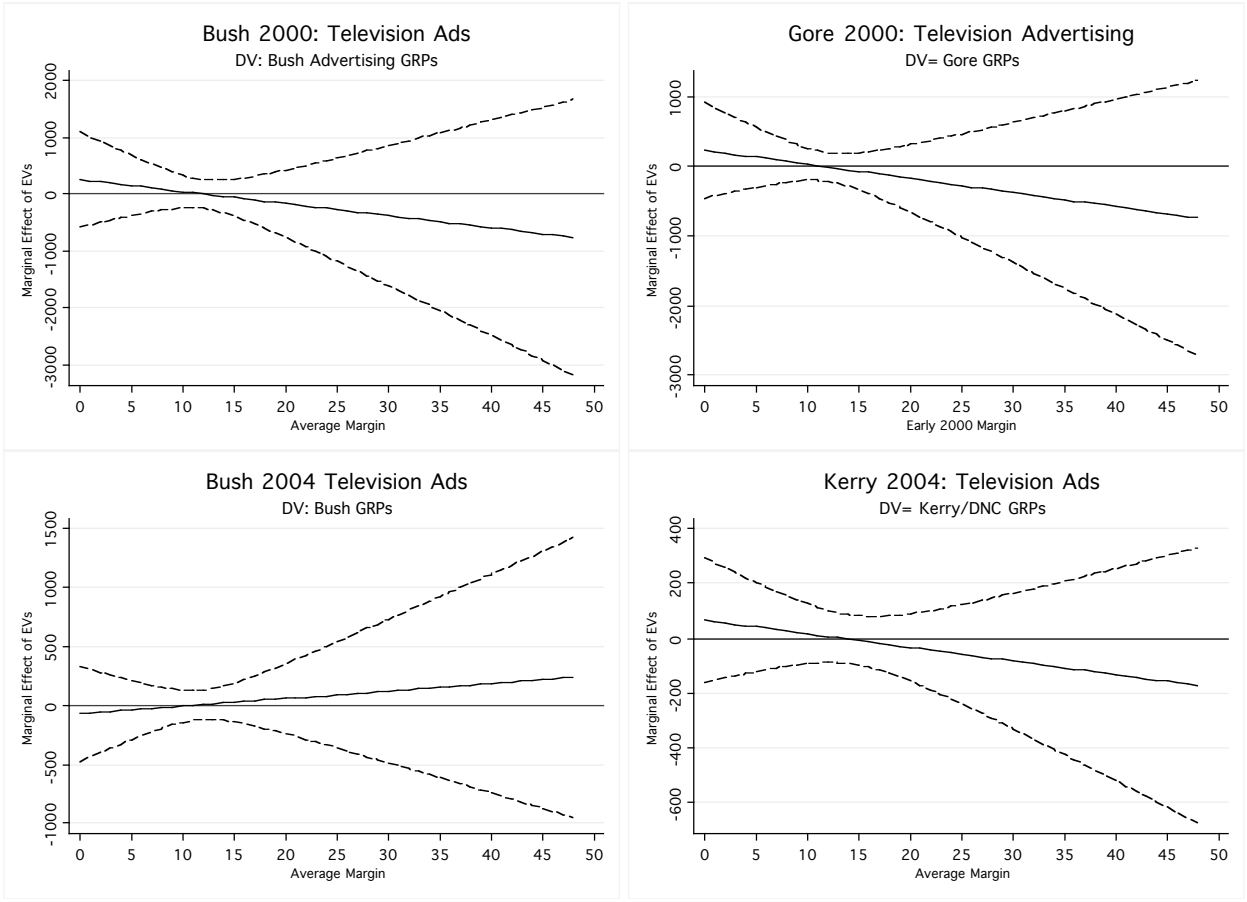
a. JFK 1960, DV= Phone banks 0=No phone banks, .5=Some phone banks, 1=Maximum phone banks (AK, HI missing), b. JFK 1960, DV= Voter Registration 0=Not a target 1=Voter registration target (AK, HI missing), c. JFK 1960, DV= Tabloid Distributon 0=No tabloids 1=Tabloids distributed in state (AK, HI missing), d. Johnson 1964, DV= Voter Registration 0=Not a target 1=Voter registration target (DC missing), e. Johnson 1964, DV = Get-Out-the-Vote 0=Not a target 1=Voter registration target (DC missing), f. Johnson 1964, DV = Total spending on campaign materials per state ($)(DC missing), g. Carter 1976, DV= phone banks 0=No phone banks, 1=Phone banks, h. Carter 1976, DV=State budgets ($), i. Carter 1976, DV=Volunteers 0=No volunteers, 1=Volunteers, j. Ford 1976, DV=State budgets ($), k. Ford 1976, DV=State mail budgets ($), l. Ford 1976, DV= phone banks 0=No phone banks, 1=Phone banks, m. Carter 1980, DV= Get-Out-the-Vote 0=No priority, .5=Medium priority, 1=High priority, n. Reagan 1984, DV= Get-Out-the-Vote 0=No GOTV, 1=GOTV

Figure 4A. Conditional Effect of Electoral Votes on Television Advertising (GRPs)



--- 95% confidence interval

Figure 4A (continued)



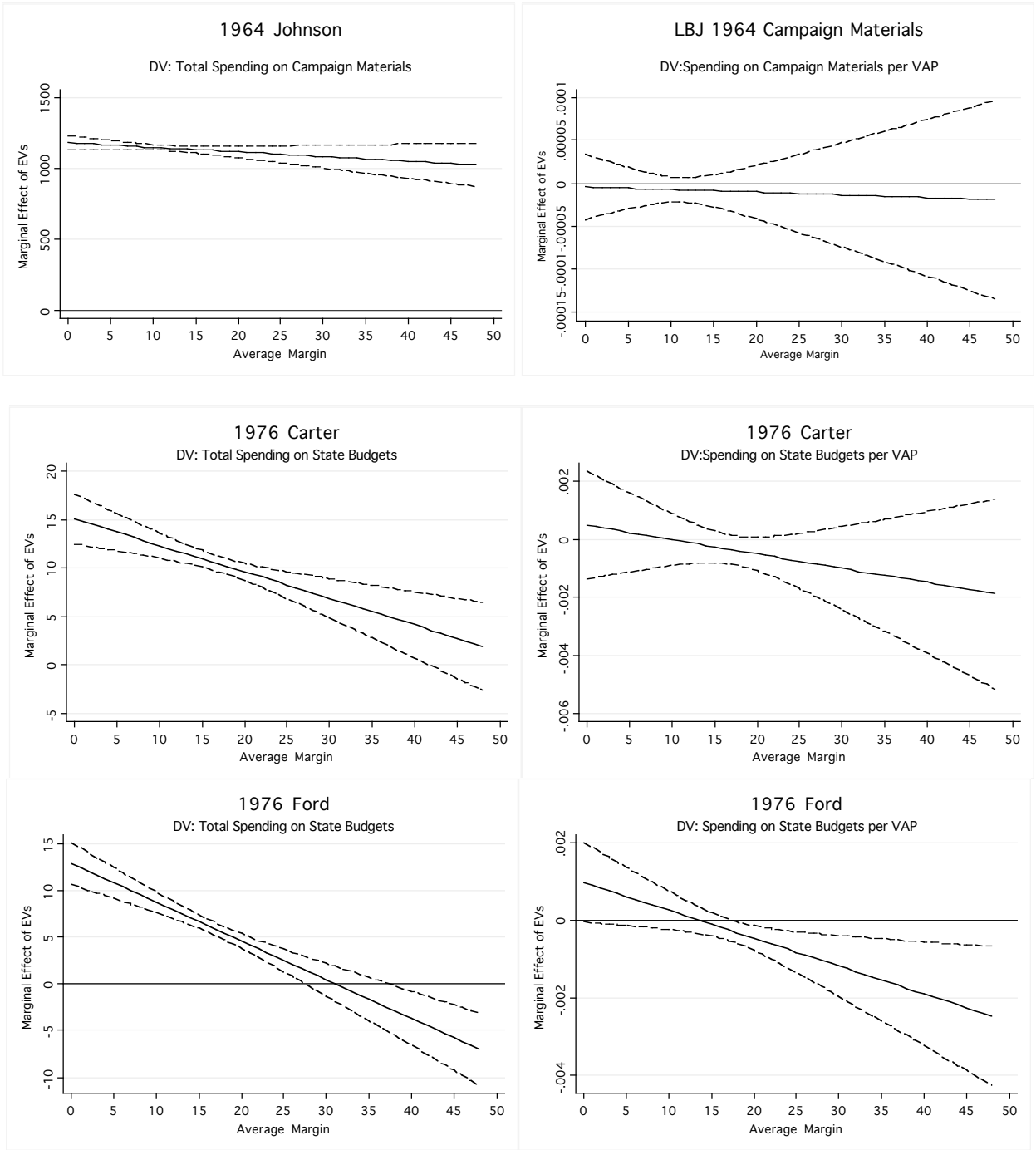
--- 95% confidence interval

Table 4C Absolute versus Relative Allocations: Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Field Activity

	1964 Johnson Campaign Materials				1976 Carter State Budget				1976 Ford State Budget			
	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Total Spending	Total Spending	Spending per Capita (VAP)	Spending per Capita (VAP)
Electoral Votes	1142.87***	1179.28**	-.000008	-.000004	10.40***	15.08***	-.0004	.0005	5.80***	12.85***	-.0002	.001
	(9.83)	(25.59)	(.000007)	(.00002)	(.46)	(1.32)	(.0003)	(.0009)	(.48)	(1.13)	(.0001)	(.001)
Competitiveness	4.76	28.07	.000007	.000009	-.48	1.23*	-.0006*	-.0002	-.39	2.19***	-.0003	.0003
	(10.50)	(18.36)	(.000008)	(.00001)	(.40)	(.58)	(.0003)	(.0005)	(.42)	(.49)	(.0001)	(.0003)
Electoral VotesX Competitiveness	-	-3.24	-	-.000000	-	-.27***	-	-.00005	-	-.41***	-	-.00007*
		(2.11)		(.000002)		(.07)		(.00005)		(.06)		(.00003)
Constant	-2550.08***	-2843.85**	.004***	.004***	-19.00	-47.65***	.05***	.04***	-10.17	-53.35***	.02	.014
	(230.70)	(297.07)	(.0002)	(.0002)	(12.24)	(13.33)	(.01)	(.01)	(12.73)	(11.40)	(.004)	(.006)
N	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Adj R^2	.997	.997	.016	-.005	.92	.94	.09	.09	.76	.87	.06	.15

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05
OLS regression coefficients.

Figure 4B. Absolute versus Relative Allocations: Influence of Electoral Votes and State Competitiveness on Field Activity



- - - 95% c.i.

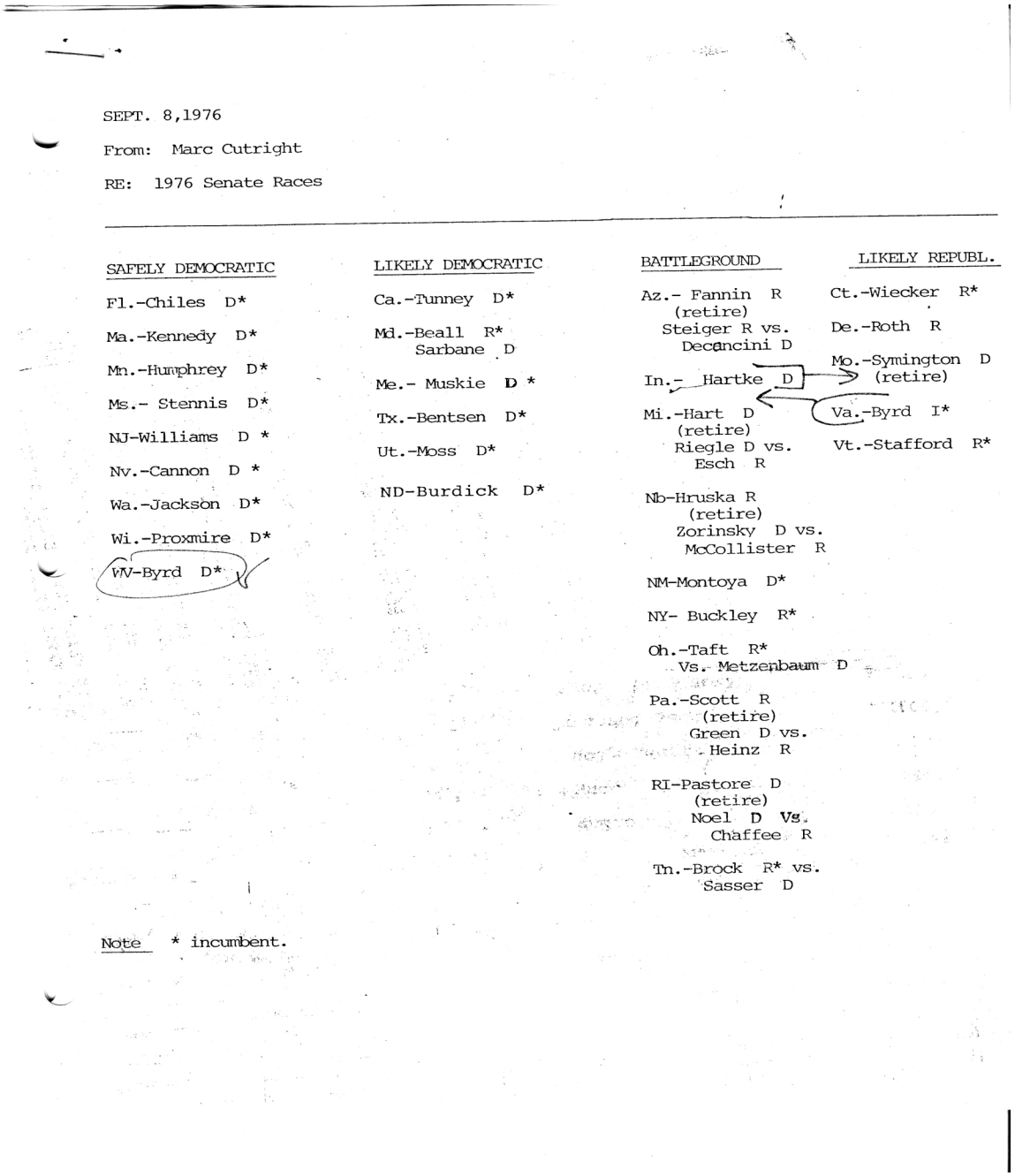
Appendix E

NES Variable Descriptions

Age	0-1
Education	0-6
Income	0-11
Strength of Partisanship	0=Nonpartisan .25= Weak independent .75=Lean Republican/Democrat 1=Strong Republican/Democrat
Political Interest	Follow public affairs: 0=hardly at all .25= only now and then .75= some of the time 1=most of the time
Newspaper	Read newspapers about the election: 0= once in a great while .25=time to time .75=often 1=regularly
Interview Date	0-T (T= election day)

Appendix F

Figure 5A. Excerpt from Carter 1976 campaign memo. 1976 Campaign Files, Situation Room Administrative Assistant, Bill Simon, Box 266, Carter Library



SEPT. 8,1976

From: Marc Cutright

RE: 1976 Senate Races

SAFELY DEMOCRATIC

Fl.-Chiles D*

Ma.-Kennedy D*

Mn.-Humphrey D*

Ms.- Stennis D*

NJ-Williams D *

Nv.-Cannon D *

Wa.-Jackson D*

Wi.-Proxmire D*

WV-Byrd D*

LIKELY DEMOCRATIC

Ca.-Tunney D*

Md.-Beall R*
Sarbane D

Me.- Muskie D *

Tx.-Bentsen D*

Ut.-Moss D*

ND-Burdick D*

BATTLEGROUND

Az.- Fannin R
(retire)
Steiger R vs.
Decancini D

In.- Hartke D

Mi.-Hart D
(retire)
Riegle D vs.
Esch R

Nb-Hruska R
(retire)
Zorinsky D vs.
McCollister R

NM-Montoya D*

NY- Buckley R*

Oh.-Taft R*
Vs. Metzenbaum D

Pa.-Scott R
(retire)
Green D vs.
Heinz R

RI-Pastore D
(retire)
Noel D Vs.
Chaffee R

Tn.-Brock R* vs.
Sasser D

LIKELY REPUBL.

Ct.-Wiecker R*

De.-Roth R

Mo.-Symington D
(retire)

Va.-Byrd I*

Vt.-Stafford R*

Note * incumbent.

Figure 5A (cont'd) Excerpt from Carter 1976 campaign memo. 1976 Campaign Files, Situation Room Administrative Assistant, Bill Simon, Box 266, Carter Library

1976 Senate Races

1. Safely Democratic (see p.1)

2.** Likely Democratic: The following races can be classified as such; but for the reasons noted, cannot be clearly taken for granted.

Ca.-Tunney (D)- The two candidates have been running closely in various polls. However, Tunney's progress has been slow but continuous in those polls. He now has a lead which should increase.

Md.-Beall (R)- Sarbane's lead in the polls is strong. Most likely defeat this yea of a Republican incumbent.

Me.-Muskie (D)- Nearly in the 1st category, but has some money problems. His "national stature" is not as fully appreciated by the increasingly volatile Maine electorate as it might be in some states.

Tx.-Bentsen (D)- A wide lead in early polls for Bentsen should shrink as his attractive, aggressive opponent, Congressman Steelman, becomes better known.

Ut.-Moss (D)- The general turmoil of the Utah Democratic party and Moss' "liberal" image have caused some concern. However, his early stand against Howe and his work in the area of Medicaid abuse have helped.

3. Battle ground: The following 10 races are the current battleground for Senate contests this year. Although some races in the "likely" categories could change status or provide surprises, primary focus is now on these races, and thei outcome will be the basis for changes in the next Senate session.

Az.-Fannin (R) (retire)- 39yr. old Dennis DeConcini, the Democrat, faces ~~conservative Representative~~ Sam Steiger, who has come off a very bloody, divisive primary. Toss-up.

In.-Hartke (D)- Hartke has come from behind before and may do it this time.

Mi.-HART (D) (retire)- Democrat Riegle currently leads. But given Cong. Esch's own appeal and Ford's campaign, it could be close.

Nb.-Hruska (R) (retire)- Mayor Zorinsky of Omaha gives the Democrats their best chance at a Senate seat in many years. His high popularity and strong base in Omaha is undermined by the fact that Cong. McCollister, his opponent, represents the same city in Congress.

NM-Montoya (D)- Harrison Schmidt, former astronaut, is conducting a "Mr. Smith goes to Washington", outsider campaign. Montoya's margin's have never been large.

** ND-Burdick (D)- Should be O.K. However, his opponent recently spent $80,000 for media production alone. Need to watch.