

COMPETING ISSUE FRAMES AND ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY:
CONDITIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC OPINION

by

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ABSTRACT

Competing elite cues help citizens crystallize their policy opinions. Political leaders prime and frame issues in opposing terms, allowing them to be emphasized and discussed in electoral competition. With equal message flows, citizens contrast policy issues and attach personal relevance to the side of the issues as campaigns connect policy alternatives to citizens' underlying political principles. Through these means, citizens in a low information environment become better informed. Since data are structured in levels of groups and coefficients can vary depending on groups, multilevel models are used. The findings show that when they are exposed to competing issue frames, citizens tend to increase constraint between their general political principles and perception of meaningful differences between candidates. This effect is remarkable for the less grounded people.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A representative democracy is premised on citizen competence. A common assumption of citizen competence is that citizens actually have an opinion on most public policy issues. Citizens' participation in decision making leads to better results than does lack of participation. Jeremy Bentham (1996 [1789]) said that if leaders were to govern properly, then citizens' views had to be taken into account. However, most Americans do not possess a lot of factual information and knowledge about politics and therefore are not closely attentive to government policy (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). As mentioned above, an informed electorate is a prerequisite for a representative democracy. If citizens do not know what is going on in politics, they cannot rationally exercise control over public policy. Citizens' lack of knowledge and information prevents government from reflecting a public's preference in any meaningful way. This imperils the ideal of democracy as a means of serving the interests of a majority of citizens, and potentially allows elites to manipulate public preferences. This casts a question for citizen competence.

Schumpeter (1975 [1942]) theorized voter ignorance. Individuals have no incentive to be informed about public decisions in politics, but are motivated to be informed about private decisions in the marketplace. Whereas individuals spend much time in their private interests over daily life, they invest too little in organizing their ideas about politics. Downs (1957) explained why citizens are rationally ignorant about politics. Citizens will remain uninformed because acquiring information is costly for them and the impact of their vote on the outcome of

an election is negligible. Hence, because gaining more knowledge offers few benefits and substantial costs, most citizens remain rationally ignorant. Consequently, information cost causes citizens to be imperfectly informed about candidates and public policies.

However, the mass publics' imperfectly informed perspective may change with respect to how we are aware of the nature of framed information. I view individuals as passive receptors of information rather than as active. What is important about the operation of a representative democracy is how to account for why most citizens are poorly informed on public policies, and how they become better informed. The former question is answered well by Downs. The answer for the latter question requires a new understanding of a representative democracy. This research makes an effort to answer the latter question.

This dissertation seeks to increase our knowledge of the promotion of democratic competence. To this end, I examine the conditions that enable citizens to participate in political decision-making and address factors crystallizing citizens' policy opinions by means of framing and priming, in which issues are emphasized and discussed by political leaders. I then identify the basic structure of public choice and shift our focus from the receptor's perspective to the provider's perspective in order to understand the nature of democratic politics. Because attitudes guide behaviors, I also pay attention to the way that the internal attributes of choosers determine their responses to the external organization of choices. An active participation in political decision-making would be realized through simplified information provided by political institutions, allowing citizens to attach personal relevance to policy issues.

Through these efforts, I suggest a theory of democratic competence that explains how citizens can actually have an opinion on political issues and control over public policy in a limited information environment. This unique theoretical work that shows the way of increasing

political knowledge through political competition based on attitude-behavior consistency. This approach sheds light on the function of a representative democracy in which leaders are to govern properly and citizens' views have to be taken into account.

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter Two develops my theory of citizen competence integrating externalist and internalist approaches of public choice. I argue that this unified approach contributes to enlightening of policy preference in a limited information environment. Chapter Three details how political choice sets are arranged in terms of opposing perspectives using issue framing and priming theories. Chapter Four suggests a psychological explanation for public choice. By being congruent with their underlying political principles, individuals choose policy alternatives. Personal importance to policy issues makes attitude-behavior relation consistent. When issues are relevant to beliefs, individuals attach personal importance to the issues. This stimulates individuals to be accessible in their memories, and, in turn, directs behavior.

Chapter Five lays out the research design. First, hypotheses are addressed based on the theory. Since group categories are structured in more than two-levels and coefficients vary by groups, multilevel regression models are used. Then, I explain why the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) data are appropriate in this research. Finally, I describe the dependent variable and the independent variables, and measurements of these variables. Chapter Six presents empirical results along with visual data analysis. A key finding is that less grounded citizens who are distant from a strong preconceived belief have a tendency to perceive a meaningful difference between candidates, once they are exposed to well-organized political information.

The final chapter focuses on summary and implications of the dissertation research. I stress that citizens in a low information environment have meaningful policy opinions, through the help of competing elite cues. Then, I identify challenges in the framing study in terms of both framing effects mediated by an information processing and a new dimension of organizing of frames.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORY OF PUBLIC CHOICE: A UNIFIED APPROACH FOR DEMOCRATIC COMPETENCE

The question of how citizens become better informed is concerned with solving “Simon’s puzzle” (Jackman and Sniderman 2002; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007): How do citizens make coherent choices,¹ knowing little about politics? In politics, citizens are de facto presented with an “organized set, or menu, of choices” (this term was coined by Sniderman and his colleagues; Jackman and Sniderman 2002; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). In other words, the substance of democratic politics is that political institutions, including political leaders and party, structure political choice sets. Citizens do not arrange a list of choice sets. They must select from an “organized menu of choices” (Jackman and Sniderman 2002; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). These available choices are framed by candidates, elites, and political parties. Running for political office, candidates and political parties must compete, and a central aspect of this competition is to define the terms of political choice. In this respect, a frame provides a comprehensible basis suggesting how citizens should think about a political issue. Candidates and political parties solicit popular support through the positions they adopt and how they frame issues. Therefore, citizens can overcome information shortfalls about politics, since the political choices provided by political institutions are systematically simplified for them.

¹ By coherent choices I mean a political choice is consistent with individuals’ underlying political principles.

The arena of electoral competition is a good example of how policy alternatives are organized and presented to citizens. Under electoral competition, candidates contest to set their policy agenda. To this end, candidates use campaigns to stress certain issues and enlighten voters on what is salient to them. By giving voters credible information on a given issue, candidates clarify reasons for supporting them. Analytically, voters' choice of candidates is motivated by the way that candidates "prime" voters to consider their underlying political principles. By making considerations important to voters, candidates persuade voters to engage in selective exposure and selective perception toward messages that voters hear from candidates throughout campaigns. This cognitive task can distinguish the two candidates and help voters make their decisions. Thus, priming is "electoral manifestation of the elite struggle for control of the agenda" (Johnston, Blais, Brady, and Crête 1992, 212). Consequently, candidates define choices by way of what they say during campaigns, and voters respond to the choices that candidates frame during campaigns.

Electoral campaigns are characterized by the battle of frames. Claims by one candidate (party) are contradicted by another. The nature of campaigns prevents any one side from exclusively manipulating voters. To provide a better comprehensible basis for thinking about issues, candidates must proceed with a competition of frames. If an issue frame is the dominant way of thinking about a given issue over the course of campaigns, the battle for election is won (Nelson and Kinder 1996). Previous framing literature, however, has overlooked the fact that "frames are themselves contestable" (Sniderman and Theriault 2004, 141; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007; see also Chong and Druckman 2007). It assumes that citizens are exposed to only one frame, in which only one way to think about an issue is presented, so that citizens are allowed to hear only one side of the argument. In other words, scholars argue that many

ordinary citizens can easily be swayed to one side or the other of an issue, depending on how the issue is framed. Therefore, public preferences can be arbitrarily manipulated by a one-sided issue frame (see Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). To study the nature of political choice, I argue that we need to consider how citizens react when they are exposed to opposing ways of thinking about an issue, that is, “dual issue frames”.² Indeed, under electoral competition, candidates and parties commit themselves to one or the other of conflicting values. With equal (conflicting) message flows, candidates call voters’ attention toward a given issue, and attempt to contrast the alternatives. The opposing arguments of a given issue let citizens hold contextual information. As a result, as far as the alternatives are contestable, voters’ choice cannot be restricted to one. Instead, when voters are confronted with competing efforts to frame an issue, they can very well choose the side of the issue that fits with their underlying general orientations.

However, an account of political choice is more complicated in real politics. Clarifying public choice, indeed, requires the connection between the properties of organized choice sets and the attributes of choosers (i.e., voters) (see also Jackman and Sniderman 2002; Zaller 1992). Voting behavior literature has traditionally converged on the latter. A focus on the internal attributes of choosers places emphasis on a characteristic of citizens’ deepest attitudes, which investigates the ability of citizens to process political information on the basis of a psychological explanation of human behavior. This approach is labeled with an internalist perspective, in that political choices are rooted in attitudinal predispositions (Jackman and Sniderman 2002). On the contrary, the properties of organized choice sets are termed as an externalist perspective, because

² The concept of dual issue frame (i.e., competing issue frames) was considered for the first time in the study of issue framing by Sniderman and Theriault (2004), Sniderman and Levendusky (2007), and Chong and Druckman (2007). My definition of dual issue frames is as follows: public statements from two or more sources that express opposing ways that invoke different values to think about a given issue or policy.

political choices are based on the political environment, such as political parties and elites, rather than internal characteristics of citizens (Jackman and Sniderman 2002).

A theory of democratic competence, ultimately, is to offer a unitary explanation of political choice by combining the properties of an organized menu of choices and internal characteristics of choosers. Public opinion is constructed by the way that predispositions pertaining to the internal traits determine individuals' responses to a well-organized set of choices provided by a political environment. In a limited information environment, a well-guided indication made by political institutions such as political parties and elites helps citizens interpret issues by attaching perceived importance to the issues, and ultimately allowing them to participate in the choice process. When political parties and candidates raise attention about an issue, many citizens are concerned about the issue, and then their attitudes become relevant to the issue. Such attitude importance results from the salience of the issue which parties and candidates frame in opposing terms and wage a battle of primes. Conflicting alternatives help citizens weigh different aspects of the issue. More specifically, contemplation of different aspects of the issue strengthens as attitude importance leads citizens to recognize links between their policy opinions and their self-interests, social identifications, and general political principles. When citizens get to know that their material interests, reference groups, and ideologies are relevant to issues, they perceive the issues to be personally important (Holbrook, Berent, Krosnick, and Visser 2005). As a consequence, personal importance motivates citizens to form attitudes that become guiding behaviors. Personal importance increases when parties and elites debate issues in opposing terms, because competing issue frames clarify the salience of the issue by organizing how citizens should think about policy opinions in a contrasting way. This personal importance helps citizens recognize the significance and concern of the given

issue. Attitude importance is a critical concept for explaining attitude-behavior consistency. Social psychologists argue that attitudes guide behaviors in a certain way. Attitude importance mediates the attitude-behavior consistency (Holbrook et al. 2005; Krosnick 1988, 1990; Krosnick, Holbrook, and Visser 2000). A detailed explanation of the role of attitude importance on the attitude-behavior consistency is that when issues are relevant to citizens, their policy preference is “more accessible in their memories and are therefore more likely to come to mind to direct thinking and action” (Krosnick et al. 2000, 242). What is more, the reason why attitude importance initiates attitude accessibility is that personal importance toward an issue is correlated with activation, saliency, and connection to the issue in memory (Krosnick 1989, 298; see also Higgins and King 1981). These three elements play a pivotal role in more accessible attitudes that lead to attitudinally consistent behaviors.

My theory of public choice builds on attitude importance that helps citizens recognize the salience of the issue under dual issue frames. To explain this theory, I first identified the terms of political competition in a representative democracy. The centerpiece of political competition accounts for the reason why political institutions define the alternatives of policy issues so that citizens can participate in the decision-making process. More specifically, political institutions, including candidates and political parties structure public choices. Elites define the terms of political choices. Determining how an issue comes to be defined can be understood as issue framing. The way of organizing how citizens should think about an issue, particularly, can be explained by electoral campaigns. Candidates make a menu of issues through the process of forming the saliency of issues. This process is addressed by priming that can make certain issues salient to citizens. However, it is worth mentioning that frames which provide a comprehensible basis of thinking about a given issue are themselves contestable. When citizens are exposed to

opposing views of a given issue, their preferences cannot be arbitrarily manipulated by a one-sided issue frame. Instead, competing issue frames can help citizens clarify their thinking and choose the policy alternative closest to their underlying political principles. Citizens understand the relevance of the issue under competing issue frames, since dual issue frames formulate the salience of the issue by organizing alternatives in opposing terms. Personal importance attached to the issue results in more accessible attitudes. Attitude accessibility guides citizens by choosing alternatives defined by political institutions closest to their policy preferences. In conclusion, the dissertation argues that under competing issue frames, citizens tend to increase constraint between their general political principles and perceptions of meaningful differences between candidates.

In what follows, I elaborate upon the nature of the external context for public choice. Then, I provide a psychological explanation of the attitude-behavior consistency mediated by attitude importance, and, finally, complete a theory of democratic competence that integrates the externalist perspective with the internalist perspective.

CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL INFORMATION CONTEXT: THE EXTERNALIST PERSPECTIVE

This chapter explains why political information matters for understanding public opinion. Being fully (politically) informed means the successful operation of a representative democracy, since citizens can know about the important issues, they can have preferences about the direction of public policy, they can know the positions taken by candidates on these public policies, and they can correctly vote for a candidate who supports their policy stands. Therefore, (political) information plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and democratic competence. Not surprisingly, the early studies have stressed citizens' competence for the ideal of a representative democracy. Yet the most widely accepted argument is that ordinary citizens are unable to pay attention to politics and are not well informed about it, which leads them to criticize the viability of democracy (Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). By assuming that democratic society functions best with fully informed citizens, early scholarship on public opinion produced pessimistic conclusions about the operation of a representative democracy. Accordingly, we can presuppose that if citizens are fully informed, they will perform democratic competence. Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, and Rich (2001) demonstrate that an infusion of information can help citizens make consistent decisions. A challenging question is how citizens who know the acquisition of information is not a costless endeavor become well-informed. This shifts our focus from the receptor's perspective to the provider's perspective. Political institutions (political parties and elites) as the organizers of political choices provide relevant knowledge available to citizens. It is necessary to make clear an informative function of choice sets. Choice

sets provided by political institutions create an opportunity for citizens to learn their preferences about public policy, because choice sets operate as information giving citizens knowledge concerning a given political issue to make citizens more certain about their opinions. Choice sets defined by the electoral preferences of candidates and political parties would be chosen by citizens if the choice sets are congruent with citizens' preferences (beliefs). In this light, political institutions arrange political information as a tally of "consistent" choices.

In an attempt to establish an explanatory mechanism of how political institutions allow citizens to make their choice coherently, notwithstanding the low level of political information, I focus on some aspect of public choice that reconciles internal processes of choices with the external organization of choices. The internalist perspective of choices is concerned with a psychological account of human behavior, and the externalist perspective of choices is related to an explanation of the role of political institutions on public choice.

A pioneer work of classifying modes of public choice as the internal and external approaches was initiated from Jackman and Sniderman (2002). Jackman and Sniderman attempted to integrate the two approaches to explain public choice. The centerpiece of the internalist approach is symbolic politics.³ Symbolic politics epitomizes two-fold aspects: 1) political choices are embedded with political predispositions and 2) political choices are consistent through symbolic associations based on individuals' inner characteristics. Symbolic associations lead citizens to positively or negatively respond to attitudinal objects. On the other hand, the externalist approach is formulated by rational choice (Jackman and Sniderman 2002, 210-1). Taking a hint from Satz and Ferejohn (1994), Jackman and Sniderman developed an analytical understanding of rational choice. Rational choice theories show explanatory success

³ Jackman and Sniderman adopted the features of the symbolic politics approach used by Sears (1993). See Sears (1993, 121-2) for more detail.

when they are applicable to political parties instead of individual voters (Satz and Ferejohn 1994).⁴ As a whole, the paradigmatic understanding of political choice suggests that interests are structured by the political environment surrounding individuals. And structured interests shape individuals' choices. Thus, as Satz and Ferejohn (1994, 72) wrote, "the theory of rational choice is most powerful in contexts where choice is limited."

Jackman and Sniderman use the two distinctive approaches to develop the concept of "a choice space" that is a conglomerate area where symbolic politics applied to the internalist perspective meets rational choice of political institutions involved in the externalist perspective. However, their endeavors theorizing public choice concentrated on much less the former than the latter. I will seek a further theoretical formulation of the former in the next chapter.

1. An Organized Menu of Choices

Early scholarship on public opinion knew how citizens become better informed, knowing the importance of organized political information. V. O. Key (1966) stated that competitive parties and candidates structure mass publics' decision-making, informing mass publics with well-prepared alternatives. Foremost, Schattschneider (1960, 138) argued that "democracy is a competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision-making process." The lesson from the two great political scientists allows us to rethink the nature of politics: citizens' information levels and decision-making depend on the political context in which the available choices are framed by political institutions, including elites, parties and the media, and

⁴ Although rational choice theories assume strict maximization of an individual's interests, a violation of this assumption faces negligible consequences. Additionally, individual voters-based rational choice models have no competing mechanism to constrain individual voters' preferences (Satz and Ferejohn 1994, 80).

the information presented to citizens from the political context determines their policy positions toward issues and candidates.

Sniderman and his colleagues' works (2000, 2002, 2004, 2007) on the structure of political information were a milestone in the research of public choice. They attempted to address significant topics pertaining to that research: (1) how we understand the structure of political choices, (2) how political choices are organized and (3) how many alternatives citizens choose among. Simon (1985) gives us an idea of the structure of political choice. The investigation of how political choice is structured can be translated with a question of where the frame of reference of citizens' reasoning comes from. Simon stated:

An important component of the frame of reference is the set of alternatives that are given consideration in the choice process. We need to understand not only how people reason about alternatives, but where the alternatives come from in the first place (302).

Simon's suggestion lets Sniderman and his colleagues focus on political institutions. As mentioned above, in representative democracy political institutions as the providers of political information help less informed citizens know which issues are important and clarify their preferences about the direction of policies. In this way, political institutions structure the alternatives open to citizens for consideration, and the coordination of alternatives through political institutions imposes choices across issues (Jackman and Sniderman 2002; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). The next question from logical reasoning on political choice is how political institutions organize alternatives. Basically, individuals are motivated to seek consistency in their beliefs (Festinger 1957).⁵ Like other areas of their lives, individuals are motivated to be consistent in their beliefs about politics. With regard to political choice, citizens would select policy alternatives congruent with their political beliefs. Thus, political institutions as organizers of

⁵ I will discuss attitude consistency theory in more detail in the next section.

political choice would arrange choices on the ground of the “consistency-generating mechanism” (Sniderman and Bullock, 2004).

A long line of research has attempted to reveal consistency-generators in attitude-behavior relation. A detailed explanation of consistency-generators will be addressed in the next section. One of the powerful consistency-generators is a policy agenda. (Carmines and Layman, 1997; Layman and Carsey 2002; see also Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). According to Carmines and Layman (1997), and Layman and Carsey (2002), citizens’ attitudes are consistent within policy agendas. For instance, citizens can take consistent policy positions on issues of the social welfare agenda such as a safety net and health care. Also, their choices on issues of the social values agenda like abortion and homosexuality tend to be jointly combined. Connections between different policy agendas, however, are more difficult for citizens to recognize. This research demonstrates that citizens take consistent positions for issues on the same agenda, but the positions they take for issues on one agenda have little to do with the positions they take on another. Analytically, policy agendas consist of not merely organized sets of issues, but a dimensional structure of policy preferences. For example, issues such as government support for jobs and standard of living and issues like foreign aid and defense spending are distinctively organized units on each attitudinal dimension, in which each policy agenda represents a distinct component of policy preferences. In this light, Carmines and Layman, and Layman and Carsey reason that citizens’ general view of policy preferences tends to be consistent within each policy agenda. A problem, however, is that citizens’ attitudes tend to be unrelated across policy agendas (Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007). Accordingly, our investigation seeks to find out what promotes constraint across policy agendas. What is the relevant reasoning generating consistency across agendas? A possible

answer to the question can be found from an idea of “issue-bundling attached to party (and ideology) brand name” (Tomz and Sniderman 2005, pp). Political parties and candidates arrange policies into coherent bundles and attach party brand names, giving citizens the information they need to put together a consistent set of positions across an array of issues (Tomz and Sniderman 2005). More specifically, the consistency is shaped through political parties and candidates for control of government. Under electoral competition parties and candidates compete against each other agenda by agenda with party brand names (Sniderman and Bullock 2004). In order to attract the support of their partisans in the electorate, parties and candidates canvass citizens to identify with them to make choices across contested issues on the basis of a coherently liberal or conservative view. Carmines and Stimson (1989) show how candidates as agents of parties bundle issues together, and coordinate choice sets presented to citizens in a campaign context:

By becoming associated with positions on salient political issues, candidates define the contents of issues. And because in the norm there are only two major candidates, voters in this period of unusual political involvement face considerable persuasive pressure to contain their own positions, but only on salient issues, to the same unidimensional and bipolar space occupied by the candidates (136).

Agenda-setting is structured along the salience of the left-right dimension, and ideological coherence determines how candidates of political parties deal with issues. And the reason why policy agendas include some issues but not others is that choices open for consideration by citizens are organized by the binary, mutually exclusive way. This bipolarity constraint of choices is expected to be a more consistent choice-generator in competitive courses of action. Sniderman and Bullock (2004b) elucidate:

[R]ejecting one [alternative] means accepting the other. They [parties and candidates] stamp a partisan and ideological brand on the arguments offered in their favor, signaling that accepting one means rejecting the other. Political candidates... can do much to determine how issues are organized into policy agendas or even how policy agendas are organized into overarching ideological orientations. But at the end of the day, it is

through parties [or candidates] that the menu of choices in offer to citizens is organized (346).

In a nutshell, the choice sets are simplified, and coordinated through electoral competition between political parties and candidates. This organized set of choices helps citizens to compensate for shortfalls in information and make consistent political decisions.

2. Priming and Campaign Context

This section bridges the void between organized alternatives and predispositions as elements of the psychological explanation of public choice. This work requires an analytical explanation of why candidates define specific issue alternatives and how the framed issue alternatives are appropriate to citizens' general political orientations. To illustrate, in the 1988 Canadian national election, the Conservative leader Brian Mulroney took a stand to support the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), while his major opponent, the Liberal John Turner, decided to pose the opposite position. The heated debate between the two major candidates pushed the issue of the FTA to the forefront, whereas another issue, such as a constitutional debate on Quebec sovereignty, moved away. As Election Day approaches, "the FTA became the voters' most important issue. Voters grew more polarized on this issue, and their positions on this issue became more important predictors of their vote preference" (Brady, Johnston, and Sides 2006, 6). This section answers the question of why presidential candidates stress a certain issue over others to formalize a citizen's vote preference.

Political actors are goal-seeking individuals. For presidential candidates, their primary goal is winning elections. Voters are also goal oriented. In a two-candidate race they are assumed to vote for their more preferred candidate (Downs 1957). Based on these assumptions, previous literature has sought theories of how politicians choose issues strategically from a menu

to conjure underlying orientations which activate and change voters' preferences. First of all, the spatial model as introduced by Downs (1957) explains that an issue is depicted as a unidimensional space, with both candidates and voters having positions along the dimension. Voters are assumed to prefer candidates with positions closer to their own on the issue. The conclusion of the model emphasizes that this situation motivates candidates to converge toward the median voter. But a critic of the spatial model questions why parties have not always done so. In the 1988 Canadian national election, why did parties take their different positions on the FTA rather than obscure their difference (Johnston et al. 1992)?

This criticism calls for a revision of the spatial model. The revision of the spatial model begins with Riker (1983, 1984). Riker proposes that politicians emphasize a particular issue to gain a strategic advantage over their opponents by changing a dimension on the issue space. He calls this heresthetic: "The point of a heresthetic act is to structure the situation so that the actor wins, regardless of whether or not the other participants are persuaded" (1983, 60). This heresthetic strategy leads candidates to seek a dimension that improves their chance of winning, if a new dimension made salient relative to other ones. Riker (1984) contrasts rhetoric and heresthetic by arguing that "rhetoric involves converting others by persuasive argument, whereas heresthetic involves structuring the situation so that others accept it willingly" (8). Therefore, the heresthetic change does not mean that voters convert on issues. Instead, a candidate stresses economic concerns while the other focuses on social issues. Which candidate wins will rest on who is better able to make their campaign strategies more salient. Consequently, as voters come to weight certain considerations more heavily, the chance of their choosing a candidate who benefits from these considerations will increase.

Another revision of the spatial model is introduced from Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989). Rabinowitz and Macdonald develop the directional model. A key feature of the directional model is that voters do not support a candidate closest to them. Instead, they back the candidate who is on the same side on policy preference areas. Rather than focusing on the spatial distance between a candidate and a voter, this model proclaims that an individual's vote decision rests on both the directional compatibility and intensity of voters and candidates' positions (1989, 96). More specifically, with this direction and intensity voters choose a candidate based on whether the candidate is perceived to choose policies in their preferred direction. Then, voters choose the candidate whose position is more intense in that direction. For this reason, Rabinowitz and Macdonald criticize the median voter theorem. Most candidates, indeed, do not campaign at the median of the electorate.

Taken together, the heresthetic strategy and the direction of preference explain well why candidates move away from the median voter. However, what fills the gap between the revised spatial models and the spatial model is why candidates focus on the dimensionality of issue conflicts as they choose issue alternatives and battle to influence what is salient to voters, and why candidates take clear differences between themselves and their opponents to mobilize their own partisans who enlighten their preferences over campaigns. According to Johnston et al. (1992, 251), "what must be added to the spatial model is a force that drives parties away from the center. That force is the need for priming." Candidates prime issues to provide citizens with reasons for supporting them. This causes candidates to avoid converging to the median on all issues. Thus, candidates take clear stands and try to clarify the salience of issues. Through this process, candidates prime citizens to consider the deep seated values which motivate citizens' choices (Johnston et al. 1992, 4). Issue ownership theory (Petrcik 1996) helps us understand

the nature of priming, providing the explanation of how agendas shape preference. Candidates use campaigns to convince citizens that their issues are more important than the opposition's issues. For that reason, candidates do not compete for the median voter. Instead, they fight to set the agenda, knowing that Democratic and Republican candidates have different credibility on different issues. In this sense, the centerpiece of priming is the content of the campaign to influence voting behavior. In other words, "priming is the electoral manifestation of the elite struggle for control of the agenda" (Johnston et al. 1992, 212).

Priming in electoral competition provides a theoretical understanding of campaign effects. The understanding of campaign effects in the literature can be classified in three stages. The first stage is termed as "the minimal effect." Early public opinion and voting studies emphasized the ignorance and indifference of the mass public toward politics. Due to the existing information and prejudices voters possess, campaigns rarely change their minds (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). Therefore, instead of focusing on campaigns, political scientists explored the influence of partisanship, economic conditions, presidential approval, and other factors on voting. This argument leads some scholars to advance election forecasting models. The election forecasting model explains that election outcomes can be predicted by a few fundamental variables such as economic conditions, presidential approval, and other political contextual variables measured before the outset of the campaign (Bartels and Zaller 2001; Campbell and Gerand 2000; Fair 1978; Hibbs 2000; Lewis-Beck 1992; Rosenstone 1993).

The next stage is labeled as "the reinforcement (or activation) effect." The basic argument of the reinforcement effect is that elections are predictable, but due to campaigns. The election forecasting model does not posit that election outcomes unaffected by campaigns (Shaw

2006, 22). In other words, the forecasting model works due to campaigns. As campaigns progress, information increases. Increased campaign information stimulates voters to recognize fundamental variables. When those variables are connected with the matter in decision-making, campaign information contributes to enlightening or reinforcing vote preferences (Campbell 2000; Finkel 1993; Gelman and King 1993). To summarize, campaigns reinforce and activate latent political predispositions, and help the election forecasting model to work.

The last stage is defined as “the priming effect.” The priming effect suggests that campaigns can make a difference at the margins. Candidates prime issues to influence what is salient to voters. Through this effort, candidates attempt to align voters’ policy preferences and their policy preference. Ultimately, campaigns convert voters’ policy preferences, helping voters attach their personal relevance to proposed policy alternatives. Accordingly, the role of campaigns provides voters with information that helps voters get to know the importance of issues and better understand an election context. A set of studies, particularly, pay attention to campaign events (debate and national convention) and campaign activities (campaign appearance and television advertising), since they play an important role in changing policy preferences. Brady, Johnston, and Sides (2006) summarize well the effect of campaign events: Debates about midway through the campaign helped make the FTA the most salient issue; it polarized partisans on the FTA; it enhanced perceptions of the voter’s (John Turner of the Liberty Party) competence; it shifted public opinion more toward the Liberal Party’s position on the FTA; and it even boosted the Liberal Party’s overall vote share. Additionally, Holbrook (1994, 1996) argues that presidential elections are well-anticipated equilibrium configurations predicated by the fundamental variables, but public minds are forced to stray from the predictable course due to campaign events (debates and conventions). Several studies of campaign events demonstrate

that conventions and debates influence voters' preferences (Campbell, Cherry, and Wink 1992; Geer 1988; Lanoue 1991; Shelly and Hwang 1991; Wlezien and Erikson 2001, 2002; see also Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson 2004; Shaw 1999, 2006). As a result, an important difference between the priming effect and the first two effects is that in the priming effect, it is possible for candidates to convert voters' policy preferences using campaigns which shape the information context within which framed issue alternatives make candidates stand their different positions on issue space. As a result, choice sets are presented distinctively to voters and help clarify their public choices.

3. Dual Issue Frames

Thus far, I have shown how political choices are organized, and how the defined choices become salient and clarify public preferences under electoral competition. Another issue to consider with respect to public choice is the nature of issue frames. Political information provided by various political institutions might be complicated, and often contradictory, toward a given issue. As a matter of fact, political communication creates many opposing views in the heads of citizens (Zaller 1992; also see Nelson and Kinder 1996; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). Citizens have many considerations about a given policy; in addition, their intertwined considerations might be contradictory. As a consequence, citizens are uncertain of their policy positions (Nelson and Kinder 1996, 1058; also see Chong 1993; Hochschild 1981). This situation causes citizens to hold both positive and negative views simultaneously toward the given policy. How can we explain this puzzle? Sniderman and Theriault suggest that we better heed on an externalist explanation rather than an internalist one (i.e., a psychological explanation), focusing on the nature of political communication (2004a, 139). Zaller (1992, 59) made clear this political

reasoning: “[I]n an environment that carries roughly evenly balanced communications on both sides of issues, people are likely to internalize many contradictory arguments, which is to say, they are likely to form considerations that induce them both to favor and to oppose the same issues.” The complicated and ambivalent aspects of policy issues, however, can be easily cleared by a well-guided indication made by elites. The well-guided indication can be translated into a “frame.” “Frames have to resolve this confusion by declaring which of the many considerations is relevant and important, and which should be given less attention” (Nelson and Kinder 1996, 1058).⁶ In other words, frames help citizens interpret issues by attaching perceived importance to the issues. Perceived importance enables issues to have apparent relevance to citizens, making citizens’ considerations more related to the issues and their attitudes (see also Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2001; Druckman and Nelson 2003; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997). For that reason, frames are the most important means for elites’ political goal (Jacoby 2000), in the sense that they can give elites an opportunity to obtain public support with the presentation of political information which may be conducive to citizens’ political judgments. Thus elites’ efforts to enlighten the policy preference of citizens are an “inevitable fact of everyday political life” (Jacoby, 764).

What is crucial in the study of issue framing is the fact that frames are themselves contested (Sniderman and Theriault 2004a; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007; Chong and Druckman 2007). In real politics elites must strive to set a policy agenda. To obtain popular support for their policy position, elites must compete to shape public understanding of a policy in a well-reasoned way. In the course of describing a policy position elites strategically present a

⁶ Gamson and Modigliani’s (1987, 143) definition of frame provides a general understanding of how a frame defines an issue in a certain way: A frame is “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue.”

differently defined point of the matter. Making a certain aspect of considerations about an issue more important than other aspects of that issue puts a greater weight on citizens' attitudes if an alternative is relevant to citizens' belief system; as a result, it helps citizens choose how to view the matter. Therefore, defining how to think about a given issue differently is readily manipulated by goal-seeking politicians. In this view, we can witness that candidates take opposing views on a policy. A candidate's assertion comes to contend with that made by another. What is more, a single issue frame is not exclusively dominated by others when elites frame an issue. This is very meaningful in the study of a framing effect, since the possibility of elite manipulation caused by a one-sided frame disappears. The framing effect means that a reader's reaction on an issue is affected by a speaker's emphasis on a certain point of considerations toward that issue.⁷ For a single issue frame (i.e., a one-sided issue frame), citizens who are exposed to one side of considerations toward an issue can be readily manipulated by elites who define the way of thinking (Sniderman and Theriault 2004; Sniderman and Levendusky 2007; Zaller 1992). Yet, when citizens are allowed to hear competing issue frames, they can hesitate to favor a certain point of argument. The opposing considerations towards the issue prevent citizens from swaying to one side of arguments. As a consequence, competing issue frames broaden the applicability of the frame. In other words, contradictory ways of thinking about the same issue enable citizens to see every facet of the issue. Understanding the full picture of the matter can increase the ability to perceive the meaningful differences of the issue frames. Various and contradictory information exposures may guide citizens to a balanced attitude that encourages them to attach personal relevance to the issue. Thus policy attitudes can be cognitively closely connected to the belief system in competing

⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the framing effect, see Chong and Druckman (2007), Druckman and Nelson (2003), Jacoby (2000), and Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997).

issue frames. In the long run, competing issue frames stimulate citizens to choose “the side of the issue that fits their deeper-lying political principles. This suggests that political argument, when it takes its full form rather than the stilted one of standard framing experiments, may facilitate consistency in political reasoning” (Sniderman and Theriault 2004, 148; see also Sniderman and Levendusky 2007; Chong and Druckman 2007).

The last part of this section presents an example of studying competing issue frames. Sniderman and Theriault’s study (2004a) is a pioneering work on this topic. Their main findings stress the crystallization of policy attitudes in dual issue frames. Their task begins by how to pick out issues, because this matters in the study of framing effects. Avoiding issues where framing effects are both “too easy to demonstrate” (e.g., the Contras in Nicaragua) and “too hard to demonstrate” (e.g., affirmative action) (142), they propose three characteristics of the selection of issues in framing effects (142): they are “(1) of major importance; (2) longstanding; and (3) competitively contested.” Given these criteria, government spending is an appropriate topic for the study of dual issue frames. According to Jacoby (2000, 752), this issue is “a salient issue in modern American politics,” and it is “one of the central components of the partisan alignment that has dominated politics in the United States since the New Deal.” Besides, Sniderman and Theriault elaborate what type of issue frames are conflicting about the government spending issue (2004, 142):

A paradigmatic example is government activism on behalf of those who are badly off. This is an issue contested in all contemporary democracies, and candidates and parties competing for public office attempt to frame it to their advantage. The terrain is well explored. The opposing sides have worked through the inventory of formulations of the issue, learning through trial and error the appeals and organizing ideas that best work to their advantage. On one side there is the appeal to opportunity and compassion, the idea that what is at stake is taking advantage of the government to see that those who are badly off get opportunities to become better off. On the other side there is the appeal to the costs that social welfare policies impose and the idea that what is at stake is that those

who have worked hard and made their own way will be worse off so that those who have not should be better off.

To summarize, in the government spending issue two types of issue frames are presented to citizens along partisan lines. Democrats and liberals tend to advocate for government policy to help members of the population in need, while Republicans and conservatives are inclined to uphold spending cuts on government welfare programs. The “getting ahead” frame (the former) and “higher taxes” frame (the latter) are competitive along partisan lines (Sniderman and Theriault 2004). Sniderman and Theriault’s study demonstrates that elite manipulation is prevalent among people who are exposed to a single frame; but when the two frames are simultaneously presented to people, the framing effect disappears. Instead, policy attitudes are a function of general political principles on each side of the issue. Sniderman and Theriault’s work paves the way for research on how competing elite cues help citizens form their policy opinions.

CHAPTER 4

A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF PUBLIC CHOICE: THE INTERNALIST PERSPECTIVE

It is obvious that a political environment surrounding individuals does not specify all of the conditions of public choice. As Zaller put it (1991, 1215), “[E]very opinion is a marriage of information and values.” A political environment which provides political information stimulates internal characteristics of individuals to enable them to connect personal relevance to the attitude object. The last challenge to complete a model of public choice is how citizens’ internally judgmental characteristics determine their responses to framed choice sets. Several major questions are as follows: What consists of internal characteristics of individuals, how they are structured, and how they respond to political information.

To answer this question, I begin with the attitude-behavior relation. The reason why we first consider the attitude-behavior relation for explaining the internal attributes of choosers is straightforward: People tend to act in accord with their attitudes. Attitudes are related to past memory and past experiences which result in an evaluation of an attitude object. People with past positive memory and experiences tend to evaluate positively toward an attitude object. In doing so, attitudes might guide behavior in a certain way. Accordingly, once we know someone’s attitude, we would be able to predict his or her behavior toward an attitude object. For these reasons, the attitude-behavior relation is characterized by the attitude-behavior consistency. The perfect framework for laying out the attitude-behavior consistency is that information defined by outside environment motivates behaviors in line with the belief as a component of attitude. The origin and the role of organized information concerning the attitude-

behavior consistency were fully explained by the previous chapter. This chapter addresses the attributes of attitudes which motivate consistent behaviors. To this end, I start by discussing past theories of the attitude-behavior consistency. I then present an alternative explanation.

1. Past Theories of Attitude-Behavior Consistency

Many past works have studied the attitude-behavior consistency to explain the competence of democratic electorates. Among previous works, I pay attention to Converse's ideological belief system as attitudinal constraint, Zaller's social constructionist theory, and the Stony Brook school's on-line model. All forms of mechanisms above (except for Zaller's social constructionist theory) provided their own general attitude-behavior consistency theories, but these mechanisms failed to provide a convincing basis for a consistency theory of any substantial scope. Briefly, an alternative explanation provided by the dissertation is that a joint combination of predispositions (i.e., internal characteristics of attitudes) and information shapes the content of a whole range of political attitudes, including policy preferences. The two attributes (i.e., predispositions and information) are crucial in the study of the attitude-behavior consistency, but previous studies did not fully seem to consider the influence of the two attributes in the research.

1.1. Converse's Ideological Belief System as Attitudinal Constraint

Conducting his research in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the overarching goal of Converse (1964, 1970) was to examine how well citizens understand left-right ideology. Not only are most ordinary citizens unlikely to think about politics ideologically, the terms liberal and conservative carry little meaning for many citizens. For Converse, political ideology serves as the glue that constrains and integrates a political belief system, since this will affect performance

in a wide range of more specific tasks—voting, expressing policy preferences, etc. Converse’s criterion with respect to this task is that a citizen should have an organized ideological belief system concerning politics. In other words, an organized ideological belief system provides the foundation for understanding politics. Converse understood that the notion of attitudinal constraint demands faithful adherence to the left-right ideological dimension. Converse, however, found that little more than one of ten Americans actively used ideological modes of thought. Most Americans do not think about political parties and candidates ideologically, recognition of the terms liberal and conservative are quite rare, and constraint across a variety of issue positions is low. The nature of belief systems based on the ideological innocence of mass publics leads to attitude instability.

Converse is mostly right about low information and limited ideological reasoning, yet he is mostly wrong about politics (Clawson and Oxley 2008; Kinder 2003, 2006; Kuklinski and Quirk 2001; Popkin 2006). In effect, there is little evidence that ideology helps to provide attitude constraint or that people use their ideology to make sense of the political world. Additionally, Kuklinski and Quirk (2001, 297) claimed that citizens can know what liberals and conservatives stand for without joining either side. For example, citizens who endorse competing elements in a liberal-conservative dimension can hold reasons for taking liberal positions on some issues and conservative positions on others (Lavine 2001). The logic underlying the attitude-behavior relation seems to exist beyond the ideological belief explored in this research.

1.2. Zaller's Social Constructionist Theory

Zaller proposed a new and fundamentally different conception of the attitude-behavior relation and attitude formation theory. In his 1992 publication *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, Zaller adopts a social constructionist perspective. For any given policy domain, he argues, people hold more than one relevant consideration which is defined as “any reason that might induce an individual to decide a political issue one way or the other” (Zaller 1992, 40). An individual's preference depends on which considerations prevail on the spot, which in turn rests on the situational cues that the individual happens to receive. Two central factors in the Zaller model are the individual's predispositions (principally ideology), and the context or situation. Citizens might be grounded in organized predispositions to respond consistently to political objects. The influence of predispositions on attitudes is conditional on political awareness: the better citizens' grasp of political issues, the stronger the connection between their stands on a specific issue and their ideological orientation to politics. However, reliance on situation cues or considerations leads to attitude flip-flopping. Considerations people attend to are influenced by the way that attention is directed just before they answer. Attention that is directed just before people answer is subject to immediate circumstances, particularly the specific wording of the questions. Considerations or situation cues may make one side of an issue (as the other) most immediately salient to people's attitudes. As a result, “most people possess opposing considerations on most issues that might lead to them to decide the issue either way” (Zaller and Feldman 1992, 585). After all, the social constructionist perspective places predisposition and context at odds: the less influential the former, the more influential the latter. Given that reliance on predisposition implies attitude consistency, reliance on considerations or situational cues implies attitude flip-flopping. By giving center stage to ambivalence, the Zaller model

emphasizes context and simultaneously attenuates predispositions. This applies to all citizens, not just the less informed. In fact, according to Sniderman, Tetlock, and Elms (2001), attitudes are a product of both situation and predisposition. These two factors can influence attitudes additively or interactively.

Consequently, in contrast to Converse who saw the basic problem as a lack of organized thought, Zaller sees the problem as people having too many considerations, which pushes their attitudes in all directions. Zaller offers convincing evidence that citizens lack a genuine attitude, since considerations are at the top-of-the head.

1.3. On-Line Model

Unlike the Zaller model that the crystallization of an attitude results from “the most accessible in memory at the moment of response” (Zaller and Feldman 1992), the on-line model underscores “impression-driven processing” of a judgment when new information is acquired (Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh 1989, 401). A core concept of this model is the role of a “running tally” in a judgment process that plays a role in integrating new information into an initial impression (Lodge et al. 1989, 401: see also Hastie and Park 1986). Exposed to new information, people use the running tally update their attitude in the way that the running tally is “immediately stored in long-term memory and the considerations that contributed to the evaluation are quickly forgotten... Then, later, when called on to make a judgment... it is this summary impression... that comes to mind to guide the decision” (Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995, 311). Therefore, the “tally of previous evaluations” mediates the influence of subsequent information on attitudes (Sniderman and Bullock 2004b, 339).

Yet the on-line model is narrowly confined. The fully developed version of the model to date gives an account only of congruence narrowly defined—the accumulation of evaluations of political objects, one by one (Sniderman and Bullock 2004b, 340). Also, Kinder (2006, 203) pointed out that the on-line model is agnostic on what kind of information voters take into account. We need to know more about what kinds of information voters are picking up and integrating into their evaluations. Another problem of the on-line model is that voters' preferences would be informed, but their amnesia about the information that led them to their preferences would disqualify them from participating in political debate (Kinder 2006, 204). Besides, Zaller (1992, 50) presents the two main shortcomings of the on-line model: “The first is that it is unrealistic to expect citizens to use each piece of incoming information to update all of the “attitudes” to which it might be relevant... The second reason... is that this model, with its notion that attitudes are simply “retrieved” from memory and reported to the inquiring interviewer, is quite obviously just a restatement of the conventional “true attitude” model, a model that... is simply not capable of accommodating the available evidence on the nature of mass political attitudes.”

2. Attitude Importance and Its Sources: The Stimuli of Attitude Consistency

The Bayesian update model is useful for understanding an alternative explanation of the attitude-behavior relation. The Bayesian update model assumes that attitudes are the result of posterior beliefs that are embraced by prior perceptions or beliefs, updated with subsequent information (Alvarez 1998, 42; see also Alvarez and Brehm 2002, 32). The Bayesian update model has a powerful logic for how attitudes are updated, but it falls short of explaining the connection between “Bayesian updating” and “consistency maximizing” (Sniderman and Bullock 2004,

350). Accordingly, I attempt to develop a theoretical framework for how the updated posterior beliefs unfold the attitude consistency.

2.1. Attitude Importance

Attitude importance plays a critical role in attitude-behavior consistency, because perceiving an issue to be important allows citizens to attach personal importance to an attitude. Then, when a political issue is personally important, citizens are more cognitively involved in the issue (Bizer and Krosnick 2001; Holbrook et al. 2005; Krosnick 1988a, 1988b, 1989; Krosnick et al. 2000). Once an issue is personally important, citizens' policy preferences are more accessible in their memories (Bizer and Krosnick 2001; Krosnick 1989; Krosnick et al. 2000); as a result, citizens are more likely to come to mind to direct behavior: "More accessible attitudes are more potent determinants of cognition and action" (Krosnick 1989, 298; see also Fazio and Williams 1986, Snyder and Kendzierski 1982). Krosnick and Petty (1995) summarize that important attitudes appear to possess the four defining features of strong attitudes: persistence over time, resistance to change, impact on information processing and judgments, and guiding behavior. In this sense, attitude importance mediates the attitude-behavior relation.

Attitude importance, defined as perceiving an issue to be salient, increases if one comes to recognize that one's immediate self-interest is at stake in an issue, if one comes to recognize that one's reference group cares deeply about a particular issue, and if the links between one's political principles and a policy issue are strengthened (Holbrook et al. 2005, Krosnick 1990; Boninger, Krosnick, and Berent 1995). Self-interest, social identification, and political principles are sources of predispositions. When predispositions come to be relevant to policy issues, attitude importance towards these issues increases. Whether or not citizens' attitudes

come to be relevant for policy issues depends on both how well-grounded citizens' attitudes are and how information is presented to citizens.

2.2. Predispositions: The Foundation of Attitude Importance

The update of individuals' perceptions and preferences about a given issue depends upon how information is concerned with predispositions. Little previous research has very seriously considered that predispositions and information mediate attitude importance. In fact, the combination of predispositions and information produces various levels of conditions that increase attitude importance and strengthen the attitude-behavior relation. In the study of attitude formation and change, it is important that how well-grounded attitudes process information.

By "well grounded," I mean simply the extent to which citizens reach their political judgments on the basis of predispositions. Citizens whose predispositions are personally relevant to policy issues are more likely to seek out information and to think deeply about that information, leading them to accumulate accurate information about the issues. However, citizens vary a great deal in terms of the personal importance they attach to their attitudes on particular issues due to the heterogeneity of predispositions that link attitudes to issues. Citizens whose policy attitudes are especially important to policy issues are likely to think frequently about those attitudes, to perceive competing candidates as being relatively polarized on the issue, and to form presidential candidate preferences on the basis of those attitudes. On the contrary, citizens who have difficulty linking their attitudes to policy issues are unlikely to understand politics in the above manner. However, once those citizens are able to gain political information, they might then determine if predispositions pertain to policy issues, and the connection between

predispositions and policy issues enables them to know their own issue positions and their perception of candidates' positions. In other words, citizens' new beliefs, after receiving subsequent information, are simply the weighted combination of their predispositions and new information, where the weights are the certainty of their predispositions and the new information, respectively. Using campaign information, citizens who attach personal importance to their attitudes on a political issue are more likely to accurately perceive the positions taken on an issue by candidates (Krosnick 1990).

The last task of predispositions is concerned with the function of predispositions to opinion formation. What makes citizens care deeply about policy issues? Attitude formation theory suggests that links between an attitude object and an individual's goals, values, or social identifications are likely to be causes of attitude importance. An attitude may become important or relevant to an individual for one of three reasons: self-interests, social identifications, and political principles. Once self-interests, social identifications, and political principles play a role in judging an object in a certain way, these attributes can be understood as predispositions which are primary ingredients of public opinion. Kinder (1998) provides strong evidence that public opinion is based on (1) the material interests that citizens see at stake, (2) strong identification with social groups, and (3) commitment to the political principles that become entangled in policy issues (800). First, an attitude may become personally relevant to citizens who perceive it to be linked to their material self-interests. Citizens are first and foremost single-minded seekers of self-interest. Barry (1990) maintains that "an action or policy is in a man's interests if it increases his opportunities to get what he wants" (183). Such opportunities are best defined in terms of wealth and power, assets that are potential means to any imaginable end (Kinder and

Sanders 1996). As such, self-interest is at stake whenever politics threatens to redistribute wealth and power.

Second, an attitude may become personally important when citizens identify with social groups as well as reference groups. Identifications with social groups may lead an attitude to become important to a person if the groups' rights and privileges are perceived to be at stake (Key 1961). Furthermore, identifying with a group lets citizens sort the political world into those groups they like or dislike. Thus, a group can be a means of describing oneself or others, and a persistent feature of accounting for differences in attitudes (Alvarez and Brehm 2002). Third, and, last, an attitude may become personally important to an individual if he or she comes to view the object as relevant to his or her political principles. By principle, Kinder (1998) means "a conception of the desirable" (808). Principles "transcend particular objects and specific situations;" they are "relatively abstract and durable claims about the virtue and the good society" (808). Moreover, principles "predispose us to favor one particular political or religious ideology over another; help us to evaluate and judge, to heap praise and fix blame on ourselves and others" (Kinder 1998, 808; Rokeach 1973, 13; see Katz 1960; Lane 1973; Smith, Bruner, and White 1956; Tetlock 1986). Kinder (1998) proposes that three principles in American politics play a significant role in shaping public opinion: individualism, equality, and limited government (808-11).

Taken together, predispositions lead an attitude to become relevant to policy issues if the ingredients of predispositions are closely involved with the matters of the issues. If so, they serve as an impetus for caring deeply about a particular issue. However, there may exist a heterogeneity at the level of predispositions, due to their degree and scope. Citizens whose attitudes are well grounded are more likely to connect their attitudes to policy issues. For those

citizens, information plays a role in strengthening their attitudes toward candidates and policy issues. As a result, the more informed and well-grounded citizens are, the more likely the attachment is to be resistant to change, persistent over time, and influential in directing thinking and action. On the other hand, citizens whose attitudes are less grounded have difficulty linking their attitudes to policy issues. Since their predispositions are weakly connected to policy issues, they are unlikely to attach their personal attitudes to relevant policy issues. However, it is worth mentioning that less grounded attitudes do not mean citizens completely lack predispositions. As a matter of fact, the degree and scope of grounding of the predispositions depend on an individual's direct cognitive and behavioral experience with those ingredients of predispositions. And the role of new information is to enlighten weak predispositions as well as strengthen firm ones.

My dissertation explores how prior predispositions and information (i.e., an organized set of choices) make attitudes become relevant to policy issues and relevant attitudes help us perceive meaningful differences between candidates on policy issues. Scholars have argued that attitude importance is an attribute of the strong attitude-behavior relation, but no study has paid attention to the fact that prior predispositions and information, indeed, mediate the effect of attitude importance on the attitude-behavior relation. Thus, this research proposes a theory that attitudes are relevant to policy issues through the help of prior predispositions and information contributing to the strength of the political attitude-behavior relation. Furthermore, this research examines how citizens who lack firm predispositions gain political information that strengthens their political attitudes during election campaigns. Citizens who are not well grounded can understand politics if they gain information that enables them to connect their relatively weak political predispositions to relevant policy issues.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Hypotheses

Based on the theory addressed, I developed several hypotheses. Questions about the nature of public choice are focused on a type of organized choice sets, a psychological response, updates of perceptions for less grounded people, and the role of group-level attributes. I answer these questions by advancing four hypotheses. I start with the externalist perspective of public choice. When citizens are exposed to opposing views of an issue, their attention toward the issue may increase and they attempt to contrast the alternatives. In addition, the political context is itself contested, so the fact that claims by one candidate are contradicted by another prevents citizens from swaying to one side or the other of the issue. With equal message flows, citizens can sort through and clarify their political choices. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Citizens who are exposed to competing issue frames are more likely to perceive meaningful differences between candidates.

According to the attitude-behavior consistency theory, attitudes may guide behaviors. The more predispositions become relevant to issues, the more behaviors are congruent with attitudes. Placing greater weight on issues lifts up the personal importance, rendering individuals more engaged in and easily accessible to the issues. Thus, attitudes motivated by personal importance strengthen the direction of a behavior in being consistent with predispositions. To sum up,

citizens' perceptions about candidates' policy positions increase when their attitudes are well-grounded. Thus, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Citizens whose attitudes are well grounded are more likely to perceive meaningful differences between candidates.

The first two hypotheses are developed to examine how two distinctive perspectives of public choice play an important role in evaluating candidates. Next, I provide the perfect picture of public choice by integrating the two different perspectives. Political information (i.e., an organized choice set) can help citizens clarify their thinking and choose the policy alternative closest to their underlying political principles. However, citizens vary a great deal in terms of the personal importance they attach to their attitudes on issues due to the heterogeneity of predispositions linking attitudes to issues. Citizens whose attitudes are especially important to policy issues have a tendency to think frequently about the issues, to perceive competing candidates as being relatively polarized on the issues, and to form their preferences on the basis of those attitudes. On the contrary, citizens who have difficulty linking their attitudes to policy issues are unlikely to understand politics in the above manner. However, once those citizens are able to gain political information, they might then determine if predispositions pertain to the policy issues. When predispositions are relevant to the policy issues, the connection between predispositions and the policy issues enables them to know their own issue positions and their perception of candidates' positions. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3: Citizens whose attitudes are less grounded are more likely to perceive meaningful differences between candidates when they are exposed to competing issue frames.

Interstate heterogeneity may influence public choice. Presidential campaigns are strategic in that plans would be developed to gain electoral votes (Shaw 2006, 42). In a presidential election in the U.S., the Electoral College decides the result of a presidential election. For this reason, there

is a vote difference among states, since the balance of delegates to the Electoral College may make some states more pivotal than others. In other words, votes may carry more weight in some states than in others. Accordingly, the pivotal states may see most of the campaign action. As a result, building a minimum winning coalition is the main campaign strategy. In this respect, campaigns face powerful incentives to concentrate their resources (money and time) geographically (Johnston et al. 2004, 66). State competitiveness within the presidential race becomes the primary determinant in allocating campaign efforts across states: “Campaigns should channel resources to states that hang in the balance, where changing the minds of one or two percent of the electorate might alter the statewide outcome” (Johnston et al. 2004, 68). Thus, we can speculate that citizens who hold strong opinions on competing issue stands have more opportunities to perceive the difference between candidates. In electoral competition candidates offer alternative issue stands, and this opposing arguments on an issue is getting stronger in battleground states. Indeed, it is very common that citizens are more likely to be exposed to the battles of frames in battleground states. Once candidates’ time and money concentrate on those states, the increased contestation of frames allows citizens to raise their attention on an issue so that they can distinguish between candidates. To summarize, as stated above, campaign strategies about how to allocate their resources across states depend upon state competitiveness, and this allocation of political information and resources varies with respect to states. The more competitive states are, the more citizens who hold strong opinions on alternative issue stands perceive candidate evaluation difference. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: Citizens who are in the battleground states are more likely to perceive meaningful differences between candidates when they hold strong opinions on competing issue stands.

2. Models and Methodology

I now describe the three candidate evaluation models that I formulate. The models vary depending on considerations theoretically motivated. I first draw a basic model derived from hypotheses 1 and 2:

$$y_i = X_i \beta + \varepsilon_i ,$$

where regression predictors are represented by an $n \times k$ matrix X . β is the column vector of coefficients with length n and k , and ε is the vector of residuals. This model tests the impact of the two distinctive perspectives, such as competing issue frames and predispositions on candidate evaluations, when holding other variables constant.

To test the possibility of coefficients that can vary by group, I now consider multilevel regression models. The upshot of this idea is that citizens whose attitudes are not very well grounded tend to connect their attitudes to policy issues if they gain enough political information provided by political institutions. According to the hypotheses addressed, information processing of highly grounded people may not be the same as that of people with a low level of predispositions. A strong preconceived belief screens new information by strengthening an attitude in a political judgment while a weak preconceived belief adjusts an attitude in favor of contextual information. Accordingly, the effect of political information on attitude change might vary at the level of predispositions which construct attitudes. Furthermore, the model considers state-level heterogeneity. As mentioned before, electoral competitiveness leads to an asymmetric distribution of political resources. This influences a political information context across states. Individuals who live in areas saturated with political information may well see the difference between candidates' policy positions. As a consequence, the state-level heterogeneity may influence voters' electoral choice. For these reasons, multilevel regression models are

applicable. Multilevel models can be designed when “some units of analysis can be considered a subset of other units” (Steenbergen and Jones 2002, 219). The aim of multilevel analysis is to account for estimates to vary by groups while fixing coefficients that do not vary by groups. As such, multilevel regression models are useful to examine the fact that “data are structured in groups and coefficients can vary by group” (Gelman and Hill 2007, 237). When information is available on individuals as well as groups, the multilevel regression gives more flexibility in fitting models (239).⁸

From the statistical point of view, multilevel regression models are recommended to solve some problems. Steenbergen and Jones (2002, 219-20) point out that ignoring the multilevel character of data results in significant statistical problems with incorrect standard errors and inflated Type I error. For instance, when a first-level unit is embedded within a second-level unit, observations in a first-level unit share common characteristics with a second-level unit. Indeed, the observations sampled from the same context are not independent. They “duplicate one another to some extent.” The duplication of observations violates the assumption that the errors are independent. In the multilevel data structures, “this will cause the estimated standard errors to be too low and the test-statistics too high ... As a result, Type I errors are more frequent, i.e., predictors appear to have a significant effect when in fact they do not” (220).

In brief, the multilevel regression is helpful for “accounting for individual- and group-level variation in estimating group-level regression coefficients, modeling variation among individual-level regression coefficients, and estimating regression coefficients for particular groups” (Steenbergen and Jones 2002, 246).

⁸ Gelman and Hill argue that it is meaningless to use statistical significance when reporting estimates of group level parameters in multilevel models. The purpose of multilevel models is to see “the best possible estimate in [groups] with appropriate accounting for uncertainty” (271). With regard to the minimum number of groups, Gelman and Hill do not suggest a certain threshold. “Even with only one or two groups in the data, however, multilevel models can be useful for making predictions about new groups” (276).

With grouped data, a model in which both the intercept and the slope vary by group is called a varying-intercept, varying-slope model (Gelman and Hill 2007). A generalization of the varying-intercept, varying-slope model is as follows:

$$y_{ji} = \alpha_{ji} + \beta_{ji} x_i + \varepsilon_i ,$$

where α and β both vary by group j . Now, I propose a multilevel model of varying coefficients of political information with different levels of predispositions:

$$y_i \sim N(\alpha_{ji} + \beta_{ji} x_i, \sigma_y^2), \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, n$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \alpha_j \\ \beta_j \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left(\begin{pmatrix} \mu_\alpha \\ \mu_\beta \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_\alpha^2 & \rho\sigma_\alpha\sigma_\beta \\ \rho\sigma_\alpha\sigma_\beta & \sigma_\beta^2 \end{pmatrix} \right), \text{ for } j = 1, \dots, J,$$

where group $j = 1, \dots, J = 3$. This works for a single level of grouping. Index variables ji code a group membership. μ is the mean of the group level parameters, and σ is the standard deviation of the unexplained group level errors. This model includes variation in the α_j 's and the β_j 's and also a between-group correlation parameter ρ (Gelman and Hill 2007, 279). In this model, $i = 1, \dots, n$ clustered in groups (the levels of predispositions) $j = 1, \dots, J = 3$. x_i is the i^{th} element of the x representing political information (i.e., an organized choice set).

Grouped data can be structured into categories in more than two-levels. It is called non-nested data in which individuals are characterized by more than two-level groups (Gelman and Hill 2007). In the model of varying coefficients of political information with different levels adding state-level groups, individuals can belong to the $J = 3$ predispositions categories and $K = 4$ state-level groups. This non-nested model can be written:

$$y_i \sim N(\alpha_{ji,ki} + \beta_{ji,ki} z_i, \delta_y^2) \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, n,$$

a decomposition of the intercepts and slopes into terms of the levels of predispositions and state,

$$\begin{pmatrix} \alpha_{j,k} \\ \beta_{j,k} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \mu_0 \\ \mu_1 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{0j}^{predis} \\ \gamma_{1j}^{predis} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{0k}^{state} \\ \gamma_{1k}^{state} \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{0jk}^{predis \times state} \\ \gamma_{1jk}^{predis \times state} \end{pmatrix}$$

and models for variation,

$$\begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{0j}^{predis} \\ \gamma_{1j}^{predis} \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \Sigma^{predis} \right), \quad \text{for } j = 1, \dots, J,$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{0k}^{state} \\ \gamma_{1k}^{state} \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \Sigma^{state} \right), \quad \text{for } k = 1, \dots, K,$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{0jk}^{predis \times state} \\ \gamma_{1jk}^{predis \times state} \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left(\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \Sigma^{predis \times state} \right), \quad \text{for } k = j = 1, \dots, J; 1, \dots, K,$$

where a single level of grouping $j = 1, \dots, J = 3$, and a second level of grouping $k = 1, \dots, K = 4$.

μ_0 , and μ_1 are the means of the group level parameters, and γ_0 , and γ_1 are the vector of coefficients for the group level parameters. Due to including means μ_0 , μ_1 in the decomposition, 0 is placed in each batch of coefficients (Gelman and Hill 2007, 291).

3. Data and Measurements

To test the above hypotheses, the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is used. The NAES is the largest public opinion survey of the American electorate conducted within a campaign cycle (Romer, Kenski, Winneg, Adasiewicz, and Jamieson 2006, 14). The 2004 NAES consists of eight studies, each a cross-sectional (National Rolling Cross-Section, New Hampshire Rolling Cross-Section, Military Cross-Section, and Inauguration Cross-Section) and panel (Democratic Convention Panel, Republican Convention Panel, Debates Panel, and General Election Panel) telephone survey of a random sample of U.S. adults. The Questionnaires of the 2004 NAES include as follows: general opinions about candidates, political figures, and groups;

policy issues; candidates' biographies (opinions and knowledge); media exposure; political discourse (debates, conventions, ads, contact with campaigns, and other political discourse); political participation; orientation to politics; voting behavior and attitudes; opinions of election outcome; demographics, etc. The 2004 NAES was conducted using random digit dialing. Households were randomly selected. Procedures were established for randomly selecting adults from the households for interviews. The sample frame consisted of individuals who were living in households that had telephones. Upon reaching a household, interviewers asked to speak with an adult age 18 or older. One adult per household was selected as a survey respondent.

More explanations are needed to compare the rolling cross-section design to the panel design. In the rolling cross-section design, researchers can detect dynamics in a population. In other words, the rolling cross-section (RCS) is a “design that facilitates detailed exploration of campaign dynamics. Its essence is to take a one-shot cross-section and distribute interviewing in a controlled way over time” (Johnston and Brady 2002, 283). As a matter of fact, the RCS design is a special case of the repeated cross-section design (Romer, Kenski, Winneg, Adasiewicz, and Jamieson 2006, 56). The RCS design involves taking a series of cross-sections over time. In the 2004 NAES, cross-sections took place each day. The RCS is unique in that the sampling protocol ensures each cross-section is random (Romer, Kenski, Winneg, Adasiewicz, and Jamieson, 56). In the panel design, researchers can track changes in individuals over a period of time because responses on the pretest are compared to the responses on the posttest to see if differences for the same individuals appear between two (or more) time points interviewed.

I use the National Rolling Cross-Section survey as a main dataset in the dissertation research. Interviews were conducted from October 7, 2003 to November 16, 2004, when 81,422 randomly selected U.S. adults were interviewed. As supplementary data, the General Election

Panel survey (more specifically, pre-election survey) is used. In this survey, 8,644 adults were interviewed for the National Rolling Cross-Section during the 15 weeks before the general election, and re-interviewed in the 8 weeks after the election (pre-election survey: July 15 ~ November 1, 2004, and post-election survey: November 4 ~ December 28, 2004).

Data used for framing studies to date have been overwhelmingly created by experimental design. As noted before, in a political world issue framing exists everyday. It is appropriate to study framing effects outside of the controlled laboratory (Jacoby 2000, 750): “The effects occur in settings that approximate the everyday world of political discourse, on an issue that is central to the predominant lines of partisan cleavage in contemporary American politics.” Following Jacoby, I use survey data (the 2004 NAES data) to implement an issue framing study. Another specific reason to use this data is that the 2004 NAES includes various questionnaires that can test opinions on competing issue frames. In particular, the 2004 NAES asked about a government spending issue, which is an excellent example that meets the criteria (an issue’s importance, long-lastingness, and contestation) for examining framing effects (Sniderman and Theriault 2004). In government spending, the “getting ahead frame” and “tax cut frame” are competitive. The 2004 NAES asked the two frames as follows: “Favor permanent tax cuts?” (the tax cut frame) and “Favor government health insurance for workers?” (the getting ahead frame). I use these questionnaires to measure opinions on competing issue frames. The questionnaire on tax cuts was administered from September 20 through November 16, 2004. Respondents were asked the healthcare question between September 20 and November 3, 2004. By focusing on respondents’ policy attitudes in pre-election, I chose the starting date of September 20 through November 1—the day before Election Day—during which respondents were asked both

questions. As a result, numbers of respondents who answered to each question reduced to 9,932 (tax cuts), and 9,944 (healthcare), respectively.

All through the four hypotheses, the dependent variable is Candidate Evaluation. Candidate Evaluation is measured from the absolute value of the difference between ‘Bush favorability’ and ‘Kerry favorability’ and is rescaled from 0 to 1. The independent variables on the baseline model are Dual Issue Frames and Predispositions. Dual Issue Frames is the proxy for an organized set of choices, or political information. To measure Dual Issue Frames, I consider two different measurements. First, the measure of Dual Issue Frames considers campaign context. Electoral campaigns involve competition between alternative issue frames. Candidates offer alternative issue stands, presenting voters with a menu of policy choices. Voters then select among the alternatives. The contestation of alternative issue frames is fervent throughout a campaign. Indeed, the intensity of battles of frames is extremely remarkable in battleground states. In this respect, it is reasonable for us to use state competitiveness as the proxy for Dual Issue Frames. Following Shaw’s (2006) classification schemes on state competitiveness, I constructed an index of Dual Issue Frames, reflecting 4 if states are strong battleground, 3 if competitive states lean toward a candidate, 2 if states are inclined to lean toward each candidate in his base, and 1 if state is a strong base of particular candidate.⁹ To range from 0 to 1, rescaled scores are equal to 1, .67, .33, and 0 respectively.

However, because state competitiveness may not be the best measure of Dual Issue Frames, I also consider an alternative measurement for Dual Issue Frames. The 2004 NAES

⁹ I recode interstate heterogeneity in the 2004 presidential election as followings: strong battleground state - Iowa, Florida, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin; weak battleground state - Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia; weak base state - Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, New Jersey, Virginia; strong base state - Alabama, California, Connecticut, Washington DC, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Wyoming.

asked respondents a government spending issue individually and simultaneously in a different time schedule. The question on a healthcare issue was asked from April 19, 2004 through August 9, 2004, while respondents were asked both questions on healthcare and tax cuts simultaneously from August 10, 2004 through November 1, 2004. Accordingly, a different time schedule on a government spending issue enables us to measure the exposure of Dual Issue Frames. In other words, Dual Issue Frames can be measured from the question wording of a survey instrument: it gives 0 if respondents are exposed to a healthcare questionnaire or a tax cuts questionnaire (i.e., Singly Issue Frame) (April 19, 2004 ~ August 9, 2004) and 1 if respondents are exposed to both questionnaires (i.e., Dual Issue Frames) at the same time (August 10, 2004 ~ November 1, 2004).

Predispositions is an index combining each of the elements of predispositions, including self-interest, social identification, and political principle. Self-interest is derived from income and education. Partisanship and group sentiment are measures of social identification, and political principle is derived from ideology. All measurements for each dimension of predispositions are scaled from 0 to 1, and then an index of predispositions is created and recoded from 0 to 1. What is more, I use somewhat different coding rules to measure predispositions. Generally, citizens who are the wealthy/the poor, the better educated/the less educated, strong Republicans/Democrats, strong group sentiment, and strong conservatives and liberals are more likely to support/oppose government spending issues. Therefore, I scaled the predisposition index from 1 (if respondents answer the highest/lowest category in each dimension of predispositions) to 0 (if respondents answer a middle category in each dimension of predispositions). To test the impact of the levels of predispositions on candidate evaluation in Hypothesis 3, I construct a trichotomous variable: a high level of predisposition if the score of

Predispositions ranges from .67 through 1, a middle level of predisposition if the score is between .33 and .66, and a low level of predisposition if the range of the score is 0 through .32.

Hypothesis 4 tests the impact of interstate heterogeneity on candidate evaluation, while citizens hold strong opinions toward competing issue stands. To measure citizens' strong opinions on alternative issue stands, I use the questions referencing 'tax cuts' and 'government health insurance' to calibrate Opinions on Dual Issue Frames. The 2004 NAES asked respondents the two questions as follows: "Do you strongly or somewhat favor/oppose permanent tax cuts?" and "Do you strongly or somewhat favor/oppose government health insurance for workers?" Strong favor/oppose is recoded 1, somewhat favor/oppose .5, and neither favor nor oppose 0. In this way, scores of each questionnaire are summed up and then rescaled from 0 to 1. These coding rules also reflect issue importance. Strongly favoring/opposing attitudes are indicators of personally important and salient perceptions toward an attitudinal object. Strong responses to a government spending issue can be considered to reveal that respondents think of the issue as important. Therefore, strongly favoring/opposing answers toward tax cuts and government healthcare questionnaires put a government spending issue into an important judgmental standard that helps citizens evaluate the difference between two candidates.

Two variables are controlled. First, Political Knowledge measures general factual knowledge about politics. Political Knowledge is assessed from the survey five-point index combining items that asked respondents' ability to correctly answer four questions: "Know Cheney is V.P.?" "Know Supreme Court determines constitutionality of laws?" "Know two-thirds majority overrides veto?" and "Know Republicans are majority party in House?" The second and last control variable is Media Exposure. Media Exposure is an index summing three

survey questions, including “Watched network news in past week,” “Read newspaper in past week,” and “Watched cable news in past week.” The two control variables are both recoded from 0 to 1. Conventional wisdom says that the more politically sophisticated and exposed citizens are, the more they are attentive to politics. Therefore, citizens who are politically sophisticated and are exposed to media tend to perceive greater differences between candidates.

CHAPTER 6

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Before analyzing the baseline and extended models, I present patterns of candidate evaluations and policy preferences over the course of the 2004 campaign. Capturing patterns in data can be vague since daily cross-sections result in sampling variation. For this reason, pooling data across days is preferred (Romer, Kenski, Winneg, Adasiewicz, and Jamieson 2006, 109). By pooling data across days, some of the random sampling variation is smoothed out of the graphs. One way to smooth data is to use a five-day centered moving average (Romer, Kenski, Winneg, Adasiewicz, and Jamieson, 110). The five-day centered moving average takes the value of a particular day plus the values on the two days before it and the values on the two days after it and averages them. In Table A-1, the five-day centered moving average for Bush favorability on Oct. 3 is the sum of the values between Oct. 1 and Oct. 5 divided by 5: $(.56 + .50 + .54 + .52 + .56) / 5$. A smoother pattern is plotted performing the same calculations for the other days. Furthermore, the unit of analysis in the five-day centered moving average is the date of interview for candidate and policy issue favorability as a mean of the individual responses on the favorability is calculated for each day.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the types of dynamics that can be analyzed by tracking public opinion about candidates and policy issues over the course of the campaign using five-day centered moving averages. In Figure 1, the average feeling thermometer evaluations of Bush and Kerry are displayed, from September 22, 2004 to October 30, 2004. Overall, citizens gave a slightly favorable rating to Bush, but a rating for Kerry is neither favorable nor unfavorable.

Both candidates' up-and-down evaluations proceed from early October through mid-October. One explanation for the seesaw may well be that by being exposed to plenty of information from presidential and Vice-presidential candidate debates cross the period, equally (conflicting) important factors give respondents a better understanding for a candidate (or both candidates). According to Zaller's theory of attitude formation, a lot of contextual information (or situation cues) causes flip-flopping attitudes by embracing opposing considerations on issues. After mid-October, a respondent's perception about the difference between the candidates becomes stronger and more consistent along with Bush outperforming Gore as Election Day approaches. In view of a Bayesian update model, this strong attitude is the result of strengthening a prior belief as getting new information.

Figure 1 Five-Day Centered Moving Averages of Candidate Favorability cross Time

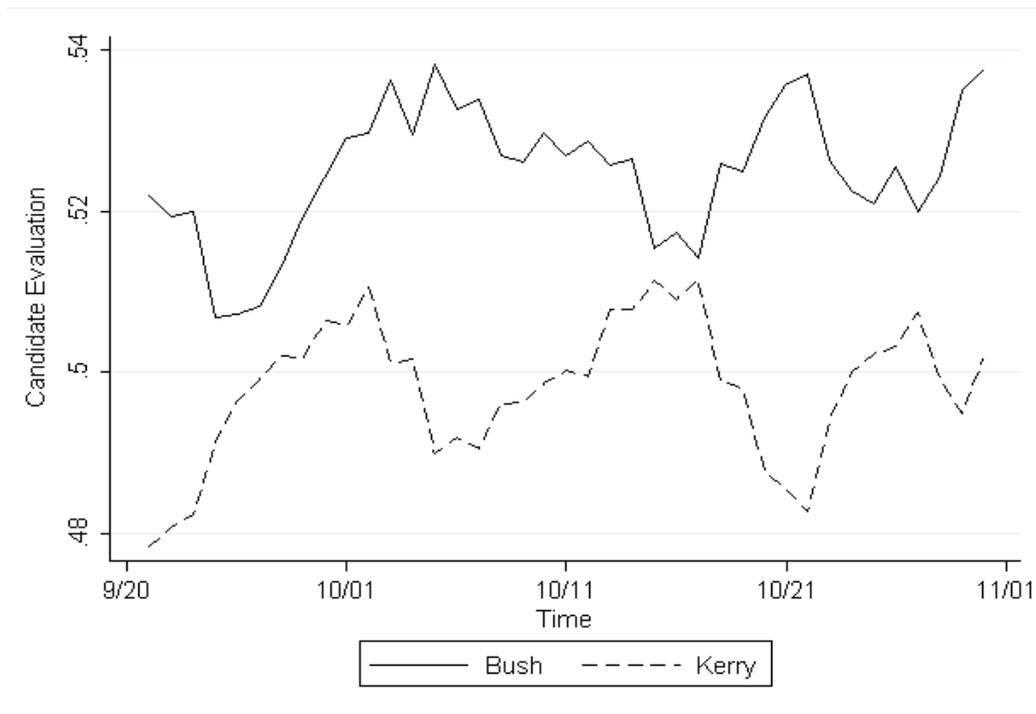
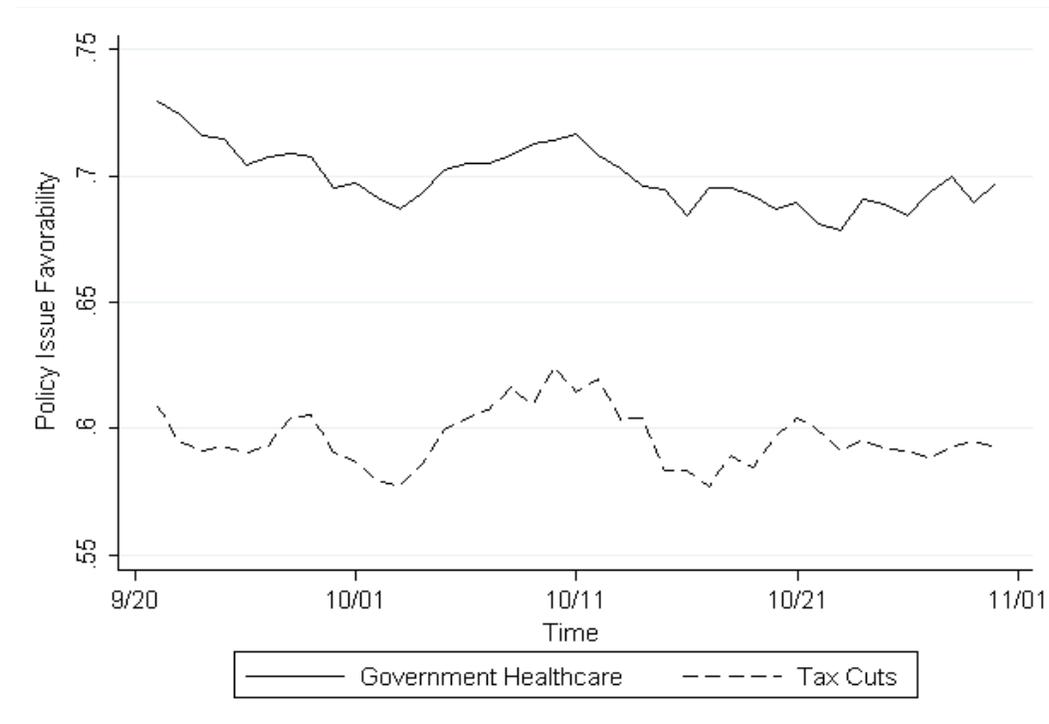


Figure 2 presents five-day moving averages of favoring tax cuts and government healthcare insurance. Ratings of both issues stay relatively favorable cross time. Respondents give healthcare higher favorability than tax cuts. The remarkable feature of the graph is an overall stable pattern of each government spending issue. The decline of both ratings starts before the first presidential debate (September 30), and the downward trend continues until a few days prior to the Vice-presidential debate (October 5). Then, the curves appear to be on the rise around the second presidential debate. At the debate, Kerry was asked each question about government spending issues (the rising cost of healthcare and tax burden). The saliency of these policy issues seems to reflect the upward trend. Then again, the drop of curves is no greater than what occurred before, and the slope increases from around October 15 through Election Day. Another feature in Figure 2 is that ratings of each government spending issue fluctuate after the first presidential debate through Election Day. Flip-flopping attitudes would be notable in a short term if respondents obtained contrasting information that is not matched with their prior beliefs.

The healthcare issue and the tax cuts issues were among the most contentious issues of domestic policy confrontation between Bush and Kerry in the 2004 presidential election. Kerry saw Bush's cuts as a giveaway to the rich, while the president argued that they were central to the economic recovery and gave financial relief to working families who needed it most. Bush promised in every debate and nearly every campaign appearance to make the tax cuts a permanent fixture of the tax code. With regard to the government healthcare issue, Kerry supported the healthcare reform based on nationalized government system funded by reversing

tax cuts. Bush favored improving the current healthcare system over government-based system.¹⁰

Figure 2 Five-Day Centered Moving Averages of Government Spending Issues Favorability cross Time



By way of Figures 1 and 2, the research raises attention about the role of information on changing attitudes based on prior beliefs. The rest of this chapter will elaborate on the relationship between information and attitude change.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is conducted to test the baseline model (Hypotheses 1 and 2). Table 1 shows that citizens who are exposed to competing issue frames are more likely to perceive meaningful differences between the two candidates. Also, the more

¹⁰ For more details, see <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/special/president/issues/>

well-grounded citizens are, the more they tend to perceive these differences. However, it is worth noting that the intensity of competing issue frames that is measured from state competitiveness is not statistically significant, while predispositions are statistically significant.

Table 1 OLS Estimates of Candidate Evaluation (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from State Competitiveness)

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Dual Issue Frames	.001	.013
Predispositions	.531***	.032
Political Knowledge	.073***	.020
Media Exposure	.131***	.021
Intercept	.206***	.022
N	2998	
Adj-R ²	.1121	

***p<.001; two-tailed

Note: the dependent variable is |Bush – Kerry|.

Alternatively, when a dichotomous variable that measure respondents' exposure to dual issue frames in a survey instrument is used, this variable is statistically significant. Table 2 shows that both independent variables (dual issue frames and predispositions) are all statistically significant.

Table 2 OLS Estimates of Candidate Evaluation (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from the Question Wording in a Survey Instrument)

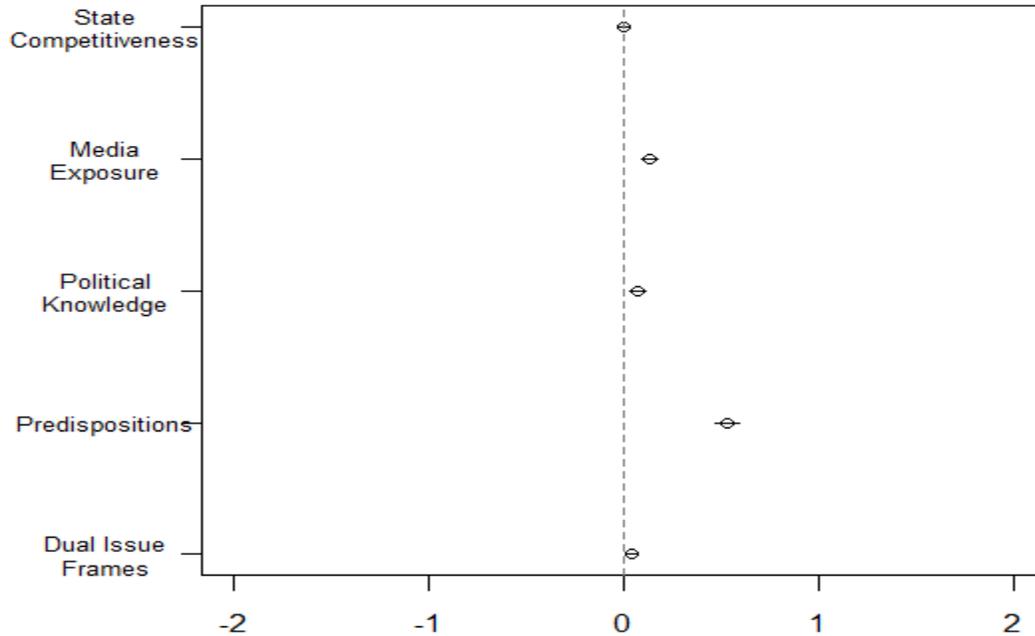
	Coefficient	Standard Error
Dual Issue Frames	.039**	.012
Predispositions	.529***	.032
Political Knowledge	.071***	.020
Media Exposure	.129***	.021
State Competitiveness	.002	.013
Intercept	.180***	.023
N	2998	
Adj-R ²	.1147	

***p<.001, **p<.002; two-tailed

Note: the dependent variable is |Bush – Kerry|.

For easy comparison of the magnitude of positive and negative coefficients, I use Table 2 to present a dot plot with the same scaling across the estimates. In Figure 3, each independent variable is displayed on the y-axis, and the range of parameter estimates is represented on the x-axis. The dots indicate the point estimates, while the horizontal lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. In Figure 3, we can see dual issue frames, predispositions, political knowledge, and media exposure are all positively significant predictors.

Figure 3 Presenting A Baseline Model Using a Dot Plot with Error Bars



Note: Adj-R² = .1147, N = 2998; Dual Issue Frames is measured from the question wording in a survey instrument.

Visual data analysis continues to investigate the probability of perceiving candidates' differences when citizens are exposed to dual issue frames. Figure 4 presents the predicted probability of candidate evaluation on dual issue frames along with a confidence interval. In this figure, dual issue frames are measured from state competitiveness. As expected in the theory, citizens clearly distinguish between the two candidates when they are simultaneously exposed to both frames. The result is the same when the dual issue frames are measured from the question wording of a survey instrument. Figure 5 also strongly supports the expectation that citizens perceive greater differences between candidates when exposed to the alternative issue frames.

Figure 4 Probability of Perceiving Difference between Candidates in Dual Issue Frames (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from State Competitiveness)

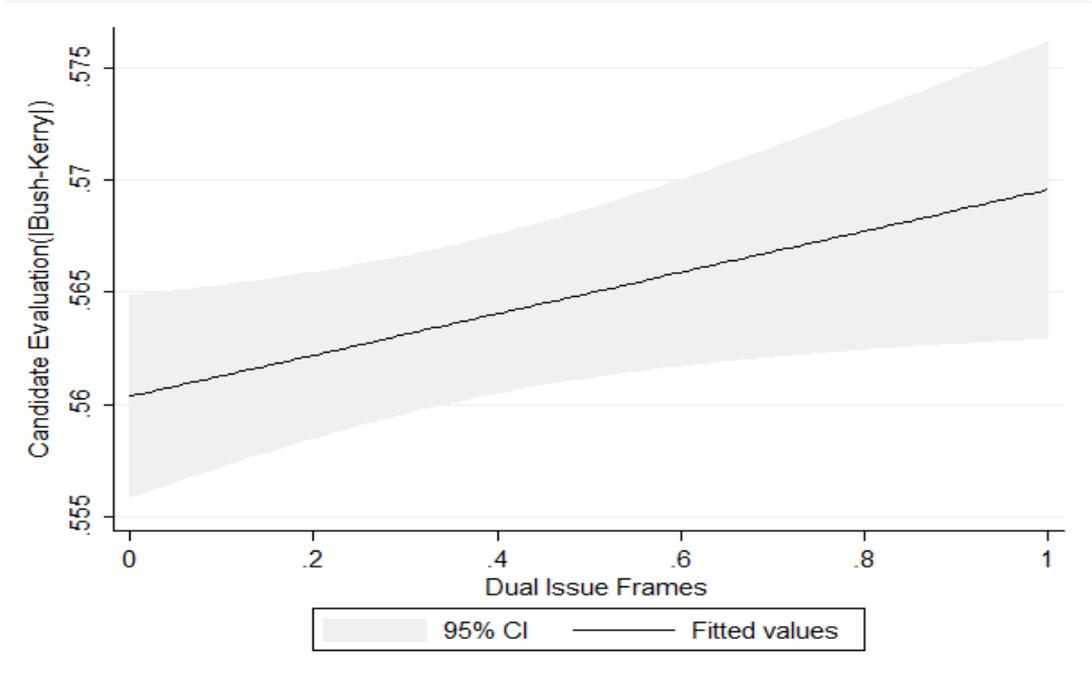
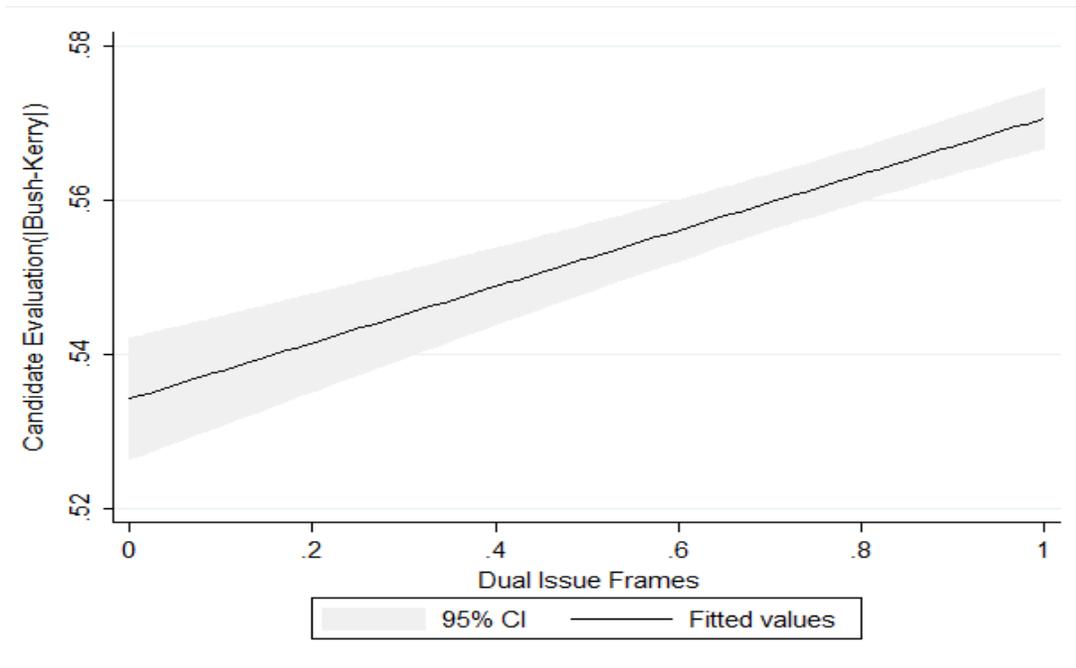


Figure 5 Probability of Perceiving Difference between Candidates in Dual Issue Frames (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from the Question Wording in a Survey Instrument)



Furthermore, I attempt to demonstrate that the possibility of elite manipulation disappears in competing issue frames. To test elite manipulation, I examine the opinion change of partisans in the dual issue frames. When opposing frames are presented to citizens at the same time, the conflicting frames cancel out the influence of each single frame on opinions (Sinderman and Theriault 2004). Figure 6 hardly supports the above argument. Under the competing issue frames, Democrats increase the difference between candidates, while Republicans and Independents show no change in candidate difference evaluation. This means that there is a possibility of elite manipulation of Republicans and Independents, since the slopes of these two groups are almost constant. In the figure, the dual issue frame is the proxy for state competitiveness. However, when I use exposure to competing issue frames in the survey instead of state competitiveness, Figure 7 confirms that the dual frames do not sway partisans' opinions

to one side or the other, and rather help them to perceive the difference between the two candidates.

Figure 6 Probability of Manipulating Opinion in Dual Issue Frames (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from State Competitiveness)

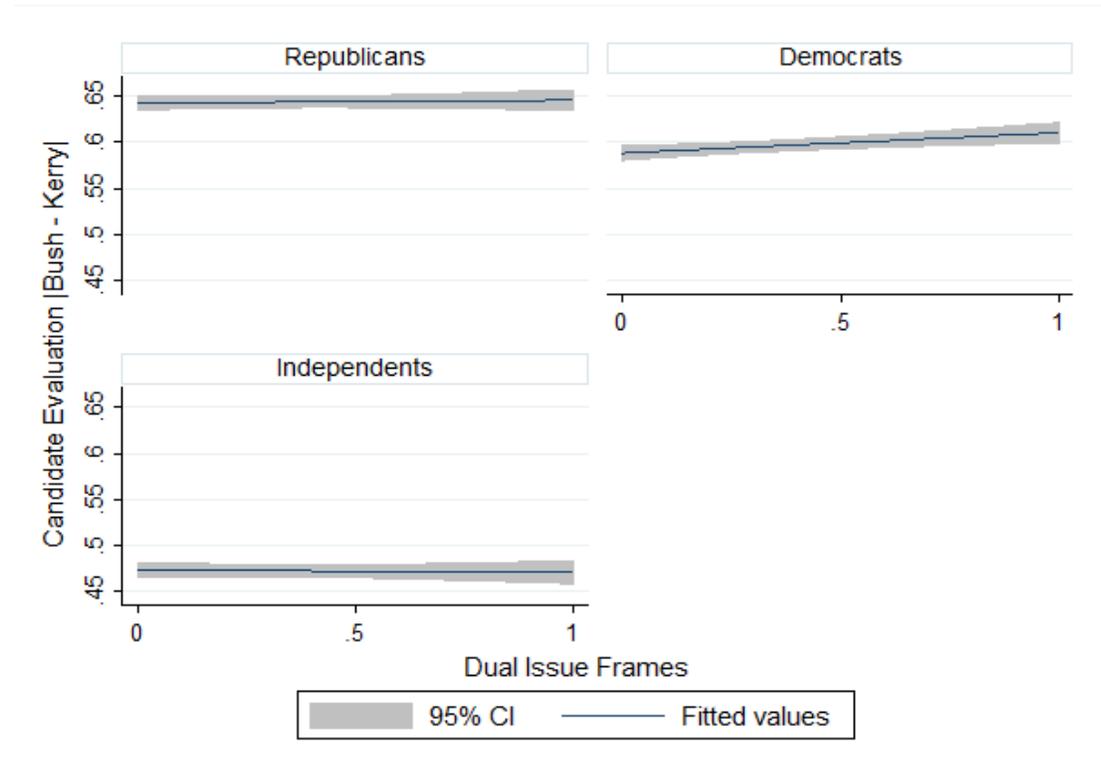
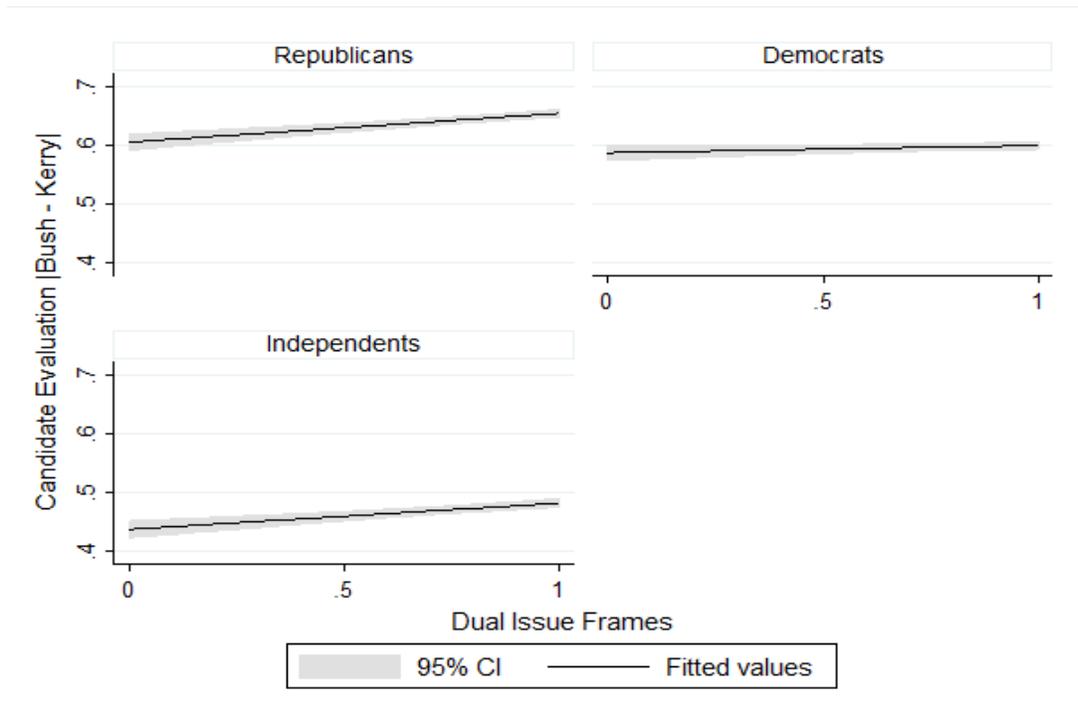


Figure 7 Probability of Manipulating Opinion in Dual Issue Frames (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from the Question Wording in a Survey Instrument)



Finally, I present the predicted probability of candidate evaluations on the competing issue frames with different levels of predispositions. As argued before, individuals vary depending on their predispositions, and the impact of political information may differ in the different levels of predispositions. Contrary to my expectation, when state competitiveness is used as the dual issue frames, Figure 8 indicates that less grounded people have a moderate magnitude of updating the perception of the differences between the two candidates when they obtain political information. For the middle level of predisposition, the update does not increase. The highly grounded people distinguish between the two candidates when they gain opposing issue stands. However, when exposure to the intensity of competing issue frames is considered the proxy for the dual issue frames, Figure 9 presents that both the low and middle levels of predispositions have the largest magnitude of updating candidate difference. In particular, those

with high levels of predisposition have no increasing perception of candidates, even though they acquire political information. A detailed explanation about the heterogeneous effect of information is provided by data analysis using multilevel models.

Figure 8 Probability of Updating Information of Three Levels of Predispositions in Dual Issue Frames (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from State Competitiveness)

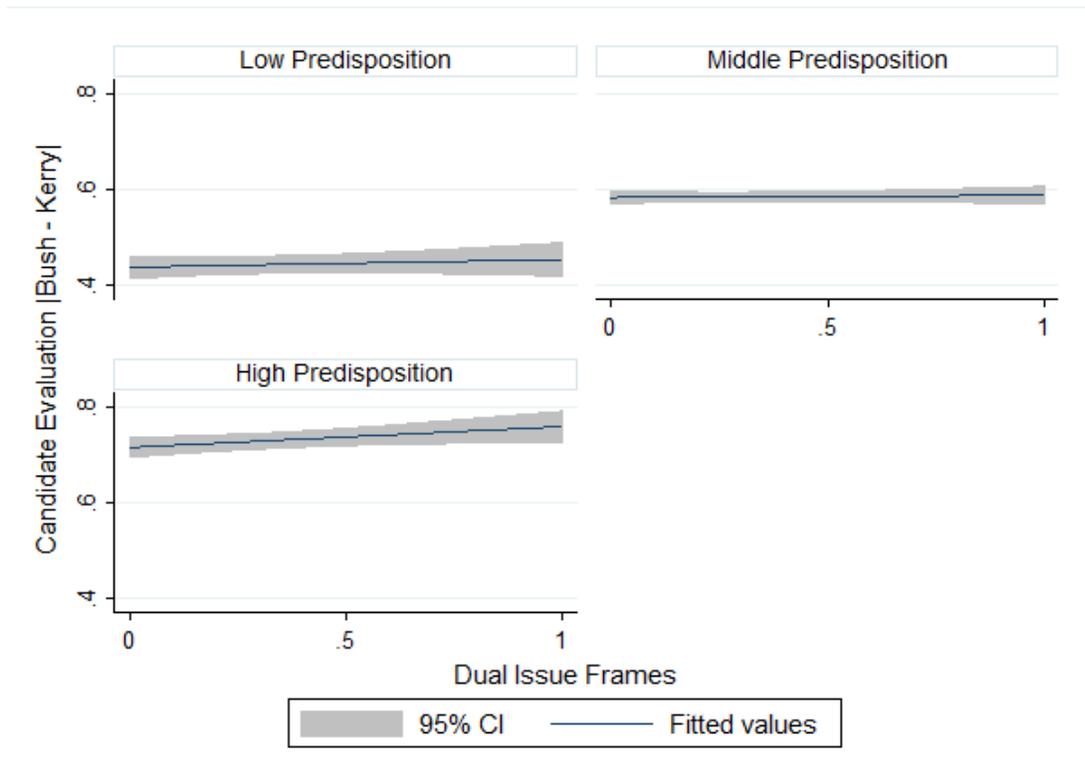
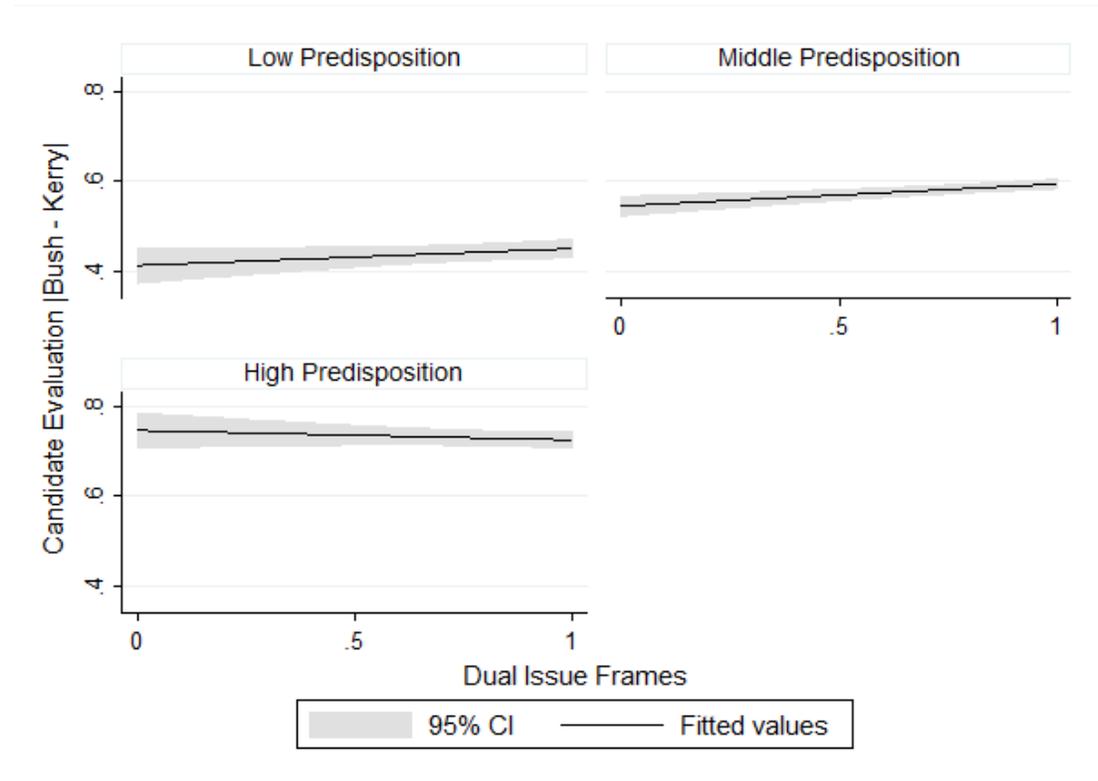


Figure 9 Probability of Updating Information of Three Levels of Predispositions in Dual Issue Frames (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from the Question Wording in a Survey Instrument)



My main goal here is to show if the competing issue frames play a role in increasing constraint between citizens' general political orientations and perceptions of meaningful differences about candidates, especially if citizens who lack firm opinions strengthen their attitudes toward policy issues after receiving new political information. Classical regressions have trouble capturing individual- and group-level variations. Instead, I use a multilevel regression to estimate varying coefficients with respect to individual- and group-level variations. Parameters of statistical models can vary at more than one level. We can expect that the effect of political information during presidential elections is not equal for all citizens. This research seeks to find how political information between group-level predispositions plays a role in

candidate evaluation difference. Highly grounded citizens find it easier to receive relevant information congruent with their perceived existing beliefs and interests about an attitude object. With higher accuracy motivation and cognitive abilities, they would be more selective in attaining valid attitudes. As a result, they will filter the opposing information that contradicts their underlying political principles.

On the other hand, moderately grounded citizens are sometimes susceptible to updating their attitudes with persuasive messages because they are less likely to engage in systematic information processing that can hinder pursuing readily available information than highly grounded citizens. However, their moderately grounded attitudes on the basis of partisan cues, ideology, and group sentiments mediate a broad range of considerations toward new information. Consequently, they are less likely to update their policy attitudes than weakly grounded citizens. Finally, less grounded citizens are distant from strong partisan cues, ideology, and group sentiments. The absence of a preconceived belief, opinion, and judgment allows individuals to canvass a wide array of information. Their less extreme attitudes toward both sides of a policy issue are more susceptible to persuasive messages and have less confidence toward one-sided judgmental considerations.

Table 3 that state competitiveness is used as a measure of dual issue frames does not seem to support the above arguments. Less grounded people rather decrease their perception of candidate difference under competing issue frames. Moderately grounded people do not show any change in the perception of candidate difference. On the contrary, highly grounded people tend to perceive the difference between candidates. When exposure to competing issue frames in a survey instrument is considered, the empirical findings show different stories. Table 4 supports Hypothesis 3. Respondents with low-level predispositions are more likely to perceive the

Table 3 Multilevel Regression Estimates of Candidate Evaluation (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from State Competitiveness)

Random Effects				
	Name	Variance	Std. Dev.	
Three Levels of Predispositions	Intercept	.014	.120	
	Dual Issue Frames	.001	.029	
Residuals		.090	.299	
N	2998			
Groups	3			
AIC	1325			
BIC	1373			
Log-Likelihood	-654.7			
Deviance	1287			
REML dev.	1309			
Fixed Effects				
	Estimate	Standard Error		
Intercept	.467	.071		
Dual Issue Frames	.0003	.021		
Political Knowledge	.081	.020		
Media Exposure	.138	.021		
Coefficients				
Three Levels of Predispositions				
	Intercept	Dual Issue frames	Political knowledge	Media Exposure
Low Level of Predisposition	.351	-.028	.081	.138
Middle Level of Predisposition	.462	-.001	.081	.138
High Level of Predisposition	.588	.030	.081	.138

Table 4 Multilevel Regression Estimates of Candidate Evaluation (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from the Question Wording in a Survey Instrument)

Random Effects				
	Name	Variance	Std. Dev.	
Three Levels of Predispositions	Intercept	.019	.140	
	Dual Issue Frames	.0005	.021	
Residuals		.089	.299	
N	2998			
Groups	3			
AIC	1317			
BIC	1365			
Log-Likelihood	-650.3			
Deviance	1279			
REML dev.	1301			
Fixed Effects				
	Estimate	Standard Error		
Intercept	.444	.083		
Dual Issue Frames	.034	.018		
Political Knowledge	.078	.020		
Media Exposure	.135	.021		
Coefficients				
Three Levels of Predispositions				
	Intercept	Dual Issue Frames	Political Knowledge	Media Exposure
Low Level of Predisposition	.312	.043	.078	.135
Middle Level of Predisposition	.432	.044	.078	.135
High Level of Predisposition	.589	.015	.078	.135

difference between candidates when they are exposed to opposing arguments of government spending issues. Next, respondents who hold middle-level predispositions enhance their perceptions as much as those with low-level predispositions. As expected, highly grounded respondents tend to filter the conflicting information that does not match with their predispositions so the magnitude of increase in perception is negligible. As a consequence, well-organized choice sets help respondents attach personal importance to their attitude and, in turn, connect weak (or middle) predispositions to their perceptions about candidates. Figure 11 displays the estimated multilevel regression lines for the three levels of predispositions. As seen in the figure, lines appear to be on the rise for both the low level of predisposition and the middle level of predisposition, and to slightly increase for the high level of predisposition.

The last model tests interstate heterogeneity. In the United States, the Electoral College decides presidential elections. Thus, political resources of candidates are allocated according to the campaign's plan to gather 270 electoral votes. Because the race is very close in battleground states, candidates have an opportunity and necessity of gaining these states to add to their base states to win the election. Therefore, such states become targets of candidates and parties due to the increased opportunity of gaining electoral votes. For that reason, candidates' campaign appearances and television advertising would be concentrated on the battleground states. Based on state competitiveness and partisan preferences, Shaw (2006) classifies states into one of five categories: base Republican, lean Republican, battleground, lean Democratic, and base Democratic. Battleground is sorted into pure battleground and lean (Republican/Democratic) battleground. In the battleground states, high campaign spending and plentiful information provided by candidates and parties help citizens connect their (weak) predispositions to relevant policy issues.

Figure 10 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in Three Levels of Predispositions (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from State Competitiveness)

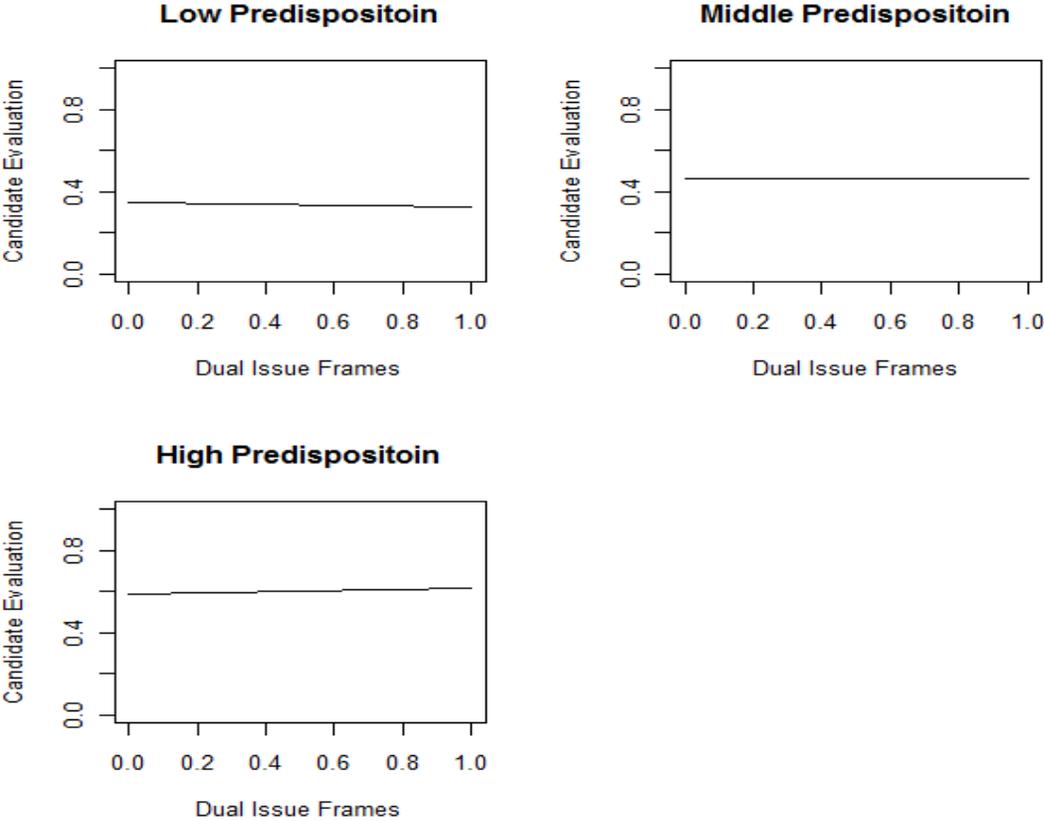
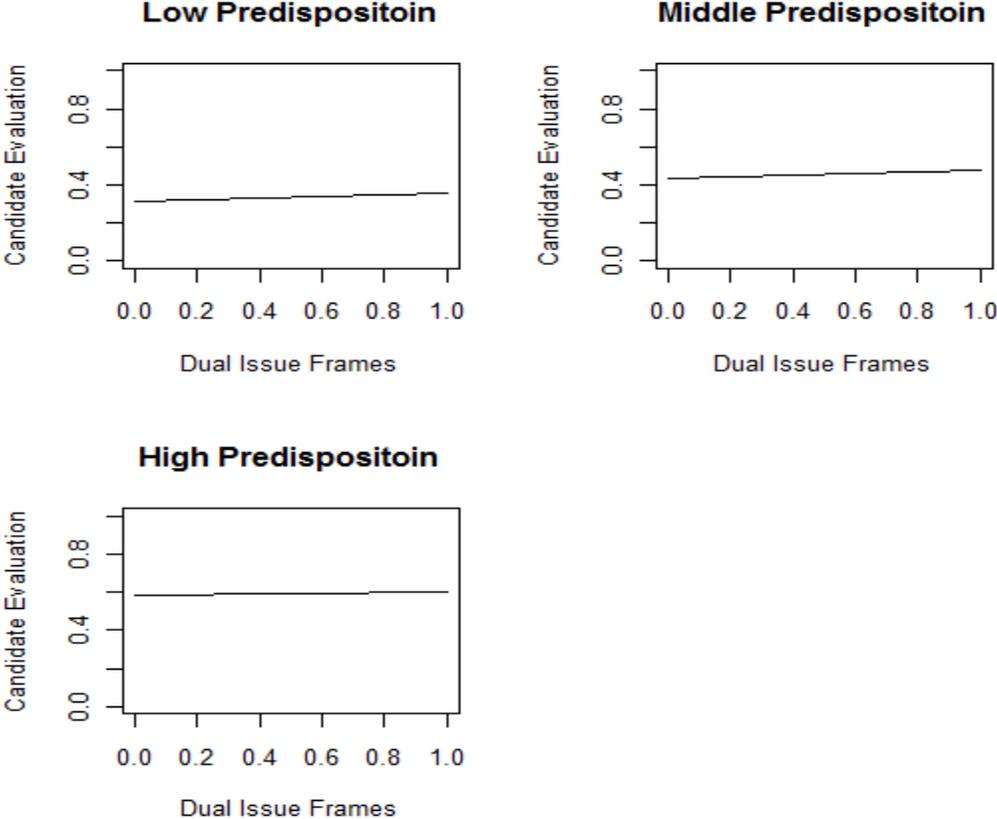


Figure 11 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in Three Levels of Predispositions (When Dual Issue Frames Is Measured from the Question Wording in a Survey Instrument)



I use a non-nested multilevel regression to test this argument. In Table 5, the highest update of candidate perception appears in the low level of predisposition across interstate heterogeneity. Especially, greater differences between two candidates increase in strong base states and strong battleground states. A moderate increase of perception of candidate differences looms in the middle level of predispositions over every level of state competitiveness. The intensity of strong opinions on organized choice sets is greater in weak/strong battleground states. Finally, the drop in perception of candidate differences occurs in the high level of predispositions. Figure 12, 13, and 14 illustrate multilevel regression lines in a non-nested model. Each graph confirms the above findings. Contrary to an expectation, the role of strong opinions toward arranged information is greater in strong battleground states as well as strong base states among less grounded people. I use the pre-election panel data to examine the impact of information among the low level of predispositions. Table 6 and Figure 15 demonstrate the greater impact of opinions toward arranged political information in strong battleground states among less grounded people. In addition, in Figure 16 and Figure 17, the resulting graphs are consistent with data analysis using RCS data. Overall, the results support Hypothesis 4: The connection between predispositions and perceptions about candidates is the most prominent among less grounded respondents in the battleground states when they hold strong opinions on competing government spending issues. It is also worth mentioning that moderately grounded respondents in the battleground states significantly enhance their perceptions of candidate differences.

Table 5 Multilevel Regression Estimates of Candidate Evaluation: Non-Nested Model
(National Rolling Cross-Section Data)

Random Effects				
	Name	Variance	Std. Dev.	
Three Levels of Predispositions * Four Interstate Heterogeneities	Intercept	.030	.173	
	Opinions on Dual Issue Frames	.007	.083	
Residual		.088	.297	
N	1390			
Groups	12			
AIC	633.6			
BIC	675.5			
Log-Likelihood	-308.8			
Deviance	597.4			
REML dev.	617.6			
Fixed Effects				
	Estimate	Standard Error		
Intercept	.464	.063		
Dual Issue Frames	.049	.044		
Political Knowledge	.087	.030		
Media Exposure	.120	.030		
Coefficients				
Three Levels of Predispositions * Four Interstate Heterogeneities				
	Intercept	Opinions on Dual Issue Frames	Political Knowledge	Media Exposure
Low Predis * Strong Base	.217	.167	.087	.120
Low Predis * Weak Base	.376	.091	.087	.120
Low Predis * Weak Battleground	.363	.097	.087	.120
Low Predis * Strong Battleground	.218	.167	.087	.120
Middle Predis * Strong Base	.455	.053	.087	.120
Middle Predis * Weak Base	.486	.038	.087	.120
Middle Predis * Weak Battleground	.404	.077	.087	.120
Middle Predis * Strong Battleground	.435	.062	.087	.120
High Predis * Strong Base	.627	-.030	.087	.120
High Predis * Weak Base	.617	-.025	.087	.120
High Predis * Weak Battleground	.711	-.070	.087	.120
High Predis * Strong Battleground	.661	-.046	.087	.120

Figure 12 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in the Low Level of Predisposition and Four Levels of Interstate Heterogeneity (National Rolling Cross-Section Data)

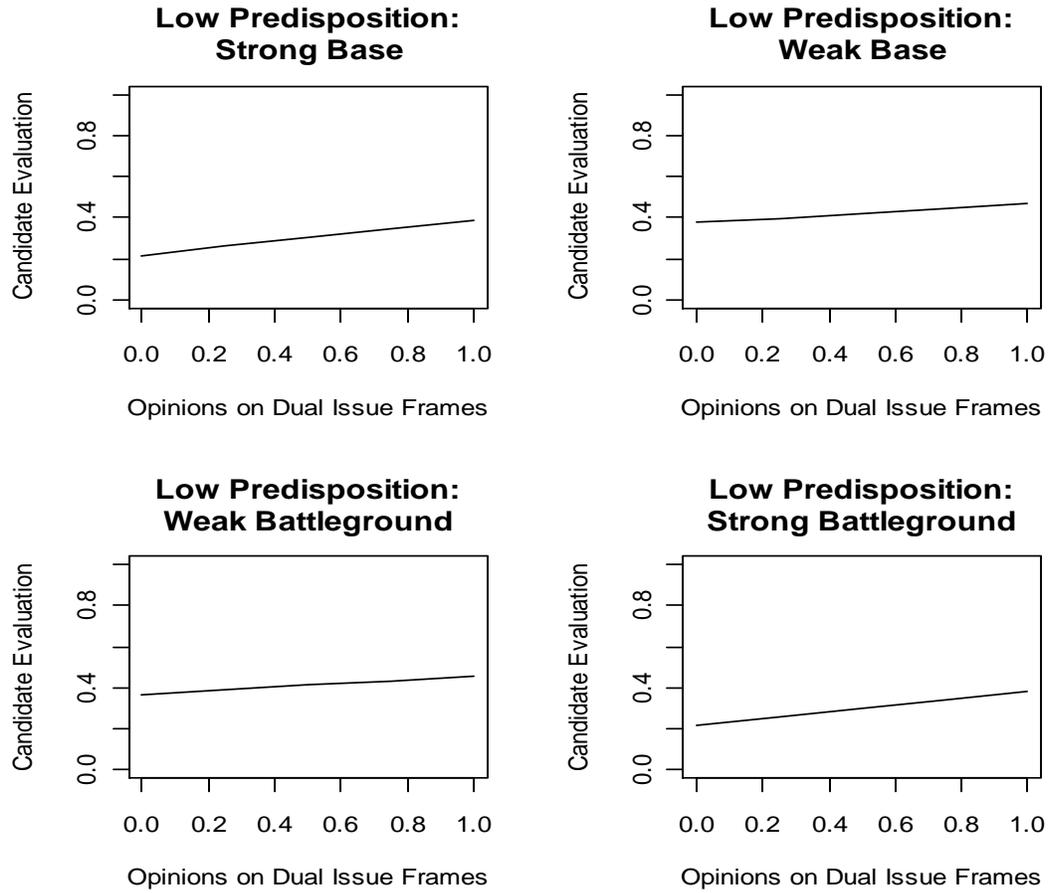


Figure 13 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in the Middle Level of Predisposition and Four Levels of Interstate Heterogeneity (National Rolling Cross-Section Data)

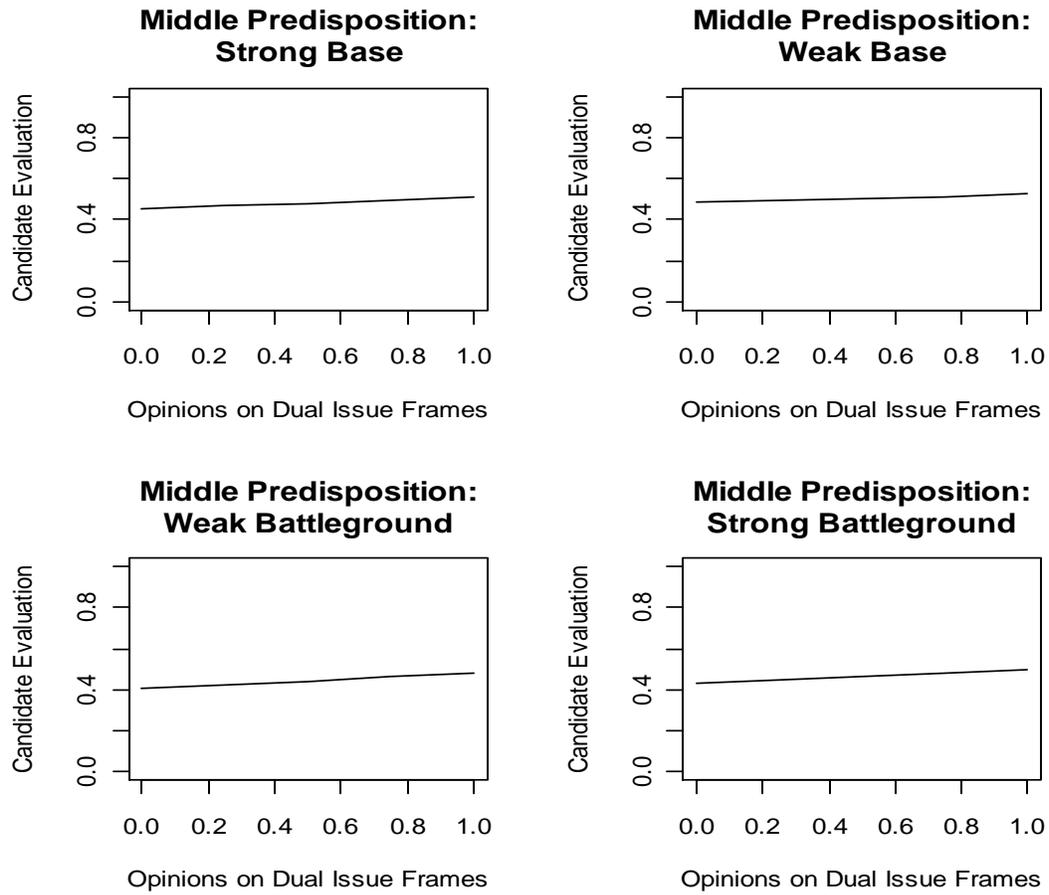


Figure 14 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in the High Level of Predisposition and Four Levels of Interstate Heterogeneity (National Rolling Cross-Section Data)

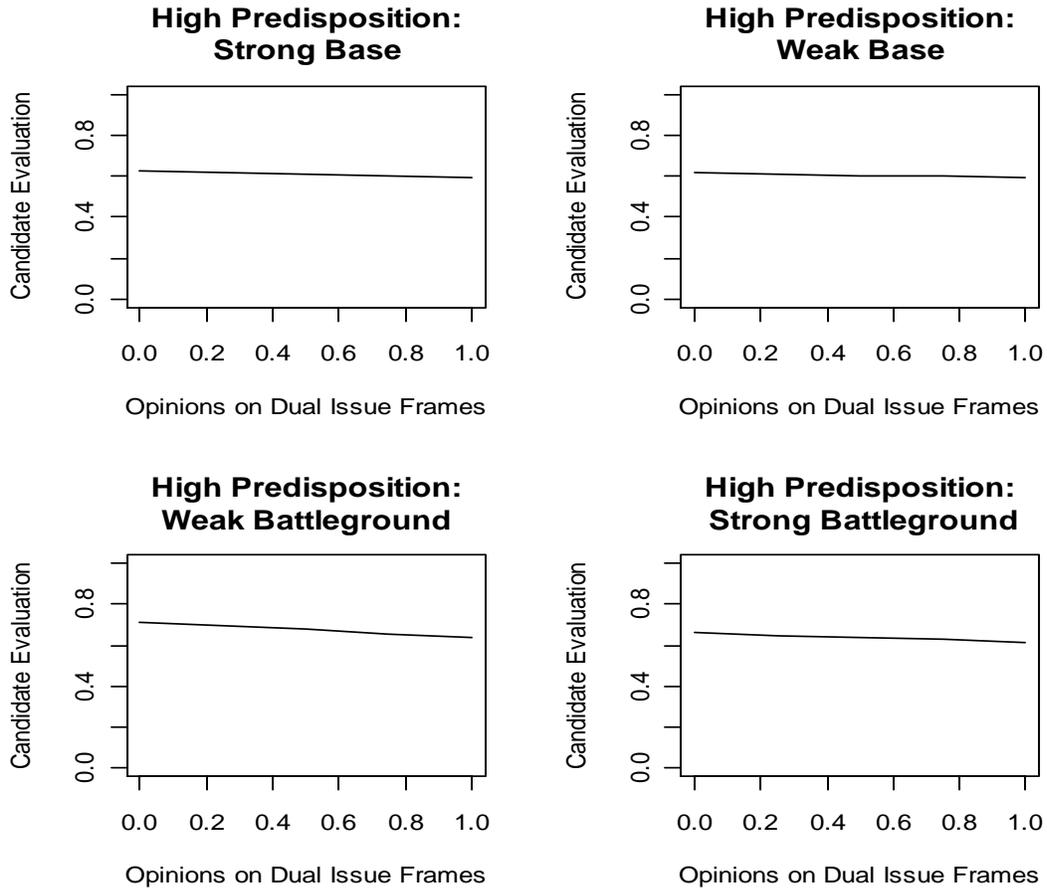


Table 6 Multilevel Regression Estimates of Candidate Evaluation: Non-Nested Model (Pre-Election Panel Data)

Random Effects				
	Name	Variance	Std. Dev.	
Three Levels of Predispositions * Four Interstate Heterogeneities	Intercept	.030	.172	
	Opinions on Dual Issue Frames	.014	.117	
Residual		.082	.286	
N	379			
Groups	12			
AIC	170.4			
BIC	201.9			
Log-Likelihood	-77.19			
Deviance	137.8			
REML deviance	154.4			
Fixed Effects				
	Estimate	Standard Error		
Intercept	.467	0.087		
Dual Issue Frames	.093	.075		
Political Knowledge	.075	.056		
Media Exposure	.140	.057		
Coefficients				
Three Levels of Predispositions * Four Interstate Heterogeneities				
	Intercept	Opinions on Dual Issue Frames	Political Knowledge	Media Exposure
Low Predis * Strong Base	.373	.159	.075	.140
Low Predis * Weak Base	.366	.163	.075	.140
Low Predis * Weak Battleground	.448	.108	.075	.140
Low Predis * Strong Battleground	.170	.290	.075	.140
Middle Predis * Strong Base	.420	.126	.075	.140
Middle Predis * Weak Base	.496	.075	.075	.140
Middle Predis * Weak Battleground	.476	.089	.075	.140
Middle Predis * Strong Battleground	.403	.138	.075	.140
High Predis * Strong Base	.606	.001	.075	.140
High Predis * Weak Base	.539	.046	.075	.140
High Predis * Weak Battleground	.702	-.065	.075	.140
High Predis * Strong Battleground	.618	-.008	.075	.140

Figure 15 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in the Low Level of Predisposition and Four Levels of Interstate Heterogeneity (Pre-Election Panel Data)

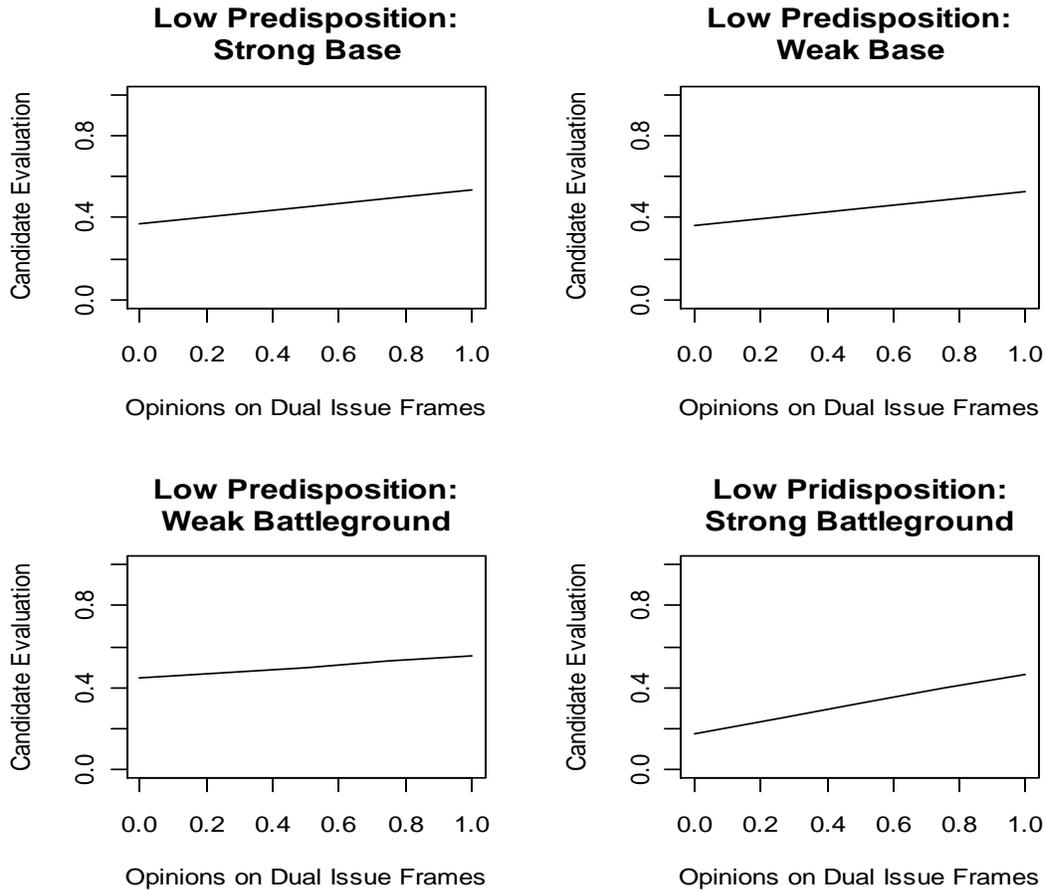


Figure 16 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in the Middle Level of Predisposition and Four Levels of Interstate Heterogeneity (Pre-Election Panel Data)

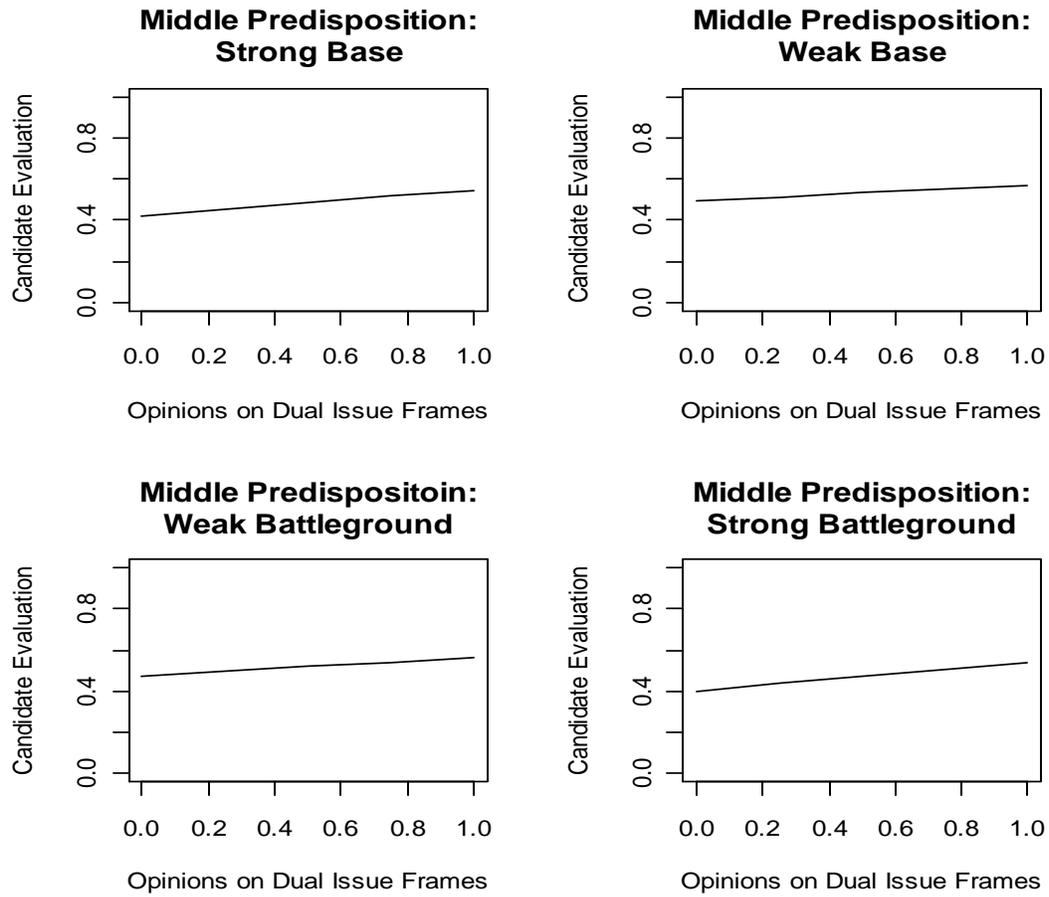
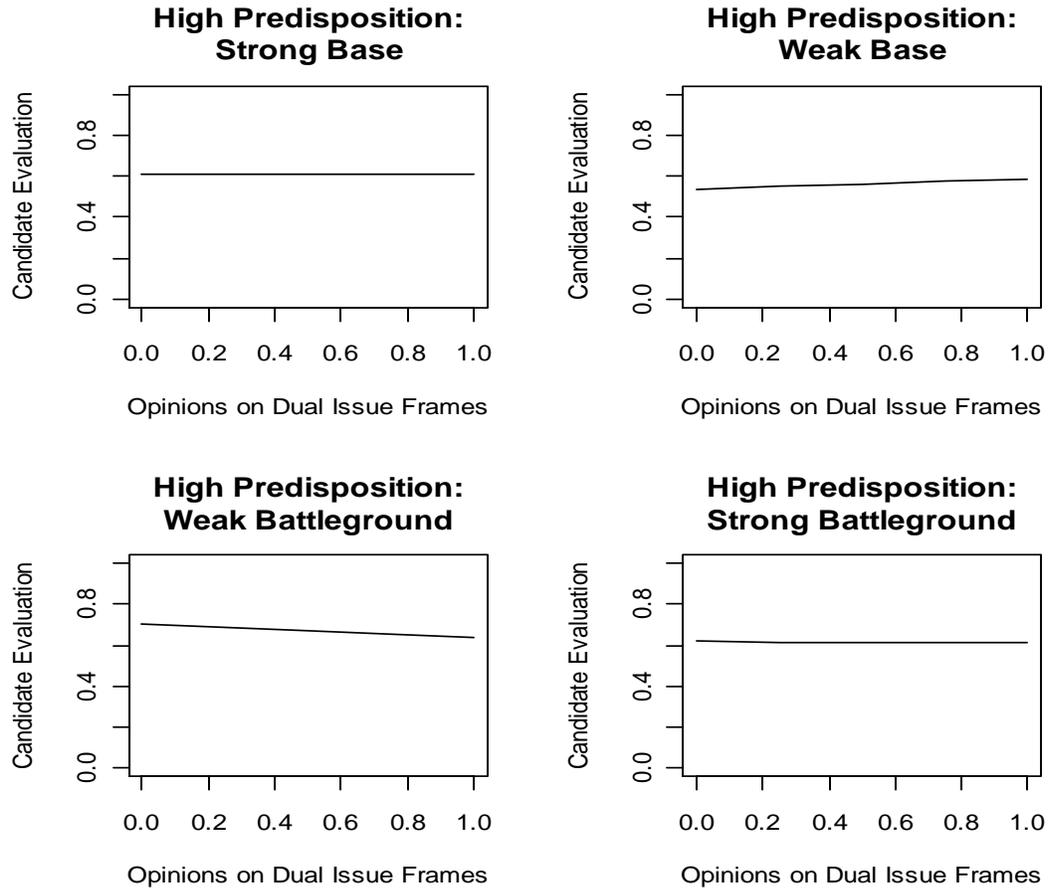


Figure 17 Multilevel Regression Lines: Candidate Evaluation Difference under Dual Issue Frames in the High Level of Predisposition and Four Levels of Interstate Heterogeneity (Pre-Election Panel Data)



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Through empirical results, the research demonstrates that even less grounded citizens perceive the difference between candidates' policy positions once they gain well-organized political choice sets. This result has significant implications concerning democratic competence. Ignorance about politics and the disconnection between citizens' policy preferences and governments' or candidates' policy positions can be overcome by the role of political institutions, including parties and political leaders. The dissertation seeks to provide a theory of where political alternatives come from and how citizens reduce their information shortfalls and have real policy opinions. This theory of public choice requires a shift in our attention on the information context.

Many political scientists have studied public choice in terms of the receptor's perspective. Some have paid attention to the provider of political information, but they have not fully developed how information organized by political institutions is presented to citizens. Exceptionally, Sniderman and his colleagues understand that the nature of politics is that public choice is organized for citizens by candidates and political parties, and citizens do not arrange a list of choice sets. The available choices are framed by political institutions. In order to win elections, goal-seeking politicians must compete, and the centerpiece of the political competition is to define the terms of public choice. Through the positions they adopt, candidates and parties amass electoral votes. In this light, alternatives simplified by political institutions help citizens overcome their information shortfalls. How organized alternatives connect with internal traits of

choosers depends on the way that candidates prime voters to consider their predispositions. Candidates campaign to stress certain issues and enable voters to perceive what is salient to them. Yet, since campaigns are themselves contested, alternatives arranged by a candidate are contradicted by another. Opposing arguments of a policy issue prevent citizens from swaying to one side or the other of an argument. Because choice sets are clarified, citizens can very well choose the side of the policy issue that is in line with their predispositions. It is worthwhile noting that the arrangement of choice sets is founded on the basis of a “consistency-generating mechanism.” People are motivated to pursue consistency in their beliefs. Accordingly, people would choose an alternative congruent with their beliefs. In doing so, attitudes guide behavior in a certain way. The attitude-behavior relation is mediated by personal involvement. Personal involvement lets individuals attach personal importance to an attitude. Individuals for whom a policy issue is personally important are more cognitively involved in the issue. Attitude importance increases when one recognizes that one’s sources of predispositions (self-interest, social identification, and political principle) are at stake in an issue. In the long run, individuals’ attitudes are the result of posterior beliefs that are embraced by prior perceptions or beliefs updated with subsequent information. In this respect, political information matters in the study of the attitude-behavior relation. Once citizens gain well-organized choice sets provided by political institutions, the systemically simplified alternatives enable citizens (especially less grounded citizens) to enlighten their predispositions and to choose a policy alternative correctly.

This dissertation also contributes to the scholarship on campaign effects. Many past works on campaign effects think of campaigns as not only minimal persuasion but also activating (or reinforcing) a preference. In reality, presidential elections in the U.S. are an arena for mapping candidates’ strategies. Campaign strategies converge on places that have a highly

possibility of a minimum winning coalition. More specifically, “Some states are written off at the very beginning as heavily predisposed to go one way or the other. Other states, conversely, are likely to be competitive and therefore worthy of campaign resources. The need for such distinction is driven by the strategic reality of presidential elections” (Shaw 2006, 44).

Presidential candidates use limited resources to solicit 270 electoral votes or more. Accordingly, candidates as goal-seeking actors optimize their winning probabilities in terms of a weighted priority of gaining Electoral College votes. For that reason, campaign information, including TV ads and news coverage, concentrates on battleground states. In particular, the presence of campaign information maximizing the saliency of issues makes a difference in a close race.

Challenges remain in the research. Chong and Druckman (2007) point out that not all frames are convincing and that the effectiveness of competing frames rests on a frame’s strength. Overall, the effectiveness of a frame in competitive and noncompetitive contexts depends more on a frame’s strength defined as how much a consideration is readily available and applicable to frames of reference on a given issue than the repetition of a message per se. What factors matter for the strength of a frame? Individual differences in cognitive abilities to process contextual information may make an impact on the strength of framing. According to the dual-process theory, a wide variety of judgments are mediated by one of two qualitatively different methods. When cognitive ability and task motivation are high, judgments are characterized by extensive information processing. Thus, we conceive of the message recipients as those who scrutinize all informational input for its relevance and importance to their judgment tasks and integrate all useful information in making their judgments (Chaiken, Liberman, and Eagly 1989, 212). Social psychologists consider this mode of information processing as systematic processing. On the other hand, individuals are economy-minded to avoid unnecessary efforts to seek complex

information in making their decisions (Chaiken et al. 1989). Recipients utilize minimal informational input in conjunction with simple knowledge structures to determine message validity quickly and efficiently. This information processing refers to heuristic processing. As a result, two qualitatively different modes of judging message validity can be abstracted by “a theory of how individuals resolve the tension between ‘accuracy’ and ‘efficiency’ in a given choice context” (Basinger and Lavine 2005, 169). In a further study, I will examine how the two different information processing approaches mediate the strength of framing, and what filters matter for informational communications.

Another challenge is concerned with a new dimension of organizing of a frame. According to Ansley and Sellers (2010), a recent way of channeling campaign information is featured as a decentralized course, in that campaign messages are often conveyed by volunteers. Through the case of Obama campaign’s efforts, they argue that a traditional top-down structure to frame political choice sets is changed into a more decentralized fashion. In this new approach, voters and voluntary groups play a central role in generating campaign messages in different ways. This alternative flow of messages helps citizens crystallize their policy preferences in more persuasive and credible ways. I will elaborate on how the terms of a debate are organized between traditional and new ways and how personal motivation forms a policy preference across different framing conditions in the competitive context.

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WWW source

<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/special/president/issues/> Accessed April 5, 2010.

APPENDIX

Table A – 1 Frequency of Candidate Evaluation Scores

Candidate Evaluation Score Bush – Kerry	Frequency	Percent
0	2,400	7.29
.1	1,959	5.95
.2	2,533	7.69
.3	2,781	8.44
.4	2,641	8.03
.5	3,879	11.78
.6	2,623	7.96
.7	2,744	8.33
.8	3,130	9.51
.9	2,173	6.60
1	6,068	18.43
Total	32,931	100

Note: Cases are selected from April 16, 2004 through November 1, 2004.

Table A – 2 Five-Day Centered Moving Averages for Candidates Evaluation and Government Spending Issues Favorability

Date	Day Mean Bush	Day Mean Kerry	Day Mean Tax Cuts	Day Mean Healthcare	5 Day Mean Bush	5 Day Mean Kerry	5 Day Mean Tax Cuts	5 Day Mean Healthcare
9/20	0.516875	0.480583	0.632426	0.741337				
9/21	0.525338	0.488435	0.594527	0.731527				
9/22	0.544755	0.471886	0.585165	0.726776	0.521972	0.478453	0.608853	0.729678
9/23	0.508176	0.475316	0.63242	0.738584	0.519306	0.480724	0.594724	0.724024
9/24	0.514717	0.476046	0.599727	0.710165	0.519871	0.482336	0.591152	0.716163
9/25	0.503543	0.491935	0.561782	0.713068	0.506756	0.49111	0.592602	0.714856
9/26	0.528165	0.496497	0.576667	0.692222	0.507318	0.496501	0.590499	0.704381
9/27	0.47918	0.515756	0.592417	0.720238	0.508176	0.499044	0.592967	0.70737
9/28	0.510986	0.502273	0.621901	0.686214	0.513282	0.502016	0.604309	0.708767
9/29	0.519006	0.488757	0.612069	0.725108	0.519228	0.501726	0.605112	0.707653
9/30	0.529073	0.506796	0.61849	0.720052	0.524126	0.506378	0.590637	0.695173
10/01	0.557895	0.495046	0.580682	0.686652	0.529031	0.505826	0.586517	0.69715
10/02	0.503672	0.539017	0.520042	0.657839	0.529674	0.510588	0.578722	0.691579
10/03	0.535507	0.499513	0.601301	0.696097	0.536195	0.501217	0.57717	0.68661
10/04	0.522222	0.512567	0.573093	0.697257	0.529481	0.501596	0.585921	0.69303
10/05	0.561677	0.459939	0.610731	0.695205	0.538207	0.489902	0.599324	0.702533
10/06	0.524324	0.496942	0.624439	0.71875	0.532766	0.491837	0.6038	0.705199
10/07	0.547305	0.480547	0.587054	0.705357	0.53385	0.490452	0.607544	0.705128
10/08	0.508303	0.509191	0.623684	0.709424	0.526994	0.496131	0.616057	0.707856
10/09	0.52764	0.505643	0.591814	0.696903	0.526154	0.496363	0.609796	0.712391
10/10	0.527397	0.488333	0.653292	0.708848	0.529666	0.498678	0.624286	0.714079

Cont'd

Date	Day Mean Bush	Day Mean Kerry	Day Mean Tax Cuts	Day Mean Healthcare	5 Day Mean Bush	5 Day Mean Kerry	5 Day Mean Tax Cuts	5 Day Mean Healthcare
10/11	0.520126	0.498101	0.593137	0.741422	0.526867	0.500233	0.61419	0.716393
10/12	0.564865	0.492121	0.659502	0.713801	0.528666	0.499529	0.619657	0.70821
10/13	0.494306	0.516968	0.573204	0.720994	0.525773	0.50775	0.603332	0.703017
10/14	0.536637	0.502121	0.619149	0.655983	0.526527	0.507831	0.604328	0.695862
10/15	0.512931	0.529437	0.571667	0.682886	0.515415	0.511425	0.583092	0.694535
10/16	0.523897	0.498507	0.598118	0.705645	0.51731	0.509116	0.583209	0.684477
10/17	0.509302	0.510094	0.553322	0.707168	0.514201	0.511637	0.577042	0.695485
10/18	0.503784	0.50542	0.573789	0.670705	0.525972	0.498871	0.589077	0.695475
10/19	0.521088	0.514726	0.588315	0.711022	0.52484	0.497989	0.584659	0.691717
10/20	0.571787	0.465605	0.631841	0.682836	0.531797	0.487863	0.596598	0.686874
10/21	0.518241	0.494098	0.576031	0.686856	0.535746	0.485435	0.604154	0.689153
10/22	0.544083	0.459467	0.613014	0.682955	0.537177	0.482695	0.599133	0.680972
10/23	0.523529	0.49328	0.61157	0.682099	0.526315	0.494054	0.590933	0.678348
10/24	0.528244	0.501026	0.563208	0.670113	0.522622	0.500054	0.595227	0.690646
10/25	0.517476	0.522397	0.590845	0.669718	0.520911	0.502222	0.592059	0.688507
10/26	0.499776	0.524099	0.5975	0.748344	0.525611	0.503239	0.59103	0.684144
10/27	0.535529	0.470309	0.597173	0.672261	0.519866	0.50743	0.588539	0.693405
10/28	0.547027	0.498365	0.606426	0.660282	0.5244	0.499264	0.592758	0.699536
10/29	0.499519	0.521981	0.550752	0.716418	0.535015	0.494907	0.594427	0.689737
10/30	0.54015	0.481566	0.61194	0.700375	0.53763	0.501918	0.593142	0.697484
10/31	0.552852	0.502317	0.605844	0.699351				
11/01	0.548605	0.505361	0.590747	0.710993				

Figure A – 1 Attitude-Behavior Consistency

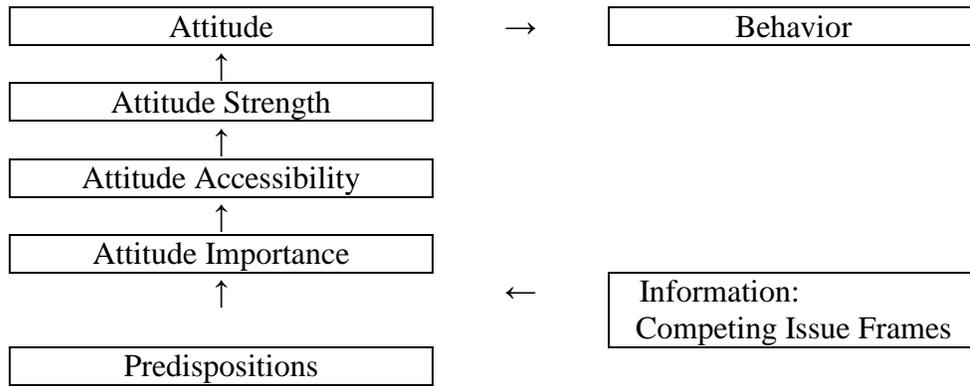
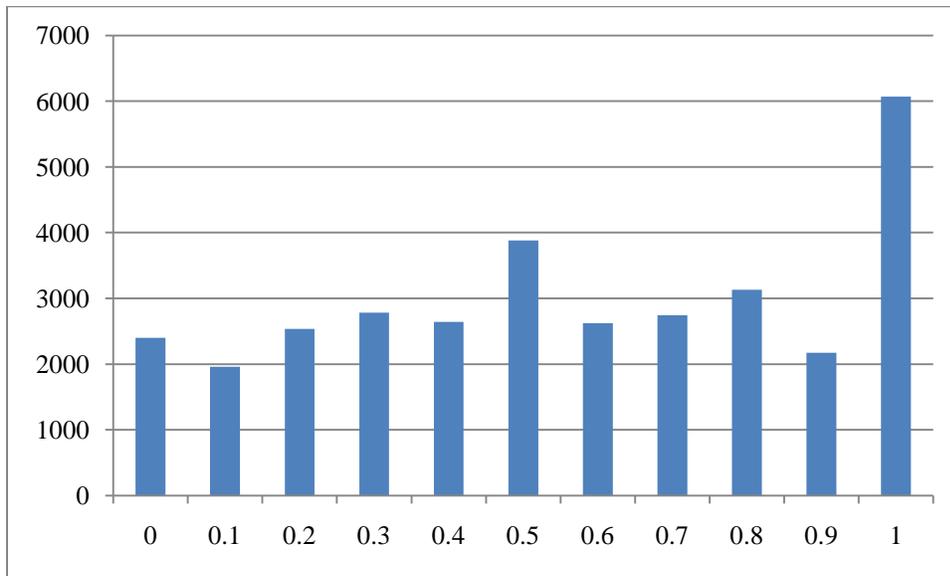


Figure A – 2 Frequency of Candidate Evaluation Scores



Note: Y-axis indicates the frequency of each score; X-axis represents the range of candidate evaluation scores. Cases are selected from April 16, 2004 through November 1, 2004.

2004 NAES Questionnaires

Candidate Evaluation

[cAA01 Bush Favorability]

Questions: On a scale of zero to 10, how would you rate George W. Bush? Zero means very unfavorable, and 10 means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable. Of course you can use any number between zero and 10.

If don't know: Do you mean you don't recognize the name, or you know the name but not well enough to rate them?

Number 0–10

11 Do not recognize name

12 Know name but cannot rate

999 Refused

[cAB01 Kerry Favorability]

Questions: On a scale of zero to 10, how would you rate John Kerry? Zero means very unfavorable, and 10 means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable. Of course you can use any number between zero and 10.

If don't know: Do you mean you don't recognize the name, or you know the name but not well enough to rate them?

Number 0–10

11 Do not recognize name

12 Know name but cannot rate

999 Refused

Opinions on Dual Issue Frames

[cCB17 Favor Making Bush Tax Cuts Permanent (Strongly Follow-Up)]

Question: Making recent federal tax cuts permanent—do you favor or oppose this?

If favor/oppose: Do you strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?

1 Strongly favor

2 Somewhat favor

3 Somewhat oppose

4 Strongly oppose

5 Neither favor nor oppose

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cCC06 Favor Government Health Insurance for Workers (Strongly Follow-Up)]

Question: The federal government helping employers pay the cost of their workers' health insurance—do you favor or oppose this?

If favor/oppose: Do you strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?

1 Strongly favor

2 Somewhat favor

3 Somewhat oppose

4 Strongly oppose

5 Neither favor nor oppose

998 Don't know

999 Refused

Predispositions

Self-interests

[cWA03 Education]

Question: What is the last grade or class you completed in school?

1 Grade 8 or lower

2 Some high school, no diploma

3 High school diploma or equivalent

4 Technical or vocational school after high school

5 Some college, no degree

6 Associate's or two-year college degree

7 Four-year college degree

8 Graduate or professional school, no degree

9 Graduate or professional degree

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cWA04 Household Income]

Question: Last year, what was the total income before taxes of all the people living in your house or apartment? Just stop me when I get to the right category—less than \$10,000; \$10,000 to less than \$15,000; \$15,000 to less than \$25,000; \$25,000 to less than \$35,000; \$35,000 to less than \$50,000; \$50,000 to less than \$75,000; \$75,000 to less than \$100,000; \$100,000 to less than \$150,000; or \$150,000 or more.

1 Less than \$10,000

2 \$10,000–\$15,000

3 \$15,000–\$25,000

4 \$25,000–\$35,000

5 \$35,000–\$50,000

6 \$50,000–\$75,000

7 \$75,000–\$100,000

8 \$100,000–\$150,000

9 More than \$150,000

998 Don't know

999 Refused

Social Identification

[cMA01 Party ID]

Question: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

1 Republican

2 Democrat

3 Independent

4 Something else

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cMA02 Strength of Party ID]

Question: Do you consider yourself a strong or not a very strong (from cMA01:

Republican/Democrat/Independent)?

1 Strong

2 Not strong

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cAE09 NRA Favorability]

Question: On a scale of zero to 10, how would you rate the National Rifle Association, also known as the NRA? Zero means very unfavorable, and 10 means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable. Of course you can use any number between zero and 10.

If don't know: Do you mean you don't recognize the group, or you know the group but not well enough to rate it?

Number 0–10

11 Do not recognize group

12 Know group but cannot rate

999 Refused

Political Principle

[cMA06 Conservative or Liberal]

Question: Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?

1 Very conservative

2 Conservative

3 Moderate

4 Liberal

5 Very liberal

998 Don't know

999 Refused

Political Knowledge

[cMC01 Know Cheney Is Vice President]

Question: Do you happen to know what job or political office is now held by Dick Cheney? If don't know: Anything come to mind?

1 Vice president (correct)

2 Other answer

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cMC03 Know Supreme Court Determines Constitutionality of Laws]

Question: Who has the final responsibility to determine if a law is constitutional or not? Is it the president, the Congress, or the Supreme Court? If don't know: Anything come to mind?

1 President

2 Congress

3 Supreme Court (correct)

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cMC05 Know Two-Thirds Majority Overrides Veto]

Question: How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a residential veto? If don't know: Anything come to mind?

1 Two-thirds (correct)

2 Other answer

998 Don't know

999 Refused

[cMC07 Know Republicans Are Majority Party in House]

Question 642 Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the United States House of Representatives? If don't know: Anything come to mind?

1 Democratic

2 Republican (correct)

998 Don't know

999 Refused

Media Exposure

[cEA01 Watched Network News in Past Week]

Question: How many days in the past week did you watch the national network news on TV? By national network news, I mean Peter Jennings on ABC, Dan Rather on CBS, Tom Brokaw on NBC, and the Jim Lehrer “NewsHour” on PBS.

Number 0–7

998 Don’t know

999 Refused

[cEA03 Watched Cable News in Past Week All dates]

Question: How many days in the past week did you watch a 24-hour cable news channel, such as CNN, FOX News Channel, or MSNBC?

Number 0–7

998 Don’t know

999 Refused

[cEA10 Read Newspaper in Past Week]

Question: How many days in the past week did you read a daily newspaper?

Number 0–7

998 Don't know

999 Refused