

Changing Horses in Wartime? The 2004 Presidential Election

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Abstract The literature makes clear that foreign policy affects voting, but it does not lead to clear expectations as to how a war will affect voting. Will views about the advisability of the war predominate? Or will the indirect effect through the incumbent's image be more important? Will a war crowd out other potential issues, particularly domestic ones? This paper addresses these questions through a series of focused analyses of NES survey data. We find that an increase in strong Republican partisans clinched the election for President Bush. The Iraq War was not a direct vote gainer for the President, but the larger War on Terrorism burnished his image as a leader, at least long enough to win the election. Likewise, the cultural war allowed President Bush to retain some of the votes that he might otherwise have lost due to the unpopularity of the Iraq War.

Keywords Presidential election · War · Foreign policy · Voting · 2004 election

In a reelection election, the electorate decides whether the incumbent is doing well enough to deserve another term. This decision has a particular dynamic during wartime since the incumbent can claim that the country would be less safe if he is turned out of office. That argument is likely to have special

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poignancy, assuming that the incumbent has been exhibiting strong leadership characteristics during the war. However, there has been little systematic examination of the effects of wars on individual voting behavior. To study the effects of wartime on elections and reelections, this paper examines individual survey responses on the 2004 U.S. presidential election. By looking at foreign policy evaluations in the context of other attitudes and demographic variables as well as partisan change, we gain insight as to the relative importance of foreign policy in wartime reelections. We provide evidence that war can be less a guarantee of reelection than the historical trend seems to suggest.

Wartime Elections

Historically, presidents have done very well in wartime reelections. Nixon was easily reelected in 1972 in the midst of the Vietnam War, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was reelected in 1944 in the middle of World War II, Abraham Lincoln was reelected in 1864 during the Civil War, and James Madison was reelected during the War of 1812. The nature of these wartime reelections is best captured by Lincoln's reelection slogan: "Don't change horses in mid-stream." Incumbents invariably argue that wartime is not the time to oust an incumbent from office. Challengers can attack the conduct of the war and claim that they would run it more ably than the incumbent, but there is inevitably greater uncertainty as to how steadfast the challenger would be in the prosecution of the war effort. All of this supports the conventional wisdom that wartime presidents always get returned to office, but that presumes that all wars are created equal.

One important distinction among wartime elections is between an election during a war and the first election after a war. The first election after a war can be seen as a referendum on whether the war was successful. In fact, however, we know that the incumbent often has lost in such an election even after success in war. Winston Churchill experienced this phenomenon in 1945, just as George H. W. Bush did in 1992. The lesson is simple and familiar by now: successful prosecution of a war does not necessarily translate into reelection. An election during wartime, however, involves a different voter calculus: whether to affirm the prosecution of the war itself, or whether to support a change in government during the war—which might lead to either a change in how the war is fought or an exit from the war. The 2004 U.S. election could be seen as the first election after the War in Afghanistan and the first election after the second War in Iraq. However, it is more appropriate to see the 2004 election as a wartime election: an election occurring while U.S. troops were still losing their lives in Iraq and while the U.S. was still engaged in a global War on Terrorism. Thus, we argue that the 2004 election should be seen as a wartime election.¹

¹ There are also elections just before U.S. participation in a war, such as 1916 when the U.S. had not yet joined World War I and 1940 when the U.S. was still not in World War II. These may be relevant elections, since the electorate certainly pays attention to the foreign situation when they vote, but they will not be considered further here.

A second relevant distinction involves whether the election is one in which the incumbent is running for reelection or stepping down. When the incumbent seeks reelection during wartime, the election becomes a referendum not only on whether the nation should be at war but also as to how well the war is being conducted. The opposition can claim to be able to fight the war better than the incumbent has fought it. The wartime reelection election also becomes a referendum on the leadership and competence of the incumbent president in his conduct of the war. There are simplistic claims that wartime presidents always get reelected. One problem with those claims is selection bias: presidents who do not think they can get reelected pull out of the race, so the potential effects of Korea in 1952 and Vietnam in 1968 on the reelection of Truman and Johnson cannot be tested. Omitting these elections would lead to exaggeration of the chances of an incumbent winning reelection during wartime if these were instances when the incumbent would not have won.

There are actually few wartime presidential elections. In 1812, James Madison became the first president to seek reelection during a war. In June of that year, Congress had declared war on Great Britain and the War of 1812 became the major issue of the presidential election. DeWitt Clinton attacked Madison for getting the country into war without adequate preparation. Clinton ran as an effective war leader, but one who would seek to end the war quickly. Clinton won most of the New England states, whose economy was hurt by the war. However, he lost in the West and the South and lost the presidential election when Pennsylvania went for Madison.

The next wartime election was during the Civil War when Abraham Lincoln sought reelection in 1864. His opponent was General George McClellan, who had been relieved of his command after leading the Union troops in the bloody Battle of Antietam in 1862 and allowing Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his rebel troops to escape. The Democratic platform demanded immediate efforts to end the war, but McClellan rejected this peace platform. McClellan was popular with the troops, but the disagreement between his position on the war and that of his party dissipated that potential base of support. Lincoln won reelection, becoming the first two-term president since Andrew Jackson's win in 1832.

The 1900 election was William McKinley's attempt for a second term in a rematch election against his 1896 opponent, William Jennings Bryan. The Spanish-American War was over by then, but the Philippine Insurrection was still going on. The U.S. had helped liberate the Philippines from Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898, but the decision to treat the Philippines as an American colony led to rebellion starting in 1899 and lasting through 1902. The opposition to the war formed the Anti-Imperialist League. The Democratic platform opposed colonies, and Bryan opposed McKinley's policy in the Philippines, but he did not attack the war *per se*. The Democrats also attacked business trusts, while the Republicans continued their attack on Bryan's support for free silver in his 1896 campaign. In the end, McKinley soundly defeated Bryan.

The next wartime election was in 1944, in the midst of World War II, with Franklin Delano Roosevelt seeking an unprecedented fourth term while running against New York Governor Thomas Dewey. The Republican platform accepted the New Deal, though Dewey opposed New Deal controls on free enterprise and attacked the inefficiency of the Democratic administration. Dewey campaigned more on Roosevelt's age and health than on the conduct of the war. Roosevelt won handily.

The 1952 election occurred in the middle of the Korean War, and Harry Truman stood down rather than seeking a second full term. Similarly the 1968 election took place during the Vietnam War, but Lyndon Johnson stood down rather than seeking a second term of his own.² The Vietnam War was again a major issue in the presidential campaign of 1972. Richard Nixon was running for a second term against his Democratic opponent, George McGovern. Nixon was pursuing a Vietnamization policy while McGovern supported a more speedy withdrawal. Nixon swept to victory.

The patterns that emerge from this historical review are very clear. Presidents who sought reelection during wartime have won. How much the wartime contributed to their reelection, however, cannot be discerned with available data. Again, two presidents stood down rather than attempting reelection during wartime—Truman in 1952 and Johnson in 1968—and their decisions not to run were at least partly due to the difficulty they would have had winning reelection; thus it is not as if reelection during wartime is always a cinch.

The 2004 election poses an important test of the weight of wartime in reelection.³ On the one hand, the wartime situation was unusual. The War on Terrorism is unlike most wars in that the opposing armies do not take direct aim on each other in pitched battles. Instead the war is fought in surrogate settings, whether in the skyscrapers of New York City, the mountains of Afghanistan, or the deserts of Iraq. In this sense, the War on Terrorism could be seen as most like the Cold War, where the battles were in Korea and Vietnam, with a secondary front in Berlin, rather than actual battles in either Moscow or Washington. But the War on Terrorism is unlike the Cold War in that the disputants are not two nation-states but rather a loosely organized band of militants taking on a dominant superpower. Because the nature of the enemy is amorphous, there can be disagreement as to appropriate battlefronts, as occurred when many felt that the second Iraq War was a diversion from the real War on Terrorism rather than being an integral part of that war. Indeed, the Iraq War provided an important campaign issue, in that opponents of the Administration could argue that that the post-war situation was

² Technically, Congress had authorized the Vietnam War in August 1964 with the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, but American involvement in the war was still limited until early 1965, so we do not treat 1964 here as a wartime election. The elections of 1948–1988 were all Cold War elections, but, as discussed below, the Cold War was a very different type of war than the others discussed here.

³ Given the nature of the 2000 election, one could quibble as to whether 2004 was a reelection, but there is no doubt that George W. Bush ran as and was treated as the incumbent in the 2004 election.

not being handled well without disputing the importance of the main front of the War on Terrorism.

Challengers during wartime elections generally campaign on a claim that they could run the war better than the incumbent. Still, the out-party recognizes that the incumbent is nearly always advantaged by the war, so that defeating the incumbent requires broadening the debate beyond the war. The Republican administration attacked George McGovern in 1972 not just for his stance on Vietnam but as the candidate supposedly favoring abortion, acid, and amnesty. Tom Dewey ran in 1944 not just on the conduct of the war but also against New Deal controls on the economy. DeWitt Clinton's candidacy in 1812 was based on economic discontent as well as antipathy toward the war. George McClellan's run in 1864 was the only wartime challenge of an incumbent that was fought exclusively on the conduct of war.

In accord with the historical pattern, the conduct of the war was not the only issue of the 2004 campaign. The economy was still in doldrums after a recession, especially in some key states. Further, there was another war going on, a culture war fought along the lines of moral issues. Ballot issues in several states banning gay marriage served to enhance the salience of the culture war to conservative voters. Republican campaigners downplayed the economic issue and instead emphasized national security and moral issues, while the Democrats emphasized the economic issue and the post-war situation in Iraq.

Additionally, views on a war interact with partisanship and candidate images. Party identification will still be an important force in wartime elections, with partisans of the incumbent's party being more supportive of the war and its conduct than those of the opposition party. Views on the war might be strong enough to cause changes in partisanship among the mass public, such as Republican gains around the Civil War and the shift toward political independence during the Vietnam conflict. Candidate factors are also affected by wartime, with the candidates' leadership and competence expected to be especially important. Presidential performance during wartime will affect views of his leadership ability and competence, while the in-party is likely to cast doubt on the challenger's ability to lead the war effort. Thus, this paper examines the wartime election of 2004 by ascertaining the relative importance of the war, the economy, moral issues, party identification, and candidate characteristics in determining the outcome of the election. Special attention is given to ways in which the reelection of 2004 differs from the election of 2000. Beyond the wars and issues particular to the election of 2004, a focus on the reelection context of 2004 would be incomplete without some comparison to its predecessor(s). After all, George W. Bush was the successful candidate in both the 2000 and 2004 campaigns; his easier victory in the reelection begs the question: what changed? Likewise, the focus on the wartime election asks which war(s) mattered to the voters and which candidate benefited. While needing a wartime leader was undoubtedly a major concern of the electorate, it is clear that it was not the only concern; indeed the other concerns may have been even more essential to Bush's victory.

Foreign Policy in Presidential Elections

The early empirical literature found little effect of foreign policy on presidential voting. Unlike domestic issues, foreign policy was viewed as too complicated and too remote for the average voter (e.g., Converse, 1964; Erskine, 1963), so foreign policy was considered salient in determining votes only in times of imminent danger. The public was found to be relatively unknowledgeable, as when 28% of voters were unaware in 1964 that China had a communist government (Hess & Nelson, 1985, p. 137), though numerous studies found presidential popularity to ebb and flow with foreign policy crises (Hurwitz et al., 1989; Kernell, 1978; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990; Mueller, 1970, 1973; Nincic & Hinckley, 1991). Foreign policy effects on vote choice were found only during the wars in Korea (Hess & Nelson, 1985; Stokes, 1966) and Vietnam (Kelley, 1983; Miller, Miller, Raine, & Brown, 1976; Pomper, 1975).

Later revisionist studies demonstrated that foreign policy issues can play a much greater role in voting than previously thought, an impact that was missed in earlier studies because foreign policy issues had been measured poorly, if at all. First, the early finding of unstable public opinion on foreign policy was reversed at the aggregate level when Page and Shapiro's (1982) analysis of more than four decades of survey questions found that changes in foreign policy opinions were no more frequent than in domestic policy. Furthermore the magnitude of the changes was comparable and the timing corresponded to major international and economic events. Looking solely at opinions on foreign policy from the 1930s to the 1980s, Page and Shapiro (1983) found that the public acts rationally given events, conditions, and the reporting of these by the media and political leaders.

In a series of articles Hurwitz and Peffley (1987a, b, 1990) and Peffley and Hurwitz (1985) demonstrated that foreign policy opinions are more consistently prominent in political evaluations than previously maintained. Looking at a survey of Minneapolis and St. Paul residents during the Reagan administration, Hurwitz and Peffley (1987a) argue that even without extreme international events individuals still utilize foreign policy based on retrospective judgments of policy outcomes and/or evaluations of the administration's "means" for achieving their policy goals. Previous survey examinations had largely missed the impact of foreign policy, because they focused on "specific policies when an emphasis on the public's preference for more general orientations (or 'postures') in foreign affairs would be more appropriate" (p. 238). In a related work (1987b), they find that foreign policy considerations do rely on an elaborate cognitive structure (see also Maggiotto & Wittkopf, 1981). They demonstrate how particular foreign policy beliefs, such as "military involvement", are derived from these postures, such as "anticommunism", which are in turn constrained by core values, like "morality of warfare". The causal ordering posited by this "hierarchical model" is largely confirmed in a subsequent panel data analysis (Peffley & Hurwitz, 1993). The postures are both more stable than the specific policy stances and responsible for the over-time stability in policy attitudes (see also

Hurwitz, Peffley, & Seligson, 1993 for a successful comparative test of the hierarchical model).

Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida (1989) most directly countered the earlier view that foreign policy was not relevant to presidential voting. Utilizing data from 1980 and 1984 NES surveys and Gallup Polls, they were able to dismiss claims that foreign policy views were either inaccessible or unavailable to voters. They showed that voters were both able to understand the more complicated foreign policy issues and to vote accordingly, especially when campaigns or the media “primed” the voters’ attention to the issue. The previous claim was that domestic attitudes are more important than foreign policy attitudes because the former were “more likely to be based on direct experience” and thus more accessible to the voter (Aldrich et al., 1989, p. 126). However, they find foreign policy issues to be nearly as influential as domestic issues in the 1984 presidential election and more influential than domestic issues in the 1980 election (Aldrich et al., 1989). The key finding is that the revisionist perspective on foreign policy holds true, even at the voting booth.⁴

Aldrich et al. (1989) classify elections into categories based on their foreign policy salience and accessibility given perceivable differences between candidate stances (p. 136). When the salience and accessibility are low and the differences between candidates small, there is a low effect. They suggest that 1976 was the only election since 1952 to fit the criteria for a low effect. There is a moderate effect when there is high salience and accessibility but small differences between candidate positions (as in 1968) or when there is low salience and accessibility but large differences between the candidates (as in 1956). There is a large effect when the foreign policy issues in an election are characterized by high salience and accessibility dependent upon a large difference between the candidate stances (e.g. 1972, 1980, and 1984).

Kessel’s analysis of open-ended comments about the candidates and parties in the NES surveys confirms that foreign policy issues directly affect the vote when the candidates have different issue positions. His maximum likelihood analysis finds that “international involvement was one of the strongest predictors throughout the Cold War,” with the single exception of 1968 when Nixon and Humphrey had similar positions on the Vietnam War (Kessel, 2004, p. 79). Indeed, international involvement was the second most influential issue in each of the three presidential elections of the 1980s. With the end of the Cold War, international involvement was not significant in 1996 and had only a “moderate influence” in 2000.⁵

⁴ There is also an interesting literature on the relationship between presidential reelections and war. Stoll (1984) finds that the use of force by the U.S. increases with presidential elections during wartime. In studying differences between the two parties in the diversionary use of force as related to unemployment and inflation, Fordham (1998) also finds greater use of force during wartime presidential reelection years.

⁵ Kessel’s (2005) analysis of the open-ended comments in the 2004 NES shows that international involvement was the most important vote predictor in 2004.

Foreign policy concerns were brought to the center stage in the 2004 presidential election, by the attacks of September 11, 2001, the subsequent War in Afghanistan and the second Gulf War. In particular, the large number of American casualties and extensive time commitment of U.S. troops made the Iraq war more accessible to the public. For example, Karol and Miguel (2005) found that President Bush's vote share in states with substantial casualties was particularly depressed as compared to his vote share in those states in 2000. The candidates took sufficiently different positions on the Iraq War that foreign policy could affect voting, especially since voters in 2004 could hold a president seeking reelection accountable for the status of the war. Thus, 2004 fulfills the Aldrich et al. (1989) conditions for a large effect of foreign policy on voting, since foreign policy was salient and the publicized difference between the candidates made it accessible to voters. While the revisionist literature makes clear that foreign policy affects voting, it does not lead to clear expectations as to how a war will affect voting. Will views about the advisability of the war predominate? Or will the indirect effect through the incumbent's image be more important? Will a war crowd out other potential issues, particularly those of a domestic nature? This paper endeavors to answer these questions through a series of focused analyses of survey data.

The Determinants of Voting in 2004

We analyze the 2004 National Election Study data. A total of 1,212 respondents were interviewed in face-to-face interviews, with 1,066 re-interviewed successfully after the election. Of these, 811 respondents voted for one of the major party candidates for President. Our analysis begins with an examination of partisanship trends through 2004, partly to see if partisanship changed as a result of the dramatic foreign policy developments since 2000. We recognize the possibility of people moving to the Republican Party out of a feeling that the incumbent party would best keep the nation secure in the post-9/11 world. Alternatively, a shift toward the Republicans could reflect success in their attempts to mobilize religious conservatives in the 2004 election, and we test this with a multivariate analysis of the impact of social-demographic variables on the vote.

We then analyze separately the effects of demographics, ideology and issues, and the candidates on the vote with partisanship controlled, after which the significant variables in those separate analyses will be combined into a final model of the 2004 vote decision.⁶ In the issues model, we test which issues significantly affected the vote in 2004, beyond the effects associated with partisanship and ideology. In terms of foreign policy, we anticipate that those

⁶ Because of the NES multi-staged sampling technique and the need to adjust for differences in response rates, we weight the data using V040101. The analysis treats these as "iweights" in Stata, except for the estimation of effects of predictors in the logit analysis for which "aweights" were required for the "tabstat" command to obtain variable means and standard deviations with casewise deletion of missing data. The key variables used in this paper are detailed in Appendix A.

who favor the war will support the wartime president. Specifically, we look for partisan differences in views about the war, testing if they hold up under controls for other issues, and we examine whether the war was the predominant issue affecting the vote. As emphasized above, however, the War on Terrorism is a multiple-front war, which permits people to have unusually differentiated opinions. Therefore we analyze separately attitudes toward the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. While we expect that support for both will be associated with voting for President Bush, we recognize that the two fronts had different levels of popularity with the American public. Indeed, they had different partisan support patterns, which could mitigate the importance of wartime for Bush's reelection.

In analyzing the effects of the war on the vote, we compare those effects with those of other issues, specifically the economy, social security, abortion, and gay marriage. Retrospective economic evaluations have been shown to affect voting in many elections, and the Democrats certainly ran against the economy in 2004. Social security has long been considered to be "the third rail of American politics," and President Bush's desire to privatize social security meant that he was daring to touch that rail. Abortion continued to be an important social issue, with some Catholic bishops wanting to deny communion to John Kerry because of his opposition to outlawing abortion. Finally, the legalization of gay marriage in Massachusetts put that issue on the national agenda, and ballot issues in several states to forbid gay marriage further increased that issue's salience. We test whether these domestic issues affected the vote, or whether the war predominated.

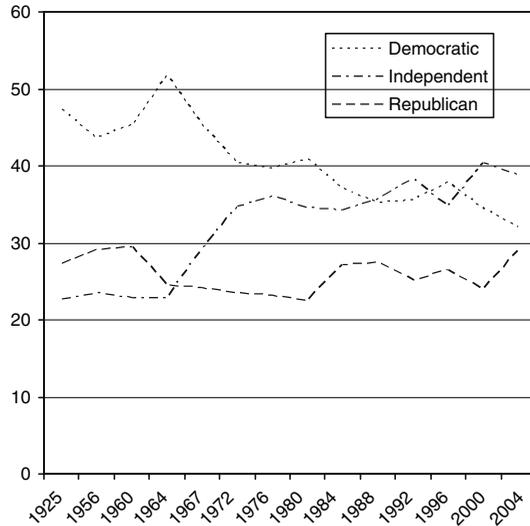
Certainly, politically relevant foreign policy evaluations will not be limited to opinions on the wars. Voters' perceptions of candidates will likely be influenced by candidates' respective foreign policy "postures" (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1987a), and such general orientations will undoubtedly come across in candidate trait evaluations. We look to see which candidate traits were relevant in the 2004 vote. We posit that an ongoing war should focus voters on the candidates' leadership and competence, but not on their integrity or empathy. Given the electorate's general preference for security, other values such as honesty and compassion may fall to the wayside for those related to strength and determination.

As our final step, we test the importance of attitudes on the war in 2004 in a fully controlled model that takes party identification, social demographics, ideology and issues, and candidate attitudes into account. This final model builds on the earlier analyses, using only the predictors that are significant in the separate analyses. This allows us to test whether wartime has a significant effect on the vote, beyond its indirect effects through candidate trait evaluations.

Party Identification and Demographics

The usual Democratic advantage in partisanship fell in 2004 (Fig. 1). When looking at just the first party identification question, the Democratic advan-

Fig. 1 Party Identification by Year, 1952–2004 (in percentages)

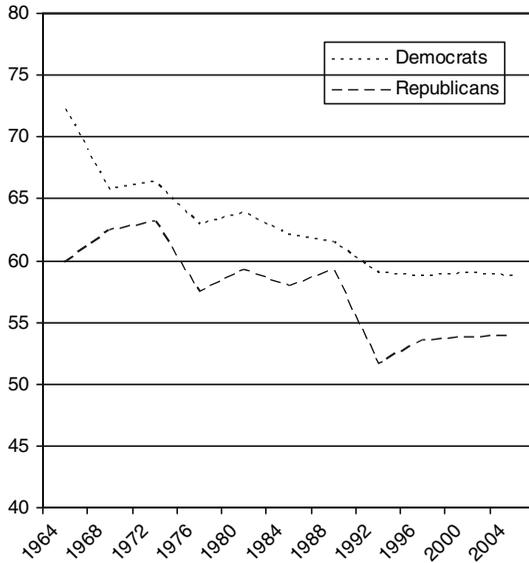


tage over Republicans was lower than in any of the 13 previous presidential elections for which we have measurements. Even when independent leaners are treated as partisans (see Appendix B Table 1), the Democratic plurality was at its lowest level since Bush senior's victory in 1988. Not only has there been a decrease in Democratic Party identification, but identification with the Republican Party was at a high in NES data rivaled only during the second half of the 1950s (when looking at only the first party identification question) or the mid-1980s (when leaners are treated as partisans). The total proportion of independent identifiers remained on the high side, dropping slightly from 2000, but the main story of partisanship in the 2004 election was that the Democratic lead over the Republicans had fallen below 10 percentage points. Furthermore, as will be seen shortly, the usual Democratic disadvantage in turnout totally offset the remaining Democratic lead in partisanship among the eligible electorate.

The party thermometers show that average reactions to the Democratic and Republican parties were virtually unchanged since 1992 (Fig. 2). The Republican Party did not suffer popularity setbacks due to the costs of the war in Iraq or the faltering economy, but, at the same time, neither party achieved greater popularity. However, attitudes towards the parties became more polarized, as shown by the most negative correlation between responses to the Republican and Democratic Party thermometers ($-.48$) in any NES presidential election survey.⁷ More than any year since the NES first used these thermometer items in 1964, people tended to dislike partisans of the opposite party (Appendix B Table 2).

⁷ As Green (1988) shows, correlated measurement error in the thermometers leads to understating how negative these correlations are—but the point remains that the 2004 correlation was much more negative than in previous years.

Fig. 2 Party Thermometer Means, 1964–2004



As to be expected, there was a very strong relationship between party identification and vote in 2004. Each candidate took about 97% of the vote of those who strongly identified with his party (Table 1). Kerry proved more adept at luring pure independents to support him (58.5–41.5%). Kerry’s apparent advantage here is mitigated by the small number of pure independent voters, about five percent, and the greater number of strong Republican voters than strong Democratic voters (about 4% more strong Republican voters than strong Democrats). Kerry took a slightly larger portion of the Republican leaners than Bush took of the Democratic leaners, but Bush was able to capture a higher proportion of weak Democrats than Kerry of weak Republicans. In the end, the greater number of strong Republican voters and Bush’s relative success among weak identifiers outweighed Kerry’s advantage among independents.

Table 1 Vote by party identification, 2000 and 2004

Party identification	Gore % of two-party vote	% of voters	Kerry % of two-party vote	% of voters
Strong Democrat	97.0	22.1	97.5	18.0
Weak Democrat	85.3	15.5	85.2	14.3
Leaning Democrat	77.8	12.8	87.8	15.3
Pure Independent	44.7	7.2	58.5	5.4
Leaning Republican	14.1	12.8	15.3	10.5
Weak Republican	16.2	12.3	10.5	14.8
Strong Republican	1.7	17.2	2.9	21.8
Total		99.9		100.0

Comparing the relationship between partisanship and vote in 2004 with that in 2000 suggests, at first glance, that Kerry should have done much better in the election than Gore, because Kerry made large gains among leaning Democrats (10%) and pure Independents (14%). However, the apparent improvement for Kerry across the party identification categories was illusory. The more important difference between 2004 and 2000 proves to be in the party identification of actual voters. The partisanship of actual voters, which in 2000 was 50.4% Democrat versus 42.3% Republican (including leaners in both instances), shifted to a very even 47.6% versus 47.1% in 2004, respectively. Kerry did as well as Gore among strong Democrats, but there were 4% fewer voters in that category than four years earlier. The counterpoint is that Bush not only did about as well among strong Republicans as he had four years earlier, but there were nearly 5% more voters within that category. Kerry's improvement over Gore's showing among pure independents was offset by a 2% decrease in the size of the pure independent bloc among actual voters. Thus, the distribution of party identification shifted away from the Democrats in key categories among actual voters. There are two potential explanations of this shift: Democratic identifiers in 2000 moving to less Democratic positions or increased turnout among potential Republican supporters.

Karl Rove's strategy of trying to turn out religious conservatives in greater numbers in 2004 appears to be successful to the extent that it can be tested with NES data.⁸ We can examine whether people who attended church more often and prayed more often were more Republican in their voting than would be expected on the basis of their partisanship. Multivariate analysis of socio-demographic influences on the vote, with party identification and other social-demographics controlled (Appendix B, Model I in Table 3), finds that these religious traditionalists were indeed more Republican in their voting. This analysis did not find education, gender, age, region, or marital status to have significant effects, which contrasts with 2000 when there were gender, regional, and marriage gaps in voting beyond what would be predicted from party identification differences (see a similar analysis for 2000 in Weisberg & Hill, 2004). The only other social group difference that was significant in this analysis is the usual racial gap, with African-Americans voting more Democratic than would be expected given their partisanship and other demographics. We will test the effect of religiosity more completely later in this paper, but this analysis suggests that the Bush appeal to religious conservatives did significantly increase his vote.

Respondent Ideology and Issues

Ideology was potentially activated more by campaign themes in 2004 than 4 years earlier. Gore's 2000 campaign was devoid of ideological rhetoric,

⁸ A small 2000-02-04 NES panel survey shows some shift in party identification toward the Republican side, but the number of panel respondents and the net shift are both too small to place much confidence in this shift.

while the Bush campaign used language such as “compassionate conservative” to solidify ideological-partisan linkages. In the 2004 campaign, Bush attacked Kerry’s ideological positioning, painting Kerry as an extreme liberal. Kerry, not unlike Dukakis in 1988, chose to respond to the ideological attacks by questioning his challenger’s competence across issues rather than criticizing his ideology. While the Bush team portrayed Kerry as ideologically extreme, Kerry’s focus on specific issues allowed Bush to define himself as a moderate Republican without seriously challenging his status as a “compassionate conservative.”

The NES respondents were asked to place themselves on a seven-point liberal-conservative scale. The average respondent evaluation was slightly less conservative in 2004 than in 2000, shrinking back to the 1992 level (Table 2). Given the nature of the 2004 campaign, it is not surprising to find that respondents, when asked to place the candidates on the same scale, placed Kerry as decidedly liberal, second only to McGovern. By contrast, Bush was seen as more moderate than most other Republican nominees during the period that NES has asked this question, though his average placement was somewhat more conservative in 2004 than in 2000. The distance between the average ideological placement of Bush and Kerry was the largest of any candidate pair since that of Nixon and McGovern, showing that the polarization of the election extended to ideology as well as feelings toward the parties. As in every election since 1972, the Republican nominee was seen as somewhat more extreme on ideology than the Democrat. However, with the average respondent being somewhat on the conservative side of the scale, the average respondent was closer to Bush ideologically than to Kerry (see column 4 in Table 2), though this difference was less than that of the preceding two elections.

The NES study included relevant foreign policy questions on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, social issues questions on the legality of gay marriage and

Table 2 Average placement on 7-point Liberal-Conservative Scale, 1972–2004

	Average respondent	Democratic nominee	Republican nominee	Distance difference	Distance between candidates
2004	.21	-.91	1.00	-.33	1.91
2000	.35	-.76	.93	-.52	1.70
1996	.35	-.78	1.05	-.43	1.83
1992	.21	-.81	1.04	-.19	1.85
1988	.37	-.76	1.11	-.39	1.87
1984	.24	-.55	.96	-.07	1.51
1980	.31	-.26	1.21	.33	1.47
1976	.23	-.75	.90	-.31	1.65
1972	.14	-1.55	.87	-.96	2.42

Values are average scores on the seven-point liberal-conservative scale, where -3 is extremely liberal and +3 extremely conservative. Distance differences indicate how much closer the average respondent is to the Democratic candidate than to the Republican: positive values show that the average person is closer to the Democratic nominee

abortion, and social welfare and economic questions on the privatization of social security and the retrospective evaluation of the economy. These issues did not all favor the same party. The public overwhelmingly felt that “the U.S. war against the Taliban government in Afghanistan was worth the cost.” However, the majority of NES respondents did not approve of the way that George Bush was handling the War in Iraq, with more people strongly disapproving than approving either strongly or not strongly. Correspondingly, most respondents felt that “taking everything into account” the war in Iraq was not “worth the cost.” More people felt that “as a result of the United States military action in Iraq” the threat of terrorism against the United States had increased rather than decreased, with an in-between proportion feeling it had “stayed about the same.” Thus, the War in Afghanistan was popular with the public, while that in Iraq was not. The public did approve of Bush’s handling of the War on Terrorism, but a strong majority felt “things have pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track,” rather than that “things in this country are generally going in the right direction.” The overwhelming view was that the economy had worsened in the last year, though people were optimistic that it would get better in the next 12 months. They viewed both unemployment and inflation as having worsened in the past year. The public was favorable to “allow[ing] people to put a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes into personal retirement accounts that would be invested in private stocks and bonds,” though many people did not yet have a position on this issue. As to social issues, more people were at the pro-choice end of the continuum than at the pro-life end, while favoring a law that makes late-term “partial birth abortions” illegal. At the same time, most people were against same-sex marriages.

To what extent did people vote on the basis of their views on terrorism and Iraq? The 2004 exit polls show that people who cited terrorism as the reason for their vote were more likely to vote for Bush, while those who cited the War in Iraq were more likely to vote for Kerry (Weisberg, 2005). However, this could be due to rationalization after the election. Bush claimed the Iraq War was part of the larger War on Terrorism, so people who supported Bush would have chosen terrorism as the most important issue, while Kerry argued that the War with Iraq was a diversion from the fight against Al Qaida so his supporters would have chosen the Iraq War as the most important issue. Furthermore, the exit poll analysis does not test the importance of foreign policy with factors such as partisanship controlled in order to see whether the differences are simply a matter of Republicans and Democrats taking different foreign policy stands.

A better test can be obtained by looking at which matters NES respondents mention when asked before the election what they like and dislike about the parties and candidates. About three-quarters of the comments (78%) made about terrorism favored the Republicans (pro-Bush, pro-Republican Party, anti-Kerry, or anti-Democratic Party), while only one-quarter of the comments (26%) made about Iraq favored the Republicans. This large difference suggests that the War on Terrorism and the Iraq War were seen as favoring opposite parties, though answers to these pre-election questions still could

have been affected by the person's vote intentions. Controls on partisanship are essential for confirming this effect.⁹

We next test whether attitudes on the war significantly affect the vote when statistical controls are employed for party identification, ideology, and other issues. While the wars on terrorism and in Iraq were important in 2004, we hypothesize that these were not the only issues that affected the vote. We performed a logit analysis of the vote, using retrospective evaluations of the economy, social security privatization, gay marriage, and abortion as predictors as well as controlling on party identification and ideology (Appendix B, model II in Table 3). Attitudes on the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars were significant as were retrospective economic evaluations and views of gay marriage, while privatization of social security and abortion were not. Thus, the wars indeed had significant effects on individual voting in 2004, but so did the economy and the cultural war as represented by views on gay marriage. We use this analysis to cull the set of issues included in our final model below.

Candidate Evaluations

The candidate thermometers show that neither nominee was wildly popular. Bush received a higher average rating (55.4°) than Kerry (52.9°), but Bush was also more controversial as shown by a much higher standard deviation of Bush's thermometer ratings than Kerry's (33 for Bush versus only 27 for Kerry). Polarization is also evident in the thermometers. The correlation between nominee thermometers is at its lowest value of $-.61$, showing sharper polarization than in any election in which thermometer ratings are available. This partisan polarization and the divergence in feelings toward Bush created opportunities for the Democrats, but Kerry was unable to achieve the popularity level required to capitalize on these opportunities.

In a reelection campaign, the incumbency advantage may be heightened by war. First of all, war places the President in the public spotlight, accentuating

⁹ Making causal claims demands exogenous independent variables. Endogeneity may strike in the form of either omitted variable bias or reverse causation. To prevent the former, we attempt to control for all relevant variables; however the extensive list that perfect controls would require expand the models to meaninglessness. Furthermore, there is a great possibility that even including every variable in our dataset would still not take into account the potential for unobserved heterogeneity. However, we do control for all variables typically thought to influence both the vote and the independent variables, including party identification and ideology. In addition, we have relied on traditionally strong measures in our models—measures that have been found to be consistently related to the vote in a theoretically consistent direction. We posit that a range of foreign and domestic policy issues affect the vote (as well as a host of social, psychological and demographic variables). Our models rely on cross-sectional data and therefore we cannot be certain that we did not model reverse causation. It is entirely possible that the NES respondents rationalize their evaluations of these factors and issues based on their vote choice, anticipated or actual. But if vote intention is channeled through partisanship during our current polarized politics, then our controlling on party identification should minimize the endogeneity problem. Without panel data or appropriate instrumental variables we cannot be positive about the causal direction; however we are encouraged by pre-election open-ended responses that our posited flow is in the appropriate direction.

his leadership duties. Furthermore, the act of going to war often increases the country's level of patriotism; such patriotism is often associated with their president, as the most visible symbol of the country. War also provides an opportunity for an opponent to challenge the competence of the administration's conduct of the war. Bush portrayed himself as a steadfast leader in his conduct of the war, while arguing that Kerry "flip-flopped" on the war (and other issues). Kerry, like other wartime challengers, challenged the competence of the administration's conduct of the war.

The NES candidate trait battery shows how the electorate views the candidates. Respondents are asked how well a particular trait typifies a candidate, for example: "provides strong leadership." Kinder (1986; see also Funk, 1996, 1999) categorizes the battery of candidate trait questions into four general dimensions: leadership, competence, integrity and empathy. Bush was seen as being the better leader, actually higher than any Republican candidate since Reagan (Table 3). Kerry was seen as better than Bush on both competence and empathy; Bush received the lowest evaluations on competence of any major party nominee since the questions were first asked in 1980, while Kerry received the weakest ratings on these dimensions of all Democratic nominees during this period, even though he led Bush on them. Finally, Bush and Kerry came out fairly even on the integrity dimension: Bush was ranked higher than Kerry on morality while Kerry topped Bush on perceived honesty.

Thus, the election played out as a battle between leadership on one side and competence and empathy on the other. Bush projected a strong sense of stable leadership, while Kerry led in terms of competence and empathy. One could imagine a wartime election turning on either leadership or competence. An incumbent would be a shoo-in for reelection if he were viewed as best on both, while a challenger's success would be guaranteed if he were seen as best on both. With the two heading in opposite directions in 2004, we must see which matters most for the voting decision – whether voters view leadership or competence as the more important trait for a wartime president. Thus we measure the relative importance of the four candidate dimensions with composite variables created by combining the measures of Bush less that of Kerry for each question within each trait category. Each of these dimensions has a significant effect on the 2004 vote (Appendix B, model III in Table 3). The strong across the board significance of the composite variables on the vote is hardly surprising, and therefore we move to a fully controlled model of the vote.

The Attitudinal Basis of Wartime Reelection

We have given an overview of the role of party identification, social demographics, ideology, issues, and candidate evaluations for voting in 2004. We next assemble these different ingredients to develop an overall model of major-party presidential voting in 2004. So far we have seen that the Democratic advantage in party identification had lessened in 2004, to the point that it did not really help them among actual voters. Reactions to the parties and to their

Table 3 Candidate trait perceptions, 1980–2004

Trait	2004		2000		1996		1992		1988		1984		1980	
	Bush	Kerry	Bush	Gore	Dole	Clinton	Bush	Clinton	Bush	Dukakis	Reagan	Mondale	Reagan	Carter
<i>Leadership</i>														
Strong leader	63	49	67	59	60	59	56	62	54	57	71	49	60	39
Inspiring					38	52	39	59	39	49	59	44	49	37
Can't Make Up Mind*	27	45												
<i>Competence</i>														
Knowledgeable	59	75	71	84	84	83	83	83	83	82	77	81	70	75
Intelligent	61	81	77	85		88	82	87	78	88	83	86		
<i>Integrity</i>														
Moral	68	62	73	74	79	39	80	48	78	80	82	85	71	81
Honest					69	41	59	51	67	78				
Dishonest*	32	24	23	28										
<i>Empathy</i>														
Cares about people	45	54	47	58	42	56	35	66	50	65	47	64		
Compassionate						69	59	79	62	73	60	79		

Values are the percentage of respondents who believe that the trait fits the candidate “extremely well” or “well”

* Traits refer to those asked in a negative direction

nominees were very polarized, with the candidates seen as more polarized on ideology than in recent elections. Religiosity and race affected the vote, while other demographics did not have significant independent effects. Issues relating to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars affected the vote, as did the economy and gay marriage. Kerry was seen as the more competent candidate, but Bush was seen as a stronger leader. Empathy worked more to Kerry's advantage than integrity did to Bush's. However, these results were obtained without full controls, so it is necessary to move to a composite model to assess correctly the different influences on the 2004 vote.

The composite model shown in Table 4 includes party identification, demographic variables, ideology and issues, and net evaluations of the can-

Table 4 Final model of the Bush vote in 2004

	Mean (St dev)	Coef. (St error)	Std. dev. effect
Party ID	.028 (.744)	1.209*** (.349)	.415
Religiosity	.258 (.816)	.089 (.228)	.036
Black	-.712 (.703)	-.912*** (.287)	-.305
Ideology	.111 (.448)	1.228* (.618)	.263
Economy	-.132 (.556)	.351 (.362)	.095
Gay marriage	.300 (.912)	.425* (.216)	.188
Iraq	-.141 (.982)	.534* (.219)	.252
Afghanistan	.453 (.884)	.409+ (.226)	.176
Leadership	.156 (.526)	1.245* (.615)	.311
Integrity	.032 (.484)	1.200 (.629)	.278
Competence	-.148 (.474)	.723 (.587)	.167
Empathy	-.062 (.618)	2.791*** (.551)	.690
Constant		-.708* (.355)	
LR χ^2	818.440		
<i>N</i>	750.000		
Pseudo <i>R</i> ²	.787		

The dependent variable is whether the respondent voted for Bush (1) or Kerry (0). The final column shows the effect of moving from one standard deviation below the mean of the variable to one standard deviation above the variable's mean, when all other variables are kept at their means. The coding of the other variables is explained in Appendix A

Standard errors are shown in parentheses below the coefficients. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses below the means

+ $P < .1$; * $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$; *** $P < .001$

didates on the four trait dimensions. We use the earlier analysis to cull the list of socio-demographic and issue variables, keeping only those that were at least marginally significant in the preceding analysis. As to be expected, party identification retains its significance in this equation. The only demographic variable that is significant is race: as in comparable analysis for recent elections, the African American vote was more Democratic than can be explained on the basis of the other predictors.

The key test is whether foreign policy so dominated the election as to crowd out the effects of ideology and other issues. The importance of foreign policy in the election is seen by the fact that attitudes on the War in Iraq were also highly significant, though attitudes on the War in Afghanistan were just barely significant. Retrospective economic evaluations did not retain their impact when controlling for the other variables. However, ideology and the culture war, as fought on the issue of gay marriage, both significantly affected the vote.¹⁰ Thus, foreign policy issues mattered in the 2004 vote, but not to the exclusion of other issues. And the mean value shows that the direct effect of the war on the vote hurt the incumbent President rather than contributing to his vote margins.

Only two candidate traits were significant under this barrage of controls: leadership and empathy. The insignificant effect of perceived candidate competence echoes the results of similar analyses of the 1996 and 2000 elections (Weisberg & Hill, 2004; Weisberg & Mockabee, 1999), though Republican charges about Clinton's and Gore's honesty made integrity a significant matter in those elections.

Looking at all the variables together, empathy actually has the greatest impact on the vote; a move from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean on empathy shifted the probability of a Bush vote by .69. Empathy worked to the Democrats' advantage, with the mean among voters being $-.06$ on a -1 to $+1$ scale. Party identification is second, having a .42 effect. While Table 1 showed a Democratic advantage in partisanship, the mean partisanship actually was pro-Republican (.03) because the greater number of Republicans among strong identifiers outweighed the Democratic advantage among leaners. Leadership had an effect of .31, with Bush having the advantage on this dimension. Race had an effect of $-.31$, expectedly in the Democratic direction. The effect of ideology was .26 in the Republican direction. Iraq had an effect of .25, working against the President with a mean value below the zero neutral point at $-.14$. Finally, gay marriage had a .19 effect, in the Republican direction. Thus, as we discuss further below, the war in Iraq was important to the 2004 election, but not so important as to eliminate the impact of the culture war.

¹⁰ While religiosity is not significant in this equation, it is certainly correlated with views on gay marriage and with ideology, both of which are significant.

Conclusions

In contrast to 2000, George Bush unequivocally won the 2004 presidential election. But the election was not a landslide and his margin was too narrow to be considered a mandate. The country was polarized and still fairly evenly divided, though Bush achieved a comfortable lead in the popular vote (albeit his Electoral College victory again rested with the outcome in a single state, this time Ohio).

The War on Terrorism gave George Bush the legitimacy that the 2000 election had not conferred on him. It allowed him to run as the incumbent Commander-in-Chief in 2004. For whatever controversy there was about his handling of the Iraq War, there was less controversy over his handling of the War in Afghanistan and the overall War on Terrorism. Furthermore, his actions subsequent to 9/11 made people think of him as a strong and decisive leader, an image that was denied to John Kerry. Our final model shows that Bush's advantage on leadership was large enough to compensate for the vote loss that he would have incurred because of Iraq.

John Kerry did not prove to be a strong contender. The Democrats may not have expected him to be as dynamic a candidate as Bill Clinton, but he was not even perceived as favorably, in terms of candidate traits, as Michael Dukakis was in 1988 or Walter Mondale in 1984. George W. Bush was not seen as highly competent, certainly not at the levels of Ronald Reagan, Bush the Elder, or Bob Dole, but events helped George W. Bush to be seen as a stronger leader than his father and Dole. That gave Bush an advantage as a candidate that Kerry could not eliminate. Another way to put this is that the Republicans won the ad war to define the candidates, a war that nowadays is as important as the other wars.

Kerry still had three major factors going for him: that the public was not altogether happy with the handling of the Iraq War, that he came off as more caring about people than did George W. Bush, and that Democrats have had a special appeal to African Americans over the last several presidential elections. However, George Bush countered Kerry's appeal not only by his advantage on leadership, but on general ideology and on the issue of gay marriage. Additionally, the usual Democratic advantage on party identification was neutralized among voters, with Republicans having an advantage in terms of strength of partisanship.

Particularly important here is the role of the Republican appeal on the basis of the cultural war. The cultural war provided an opportunity for President Bush to gain back some of the votes that he might otherwise have lost to the unpopularity of the Iraq War. It is notable that the cultural war issue of gay marriage was the only issue other than Iraq that is significant in our final model, showing that the cultural war strategy was successful.

The other tantalizing aspect of the 2004 election is the shift in partisanship. The old Democratic lead in party identification has been eroding over the years, and this was not the first election in which the Democratic lead in party identification among actual voters was eliminated. But the Republican

advantage among strong partisans is new to 2004. One interpretation is that the 9/11 attack on America and subsequent events of the first G. W. Bush term may have moved some people away from the Democratic column and towards the Republican column. Another interpretation is that the mobilization of new voters over moral values, particularly gay marriage, led to an infusion of Republican identifiers. Either way, the important question for the future is the permanence of this development—whether the events of the second G. W. Bush term will keep new converts in the Republican column. The results of the 2006 midterm elections suggest that the Republican advantage in partisanship in 2004 was just transitory.

Finally, our original expectation of an incumbent advantage during a wartime reelection merits considerable qualification, given our findings. The Iraq War did not prove to be a direct vote gainer for President Bush, but the larger War on Terrorism burnished his image as a leader at least long enough to win the election. Meanwhile, the Republican advantage on the culture war offset any potential loss due to the economy. The slogan “don’t change horses in midstream” presumes consensus that the horses are heading in the right direction; it is fully appropriate to get off a horse that seems to be headed to the wrong shore or is likely to fall into a precipice. In the end, the 2004 election proves a powerful reminder that wars are not always popular, and even wartime presidents sometimes need to make use of peripheral issues. The 2004 presidential election continued the perfect streak of wartime presidents being reelected, but that reelection was not as easy as history might predict.

Appendix A

Coding the Key Variables of the 2004 Presidential Election

All variables were taken from the 2004 National Election Study (www.umich.edu/~nes) of the University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies, Ann Arbor, Michigan. We have recoded all of the independent variables therein on a scale of -1 to $+1$, with positive values for conservative positions and negative for liberal positions. This permits the means to be easily compared across variables and the effects to be substantively interpreted, though this recoding has no impact on the standard deviation effects or P -values.

Vote Choice: 1 for Bush and 0 for Kerry, with all other responses discarded.

Demographics: Sex, race, resident of the south, and marriage were coded as dummy $-1/+1$ variables, with $+1$ representing female, black, Hispanic, southern and married. The southern states were limited to Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Married included “partnered” couples. Education was collapsed with a single category for those without a high school diploma, thereby creating a seven-point scale that was converted into the -1 (no high

school diploma) to +1 (post-graduate) scale. Age was collapsed at the high end with everyone 89 and older combined into age 88, after which age was linearly transformed from -1 (the youngest category) to +1 (88 and older).

Party Identification: V043116, rescaled: -1 for “strong Democrat” to +1 for “strong Republican,” with “don’t know” responses, missing values and other parties discarded.

Ideology: V043085, rescaled: -1 for extremely liberal to +1 for extremely conservative, with “don’t know” responses recoded to 0 and nonresponse discarded.

Abortion: V045132, with answers rescaled: +1 for never permitted, +.5 for abortion permitted only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman’s life is in danger, -.5 for permitting abortion only after the need has been clearly established, and -1 for permitting abortion as a matter of personal choice, with missing values placed at the middle.¹¹

Retrospective Evaluation of the Economy: V043098, rescaled: -1 for the economy has gotten much worse in the “last year” to +1 for the economy has gotten much better, with 0 for those who said the economy has stayed the “same” in the previous question (V043097), with missing values placed to the middle.

Social Security Privatization: V045143a: “Do you [favor/oppose] it [investing social security funds in the market] STRONGLY or NOT STRONGLY?” Rescaled: 1 for favor strongly; .5 for favor not strongly; 0 for missing values; -.5 for oppose not strongly; 1 for oppose strongly, with missing values placed to the middle.

Afghanistan War: “Taking everything into account, do you think the U.S. war against the Taliban government in Afghanistan was WORTH THE COST or NOT?” (1 for “worth it,” 0 for don’t know, and -1 for “not worth it”)

Iraq War: “Taking everything into account, do you think the war in Iraq has been WORTH THE COST or NOT?” (1 for “worth it,” 0 for don’t know, and -1 for “not worth it”)

Candidate Traits: These scales are additive measures of evaluations of Bush less those of Kerry in each category: leadership, competence, integrity and empathy. Each trait was originally measured on a four point scale, so the additive measures can be no larger than 8 and no smaller than -8; dividing the measures by 8 yields a scale ranging from -1 (pro-Kerry) to +1 (pro-Bush).

¹¹ Excluding the “don’t know,” “refused,” and missing values on this and other issue variables has no substantive effect on the models.

Appendix B

Supplemental Tables of the 2004 Presidential Election

Table 1 Party Identification by Year, 1952–2004 (in percentages)

	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Democratic	47.2	43.6	45.3	51.7	45.4	40.4	39.7	40.8	37.0	35.2	35.5	37.8	34.3	32.1
Independent	22.6	23.4	22.8	22.8	29.1	34.7	36.1	34.5	34.2	35.7	38.3	34.7	40.4	38.9
Republican	27.2	29.1	29.4	24.5	24.2	23.4	23.2	22.5	27.1	27.5	25.2	26.4	23.9	29.0
Dem plurality	20.0	14.5	15.9	27.2	21.2	17.0	16.5	18.3	9.9	7.7	10.3	11.4	10.4	3.1
Dem + leaners	56.8	49.9	51.6	61.0	55.2	51.5	51.5	52.2	47.9	46.9	49.8	51.8	49.6	49.6
Pure Indep.	5.8	8.8	9.8	7.8	10.5	13.1	14.6	12.9	11.0	10.6	11.6	9.1	12.3	9.7
Rep + Leaners	34.3	37.5	36.1	30.3	32.8	33.9	33.0	32.7	39.5	40.8	37.5	38.1	36.7	40.7
Dem Plurality	22.5	12.4	15.5	30.7	22.4	17.6	18.5	19.5	8.4	6.1	12.3	13.7	12.9	8.9

Table 2 Party Thermometer Means, 1964–2004

Party	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Democrats	72.3	65.8	66.4	62.9	63.9	62.1	61.5	59.0	58.8	59.0	58.7
Republicans	59.8	62.4	63.1	57.5	59.2	57.9	59.2	51.6	53.5	53.8	53.9
Difference	12.1	3.4	3.3	5.4	4.7	4.2	2.3	7.4	5.3	5.2	4.8
Correlation	-.28	-.18	.02	.01	-.23	-.40	-.39	-.27	-.42	-.34	-.48

Thermometer scores range from 0 to 100. Higher scores correspond to more favorable evaluations

Table 3 Demographic, Issue and Candidate Traits Effects on the Bush Vote, 2004

	Model I	Model II	Model III
Party ID	3.429*** (.234)	2.395*** (.271)	1.694*** (.292)
Education	-.171 (.236)	–	–
Female	-.158 (.130)	–	–
Black	-.797*** (.220)	–	–
Hispanic	-.117 (.263)	–	–
Age	.289 (.282)	–	–
South	.184 (.149)	–	–
Marriage	.019 (.133)	–	–
Religiosity	.406** (.158)	–	–
Ideology	–	1.592*** (.487)	–

Table 3 continued

	Model I	Model II	Model III
Economy	–	1.000*** (.299)	–
Gay Marriage	–	.423* (.179)	–
Iraq	–	1.013*** (.171)	–
Afghanistan	–	.658*** (.183)	–
Social Security	–	.195 (.206)	–
Abortion	–	.060 (.211)	–
Leadership	–	–	1.752** (.563)
Integrity	–	–	2.056*** (.582)
Competence	–	–	1.321** (.500)
Empathy	–	–	2.615*** (.485)
Constant	–.715* (.341)	–.212 (.222)	.153 (.205)
LR χ^2	607.330	744.170	808.500
<i>N</i>	761.000	770.000	771.000
Pseudo <i>R</i> ²	.576	.697	.757

The dependent variable is whether the respondent voted for Bush (1) or Kerry (0). Model I refers to a model of the demographic variables; Model II refers to a model of issues with a control for ideology; Model III refers to a model of candidate traits. The coding of the other variables is explained in Appendix A

* $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$; *** $P < .001$

Standard errors are shown in parentheses below the coefficients

Table 4 Nominee Thermometer Means, 1968–2004

Nominee	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Democratic	61.7	49.1	63.1	56.6	57.4	56.8	56.1	59.7	57.3	52.9
Republican	66.5	66.0	60.6	56.1	61.2	60.6	52.3	52.0	56.6	55.4
Independent	31.4			52.0			45.4	40.0		
Winner's Lead	4.8	16.9	2.5	–.5	3.8	3.8	3.6	7.7	.7	2.5
D–R Correlation	–.18	–.4	–.3	–.29	–.5	–.38	–.39	–.45	–.39	–.61

Thermometer scores range from zero to 100. Higher scores correspond to more favorable evaluations

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