

THE CAMPAIGNS CHARACTERISTICS MAKE: TELEVISION ADVERTISING AND  
CHANGES IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN PERCEPTIONS

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## ABSTRACT

### THE CAMPAIGNS CHARACTERISTICS MAKE: TELEVISION ADVERTISING AND CHANGES IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMAPAGN PERCEPTIONS

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Though other methods are growing in prominence, television advertising continues to be a significant portion of presidential campaign spending. The effects of these commercials, however, remain unclear. This dissertation suggests that a substantial component of their effect comes from their ability to shape perceptions of personal characteristics of the candidates running for president. Combining national advertising data with national polling data, this dissertation finds that the effects of candidate appeals via television vary in shaping how voters view the candidates on a personal level. Effects appear to be stronger on initial airing, and no consistent effects for repeated mentions are found. Negative advertising appears to be dangerous, as its effects are often harmful for the candidates running the ads. While no large-scale and consistent support is found for sustained advertising effects, the findings support a theory of running tally information processing and suggest that for some candidates personal appeals can be effective in shaping perceptions.

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The length and breadth of the modern presidential campaign has dramatically grown over the last decade, with current potential contenders for their party's nomination declaring earlier and earlier, some even declaring before the midterm election in between presidential elections<sup>1</sup> and the field becoming well-populated during the year prior to the election. This elongation of the campaign timeline has been joined with a broadening of scope in terms of what aspects of a candidate represent an appeal or a rationale for their selection. While consideration of the personal qualities of potential presidents has been a factor since the initial days of the office, increasingly the ways in which candidates present and argue for themselves centers on their personal traits and abilities rather than more policy-focused rationales. As politics increasingly becomes personalized, *who* is in the office is on par with – if not exceeding – considerations of *what* constitutes their policy program.

This trend in campaigning is influenced, to a large extent, by changes in the mediums through which candidates have been able to present their arguments and appeals to potential supporters. As television spread and grew beginning in the 1950s, the importance of *visual* presentation altered the incentives and strategies for candidates to justify their election.

Increasingly, candidates came to be understood (not just by observers but by the candidates themselves) as products to be sold, with marketing strategies akin to those for consumer goods

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<sup>1</sup> John Delaney declared his candidacy for the Democratic nomination on July 28, 2017, almost 1200 days before the 2020 election. This gambit, while noteworthy, failed spectacularly.

becoming relatively standard (see, for example, Waterman, Wright, and St. Clair 1999) and the idea of a “personal brand” as a means to define one candidacy growing in importance as candidates looked to define themselves and their quest for office. The abilities of televisual presentations to allow voters and candidates to connect not just on substance but on *appearance* only further facilitated the linkage between perceptions of personal qualities and overall candidate assessments. The importance of *personal* rather than political failures as facets of scandals beginning in the 1970s (Nixon’s ambition, dishonesty, and “trickiness” as part of the understanding Watergate), continuing through the 1990s (Clinton’s sexual predilections, deceptiveness, and “slickness” as part of the Lewinsky affair), and through the 2000s (George W. Bush’s honesty and trustworthiness surrounding the Iraq war<sup>2</sup>) continuing to today (the current discussion surrounding President Trump’s personalistic failings as an impingement on his abilities to handle crises and perform the job of the presidency) further made the personal qualities of presidents a relevant consideration for voters assessing their options at election time.

This focus on personal attributes and traits, then, has inexorably become a significant portion of the campaign strategy for those running for president. Whether as a means to offer voters an option that contrasts against perceived shortcomings or flaws of the incumbent or as a means to give voters a non-policy reason for desiring their election<sup>3</sup>, it is clear that campaigning on one’s personal characteristics is an important component for modern aspirants to the presidency. However, what effect this type of campaigning actually has on observers’ perceptions of those seeking the executive office is unclear. More generally, the effects of television

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2 Though this particular angle is not strictly a personal failing, nor was it the first time a president had suffered due to perceived untrustworthiness surrounding an unpopular war – Johnson in the run-up to the 1968 election and Nixon in 1972 could conceivably be painted with this brush as well.

3 Democratic candidate Michael Bennet’s appeal on Twitter in August 2020 that if he was elected “you won’t have to think about me for 2 weeks at a time” is one of the more memorable examples of this, suggesting that if he were elected he would be so personally boring so as to not even warrant attention.

advertising on perceptions of and assessments about presidential candidates have been relatively unexplored. Campaign messages are generally perceived to have more of a prompting or mobilization effect (though this is not consistent for all messages [Sides & Karch 2008]), fitting with larger research on the effects of media regarding abilities to prompt or frame rather than persuade (Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder 1982), but advertising on personal qualities would seem to be intended to achieve a different outcome, that of convincing voters of one's authentic traits and why those traits are relevant to the job they are seeking. While some framing and prompting can be important (reminding voters of one's military service, for example, if military and security matters are seen as particularly important or framing honesty as a key part of the job if the incumbent is seen as particularly untrustworthy), candidates are also likely using these advertisements to *persuade* voters that they (the candidates) do possess particular traits. Thus, understanding when and how candidate mentions of their own (or their opponent's) personal characteristics affect perceptions and assessments of the personal traits of candidates is an important question that requires attention.

The importance of traits for voter selection of candidates has long been an object of study in political science, with research generally assessing what voters want in a president or specifically examining how voters perceived and rated the candidates in a particular election. However, whether or not advertising from the candidates themselves actually influence perceptions of those candidates has generally been overlooked by researchers. Whether or not voters can name aspects of a candidate they like or dislike or basing conclusions on the importance of traits off a pre-selected set of trait questions (often asked at a single point close to the end of the campaign or soon after election day) can help demonstrate some effect from the candidates' own advertising, but a more direct approach is needed to better understand when and how the candidates' appeals can have an effect on shaping how they are viewed and – more

importantly – how sustained that effect can be. Campaign effects literature is generally pessimistic on the sustainability of these contemporary sources of influence, with effects understood as diminishing quickly, with the underlying factors or fundamentals framing the larger political environment asserting more of an effect on the final voting decision rather than fleeting moments over the course of the election timeline (Erikson and Wlezien 2012). However, given that personal characteristics are (1) often mentioned at multiple points throughout the campaign in advertising and (2) often introducing pieces of new information about the candidates running, these advertisements should not be understood as short-lived campaign effects but rather a larger component of voter learning about their options. If these advertisements shape how voters view the candidates and influence their perceptions of what the relevant traits are for a particular election, then advertising is directly affecting voting decisions in ways that have not generally been theorized or explored. Furthermore, there is a theoretical rationale (described in greater detail in the literature review) to assume that early pieces of information *about candidate personality* may have outsized influence in shaping later perceptions and the decision making criteria voters bring into the voting booth. If voters are told early on in the campaign about a candidate’s personal traits and those traits make the candidate more appealing, then this advertising is having a potentially more indirect effect on voting choice, but no less important for its more circuitous effect.

Though larger, more generalized television advertising is diminishing in importance compared to more “mediated forms of indirect or two-step communication” (Roemmele and Gibson 2020, 601) such as social media and “more personalized and individualized content” (Roemmele and Gibson 2020, 602) that targets specific voters instead of larger geographical or demographical groupings, it is clear that television advertising is still a substantial portion of the modern campaigning structure that only continues to grow: by one estimate, television spending

on political ads in the 2019/2020 campaign cycle will grow by over \$2 billion compared to four years earlier, with the \$4.55 billion spent on television political advertising representing almost 2/3 of total political ad spending (eMarketer Editors 2020). While certainly an outlier, the fact that Michael Bloomberg spent \$183 million on television advertising (Schaul, Uhrmacher, and Narayanswamy 2020) over less than four months suggests that campaigns still view television advertising as a critical way to reach and persuade voters to select them. It seems nonsensical for these staggering amounts to be spent if candidates and the professionals who staff the advertising arms of their campaigns perceive no benefit to be gained from running television ads. They must be doing *something*, though what that purpose is is still somewhat unclear. One possibility may be that the television advertising candidates run connects them with voters on a personalistic level; that seeing the candidate, learning about the type of person they are, and what their strengths and values are helps forge an attachment that facilitates a greater likelihood of receiving their votes. Television, more than any other medium, allows candidates to present themselves on an individual, personal level; these presentations, while often touching on policy matters, can help demonstrate the type of president they would be, an important step in persuading a voter to cast their ballot for them.

Thus, the research that follows, while examining three past elections (the 2000 contest between then-Vice President Al Gore and Texas governor George W. Bush, the 2004 contest between incumbent president Bush and Massachusetts senator John Kerry, and the 2008 contest between Arizona senator John McCain and Illinois senator Barack Obama) presents findings that are relevant in the current election cycle and those to follow. As long as television advertising continues to be the predominant way campaigns bring their messages to voters (at least in terms of money spent), then how those ads are able to influence voter perceptions and assessments will continue to be critical. The continuing trend of personalized politics and ongoing discussions of

the types of traits, backgrounds, and qualities a good president should possess only serve to highlight the importance of developing a research program that analyzes just under what circumstance and in what ways perceptions of personal characteristics can be shaped by the candidates themselves, how voters consume and catalog that information, and how perceptions of traits at different points in the campaign influence the final choice voters make at the conclusion of the political cycle. By combining data noting the content and date of television advertisements run by (or on behalf of) the two major party candidates with a daily survey of Americans over the course of each election campaign, this research looks to offer an initial exploration of the contemporary effects of appeals that make note of candidate personality traits or personal qualities; specifically, this research looks to determine if and how advertising making mention of a particular trait influences perceptions of that trait (or a close equivalent, depending on survey question wording and availability) in the days after an advertisement airs. If advertisements have little contemporary effect or work in opposite ways than intended (that is, if ads promoting a candidate lead to that candidate being viewed less positively on an associated trait question), that suggests that the effects of advertising may be more diffuse or indirect. While future research will be necessary to fully explore the temporal impacts of advertising at different points in the campaign, what follows looks to begin an important direction for research on presidential campaign advertising and voter perceptions and assessments of candidates.

The rest of the dissertation will proceed as follows. Chapter 2 will explore the surrounding literature about personality traits in presidential campaigns, advertising effects, and other associated factors that shape how voters assimilate and utilize information. Chapter 3 will describe the methods and data used. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will explore and analyze results from the 2000, 2004, and 2008 presidential campaigns (respectively). Chapter 7 will provide a summary of



the myriad findings, and Chapter 8 will discuss future directions for research. Appendices providing detailed breakdowns of the results by month and tone follow.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Determining How to Approach Trait Measurement*

Including candidate traits as part of the larger understanding of the vote choice has a long history, though often its role has been supplementary, with a focus on partisanship (Kelley and Mirer 1974) or more context-specific factors (Stokes 1966) operating as the primary influence. This approach makes sense, given that more long-standing factors can influence the ways in which voters evaluate candidates (Weisberg and Rusk 1970), and thus likely shape whatever role candidate characteristics directly play in the vote decision. Despite this long history, the study of candidate traits is still plagued with inconsistencies and difficulties from numerous angles.

Generally, candidate traits have been included in studies by asking voters either to list those aspects of candidates or parties they like or dislike or utilizing a pre-existing list of traits in surveys or experiments to test correlations between these traits and likelihood of voting for a candidate. Earlier attempts at using like/dislike lists from the NES (Stokes, Campbell, and Warren 1958, Glass 1985) have found relationships between more positive descriptions and vote choice, but the causal nature of this relationship remains suspect. As will be discussed in more detail below, while the use of like/dislike measures may be effective measures of the aspects voters hold in their memory about the candidates, it is also likely that many of these are influenced by the vote decision itself (especially for those voters interviewed after the election but also for those who have made up their mind at the time of interview).

Utilizing researcher-defined lists of traits can help avoid these issues, but come with their own methodological shortcomings. Generally, pre-determined lists focus on obviously important traits, such as competence, trust, reliability, leadership appeal, and personal appearance (Miller and Miller 1976; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986)<sup>4</sup> to examine how important these factors are to voters in a presidential election. Theoretically, the use of such traits is justified, as the assessments voters have of the candidates in these areas likely help them preview how the candidates would perform as president (Buchanan 1988). Using traits as previews of performance suggests that there may be something of an “ideal” that voters possess when assessing candidates, though research in this vein has found that while voters can describe their ideal, candidates are not assessed equally on those standards (Kinder, Peters, Abelson, and Fiske 1980). Voters may also apply different heuristics separate from judging candidates against an ideal, such as focusing on information about a particular policy (Iyengar, Hahn, Krosnick, and Walker 2008) or using a more general information search strategy that allows them to handle the information overload present in presidential campaigns (Lau and Redlawsk 2006)

Allowing voters to define their ideal or desired traits in a president has provided some insight, but results have been varied. Voters have described their ideal presidents as possessing honesty, intelligence, and independence (Sigel 1996), as well as genuineness and leadership ability (Kjeldahl, Carmichael, and Mertz 1971), though competence is also found to be an important determinant in assessing candidates (Hellweg, King, and Williams 1988). Complicating this voter-driven assessment is the fact that these ideals are not necessarily static. Trent, Mongeau, Trent, Kendall, and Cushing (1993) find shifts in the ideal candidate between 1988 and 1992, attributable to macro-level political changes and the important issues in the campaign

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4 Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk (1986) utilize essentially the same groupings as Miller and Miller (1976), but instead label them as competence, integrity, reliability, charisma, and personal characteristics.

(personal issues being less important in 1992 due to the importance of the economy, for example). Similarly, Trent, Trent, Mongeau, and Short-Thompson (1997) find changes between 1992 and 1996. Though in both cases the traits of honesty and an ability to talk about the country's problems remain paramount in voters' minds, the finding that the importance of traits can wax and wane over time complicates the development of a standard ideal for voters. The idea of a standard is also undermined by findings that demonstrate some variability in the importance of particular traits across demographic levels (Funk 1997, specifically across levels of political knowledge). This may be suggestive that a standard does not exist but rather that voters rationally assess which candidate is better able to face specific challengers or address the salient issues of the day or respond to perceived failings of past presidents.

### ***Importance of Campaign Contexts***

The findings of Trent et al (1993) regarding changes from 1988 to 1992 raise the larger possibility that the dynamics of a particular campaign can make some traits more or less important in voters' minds. National-level factors (Holbrook 1994; Erikson and Wlezien 2012) are well-understood to influence the campaign, and saliency of issues across campaigns has long been recognized as inconsistent (Stokes 1966). Often, though, research has focused primarily on the variability of issues rather than how this variability affects the salient traits voters use in choosing between candidates. Studies of campaign advertising have often been descriptive in nature, with little cross-campaign comparison. Generally, advertising has been found to primarily focus on issues, with some image-based content of secondary importance (Joslyn 1980; Johnston and Kaid 2002). While many of the traits focused on by candidates are understandable, if not expected (see Joslyn 1980 and Benoit and McHale 2003 for exhaustive lists), others have found that the balance of traits presented by a candidate is influenced by the specific candidate and the

context in which they are operating. Shyles (1984) found significant variation between candidates in the 1980 Republican primaries (similar to Bartels [1988] and his discussion of the candidates trying to be alternatives to Reagan) but also theorizes that many of the trait-based appeals were attempts to differentiate themselves from the perceived failings of President Carter (experience and competence being the two most heavily utilized traits in advertising). The perceptions of the incumbent, then, may affect the larger electoral context, altering which traits are most or least important in campaigning (Hellweg, King, and Williams 1988), though there may be a general core set of traits that are consistently important. How traits fit into campaigns, how campaigns affect trait appeals, and how these appeals influence voters is still unclear.

### ***Traits and Voter Learning***

In terms of the candidate's ability to influence voter decision-making, research has focused primarily on voter learning about the candidate and the effect this learning has on perceptions. Gaining information about the candidates through debates (Benoit, McKinney, and Holbert 2001; Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte 2003; Van Der Meer, Walter, and Van Aelst 2016) and interpersonal communication between the candidate and the voter (Kaid 1977)<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, the gender of candidates can influence the desired or perceived traits in an election (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Anderson 2002), suggesting that candidates can indirectly set the themes of a campaign separate from more national-level forces. Generally, political information that touches on value assessments (especially as it relates to the behavior of the incumbent party) can play a substantive role in the vote choice independent of economic fundamentals. Presidential approval certainly plays a role (Erikson and Wlezien 2012), but more scandalous information can

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<sup>5</sup> Social media connections (following a candidate on Twitter, for example) can increase positive perceptions as well (Kobayashi and Ichifuji 2015), though it is unclear if this has the same effect as direct communication on an interpersonal level.

have a similar effect (Fackler and Lin 1995). The candidates can exert some influence over the vote decision, but it is unclear what the balance is between external forces establishing particular issues as important and the campaigns themselves setting the agenda (whether directly or indirectly).

The candidate's ability to directly influence the saliency of particular issues appears to be greater when discussing more personality-based aspects of the campaign. External factors, such as economic strength or policy moods, appear fixed; candidates, then, campaign within that context. If desired traits are not as exogenous (or do not change much from election to election), then candidates may be able to gain an advantage through self-definition of important traits. Evidence for this can be seen in the context of the primary, where the effect of partisanship is minimal and issue divisions are minor. Perceptions of the candidate's image can be an influential factor when these other factors are minimized (Marshall 1984), though it is likely that in some electoral contexts image can be influential as well (see, for example, Lau and Redlawsk's [2006] discussion of campaigns where the two major party candidates are less ideologically distinct). Campaigns that are less focused around ideological differences can also lead to charisma being more influential (Shamir 1994). Even in more ideologically distinct cases, image can enter into the decision more indirectly. As Rudd (1986) describes, advertising that is primarily issue-focused can still be utilized to associate candidates with particular traits (whether positively or negatively); for example, an advertisement highlighting a candidate's stance on education may include footage of him speaking with parents or playing with children, which serves to connect the candidate to images of being a good family man. Image and issue can also be connected when candidates take different stances on the issues - candidates taking more specific stances relative to their opponents can benefit in image assessments (Rudd 1989). Regardless of the nature of the election, there is evidence that issues and image are highly correlated, suggesting that issue

stances enter into image perceptions of candidates more generally (Hacker, Zakahi, Giles, and McQuitty 2000). The process by which image enters into candidate assessment and vote choice, then, may involve some measure of issue-based assessments as well, then.

### ***How Traits Influence Assessments***

The discussion of whether image is wholly independent or simply tied up with issue-based assessments is separate from the larger discussion of how personality traits enter into candidate assessments. Generally, this discussion relates to the larger question of how candidate assessment is conducted from a psychological standpoint but connects to separate questions concerning the larger role of campaign information, the ability of the news media to shape assessments, how partisanship influences assessments, and what constitutes candidate “image”.

Traditionally, traits have been assumed to enter into candidate assessment via an “on-line processing” method, where information about traits influences assessments positively or negatively at the time of consumption but little detail is retained in long-term memory. Assessments of candidates in this model are instinctual; voters can remember how they feel about a candidate, but they cannot necessarily articulate all the reasons behind that feeling.<sup>6</sup> On-line processing can be helpful in explaining how voters choose between candidates in a primary setting; as Williams, Weber, Haaland, Mueller, and Craig (1976) describe, voters utilize traits to winnow down primary candidates, rejecting candidates as disliked information is revealed about them. Justification for the on-line model is demonstrated more generally in findings that voters tend not to remember specific campaign information but rather internalize their feelings about

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<sup>6</sup> If this understanding is correct, it calls into question the use of the like/dislike measures discussed above; voters giving reasons they like or dislike a candidate may simply be listing the things they do remember about a candidate regardless of whether or not those factors are actually important in shaping their assessment.

that information, updating a running tally of positive and negative assessments (Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995). The running tally appears to best account for how voters weigh new information; as more and more knowledge is gained about a candidate, new pieces of information appear to have a diminished effect in shaping the overall assessment (Holbrook, Krosnick, Visser, Gardner, and Cacioppo 2001). These findings are corroborated by Funk's (1996) discussion of weathering scandal, where initial assessments of candidates can mediate or exacerbate later negative information, suggesting a process of initial assessment that is then updated as new information is encountered rather than assessments that are purely driven by clear remembrance of positive or negative pieces of information about a candidate.

The divide between an on-line processing and more memory-based model may be overstated, however. Memory, while perhaps not the main force by which assessments are created and updated, still enters into the process, especially when thinking about candidate assessment in comparative terms. Voters may use on-line processing as a means to update their feelings about individual candidates, but when faced with a choice between multiple candidates memory may become more important. Memory is especially important in this area, as comparative information about candidates may not be encountered simultaneously (for example, one candidate's stance on a policy issue may be encountered days or weeks before information on the other's candidate(s) position; without remembering the first candidate's stance direct comparison would be more difficult) (Lau and Redlawsk 2006). Whether or not voters specifically remember great amounts of detail, though, still appears uncertain.

Understanding how assessments are created and updated requires a comprehension of how information enters into the vote choice more generally. Much of the focus in this area revolves around questions of media influence, though there are more voter-specific factors that must be included in this discussion. Primarily, what sort of information gets processed and



retained by voters varies depending on the motivations of the receiver (for example, voters looking to forge assessments about individual candidates will focus on different pieces of information than voters specifically looking to choose between two or more candidates) (Garrazone 1983). If voters are mainly focused on making a choice between the competing candidates, successful campaigns will be those that meet expectations, counter their opponents' messaging, and garner greater amounts of news coverage (Iyengar and Simon 2000). This understanding of the role of information is complicated, however, by larger factors that influence how information is provided to voters and how voters process that information.

### ***Continuing Importance of Traits and Campaign Messaging***

One fairly recent strain of argument has proposed that, relative to other factors such as partisanship, personal characteristic assessments are becoming less relevant as important considerations on or determinants of the vote choice (Wattenberg 2016)<sup>7</sup>. The 2016 election, though, appears to have been cause to push back against this perceived decline, as explorations of the relative perceptions of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have suggested that how the candidates were viewed on a personal level did have some relevance for the final outcome (indeed, Wattenberg [2019] himself is one of the more direct contributors of this argument). Furthermore, there is reason to believe that campaigns themselves still play an independent role in shaping voter perceptions of and reactions to the candidates seeking the presidential office.

This summary, though, should not be read as suggesting that candidate trait perceptions are a particularly strong means of *persuading* voters; however, research continues to demonstrate that these perceptions do matter independently of other factors, such as partisanship or race. As

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<sup>7</sup> This article, though, relies on self-reported considerations, which do not necessarily mean that voters are not utilizing traits in their assessments but instead that they are tending not to list them as considerations.

Holian and Prysby (2020) describe, while partisan voting was quite substantial in the 2016 election, those who switched parties tended to have quite negative views of their own-party candidate relative to the alternative (that is, Democratic Trump voters “rated Trump better than Clinton on every one of the trait items, including being knowledgeable and really caring about people” [Holian and Prysby 2020, 15], with similar findings existing for Republican Clinton voters). While this strong overlap between low ratings of one’s partisan candidate and defection might seem to suggest a post-hoc rationalization (especially important given the cognitive stress such a defection might entail), Holian and Prysby offer a counterargument that is generally applicable for this post-hoc concern. As they argue,

If voters form character trait perceptions solely to justify their vote after the fact, it seems unlikely that a candidate would do much better on some traits than on others, or that voter trait perceptions would lag behind voter support so dramatically. In sum, our existing theoretical knowledge of voting behavior, combined with the indirect evidence from the patterns of candidate character trait perceptions over time, provides a number of reasons to conclude that perceptions of candidate character traits do influence the vote for president (2020, 18, footnote 6)

While 2016 might be considered something of an outlier given the historically poor ratings of the two major party candidates in terms of general likeability (Saad 2016), the fact that even in a more media-dense environment basic measurements of traits still appear relevant suggests that the (relatively) historical campaigns discussed here can provide important insights as to how candidates campaign and how they attempt to present themselves to voters. *Who* candidates are perceived to be still matters; it is logical to conclude, then, that how they attempt to define themselves and their opponent matters as well.

Fairly recent research has continued to demonstrate the importance of candidate assessments and the abilities for campaign messaging to affect those assessments. From an assessment standpoint, the work discussed above suggests a fairly direct role for traits, but perceptions may be more generally understood as part of the candidate’s appeal on “social”

capital (Yun 2020), understood as “the dimensions of candidate attributes that cultivate interactive connections with voters beyond political capital” (Yun 2020, 4). This area of research provides something of a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which perceptions might be important – as discussed above, the reliance on clearly stated traits defined by the researcher or self-reported likes and dislikes may be introducing biases or error, by making respondents either try to define their feelings through remembered details of a candidate’s messaging or biasing through prompting; though Yun’s work also relies on researcher-defined and delineated traits to create the social capital measures, the measures of warmth are much more comprehensive than past attempts to measure voter perceptions of traits. Thus, increased perceptions of positive traits does seem to specifically help with candidate appeal to voters, but being viewed more positively can also have appeal effects that are more nebulously defined (general “warmth” or feeling a connection to the candidate).

Though operating in different venues than the research that follows, current research is also reaffirming the abilities of campaigns and their messaging to set the larger tone of discussion around candidates and shape framing of the race more generally. Negative messaging, in a general sense, can negatively affect perceptions of the candidates – the finding that emotional responses are common when observing negative messaging, and the associated finding that those physical responses are often not the same as self-reported reactions – lends some credence to a on-line processing or running tally approach (Fridkin, Kenney, Cooper, Deutsch, Gutierrez, and Williams 2020); observers of ads may be internalizing emotions or perceptions that are only later sorted through and cognitively understood. While recent research has found that attacks from candidates on social media are not often linked to incivility in comments sections (Rossini, Stromer-Galley, and Zhang 2020), the related finding in this research that attacks from public users is correlated with more incivility in responses does suggest some indirect role for campaign

framing and magnification of messaging; that is, while the candidates' making attacks does not appear to dramatically heighten feelings of dislike toward the opponent, echoing of those attacks by others can achieve this end. This indirect effect, though a bit more focused on tone rather than content, fits well with contemporary research regarding the abilities of candidates to use social media to gain attention in the news media, thus allowing messaging from the campaign to reappear in other forms, widening the abilities for campaigns to influence perceptions of what is and is not important for voters to consider (Wells, Shah, Lukito, Pelled, Pevehouse, and Yang 2020).<sup>8</sup> Though this focus on social media or online campaigning suggests new and unique ways for campaign messaging to influence candidate perceptions and those perceptions to influence larger voter decisions and assessments, the research that follows has continued relevance given that (in 2018 at least) television advertising is still a highly dominant venue for campaign messaging (Fowler, Franz, and Ridout 2020). The abilities for conventional media to help shape relevant traits and perceptions, then, are still critical areas for study.

### ***The Media and Candidate Traits***

The media's role as a provider of information is one of the most discussed aspects of political campaigning, as understanding the way in which voters process information must take into account the content of the information they consume. In a presidential election, determining which specific pieces of information voters actually encounter may not be as important as simply understanding the general themes represented in the media – the national scope of the campaign and its (ever-increasing) length may mean that voters can pick up information about the

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted, though, that this article specifically covers only Donald Trump in the 2016 election, whose abilities to garner free media through the use of social media may not be generally possessed by past, present, or future candidates.

candidates' issue and image passively (Dreyer 1971-1972; Zukin and Snyder 1984). Regardless of whether or not passive learning occurs, the media voters use in gathering information can have an effect on what information is consumed and retained. Television, for example, may lead to more image-based considerations being retained as important (Hofstetter, Zukin, and Buss 1978), while newspapers allow for more information to be retained due to their consumers being more able to take the information at a slower pace (Druckman 2005). As with the motivation distinction discussed above, how voters gather information about the campaign influences the types of information they are exposed to and thus likely influences the considerations available to voters as they assess candidates.

Whether or not the media can significantly alter the matters salient to voters is a separate question from general differences in informational content and retention. While media effects research has generally found little ability for these sources to change voters' minds on an issue, there appears to be some ability for the media to make particular issues or considerations more salient (Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder 1982). Presidential campaigns require a slightly different approach, however, as news media sources are not the only ones presenting information about the candidates. Advertising from the campaigns is increasingly prevalent, and oftentimes the news media and campaigns are presenting contrasting information (Graber 1972), presenting voters with a more complicated information environment. How voters balance these sources of information and which sources are more influential is still unclear, however. Advertising for candidates can increase information and positive affect toward those candidates (Atkin and Heald 1976), and increased exposure to the candidates can increase assessments of trustworthiness (Mendelsohn 1996), but this effect may not be consistent for all groups. Atkin and Heald's (1976) findings were greater for those voters with less awareness of the campaign or the less-interested, and Mendelsohn's (1996) results also suggested differential effects across varying media sources.

Advertising may affect lesser-aware voters more, but news media may be more able to prime voters with greater political awareness (Miller and Krosnick 2000), suggesting that the ways in which the media environment influences voters' levels of information and perceptions of what is salient is not easily generalizable. While concerns about the media's ability to shape perceptions of candidate viability (Bartels 1988; Ramsden 1996) likely operate more broadly, media shaping of particular issues and traits as salient is less clear.

### ***The Effects of Partisanship***

The effects of the media and how the information voters consume influence their perceptions and assessments of candidates is further complicated by the recent development of more and more partisan media sources (Taber and Lodge 2006). Proliferation of more partisan media via radio, television, and (increasingly) Internet sources has created greater opportunities for voters to choose the information they consume, and research shows that voters are tending to choose information that aligns with their pre-existing views (Iyengar and Hahn 2009) or consume greater amounts of information about candidates that share their partisan alignments (Iyengar, Hahn, Krosnick, and Walker 2008). This effect is likely self-reinforcing, as consuming partisan media has been shown to move political opinions in the direction of that media (Jones 2002). As more and more partisan sources proliferate and the messaging across these partisan divides diverge more and more, the ability for the media to exert an independent effect in providing information or shaping assessments may be diminished (Bennett and Iyengar 2008), leading to partisanship functioning as a stronger influence in candidate assessment and vote choice.

Partisan differences also exist in how campaigns present their candidates, possibly exacerbating differences attributable to partisan media sources. Shyles (1984) description of the content of Democratic and Republican advertisements finds substantive differences in the relative

mentions of particular traits, a finding corroborated by Benoit and McHale (2003). Hayes (2005) further suggests that particular traits have become more associated with each party and that candidates can possibly spur partisan defections by “stealing” traits from the other party.<sup>9</sup> Partisanship can also influence the traits that will be perceived as salient, particularly if the opposition party’s candidate is viewed as lacking a particular trait (Goren 2002), though this process involves partisan elites making that deficiency an issue rather than voters independently bringing that deficiency into their assessments.

### ***Methodological Issues***

How candidates define themselves, then, is something of a contextual exercise. While personal appearance of the candidates can be an indicator of particular traits (Rosenberg, Kahn, and Tran 1991), what traits get highlighted in a campaign are shaped more by the context of the election. Recognizing the nature of the political environment is beneficial for candidates (Devlin 1993), and focusing on a singular message can help candidates in their self-definition (Devlin 1997, 2001). Perceptions of candidate traits are not entirely shaped by the candidates or the media, though. Larger political events can generate differing perceptions of candidates – for example, winning or losing an election substantively changes voters’ perceptions of candidates, with winners viewed as more powerful or more likely to take risks (Anderson and Bass 1967). The non-static nature of trait perceptions as events develop during a president’s term (Mudd and Pohlman 1976) further complicate the definition and measuring of candidate image, as the way voters view a candidate before and after an election is not necessarily consistent. Even more complicated is the finding that candidates within the same election are often not assessed on the

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<sup>9</sup> This strategy can also occur with traditional party issues; Bush’s campaign in 2000, for example, used traditional Democratic issues to redefine himself as a different kind of Republican (Devlin 2001).

same traits (Miller and Miller 1976). Mayer (2004) identifies four elements that contribute to public assessments of presidents that can be applied to presidential candidates – the attempts by presidential staff to cultivate and manage a particular image, attempts by political opponents to alter that image, assessments by media figures, and the actual “reality” of the president’s character and behavior. In a campaign, these four sources enter into public understandings of the people vying for the presidency, with likely greater reliance on the “non-reality” sources (that is, the candidate’s campaign, the opponent’s campaign, and the media assessments) due to the public often being unfamiliar with a candidate and lacking the action-based aspects that help contribute to the reality of a candidate’s character. The ways traits enter into voter assessments, then, is a function of numerous factors, with multiple sources presenting information on the candidates and multiple filters that can influence which traits voters view as salient.

This complicated description of how traits can influence assessments is separate from some larger methodological issues that must be considered before studying campaign effects generally and trait effects specifically. Generally, campaign effects are difficult to discern, as any persuasion one campaign does is likely canceled out by the opposition’s campaign (assuming both campaigns are comparatively active) (Holbrook 1994). Even if a strong disparity exists in campaign activity, it may be difficult to demonstrate an independent effect stemming from campaigns, as presidential campaigns tend to activate (Erikson and Wlezien 2012) or confirm (Finkel 1993) the underlying predispositions of voters. Campaign messaging may not be useful in delineating a campaign effect for multiple reasons. First, campaign messages are strategic and often not static throughout the length of the campaign; particular themes will become more important or ineffective strategies will fall away (Kaid and Tedesco 1999). Using the messaging from campaigns as an independent variable is also problematic, as campaign themes will respond to (or try to predict) voters’ opinions (Gabel and Scheve 2007). Furthermore, a unitary campaign



message is inconsistent with the actual nature of the election. The campaign is not a single strategy operating on the national level but rather tends to focus on state-level efforts, with changing foci across the different states targeted (Geer and Lau 2006). Defining the messages of the campaign, then, is not a straightforward process.

Understanding the importance of particular traits is also difficult due to consistency issues in a number of areas. The set of traits included in research has often been a mix of traits with no political meaning and those that have direct bearing on the job of president (Shabad and Andersen 1979), and researchers often do not utilize consistent definitions of traits (Benoit and McHale 2003).<sup>10</sup> Pre-defining the set of traits to be included can also negatively affect research, as providing respondents with a list may be priming them rather than allowing the salient characteristics to be listed naturally (though the respondent-driven like/dislike method has its own issues, as already discussed [see Miller and Miller 1976]).

As suggested above, issues with media presentation and increasingly important partisan influences can undermine the study of campaign effects. Developing a larger theory of traits is further complicated by evidence of variability across media sources, both in terms of the individual sources but also more macro-level changes in the media environment over time that can hinder cross-election comparisons (Woolley 2000). The media's motivation may also be an influence across different time periods; if partisan media is looking more to pander than inform or persuade, then how its information is processed by voters may not be consistent over time (Bovitz, Druckman, and Lupia 2002). Partisanship will also influence evaluation separate from the priming effects discussed above, especially for candidates that are already well-known (Weisberg and Rusk 1970).

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<sup>10</sup> Both the NES and NAES is an excellent example of this inconsistency – from election to election, often some traits are added or dropped from the survey, making cross-election comparison difficult.

The most difficult aspect of studying campaign effects concerns determining to what extent voters actually consume particular bits of information. Determining what information is being provided by the campaign or media is separate from determining whether significant numbers of voters actually consume, understand, and utilize that information; if different voters are receiving different messages, for example, then overall campaign effects will be difficult to identify. A lack of understanding of how voters digest information from media sources (Graber 1972) complicates this process; the on-line/memory discussion demonstrates that the process of how voters use information is still unclear. Furthermore, it is unclear if this process will be the same for all voters and all types of information; individual-level factors (demographics, such as political knowledge, for example) will influence information consuming behavior and likely also influence information processing (Druckman 2005; Drew and Weaver 2006; Lau and Redlawsk 2006). Information about the campaign may also be encountered through non-traditional sources, such as interpersonal communication, which makes it more difficult to attribute learning effects to news media or the campaigns themselves (Druckman 2005). Finally, while there are methods being developed to account for the likely tendency of voters to over-report their amount of media consumption (Prior 2009), validating whether or not voters have actually encountered a particular source of information in a meaningful way is difficult at best. These issues all serve to create particular complications when using surveys or experiments to measure campaign effects. Surveys may be useful to ensure greater external validity, but may be priming voters (if using a pre-defined set of traits) or over-assuming the extent to which respondents are actually consuming the information being studied. Separate from these issues is a general concern that many studies do not possess the statistical power to observe campaign effects or media-generated influences (Zaller 2002). Using more experimental designs contains unique methodological issues, primarily the artificial nature of the electoral context. While newer attempts have been

better at reproducing the chaotic nature of information in a campaign (Lau and Redlawsk 2006), the differences in exposure attributable to the rise of partisan media may make random selection difficult to assume (Bennett and Iyengar 2008; Iyengar and Hahn 2009).

There are a number of potential approaches that may help resolve issues of simultaneous effects and endogeneity prevalent in examining campaign and media effects. Time-series approaches that examine the effects of messaging as they enter into the campaign discussion (more detail on this below) will be helpful, but more advanced methodologies may be necessary to accurately model the relationships between campaign and media messaging and candidate assessments or vote decisions. Instrumental variable approaches (Sovey and Green 2011), structural equation modeling (----) and two-stage least-squares regression (Erikson and Wlezien 2012, specifically chapter four) may be better at overcoming issues of endogeneity and help clarify the individual influences of media and campaign messaging, as both sources will operate on voters simultaneously and in unclear, overlapping ways.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

Given the structure of the data and methods utilized in the analytical chapters to follow, this work will explicitly adhere closely to the tenets of the running tally approach rather than a more specific assumption of recall of information (though, as discussed above, this divide may be a distinction without a difference). The theory underlying this research assumes that as voters are exposed to and consume pieces of information from the candidates' campaigns (about themselves and their opponent) that information is added to pre-existing definitions the voters have of the candidates. While the running tally or on-line processing approach necessarily encompasses all aspects of the campaign (that is, policy, personal, and all other pieces of information all enter into a singular assessment of the candidate), the theory here specifically entails information relevant to

personal characteristics of the candidates and thus entails only the specific assessments of the candidates' traits rather than a more general positive/negative or comprehensive assessment. Most importantly, this theory is ambivalent about whether or not the information concerning personality traits *makes the voter more or less likely to choose one candidate over another*. As discussed above, there is certainly some linkage between personal assessments and voting decision; while this linkage is still theoretically unclear, it is also far beyond the scope of the current research. The questions here are more focused on whether or not advertising that discusses personal characteristics affects the assessments voters have *of the candidates' personal characteristics*. While positively boosting one's perceived traits, strengths, and personal abilities is likely to boost the chances of being chosen as the better candidate, this research is not looking to explore the entire sequence from advertising to vote choice; rather, the initial step in the equation – whether advertising affects perceptions in the first place – is what is being explored here. Future research can and should look to more clearly explore the connection between increased esteem or perceptions and likelihood of vote, but for a number of structural and methodological reasons that part of the chain is unable to be explored here.

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODS

To examine the effects of individual campaign messages on perceptions of candidate traits, this dissertation utilizes and combines two separate data sets for the 2000, 2004, and 2008 elections. One group of datasets, gathered by researchers at the Wisconsin Advertising Project (at the University of Wisconsin-Madison), contains information about television advertisements run by or on behalf of the two major party candidates over the course of both the primary and the general elections, though the general election is the only timeframe analyzed here. Two components of the advertisements contained in the data gathered here will be utilized – inclusion of specific methods and overall tone/intent of the advertisements. The first of these components represents the primary independent variable of the studies that follow – specifically, did the ads run by or on behalf of the Republican and Democratic candidates in these three elections make mention of characteristics or traits? The Wisconsin Advertising Project datasets tended to include a large number of traits – both positive and negative – that touched on multiple angles of personality and relevant background and included a large number of advertisements over the course of the general election campaigns, making these datasets highly useful as sources of observations of campaign messaging.

However, despite this comprehensiveness, a slight caveat is important to note regarding the year-to-year changes across these datasets. While, for the most part, the traits measured and catalogued did not differ substantially from 2000 to 2004, the shift from 2004 to 2008 is quite remarkable and has important consequences for both the final individual election chapter and the overall comparability of the trio of analytical entries that follow. Most importantly, from 2004 to

2008 the Wisconsin Advertising Project datasets drop nearly all of their trait-specific mentions and instead utilize a more slimmed-down set of specific questions, many of which do not directly measure a specific personality trait or characteristic and some that do so only in a more indirect fashion (asking if ads mention “God”, for example, which could be used as a proxy measurement of mentioning religiosity). While the specifics of these differentiations and the strategies for accounting for them are laid out in more detail in the 2008 chapter (Chapter #), it is useful in this initial section to provide a comprehensive description of the traits included in each year’s dataset.

***Table 3.0.1 - Positive Wisconsin Traits by Year***

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Bipartisan</b>		✓	
<b>Bold</b>	✓		
<b>Cares</b>	✓		
<b>Caring</b>		✓	
<b>Committed</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Common Sense Leader</b>		✓	
<b>Common Sense Leadership</b>	✓		
<b>Competent</b>		✓	
<b>Family Man</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Fatherly</b>		✓	
<b>Fiscally Conservative</b>		✓	
<b>Hard Working</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Honest</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Leader</b>		✓	
<b>Patriotic</b>		✓	
<b>Principled</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Progressive</b>		✓	
<b>Protector</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Proven</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Reformer</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Religious</b>		✓	
<b>Self Made</b>		✓	
<b>Tough/Fighter</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Values</b>	✓		
<b>Visionary</b>	✓		

As noted, the transition from 2004 to 2008 is stark – 2008 contains none of the previous two elections’ trait mentions. Also notable, however, is the massive growth in mentions catalogued between 2000 and 2004, though this is more likely attributable to a substantial diversification in messaging from the candidates rather than an expansion on the part of the Wisconsin

researchers.<sup>11</sup> Basing the lists of mentions on the actual advertising is helpful in this regard, though as will be touched on in the discussion of the second dataset below this has some potential issues when shaping the list of relevant traits the candidates are actually measured on.

The three datasets also included a number of *negative* trait mentions (either mentions that are inherently negative or ones that were primarily utilized as attacks even though the word itself is only negative through connotation – “liberal” being a clear example). As in the previous table, though, 2008 stands out for its lack of overlap with the previous two campaigns.

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<sup>11</sup> Justification for this assumption is that the advertising of John Kerry is present in every single one of the categories included in the 2004 list, suggesting that additions to the 2000 base list were driven more by their presence in the campaign itself rather than an extremely lucky set of guesses on the part of the Wisconsin team as to what the candidates would be talking about.



***Table 3.0.2 - Negative Wisconsin Traits by Year***

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Career Politician</b>		✓	
<b>Dangerous</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Dishonest</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Extremist</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Failure</b>		✓	
<b>Friend of Clinton</b>	✓		
<b>Friend of Newt</b>	✓		
<b>Friend of Special Interests</b>		✓	
<b>Heartless</b>	✓		
<b>Hypocrite</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Incompetent</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Liberal</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Negative</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Reckless</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Right Wing</b>		✓	
<b>Risky</b>		✓	
<b>Soft</b>		✓	
<b>Special Interests</b>	✓		
<b>Taxing</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Too Risky</b>	✓		
<b>Unpatriotic</b>		✓	

The overlap between 2000 and 2004 is also much greater, further suggesting that the expansion between the two in the positive trait index was more a campaign- than researcher-driven decision. It should also be noted that the overlap is also even more than the table initially suggests, as slight changes in wording occurred between 2000 and 2004 that give the appearance of changes where none actually occurred (the use of “Too Risky” in 2000 and just “Risky” in 2004 or the use of “Friend of Special Interests” in 2004 and just “Special Interests” in 2000). While 2004 did include some additions (such as “Right Wing”, “Soft”, and “Unpatriotic”), the general lexicon of negative mentions was quite stable from election to election, at least in the first two studied.

**Table 3.0.3 - 2008 Wisconsin Mentions**

**Bill Clinton (Positive)**  
**Change**  
**Experience**  
**George W. Bush (Negative)**  
**George W. Bush (Positive)**  
**God**  
**Hope**  
**Iraq**  
**September 11**  
**Surge**  
**Terrorism**

As Table 3.3 demonstrates, the list of mentions that could be conceivably thought of as representing some kind of trait dimension is both smaller and categorically unique compared to the previous elections. While some of the mentions listed here could conceivably be continuations of the previous years (the mentions of former presidents Clinton and Bush used as associations along the lines of “Friend of Clinton/Newt/Special Interests” and usages of terms like “Change”, “God”, and “Hope” as corollaries of terms such as “Visionary” or “Religious”) the connections are much more tenuous. “Experience” is the only direct trait mention, and is also unique to 2008.

**Table 3.0.4 - NAES Traits by Year**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Arrogant</b>		✓	
<b>Cares</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Changes His Mind</b>		✓	
<b>Effective</b>		✓	
<b>Erratic</b>			✓
<b>Flip Flops</b>		✓	
<b>Has Judgment to Be President</b>			✓
<b>Has Right Experience</b>		✓	✓
<b>Honest</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Hypocritical</b>	✓		
<b>Inspiring</b>	✓	✓	
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	✓		
<b>Leadership</b>	✓		
<b>Out of Touch</b>		✓	
<b>Patriotic</b>			✓
<b>Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief</b>			✓
<b>Ready to Be President</b>			✓
<b>Reckless</b>		✓	
<b>Says One Thing, Does Another</b>		✓	
<b>Says What He Believes</b>			✓
<b>Shares My Values</b>			✓
<b>Shares Values</b>		✓	
<b>Strong Leader</b>		✓	✓
<b>Too Old (McCain Only)</b>			✓
<b>Too Young (Obama Only)</b>			✓
<b>Trustworthy</b>	✓	✓	✓

The Wisconsin datasets thus provide the categories that will serve as the independent variables for the analyses to follow. To best understand how advertising making mention of particular traits affects associated perceptions, questions that measure the applicability of certain descriptors must be utilized. Fortunately, the National Annenberg Election Survey contains a

number of questions of this nature. Rather than relying on the like/dislike questions asked in the National Election Studies batteries, the NAES questions provide a much more direct approach, asking questions that are in the field *at the same time* as the ads being studied.

This connection stems from the methodology of the Annenberg surveys. While the NES questions are asked once (or twice, depending on the overlap between pre- and post-election versions), the NAES questions are asked daily. A rolling cross-section approach is utilized in these surveys, asking a random sample of Americans the questions each day. While this does prevent the examination of long-term trends (such as a panel study, see the conclusion for more discussion of this) due to the samples being made up of different people each day, it is assumed that the random sample process does allow for some day-to-day (or week-to-week) comparison when it comes to viewing potential effects of advertising. These samples do tend to be small (at most 200-300 people each day), preventing the introduction of a number of important controls (again, see the discussion chapter for more on this), but given that the current project represents an initial first step toward a new process of testing and understanding campaign effects, this is not a major issue.

As with the trio of Wisconsin datasets, the trait questions for the three iterations of the National Annenberg Election Survey demonstrate substantial variation across the election years studied year, with some of this variation clearly driven by the contours of the campaigns themselves. While this is less a concern for the Wisconsin datasets (it would be quite unhelpful if the trait mentions did not include those highly used by the candidates, after all!), the presence of campaign-driven trait questions in the NAES data does introduce some possibilities for overstating of effects, as voters may be prompted to demonstrate effects stemming from campaign advertising simply by being reminded of the themes present in advertisements and other messages in the first place. However, this possibility is unavoidable to a larger extent and is

likely not too major of an issue given that the linkage between commercial mention and trait perception is theorized to work in such a way (see, for example, the running tally and recall discussion in the literature review chapter).

That all said, some caveats are in order. A number of the traits contained in the 2004 and 2008 NAES datasets require some explanation and commentary before going into analysis, more to help explain some odd setups than any major methodological questions (though some of the NAES decisions do touch on the proper balance between tailoring the datasets to what the candidates are talking about). First, in the 2004 listings the NAES included both “changes his mind” and “flip flops” as trait questions for incumbent president George W. Bush and Democratic challenger Senator John Kerry. This would seem to represent something of an unnecessary duplication, as both phrases conceptually mean the same thing. What is occurring, though, is a shift from one to the other, a shift that seems to be influenced entirely by advertising and larger discussion over the course of the campaign *from the candidates and their supporters*. “Changes his mind” was asked from March 12 through June 30, 2004, encompassing a significant portion of the first stage of the campaign (while Bush was the preemptive nominee throughout the campaign, Kerry became the presumptive nominee quite early, his major competitors dropped out after Super Tuesday on March 2). “Flip flops”, however, was asked from September 17 through November 16 (two weeks after Election Day). The rationale for ending the questioning of “changes his mind” is unclear, as is the justification for starting up that same general question with a different wording almost three months later. The clearest explanation would appear to be the prominence that the Bush campaign put on Kerry’s (argued) lack of consistency on the issue of Iraq, particularly a comment Kerry had made where he stated that he had voted for increased funding before he opposed it. This, combined with a memorable ad on the subject showing Kerry

windsurfing,<sup>12</sup> would seem to suggest that at this late stage in the campaign, “flip flopping” had suddenly become a highly salient issue and thus worthy of inclusion as a trait question in the NAES. However, this decision does not mesh with the timeline of events – the Kerry comment (and the associated Bush highlighting of it) came in March (Kerry made the comment on the 16<sup>th</sup> and, as Bush campaign hands happily state, they had ads making reference to it running almost immediately) and the Bush windsurfing ad did not air until September 23, almost a week *after* the question was started to be included in the daily NAES instrument. Thus, the change in wording does seem to be somewhat representative of changes in the overall nature of the campaign, but the timing of this change does not seem strongly tied to any external event or justification. Thus, while the overlap in theme is useful, the 2004 dataset presents some difficulties due to methodological decisions on the part of the survey designers.

Something similar – and seemingly even more directly connected to campaign events – occurs with the inclusion of the term “erratic” in 2008. This trait question is unique in that it is asked only about Republican candidate Senator John McCain and is only asked from October 22 through November 3 (the day before Election Day). This question seems to be derived specifically from negative advertising directed against McCain as he responded oddly to growing economic crises by suspending his campaign, stating he was not going to attend the first debate against his challenger, Senator Barack Obama, then revoking both promises while attempting to participate and guide response discussions in Washington. The inclusion of this question, then, appears to be directly responding to changing events as well as (if not even more so) changing discussions surrounding the candidate. This example, as well as the “flip flop” example above, also presents a number of issues regarding the overlap between mentions and traits that are

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12 <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2004/windsurfing#>

clearly focused on one candidate's particular rhetoric. For example, while "flip flop" could have conceivably been used by both sides in 2004, it was at the time (and has since) become associated almost wholly with the Bush campaign's attacks against Kerry on Iraq. By the same token, it is clear that the timing and subject of the "erratic" question mirrors attacks against the Republican candidate only rather than a conceivably relevant trait for both candidates. While this may not be a particularly major issue given that the bulk of mentions on flip-flopping and erratic were coming from one party and thus are not dramatically different from the other trait-mention pairings discussed here, these particularly loaded terms (at least in term of abject partisan messaging) may operate differently than more anodyne or conventional pairings, even ones that are clearly dominated by one party or the other.

All this discussion is to note that the trait questions included in the NAES appear to be a mix of both traditional or large-bore campaign messaging (honesty, leadership, trustworthiness) and more narrowly relevant or temporally limited areas of discussion (changes mind/flip flops, erratic, even the inclusion of "patriotic" in 2008, likely itself driven by the negative messaging surrounding Barack Obama's background and beliefs), suggesting that future research may require a stronger delineation between these more standard traits (along the lines of the groupings suggested by Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk [1984]) and the more contemporaneous and specific mentions more targeted to individual campaigns. This is also to provide a pre-analysis caveat that for timing reasons a number of the potentially important combinations are not tested in the chapters that follow. While the trait questions included are often either generally or specifically relevant, the tests that follow are dependent on their being an overlap between the trait question being asked and mentions being made in the campaign advertising, a syncing-up that does not occur in all cases. While the individual chapters will dive more deeply into proposed combinations for all trait mentions from the Wisconsin datasets and trait questions from the

NAES surveys, practical limitations mean that not all of these proposed combinations are actually tested.

This focus on conceptual overlaps also means that the variations between content contained within the three chapters' datasets makes direct comparisons across the three years problematic (though not entirely impossible). From a political evolution standpoint, it is hard to assume that the same sets of traits are going to be relevant to the same extent across the trio of campaigns; the issues of 2000 are not the issues of 2004, and neither year's issues were those of 2008. While certain political factors are evergreen and some traits are likely always important to some extent (honesty, strong leadership, competence), the balances even these regular components of the personality discussion take on are variable as well. For example, while it is unlikely to assume that voters did not care *at all* about the honesty of the candidates in 2008, it is much more safe to speculate that honesty was weighed less heavily than it had been in 2000 (when Gore's veracity was directly attacked as lacking due to a tendency to exaggerate and indirectly challenged due to his association with the Clinton administration) or in 2004 (when Bush's willingness to bend the truth was tied to more prominent policy matters, primarily the justification for the war in Iraq). While it still mattered if Barack Obama or John McCain were honest, it is hard to envision honesty as being as central to the campaign messages of both men, and similarly hard to see it as crucial to voters' decision making. Similarly, strong leadership takes on different dimensions in the midst of the war on terror in 2004, making it much more prominent in that election and, in many ways, qualitatively different than it likely was depicted in 2000 or 2008 (where more domestic leadership angles were highlighted). Thus, the analyses that follow should not be understood as tracing the ebbs and flows of particular traits but more viewed through the lenses of the individual political environments that produced the ebbs and flows of the campaigns (much like studying presidents, studying presidential campaigns seems to be



vulnerable to the “ $n = 1$ ” problem [King 1993]). This approach assumes, then, that the focuses of the campaigns overlapped with (or, perhaps more correctly, *generated*) the relevant traits on which voters made their decisions.<sup>13</sup> Since every campaign will present a different balance of important traits (defined both by the candidates and, at least partially, by those constructing the datasets<sup>14</sup>), directly comparing even the same traits across the three elections is difficult. That said, the project undertaken here still allows for useful contributions to the continuing discussion of which traits matter in presidential elections as well as how they matter, and further develops the discussion on how and when campaign advertising can affect voters’ decisions (albeit a more indirect version of this question, given that the dependent variable here is perceptions rather than actual votes). It may be the case that a more persistent, baseline set of characteristics shapes voters’ approaches to assessing the candidates and choosing who would be a better president; if the efforts of the candidates appear to do little to change how voters see them, then this more persistent conceptualization may be more accurate. However, if candidates can utilize advertising to substantively change the way they and their opponents are viewed, then more transient assessments may be a more critical factor in shaping the ultimate outcomes of elections. It could also be a mix of the two – given the broad nature of many of the past conceptualizations of persistently important traits and the overlap these conceptualizations have with the traits analyzed

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13 Fortunately, this assumption is not too critical to the research project here; the current work is looking to determine if the campaigns can change perceptions on the traits they think are relevant for making the case for their candidate. Future work can, should, and will go the next step to determine how effective these advertisements are at priming voters to use these traits as part of the voting decision.

14 As noted, though the traits contained in the Wisconsin and NAES datasets likely encompass a good portion of the ways in which the major party candidates talked about themselves and their opponents, they are limited. To take one example, though “compassionate conservatism” was a major slogan and theme of the Bush campaign in 2000 (Mitchell 2000), this seems to have been mentioned in only one advertisement contained in the Wisconsin dataset, on June 11. Similarly, while there appears to have been some attempt in the 2004 and 2008 iterations of the NAES to add or re-frame particular trait questions, the 2000 version is relatively static.

here, it may simply be that the vast majority of advertising is simply working at the edges while the important battles are being fought over a handful of consistently relevant traits.

## ***Hypotheses***

Though exploring three separate elections with three separate batteries of relevant traits (NAES) and advertising mentions (Wisconsin data), the hypotheses proposed here are ambivalent as to the specific mentions being made and how they influence their associated traits (that is, the relationship between advertising and perception is not assumed to be contingent on or different across the specific trait area being explored; honesty is assumed to function the same as strong leadership, which is assumed to function the same as competent, which is assumed to function the same as...). With that in mind, two general hypotheses (and one sub-hypothesis) can be made that encompasses the trio of analytical chapters that follow.

- *H<sub>1</sub>: Positive mentions of one's own personal characteristics will correspond to increased perceptions of one possessing that characteristic (or a close alternative)<sup>15</sup> relative to one's opponent.*
- *H<sub>2</sub>: Negative mentions of one's opponent's personal characteristics will correspond to increased perceptions of one possessing that characteristic (or a close alternative) relative to one's opponent*
  - *H<sub>2B</sub>: Negative mentions of one's opponent's negative personal characteristics will correspond to increased perceptions of one's opponent possessing that characteristic (or a close alternative) relative to oneself.*

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<sup>15</sup> The correlation in mention/trait across datasets is not always direct – see the individual chapters for detailed discussions and breakdowns of the proposed pairings.

The sub-hypothesis for H<sub>2</sub> recognizes the variety across the three NAES datasets – the three all include, to varying degrees, a number of *negative* traits as well as positive traits (for example, “Erratic” in 2008 or “Flip-Flops” in 2004). It is important to include the full range of possible relationships, as negative mentions may negatively influence an opponent’s personal characteristics (calling one’s opponent “dishonest”, for example, would be assumed to hurt their relative perception of being honest) but the relationship may be different if the negative version of a trait is specifically being asked (calling one’s opponent “dishonest” may affect relative perceptions of the two candidates as “dishonest” more or differently than it does relative perceptions of “honest”). Given the presence of specifically negative trait questions, it is useful to propose hypotheses that explore the full range of possible influences.

It should be noted quickly that that full range does not appear to include the effects of positive mentions on negative traits (for example, the effects of “honest” mentions on relative perceptions of “dishonest”). There is theoretical reasons to expect that this type of approach (using positive mentions to rebut/refute attacks) is ineffective and/or rarely used on the part of candidates, suggesting that this particular pairing would see little effect if only because most campaigns do not tend to reply to attacks on their personal characteristics with responses that directly try to reinforce perceptions on that trait (a more verbose way of stating the political axiom “if you’re explaining, you’re losing”<sup>16</sup> or the more literary adage of “any man who must say ‘I am king’ is no true king at all” (Martin 2000, 591). Attempting to refute an attack by simply stating that one is actually *not* whatever one is being accused of would appear to be ineffective generally, especially in the heated context of a political campaign. From a campaigning theory standpoint, as well, this approach is found to be rarely used. Defenses, as

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16 The origin of which is surprisingly difficult to trace!

described by Benoit, Stein, McHale, Chattopadhyay, Verser, and Price (2007, 9), have “the potential to prevent further damage from an attack, and it may help restore a candidate’s preferability from damage caused by an attack” but are dangerous to deploy due to the equal likelihood that

attacks obviously tend to occur in areas where a candidate is weakest, so responding to attacks is likely to take a candidate ‘off-message.’ Finally, one has to identify an attack before one can try to defuse it. Mentioning the attack might remind or inform voters of an alleged weakness of the candidate. Thus, it is not surprising to see that defenses are less common than acclaims or attacks in campaign messages (Benoit et al 2007, 9)

Thus, while there is some potential for positive appeals to diminish negative perceptions, it is much less likely that these positive appeals would be deployed as a means to recover damage done by the (more direct) negative mentions on that particular trait. While this approach necessarily, then, ignores the potential effect of positive appeals on negative traits more generally, this generic approach would not appear to offer any independent insights that can be gleaned from the positive appeal-positive trait, negative appeal-positive trait, and negative appeal-negative trait pairings already proposed. Negative traits can be assumed to always have the potential to undermine positive perceptions or exacerbate negative perceptions; positive traits can be assumed to always have the potential to reinforce positive perceptions, but undermining negative perceptions is typically viewed by theorists and practitioners as much more of an uphill battle. Benoit et al’s description of defenses as going “off message” would seem to make this particular type of sequencing unappealing to most campaigners, making positive appeal-negative trait pairings relatively rare in terms of the campaigns utilizing the appeal to that particular intended effect. Campaigns can and will rebut attacks, but often more by attempting to change the

focus of the discussion; defenses, as Benoit and his colleagues note, often place campaigns in disadvantageous positions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> It should also be noted that the analysis to follow often does not consider sequencing to begin with, so connecting positive appeals to proximate attacks is outside the scope of this research. Campaigns likely do make their positive appeals regardless of whether or not they've been attacked on a particular trait, but it is important to distinguish between the intended goals in justifying why positive appeal-negative trait pairings have been omitted from this research; the intention is rarely, it seems, for positive appeals to rebut negative perceptions but rather raise positive perceptions. This may appear to be a distinction without a difference – one would assume that as the positive perception goes up, the negative perception goes down, but this is not necessarily the case (and, as will be discussed in the election-specific chapters, often the positive and negative versions of the trait questions are not being asked simultaneously, limiting the ability to comprehensively explore the balance between the two aspects of trait perception).

## CHAPTER 4 – THE 2000 ELECTION

### *Introduction*

The political environment framing the 2000 election created a set of cross-cutting incentives for both the Democratic and Republican candidates. On the one hand, the Republican challenger looking to prevent a third Democratic term faced an uphill battle, working against “the economy, public opinion, and the popularity of the incumbent president...[which created] the unanimous forecast not that the popular vote would be close but that Gore would achieve a significant win” (Jamieson and Waldman 2001, 2-3). While the Democratic candidate, a vice-president looking to succeed his partner for eight years, seemed to have a number of factors on his side, the campaign faced a plethora of decisions about how best to go about making the positive case for himself. Given that the political circumstances and policy successes of the incumbent administration were potentially attributable to the incumbent rather than his second-in-command (a possibility exacerbated, shockingly, often *by the candidate himself* [Smith and Mansharamani 2002, 96]), it appeared as though the strategy was to attempt to argue for consistency in policy via an argument about the abilities of the man seeking the office. This created the odd situation where the candidate of the party out of power *and* the candidate of the party in power were presenting themselves as challengers to the established order (Smith and Mansharamani 2002). With the Republican candidate taking a personal approach, arguing for “effective leadership and moral character in the White House” (Smith and Mansharamani 2002,

106) and the Democratic candidate seeking to make a positive case for his election not on past successes but his willingness to be a fighter for the people against the powerful (Smith and Mansharamani 2002, 102), it is no surprise that the nature of the 2000 election was one about personal characteristics as key determinants of how voters should select between the two major-party candidates.

This particular approach, however, makes sense given the larger political environment facing the two major-party candidates as they strove for the approval of voters. Given the lack of a major crisis facing the American government – either domestic or international – and the number of perceived policy achievements and continued economic successes of the incumbent administration, running campaigns that focused on highlighting policy matters and advocating strongly for changing direction made little sense. However, this did not mean that there were no failures of government for the challenging Republicans to latch on to; these failings, furthermore, almost seemed to necessitate making the personal strengths and weaknesses of the two candidates a more central component than their policy positions.

Personal characteristics were especially important in the 2000 campaign given the events of the second Clinton administration regarding the president's personal behavior towards female employees, both in Washington as well as his previous offices in Arkansas. Even from the early days of the primary, the candidates looking to run for the presidency "attached themselves to issues of morality and character" (Trent 2002, 32). This was not simply a Republican angle, either; candidate Bush "promised that he would restore integrity and dignity to the White House...[while] the vice president, who to this point in time had been one of Clinton's most vocal and visible supporters, said in his announcement speech that he intended to rebuild the morals and values of the country" (Trent 2002, 32). This disconnect between the president's job performance and the president's personal characteristics (Kenski 2002, 82, see also Dowd 2001, 25) allowed

for personal character to enter more strongly into electoral relevance, as “Americans wanted a continuation of the good economy and many Clinton policies, but they wanted a president with better character and a change of tone in Washington. Thus, the candidate who could continue peace and prosperity with a more pleasing public persona would be well positioned for the campaign” (Smith and Mansharamani 2002, 93). With the path to victory seeming to be attempting to convince voters that they could achieve the successes of the Clinton policies without the drama of the failings of the Clinton character, the approach taken by both Al Gore and George W. Bush was to highlight their personal qualities rather than stake out dramatically different policy platforms and make their pitches to voters on substantive grounds.

The lack of any strong substantive differences on policy are well-recognized by academic researchers describing the 2000 election as well as the practitioners on the ground during the campaign. As Bob Shrum points out, though “the Gore message on what government should do for policy outpolled the Bush message consistently...Bush had a really smart response. He downplayed the differences. He said he was for a patients’ bill of rights. He was for a prescription drug benefit. He actually ran spots attacking us on prescription drugs” (2001, 61). While differences did exist on important policy matters, such as taxes, abortion, civil rights, education, and the environment, the different policy choices “offered during the 2000 elections were not dramatic ones” (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003, 2). Part of the lack of drama stems from the substantive lack of focus on these differences; given the perception on the part of the Bush campaign that “the American people would be eager to replace the Clinton administration with a Republican one as long as they were convinced it would not be too extreme ideologically” (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003), the incentives were to focus more on undermining perceptions of the Democratic candidate’s character and ability to lead rather than staking out high-profile fights on policy matters. The focus of the Bush campaign thus appears to have been



more balanced toward taking on the vice-president as a person and potential leader rather than arguing for a wholesale change in policy direction (especially given, as noted above, the general approval of much of the incumbent administration's policies).

In terms of his own personality, then, Gore worked to link himself to many of the policy successes achieved by the Clinton administration. As noted above, however, this linkage was less as part of the rationale for its success but rather as a dedicated successor that would continue the pursuit of those policies. Gore's major attempt to "establish himself as a raging populist" (Milbank 2001, 266) dominated his primary and general campaign messaging, with the campaign centering around "the thematic of Al Gore fighting for you" (Kenski 2002, 75). The synthesis of more old-style messages about fighting for the people versus powerful, established interests and highly detailed policy proposals and discussions made Gore, in the words of Carter Eskew, "a techno-populist. In other words, he can sit down and talk to you for four hours about the human genome, but the end of it will be, 'and we've got to make sure these insurance companies don't screw people with this information.'" (2001, 67). This approach, then, was an attempt by the vice president to reinforce the general successes and themes of the Clinton years without tying himself too closely to the president under whom those successes had been achieved. It is clear from his own messaging and the lack of credit Gore takes for the Clinton administration's attainments that the vice president wanted to be his own man (Castellanos 2001, 192). Whether this is due to a need on the part of the Democratic candidate to have been elected on his own merits or a perception that he needed to break with a president whose personal conduct was an electoral liability is unclear; despite his attempts, though, his opponents would find ways to suggest that this populist fighter was a replica of the man he was looking to replace, particularly when it came to his own personal flaws.

The focus on Al Gore as a person, his perceived flaws and inadequacies reflecting on his abilities to be an effective president, did not start with the general election campaign. Though only challenged by one primary opponent – New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, who withdrew from the contest on March 9, 2000 – Gore faced a number of critiques about his personal approach to campaigning and connecting to voters by contrast. Gore’s focus on detailed, technocratic policy proposals compared to his primary opponent’s more lofty, vague policy pronouncements, created the contrast of one candidate (Bradley) being “a loose and surprisingly potent challenger presenting an expansive vision for the country, [while Gore] is a tired champ, obsessed with the picayune and intent on self-immolation” (Milbank 2001, 28). This highly specific approach on the part of Gore may have been intended as looking ahead, establishing a direct criticism with his likely general election opponent; as Milbank notes, “[b]y laying out his themes now, along with a mind-numbing array of proposals, Gore and his aides hope to smoke out Bush: either the governor gives no specifics and looks like a lightweight or he is forced to offer specifics that alienate one side or the other” (2001, 58). However, in the primaries this dry approach only served to generate the image of Al Gore as pedantic and lecturing, a characterization that would come back to haunt him, particularly in the first debate (Denton 2002, 11). Though Gore would attempt to pivot to a focused message on him as “fighting for working families” as a means to be more inspirational, this was also a response to messaging trying to coast on the successes of the Clinton years failing to move voters (Shrum 2001, 57). In many ways, Gore’s focus on detail and inability to focus on more broad and inspirational policy goals reflects an aspect of his personal character that influenced his campaigning style and, more importantly, voters’ perceptions of what kind of president he could or would be. Denton (2002, 12), summarizing the debates in 2000, puts it plainly: “Gore came away from the debates with the issue advantage intact. But

issues alone seldom determine votes. Style matters. In the end, voters found Bush acceptable and more likeable.”

It was not solely Gore’s lecturing tone that would be a point of comparison between him and Bush; the Bush campaign, focusing on the concept of restoring integrity and dignity to the executive office, was content to attack the vice president for a seeming lack of veracity<sup>18</sup> when it came to his own accomplishments and the arguments behind his policy proposals. As Smith and Mansharamani (2002, 101) describe,

problems with Gore’s veracity undermined his statesmanship. His claiming credit for the invention of the Internet, his penchant for details and stories (such as the girl who had to stand because of overcrowded classrooms or his claim that his mother’s medication cost more than that for his dog) combined to invite reporters and Republicans to pursue verification. When several of those claims proved to be “exaggerated,” Gore looked less than presidential. Moreover, Gore’s frequent sighs and interruptions during the first presidential debate made him appear rude and possibly untrustworthy. These problems also supported Bush’s implication that electing Gore would mean four more years of what people were most tired of—a president who lacked character and integrity.

Though Gore was clearly not implicated in many of the scandals surrounding the president he hoped to replace, the suggestion that the vice president was just as untrustworthy as his boss clearly resonated in the minds of some voters. As Friedenberg (2002, 162) argues,

It is bad enough for any political figure when his truthfulness is questioned. Given the ethical clouds that hung over the administration in which he served, it may be a tribute to Gore that even though questions about his own veracity were raised during this campaign, only 44 percent of all voters told exit pollsters that the Clinton scandals were important to them during this election...Had Gore been able to put concerns over his exaggerations behind him early in the campaign, and had they not resurfaced during these debates, perhaps that 44 percent might not have voted so overwhelmingly for Bush.

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18 Though the “exaggerations” highlighted by the Republican campaign tended to be better explained as either poor phrasing on the part of Gore or outright misquoting on the parts of others – Gore’s wording that as a member of Congress he “took the initiative in creating the Internet”, for example, while technically correct in that he helped commercialize and expand applications for non-military Internet usage, was easily spun by his opponents as a statement of overall creation (Kessler 2013). The highlighting of these “extreme” cases made future Republican efforts to depict Gore as a serial exaggerator or outright liar fit with a pre-constructed narrative that, even if the factual bases for it were rickety, nevertheless became an easy description for Gore both in the media and in the minds of voters.

Similarly, exit polls suggested that the arguments pursued by the Bush campaign regarding Gore's veracity and how this reflected on his leadership skills had some resonance. According to Voter News Service data, "24 percent of the electorate...said honesty and trustworthiness were the qualities that mattered most in their vote, [and] 80 percent [of these respondents] voted for Bush. Moreover, when respondents were asked which candidate would say anything to get elected, 74 percent said Gore and only 50 percent said Bush" (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002, 45; see also Kenski, Aylor, and Kenski 2002). The fact that this argument had been made against Gore as early as the New Hampshire primary (Trent, 2002, 40) demonstrates the importance of candidate qualities both in the primary and general election; the associated fact that Bush so heavily dominated Gore on these matters suggest that the campaign does have some influence over shaping and confirming voter perceptions of the candidates running for president. The tests below look to explore the role that direct campaign advertising has in shaping these perceptions.

The Bush campaign, while attacking its opponent as an inveterate exaggerator and representing more of the same in Washington, looked to present their standard-bearer as a break from the past, a new kind of Republican that did not reject out of hand the idea that "government can be a force for good and that it has a responsibility to help the weak" (Milbank 2001, 77). The Bush self-label of "compassionate conservative"

appears to imply a more activist style of conservative governance. Instead of demanding anti-abortion laws, he seeks alternatives, such as abstinence and adoption programs, which will reduce abortions. Instead of the usual Republican lock-'em-up-and-throw-away-the-key line on criminal justice, he has fostered a faith-based rehabilitation program for prisoners. He has demanded increases in education funding and opposed anti-immigration measures. Instead of a flat tax, he talks of modest cuts and reducing regressivity (Milbank 2001, 78)

This focus on a softer focus to conservative government was intentionally designed to not totally question or overturn the successes of the Clinton administration; rather, the focus was to try to

present better solutions on traditionally Democratic issues. Mark McKinnon, the Bush's campaign's chief media advisor, states it plainly when he notes that

all the issues that people cared about were typically Democratic issues: education, Social Security, health care. So, we knew that while we probably couldn't win on those issues, we had to at least keep them close. Fortunately, we had a candidate who had been talking about those issues, not just in this campaign but for years as governor in Texas. So there was a platform there, and a history. Our strategy was to stay close on those issues (2001, 145-146)

The Bush campaign's attempt to do battle on issues that Republicans traditionally ceded to Democrats fit with the Texas governor's reputation in office, helping bridge some of the experience divides that were natural when a sitting president or vice president is on the ballot. This focus, though, also helped present Bush as a viable alternative on the policy issues that Gore would be touting and served to help reinforce one of the main criticisms Bush leveled at the incumbent administration. As the Clinton policy successes were well-liked, Bush would have been ill-served by pursuing a wholesale repudiation; instead, he "generally embraced the Clinton-Gore agenda, minimized their accomplishments, and characterized their leadership as ineffective... The Texas governor called for change in two key areas: improved working relationships between the parties and effective leadership and moral character in the White House" (Smith and Mansharamani 2002, 106). While both candidates, then, argued for a continuation of policy priorities and successes, Bush advocated for more conservative approaches to those that would be more successful due to his better working relationship with both parties in Congress and a lack of scandal distracting the executive branch (which, presumably, would bolster the comity with the legislature). Prevented from criticizing the incumbent (and its ordained successor) on policy grounds, the tenor of the Bush campaign became highly personalized in tone, with its candidate presenting himself as an approachable, caring figure who could still keep the economy running strongly without all the baggage.

The response on the part of the Gore campaign was to attempt to present the caring and compassionate conservatism as a mask, a façade covering up typical Republican preferences for larger and corporate interests and a smaller government, particularly a smaller safety net. Though Gore held a perceived advantage on experience, particularly on foreign policy (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002, 38-39), this was not a particularly strong angle given Bush's own experience as governor of a large state (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002, 37) as well as the presence of Dick Cheney on the ballot (Denton 2001, 7) and the implicit connection between Bush and his father. Gore had likely squandered this advantage anyway, given his focus on appearing more personable and connected to common people; one tactic "to warm his image as a cold technocrat and to connect with voters in his town hall meetings...[was] to dress casually" (Smith and Mansharamani 2002, (101). This, as the authors note, only served to present a confusing image as to which candidate was the more fitting to take on the role of the president:

Night after night television news viewers saw one candidate in a suit and the other in a golf shirt and slacks. This not only allowed the governor of Texas to look the more presidential; it also invited viewers to wonder why Gore was wearing warm weather clothing for winter visits to Iowa, New Hampshire, Michigan, and other cold weather venues (after all, Dan Rather had worn a sweater under his sport coat to achieve the same effect on the *CBS Evening News*). As a result, Gore looked more like an average person than a statesman and potential president. After securing the Democratic nomination, Gore declared that he would no longer speak as the vice president but as himself. This disadvantaged him by relinquishing the legitimacy that the office provides, and he became just another aspiring politician (Smith and Mansharamani 2002, 101).

With arguments of experience made more difficult (though not impossible), the Gore campaign tended to focus its attacks on Bush around the threat he posed to governmental programs like Social Security and Medicare (Kenski, Aylor, and Kenski 2002, 229). Much like with the focus on education, though, these attacks may have only served to bolster the underlying Bush message of dramatic change in government. As Stanley Greenberg notes, though the Gore campaign tended to outpoll the Bush campaign on health care and Social Security,

Bush looked like he wanted to do something. He didn't look like a man with bad intentions. It also put us on seniors' issues for a much longer period that we wanted to be. One of the reasons we did

not get to youth-oriented and education issues—which we did somewhat, but not to anywhere near the degree that we wanted to—was that we could not walk away from the battles we were fighting on prescription drugs and Social Security (2001, 95-96).

Though the Gore campaign focused on labeling the Bush plans for safety net programs as “risky” (Greenberg 2001, 99), the fact that they had to be fighting on that turf at all represented a reinforcement of the Bush campaign’s efforts to portray their candidate as someone who would be a leader who recognized that a time of economic strength and surplus was “the time to do hard things” (Kenski 2002, 54). Unlike the attacks on Gore from the Bush campaign, the efforts to paint the Republican candidate as an inexperienced, uncaring candidate whose policy proposals were untested and uncertain could not stick as strongly. As Kathleen Frankovic notes, “although more said that Gore cared about people like themselves, a majority said the same thing about Bush. Both candidates had weaknesses. There were doubts about whether either man could be trusted to keep his word, and doubts about whether they would keep their campaign promises. In many ways, the candidates were shockingly alike” (2001, 122-123). For an incumbent running against a (relatively) political fresh face, being seen as just as much a risk as the challenger is not running even, it is running behind. Voter perceptions of the two men mattered, then; certain attacks were better advantaged than others, and what voters wanted out of the president seems to have shaped which campaign appeals and attacks resonated or fell flat. However, the past discussion about which traits mattered at the end of the campaign does not answer the questions about how able the candidates were to shift perceptions of themselves *during* the campaign, an important question given that those perceptions are proximate and pressing on the final voting decision. The analysis below looks to begin to determine how and when candidate appeals on personality changed the perceptions of potential voters.

## *Methods Setup*

For the 2000 election, the Wisconsin Advertising Project<sup>19</sup> codes references made in television commercials via a set of twenty-two categories – “Common sense leadership”, “Independent”, “Innovative”, “Self made”, “Caring or Compassionate”, “Bold”, “Principled”, “Tough or a fighter”, “Proven Tested Experienced”, “Values (shares them, has American ones)”, “Protector”, “Moderate middle of the road mainstream”, “Conservative”, “Fiscally conservative”, “Hard working”, “Friend of Clinton”, “Committed”, “Visionary”, “Reformer”, “Competent and Knows how to get things done”, “Honest”, and “Family man”. A number of these traits were not included in analysis, either because no advertisements for the presidential election in the dataset made reference to the supported candidate in these terms (“Self made”, “Moderate middle of the road mainstream”, “Fiscally conservative”, and “Friend of Clinton”) or because the advertisements that used these terms were aired solely before the general election campaign (“Independent”, “Innovative”, “Competent and Knows how to get things done”, and “Conservative”). These restrictions leave fifteen traits that were used in advertisements for the presidential race that aired after the nominations had been assured for both parties:

- Bold
- Caring/Compassionate
- Committed
- Common Sense Leadership
- Competent
- Family Man
- Hard Working
- Honest

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19 Goldstein, Kenneth, Michael Franz, and Travis Ridout. 2002. “Political Advertising in 2000.” Combined File [dataset]. Final release. Madison, WI: The Department of Political Science at The University of Wisconsin-Madison and The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University.



- Principled
- Protector
- Proven/Tested/Experienced
- Reformer
- Tough/Fighter
- Values
- Visionary

This set of traits provides a comprehensive picture of the positive appeals made by both candidates (and by others acting on the candidates' behalf) in the 2000 election. Unfortunately, the trait questions utilized in the 2000 NAES battery is less comprehensive and more vague; six positive traits are used as assessments of the major candidates – “Cares”, “Honest”, “Inspiring”, “Knowledgeable”, “Leadership”, and “Trustworthy”.<sup>20</sup> The direct overlap between Wisconsin categorization and NAES questioning is limited (Caring/Compassionate → Cares; Honest → Honest), meaning that inclusion of the remaining Wisconsin categories as influences over trait assessments by NAES respondents requires decisions regarding the comparability of these categories. Some of these are easier than others (Common Sense Leadership → Leadership), but are still uncertain – does the inclusion of “Common Sense” as a description of leadership in the Wisconsin data reflect a narrower or altered concept than simply “Leadership” as utilized in the NAES? The process by which these categories are equated has serious implications for both the statistical and analytical results presented below and thus should be explained directly.

To begin with, an understanding of what differentiates the traits utilized in the NAES question set may help direct the re-categorization of the Wisconsin descriptors. “Honest” and “Trustworthy” as separate categories would seem, at first glance, to be confusing – both touch on ideas that the candidate means what they say and can be relied upon when they make statements

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<sup>20</sup> A seventh trait – “Hypocritical” is also used, though the process here is more straightforward given that the Wisconsin dataset contains negative mentions as well and that “hypocritical” is one of these categorizations.

or promises. Treating them as conceptually distinct suggests that these words should be understood as separate descriptions. Falling back on a traditional assessment divide of prospective and retrospective evaluations<sup>21</sup> may provide some guidance, at least for these two traits. “Honest” in this case can perhaps be best understood as a *retrospective* evaluation (has this candidate been honest with the electorate about his past behavior, for example). Given the presence of President Bill Clinton’s sexual history as a possible campaign issue, concerns about Al Gore’s own background (the veracity of his depiction as a rural Tennessean versus the urbane son of a Senator living in Washington, D.C., as well as the regular jabs at Gore’s misstatements regarding his accomplishments – particularly his claim regarding the invention of the Internet) and the late-breaking story regarding George W. Bush’s DUI charge all suggest some role for the ability of the candidates to be straight about their past as a distinct concern for voters.

By comparison, “trustworthy” may perhaps be best understood as a *prospective* criterion (will this candidate actually do the things he says he will, can he be trusted to uphold the principles of the country/his party/etc., as examples). Every presidential campaign contains some measure of (justified) skepticism regarding the believability of promises made and values stated, suggesting that a candidate could be (and likely often is) assessed on how likely it is they mean what they say when they communicate to voters. For the purposes of re-categorization of the Wisconsin data, then, “trustworthy” contains the categories of “committed” (can this candidate be trusted to fight for the people and policies he claims to support), “family man” (is this candidate believable as a protector of family values/children), “principled” (can this candidate be trusted to abide by the values and tenets he – or his party – claim to honor), and “values” (similar to principled – does this candidate actually share and live by a set of American core beliefs). A

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21 MacKuen, Michael B., Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson. 1992. “Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the U.S. Economy.” *American Political Science Review* 86(3): 597-611.

retrospective view of “honest” as an assessment does not map conceptually well with any of the Wisconsin traits, and so will only be used alongside its partner in the NAES question set.

A similar retrospective/prospective approach can be used when assigning Wisconsin categories to the traits “knowledgeable” and “leadership”. While not as closely linked as honest and trustworthy, treating these two traits as assessments of performative capabilities may allow for a similar connection along prospective and retrospective lines. “Knowledgeable” under this definition can perhaps be understood as reflecting a retrospective understanding of a candidate’s capabilities – have they faced tough decisions in the past, are they cognizant of the stresses of political office, etc. Using this definition, the Wisconsin descriptors “competent” and “proven/tested/experienced” can be linked to the NAES assessment of “knowledgeable”, as they both discuss the candidate’s general abilities to perform (competent) and past involvement in tough decisions or governance (proven/tested/experienced). “Leadership”, in contrast, can perhaps be understood as a more prospective assessment of ability – not assessing whether or not the candidate knows what the job entails but simply whether or not they have the skills necessary to do the job correctly. Under this description, the Wisconsin categories of “common sense leadership”, “hard working”, and “tough/fighter” will be assessed as conceptually representative of leadership as a prospective assessment of future performance by the candidates.

A prospective definition may also help with the category of “Inspiring”, though here the assessment may be more stylistic than substantive. Whether or not the candidate inspires voters is a separate question from assessments of the candidate’s abilities to actually do the job well (leadership/knowledgeable) or realistically attain the lofty goals contained in campaign rhetoric (trustworthy). Inspiring, then, may be best understood as a general assessment of the content of the candidate’s campaign promises; as such, the Wisconsin descriptors of “bold”, “reformer”, and “visionary” can be included under this trait.

This leaves “protector” as the sole Wisconsin category yet to be assigned to an NAES trait. Given the normative content of this term (protector of values, for example), it could be argued that protector should be included under trustworthy, but the nature of protector is more of a policy-based descriptor rather than general assessment of values. Protector suggests some measure of compassion (protecting as defense of some vulnerable group or idea), and will – for the purposes of this research – be included as part of the “Cares” trait grouping. This vagueness, however, suggests a secondary methodological question.

Simply stated, there may be some Wisconsin categories that are too far off or different from the trait questions used in the NAES. Put differently, there are some categories used in the Wisconsin data that *could* be categorized under one of the broader traits included in the NAES but may be reaching too far (undercutting the substantive link between the two concepts). Family Man and Values, for example, can perhaps be viewed as assessments of the future behavior or policies of the candidates (trustworthy), but may be too distinct as appeals to be accurately described in this way. Reformer, as well, could be viewed as a mobilizing force driving voters to support the candidate and his attempts at achieving some future goal (inspiring) but may, especially in the American context, be more of a policy-specific appeal than a general rallying cry (separating a candidate’s reform appeals from more abstract qualities of being bold or visionary). Finally, protector as a distinct category presents a number of questions – while it could be viewed as representing a candidate’s concern for more vulnerable groups in society, it could also be included under the prospective policy definitions of trustworthy. The vagueness of this term may be best addressed by simply testing it twice to see which category, if any, protector seems to have a stronger relationship with; alternatively, it may be more prudent to simply drop these uncertain categories from analysis altogether – focusing the statistical tests on a more theoretically justified and explainable set of traits rather than relying on marginally connected concepts.

As a first cut, I will focus on the categories “Bold”, “Caring/Compassionate”, “Committed”, “Common Sense Leadership”, “Competent”, “Hard Working”, “Honest”, “Principled”, “Proven/Tested/Experienced”, “Tough/Fighter”, and “Visionary”, dropping the mentions of “Family Man” and “Values”, due to the lack of a clear NAES corollary for these (while “Protector” and “Reformer” do have some vagueness, in the context of politics generally and the 2000 campaign specifically there are clear connections to NAES traits – “Protector” in this election was primarily used in reference to pre-existing programs that were potentially endangered, while “Reformer” can generally fit with a message of inspiration, as described above). These omitted categories can be reintroduced as part of a later reexamination of the data, but the conceptual uncertainty contained in these descriptors makes them less useful for a direct exploration of the linkages between campaign advertising and candidate assessments that have been proposed to exist in this research.

These comments suggest that future research is necessary to better understand possible linkages between the traits mentioned and discussed by the campaigns and the characteristics these mentions attach to in voters’ minds. The nebulous nature of many of the NAES traits makes the connections proposed here less an objective, denotative attachment and more a subjective, connotative attachment. However, given the varied nature of meanings these traits (both the Wisconsin and NAES lists) likely have in the minds of voters, an objective and “best” set of connections is difficult to imagine. A comprehensive approach, testing each combination in order to find the most effective pairings, is one possibility but is beyond the scope of this research.

The trait mention on the part of the campaign serves as the independent variable in each pairing; the trait question from the NAES serves as the dependent variable. For each trait question, a variable was constructed that subtracted the value given to Democratic nominee Al Gore from the value given to Republican nominee George W. Bush. The original set of NAES

trait questions asked respondents to assess how well the particular trait described each candidate using a four-category ordinal scale – “Not Well”, “Not Too Well”, “Quite Well”, and “Extremely Well”. Originally, these values were coded in reverse order, with “Extremely Well” listed first, declining to the last option of “Not Well”. These variables were recoded for each candidate, creating scales that gave the lowest category to “Not Well” and increasing up to “Extremely Well”. From these two variables, a “gap” variable was created, measuring the distance between the two men on that particular trait for each respondent. These gap variables, then, can range from +4 (Bush is given the highest rating while Gore is given the lowest) to -4 (Gore is given the highest rating while Bush is given the lowest). Aggregating these gap variables across five-, seven-, and fourteen-day periods allows for the measurement of movement in respondents’ perceptions of the two men across those periods and, more importantly, to determine to what extent – if any – being exposed to advertising mentioning personal characteristics affects the relative balance between the two men.

The initial independent variable is simply one of exposure: for every day an ad mentioning a specific trait is mentioned, the following five days are given a diminishing value, starting from 1 and ending at 0.2. As the effect of an individual (televisual) ad are assumed to decline quickly over time (Furnham & Williams 1987), this approach fits with past research on the longevity of campaign advertising. These effects, however, are allowed to “stack” using this approach: for example, the Bush campaign ran ads mentioning “common sense leader” for 25 days from August 21 to September 14. August 26<sup>th</sup>, then, would be included as part of the exposure variable five times – it would catch the tail end of the first day (August 21<sup>st</sup>) and then increasing amounts up to the previous day of August 25<sup>th</sup>. This additive effect, then, means that exposure may be as low as 0.2 (the last day of proposed effect) or as high as 3 ( $0.2 + 0.4 + 0.6 + 0.8 + 1$ ) for days in the middle of a sustained ad buy. This makes sense given the proposed nature

of advertising – reinforcing ads are assumed to have more effect than one-off exposures (Schmidt & Eisend 2015), meaning that days that are in the middle of a sustained campaign of mentions by the candidates ought to be assumed to have greater effect than those at the beginning or ends of campaigns. The cross-sectional groupings, then, create a varying amount of exposure and allow for the effects of that exposure on perceived candidate traits to be measured.

However, this initial exposure variable has a number of limitations. Primarily, for sustained ad periods there is the distinct possibility that many of the cross-sectional groupings will not allow for testing due to lack of variation on the independent variables (that is, if all the days in a five-day grouping have a value of 3 due to being in the heart of a sustained campaign, regression will fail due to the value of independent variable remaining constant). Additionally, the straightforward exposure variables treat all the days with advertising equally, when there is immense variation across the days of the campaign that may magnify the effects of the exposure. For example, from September 8<sup>th</sup> through September 12<sup>th</sup> as part of his campaign mentioning “common sense leader”, Bush only ran five, one, two, one, and four ads reinforcing this theme, respectively. This means that the exposure variable values for this quintet of days is the exact same as the values for September 2<sup>nd</sup> through September 6<sup>th</sup>, where Bush ran 90, 119, 210, 218, and 149 ads reinforcing the common sense leader message, respectively. If sustained days of exposure are assumed to have an additive effect, some attention must also be given to the possibility of seeing multiple ads *on the same day* mentioning the same trait. To overcome both these statistical and theoretical issues, a second set of exposure variables was created and tested. This second set keeps the initial exposure variable but then multiplies that exposure variable by the number of ads *on the day itself*. So, for example, September 9<sup>th</sup> would have a value of 3 (3 for the initial exposure multiplied by the number of ads that day, 1) and September 3<sup>rd</sup> would have a value of 357 (3 for the initial exposure multiplied by the number of ads that day, 119). As these

multiplications created a wide range of possible values that initially led to near microscopic effect sizes, the log for each value of the second set of exposure variables was generated instead. The second set of exposure variables, to summarize, is the log of the product of the initial exposure variable times the number of ads on that particular day.

Given the setup of the gap variables and that all the combinations included in this chapter are positive in nature (that is, a positive ad on the part of the campaign associated with a positive trait from the NAES), the expectations for each pairing are straightforward. When Bush's ads are being tested, a positive effect should be generated (that is, being exposed to Bush's ads should widen the gap in Bush's favor); for Gore the effect should be negative. The tables below will describe Bush's combinations first and then Gore's; for each pairing, both sets of exposure variables will be discussed in turn.<sup>22</sup> One final assumption should be noted – while these traits are all positive, it may be the case that some of these positive mentions are contained in ads whose overall message is negative or attacking. The Wisconsin data do contain a variable measuring the “tone” of each ad, noting whether the ad is mostly promoting, attacking, or contrasting.

Examining the breakdown of each positive mention listed above, it was found that only two mentions – Protector and Values – were included in ads whose primary tone was to attack the other candidate. For Protector this number was quite substantive – 4,467 or about 44% of the overall mentions, while for Values almost 15% (122 of 814) of the mentions were made in ads

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22 It should be noted that the Wisconsin data for 2000 does contain a number of negative traits – “dangerous”, “dishonest”, “extremist”, “friend of Bill Clinton”, “friend of Newt Gingrich”, “heartless”, “hypocrite”, “incompetent”, “liberal”, “negative”, “reckless”, “special interests”, “taxing”, and “too risky” – that were not tested. Part of this decision was based on the paucity of options for NAES comparisons – both in terms of number of options but also negative traits; 2004 allows for a more direct means of testing the effects of negative advertising on negative traits, and 2008 allows for an even more nuanced testing of the effects of positive mentions used in negative ads, so it was determined that the straightforward positive-positive approach would be the best one to take for this chapter. Further iterations of this research can better assess the possible effects of negative advertising on positive traits, though as mentioned the limited list of NAES traits for 2000 further exacerbates the subjectivity of the pairings described above.



primarily used for attack. While the Protector ratio is especially concerning given the lack of differentiation being made between promotion and attack in the regressions, the fact that thirteen of the fifteen traits were used solely in ways that promoted or, at worst, contrasted likely does not invalidate the assumptions underlying the regressions that follow.

Finally, the tables discussed below will describe the trait effects using monthly breakdowns – this will allow for a more general discussion towards the end of the chapter about the effect of sustained ad campaigns generally and the possibility for greater or lesser effects as the campaign moves closer to Election Day more specifically. Given the finding of greater effects towards the end of campaigns due to lack of time to dissipate (Erikson & Wlezien 2012), this monthly approach will allow for some greater insight about when campaigns potentially have their greatest effects. For each table, the values for each month are given as percentages – first the percent of days (more specifically, starting days for the five-, seven-, and fourteen-day cross-sections) where significant effects were found and second the percent of those significant days where the regression coefficient was in the hypothesized direction (positive for Bush, negative for Gore). This approach was utilized in order to account for the variation in the number of days in which there were ads across the months and the combinations as well as to help better depict the true nature of the effects (as just giving the number of days for significant/correct effects would be confusing without also noting the number of possible days where there could have been effects in the first place).

### ***Results – “Success Rates”***

While individual tables were constructed displaying each advertising mention-NAES trait pairing for both Bush and Gore, these results are much better displayed in an aggregated form, enabling a comprehensive and comparative analysis of which traits were on the whole more or less affected

by corresponding advertising mentions in television commercials. The individual tables for each pairing, which present both the percentage of overall significant results and the percentage of those results that were in the correct direction are presented in Appendix #. The tables that follow here are condensed versions of these individualized tables, presenting only a single result for each mention-trait pairing: the **success rate**. This value is calculated by multiplying the percentage of significant results for each pairing by their corresponding percentage of significant results that were correct. As the main focus of this analysis is whether or not the ads are helping candidates by increasing their relative advantage in comparative trait measurements (or decreasing their relative disadvantage), this is the most concise way to display results of interests. This approach does have a drawback in that it prevents conflates non-significant results and significant results that work in the opposite direction than intended (as the multiplication is going to make either of these cases appear as low success without distinguishing whether or not the weakness is in the first or second numbers), but this distinction is unimportant given the focus of this research. Those interested in seeing which mentions tended to backfire and which mentions tended to just not have significant effects can explore the appendices to gain clearer insights.

Separate tables were created for each candidate's exposure-only results (that is, regressions that only factored in the exposure variables) and each candidate's exposure \* number of ads results (taking into account ad quantity as a multiplying factor for exposure). Given the large variation this caused, the log of those multiplicative values were used in the second set of results. Candidate Bush's results are presented first, followed by those for Vice President Gore.

***Table 4.0.1 - Overall Success Rates - George W. Bush***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Tough/Fighter (Bush) - Leadership</b>	25.00%	20.00%	31.67%	25.56%
<b>Reformer (Bush) - Inspiring</b>	9.38%	5.00%	16.67%	10.35%
<b>Bold (Bush) - Inspiring</b>	7.84%	7.74%	12.85%	9.48%
<b>Common Sense Leader (Bush) - Leadership</b>	4.17%	11.67%	7.09%	7.64%
<b>Honest (Bush) - Honest</b>	22.22%	0.00%	0.00%	7.41%
<b>Committed (Bush) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	10.00%	5.27%	5.09%
<b>Proven/Tested/Experienced (Bush) - Knowledgeable</b>	6.25%	4.55%	2.00%	4.27%
<b>Caring/Compassionate (Bush) - Cares</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Hard Working (Bush) - Leadership</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Protector (Bush) - Cares</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	7.49%	5.90%	7.55%	

The exposure-only results for George W. Bush tend to show both evidence for short-term as well as more long-term changes in perceptions corresponding to the presence of ads, though these successes tended to vary across pairings and are substantively quite small (a significant effect working in the correct direction was seen in, at best, 7.55% of groupings). The most successful pairing is one of the most constant made by Bush in the 2000 campaign – that of describing himself as tough or a fighter affecting perceptions of the governor’s leadership abilities. Across the three timeframes, Bush saw successes just over a quarter of the time, with these effects seen most strongly in the largest timeframe (31.67% of biweekly groupings saw significant effects in the correct direction). This suggests that being exposed to an advertisement describing the Republican candidate as fighter or tough resonated even two weeks later. Weaker effects are seen for the 7-day (20.00%), and 5-day (25.00%) groupings, though these too are fairly substantive and suggest that these advertisements both shifted perceptions in the short- and medium-term but had effects that persisted long after their airings.

A similar pattern exists for the next most successful pairings, both touching on perceptions of Bush as “inspiring”. While neither “Reformer” nor “Bold” reach the same average success as “Tough/Fighter”, there appear to be some substantive effects for these mentions in correlating with positive changes in perceptions of the inspirational nature of Bush as a candidate. Here, too, the effects tend to sustain over the longest period examined, with 16.67% and 12.85% of the biweekly periods being both significant and correct for reformer and bold, respectively.

The remainder of successful pairings, however, take on different patterns, with their effects tending to dissipate after 5 days or a full week. While 22.22% of the honest mentions correspond to successful effects in the trait question of the same name, this effect is difficult to be confident in, given that Bush only ran one ad making mention of this characteristic in the 2000 general election campaign. Mentions of the Republican as “Proven/Tested/Experienced” did correspond to some short-term change in perceptions of him as knowledgeable, those these tended to be fairly rare (4.27% average success) and short-lived (the highest percentage – 6.25% - is found in the 5-day groupings).

Mentions of Bush as a common sense leader and mentions of him as committed did have some effects on the relative perceptions of him as a leader and trustworthy, respectively, but these effects tended to dissipate much more over time, particularly between the first and second week after initial airing. While the overall averages for these two pairings (7.64% and 5.09%, respectively) are fairly typical for the pairings as a whole, the most successful time period for this duo is the 7-day grouping, with common sense leadership (11.67%) just slightly more effective than committed (10.00%).

Three pairings had no significant results in the correct direction – Caring/Compassionate – Cares, Hard Working – Leadership, and Protector – Cares. The first of these three is very understandable – only one mention was made by the Bush campaign of their candidate being

caring or compassionate, so it is not particularly surprising to find no evidence of a shift in perceptions based on that singular example. The last pairing is also understandable, given the high premium the Gore campaign put on presenting their candidate as a “protector”, especially one of Social Security against the Republican’s candidate’s proposed changes to the program.

***Table 4.0.2 - Overall Success Rates - George W. Bush (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Common Sense Leader (Bush) - Leadership</b>	4.76%	8.75%	10.54%	8.02%
<b>Tough/Figher (Bush) - Leadership</b>	2.09%	1.93%	19.89%	7.97%
<b>Reformer (Bush) - Inspiring</b>	2.09%	1.93%	18.82%	7.61%
<b>Bold (Bush) - Inspiring</b>	3.57%	6.56%	5.68%	5.27%
<b>Proven/Tested/Experienced (Bush) - Knowledgeable</b>	3.13%	2.78%	0.00%	1.97%
<b>Committed (Bush) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Hard Working (Bush) - Leadership</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Protector (Bush) - Cares</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	1.95%	2.74%	6.87%	

Taking into account the number of ads also being aired during the exposure periods leads to slightly different success measurements for Bush’s commercials. First, the honest-honest and caring/compassionate-cares pairings disappear from analysis – as only one ad was aired making mention of Bush as honest or caring and compassionate, the method used to incorporate ad counts led to all the post-airing measures being zero (exposure \* 0), so no results were attainable. Second, the success rates categorically decline when taking into account ad numbers, helping further suggest the “running tally” approach utilized here – more ads appear to not reinforce or strengthen the linkage between their message and perceptions of the candidate, but rather quickly achieve a state of diminishing returns. Individualized breakdowns that examine these pairings

month-by-month tell similar stories (see Appendix #), though it should be noted that this pattern is not entirely consistent from pairing to pairing. Regardless, it does appear that taking into account the iterative and crowded nature of modern campaign advertising leads to a more pessimistic conclusion regarding the abilities of these messages to substantively (and solidly) change voters' perceptions of the candidates.

Adding a measure of ad counts still leads to the longest timeframe (14 days) seeing the most success on average, though now the success rates decline linearly from the longest to shortest timeframes (though here the 7-day groupings are just barely better than the 5-day groupings, on average). This would also seem to fit with a more running-tally-based approach, as the short-term effects tend to persist (or, put differently, information learned at an earlier point in time has a continued effect even long after initial exposure). As the individualized pairings show, however, not every trait and mention operated in this way.

Under this new measuring strategy, the most successful pairing was mentions of Bush as a common sense leader coupled with relative perceptions of him as a leader. This pairing did follow the positive pattern between grouping size and success rate, with the differences between 5-, 7-, and 14-day groupings being fairly substantive. While Tough/Fighter – Leadership falls to second-highest in terms of success rate when the independent variable is measured in a more complex form, this particular pairing and the one in third (Reformer – Inspiring) present a starkly different pattern, at least in terms of 14-day effectiveness. For these two pairings, the short- and medium-term pairings were barely ever successful (topping out at 2.09% for the 5-day groupings in both cases, with 7-day success rates of 1.93%). For the biweekly groupings, however, these pairings saw quite substantive successes, with significant pairings in the correct direction in almost a fifth of the days analyzed. Bold – Inspiring sees just over a 5% success rate on average, though here the pattern is slightly shifted in that the 7-day period tends to be the most successful,

followed by the biweekly and then the 5-day groupings. Proven/Tested/Experienced – Knowledgeable works in the complete opposite way, with the short-term being the most successful, followed by the medium-term, though the substantive difference here is quite small.

While hard working – leadership and protector – cares continue to have no significantly correct results, it should also be noted that in this approach the previously correct results for committed – trustworthy disappear entirely. This is surprising, given that this mention was the most common positive one made by the Bush campaign in 2000 (8059 mentions total, 300 more than the next closest – “common sense leadership”). The reasoning for this appears to be primarily a result of a quirk of ad timing and a limitation inherent to including the count of ads over the exposure-period, as the change seems to be coming solely from the second approach being unable to include the effects of a single day in August where two mentions were made. While in the exposure-only results, this day’s ads could be included (as the independent variable in the days following the airings on August 8<sup>th</sup> would simply just be the diminishing exposure values), they could not be in the exposure \* count results (as the days following the 8<sup>th</sup> all had 0 ads, so there is no variation on the IV in the groupings that include those days). This would seem to suggest that the initial successes were, much like the honest – honest successes, more random occurrence than real effect. This example does help provide some credence for comparing exposure \* count to just exposure.

***Table 4.0.3 - Overall Success Rates - Al Gore***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Tough/Fighter (Gore) - Leadership</b>	12.50%	10.00%	11.76%	11.42%
<b>Visionary (Gore) - Inspiring</b>	4.55%	11.54%	7.50%	7.86%
<b>Common Sense Leader (Gore) - Leadership</b>	3.85%	2.94%	0.00%	2.26%
<b>Protector (Gore) - Cares</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.83%	0.28%
<b>Caring/Compassionate (Gore) - Cares</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Hard Working (Gore) - Leadership</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Proven/Tested/Experienced (Gore) - Knowledgeable</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Reformer (Gore) - Inspiring</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	2.61%	3.06%	2.51%	

For Al Gore, only four pairings (half of those where results could be generated) saw any measure of success, but even these tended to be much rarer compared to Bush. From a general standpoint, this would be expected given the running tally logic utilized here; Al Gore had been vice president for the past eight years, had run for president in 1988, and had been a senator since 1985. Any of these roles (but particularly the vice presidency) would likely have made Gore fairly prominent and well-known to those observing his campaign in 2000. Put differently, it is not surprising that Gore saw less success in shifting perceptions of himself because by the time of the 2000 campaign most people's perceptions of him were likely fairly well-established and would require either highly disconfirming or highly stunning new pieces of information to shift. While Gore did try to reinvent his image to some extent, moving away from technocracy to populism (Milbank 2001, 266; Eskew 2001, 67), he did not give him the type of total political makeover that would be required to change already deeply-held senses of him as a political figure.

That said, it is telling that two of the four shifts Gore was able to have some success at regarded perceptions of his leadership skills. As a vice president generally (and Bill Clinton's



vice president specifically), one of Gore's main tasks in the 2000 campaign was to prove he could be his "own man" and both handle the crises that come with the presidency as well as continue the successes of the Clinton years (successes that he had trouble making clear were partially due to his own participation in decisions – see Popkin 2012). The populist change does appear to have had some success, too, given that mentions of Gore as tough or a fighter (by far his most prominent mention, appearing in over 26,000 ads, over twice as often as his next most common mention) were associated with shifts in relative perceptions of Gore as a leader. These effects did not dissipate quickly – almost 12% of the 14-day groupings still saw the presence of these shifts, with 10.00% of the weekly groupings also having correct results. While the success rates are much smaller (and contained only in the short- and medium-term) for common sense leader, Gore did manage to have some positive growth when it comes to being seen as a leader in his own right.

This difficulty for Gore is further illustrated by the low effectiveness of one of the strongest portions of his advertising strategy – that of depicting himself as a "protector", specifically of Social Security and other governmental safety net programs. This area was one of the few major policy disagreements highlighted during the 2000 campaign (Tedesco 2002; Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde 2003, 2), and Gore took great pains to focus on the image of him as a defender of these programs from the proposed changes coming from the Republican candidate (indeed, "Protector" was Gore's second most common positive mention, occurring in just over 10,000 ads). However, given both Gore's own prominence in a Democratic administration that had made welfare reform a major component of its policy platform (Castellanos 2001, 187) and the general understanding that Democratic politicians are more supportive of governmental support programs, it is unsurprising that these ads were so lacking in successfully shifting perceptions of Gore as someone who "cares". Democratic candidates tend to be advantaged on

this trait to begin with (Hayes 2005), and Gore making strong appeals on an area he was already identified with probably served more to maintain that advantage than grow it in a substantial way.<sup>23</sup> The relatively small success rate, limited only to the biweekly groupings, could also just be a coincidence, much like the positive findings for Bush's honest mention above.

Given these difficulties in shifting perceptions as one becomes better known, it is intriguing that the second most successful pairing for Gore was mentions of himself as a "visionary" influencing perceptions of the vice president as "inspiring". Gore faced one of the more difficult situations for a candidate for the presidency, that of successor of a two-term president (Popkin 2012). Weighted down with competing pressures to both maintain the Clinton policy agenda and its successes but also offer a stark change from the personal issues that had tended to derail progress, Gore took a surprising tack and ran more as a challenger than an incumbent (Smith & Mansharamani 2002). The more populist approach did seem to lead to some benefit in presenting Gore as a leader in his own right, and it seems to also be the case that presenting himself as a "visionary" politician was associated with a stronger perception of Gore as inspiring (especially important given the criticism of Gore as a pedantic, wooden politician [Denton 2002, 11]). The nature of that "visionary" message may have received a boost from Gore's own successes in government (or at least a connection to an administration seen as successful), though it should also be noted that much of this rhetoric was likely tied up in

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23 As discussed later in the concluding chapter(s), this possibility is one explanation for the lack of consistent, substantive effects – given that these mentioned are examined in isolation but are present in the campaign as part of a larger messaging whole, it may be the case that the true effect of these mentions are not *changing* views but rather *maintaining* a baseline difference, which for a candidate may be just as important (if one is already advantaged on a particular trait, that is). This is especially context-dependent. As an example, Bush's campaign and its allies ran over 15,000 ads calling Gore dishonest in 2000; if views of Gore's honesty were unchanged from campaign start to finish, the method used here would see no effect from his own positive ads but they may have been crucial in rebutting or negating the effects of the attacks, an important achievement indeed. Future research will better incorporate the varied messages facing voters to more clearly determine the effects of these mentions in the fuller context of the campaign environment.

discussions about the start of a new millennium<sup>24</sup>, making any specific connection to Gore on a personal level more tenuous than some of the other pairings discussed here.

Overall, the difficulties suggested by the running tally approach are borne out, given that the lowest success rate for Gore (albeit just barely) is the longest grouping utilized here. While long-term changes in perceptions of Gore as inspiring or a leader were substantially related to the presence of ads mentioning the term visionary or tough/fighter, respectively, the other two pairings where successes were found saw little to no of these shifts that held over the two weeks after initial airing. Successes tended to be more common in the short- and medium-term, with a lack of consistency overall (tough/fighter and common sense leader saw more success in the short term, while visionary saw more success in the medium term). The relative paucity of success, coupled with the greater concentration generally in the short- and medium-term does suggest that perceptions of Gore were harder to move in more permanent ways than they were for Bush.

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<sup>24</sup> The context-free nature of the coding in the Wisconsin datasets makes these points more assumptions than statements; one does not have to look hard to find rhetoric surrounding the year 2000 and hopes for the new millennium during the campaign, though.

***Table 4.0.4 - Overall Success Rates - Al Gore (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Tough/Fighter (Gore) - Leadership</b>	6.59%	4.20%	9.26%	6.68%
<b>Caring/Compassionate (Gore) - Cares</b>	11.76%	5.26%	0.00%	5.67%
<b>Common Sense Leader (Gore) - Leadership</b>	8.34%	5.00%	0.00%	4.45%
<b>Proven/Tested/Experienced (Gore) - Knowledgeable</b>	0.00%	0.00%	4.17%	1.39%
<b>Hard Working (Gore) - Leadership</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Protector (Gore) - Cares</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Reformer (Gore) - Inspiring</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Visionary (Gore) - Inspiring</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	3.34%	1.81%	1.68%	

When the number of ads being aired alongside the exposure variables is taken into account, the successes for Gore change quite dramatically. Only two of the four original successes still show some sign of effectiveness, with two others that had previously shown no successes now having some (albeit small) rates of effectiveness. Tough/Fighter – Leadership is still Gore’s best pairing, though diminished compared to the exposure-only results. Common Sense Leader – Leadership also retains some measure of success, with *more* successes seen in this second iteration than exposure-only. Caring/Compassionate – Cares and Proven/Tested/Experienced – Knowledgeable attain some successes when taking into account the number of ads being run alongside the exposure variables. This reinforces some of the conclusions discussed above (namely that Gore’s attempts to define his own leadership abilities continued to be associated with positive changes in his leadership, at least some of the time).

One of the possible reasons for these changes has to do with the nature of the variables being constructed. The exposure-only variables, being additive, are vulnerable to a suppressive effect when the ads are aired in a long series of days without breaks (as the exposure variable for many of these becomes the maximum value of 3); both Caring/Compassionate and

Proven/Tested/Experienced take on this pattern for Gore. 485 of his 488 Caring/Compassionate ads air across 11 consecutive days, while all 1,279 of his Proven/Tested/Experienced ads air across the last five days of the campaign (also limiting their ability to be associated with post-exposure shifts). Given the condensed location of the Proven/Tested/Experienced ads, the 14-day effects seen here should probably be better understood as short-term effects (as they are prominent in biweekly periods that encompass the last few days of the campaign rather than being primarily encompassing days after the ads air). It is not that these ads are persisting, but rather very abruptly changing perceptions in the days where they air and immediately follow. No trait questions were asked after election day.

The tendency for the ads mentioning Caring/Compassionate to have only short- and medium-term effects does further reinforce the conclusion suggested above that Gore was relatively limited in his ability to shift perceptions of himself on this particular issue especially given pre-existing advantages for both him as a candidate and partisan stereotypes about him and his Republican challenger. While some substantive shifts are seen, they are mostly contained in the shorter periods and dissipate as the groupings get larger.

The divergent patterns for the two leadership-related mentions are also intriguing, and may have more to do with quantity of advertising than anything else. Tough/Fighter was Gore's most prominent mention by a fair margin (26,340 mentions, more than 2.5 times the number of Protector mentions), and when these quantities are included as part of the independent variable, these ads tend to have the most success in the largest groupings, suggesting more long-term effects than when exposure was the only factor being analyzed. While Gore did make mention of his common sense leader qualities over 3,000 times, the limitation of these successes to the short- and medium-term does suggest that repetition of the message may be more efficacious at keeping the message in voters' minds; indeed, an argument could be made related to the running tally

effect that frequent reminding helps cement a message in observers' minds by reinforcing a previously-observed message. A constant message that Gore is fighting for a particular group or a goal may become mere background noise as voters pay less and less attention to a commercial they've seen multiple times already, but the results here also suggest that that consistency can lead to the message still shaping perceptions long after the fact, even as voters may have forgotten where the original information came from (Lau & Redlawsk 2006).

## CHAPTER 5 – THE 2004 ELECTION

### *Introduction*

The 2004 election is, above all else, a story about national security. The priorities, promises, and perceptions critical to the 2000 campaign and election, while important in the moment, were rendered immaterial on the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. While the campaign between vice president Al Gore and Texas governor George W. Bush was highly domestic in nature, their discussions of education, health care, and social safety nets ended up not being the focus less than a year after that campaign ended; rather, national security and the prevention of another terrorist attack became the central point of George W. Bush's first term. With the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq ongoing as the 2004 campaign began, it was not difficult to discern that military matters, particularly the controversial war to topple Saddam Hussein's regime and the ongoing struggle to contain or destroy the threat of terrorism, were going to be the crucial lenses through which the candidates would be assessed.

This discussion, then, also impacted the traits that the American people desired from their president. Unlike in 2000, where the relevant personal characteristics were shaped more by the personal character of the man leaving office, the relevant traits in 2004 were shaped highly by the salient policies pertinent to voters; 2004 also differed from the prior election in that the incumbent president was on the ballot once more. The discussion surrounding personal characteristics, then, was both a question of the flaws and strengths of the incumbent but also,

perhaps even more heavily, a question of which of the two major-party candidates had the personal abilities to see the country through a time of threat and war.

Personal characteristics entered into this discussion in 2004 mostly due to the fact that both the Republican incumbent and his challenger, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, were agreed in terms of the policy goals they wanted to attain. Both men wanted to keep the United States safe from foreign threats, to protect their citizens from terrorist attacks, to punish those who had been responsible for the attacks already executed against the homeland. The main points of contention, then, were not of the policy ends but rather the policy means (Carmines & Stimson 1980). Personal characteristics became particularly important in this discussion for each side. On the Democratic side, one of the major themes presented by Kerry and his allies was that Bush had failed to fulfill his role as president in leading the country into an ongoing war on flimsy – if not outright false – pretenses and had continued to fail by pursuing the conflict even as the stated justifications for it failed to materialize and the country continued to pour more resources, material and human, into the war. Kerry was thus the better option because he would handle the war better, change strategy rather than continue the stubborn course of the current administration, and work to ensure that America successfully countered the threats it faced without having to bankrupt itself in the process. On the Republican side, Bush and his allies lambasted their opponent as not possessing the strength or conviction to properly stand up to the United States' foes; whether due to the Democrat's focus on international agreement, a misunderstanding of the proper means to combat terrorism and extremism, or his inability to stand firm in his commitments and principles, the Republican argument was that the senator was unable to lead properly in this time of crisis.

From a strategic standpoint, the Bush campaign tended to focus more on targeting Kerry's personality characteristics than the Kerry campaign focused on the incumbent president's



personality. Similarly, the Bush campaign spent much less time touting its own candidate than the Kerry campaign did promoting their own. This imbalance, with the incumbent defining his opponent and the challenger defining himself, is understandable given that the president was, in the words of Mary Beth Cahill, “a wholly known individual. Voters felt as though they knew him and they really accept him both with his flaws and with his strengths. There was very little new that we could tell voters about him” (2006, 32). Being president allowed the Bush campaign to coast on defining their candidate; voters knew him and could judge him on performance without much new information necessary. The stability that Cahill laments also factored into the Bush campaign’s strategy; with perceptions of the incumbent fixed fairly strongly, the focus “was about how John Kerry was perceived, what he represented. It was as much about him as it was about us. And we ran a campaign based on that” (Dowd 2006, 25). Though Kerry would attempt to portray the president as a failed leader, someone who could not be trusted with America’s safety, his opponent was working to do the exact same to him; both sides focused heavily on personal characteristics as the main rationales for why voters should select them and reject the other.

The centrality of national security, the Iraq War, and terrorism undercut John Kerry’s ability to make a strong positive case for himself outside of those policy areas. While the two candidates did discuss other matters, the dominant messaging was more military-focused, shunting other, more traditional domestic matters, to the sidelines. However, this is not to say that these issues were unimportant to voters: as Kenski and Kenski note,

The top issue was moral values (22 percent), and those selecting moral values favored Bush 80 percent to 18 percent. Second was economy and jobs (20 percent), with an identical 80 percent to 18 percent advantage for Kerry. Terrorism ranked third (19 percent) with a striking 86 percent to 14 percent edge for Bush. Iraq was next (15 percent) and those choosing it supported Kerry 77 percent to 23 percent. The final three issues were single-digit mentions. Kerry led on health care (8 percent) by 77 percent to 23 percent and on education (4 percent) by 73 percent to 26 percent.

Bush maintained the advantage on taxes (5 percent) but by only a 57 percent to 43 percent margin (2005, 334)

The strength of the economy was also a clear weakness for Bush, “with nearly half thinking it was worse, three in ten thinking that it had stayed the same, and only one in four thinking it was better” (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2006, 170). Thus, on the more traditional Democratic themes of domestic policy, Kerry did try to present himself as a better alternative to the president, though these themes were not nearly as prominent as the major issues of national security, where Kerry’s strategy was essentially the same. Complicating this, however, was the relatively quick manner in which Kerry became the Democratic nominee and the subsequent domination by the Bush campaign in presenting information to voters once the campaign started. Mary Beth Cahill demonstrates the task facing the Kerry campaign simply, noting that “[w]e came out of the primaries really needing to introduce John Kerry again. He was not a fully defined person. *Almost one half of voters did not know that he had served in Vietnam*” (2006, 33, emphasis added). Cahill also notes that the primary fight had left the Kerry campaign in dire financial straits, while the Republican incumbent, facing no such challenge, was well-equipped: “On March 10 we had 2.3 million cash on hand, and the Bush campaign had 114 million dollars. So they did precisely what you thought they would do. They used the opening to try to define John Kerry” (2006, 33). For a candidate whose main challenges to the president were going to have to be on strong, competent leadership, this disadvantage was a major concern.

A significant component of this attempt to challenge Bush on national security issues revolved around Kerry’s service in the military during the Vietnam War. As will be discussed more below in covering the Republican strategy, this focus came with a number of drawbacks. However, this focus also appears to have come at the expense of other, potentially more important, characteristic discussions. As Holloway describes,

The Democrats clearly felt the primary character trait essential to John Kerry's election was strength. They believed he had to convince the American people he would act decisively in the war on terror and would not shrink from using military force if needed. Although multiple individuals testified to Kerry's strength of character, his Vietnam service offered the most compelling and dramatic example of his courage under fire. The convention symbolically reinforced his strategy. Kerry walked through the adoring crowd to a stage flanked by his war buddies who stood by as he reported for duty. His Vietnam service dominated the convention to the exclusion of other critical components of character: the likability factors such as humor, warmth, compassion, and caring. Although Kerry exceeded many analysts' expectations, his ethos was narrowly defined at the convention and would be the source of doubts over the course of the campaign (2005, 69)

Though the focus on military service could demonstrate that Kerry was capable of strong action and was familiar with the tough decisions wartime requires, the focus on a positive case for the candidate appears to have suffered as a result. Though the war in Iraq was increasingly unpopular, the Democrats as a whole "did not present a clear, specific alternative to Bush's policies" (Benoit, Stein, McHale, Chattopadhyay, Verser, and Price 2007, 56), focusing instead on more general discussions and criticisms of the war and the associated policies of the Bush administration. As Cahill describes, the strategy on the part of the Kerry campaign was "to portray Iraq as a mess of Bush's creation and to really tie what voters saw every night on the evening news and the front pages of the papers to the Bush policies. The nation was not antiwar, but a lot of our supporters or people who were going to vote for us were very much anti-Bush policy" (2005, 33). This strategy, while potentially mobilizing for people already opposed to the president and his policies, has limited potential to convince those more undecided; Kerry could critique the current state of affairs all he liked, but without a clear alternative plan, uncertain voters were likely more amenable to staying with the status quo rather than taking a chance on new policies; the Bush attacks against Kerry only highlighted the riskiness of changing presidents in mid-stream. In terms of self-promotion, Kerry's main angle appears to have been that he wasn't Bush. The finding that "for those who voted for Kerry, only 40 percent did so voting for

their candidate” (Denton 2005, 276) is telling; most of Kerry’s supporters were voting against the president rather than for a clear, consistently defined alternative candidate.

It is not particularly surprising that 2004 is best remembered for the attacks on the Democratic candidate, as due to both novelty and prominence a number of criticisms of Kerry have stayed resonant. For the Bush campaign, the strategy was to contrast the “clear, simple, and familiar positions” (Smith 2005, 147) of the incumbent with the inconsistent and often politically expedient positions of his challenger. The references to John Kerry as a “flip-flopper” are prevalent through both the advertising and campaigning done by the Bush team and its allies. Particularly on matters of national security, the Bush campaign focused on the idea that the president “was an effective and resolute leader who got things done. Both by implication and directly, as he developed his overall theme, Bush was also claiming that Kerry lacked leadership ability” (Friedenberg 2005, 104). Two major advertising campaigns sum up this strategy: the focus on Kerry’s seemingly inconsistent position on war funding and the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads.

Barely a week after becoming the presumptive Democratic nominee, John Kerry was in Huntington, West Virginia, speaking at Marshall University. There, in response to a question about his voting against an \$87 billion appropriations bill for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kerry gave as part of his answer perhaps one of the more famous statements in modern campaign history: “I actually did vote for the \$87 billion before I voted against it” (quoted in Roberts 2004, among others). While Kerry was technically correct, meaning to note that he had supported a similar bill that spent the same amount but also repealed tax cuts and had decided to vote against the authorization bill when it was clear his preferred alternative would not pass, that point was

lost both in the moment and in the wave of criticism coming from the Bush campaign.<sup>25</sup> In a handful of words, the Massachusetts senator had not given a clear rationale for his actions but had given his opponent a clear way to demonstrate that Kerry's positions were often inconsistent and unclear, even to the man himself. The changing technology of the campaign allowed the Bush team to begin hitting Kerry on this quote almost as soon as the words were spoken: Mark McKinnon notes that the Bush team "immediately produced an ad on the 87-billion-dollar vote. Because of technology we have today we could digitally send it down to West Virginia so that it was on the air when [Kerry] got to West Virginia" (2006, 43). The quote, repeated numerous times in Bush advertising, also got significant media attention, with many media outlets "run[ning] the ad frequently, free of charge..." (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2006, 38). The campaign theme that Kerry's positions were not firm, would change with the political winds, also got a boost with footage of the Democratic candidate windsurfing while on vacation, airing an ad starting in late September showing Kerry literally moving whichever way the wind blew. Though mainly intended to reinforce the notion of the Democrat being unmoored in terms of political principle, this ad also helped restate a minor Bush theme regarding Kerry's disconnection from the average American. As McKinnon notes, "There are not a whole lot of people in Iowa and Wisconsin who are windsurfers" (2006, 46). Robert Denton takes this connection a bit further in noting that "Kerry's elitist, windsurfing, Botox, and tanned visuals simply felt alien to Middle America. As the cliché goes, 'Who would you rather share a beer with or hang out with?' Bush wins easily for most Americans" (2005, 276). Though the \$87 billion quote was not the only example the Bush campaign gave to depict Kerry as inconsistent, the general presentation of the

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25 As the sentence attempting to explain Kerry's point shows, too, this was not a clear delineation to begin with!

Democrat as an elitist who only told people what they wanted to hear was the cornerstone of the Republican attacks.

Discussion of the 2004 advertising environment should not ignore the important contributions made by outside actors, both in the moment and in the evolution of campaigns since. The relatively small amount of money spent by the group Swift Boat Veterans for Truth - \$546,000 in an election where over \$2 billion was spent on advertising (Jamieson 2006, 3) – belies the impact this group had at changing perceptions of Kerry and redefining how attack advertising could be done in a presidential election. A small ad buy was made even more powerful through the use of Internet ads and free media replays of the ads (LaCivita 2006, 185-186). In terms of content the ads were direct and devastating, suggesting (or outright stating) that Kerry had lied about his military service in Vietnam, undeservedly winning medals and describing the Democrat as a traitor for these deceptions, as well as his protests against the war after returning home (Williams 2005, 246). The ads are rife with clear criticisms of Kerry, that he “lied to get his Bronze Star” (Odell, quoted in Jamieson 2006, 187), that he “lacks the capacity to lead” (Lonsdale, quoted in Jamieson 2006, 187), that he “dishonored his country” (Ponder, quoted in Jamieson 2006, 187), that he “cannot be trusted” (Hildreth, quoted in Jamieson 2006, 187), and that he “betrayed us in the past” (Cordier, quoted in Jamieson 2006, 189). Though the factual basis for accusations about Kerry being dishonest about his military record was suspect, “the damage was done” (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2006, 39). In an election where Kerry’s main argument for voting for him revolved around his military service, ads giving direct and (seemingly) factual testimony from men who allegedly knew Kerry in Vietnam was a targeted and effective refutation of that qualification. These ads also had a more indirect effect of allowing the president to appear less involved in attacking than his opponent; as Kaid notes, the group’s independent structure and credibility allowed them to make mincemeat of Kerry’s character and

honor while Bush focused his Kerry attacks on issues. The independent ads helped Bush in another way, as well, by emphasizing his positive character traits” (2005, 296-297). Though obviously intended to support Bush, the separation between the candidate and this group allowed for the president to enjoy the benefits of the attacks without risking blowback from their message, a tendency that has only increased over time.

Finally, the flip-flop and Swift Boat ads meshed with a major focus of the Bush campaign, not so much as to strongly define their opponent in negative terms (though that was certainly an intention) but rather to use that definition to rebut legitimate criticisms coming from the Kerry campaign. Kenski and Kenski put it plainly when they note that the “Bush campaign had to question Kerry’s credibility so that the public would question Kerry’s arguments” (2006, 304). Matthew Dowd also makes it clear that this was intentional on the part of the Bush campaign, stating that

the arguments we made about John Kerry, especially the ones about credibility, had as much to do with affecting his ability to make an argument about us as it did with impacting his numbers. I think people missed that. We wanted to put John Kerry in the position where if he said something about us, people would question it. People would say, ‘Wait a second, I don’t know if I can believe that, I don’t know if that’s true, this is a guy who has a tendency to flip flop,’ or ‘he’s not really true to himself, and where does he stand, and can I really believe what he’s saying about the president.’ That was as important or more important than affecting his personal ratings because it affected the ability of the Kerry campaign and Kerry to make as a credible argument against us (2006, 25).

For Kerry, then, the attempts to present himself as a strong alternative to Bush on national security matters faltered both due to the lack of a positive rationale for selecting him and the presence of a concentrated set of attacks from his opponents that directly challenged his credibility and thus his ability to be the leader the country required in a time of war. This focus, on the necessary traits of a wartime leader, was the center of the Bush campaign’s argument for re-election, and Kerry had no clear, consistent and convincing argument to suggest he was the stronger candidate on those criteria.

The Bush team's argument in favor for their own candidate, then, relied heavily on the negative characterizations being made about the Democratic candidate, with the Republican incumbent being presented as a much safer choice than the unknown, untested, and inconsistent challenger. Tellingly, the Bush campaign did not seem to consider a strategy of trying to convince voters necessarily on the merits of the Bush administration's first term but rather paint the choice as one of stability and familiarity versus uncertainty. Matthew Dowd puts it plainly when he notes that "[o]ne advantage I think we had from the president's perspective is that voters might disagree on some policies but they always said, 'at least I know where this guy comes from and at least I know where he stands on this'" (2006, 26). Instead of running on successes as justification for a second term (a tough argument given dissatisfaction with the ongoing Iraq war and the state of the economy), a major Bush argument appears to have been one of negation: you may not like the president and what he has done over the last four years, but the alternative is a mystery and much too risky a chance to take, especially when America is threatened. Mark McKinnon ties this general tack more closely to an idea of leadership, noting that

we determined the idea of steady leadership still held a powerful message for us, certainly on our side, but 'steady' in terms of John Kerry is much different than it was for Howard Dean. For Howard Dean it was sort of 'steady' versus 'crazy.' With John Kerry we were going to argue 'unsteady' as in 'not consistent, politically.' Steady meant steady convictions or principles, which we knew people believed about the president. We wanted to articulate the idea that, even if you didn't like this guy you knew where he stood, you knew what he believed, you knew where he was headed (2006, 39-40)

This approach appears to be at the center of Bush's appeal in 2004. Holloway (2006, 51) describes the importance of this characterization when noting that "[t]he president needed to convince the undecided and independent voters that he could provide continued leadership and deal with the nation's domestic problems. The focus of the convention would be to balance Bush's strong leadership credentials by reviving the compassionate conservative image he had created in 2000." This leadership presentation was couched in the familiarity voters already had



with the president; they knew what Bush's leadership looked like, and they were less well-versed in how Kerry's would look. Through attacks on Kerry's waffling approach to policy and critiques of a more internationalized approach to fighting terrorism, Bush's leadership was presented as a firm and strong response to the threat of terrorism. The personal attacks on Kerry as elitist or aloof also played into this to some extent – Bush was presented as a strong leader, but also as a president who could sympathize and relate to others. Here again, familiarity with the incumbent was key. Edwards states the strategy pursued in the media at the Republican National Convention in these terms, describing how “[b]y incorporating aspects of Bush's character and allusions to his police résumé in film capsules, the convention had greater potential flexibility in usage and timing of these messages, but it also provided an avenue to project these messages televisually without infringing on the central message of the campaign—Bush as a wartime leader, a strong and compassionate leader, and an incumbent who inspired trust” (2005, 89-90). As opposed to Kerry, who had to try to introduce himself to voters who did not know him while also attempting to rebut characterizations of him as weak-willed or out-of-touch, the incumbent president could rely heavily on existing perceptions of him; the comparison of steadfastness versus blowing in the wind meant that an argument was there even for those voters who might not like the president's policies. Though relatively sparse on positive rationales for selecting him, the strategy of comparative leadership was a simple message that fit well with the political environment; importantly for the purposes of this research, it fit the traits that voters were looking for in this election.

Kerry and his allies, by comparison, did not seem to have a strong negative case against Bush; however, the criticisms they did attempt to levy at the incumbent attempted to undermine many of the positives Bush was trying to highlight. Bush's “steadfast” leadership on Iraq was, in the messaging of his challenger, a sign that the president was “war-mongering, arrogant, and

ineffective with regard to his own social programs” (Edwards 2005, 83). The leadership issue was also brought up in Kerry’s criticisms of Bush’s focus, particularly on “failing to keep the focus of the war on terror on Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and Afghanistan” (Friedenberg 2006, 102). This lack of focus was directed into criticisms of Bush as failing to achieve important domestic goals; as Mark Mellman describes, the themes for the Kerry campaign in terms of the incumbent’s weaknesses were “focusing too much overseas in expense of the home front, too stubborn, credibility problems, policy failures on Iraq and the economy, special interests” (2006, 98). However, while these may have been effective rebuttals on the leadership themes presented by Bush for those already disinclined to like the incumbent and his policies, it is unclear if these attacks make a strong negative case for the incumbent especially given that the positive case for Kerry was so poorly defined. Mary Stuckey states it plainly: in 2004 the Democratic candidate and his team “failed to take advantage of their opportunities to hammer Bush’s weaknesses beyond the base and failed to define their own candidate with sufficient clarity. The Republicans, on the other hand, consistently offered both positive messages and a relentless assault on the Democratic nominee” (2005, 155). While Bush did have substantive weaknesses that could have been exploited, his position as a known incumbent allowed for a stronger ability to rely on an implicit positive case and a more pronounced negative case against an unknown and inconsistent challenger. Kerry, on the other hand, had to foment both a strong positive case for himself and a substantive enough negative case to justify the positive case. In the face of a relentless and targeted negative campaign from the Bush team, these dual goals were difficult to achieve.

The election of 2004, then, appears to offer a substantial opportunity for character factors to become important to voters’ decisions. Policy matters were important considerations, as they are in all elections, but in the first post-9/11 election the importance of strength and leadership as character traits appear to have been of greater importance to the candidates than at any point since

the end of the Cold War. Compared to the 2000 election, where policy disagreements were more muted, the policy divide in 2004 was much more stark and much more concentrated, with personal characteristics being viewed through the lens of approaching the key national security issues of terrorism and, more importantly, Iraq (a situation that would be replicated to some extent in 2008, though with the economy being more prominent). Whether perceptions of the candidates were influenced by the character-centric advertising being aired by the two major-party campaigns, however, remains an open question.

### ***Methods Setup***

For the 2004 election, the Wisconsin Advertising Project<sup>26</sup> utilized a set of both positive and negative traits, tracking these mentions across campaign and campaign-allied advertising over both the primary and general election campaigns. While the number of positive traits is slightly smaller in 2004 compared to 2000, the presence of a substantive set of *negative* trait mentions allows for a more varied analysis of the effects of advertising on shifting voter perceptions of candidates over the course of a presidential election campaign.

On the positive side, the Wisconsin data include 30 positive mentions overall; however, only 19 of these 30 were actually mentioned during the general election campaign, many of which appeared in the 2000 version of the dataset. The 19 are “Bipartisan”, “Caring”, “Committed”, “Common Sense Leadership”, “Competent”, “Family Man”, “Fatherly”, “Fiscally Conservative”, “Hard Working”, “Honest”, “Leader”, “Patriotic”, “Progressive”, “Protector”, “Proven”, “Reformer”, “Religious”, “Self Made”, and “Tough/Fighter”. The 11 that were not

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26 Goldstein, Kenneth, and Joel Rivlin. 2007. “Presidential advertising, 2003-2004” Combined File [dataset]. Final release. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Advertising Project, The Department of Political Science at The University of Wisconsin-Madison.

included were either mentioned in the primary and then not mentioned in the general election campaign or were included as part of the Wisconsin data's coverage of congressional and gubernatorial races alongside the presidential race (for example, it is unlikely that "friend of Bush" was a mention of either major party presidential candidate or any of the contenders for the Democratic nomination in 2004).

The 2004 iteration of the Wisconsin catalogue of television advertisements also includes 23 mentions of the *opposing* candidate, which can be generalized as negative mentions. Of these 23, 16 were utilized by the major party candidates in the presidential general election campaign. These 16 are "Career Politician", "Dangerous", "Dishonest/Corrupt", "Extremist/Radical", "Failure", "Friend of Special Interests", "Hypocrite", "Incompetent", "Liberal", "Negative", "Reckless", "Right Wing/Reactionary", "Risky", "Soft/Weak", "Taxing", and "Unpatriotic". As with the set of positive mentions, the seven not included in this chapter were dropped due to a lack of inclusion by the two major party candidates during the general. Three of these are "friend of" mentions, highlighting a candidate's chumminess with the National Rifle Association, the religious right, and the Bushes generally. Surprisingly, mentions such as "Heartless" and "Partisan/Uncompromising" were not included, despite Social Security (mentioned directly in the coding for Heartless) and the divisiveness and stubbornness of the Bush administration's policies being general themes of the campaign. "Washington Insider" was likely utilized more on the congressional campaign trail, and the final trait, "Turncoat", was never utilized by any candidate in any race.

These 35 traits, as with 2000, were then paired with a corresponding characteristic from the 2004 version of the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES). As in 2000, the cross-sectional version of this survey conducted a daily survey, asking respondents their perceptions of the two major party candidates on a number of personality traits. Unlike in 2000, however, the

2004 iteration of the NAES includes a substantive number of *negative* traits alongside its battery of positive traits (2000 did include “Hypocritical”, but given the lack of a negative mention in the Wisconsin data for 2000 this trait was not included). 2004, then, allows for the direct comparison of positive mentions in advertisements on positive traits in survey responses and negative mentions in advertisements on negative traits in survey responses. In total, the NAES instrument contained 15 positive characteristics and 10 negative characteristics. Of these, only eight positive and six negative traits were coupled with Wisconsin trait mentions for analysis.

The impediments for inclusion were twofold – for five of the eleven trait questions omitted, timing of the trait questions made meaningful analysis difficult: “Has Clear Vision”, “Will Make Tough Decisions”, “Not Willing to Admit Mistakes”, “Too Conservative”, and “Too Liberal” were all asked for very brief periods of time and either towards the end of the campaign or (more often) in March. While the two campaigns did not wait long to get started with substantive ad campaigns (unlike the 2000 campaigns), the relative succinct period for influence to be measured made dropping these traits from consideration more efficient. These five, however, also suffered from the impediment facing inclusion of the other six not included in the analysis – the lack of a clear connection to a trait in the Wisconsin lists. For example, the positive NAES traits of “Decisive” and “Easy to Like” did not have clear comparisons with any of the Wisconsin traits. While “Caring” or “Honest” may have been components of “Easy to Like”, the presence of “Cares” and “Honest” in the NAES made the direct connection more appealing. Similar concerns existed for “Knowledgeable”, “Optimistic”, and “Steady”. While “Knowledgeable” in the 2000 NAES had been coupled with “Proven/Tested/Experienced” from the 2000 Wisconsin data, the presence of “Has Right Experience” as an option in the 2004 NAES seemed a better fit in this iteration of the data. The decisionmaking process when assigning traits from one dataset to the other was to find the best connection possible for each Wisconsin trait, not

necessarily to include every NAES trait. On the negative side, the only trait excluded due to a lack of a clear comparative term in the Wisconsin data was “Stubborn”. If “Partisan/Uncompromising” had been mentioned by either George W. Bush or John Kerry then Stubborn would have made it into the analysis; as it stands, however, no mention that was made seems to clearly connect with this NAES trait.

In total, the eight positive traits from the NAES included were “Cares”, “Effective”, “Has Right Experience”, “Honest”, “Inspiring”, “Shares Values”, “Strong Leader”, and “Trustworthy”. The six negative traits included were “Arrogant”, “Changes His Mind”, “Flip Flops”, “Out of Touch”, “Reckless”, and “Says One Thing, Does Another”.

In terms of the logic of the connections proposed, much of the rationale from 2000 can be extrapolated to 2004. Eight of the nineteen positive pairings are direct duplicates of the 2000 pairings – Caring-Cares, Committed-Trustworthy, Common Sense Leadership-Strong Leader, Hard Working-Strong Leader, Honest-Honest, Protector-Cares, Reformer-Inspiring, and Tough/Fighter-Strong Leader. Some of these comparisons need no explanation (Caring, Common Sense Leadership, and Honest, for example). For the others, the reasoning behind the meaning of “Inspiring”, “Trustworthy”, and “Strong Leader” applies again. For the remaining eleven pairings, however, some further justification is warranted.

The trait of “Effective”, perhaps even moreso than “Strong Leader”, suggests that the candidate has an ability to achieve results, to get things done, and to overcome obstacles in doing so. As such, it seemed sensical to associate the Wisconsin mentions of “Bipartisan” and “Competent” with this NAES question. “Shares Values” does inhabit much of the same theoretical space as “Trustworthy”<sup>27</sup>, but here can be associated with Wisconsin mentions that

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27 Indeed, in 2000 the Wisconsin mention of “Values” was associated with the NAES “Trustworthy” question.

touch on more value-driven rather than policy-driven considerations; as such, the mentions of “Family Man”, “Patriotic”, and “Religious” fit best with this characteristic. While “Strong Leader” in the NAES does easily connect with “Leader” in the Wisconsin data (along the lines of the Cares and Honest linkages), its connection with “Fatherly” is a bit more indirect. While Fatherly might be arguably similar to Family Man and thus linked to Shares Values in the NAES, the presence of *both* of these characteristics in the Wisconsin data suggests that something else is intended when the candidate is presented specifically as a father figure (rather than just a person who cares about their family). Alex Castellanos’ description of one of the appeals of Bush as “daddy bear, a father figure, a strong leader...” (Jamieson 2006, 54), coupled with more general research on the more masculine depictions of the president (Katz 2013) suggest that “Fatherly” may be more intended to serve as a depiction of strength and leadership of the national family rather than touching on the more caring or warm qualities suggested by Family Man. As such, Fatherly is linked to Strong Leader here.

The understanding of Trustworthy as more policy-oriented, suggesting that the candidate can be relied upon to ensure good outcomes for Americans, made the association with “Fiscally Conservative” relatively easy to explain. Similarly, the understanding of “Inspiring” as more future-oriented suggested that “Progressive” should be associated with this more optimistic NAES trait. Finally, “Has Right Experience” seems to be primarily focused on candidate history, making the linkages to “Proven” and “Self Made” rather direct.

The negative pairings are a bit more direct, both owing to the relatively small number of NAES trait questions utilized (six), and the clearer theoretical linkages between the concepts being measured in the daily survey and the more specific mentions noted in the Wisconsin data. The six NAES traits are “Arrogant”, “Changes His Mind”, “Flip Flops”, “Out of Touch”, “Reckless”, and “Says One Thing, Does Another”. Some similarities are fairly obvious in this set

– for example, Changes His Mind and Flip Flops would seem to be measuring the same underlying concept; however, this does not require some decision to be made in the pairing utilized, as neither of these questions were in the field at the same time (Changes His Mind was asked about both Bush and Kerry from March 12 to the end of June, with Flip Flops starting September 17 and running to November 16). Because of the clear similarity in these questions, the pairings where either Changes His Mind or Flip Flops were deemed the best associated trait utilized a combined approach, using the Changes His Mind gap as the dependent variable for the days in which that question was in the field and the Flip Flops gap as the dependent variable for the days in which that question was being asked. This is somewhat related to Says One Thing, Does Another, but the latter trait appears to have more of an intentional deception about it, as opposed to the more indecisive nature of the previous two traits. Using this logic, the Changes His Mind/Flip Flop gaps seemed best associated with the Wisconsin traits of “Risky” and “Soft”, which both suggest that the voters would be making a poor decision due to the candidate’s lack of conviction in his decisions or positions<sup>28</sup>; Says One Thing, Does Another seemed better suited for the Wisconsin traits of “Dishonest” and “Hypocrite”, whose definitions are closely aligned with the underlying deception contained in not practicing what one preaches.

Reckless as a trait in the NAES could have been paired with Risky from the Wisconsin data, but the risk of decision in 2004 was less about a candidate going off in an unrestrained way and more a concern about not getting what was promised, perhaps due to a lack of certainty in the positions being held. Reckless in 2004 carries more of a cachet of poorly thought out decisions, not wavering ones (a perception somewhat supported by the fact that Bush was more likely to run

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28 This understanding also fits with one of the stated goals of the Bush campaign, “argu[ing] ‘unsteady’ as in ‘not consistent, politically.’ Steady meant steady convictions or principles...” (Mark McKinnon, quoted in Jamieson [2006, 39])



ads painting Kerry as Risky – 15543 mentions for Bush compared to 1909 for Kerry; however, Bush also ran substantially more ads painting Kerry as Reckless – 6418 for Bush compared to only 2 for Kerry). Using this understanding of Reckless, this NAES question was paired with the Wisconsin mentions of Dangerous and (unsurprisingly) Reckless. Arrogant is fairly straightforward given the nature of the advertising from the campaigns. A longstanding message from the Bush campaign (indeed, such a theme existed in 2000 as well<sup>29</sup>) was that the Democratic candidate's reliance on government spending and the taxation to generate it represented a lack of faith in the American people to handle and utilize their own money effectively. This lack of faith was often depicted as arrogance on the part of a political insider who "knew better" than the average citizen; as such, the pairing of Arrogant with the Wisconsin mention of "Taxing" is relatively straightforward.

This leaves "Out of Touch" as the final NAES trait to discuss; the versatility of this trait allows it to do some heavy lifting in the following analyses. Being depicted as out of touch in a political setting can mean any number of things – one's views can be outdated, one's experiences could be dramatically different from the average American (perhaps due to former wealth and privilege or perhaps due to an extended stay in the halls of power), one's views can be incredibly out of the mainstream, one's understanding of problems and solutions could be incredibly flawed (perhaps due to one of the other possibilities listed above). Depicting an opponent as out of touch, then, can be a useful strategy in a large number of contexts. For this reason, Out of Touch from

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29 See, for example, a speech Bush gave in October 2000, saying "And that money -- if you listen to my opponent, he lost some of the lessons he learned here in Tennessee, evidently -- because that money is not the government's money, Mr. Vice President. That money is the people's money. And that is one of the big differences in this campaign, and that's what you've got to tell our fellow independents and Democrats. This is a man who trusts government, and we trust the people. He trusts the federal government, and I trust the people with your own money to make your own decisions for your family". (<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/28/us/2000-campaign-speech-bush-says-it-s-time-for-leader-who-will-people-s-business.html>)

the NAES was paired with nine of the sixteen Wisconsin traits – “Career Politician”, “Extremist”, “Failure”, “Friend of Special Interests”, “Incompetent”, “Liberal”, “Negative”, “Right Wing”, and “Unpatriotic”. While failure and incompetent are a bit less direct, being seen as represented failed policies appears to be one possible reading of the concept of being out of touch, and the lack of any more direct negative NAES trait made this decision fairly straightforward. Liberal, Right Wing, and Extremist all seem to inhabit the same conceptual space, and the same can be said for Career Politician and Friend of Special Interests. Negative and Unpatriotic can be viewed as traits representing a certain mismatch between the candidate and the mood (Negative) or values of the country (Unpatriotic); as with Incompetent and Failure, a large portion of this decision is the lack of any clearly superior alternative.

As in 2000, the trait mention on the part of the campaign (Wisconsin) serves as the independent variable in each pairing; the trait questions from the NAES represent the dependent variable. For each trait question, a variable was generated that subtracted the value given to the Democratic nominee, Senator John Kerry, from the value given to the Republican nominee, then-president George W. Bush. The NAES questions in the 2004 iteration, differ substantially from the versions included in the 2000 survey; rather than a four-category ordinal scale, the 2004 version asks respondents how well each trait describes either man using a zero to ten scale, with respondents told for each question that zero means it “does not apply at all” and ten means it “applies extremely well”. This version avoids much of the categorical fuzziness of the original four-category scale, as well as provides more possible variation between the two men generally and clearer measurements of shifts in the relative perceptions of the candidates. These subtractive variables, then, represent the same approach as the “gap” variables created in 2000, with just a larger range. These variables can range from -10 (Kerry is given the highest rating, while Bush is given the lowest) to +10 (Bush is given the highest rating, while Kerry is given the lowest).

In terms of the exposure and exposure multiplied by number of ads variable (the two independent variables utilized here), the process and explanation are exactly the same as in the methods setup section for the 2000 analysis. The expectations for the direction of the effects are also the same as 2000; when Bush's ads are being tested, a positive effect should be generated (that is, being exposed to Bush's ads that mention positive traits should widen the gap in Bush's favor); for Kerry the effect of positive trait mentions should be negative. For *negative* trait mentions, the expectations are flipped. For Bush, negative trait mentions should generate negative effects (that is, since negative mentions *from* Bush are intended to be attacks *against* Kerry, the negative trait being asked about in the NAES should apply more strongly to Kerry); for Kerry, then, negative mentions should lead to a positive gap (the negative trait being asked about applying more strongly to the president). As in 2000, the sequence below will be Bush's mentions, then Kerry's, with positive mentions presented first. As with 2000, one final assumption should be noted – while the traits are divided into cleanly positive and negative groupings, it may be the case that some of the positive mentions are contained in ads whose overall message is negative or attacking, and some of the negative mentions are contained in ads whose overall message is positive or promoting. The Wisconsin data do contain a variable measuring the “tone” of each ad, noting whether the ad is mostly attacking, promoting, or contrasting. However, in examining the overall tone of the positive mentions described above, no positive mentions were made in an ad whose main intention was to attack (however, as Table X.X shows, a substantial number of positive mentions were made in contrast ads, which may in some cases be fairly close to attacking – the finding that all of the “Fiscally Conservative” mentions were done in contrast ads, for example, may be suggesting that the usage of this positive trait was often more to attack than directly promote). On the negative side, as Table X.X shows, almost none of the negative mentions were made alongside advertisements that were intended to promote

– only “Liberal” and “Taxing” were utilized in this way, and these were less than 1% of the total number of ads for each mention. Unsurprisingly, all of these incongruous mentions were made in pro-Bush ads, suggesting that these could have easily been contrast ads. Regardless, it does not appear that the overall tone of either the positive mentions or negative mentions would dramatically work against the expectations presented above.

As with the 2000 results tables, the tables discussed below will describe the trait effects using monthly breakdowns – this will allow for a more general discussion towards the end of the chapter about the effect of sustained ad campaigns generally and the possibility for greater or lesser effects as the campaign moves closer to Election Day more specifically. Given the finding of greater effects towards the end of campaigns due to lack of time to dissipate (Erikson & Wlezien 2012), this monthly approach will allow for some greater insight about when campaigns potentially have their greatest effects. For each table, the values for each month are given as percentages – first the percent of days (more specifically, starting days for the five-, seven-, and fourteen-day cross-sections) where significant effects were found and second the percent of those significant days where the regression coefficient was in the hypothesized direction (positive for Bush, negative for Kerry for positive mentions, vice versa for negative mentions). This approach was utilized in order to account for the variation in the number of days in which there were ads across the months and the combinations as well as to help better depict the true nature of the effects (as just giving the number of days for significant/correct effects would be confusing without also noting the number of possible days where there could have been effects in the first place).

## Results

***Table 5.0.1 - Overall Success Rates (Positive Traits/Mentions) - George W. Bush***

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
<b>Tough/Fighter (Bush) - Strong Leader</b>	13.68%	16.66%	17.54%	15.96%
<b>Caring (Bush) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	12.50%	10.00%	5.88%	9.46%
<b>Leader (Bush) - Strong Leader</b>	5.16%	5.00%	8.41%	6.19%
<b>Protector (Bush) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	6.25%	5.00%	2.94%	4.73%
<b>Religious (Bush) - Shares Values</b>	5.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.67%
<b>Patriotic (Bush) - Shares Values</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	7.10%	6.11%	5.80%	

While the 2004 iteration of the Wisconsin dataset contains almost twenty positive mentions, the re-election campaign for President George W. Bush utilized very few of them. This could, in part, be understood as a general strategy for incumbents running for re-election: after four years of being the most prominent political figure in the country (and arguably the world), spending time and money talking about one's personal qualities seems unnecessary. Bush likely found it a moot point to run commercials discussing his competence or sense of hard work; if he couldn't demonstrate that via *being the actual president* then a commercial during the evening news was not going to be able to effectively change people's minds. As such, the analysis of positive mentions made by the Bush campaign is limited to a half-dozen pairings.

The particular context of assessing the impact of advertisements on perceptions of a sitting incumbent, however, make the conclusions that can be gleaned a bit trickier. While in 2000, Gore was fairly well-known (at least his personality – Gore's background tended to be a

little more nebulous; see Popkin [2012, 229]), his advertising took great pains to redefine him as an independent actor outside of the aegis of the Clinton presidency. Bush in 2004 had no need for such a redefinition; if anything, his advertising was intended to reinforce perceptions of him that were presented in his rhetoric and actions (Cahill 2006, 32) or to present clear alternatives in areas where his campaign viewed his opponent as weak. As such, the half-dozen mentions that are made – Caring, Leader, Patriotic, Protector, Religious, and Tough/Fighter – operate more as confirmation than persuasion; this change in intention does not dramatically affect the expectations for the relationships going into the analysis, but it should be noted that the potential for changed perceptions is much greater for an unknown challenger than a sitting incumbent. Put differently, it is hard to be certain if a lack of strong findings for Bush in 2004 is due to the ads themselves being ineffectual generally or the ads themselves being unable to shift perceptions of a man who had become incredibly prominent in voters' minds over the preceding three to four years.

That said, there does appear to be some substantive changes in perceptions of Bush, and perhaps more surprisingly these changes are not contained solely to short-term shifts that dissipate quickly. Overall, the 5-, 7-, and 14-day groupings used here have fairly similar success rates on average (7.10%, 6.11%, and 5.80%, respectively). However, these successes do appear to be highly concentrated in a small number of pairings overall.

By far, the most successful mention Bush had in 2004 was describing himself as “tough” or a “fighter” paired with perceptions of him as a strong leader. This is a bit surprising on its own, given the prominence of leadership as a component of Bush's public presentation as president (particularly after the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001); the fact that perceptions of his leadership ability were malleable at all over the campaign is thus a bit unexpected. However, it should be remembered here that the dependent variable is not a singular perception of leadership but rather

*relative* perceptions between Bush and his opponent, Massachusetts Senator John Kerry.

Mentioning himself as tough or a fighter, then, may not be boosting Bush as much as it is making him look more of a leader *relative to Kerry* (put differently, the results here may not be so much Bush going up on the scale but rather Kerry going down). Given the relative paucity of these mentions as part of Bush's overall mentions (2,236 total, 1.22% of his total mentions), seeing success in anywhere from 13.68% to 17.54% of groupings suggests that these mentions were contributing to an increased sense of Bush as a leader, relative to his opponent.

Though more limited to the short- and medium-term groupings, Bush's efforts to present himself as a caring figure in touch with the average voter did appear to pay some dividends, though not as clearly as mentions of him as tough/fighter. In a sense, though, these mentions of Bush as "caring" may not have been totally separated from the general strategy utilized by the Republicans in 2004 to present Bush as the right man to make the hard decisions necessary for a leader in the post-9/11 world. The most prominent example of Bush making an effort to depict himself as caring is likely the ad campaign called "Ashley's Story," where an encounter Bush had with a young girl whose mother had died in the World Trade Center. Bush is shown giving "the girl a big hug...with an unusually empathetic look on his face as Ashley buried her tearful face in his chest" (Boehlert 2004). Ashley's own description of the president in the ad demonstrates the meshing of Bush as both a caring figure and strong leader, saying "He's the most powerful man in the world, and all he wants to do is make sure I'm safe, that I'm OK" (quoted in Boehlert 2004 [or one of the other sources]). Thus, it is likely the case that these ads were not solely the province of Bush as compassionate conservative a la the 2000 election but rather a mixing of ads making mention of him as connected to average voters and also concerned with the country's

safety and security.<sup>30</sup> While the success rate for Protector is much smaller than the direct Caring mentions, much of the same logic is at work here; this may suggest that the “Caring” aspect of the campaign did branch out beyond the national security-tinted approaches, but there is a strong substantive overlap between the two mentions (at least conceptually).<sup>31</sup>

Though the presentation of Bush as a strong and decisive leader had its roots in the immediate periods following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, this theme was a major component of Bush’s positive messaging in 2004. Mentions of “leader” were by far the most prominent one for Bush, appearing in 31,567 ads (making up 65.42% of his positive Wisconsin mentions and 17.22% of his Wisconsin mentions overall). Presenting the incumbent president as a leader would seem a fairly easy task; as presidents before Bush have found out, being able to run with the trappings of the office does help present an aura of leadership, even in times of crisis (see, for example, Ford’s strategy in 1976 and Carter’s usage of the office in 1980 [Erickson & Schmidt 1982]). However, Bush appears to have made a concerted effort to avoid relying on image and make the case more directly that his continued presence in office was important due to his own leadership abilities (and, by contrast, Kerry’s lack of such qualities). There does appear to have

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30 As will be mentioned below, it is also difficult to separate the effects of these ads from related *negative* ads that cover some of the same ground. The relative perception of Bush as “caring about people like me” is likely affected simultaneously by the presentations of him as in touch with the concerns of regular people and the presentations of Kerry as an out-of-touch, elitist liberal.

31 These mentions, in particular, demonstrate the limitations of the current study where only singular mentions are analyzed in isolation. Bush had 26 days where “Protector” was used in an advertisement, and only 14 where “Cares” was used; however, all 14 of the Cares days were also Protector days. While the substantively different success rates suggest some independent effect for both Cares and Protector, it is highly difficult to determine the separate effects for each trait. The independent effects are supported by the observation that the counts for each of these overlapping days is not the same (suggesting that the mentions were at least some of the time occurring separate from each other), but given the coding processes used by the Wisconsin researchers it cannot be ruled out that some of these mentions occurred in the same ad. Future iterations of this research will have to address both the fact that one ad can contain multiple mentions and that multiple mentions can be made in separate ads *on the same day*, both of which complicate the analyses presented here. While these initial, individual tests do suggest some independent effects, more holistic approaches are necessary to more clearly understand what mentions work and under which circumstances.



been some substantive movement in relative perceptions after these ads aired, suggesting that these messages had some independent effect. The limited utility here, may be more of a ceiling effect than a sign of advertising's weak effectiveness; by the summer and fall of 2004 perceptions of Bush's leadership skills were likely fairly stable in the minds of most voters, meaning that advertisements talking about them had a limited pool of persuadable viewers to work with. This caveat applies to all perceptions of the incumbent, however, so while any successes here should be considered with a grain of salt there is some evidence that these advertisements did move some people, at least some of the time.

While "Religious" mentions do appear to have some effects on relative perceptions of Bush as someone who shares the respondents' values, these appear only in the short-term pairings, suggesting that these effects dissipate rather quickly. Furthermore, Bush only made mention of his religious qualities in 15 ads across 4 days throughout the 245 campaign days studied, which suggests that these results may be spurious. The purpose of these ads is somewhat confusing; Bush's qualities as a religious man had been fairly well-covered in the 2000 campaign, and any observers who might have considered voting for or against Bush on religious grounds likely already knew his evangelical background. These may have been mentions by an outside group operating on Bush's behalf; regardless, they appear too rarely and briefly to have any strong confidence in the concreteness of these effects.

Similarly, though 448 ads aired mentioning Bush's patriotism, these came in the final five days of the campaign and thus were of limited analytical utility. These are even more questionable, as the likelihood that anyone who was still unsure about Bush's patriotism could be swayed in the last week of the campaign seems quite small. As with the religious ads, these may have been outside groups making a final push (or simply exhausting available funds); it is not particularly surprising that no successes were observed for these ads.

**Table 5.0.2 - Overall Success Rates (Positive Traits/Mentions) - George W. Bush (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Tough/Fighter (Bush) - Strong Leader</b>	23.33%	19.61%	25.29%	22.74%
<b>Caring (Bush) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	6.25%	5.56%	4.00%	5.27%
<b>Protector (Bush) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	3.13%	2.78%	4.00%	3.30%
<b>Leader (Bush) - Strong Leader</b>	2.00%	1.29%	3.46%	2.25%
<b>Patriotic (Bush) - Shares Values</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Religious (Bush) - Shares Values</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	5.78%	4.87%	6.12%	

Taking into account the number of ads airing during exposure periods presents something of a mixed bag. Overall, three of the four pairings with any successes see their rates go down, while the Religious – Shares Values pairing sees its successes disappear entirely (though, as mentioned above, the briefness of these ads as a presence in the campaign is likely the cause of that). Tough/Fighter – Strong Leader, however, sees its success rate go up quite substantively, though the reasoning for this is unclear.

One of the main arguments to include ad counts as part of the independent variable is that the relative prominence of advertising mentions can be quite uneven (as already noted above, there is a wide gap between the 15 mentions of “Religious” and the 31,567 mentions of “Leader” for Bush). Furthermore, the exposure variable tends to encompass days where further iterations of the advertisements are airing, so bringing in these counts over those periods helps account for the likely boosting of the effects of exposure (put differently, one is more likely to remember an ad they had seen yesterday if they see it again today, especially if they see it multiple times today). The additive nature of the exposure variable already accounts for this to some extent, but the number of ads appearing per day is also uneven; the exposure variable, though additive, does not differentiate between a day with 1 ad (the minimum for Bush), and a day with 1,736 (the

maximum value for daily mentions of Protector). Multiple airings may have a multiplier effect on the resonance of the message, so accounting for these differences is important to get a more detailed sense of the effects of exposure in a busy campaign media environment (at least for these individual mentions).

The increase in successes for Tough/Fighter, then, may be due to accounting for the multiplier effect of multiple airings of these ads over the exposure periods analyzed. This particular pairing, though, suggests that the effects of quantity can be observed even in small sizes – the average number of airings per day is 43, meaning that even marginal amounts of reiteration can have a substantive effect on the persistence of a particular depiction (particularly in the short- and long-term, where the success rates for this pairing increase by almost 10 and 8 percentage points, respectively). However, some caution should be taken here, as it is clear from the rest of the changes that quantity does not always have this quality of its own; “Leader” averages 295 mentions per day for Bush, but the success rates here drop noticeably. While this may be a unique result given the likely limited movement for perceptions of Bush’s leadership (as discussed above), the differing results after accounting for the number of ads being aired suggests that increased quantity does not always correspond to increased effectiveness. A saturation point is likely, where the ads begin to lose effectiveness (or have the opposite effect, as voters may tune later iterations of a particularly prominent ad out entirely or see repetition as a negative sign [Kirmani 1997]), but where that is does not appear clear (or is likely to be consistent) in the mentions being studied here.

Caring and Protector also see diminished successes, though not dramatically so. The prominence of both of these mentions in the final two weeks of the campaign may be partially explaining this decline (as the potential for counts to matter is limited due to the lack of trait questions after election day), but this limitation is also present in the exposure-only results. One

possibility is that this diminished effect is a truer reflection of the overall effects of exposure due to the fact that the second version of the independent variable tends to account for more days when the ads are run across a tightly concentrated period of sequential days (see Chapter X for a detailed explanation of this); given the relatively few number of days where Caring and Protector ads are present over the course of the campaign, this decline may simply be occurring due to the number of possible days for successes to be observed growing. Regardless, the already rare successes for these mentions appears to not be bolstered dramatically when accounting for how many mentions were being made during the campaign.

***Table 5.0.3 - Overall Success Rates (Negative Traits/Mentions) - George W. Bush***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Hypocrite (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	8.34%	21.53%	28.67%	19.51%
<b>Unpatriotic (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	17.50%	16.16%	16.81%	16.83%
<b>Risky (Bush) - Changes His Mind/Flip Flops</b>	8.34%	31.25%	10.00%	16.53%
<b>Soft (Bush) - Changes His Mind/Flip Flops</b>	16.03%	14.22%	11.91%	14.05%
<b>Dishonest (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	8.89%	10.29%	18.38%	12.52%
<b>Taxing (Bush) - Arrogant</b>	5.73%	8.39%	11.28%	8.47%
<b>Reckless (Bush) - Reckless</b>	12.50%	10.00%	0.00%	7.50%
<b>Liberal (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	3.66%	4.63%	7.55%	5.28%
<b>Negative (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	14.29%	0.00%	0.00%	4.76%
<b>Right Wing (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	4.35%	7.15%	3.83%
<b>Incompetent (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	7.32%	1.19%	0.80%	3.10%
<b>Extremist (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	8.55%	10.17%	9.38%	

Unsurprisingly for an incumbent president, the Bush team in 2004 made greater attempts to define their opponent than run commercials that talked directly about the president's own qualities. While this is a generally useful strategy for incumbents (the unknown candidate is

always a greater risk than the known incumbent, even a flawed incumbent), such a strategy was also rational given the great disparity in funds available to the candidates as Kerry clinched the Democratic nomination in early 2004. Well-funded already and not having to waste resources in a primary campaign, the Republican campaign was in a strong spot to define their opponent with little resistance in the opening days of the general election (Benoit, Stein, McHale, Chattopadhyay, Verser, & Price 2007, 170). Negative messaging on the part of the president, though, was prominent throughout the campaign; the Bush campaign and its allies made almost three times as many negative mentions as positive mentions, at least in terms of the mentions coded in the Wisconsin data (135,096 negative vs. 48,254 positive).

Almost 60% of these mentions, though, do not appear specifically tailored to Kerry but rather seem more generic criticisms or attacks against Democratic candidates. 40,966 mentions are made of Kerry as “Taxing”, with 40,661 using the mention of “Liberal” in a negative way. These would both seem to be generic attempts to define the Democratic candidate as in line with the stereotype presented more broadly by the Republicans, and as Table X.X shows, these mentions did have some effect at shifting relative perceptions of Kerry as Arrogant (associated with Taxing) and Out of Touch (associated with Liberal). Both of these pairings follow the pattern of having greater success rates as the groupings analyzed get larger, with 11.28% of the biweekly Taxing and 7.55% of the biweekly Liberal groupings seeing movement in favor of Bush (that is, the relative perceptions of the two candidates tends to be balanced toward more people saying the trait in question applies more to Kerry than it does to Bush). These descriptions, though fairly generic, did correlate with some substantive long-term shifts in how observers saw Kerry. The standard nature of these attacks, though, may be the rationale for these successes; the Bush ads discussing Kerry as Taxing or Liberal may have persuaded some observers to see Kerry as just another Democrat (fitting a stereotype they already held). Regardless of the logic behind

the utility of these ads, the relatively small success rates overall do suggest that while some effect can be linked to these ads, they were not the strongest potential drivers of changing perceptions of the two candidates in 2004.

Though in numerical terms the number of ads from Bush touching on Kerry's veracity are relatively quite small (265 ads calling him a Hypocrite and 8,944 calling him Dishonest), these types of attacks have tended to be regarded as highly important to the Bush campaign's victory in 2004; the success rates for these two mentions demonstrate that this assumption is justified. Though only present in a relative handful of ads, mentions of Kerry as a hypocrite increased relative perceptions of him as someone who says one thing and does another in almost 20% of the groupings analyzed, on average. While these effects are limited in the short-term (8.34% of 5-day groupings), the medium- and long-term groupings see a substantial amount of significant correlations between ad exposure and movement in Bush's favor on this trait (21.53% and 28.67% of 7- and 14-day groupings, respectively). Though the results for Dishonest are weaker overall, the success rates are still substantive (8.89%, 10.29%, and 18.38% of the short-, medium-, and long-term groupings, respectively). While the Wisconsin dataset never analyzes usage of the term "flip-flop" directly, these two mentions form part of the overall attack that tends to be remembered as the core of the Bush critique of Kerry. While part of the flip-flop attack was intended to show Kerry as an inconsistent and weak leader, these angles (Hypocritical and Dishonest) fit more with an intended perception as someone who would say anything to get himself elected or take positions he didn't believe in for political gain (Friedenberg 2005, 104); the intended contrast with Bush as a president who would be true to his principles and take unpopular stands if he felt they were right is clear (Friedenberg 2005, 116-117). These angles in particular do appear to have had some resonance with voters, as the periods following these mentions being made often saw shifts in how respondents viewed the two men.

The other aspect of the indecisiveness/insincere attacks on Kerry's steadfastness can be seen in the analyses of the Wisconsin traits "Risky" and "Soft". While the conventional wisdom has tended to view the flip-flop rhetoric as more depicting Kerry as inconsistent, dissembling for political purposes, or just flat-out dishonest (the most well-known examples being the Swift Boat ads, where Kerry is directly accused of lying about his exploits while serving in Vietnam [see, for example, the transcripts in Jamieson 2006]), a major component of the Bush argument about why Kerry's inconsistencies made him unfit for office was heavily tinged with national security concerns; such a depiction helped the presentation of Bush as a steadfast leader become starker and more relevant (Friedenberg 2005, 116-117). A leader who changes his mind because he is indecisive is just as bad (if not worse) than a leader who changes his mind for political purposes; the end goal is a national policy that is erratic and, in the argument of the Bush campaign, demonstrates a weakness that is ill-suited to the landscape of threats that faced the United States in the post-9/11 years. Risky becomes a fairly easy mention to connect to these as well; a central argument for Bush (as it was for Lincoln in 1864) was that in a time of crisis the best kind of leader is one for whom the American people already have a familiarity with. While inconsistent policies are generally presented as an indication of a lack of dedication on the part of the American people, dramatic changes in policy (particularly security-related policy) can have disastrous outcomes simply because the people are not highly informed about what the consequences of those changes would be (and by the time they know, it will be too late). Coupling Kerry's perceived lack of clarity on war policy (Holloway 2005, 64) with a general argument about Bush's familiarity representing a safer choice in dangerous times, it is understandable why both mentions Risky and Soft saw substantial correlations with changes in

Bush's favor on the trait questions about the two men's propensities to change their mind or flip-flop.<sup>32</sup>

The concern over the larger political environment introducing potential confounders appears the strongest when examining the mentions Bush made of Kerry being "Unpatriotic" and their effect on perceptions of the two men as "Out of Touch". Though this is an intriguing pairing (the patriotism attacks representing a means to suggest that Kerry is out of step with the mood of the country), it is not entirely clear that this can be assumed to be the intended strategy of these attacks. While the mentions of Kerry as not sufficiently supportive of America is likely tied to support of the Iraq war most directly, it is not as though this war was receiving strong support among the public over the course of the campaign (Abramson, Aldrich, & Rohde 2006, 37); additionally, it was more Kerry's *inconsistent* support for the war that became the stronger angle for the Bush campaign (with perhaps the most memorable example being an ad that quoted Kerry's complicated answer regarding his support for military funding early in the conflict [quoted in Jamieson 2006, 47]). While the average success rates here do suggest *some* connection between ads attacking Kerry as unpatriotic and perceptions of him as out of touch, the logic for this connection is a bit murkier. This may be another example of the larger political environment giving the appearance of a direct connection where the real explanation is more attributable to other messages occurring at the same time; the Bush campaign did attack Kerry's "elitism" in multiple ways (the famous "windsurfing" ad and a Citizens United ad lambasting Kerry's spending on a yacht and beachfront property are two prominent examples), so the measurement

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32 As noted above, these are not separate questions as much as a combined single question – the NAES instrument changed the wording on the "Changes His Mind" question during the course of the campaign. While this may mean that some of the effects here are more attributable to larger campaign effects (as changing to "Flip-Flops" begins to more directly overlap with general Republican rhetoric about Kerry beyond advertising), this possibility does not seem to be any worse than the general possibilities of other aspects of the campaign where similar language is being used (speeches, commentary, etc.).



of “Out of Touch” may be reacting to other messages rather than solely the unpatriotic mentions (especially given that over the course of the campaign Bush only ran ads making mention of this 1,353 times, 1% of his total negative mentions).

A number of other combinations do see some successes, but for the most part these are relatively small overall (or limited to one or two of the groupings analyzed). Mentions of Kerry as “Reckless” do tend to benefit Bush in the same-named trait questions, but these tend to dissipate in the medium- and long-term groupings. Similarly, mentions of Kerry as “Negative” do have some correlations with increased perceptions of the Democrat as Out of Touch in the short-term, but have no successful pairings in the medium- and long-term groupings. There is some short-term success for mentions of Kerry as Incompetent and movement on the Out of Touch question, as well, though this pairing may be subject to the same concerns as Unpatriotic – while Bush ran many more ads knocking Kerry’s competency (9,517 overall), this logic is a bit tenuous. “Extremist” appears to have had no success in shifting perceptions of Kerry as Out of Touch, though the fact that Bush only made mention of this 64 times suggests this was not a major tactic on the part of the Republicans.

One final pairing deserves special attention, if only for its confusing nature. According to the Wisconsin data, the Bush campaign or its allies ran 5,100 ads making mention of the term “Right Wing”. While small (only 3.78% of the total negative mentions listed in the Wisconsin data), the fact that Bush is making mention of this term in ads at all is somewhat surprising. One possibility was that they may have been responding to Kerry ads making mention of the term and getting counted as Bush mentions simply because of the presence of the term in the ads (as the Wisconsin data only codes based on whether or not the term appears, separated from context). This, however, does not appear to be the case, as the first mention from Bush of this term occurs almost a week before Kerry’s first mention (October 6 for Bush, October 12 for Kerry). One

possibility is that Bush is using these ads to tout successes in standing up to the right wing of his party, but this seems unlikely. Without an example of this mention, the context is unclear; while there are some minor successes at these mentions corresponding to Kerry being seen as more out of touch, this is another pairing where the logic does not fit the argument for a direct effect.

***Table 5.0.4 - Overall Success Rates (Negative Traits/Mentions) - George W. Bush (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
<b>Reckless (Bush) - Reckless</b>	22.22%	27.27%	27.78%	25.76%
<b>Hypocrite (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	8.34%	16.35%	19.17%	14.62%
<b>Risky (Bush) - Changes His Mind/Flip Flops</b>	18.28%	14.12%	10.00%	14.13%
<b>Dishonest (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	3.96%	9.88%	7.75%	7.20%
<b>Taxing (Bush) - Arrogant</b>	0.62%	3.28%	16.64%	6.84%
<b>Right Wing (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	4.35%	7.15%	3.83%
<b>Liberal (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	2.08%	3.19%	2.87%	2.72%
<b>Incompetent (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	3.57%	0.00%	0.00%	1.19%
<b>Unpatriotic (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	3.03%	0.00%	1.01%
<b>Extremist (Bush) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Soft (Bush) - Changes His Mind/Flip Flops</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	5.37%	7.40%	8.30%	

Taking into account the number of advertisements aired during exposure periods changes the analysis of what was and was not effective for the Bush campaign in 2004 quite dramatically. Two of the most consistent pairings for Bush lose their effectiveness almost entirely, while the rest see substantive declines in their success rates. Given the stark imbalance between positive and negative mentions for the Bush campaign (48,254 positive mentions versus 135,096 negative mentions), this may be further evidence suggesting that quantity in advertising tends to work

against the interests of the candidate making the repeated appeals; this also connects to long-standing research about the general dislike on the part of voters for negative advertising that focuses on personal characteristics (Min 2004)<sup>33</sup>. Flooding the airwaves with negative messaging may have allowed Bush to define Kerry in certain unsavory ways, but it does not appear to have had a consistent effect; more and more iterations of the ads in question appear to have tended to make them less effective at instilling the senses of the two candidates that the incumbent president desired.

Most starkly, two of the pairings were Bush saw the highest success rates when only exposure was utilized – Unpatriotic – Out of Touch and Soft – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops – see their success diminish to nearly zero and actually zero, respectively. Unpatriotic declines from an average success rate of 16.83% (seeing fairly equal successes across each grouping) to successes only in the weekly groupings, and not a substantive amount at that (3.03%). Soft loses its successes entirely, going from a 14.05% average success rate (again, fairly even spread across the three groupings) to no observed successes entirely. Both mentions are aired in fairly tightly grouped campaigns – the vast majority of Soft mentions come in a single, unbroken 15-day period, and all but 6 of the Unpatriotic mentions are grouped together in unbroken 9-, 8-, and 6-day periods, so this does not appear to be attributable to large gaps in between airings limiting the observable periods for analysis. These concentrated periods do seem to have some substantive effect on the abilities of the ads to meaningfully shift respondents' views of the two presidential candidates.

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33 It should be noted here, though, that the demobilizing or dispiriting effects of negative advertising remain an area of debate; Min's distinction between personality and policy, though, is useful for the current research.

This conclusion, however, is complicated by the results for the three most prominent mentions made by Bush. While all three – Risky, Taxing, and Liberal – are not as successful when their counts are taken into account, these declines are nowhere near as substantive as Soft or Unpatriotic. Taxing does see most of its effectiveness limited to the biweekly grouping (suggesting that this message may have *benefitted* from its continued repetition, especially given that the success rate *increases* for the 14-day periods), though this is not too different from the exposure-only results, where the biweekly grouping had the highest success rate. The short- and medium-term groupings see sharp declines in their success rates here. The vast majority of these mentions did come in unbroken chunks, suggesting that part of the decline may simply be more observations (as long unbroken strings of days limit the variation of the exposure variable), but this then complicates the conclusions that can be drawn about the effects of highly-repeated advertisements. An average day saw almost 168 Taxing mentions, and most days were substantially above that, especially in the late summer and fall. While this may be a more accurate understanding of the effects of Taxing, the finding that large quantities do not necessarily lead to strong drop-offs in effectiveness may mean that there is not a unified theory of when and how trait-centric advertising is effective.

Risky and Liberal see similar declines as Taxing, though they maintain fairly similar patterns across the three groupings analyzed. Given that these follow the same pattern as Taxing (most, if not all, of the mentions coming as part of an unbroken string of days), it is likely that this decline is due to the increased sample size; the lack of any large substantive change in success rates further complicates conclusions about the effects of quantity.

A number of other pairings follow this pattern of slight decline, though certainty in these effects is limited either due to their being a relatively small number of ads (Hypocrite) or generally small effects overall (Incompetent). Hypocrite looks much the same when ad counts are

included, though this is likely due to their only being 265 mentions of this trait over the course of the campaign. Incompetent sees a stark decline in terms of breadth of effect – once ad counts are included, only (diminished) short-term successes are found, though much like Unpatriotic the small percentage here (3.57% of short-term Incompetent groupings) raises questions of spuriousness. Dishonest, on the other hand, sees an overall decline (especially in the short- and long-term groupings) but still demonstrates some substantive successes. This latter pairing may be more attributable to an outside factor that is not as prominent in the other pairings discussed so far; while Dishonest was mentioned often by the Republicans (8,944 times over the course of the campaign), these mentions were some of the most well-covered of the campaign. Specifically, accusations of dishonesty on the part of Kerry’s descriptions of his military service in the Swift Boat ads received outsized coverage from other media players after their initial airings. Thus, this particular type of mention may not be fully vulnerable to the methodological effects in other pairings, as their effectiveness may have been boosted by both their effective re-airing (via free media not captured in the Wisconsin data) and increased prominence due to media highlighting of their controversial claims.

Two other pairings see no change whatsoever across the two versions of the independent variable. The results for Right Wing – Out of Touch are exactly the same even after ad counts are included (somewhat surprising, given that 5,100 mentions were made over the campaign). Extremist continues to have no successes in being linked to changes in perceptions of the two men as Out of Touch.

One final complication to derive a singular theory of the effects of quantity on effectiveness is that one pairing – Reckless – Reckless – had *increased* success rates in this more complex approach. This change is not minor, either: the 5-day groupings’ success rate jumps almost ten percentage points, the 7-day groupings’ rate jumps about 17 percentage points, and the

biweekly groupings go from no observed successes to almost a 28% success rate. It should be noted, however, that all of the 6,418 mentions of Reckless came over the final week of the campaign, so this pairing is particularly vulnerable to concerns of spuriousness (as there is a very small period of days being examined). This seems to suggest that the greater sample size is leading to *increased* observations of success (working against the larger pattern identified above), but the small number of observations does not lend a substantive amount of confidence in the reality of these effects. Taking into account the number of ads may help achieve a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of Reckless as a mention, but the number of days in which these ads could be studied may simply be too small to rule out randomness as the true explanation for the observed successes.

All told, then, negative campaigning on Bush's part appears to have had some successes in shaping perceptions of Kerry, though the effects that large amounts of repetition and outside discussion have on the effectiveness of these types of mentions presents a much more complicated picture. Given that the strategy for incumbents (especially unpopular incumbents) is more focused on defining one's opponent rather than deflecting criticisms, understanding how negative advertising can be successful in shaping voter perceptions of the challenger is critical. The findings here suggest some utility for this strategy, though more research is required to better understand how, when, and why negative mentions from the incumbent affect perceptions of the challenger (and the incumbent themselves).

***Table 5.0.5 - Overall Success Rates (Positive Traits/Mentions) - John Kerry***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Reformer (Kerry) - Inspiring</b>	3.85%	5.89%	31.78%	13.84%
<b>Self Made (Kerry) - Has Right Experience</b>	12.50%	10.00%	18.75%	13.75%
<b>Committed (Kerry) - Trustworthy</b>	11.06%	15.07%	10.27%	12.13%
<b>Leader (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	7.33%	10.16%	14.61%	10.70%
<b>Tough/Fighter (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	9.89%	8.55%	13.06%	10.50%
<b>Proven (Kerry) - Has Right Experience</b>	7.48%	4.48%	11.96%	7.98%
<b>Competent (Kerry) - Effective</b>	7.50%	2.50%	8.50%	6.17%
<b>Protector (Kerry) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	12.50%	0.00%	5.88%	6.13%
<b>Fatherly (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	9.09%	8.34%	0.00%	5.81%
<b>Patriotic (Kerry) - Shares Values</b>	7.63%	4.62%	0.81%	4.35%
<b>Family Man (Kerry) - Shares Values</b>	2.56%	1.96%	8.33%	4.29%
<b>Religious (Kerry) - Shares Values</b>	2.56%	1.96%	8.33%	4.29%
<b>Progressive (Kerry) - Inspiring</b>	0.00%	5.00%	7.15%	4.05%
<b>Common Sense Leadership (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	6.25%	5.00%	0.00%	3.75%
<b>Hard Working (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	0.00%	0.00%	3.13%	1.04%
<b>Bipartisan (Kerry) - Effective</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Caring (Kerry) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Fiscally Conservative (Kerry) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Honest (Kerry) - Honest</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	5.27%	4.40%	7.50%	

Unsurprisingly for a challenger running against an incumbent president, Kerry appears to have taken an incredibly diverse approach to positive mentions, presenting himself in a number of ways both as a means to introduce him to the American people as well as present a clearer alternative to the president. All told, 19 mentions were included for Kerry in the Wisconsin dataset, with Kerry making a total of 120,505 positive mentions over the course of the campaign. As Table X.X shows, the abilities of these mentions to substantively change perceptions of him and Bush were highly varied: while some had little to no impact at all, others showed a stronger ability to shift views about Kerry and Bush's personal qualities, particularly in the biweekly

groupings. Overall, Kerry does appear to have made some strides in bettering perceptions of him at a personal level, and those perceptions do not appear to have dissipated quickly.

Four pairings saw no significant effects in Kerry's favor: mentions of Kerry's Bipartisan work had no influence on perceptions of him as Effective, mentions of Kerry as Caring had no effect on the trait question about the candidates' ability to Care about people like the respondents, mentions of Kerry as Fiscally Conservative had no impact on perceptions of him and Bush as Trustworthy, and mentions of Kerry as Honest did nothing to substantively change perceptions of his and Bush's Honest. However, most of this lack of findings is likely attributable to the relative scarcity of these mentions over the length of the campaign. All told, Kerry made mention of Bipartisan only 295 times (over 15 days, four of which were the final four of the campaign), Caring only 270 times (over 17 days), Fiscally Conservative 86 times (over four days, again the final ones of the campaign), and Honest 694 times (over 38 days). Honest is slightly less explainable in this regard, but is still quite rare relatively. The timing of the Fiscally Conservative mentions is strange, but a discussion about the rationale for these mentions is outside the scope of this research; suffice it to say here that the non-results here are at least partially attributable to these mentions being whispers in the grand scheme of the noise of the campaign, with many of them coming in the closing days of the fight after perceptions can be assumed to have hardened substantively (see the 2000 discussion for more analysis on this trend). While the next table brings in counts more directly, it can be assumed here that the relative scarcity in terms of days also limits the effectiveness of an exposure-only approach.

A number of other pairings do see some minor successes, but these tend to be either limited to a single grouping, small enough so as to introduce concerns of spuriousness, or both. Mentions of Kerry as a Family Man (and Religious), for example, seem to have most of their effect in the longest groupings (8.33% of biweekly groupings are significant and in the right



direction), though outside these groupings the successes drop noticeably (2.56% of five-day groupings and 1.96% of seven-day groupings). These two sets of results demonstrate one of the ongoing concerns of the research – while Kerry made slightly more mentions of Religious than Family Man (6,370 and 6,251, respectively), there was no day where only one of these mentions was made. While speculative, it is highly likely that these mentions almost always came *in the same ad*, making separate effects difficult to discern. It may be the case that only one of these mentions actually impacted voters’ perceptions of Kerry’s values, and it may equally be the case that the juxtaposition of the two mentions worked to multiply the effect on perceptions of Kerry’s values. While the concern over multiple messages being offered simultaneously is more general for this research, these pairings do demonstrate the separate issue that campaigns will often pair together multiple terms that cover similar ground, which makes a detailed understanding of how these individual terms affect voter assessments of candidates very hard to achieve.

Kerry does see some medium- and long-term successes in mentioning himself as a Progressive, at least when paired when perceptions of him and Bush as Inspiring. No short-term successes are found, but 5.00% of the weekly and 7.15% of the biweekly groupings see significant results in the Democrat’s favor. Two areas of leadership see varied results here, as well: while making mention of his Common Sense Leadership does have some short- (6.25% of five-day groupings) and medium-term (5.00% of seven-day groupings) successes, mentions of himself as Hard Working only changes Strong Leader Perceptions in the long-term groupings, though here the total (3.03% of biweekly groupings) does not inspire much confidence in the reality of these results.

Two other groupings see Kerry achieving success mainly in the short- and medium-term. Both important as appeals to the security-minded electorate, it makes sense that mentions of Patriotic would see Kerry gain some successes on the balance of which candidate Shares Values

(7.63% of 5-day groupings, though only 4.62% of 7-day groupings and 0.81% of the 14-day groupings). Giving some credence to the strategy outlined by Bush's advisers about the president being a father figure for the nation (Castellanos 2006, 54), mentions of Kerry being Fatherly was associated with some successes at being seen as more of a Strong Leader, though only in the short- (9.09% of 5-day groupings) and medium-term (5.81%). These latter mentions are particularly interesting, given that they were not a major part of Kerry's ad campaign overall (254 mentions over 8 days), and it is not particularly clear that Kerry intended them to be tacit mentions of a paternalistic figure along the lines of the Bush team's conception of the president.<sup>34</sup> A similar caveat could be attached to Kerry's mention of himself as a Protector and the correlation with changes in perceptions of the candidates as men who Care about people like the respondents – it is likely that Kerry meant Protector to function much like Gore did in 2000 (protecting governmental programs such as Social Security from Republican reforms and restrictions), but this may have taken on a national security bent as well. Regardless, Protector here appears to have fit into pre-existing stereotypes about Democratic candidates, as exposure was associated with substantive changes both in the short-term (12.50% of 5-day groupings) and long-term (5.88% of 14-day groupings) for Kerry.

Given that Kerry was a relative unknown at the start of the 2004 general election campaign, it makes strategic sense that he would focus heavily on highlighting his past record to demonstrate that he had the knowledge and capacity to take on the office of the president. Making mention of himself as Competent (24,837 mentions over 126 days) does appear to have been

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34 This is mainly speculative, though. Correlation analyses show that Fatherly is not particularly related to any of the other positive mentions, though the closest are Religious (-0.0167), Family Man (-0.0160), and Self Made (-0.0151). The small count here makes linking Fatherly to other mentions tenuous, but it seems as though this was airing more concurrently with other mentions of family values than mentions of paternal leadership and strength.

fairly successful at boosting perceptions of Kerry as an Effective politician. Though not as successful in the medium-term (only 2.50% of the 7-day groupings see significant effects in the correct direction), Kerry does see some substantive successes in the short- (7.50% of 5-day groupings) and long-term (8.50% of 14-day groupings). A particularly important area for Kerry to cover given that he was challenging a sitting incumbent was the trait that he had the Right Experience to be president – connecting this to Kerry’s mentions of himself as Proven see some substantive effects. Especially helpful for Kerry, these effects are most strongly found in the long-term groupings (11.96% of 14-day groupings); short-term perceptions see some successes (7.48% of 5-day groupings), with the mid-term groupings seeing the least success overall (4.48% of 7-day groupings). For a relatively unknown senator, these success rates demonstrate that Kerry was able to help make himself known to the voters, even in the face of a substantive negative onslaught from his opponents.

Whether due to the advocacy of the Republican campaign or the larger political environment, strong leadership was the defining factor of the 2004 campaign, thus it is not surprising that a number of substantive effects are found for Kerry on these trait questions. Kerry focused heavily on associated themes in his advertising with Tough/Fighter and Leader representing his second and third most mentioned positive traits in the Wisconsin data (25,126 and 16,207 mentions, respectively). Substantive successes are seen with both of these mentions, with slight differences in their overall patterns. Tough/Fighter saw the greatest success in the long-term groupings (13.06% of 14-day groupings), followed by the short-term groupings (9.89% of 5-day groupings) and the medium-term groupings (8.55% of 7-day groupings). Leader sees an increased success rate as the groupings get larger, with 7.33% of 5-day groupings, 10.16% of 7-day groupings, and 14.61% of 14-day groupings showing significant effects in the correct direction.

The three most successful mentions (at least in terms of average success rates across the three groupings) all touch on surprisingly vague mentions; relative to the national security-connected traits such as leader or protector and the more traditionally Democratic mentions such as caring or progressive, Kerry's mentions of himself as Committed, Self Made, and a Reformer seem ill-suited to the demands of the electorate in 2004. Some caveats may explain the successes observed, however.

First, the topmost pairing by average success rate is a bit misleading. The 13.84% average success rate for Reformer – Inspiring is almost entirely driven by the 14-day grouping (where 31.78% of groupings were significant); the other two groupings are in the single digits (3.85% for 5-day groupings and 5.89% for the weekly groupings). The Reformer message may have been inspiring to voters, but given that the 14-day grouping rate is by far the highest of any of the groupings analyzed here, some caution is warranted. Given the tendency of the exposure-only variable to have limited observations when the mentions are being made across a large number of consecutive days, the unbroken string of 23 days where Kerry was making all his mentions of himself as a Reformer suggest that this high success rate is more a function of small sample size than high effectiveness on the part of the mentions (indeed, 19 of 27 days with a non-zero exposure value for this variable have a value of 3). Other factors may have been affecting the dependent variable besides these ads, however; besides the presence of other advertising, it should be noted that the period from July 7 to July 29 (where Kerry was running the Reformer ads) includes the entirety of the 2004 Democratic National Convention, where a strong focus was placed on introducing Kerry and his biography to the American public (Holloway 2005). The presence of a number of videos and testimonials about Kerry's inspiring story (as well as a fairly well-received, optimistic speech from the junior senator from Illinois) likely had some effect on perceptions of Kerry's inspirational nature. While these effects come at the tail end of the

exposure period, the 14-day groupings would include a substantial number of post-convention days as well. Once more, the limited scope of the research here warrants caution in overstating the true effects of these ads *on their own*. They may have contributed to overall changes in perception, but their individual effect must be explored more granularly in future iterations of this research. For now, it suffices to say that though some substantive successes are observed here, it is likely that the Reformer ads were one part of a very complicated larger story.

Though not as drastic as Reformer, the Self Made – Has Right Experience results have some of the same caveats, notably the limited variation in the exposure variable (all 412 mentions come over 13 consecutive days). Though a small range of time, there does appear to be some substantive successes here; 12.50% of the short-term groupings, 10.00% of the medium-term groupings, and 18.75% of the long-term groupings are significant and in the correct direction, showing that some limited successes can still be achieved even during a relatively small advertising campaign. Finally, the pairing of Committed – Trustworthy sees very similar results as the previous pairing, with 11.06% of the short-term groupings, 15.07% of the medium-term groupings, and 10.27% of the long-term groupings seeing significant movement in the correct direction.

**Table 5.0.6 - Overall Success Rates (Positive Traits/Mentions) - John Kerry (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
<b>Caring (Kerry) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	52.64%	57.15%	57.15%	55.64%
<b>Family Man (Kerry) - Shares Values</b>	11.54%	10.71%	41.67%	21.31%
<b>Religious (Kerry) - Shares Values</b>	11.54%	10.71%	41.67%	21.31%
<b>Reformer (Kerry) - Inspiring</b>	3.85%	10.71%	48.56%	21.04%
<b>Common Sense Leadership (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	17.86%	18.75%	13.04%	16.55%
<b>Self Made (Kerry) - Has Right Experience</b>	18.75%	5.55%	24.56%	16.29%
<b>Competent (Kerry) - Effective</b>	7.95%	9.95%	14.19%	10.70%
<b>Tough/Fighter (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	8.60%	6.62%	11.80%	9.01%
<b>Proven (Kerry) - Has Right Experience</b>	8.10%	1.85%	13.14%	7.70%
<b>Committed (Kerry) - Trustworthy</b>	6.25%	7.38%	8.57%	7.40%
<b>Patriotic (Kerry) - Shares Values</b>	7.63%	4.62%	0.81%	4.35%
<b>Leader (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	2.58%	1.29%	8.63%	4.17%
<b>Progressive (Kerry) - Inspiring</b>	0.00%	5.00%	7.15%	4.05%
<b>Bipartisan (Kerry) - Effective</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Fatherly (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Fiscally Conservative (Kerry) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Hard Working (Kerry) - Strong Leader</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Honest (Kerry) - Honest</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Protector (Kerry) - Cares About People Like Me</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	8.28%	7.91%	15.31%	

Taking into account the number of ads being aired over the exposure periods dramatically changes a number of the success rates seen in the exposure-only results above. Six pairings see no successes at all over the three groupings; three of these (Bipartisan – Effective, Fiscally Conservative – Trustworthy, and Honest – Honest) had previously also had no successes in the exposure-only results. The remaining three, then – Fatherly – Strong Leader, Hard Working – Strong Leader, and Protector – Cares About People Like Me – see their previous successes dissipate entirely when taking into account the number of ads being aired during the exposure periods.

These dissipations are likely due to the relatively small number of ads being discussed in these three pairings. Fatherly had 254 ads (over 8 days), Hard Working had 326 ads (over 17 days), and Protector had 532 ads (over the last 20 days of the campaign, further limiting the ability to analyze the effects of these mentions). Given that this second iteration utilizes the log of the exposure x count variable, this may make for limited variation when a small range of ads per day is used; however, this seems to only be an issue for Fatherly (which ranges from 3.273 to 5.088). None of these three had particularly large success rates in the previous analyses (Fatherly averaged 5.81%, Hard Working averaged 1.04%, and Protector averaged 6.13%), though there were some individual groupings that had a substantive number of successful groupings. The rationale for why all of these should dissipate is likely tied strongly to the number of ads being aired affecting the results, but that is likely not the whole story.

Strangely, two of the pairings see no change in their success rates when the number of ads are included as part of the independent variable. Progressive – Inspiring and Patriotic – Shares Values see the exact same success rates across the two iterations of the analysis. This is especially unexpected given that both mentions were quite prominent across the course of the campaign (Progressive was mentioned 2,611 times over 25 days while Patriotic was mentioned 10,249 times over 64 days). These seem to suggest that repetition of the ads has minimal effect, at least on some types of traits.

Four pairings see their success rates diminish when the number of ads is taken into account, some of them quite substantially. Tough/Fighter – Strong Leader, Proven – Has Right Experience, Committed – Trustworthy, and Leader – Strong Leader all see a smaller average success rate in the second set of results compared to the first. Two of these declines are relatively slight – the average for Tough/Fighter – Strong Leader drops about 1.5 percentage points overall and the individual groupings all decline fairly equally. Similarly, Proven – Has Right Experience

sees its overall average decline by less than 0.3 percentage points; that decline, however, is misleading – the 5- and 14-day averages for the second iteration are actually *higher* by about 2 percentage points apiece, while the weekly groupings’ success rate diminished by three percentage points. The other two pairings with an overall average decline see diminishments of 5 to 6 percentage points, a substantive lessening of their success rates. Committed sees quite a lot of decline in the short- and medium-term groupings, while the biweekly groupings only decline by about 2 percentage points overall; Leader – Strong Leader sees a much more substantive decline across all three groupings, suggesting that this prominent mention from Kerry may have suffered from excessive repetition (though as has been seen before and will be seen below, this effect of highly prominent mentions is not always present).

The remaining seven pairings all see increases in their overall average success rate compared to the exposure-only results, and these seven also represent the highest success rate averages in this iteration of the analysis. Some of the changes from the first to second version of these regressions are quite stark – the most prominent example is Caring – Cares About People Like Me, which sees no significant pairings moving in Kerry’s direction when examining exposure only but becomes the pairing with the highest overall average success rate with 55.64% of the groupings being significant and in Kerry’s direction. This shift demonstrates once more the importance of taking into account the number of ads, at least as a means of introducing variation into the exposure variable when the ads are (as they are in this pairing) aired over a single string of consecutive days. Given that only 270 mentions were made of Kerry as Caring in 2004, these results should not be taken to justify an argument about quality multiplying the effects of exposure generally, as the most mentions in a single day were 34, far below the maximums of the more prominent mentions for Kerry. While the small number of days being considered here does introduce some concern about spuriousness, the larger conclusion is that quality and exposure



appear to not operate consistently across all mentions; a relatively muted appeal appears to have a substantive effect on people's perceptions in this case.

Contributing to this varied understanding of how taking quantity into account influences the success rates is the substantive increase in successes for Family Man and Religious, both of which were mentioned over 6,000 times over the course of the campaign. Compared to the exposure-only results, the overall average success rates of these pairings increased by over 17 percentage points; while the 5- and 7-day success rates both increased by about 9 percentage points, the 14-day groupings see a massive increase, going from a success rate of 8.33% to 41.67% when quantity is included. Similarly, taking into account the 6,630 mentions of himself as representing Common Sense Leadership sees an overall average success rate increase of almost 16 percentage points, though here the increases across the groupings are fairly even overall. This suggests, then, that greater quantities can have a similar effect of bolstering effectiveness, but again this does not seem to be a wholly consistent effect.

Reformer and Self Made are two areas where increases are seen, though relatively small. These limited effects may be a function of the comparatively small number of mentions overall, though as Caring above shows, this is not a consistent effect. Reformer, with 1,849 mentions, does see a greater overall average increase (about 8 percentage points) compared to Self Made (about 3 percentage points, off 412 mentions), which does suggest that there is some additive effect for greater quality, but this does not appear to be monotonic, as the second-most mentioned trait for Kerry – Competent – only sees an overall average increase of 4 percentage points (and his most mentioned – Tough/Fighter – saw a decline, as previously noted).

Overall, then, the positive messages from the challenger Kerry did seem to work well at shoring up some of the weaker points of his appeals or make the candidate more known to the voting public, but the effect of quantity continues to be variable depending on the trait(s) being

analyzed and the larger campaign environment. While Caring would be assumed to be a pretty standard assumed advantage for the Democratic candidate regardless of year (Hayes 2005), the dramatic rise in effectiveness across the two iterations analyzed here suggests that some role continues to exist for advertising even in these seemingly established areas (though it should also be mentioned here that Bush saw some successes in this pairing as well, further demonstrating the need for a more holistic approach to understanding individual mention effects). For Kerry, at least, some slight mentions saw outsized effects, while the more prominent mentions by count were much more limited and some mid-level mentions were quite successful when their counts were taken into account. Repetition continues to have a variable effect rather than quantity consistently having a quality of its own.

***Table 5.0.7 - Overall Success Rates (Negative Traits/Mentions) - John Kerry***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Dangerous (Kerry) - Reckless</b>	8.33%	17.50%	31.17%	19.00%
<b>Risky (Kerry) - Changes His Mind/Flip Flops</b>	4.76%	8.33%	16.13%	9.74%
<b>Friend of Special Interests (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	5.21%	9.28%	10.92%	8.47%
<b>Failure (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	6.79%	4.85%	11.20%	7.61%
<b>Incompetent (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	8.89%	7.84%	3.51%	6.75%
<b>Dishonest (Kerry) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	0.51%	3.86%	7.89%	4.09%
<b>Hypocrite (Kerry) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	0.00%	5.56%	6.00%	3.85%
<b>Taxing (Kerry) - Arrogant</b>	7.14%	3.34%	0.00%	3.49%
<b>Negative (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	3.45%	2.83%	3.58%	3.29%
<b>Unpatriotic (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	1.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.37%
<b>Career Politician (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Right Wing (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	3.85%	5.28%	7.53%	

Though not to the same extent as Bush, Kerry on balance did run a more negative than positive campaign (at least by the Wisconsin count), making 135,837 negative mentions overall (compared to 120,505 positive mentions; Kerry ended up making 741 more negative mentions than Bush, as well). Kerry's negative mentions crossed 13<sup>35</sup> categories, and his focus was (understandably) on indicting the incumbent for poor performance, though like with Bush's focus, Kerry does also spend a considerable amount of time levying more traditional criticisms of Republican interests (for example, almost 46% of the negative mentions from the Kerry were labeling his opponent a "Friend of Special Interests"). When examining exposure-only, the effectiveness of these negative mentions appears to have been limited in changing negative perceptions of Kerry and Bush; as with the other sections, though, it is unclear how much of these limitations are attributable to the ads themselves not being effective or the larger political landscape washing out any individual effect these ads may have had (especially important given the relative equality in negative messaging coming from the Bush campaign).

Somewhat surprising given that he was the challenger running against a known quantity, the most effective pairing (at least when exposure is the only component of the independent variable) was Kerry mentioning his opponent as Dangerous and the trait question about the two men being Reckless. However, there may be some spuriousness here; though Kerry did make mention of Dangerous over 20 days, 14 of these were the final two weeks of the campaign, which does limit the number of observable days for exposure to have an effect (as, again, the trait questions stopped after Election Day). Though this is less of an issue for the biweekly days (as these will begin catching effects sooner), the 31.17% success rate for these groupings does

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35 One category where negative mentions were made – Reckless – was not included for analysis, as the two ads the Kerry campaign or its allies ran that made mention of it aired on the day before Election Day. As such, no trait questions were available to be compared.

warrant some hesitation. Some effect on perceptions of Bush as reckless may have occurred as a consequence of voters getting the message from Kerry that Bush's behavior in office was dangerous, but the timing of these ads means that confidence in these results must be tentative.

Similarly tentative, though more so as a consequence of the conventional wisdom surrounding the 2004 campaign, is the finding that Kerry appears to have had some success in changing perceptions of him and his opponent by mentioning Risky; overall, the average success rate for the three groupings here was 9.74%, with success rates increasing steadily as the groupings got larger. What may be occurring here, though, is not so much an increased perception of Bush as one who Changes His Mind or Flip Flops but rather a decreased perception of Kerry was someone who does so (recall that the dependent variable is the relative "edge" on each question for the two candidates, so a "success" for Kerry here is Bush's edge growing – this could occur through Bush's score increasing or Kerry's score decreasing while Bush's stays steady). While the 2004 election is remembered more for Republican accusations of a lack of consistency on Kerry's part, he did make just over 1,900 mentions of Bush as Risky, suggesting that this trait could be fought by both sides, just in different ways.

As mentioned above, Kerry's primary attack (at least in terms of mentions count) in 2004 was painting Bush as a Friend of Special Interests, which appears to be a bit out of place given the context for the 2004 election (though Wisconsin also counts mentions from outside groups aligned with candidates). Despite this dominant presence in the Kerry campaign's messaging, there appears to have been a very limited effect from these ads in changing perceptions as a man Out of Touch with the American people, with an overall average success rate of 8.47%, with increasing success rates as the groupings get larger. However, the dominance of these mentions may be limiting their effectiveness in this approach – across the 244-day span between Kerry clinching the Democratic nomination and Election Day, only 52 did not have a mention of Bush

as a Friend of Special Interests, so the issue of depressed variation in the exposure variable is likely occurring here (as the mentions often came as part of long, unbroken strings of days). The second iteration of these results should help better present the true effect of these mentions; while some substantive successes are seen here, the true effect may be much greater overall.

Challenging a sitting president necessitates turning the election into a referendum on their performance, and Kerry did make a concerted effort to depict his opponent as a Failure and Incompetent (16,790 mentions across 67 days and 11,021 mentions across 49 days, respectively). These appear to have had comparable results in shifting perceptions of the two men as Out of Touch, with Failure averaging success in 7.61% of groupings and Incompetent averaging success in 6.75% of groupings. These two mentions, though conceptually very similar, had different trajectories across the three groupings, however: Failure tended to do better in the short- and long-term (6.79% success rate in the 5-day groupings and 11.20% success rate in the 14-day groupings), while Incompetent did best in the short-term and diminished in effectiveness steadily as the groupings increased in size. One possibility for this differential effect is the memorability of the mentions themselves; though this is speculative, it may be that mentions of Bush as an out-and-out *Failure* stuck better in the minds of voters or better penetrated the larger discussion present in a modern presidential campaign (at least better than Incompetent, which may have been linked to more detailed discussions of what Bush did wrong as president). Past research on the wording of political messaging (Luntz 2007) does give some credence to the idea that different phrasings can be more or less effective, so this may be part of the reasoning for why Failure does so much better at affecting perceptions in the 14-day groupings, though the fact that these two mentions do not appear often at the same time as each other does complicate this assertion.

In a similar vein, Kerry did structure some of his critiques of Bush around the incumbent's perceived veracity (particularly on the rationales for the war in Iraq – this became a way for Kerry to square his initial support with his later opposition, focusing on Bush and the larger administration being misleading [Zimmerman 2006, 221]). Unsurprisingly, Dishonest was more prominent than Hypocrite (16,584 mentions over 152 days compared to 7,520 mentions over 19 days), but both worked to present Bush as someone whose word was unreliable. Both appeared to have had some slight success at changing perceptions of both men as people who would Say One Thing and Do Another, especially in the medium- and long-term groupings. The relatively small success rates here, though, are likely attributable in part to the massive push being made by the Republicans to hang the same charges around Kerry's neck<sup>36</sup>

The only other pairings with some substantive successes touch on very general and (for a Democrat) incongruous attacks, and the contours of the mentions raise some concerns over spuriousness. It is somewhat odd for a Democrat running nationally to try to paint his opponent as Taxing (if only because it tacitly accepts Republican critiques that such a trait is a negative in the first place), and this is bolstered by the fact that only 22 mentions were made by the Kerry campaign over the course of the 2004 campaign. However, these slim numbers still see some significant movement in Kerry's direction on the trait of Arrogant, with 7.14% of short-term and 3.34% of medium-term groupings succeeding. These findings, though, are difficult to feel confident about, given the small number of days where these ads appeared (11 days overall, with

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36 One other possibility may be along the lines of the Failure/Incompetent divide; while Dishonest is mentioned directly in a large number of pro-Kerry ads (as per the Wisconsin coding approach), the overall message may have been a bit muddled. The Kerry campaign, according to Zimmerman (2006) made a concerted effort to not call Bush an out-and-out liar because "the word...was too strong. People wouldn't accept it; it would encounter too much resistance had we called an incumbent president a liar" (221). It is unclear whether or not Dishonest was an acceptable alternative, but part of the lack of success may have been due to the messaging being too extreme in the minds of some (along the general lines of negative advertising as a demobilizing force).

3 of them in the final week of the campaign, limiting post-exposure analysis even more). These outsized effects may be a demonstration of the utility of attempting to steal partisan trait territory (Hayes 2005), but the late-stage nature of these ads does present a solid counterargument for random change operating here. The mentions of Negative (3,857 mentions over 32 days) does not seem as prone to these concerns, but here too the effects are quite small: 3.45% of 5-day groupings, 2.83% of 7-day groupings, and 3.58% of 14-day groupings are significant and in the correct direction. While past findings do suggest that the American people as a whole tend to dislike negative advertising, accusations of his opponent being Negative does not appear to have dramatically altered perceptions of Kerry as being less Out of Touch.

The final pairing with any successes – Unpatriotic – Out of Touch – sees a very small rate (1.11%) for the 5-day groupings only. This may be depressed due to almost all of the 9,837 mentions coming over an unbroken two-week span; the second iteration will allow for more precise analysis of the effects of these ads. Career Politician and Right Wing appear to have had no successes at shifting perceptions of the candidates as Out of Touch, at least not in the exposure-only results.

**Table 5.0.8 - Overall Success Rates (Negative Traits/Mentions) - John Kerry (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
<b>Unpatriotic (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	6.91%	9.52%	81.56%	32.66%
<b>Dangerous (Kerry) - Reckless</b>	0.00%	7.78%	30.47%	12.75%
<b>Friend of Special Interests (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	6.06%	7.79%	11.55%	8.46%
<b>Dishonest (Kerry) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	6.60%	7.98%	7.84%	7.47%
<b>Risky (Kerry) - Changes His Mind/Flip Flops</b>	0.00%	0.00%	12.90%	4.30%
<b>Negative (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	4.44%	3.64%	1.11%	3.06%
<b>Incompetent (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	4.55%	2.78%	0.00%	2.44%
<b>Failure (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	3.85%	2.50%	0.76%	2.37%
<b>Taxing (Kerry) - Arrogant</b>	4.76%	0.00%	0.00%	1.59%
<b>Right Wing (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	4.35%	0.00%	0.00%	1.45%
<b>Hypocrite (Kerry) - Says One Thing, Does Another</b>	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%	0.62%
<b>Career Politician (Kerry) - Out of Touch</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	3.46%	3.50%	12.34%	

As suspected, there was some evidence of the limitations of the exposure variable presenting suppressed effects for Kerry's negative mentions, nowhere more clearly than in the Unpatriotic – Out of Touch pairing. After taking into account the number of ads airing during exposure periods, the overall average success rate increases from almost 0 to 32.66%, with an incredible 81.56% of the 14-day groupings seeing significant effects in the correct direction. Though a loaded term in its own right, these ads appear to have dramatically shaped perceptions of the candidates as Out of Touch, and these effects did not diminish quickly. As with the positive Kerry mentions, this appears to be a case where a relatively medium amount of quantity had an important effect on keeping a message in front of voters enough to not be ignored (Unpatriotic was Kerry's fifth-most prominent negative mention, with 9,837 mentions overall).

Only two other pairings see increases from the first to second set of regressions, and the overall average success rate changes are much smaller compared to Unpatriotic. Right Wing sees an increase from no successes to an overall success rate of 1.45% (with all of these successes



being limited to the 5-day groupings). Dishonest sees its overall average success rate increase around 3 percentage points to 7.47%, with these successes fairly evenly distributed across the groupings (6.60%, 7.98%, and 7.84%). This further suggests that there is something of a quantity “sweet spot” for effectiveness, as accounting for the 16,584 mentions of Dishonest saw nowhere near the same increase as observed for Unpatriotic.

Two pairings technically see diminished overall average success rates, but the changes are quite small substantively. Friend of Special Interest’s overall average success rate declines by 0.01 percentage points (though the 5- and 14-day grouping success rates increase by less than a percentage point, with the 1.5 percentage point decline the 7-day grouping off-setting these gains). Similarly, Negative’s overall average declines by 0.23 percentage points; here, too, increases in the 5- and 7-day groupings are offset by a decline in the 14-day grouping. Given the small size of these variations, analytical conclusions are tough to draw. It is notable, though, that taking into account the number of ads for Friend of Special Interests does dramatically increase the sample of days available for study, so the similarity in results here could be taken as another point of evidence to support the conclusion that extremely high numbers of ads reach a point of diminishing returns (recall that Kerry made 62,309 mentions of Friend of Special Interests, accounting for almost 46% of his negative mentions as coded by the Wisconsin researchers).

Six other pairings see diminished average success rates compared to exposure-only, though most of these changes are not highly substantive, ranging from 2 to 6 percentage point declines. Dangerous sees the highest decline, though its overall average is still 12.75% (with almost no change in the biweekly success rate). This mention only occurred 117 times, though, so the effect of this inclusion was likely to not change much. Both Risky and Failure see overall average success rate reductions of about 5 percentage points, with both seeing substantive changes within groupings. When counts are included, Risky only sees effects in the biweekly

grouping (12.90%). Failure, on the other hand, almost entirely loses its biweekly successes (going from a success rate of 11.20% to 0.76%), with the other two groupings' rates cut in half. This last mention presents a counterexample to the effects of Dishonest – while both were mentioned in similar numbers by the Kerry campaign, Dishonest's rate increased while Failure's declined. This may be attributable to the perceived harshness of the terms (along the lines of Zimmerman's concerns about "liar" mentioned above), but that is speculative. Regardless, quantity continues to appear to not operate uniformly across mentions.

Incompetent sees an overall average decline of 4 percentage points (relatively evenly distributed across the three groupings). Hypocrite's overall average declines 3 percentage points overall (though here, all that remains are successes in the long-term groupings, and the success rate of 1.82% does not inspire much confidence in the realness of these findings). Taxing sees a 2 percentage point decline on average, though like with Hypocrite the successes in this second iteration are limited to one period (5-day groupings) and overall insubstantial (4.76%).

Finally, Career Politician continues to never have statistically significant effects in the correct direction, even when taking into account the number of ads mentioning this term. Though not insignificant (with 2,715 mentions overall), it appears that accusing a sitting president of making a career out of political office had little traction in the 2004 contest.

## CHAPTER 6 – THE 2008 ELECTION

### *Introduction*

In terms of personal characteristics, the dominant factor that may have affected voters' perceptions of Barack Obama and John McCain in the 2008 election was how closely they resembled the personality traits of the incumbent president, George W. Bush. David Axelrod, in his debriefing at the University of Pennsylvania after the election, states it plainly: "With few exceptions, the history of presidential politics shows that public opinion and attitudes about who should next occupy the oval office are largely shaped by the perceptions of the retiring incumbent. And rarely do voters look for a replica. Instead they generally choose a remedy, selecting a candidate who will address the deficiencies of the outgoing President" (2009, 68). While this maxim could also be applied to the 2000 election (where incumbent Bill Clinton's personal failures and peccadillos certainly influenced the perceptions and strategies of the men seeking to replace him), 2008 is a different story due to simply how disliked the incumbent president was and how closely his own personal characteristics connected to that unpopularity. While the John Kerry campaign had tried to hit George W. Bush in 2004 as dishonest, stubborn, and only concerned with the interests of the elite, the foreign and domestic policy crises facing the American electorate four years later would only bring those areas of criticism into sharper relief, further demonstrating the need for a wholesale change not just in partisan control of the White House, but the *type* of person occupying the office.

That said, the 2008 election also appears to be a campaign in which the personal characteristics and policy credentials of the two men running for the presidency were not cleanly separated; much of the Obama campaign's attacks against McCain were decidedly *impersonal*, choosing to forego attacking a decorated war hero and longstanding political figure on his personal traits and instead suggesting that electing McCain was tantamount to a third Bush term (Margolis 2009, 127-128). While some personal attacks did make their way into the Democratic messaging, they tended to be connected to policy matters (for example, McCain's statement in mid-September that the "fundamentals of [the] economy were strong" created an opportunity for the Obama campaign to feed the narrative that McCain "like the President, was completely out of touch with the reality of the economy" (Axelrod 2009, 75). Furthermore, this policy gaffe on the part of McCain required a reversal, which furthered a more personal line of criticism on the part of the Obama campaign. As Axelrod continues,

Obviously you required a course correct for 'the fundamentals of the economy are strong.' When Senator McCain moved from that position to one of crisis pretty quickly, it created a sense of inconsistency. We used the word 'erratic' a lot during that period. Then you suspended your campaign. Our feeling was that there was a herky-jerky nature to what was going on [in your campaign] at the time and it played well against our solidity (2009, 75).

From a strategic standpoint, this approach makes sense for the Obama campaign. Rather than running against McCain, the Democratic candidate's plan was more to run against the unpopular incumbent; by making the election more a referendum than a choice between the two candidates, the importance of personal attacks against the incumbent party's candidate diminishes somewhat. The focus became more tying the opponent to the unpopular administration, a goal aided by both "a lot of tape of [McCain] talking about how he voted with Bush 90 percent of the time and [saying] he couldn't think of a major issue on which he had a disagreement with Bush..." (Axelrod 2009, 70) and the fact that "there wasn't a real clear sense among voters of who [McCain] was..." (Axelrod 2009, 70). This self-linkage to Bush (a strategy intended to calm

Republican voters' fears about McCain in the primary that became a liability in the general election), the lack of sense of McCain among ordinary voters, and the unpopularity of the outgoing president made the most advantageous approach for the Obama team apparent. Axelrod's findings in focus groups that "there was a fundamental concern that he [McCain] would represent more of the same, that he was not enough change, that he was a little too much like Bush" (2009, 70) only further solidified this strategy: rather than coming at McCain on personal characteristics or his ability to be an effective president, the "strategy from the beginning was to make this a race between 'more of the same' and 'real change'" (Axelrod 2009, 70). In this regard, then, the Obama campaign was subsuming more generally personal characteristic attacks into a combined retrospective/prospective argument – that the Republicans have failed in the past and under a new Republican candidate the policies and results will be unchanged. Unlike in 2000 and 2004, this does not appear to have been tied to traits possessed by McCain himself (though some attacks on McCain as out of touch were made that touched on him more personally – for example, one ad notes that "that same day when asked how many houses he owns? McCain lost track. He couldn't remember. Well, it's seven. Seven houses" (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 128). Rather, the focus is on the continuance McCain represents.

The political environment, then, seemed to present a tough situation for McCain in terms of promoting himself. Both generally, where the party brand of the Republicans had been tarnished in the eyes of voters, and specifically for McCain as a "maverick" in his own party trying to win primary elections and then a general election, the positive case had to both suggest to Republicans that he would be in line with what they had come to expect from their party but also to Independents (and potentially some Democrats) that he would not just be a reiteration of George W. Bush. For McCain, the positive case for himself was tied up almost entirely in a long-standing depiction of himself as a maverick Republican; as one ad puts it, "His philosophy:

before party, polls and self—America. A maverick, John McCain tackled campaign reform, military reform, spending reform. He took on presidents, partisans and popular opinion...” (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 112). However, this maverick reputation presented issues for McCain in the early stages of the primary campaign. Particularly on social issues, “McCain had not shown a commitment to these values throughout his career, and even though he had embraced an antiabortion position, he had not adopted all the policies favored by social conservatives” (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2010, 124), meaning that he would have to strive to reassure Republican primary voters that that maverick reputation did not preclude him from delivering on larger party policy goals. While less harmful on social matters, the need to downplay the maverick label became much more of an issue for McCain on national security matters, particularly the war in Iraq. As Steve Schmidt states, Iraq “was the issue that, more than any other, damaged Senator McCain in the early part of the campaign in the Republican primary. It did as much as any other issue to injure him politically and to diminish the difference in his brand, his difference from the president” (2009, 58). This undoing of McCain’s maverick status within the Republican Party helped him defeat his primary rivals, but it undercut a potentially strong argument for him in the general; by moving closer to the incumbent, the argument that he represented a different type of Republican lost much of its credibility.<sup>37</sup>

McCain did attempt to revitalize this maverick image, though, in his selection of Sarah Palin for the vice presidency. The selection of the Alaska governor appears to have been an attempt to achieve a number of goals to benefit McCain, with a significant one being – as Nicolle Wallace describes it – her ability to be a “game changer” (2009, 28). She helped reinforce the

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37 There is an argument, made directly by Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (2010) that this maverick reputation allowed McCain to better present himself in the primary as a strong general election opponent, though Schmidt and others in the Annenberg debrief appear skeptical that McCain was able to separate himself from Bush and the Republicans effectively post-primary victory.

conceptualization of the Republican candidates as mavericks: “She had taken on her own party. She was a reformer” (Schmidt 2009, 60); she had life experiences, such as struggles to obtain and maintain health insurance, that meant that “she could identify with many Americans around the country in ways perhaps that other candidates had not” (Wallace 2009, 18), refuting perceptions of the Republican ticket as out of touch; she was a strong social conservative, “which allowed her to appeal to the party base in a way that McCain could not. Adding her to the ticket might energize the Republican base, and yet she and McCain could stand as distinctive from the incumbent administration” (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2010, 37). For a number of reasons, then, the vice presidential pick was intended to help reinforce a positive case for McCain; by making a fairly unorthodox pick, the candidate was attempting to demonstrate that he could represent change from the current state of affairs despite his shared partisanship.

However, this strategy also appears to have substantially undercut a larger portion of the positive case for McCain. The maverick aspect, already damaged by cohesion with the Bush administration on Iraq, also suffered something of a hit with the Palin selection; though not an ally of his, Cecile Richards states firmly that “[t]here was a point at which John McCain’s moderate/maverick credentials really got damaged because it seemed he would anything to get elected. I think the nomination of Sarah Palin really confirmed that and reinforced it” (2009, 182). The need to appeal to social conservatives undermined one of the clearest areas in which McCain had separated himself from Republican orthodoxy; the mantra of “country over party” that the maverick image was intended to stress also appears to have been damaged by this selection. Furthermore, one of the best advantages McCain had over his Democratic opponent was a question of tenure; McCain had been a member of the Senate for over 30 years by the time of the 2008 election, while Obama had not completed his first term. The question of experience, then, was a major component of the McCain campaign. Bringing onto the ticket a (relative) political

newcomer with no national experience, then, seemed to undermine the experience advantage. Jim Margolis notes this directly, stating that “[e]verything had been predicated to that point on McCain being ready. He was the experienced one. We were the ones who were not up to this job. Overnight that shifted with the Palin selection” (2009, 28). However, those involved with McCain’s campaign downplay this seeming reversal in strategy. As Steve Schmidt describes,

We also believed at the end of the day that experience was not a message that was going to win the election for us. We believed that in order to win the election or have any chance coming out of the convention, we needed to do a number of different things, some of them contradictory. We needed to get our piece of the change issue. It was a change election and that the experience issue [needed to be cast as] John McCain had the experience to change and to lead reform. So we needed to come out of the convention, into the fall campaign, being able to be a credible messenger on the change and reform issue, number one. Number two, we needed to distance ourselves finally and completely from the administration in a very profound way. We needed to appeal to the middle of the electorate, number three. And number four, we had to excite the base of the party. We had an unexcited party. We needed to do those four things. We never intended to run on experience in the course of the fall campaign. We came out of the convention. We seized a lead in the campaign I think with the reform credential, with the change credential, with the distance from Bush (2009, 29)

The positive case for McCain, then, after the Palin selection and the summer conventions, became a message of change and reform, highlighting the maverick angle to better suggest that the Republican senator was better able to achieve the reform that was desired by the electorate. This relative ability had some overlap with an experience message, but this message was less about McCain possessing the requisite experience to get things done and more about Obama *not* possessing that experience. The positive case for McCain, then, appears more abstract than in past years, with the comparison between the two candidates (and the attacks against his opponent particularly) intended to make the case rather than a separate positive rationale. This balance appears to have been strategic on the part of the McCain campaign; Bill McInturff describes the issue plainly, noting that “[w]e tested months of positive McCain stuff and it didn’t move a single number. To the extent that we had a chance, this race had to be about Senator Obama” (2009, 89). With an unpopular president and party weighing down McCain, the strategy appears to have been



less to positively justify their own candidate and more to raise enough doubts about their opponent, particularly with regards to the Democrat's ability to actually be able to achieve the lofty promises he was making.

Unsurprising for an election where the incumbent – more specifically, the policies he had pursued over the previous eight years – was supremely unpopular, both John McCain and Barack Obama advocated for change as their abiding goals. This change was not limited to just a shift in priorities or ideological types of policies; both candidates were arguing that they would bring change the way politics were pursued in Washington. Indeed, as Joel Benenson notes, internal Obama polling early in the campaign had “three-quarters of the electorate telling us that this [election] was going to be about fixing the economy and bringing about change in Washington” (2009, 98). For the Obama campaign, making the stronger case in this regard required – as noting above – tying McCain to the incumbent administration but also presenting Barack Obama as better able to achieve change due to his *lack* of time served in Washington. This was done both via attacks on McCain – “McCain represented a Bush third term; he was more of the same. His 26 years in Washington didn't make a case for change” (Margolis 2009, 127-128) – but also with more positive depictions of Obama's abilities via his increased flexibility due to a lack of binding ties to others – “[I]t was very important for us not to lose that insurgent, outsider feel. So now, we had to work with all the interest groups and the elected officials. And one of the great benefits of the primary is, for the most part, we won without their help. I think it's one of the reasons [Obama's] got a chance to be a successful president is we don't owe a lot of people in Washington very much” (Plouffe 2009, 38). Both candidates, though, couched their change messages not so much in proven policy achievements but rather in more personalistic terms, a factor that would allow the McCain campaign to come at the Obama team on relative inexperience and, as Plouffe described it, as being “all hat and no cattle” (2009, 36).

As noted above, the positive case for McCain was quite difficult to make given the general dissatisfaction with President Bush and the Republican Party generally. To counter the change message coming from the Obama campaign, then, the Republican's "main line of attack was to claim Obama was liberal, inexperienced, and not ready to be president" (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2010, 43). Arguing both that the "change" Obama represented was far outside the mainstream and that Obama was not experienced enough to handle the responsibilities of the office, the McCain campaign tried to portray their candidate as a safer pick, even if voters did not necessarily like his ideological or policy commitments. A number of these attacks oriented on foreign policy concerns, where Obama's lack of experience in government was used to depict him as a naïve candidate who would be taken advantage of by more ruthless foes. As one pro-McCain ad put it, "Obama says Iran is a tiny country. It doesn't pose a serious threat. Terrorism? Destroying Israel? Those aren't serious threats? Obama, dangerously unprepared to be president" (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 117). On the domestic front, this naivete was combined with more traditional depictions of the Democratic candidate as too liberal, with one ad saying directly, "Behind the fancy speeches, promises, and TV specials lies the truth. With crises at home and abroad, Barack Obama lacks the experience America needs, and it shows. His response to our economic crisis is to spend and tax our economy deeper into recession. The fact is, Barack Obama's not ready yet" (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 118). Smaller attacks on his associations with Bill Ayers and Jeremiah Wright furthered the concept of Obama as a "risky" proposition compared to the "proven" John McCain (Jamieson 2009, 116). By presenting their opponent as both unprepared to effectively enact lasting change and the change he would achieve as risky and radical, the McCain campaign looked to bolster their chances by raising spectres.

For the Obama campaign, the change message was embedded not just in policy shifts compared to the Bush administration but in highly personalistic terms as well. Often left unsaid

was the transformational nature of the Obama candidacy from a demographic perspective – both in terms of age and background, Obama represented a dramatic shift from traditional presidential candidates – but the candidate did often explicitly attempt to present himself as representing a change in the nature of American politics. This was couched often as a change in terms of not pandering, but being straight with the American people: as Obama himself says in one ad, “We cannot deliver on a better...policy unless we change how business is done in Washington...That’s the real, honest answer to how we’re going to solve this problem. That’s what you need from a president, somebody who’s going to tell you the truth” (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 126). The message, too, was presented as more of a unifying message (indicting the Bush administration as presenting a divisive message); as Obama states in a separate ad, “We’re tired of fear, we’re tired of division. We want something new. We want to turn the page” (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 126). The message of change, then, appears to be more suggestive than substantive and highly attached to the personality of Obama rather than specific policy proposals (though, of course, both sides did discuss policy over the course of the campaign).

What is notable about the 2008 campaigns, then, is how much of their appeals appear to be implicit and personalistic; specifically, much of the appeals being made argue for a negative case against the opposing candidate rather than a positive case for one’s own election. For McCain, the positive case was much harder to make, meaning that the clearer strategy was to raise enough doubts in the minds of voters as to how prepared and effective the young Illinois senator would be in office; for Obama, the positive case tended to be a bit clearer and stronger, though not particularly substantive (aspirational and inspirational messages of change were prominently featured, for example). This positive case, however, tended to contain elements of a significant negative case against McCain that presented the Republican as a continuation of the Bush era (“four more years of the same old tune”, in the words of one ad [quoted in Jamieson

2009, 128]). Both campaigns seemingly argued specifically that their election was warranted because of what they *weren't* as much as what they *were*; much of this argumentation was personalistic in tone. The traits each men possessed, then, were a large component of their advertising; whether this advertising actually influenced the ways voters understood the two candidates, though, is unclear.

### ***Methods Setup***

The 2008 presidential election represents a substantively different political environment than the preceding two elections discussed. While 2000 did not have an incumbent on the ballot, the Democratic candidate was the clear successor and, despite his best efforts, was likely considered an extension of the incumbent administration. 2004 saw the current president running for re-election, making the political context potentially a referendum on his performance (certainly one of the major strategies pursued by his challenger). 2008, by comparison, had no direct incumbent administration representative on the ballot; despite the closeness Senator John McCain attempted to strike with some of the Bush administration's policies, particularly Iraq (Balz and Johnson 2009, 39) the Republican running to succeed George W. Bush was outside the executive branch. The political context, then, would seem to present a clear opportunity for personal characteristics to matter in ways different from the previous two elections – indeed, one of Barack Obama's campaign advisers put it succinctly in his election debrief, noting that the 2008 election was a search for a candidate who differed from Bush in policy as well as personality (Axelrod 2009, 68).

This decidedly different environment is mirrored by an unfortunately different approach taken by the Wisconsin Advertising Project in its measurements of candidate mentions in campaign advertisements. While in many ways the approaches used in coding the 2008 data are

unchanged from the previous two iterations, the 2008 version contains almost no direct mentions of personality characteristics stemming from the candidates and their allies. As such, the attempt to formulate an independent variable on par with the previous two chapters requires some theoretical and methodological stretching – the usage of other measures from the Wisconsin data help to overcome this, but comparisons of the results below with previous years must come with a substantial caveat.

The 2008 version of the Wisconsin data contains no questions asking about personal characteristics being mentioned – in previous iterations a single question with a large number of categories serviced to enumerate the personality characteristics being mentioned in ads; no such question is present in this version of the dataset. However, a number of specific mentions are singled out by the Wisconsin researchers, and these can serve as stand-ins for personality traits. Eight words or phrases are specifically covered in the dataset – “September 11<sup>th</sup>”, “Terror/Terrorism/Terrorist”, “Iraq/War in Iraq”, “Surge/Troop Surge”, “God”, “Hope”, “Change”, and “Experience”.

Only one of these – the last item, experience – would seem to be a direct mention of something inherent to the two men; this is not so much a personality trait as it is a measure of some nebulous notion of time spent in life that gives either candidate a good idea of what is required to be effective, but “experience” can serve as a stand-in for a number of traits, especially in an election where an age gap of almost 25 years and a senatorial tenure gap of 18 years separated the two candidates. In this election, experience was not simply measuring the two candidates’ temporal differences – given John McCain’s notoriety as a military hero, the usage of experience may be more martial than political, particularly given the still-central importance of the war in Iraq and Senator Obama’s lack of military service.

A trio of others in this list would seem to be a bit more indirect but can still function as mentions of candidate personality, particularly given the political environment facing the two candidates. Mentions of “God” have clear connotations of linking the candidate to religious appeals to voters, which have been made directly in previous chapters and thus have clear connotative connections to previous analyses. In 2008, usage of this term may also have been used as a referent on candidate judgment; while the Wisconsin data does not allow for specific exploration of this possibility, the coding scheme that counts a mention as long as the word is directly mentioned may be counting a number of ads that quote the controversial sermons of Reverend Jeremiah Wright, particularly his inveighing call of “God *damn* America!”. While the McCain campaign produced ads mentioning Wright, these never ran; however, this did not stop GOP-affiliated groups from running their own ads mentioning the pastor (Schechter, Longabardi, and Ross 2008)<sup>38</sup>; the Wisconsin dataset covers both candidate and allied ads, meaning that these ads are likely in the dataset. Given the perceived framing of the Wright issue as about “character, especially when no one is looking” (Davis, quoted in Schechter, Longabardi, and Ross 2008) and Obama’s judgment in who he affiliates with and what he tolerates (Balz and Johnson 2009, 289), it is likely that in 2008 at least some of the mentions of “God” are direct references to an ongoing concern being raised about the Democratic candidate’s character. As such, the inclusion of that term as part of the independent variable being constructed here fits theoretically with previous examples of more direct religious references.

Hope and change would seem to occupy much of the same conceptual ground, particularly for the Obama campaign (if, at least, Sarah Palin’s description of the campaign’s promises as “hokey, changey stuff” [quoted in Gonyea 2010] are accurate). While both campaigns did make

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38 <https://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/Vote2008/story?id=6395775&page=1>

appeals in this area, the Obama campaign in particular seemed to attach significant importance to depicting their candidate as a person who had the potential to exact change in the way politics operated in Washington and represented change in his physical presence at the top of the ticket alone (see Axelrod's letter to Obama, quoted in Balz & Johnson 2009, 29, for example). That change also was coupled with a depiction of the candidate as an optimistic person, whose aspirational style portended political success and, indeed, change. While the particular usage of this term for both candidates represents some difficulties given the methodological approach taken by the Wisconsin researchers (discussed more below, as well as in previous chapters), it is not too much of a conceptual stretch to state that these terms were used in highly personalistic terms during the 2008 campaign, and as such can serve as functional independent variables to measure the effects of campaign advertising.

The final four are also all of a piece – mentions of “September 11<sup>th</sup>”, “Terror/Terrorism/Terrorist”, “Iraq/War in Iraq”, and “Surge/Troop Surge” all touch on the pressing foreign policy and national security themes of the campaign and can thus serve as stand-ins for many of the personality traits highlighted by President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry in their contest in 2004. While not directly mentioning aspects of the candidates' personality such as leadership ability, strength, and decisiveness, these military and security terms were often used in contexts that suggested their importance raised the issue of traits such as leadership and foreign policy experience (particularly salient given the disparity in military experience between the two candidates in 2008). As with hope and change, this quartet of terms can functionally serve to represent more direct mentions of candidate ability to handle foreign policy crises, military matters, and national security more generally.

This reading of the Wisconsin traits is also shaped heavily by the corresponding availability of traits from the 2008 iteration of the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES).

Unlike the previous election's set of traits, the 2008 version is predominantly positive, containing only three negative traits (with two of these being specific to the individual candidates). A dozen traits in total are included, and many of them are similar in concept. On the positive side, the survey asks respondents to rate John McCain and Barack Obama on how well the phrases "has judgment to be president", "has right experience", "patriotic", "ready to be commander-in-chief", "ready to be president", "says what he believes", "shares my values", "strong leader", and "trustworthy" describe each man. As can be seen, much of the discussion stemming from these traits is tied up with experience and capability of taking on the office of president (both in its general and specifically military capacities). Beyond that, questions of values, honesty, and dependability are included. This combination of trait areas meshes quite well with the security and experience traits measured as part of the Wisconsin data.

On the negative side, respondents are asked to state how well "too old" and "too young" apply to McCain and Obama, respectively, with an additional question asking how well "erratic" describes McCain, though this question is only asked over a short time-frame. While these traits will, by necessity, have to be measured differently than past dependent variables in this study, the methodology does not change in any major way (more detail on this below).

Assigning traits from the Wisconsin dataset to the NAES trait list is less straightforward than in previous chapters given the more policy-centric nature of many of the mentions listed in the advertising data. As such, a combined approach is taken in this chapter, assigning multiple Wisconsin traits to each NAES characteristic (rather than following past chapters and just assigning a single NAES trait to each Wisconsin trait). This allows for multiple tests across each NAES trait and generates more observations for possible effects; in a sense, this also allows for empirical exploration of the effects of more policy ads on perceived personality traits. Past research has discussed the blurring of boundaries between pure policy and pure personality



mentions in campaign advertising (Rudd 1986), though few tests have actually looked to determine the potential abilities for policy ads to shape perceptions of the candidates as people. Taking multiple approaches at these possible relationships will help to begin to provide some insight on the ways in which even more substantive policy ads can affect how the candidates are viewed in personal terms. Taking multiple passes at an advertising-characteristic relationship is also somewhat required by the nature of the Wisconsin mentions – for example, trying to decide between whether or not “ready to be commander-in-chief” is best paired with one of “Iraq”, “September 11<sup>th</sup>”, “Surge”, or “Terrorism” seems an arbitrary decision; given the relatively short time period in which the 2008 general election was conducted, running multiple regressions for each possibility was not particularly onerous and avoiding any difficult justifications for what would seem to be an incredibly close choice between related traits.

Not every NAES trait required multiple assignments from the Wisconsin list – “has right experience” and the “too old/too young” questions all appeared to be best captured by the “experience” mentions in the advertising data, and thus were only paired with that trait. The remaining NAES traits, however, all have at least two Wisconsin traits assigned to them, though for some of the NAES characteristics the Wisconsin list as constructed so far seemed ill-suited. To augment the existing Wisconsin list, a slight enlarging of the scope was used, bringing in two additional measures from the advertising data – whether or not the ads mention former president Bill Clinton or then-President George W. Bush. These measures also included whether or not the mentions were positive or negative, so in total four separate mentions were included in the list – positive and negative mentions of both presidents (though only three were included in the regressions, as no negative mentions of Bill Clinton were made). This disparity in Clinton mentions highlights the rationale for including these mentions in these analyses: particularly for Barack Obama, mentioning previous presidents appears to have been intended to, in the case of

Clinton, help assuage concerns about his readiness to be president (as there would not seem to be any political benefit to mentioning a man who had been out of office for almost eight years beyond his endorsement that the candidate would be a good choice) and, in the case of Bush, tie his opponent to the policies of the current administration. For McCain, mentioning Bush appears to have been for multiple strategic concerns, as ads run by him (or on his behalf) take both tacks in mentioning the incumbent – for McCain, positive mentions could help endear him to Republicans, who may have still harbored suspicions about his strength as a partisan (Balz and Johnson 2009) and negative mentions could have helped endear him to independent voters who did not just want a third Bush term. These mentions, then, could also speak to personal competency and abilities to be effective leaders and thus seem to fit a number of the NAES traits.

In terms of assignments, the groupings for each NAES trait are as follows:

- **Erratic – George W. Bush (Negative), George W. Bush (Positive), Iraq**
  - Given McCain’s focus on staying the course in Iraq (Balz & Johnson 2009, 240) and his transformation over time from a critic to a cheerleader for the president, these three appear to represent possible measures of consistent (or inconsistent) statements and decision making on the part of the two candidates.
- **Has Judgment to be President – Bill Clinton (Positive), George W. Bush (Negative), George W. Bush (Positive), Iraq**
  - As mentioned above, the largest rationale for mentioning Bill Clinton appears to be tamping down concerns that Barack Obama was simply not ready to handle the office of the president; mentioning him in positive terms is likely a way to remind voters that the young senator has the

support of one of the Democratic Party's elder statesmen. Similarly, Obama ads may have used Iraq and negative mentions of George W. Bush to indict McCain's judgment, and McCain may have used positive mentions of Bush to demonstrate his own capabilities and judgment.

- **Has Right Experience – Experience**
- **Patriotic – Iraq, September 11<sup>th</sup>, Surge, Terrorism**
  - Both men, though likely more McCain than Obama, likely used mentions of ongoing military struggles and national security matters as indirect proxies for patriotism (particularly when attacking the other for insufficient support for the soldiers and goals of the conflicts).
- **Ready to be Commander-in-Chief – Iraq, September 11<sup>th</sup>, Surge, Terrorism**
  - Similar to the judgment question above, these mentions were likely intended, at least in part, to show the candidates' knowledge of and ability to handle tough foreign policy decisions. However, “commander-in-chief” specifically entails military matters while in office, suggesting that the former presidents would not be expected to have much effect on this trait.
- **Ready to be President – Bill Clinton (Positive), Experience**
  - See the discussion on “has judgment to be president”, much of the same logic applies here. Connection with Bush, however, would likely not have the same effect in the former case as it would here – given John McCain's long-time presence in government, it is highly unlikely he

needed to stress a connection to the current (and quite unpopular) president to stress his readiness for the office.

- **Says What He Believes – George W. Bush (Negative), George W. Bush (Positive), Iraq**
  - Much of the same logic as the “erratic” discussion applies here as well, though each of these has specific connections to being honest rather than pandering. Given the attack by the Democrats that Bush had been less than truthful when it came to explaining the rationale and realities of the Iraq War, attacking the current administration generally and on Iraq specifically could have been used to highlight Obama’s willingness to be direct and “tell[...] the American people what they need to hear” (quoted in Jamieson 2009, 124). On the Republican side, positive mentions of George W. Bush could have been intended to stress McCain’s own straightforwardness (Bush’s approach in 2004 of touting that people “always knew where he stood” [McKinnon 2006, 39-40] seems to echo McCain’s own history of riding the “Straight Talk Express”, for example).
- **Shares My Values – Change, God, Hope**
  - God is the most direct mention that connects to this, though change and hope could also be direct in appealing to traditional American values or getting back to lost principles in looking toward a better future.
- **Strong Leader – Iraq, September 11<sup>th</sup>, Surge, Terrorism**

- See the “ready to be commander-in-chief” section, much of the same rationale is used here. Given the prominence of national security as a component of “strong leadership” in the previous election (Cahill 2006, 31), this connection seems fairly straightforward.
- **Trustworthy – Bill Clinton (Positive), Change, Experience**
  - One possible reading of trustworthy is more in line with “steady” (see the 2004 discussion for more on this), and is thus more of a dependability rather than necessarily honest connotation for trustworthy. As such, the decision was made to approach this more in line with traits concerned with experience than truthfulness (especially as “says what he believes” covers much of the latter ground anyway). Connections to a previous president, who is vouching for one’s fitness for office and mentions of one’s past experience would seem to fit well with this reading. As an additional test (given the focus on change that could be believed in), the mentions of “change” were added.

One other major difference in approach is taken for this chapter – unlike in 2000 and 2004, the general vagueness of the usage of these terms (specifically the potential for dual-usage as both positive and negative mentions) creates a situation wherein the predicted effect of the trait mention on the characteristic question may be undercut less by the general applicability of the terms as pairs but more so by the incorrect understanding of how the term is being used. While certain terms are contextually able to be understood as likely positive or negative (for example, the fact that positive mentions of Bill Clinton are only made by the Obama campaign and its allies suggests that these are likely intended to serve a positive role in boosting perceptions of Obama’s capabilities), many more of these mentions are much more versatile. For example,

mentions of change dominate both campaigns (in total, the Obama campaign used this word over 121,000 times, accounting for over a third of its total while the McCain campaign used it over 97,000 times, over *half* of the campaign's total mentions). This word, however, could be utilized in a positive ad (promoting change as a benefit to the country, change as something that is inspiring, etc.), or negative ad (change as an unwanted shakeup or betrayal of the country's principles and values). Experience, God, hope, and Iraq all present clear potential for this versatility, and the others listed above could, of course, always be used in counterintuitive ways (to continue the example from above, a positive Bill Clinton mention could be used by Obama to attack McCain, mentioning the former Democratic president and comparing his successes to the failures of the current Republican president and, by extension, the candidate looking to succeed him). To avoid the potential of confusing results by combining both positive and negative ads, a question from the Wisconsin dataset was used to properly categorize ads as either primarily intended for "promotion", "attack", or "contrast". The contrast ads were not included, but separate variables were made denoting the presence of a trait mention included in an ad that was primarily promoting or attacking and separate regressions were then run for each type of ad, as well as the overall mention regression.

Comparison ads were dropped from analysis due to their unsure position between promotion and attack – for the most part dropping these from the analysis does not dramatically alter the numbers of ads available, though there are some exceptions. For Obama, the use of comparison ads was most common when discussing Iraq (31.04% of total mentions) and making negative mentions of George W. Bush (26.69% of total mentions); the next most common usage was when mentioning terrorism (6.47% of total mentions), with the rest under 5%. For McCain, comparison ads were incredibly prevalent when discussing hope (96.77% of total mentions), meaning that although the Republican candidate did spend a great deal of time mentioning hope

he very rarely did it in a way that was purely promotional or combative. Experience, unsurprisingly, was also done often mentioned through the use of comparisons, though was still more often than not fully promoting or attacking (comparison ads make up 42.02% of the total McCain mentions of experience). The next most common is change (9.09%), with no others over 5%.

This complicated set of independent variables and separated regressions, however, does not require much variation in terms of the predicted directions of the hypothesized relationships. Given that only three of the NAES traits are negative (and two of those – Too Young and Too Old – only apply to one apiece), the distinction between promotion and attack is more for clarity's sake, continuing to test the possibility for differential effects stemming from positive and negative advertising (Cho 2013). For positive trait questions, the intent behind both positive and negative ads is the same – move the balance in favor of the candidate the ad is intending to support, either by positively moving perceptions of one candidate (promotion), negatively moving perceptions of the other (attack), or perhaps both. As such, then, for the positive mentions the proposed direction is the same – no matter whether promoting, attacking, or examining the overall regressions, exposure to a candidate's ads should move the gap between the two candidates in that candidate's favor. For the negative traits (Erratic, Too Young, and Too Old), the opposite direction should be observed.

For all the traits except for Erratic, Too Young and Too Old, the same procedure was used here as in the previous chapters. For the 2008 version of the NAES, a ten-point scale was used, with respondents being told that a value of zero means the trait does not apply at all and a value of 10 means it applies extremely well. No other numerical point was labeled. For each trait, the values given to each man were subtracted from each other (McCain minus Obama), creating a “gap” variable that measured the distance between perceptions of each man for each respondent

on each day. This gap ranges from -10 (Obama given the highest rating while McCain is given the lowest) to +10 (McCain given the highest rating while Obama is given the lowest). As in the previous chapters, respondents were grouped together across five-, seven-, and 14-day cross-sections, allowing for variation in the gaps over these periods of time to be measured. These gap variables serve as the dependent variables in each regression.

For Erratic, Too Young and Too Old, no gap variable was constructed as these questions only applied to one candidate. For Erratic, the same 10-point scale as above was used, but the question was only asked in regards to McCain; the variable here is thus fairly similar to the gap variables with just a smaller range. The age questions were originally asked as Yes or No questions (i.e., “Is John McCain too old to be president?”) and were recoded to give No answers a value of 0 and Yes answers a value of 1. Movement along these variables, then, is more measuring increased or decreased proportions of respondents answering that either candidate is not the right age to be president.

As in previous chapters, two approaches were taken to capture the effect of being exposed to ads from candidates making mention of particular personality traits. In the first group of regressions, a simple exposure variable was created for each five-day period following an ad’s airing. For example, since an ad from Obama mentioning experience ran on October 20, 2008, then the exposure value for October 21 would be 1, for October 22 would be 0.8, for October 23 would be 0.6, for October 24 would be 0.4, and for October 25 would be 0.2. These exposure values can stack – for example, Obama also ran an ad mentioning experience on October 21, meaning that the process of diminishing exposure values starts again on October 22; October 22, then, has an exposure value of 1.8 (0.8 from the ad on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1 from the ad on the 21<sup>st</sup>). The exposure variable can thus max out at a value of 3 (0.2 + 0.4 + 0.6 + 0.8 + 1) for those days that come in the middle of sustained ad periods. The more complicated approach takes these exposure



values and then multiplies them by the number of ads present *on each day* to better capture the possible multiplicative effects of exposure coupled with sustained large amounts of advertising. To continue the example from above, in this second approach the value for October 22 would be 19.8 ( $1.8 * 11$ , as 11 ads mentioning experience ran on the 22<sup>nd</sup>). Given the extremely large number of ads present on multiple days across the campaign, the log of this exposure multiplied by number of ads variable was generated, and this becomes the independent variable for the second set of regressions for each pairing.

The results that follow will take on the following order – first, the exposure-only and exposure multiplied by number of ads overall results for Obama and then McCain will be presented (that is, no distinction is made in these first sets between promotion and attack). The separate results for promotion and attack are presented in Appendix IV.

## ***Results***

***Table 6.0.1 - Overall Success Rates - Barack Obama***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Iraq (Obama) - Says What He Believes</b>	10.00%	33.34%	52.63%	31.99%
<b>Iraq (Obama) - Strong Leader</b>	8.19%	12.57%	11.58%	10.78%
<b>Iraq (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	9.58%	12.15%	10.09%	10.61%
<b>Terrorism (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	13.07%	12.69%	4.10%	9.95%
<b>Iraq (Obama) - Patriotic</b>	8.19%	11.25%	9.05%	9.50%
<b>Iraq (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	5.24%	8.82%	10.84%	8.30%
<b>Terrorism (Obama) - Strong Leader</b>	9.94%	8.27%	4.17%	7.46%
<b>Terrorism (Obama) - Patriotic</b>	9.94%	5.96%	2.78%	6.23%
<b>Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	5.00%	7.15%	1.85%	4.67%
<b>George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	0.00%	3.13%	8.00%	3.71%
<b>Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) - Trustworthy</b>	5.00%	3.57%	1.85%	3.47%
<b>Experience (Obama) - Too Young (Obama)</b>	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	3.03%
<b>Change (Obama) - Shares My Values</b>	4.32%	3.50%	0.81%	2.87%
<b>Change (Obama) - Trustworthy</b>	3.13%	3.75%	1.61%	2.83%
<b>Hope (Obama) - Shares My Values</b>	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.83%
<b>Experience (Obama) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (Obama) - Has Right Experience to be President</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (Obama) - Too Old (McCain)</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (Obama) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	4.95%	6.64%	6.76%	

As noted above, the 2008 iteration of the Wisconsin dataset no longer contains specific mentions based on positive and negative traits under a single question but rather focuses on a number of individual questions that range across a number of policy areas and trait-adjacent mentions on the part of the candidates. As such, the singular pairings of the previous two chapters were jettisoned in favor of a more expansive approach in order to explore possibly related pairings given the larger contexts in which these policy and trait-adjacent messages were likely being placed (for example, mentions of Iraq could be used to bolster national security bona fides or attack one's opponent on the same, as well as touch on questions of veracity and straightforwardness; similarly, mentions of previous presidents could be used to rebut arguments that a candidate is not prepared to take on the task of president – as Obama likely did when mentioning former president Clinton – or show their independent nature – as McCain likely did

when mentioning George W. Bush). This makes the analysis more holistic but also more tentative as the motivations that can be attributed to these broader mention categories are more varied. However, given the larger issues with the previous pairings not taking into account the larger environment or other messaging occurring alongside ad mentions, this problem is not wholly novel in this chapter.

Examining Obama's set of mentions generally (that is, mixing both promotional and attacking mentions) sees mostly limited success rates, on average, with one major exception that fits well with statements of strategy on the part of the Democratic candidate and his team. By far, the most successful pairing seen here is Obama mentioning Iraq and perceptions of him and McCain as men who say what they believe. Though not incredibly successful in shaping perceptions in the short-term (10.00% of 5-day groupings were statistically significant and in the correct direction), the medium- and long-term saw substantial success rates for Obama, with just over a third of 7-day groupings and 52.63% of 14-day groupings both significant and in the correct direction. Given that Obama made mention of Iraq at least once on 109 of the 154 days examined further demonstrates the substantive nature of these results (though it should be mentioned that these results may be inflated given that these mentions tended to come in long, unbroken streaks, which does negatively effect sample size as the exposure variable becomes uniform over most of these streaks). Regardless, this connection fits with one of the larger themes presented by the Obama campaign of the candidate being willing to state hard truths and level with the American people (Balz & Johnson 2009, 119-120); given discontent surrounding the origins and execution of the invasion of Iraq in 2008, it is easy to see a linkage between Obama ads mentioning the war and a sense that this was a candidate who was willing to state his views (or, alternatively, view McCain as less willing to do so, which would lead to the same results).

Mentions of Iraq also tended to help Obama on a number of related trait questions surrounding his ability to make difficult decisions and provide leadership. Both Strong Leader and Ready to Be Commander in Chief see some substantive correlations with mentions of Iraq from the Obama campaign, with very similar results overall. While both traits do appear to be less correlated when examining them over the short-term (success rates of 8.19% and 9.58% for the 5-day groupings for Strong Leader and Ready to Be Commander in Chief, respectively), the gaps between these shortest time frames and the other two are not substantively different. The weekly periods appear to have the highest success rates (12.57% and 12.15% for Strong and Ready, respectively), with the biweekly groupings close behind (11.58% and 10.09%). Conceptually, these two traits tend to be connected, and the variables for the relative perceptions of Strong Leader and Ready to Be Commander in Chief are also highly correlated (0.8724), so these similar results are not particularly surprising.<sup>39</sup> The variations here, though, do suggest that the same message can still generate differing views and conclusions.

Further demonstrating this variety are the results for Iraq's pairing with Patriotic and Has Judgment to Be President. The pattern and values for Patriotic are fairly consistent with Strong Leader and Ready to Be Commander in Chief (8.19% / 11.25% / 9.05%), while Has Judgment to Be President sees a slight alteration of the pattern, with a lower success rate in the short- and medium-term (5.24% of 5-day groupings and 8.82% of 7-day groupings) and a higher success rate in the long-term (10.84% of biweekly groupings). On the traits that could be closely

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<sup>39</sup> It should be noted, though, that almost all of the nine trait questions here are highly correlated, with the lowest correlation being Patriotic and Shares Values at 0.7575; this does suggest that perceptions generally may be shaped by larger factors, such as partisanship, rather than specific assessments of the candidates, but the variations across traits using the same mention as the independent variable also suggest that these larger factors are not the only thing driving how voters approach these trait questions.

associated with national security, then, mentions of Iraq tended to have very similar effects on the whole.

In a similar vein, mentions of terrorism generally were paired with Ready to Be Commander in Chief, Strong Leader, and Patriotic and here, too, the results are generally substantively similar.<sup>40</sup> While terrorism was only mentioned by the Obama campaign on 39 days, some substantive successes can be observed at shifting perceptions in the periods after exposure (though here, too, some concerns over sample size are warranted, given that the bulk of these mentions came in a 27-day string and a 10-day string). The nature of the effects for terrorism tend to be the reverse of those seen when examining mentions of Iraq; the short-term groupings tend to see the highest success rates and the long-term groupings the lowest. On average, Ready to Be Commander in Chief sees the most successes (13.07% / 12.69% / 4.10%), with Strong Leader having slightly higher success rates than Patriotic (9.94% / 8.27% / 4.17% for Strong Leader compared to 9.94% / 5.96% / 2.78% for Patriotic). The relatively quick dissipation of these effects may be attributable to a lack of repetition in terms of daily reminders of the topic, but may also be a function of prominence in terms of the number of mentions overall – Terrorism was mentioned 16,969 times over the course of the campaign compared to 44,679 mentions of Iraq. The second set of results will introduce quantity to determine the effects these numbers of mentions have on perceptions of the two candidates.

One of the best ways for candidate Obama to quell concerns about his lack of experience was to rely on the words of other, more trusted political figures. Perhaps the best messenger he

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40 Given both the more general approval of fighting terrorism as a policy goal and its status as secondary to the specific Iraq conflict, this mention was not paired with Says What He Believes and Has Judgment to Be President. While the Obama strategy of delivering hard truths may have justified pairing it with Says What He Believes, Obama never tackled the larger fight against terrorism with the same criticisms as Iraq specifically (his distinction between being generally anti-war and anti-“stupid wars” is indicative of this divide).

had for this in 2008 was the last Democratic president, Bill Clinton, whose endorsement on June 25<sup>th</sup> served to signal both voters generally and Hillary Clinton-supporting Democrats specifically. Though the Obama campaign did not run ads mentioning Bill Clinton in a positive way until mid-September, these did have some significant correlations with perceptions of Obama having the Judgment to Be President and him as Trustworthy. The results here are quite similar, with the only distinction being the 7-day grouping – Judgment sees success rates for the short-, medium-, and long-term of 5.00%, 7.15%, and 1.85, while Trustworthy’s pattern is 5.00% / 3.57% / 1.85%. These results, though, do come with the same sample size concerns as Iraq and terrorism: 16 of the 17 days where a Clinton ad appeared came all in a row, with the 17<sup>th</sup> being Election Day, November 4<sup>th</sup>. These concerns, though, are muted somewhat by the finding that negative mentions of the incumbent president had a smaller overall average effect on perceptions of Obama’s Judgment to Be President (though with a slightly different pattern). Mentions of the incumbent tended to affect changes more in the long-term, with 8.00% of 14-day pairings seeing significant movement in Obama’s favor. Only 3.13% of the 7-day groupings were successful, and no significant effects were found in Obama’s favor in the short-term. Obama was much more negative towards Bush, with 118 days having mentions of this type, so while some concerns about sample size may exist here as well, the variations across the source of the appeal suggest that each former president was operating differently, at least in terms of associated perceptions of Obama.

However, it does not appear that these mentions of former presidents were helping solely with possible concerns about Obama’s Experience, as direct mentions of this concept only had a significant benefit to Obama on one of the trait questions asked. This trait, though, was likely the one most concerning to the Obama campaign: exposure to mentions of Experience only significantly quelled concerns about Obama being Too Young in 9.09% of the 14-day groupings,

but it should also be noted that direct mentions of Experience were not an important component of the Obama advertising in 2008 (32 mentions over 5 days, the first being October 20<sup>th</sup>). This relative paucity of airtime likely explains why Erratic and Too Old (questions asked only about McCain), Has Right Experience to Be President, and Trustworthy saw no successes for Obama.

Finally, the two pillars of the Obama campaign – Hope and Change – saw limited successes at shifting perceptions of the two candidates as men who were Trustworthy or Shared the Values of NAES respondents. Hope was especially limited in this regard – only 2.50% of the 5-day groupings saw significant correlations in Obama’s direction for the question of Shares My Values after these ads aired; this may be attributable to the limited nature of these mentions (13 days total, with the vast majority of the mentions coming over the final 5 days of the campaign). Change did slightly better for Obama on the Shares My Values question, with 4.32% of short-term, 3.50% of medium-term, and 0.81% of long-term groupings seeing successes; Trustworthy saw similar results, with success rates of 3.13%, 3.75%, and 1.61% across the three timeframes.

One possibility limiting the appearance of effects here may be that this overall analysis combines both positive and negative advertising. The Wisconsin dataset categorizes ads by their primary goal, specifically whether the ad is intended to promote the sponsoring candidate or attack his opponent, so the mixing of these goals may be leading to a muddled effect overall (as promotional ads may be offset by attacking ads, at least in terms of changing perceptions). Later analyses break these types of ads into separate groups. However, the effects that are seen in the overall results for Obama are suggestive of some successes, at least for some pairings. Mentions of Iraq did correlate with better views of Obama as a candidate willing to state his true beliefs about issues, as well as bolstering perceptions of him as ready to be president or a strong leader. Terrorism operates much the same way, though to a lesser extent that fits with its secondary status (at least in terms of days mentioned). Mentions that look to mute concerns over Obama’s

inexperience tend to see some substantive effects in the desired direction (again, in patterns that fit the relative prominence of the mentions analyzed).

***Table 6.0.2 - Overall Success Rates - Barack Obama (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
Iraq (Obama) - Says What He Believes	0.00%	8.33%	36.84%	15.06%
Terrorism (Obama) - Patriotic	6.43%	10.42%	14.16%	10.33%
Iraq (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	3.61%	6.63%	5.77%	5.34%
Terrorism (Obama) - Strong Leader	0.00%	7.68%	5.13%	4.27%
Iraq (Obama) - Strong Leader	0.98%	3.62%	7.05%	3.88%
Experience (Obama) - Too Young (Obama)	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	3.33%
Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) - Trustworthy	5.56%	2.50%	1.85%	3.30%
Terrorism (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	1.67%	1.52%	5.16%	2.78%
Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	5.56%	2.50%	0.00%	2.69%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	2.07%	1.36%	3.87%	2.43%
Iraq (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	0.98%	3.95%	1.82%	2.25%
Change (Obama) - Trustworthy	1.56%	1.67%	0.65%	1.29%
Iraq (Obama) - Patriotic	1.33%	0.00%	0.54%	0.62%
Change (Obama) - Shares My Values	0.00%	0.83%	0.00%	0.28%
Experience (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Iraq (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Experience (Obama) - Has Right Experience to be President	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hope (Obama) - Shares My Values	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Experience (Obama) - Too Old (McCain)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Experience (Obama) - Trustworthy	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	<b>1.49%</b>	<b>3.05%</b>	<b>4.14%</b>	

Taking into account the number of ads that air over the exposure periods analyzed previously sees a general pattern of diminished effects, suggesting that repetition may not benefit the resonance of messages, at least as means to shift trait perceptions of candidates. Of the 20 pairings analyzed in Table X.X, only two see overall average success rates increase relative to the previous table; one of these two sees an increase in this regard of only 0.3 percentage points, further suggesting how limited these counts are. Five see no change, with the remaining 13 seeing diminished averages relative to the first version of these results.



Four of the five that see no change are pairings where no successes were found originally – Experience continues to have no significant correlations with benefits for Obama on the questions of Erratic or Too Old (both asked only of McCain), nor does the Democrat see any changes on the questions of Trustworthy or Has the Right Experience to Be President. One of the pairings here – Iraq – Erratic – becomes analyzable due to the counts breaking up the continuous value of the exposure variable, but Iraq has no significant effect in Obama’s favor on the Erratic question, either<sup>41</sup>

As mentioned, only two pairings saw increased averages when counts were included, though Experience – Too Young saw its overall average increase by three-tenths of a percentage point. However, this also sees the nature of the effect change – instead of 9.09% of the 14-day groupings, taking quantity into account sees the effects move to only being present in the 7-day grouping, with 10.00% of these groupings being significant and in the correct direction. As noted above, though, only 32 ads mentioned Experience for Obama in 2008. The other pairing with a positive change – Terrorism – Patriotic – sees its overall average success rate increase by 4.10 percentage points, with much higher success rates in the 7- and 14-day groupings specifically (reversing the pattern seen in the initial analysis). Given that Obama made mention of terrorism almost 17,000 times, these substantive changes do suggest that quantity contributed to changed perceptions of Obama and McCain’s Patriotism.

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41 This is not surprising, given that the context of the Erratic question is domestic in nature – the NAES battery added this question in the aftermath of McCain’s behavior as the financial crisis worsened: canceling his appearance at the first debate then quickly re-agreeing to participate being perhaps the clearest example. Obama himself called McCain’s behavior “Erratic”, though he was certainly not the only source of such criticism. While McCain’s transition on Iraq may have also registered to some as Erratic, the context here places it in a separate area than the foreign policy arena, and so a lack of findings fits with the larger message environment.

However, for mentions of terrorism, this quantity was associated with diminished successes for perceptions of Obama as a Strong Leader (3.19 percentage point decline in the overall average success rate), and Ready to Be Commander in Chief (7.17 percentage point decline in the overall average success rate). While both of these do see some minor successes in the long-term groupings (5.13% for Strong Leader and 5.16% for Ready to Be Commander in Chief), there are substantive declines in the short-term and (for Ready) medium-term groupings. These declines are important in that they suggest that immediate reactions may be affected more by high repetition of ads within days; with an average of 435.10 mentions per day, observers may be being overwhelmed by the message in the short-term, with the resonance only coming after the fact (or, conversely, as part of a continued barrage of high-number days – as with the previous chapters, the overall conclusions about the effect of quantity do not appear to be uniform).

In a similar vein, the even more prominent mentions of Iraq are associated with starker declines in success rates. While the pairing of mentions of Iraq with the trait question of Says What He Believes continues to be the most successful pairing on average, its overall average success rate is cut more than half, declining by 16.93 percentage points when counts are included in the regressions. The short- and medium-term rates are especially diminished, though the 14-day groupings still see a 36.84% success rate, suggesting some resonance persists. Strong Leader and Has Judgment to Be President also see substantive declines, with their overall average success rates dropping by almost 7 and 3 percentage points, respectively. Here, too, the decline is seen most strongly in the short- and medium-term, which may suggest that while high numbers of mentions can harm effectiveness, they do so more in the short- and medium-term than the long-term (a reading which fits with some of the running tally logic, as voters exposed to a piece of information may assimilate it into their perceptions and then forget the source as time goes on).

However, these patterns are complicated by the results for Iraq's pairings with Patriotic and Ready to Be Commander in Chief. Both see similar declines in their overall average success rate (8.88% for Patriotic and 8.36% for Ready to Be Commander in Chief), though here the declines are fairly consistent across the board, and the individual grouping rates end up being quite small overall (with three of the six under 1% and only one over 2%), raising concerns that even these successes may be spurious. It is not immediately clear why these two should operate so differently from similar pairings with mentions of Iraq. One possibility is that increased mentions harm perceptions of Obama's patriotism (and, perhaps, all the others discussed here), but this does not appear to be a major concern for many of the other pairings, where effects are still found over longer periods of time after initial exposures. One clear possibility is that other factors are at play in these trait questions, but the differential patterns even in trait questions that would seem to be connected (remember the strong correlations mentioned above) suggest that this is not the only reason for this divergence.

Further complicating this analysis are the *non*-divergent findings for two mentions that are similar in general topic but starkly different in number of ads being aired. Positive mentions of Bill Clinton were one of the rarest topics for Obama (relatively, though, as 10,784 mentions were made) with negative mentions of George W. Bush being his most mentioned topic (at least of those pulled out of the Wisconsin data), with 134,132 mentions in total. However, taking these mentions into account when examining correlations with questions about the candidates' trustworthiness and judgment sees fairly consistent results. The success rates for Clinton – Trustworthy are barely changed, with an overall average success rate decline of 0.17 percentage points (with the 7-day groupings only showing a substantive decline), while the Clinton – Judgment and Bush – Judgment overall average success rate declines are 1.98 and 1.28 percentage points, respectively. The Bush results are especially interesting, on the 118 days where

a mention was made the average total was almost 1137 ads, suggesting a clear potential for oversaturation and message fatigue that clearly does not appear to exist; while slight in substantive terms, even the 14-day groupings see some successes in shifting perceptions of the candidates' judgment to be president. It may be that in certain electoral contexts, particularly salient mentions continue to hold voter attention or persist even in the face of massive amounts of repetition. Rather than a "sweet spot" of repetition, as broached in the previous chapter, the effects of counts appear highly variable in 2008 and more reliant on the type of mention rather than an overall pattern.

Similar consistencies are found when examining the pairings using Change and Hope, another two mentions that are at the high and low for mention totals (121,428 for Change and 11,766 for Hope). Taking these counts into account barely changes the Hope – Trustworthy pairing (overall average success rate declines by 0.83 percentage points) and sees slight declines for Change – Trustworthy (1.54 percentage points) and Shares My Values (2.59 percentage points). However, this should not detract from the substantive nature of these changes – while Hope only declines a bit, it was already low to begin with and the count-inclusive regressions see no successes at all. Similarly, the declines for Change cut away at an already sparse rate of success, again raising concerns about spuriousness. Though Obama's campaign has, as time has elapsed, been boiled down to one of hope and change, it appears that these two mentions in particular had little benefit for the Democratic candidate, at least when it came to bolstering perceptions of him having shared values with NAES respondents or being seen as more trustworthy. This may be a function of the mentions themselves, the extent to which they permeated messaging over the course of the campaign, or both. Regardless, including the counts in the analysis demonstrates a mixed set of results, at least for this overall analysis: some mentions suffered more from high amounts of repetition than others, and even within mentions

particular trait questions responded differently to high repetition. It does not appear that quantity had a positive quality of its own in 2008, but it also does not appear that quantity had a consistent effect across the board for Obama in 2008.

***Table 6.0.3 - Overall Success Rates - John McCain***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
Experience (McCain) - Too Old (McCain)	17.22%	17.74%	17.78%	17.58%
George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) - Says What He Believes	12.50%	10.00%	5.88%	9.46%
George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President	13.29%	7.50%	5.50%	8.76%
Experience (McCain) - Too Young (Obama)	13.61%	9.97%	0.00%	7.86%
Change (McCain) - Trustworthy	8.35%	9.22%	5.95%	7.84%
Surge (McCain) - Strong Leader	7.58%	6.55%	5.44%	6.52%
Change (McCain) - Shares My Values	5.00%	8.27%	5.36%	6.21%
Surge (McCain) - Patriotic	8.67%	7.55%	1.29%	5.84%
Surge (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	7.58%	5.36%	2.86%	5.27%
God (McCain) - Shares My Values	12.50%	0.00%	1.62%	4.71%
Experience (McCain) - Has Right Experience to be President	4.86%	4.41%	2.78%	4.02%
Iraq (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President	5.26%	3.57%	2.86%	3.90%
Experience (McCain) - Trustworthy	3.47%	3.14%	2.22%	2.94%
George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President	1.56%	2.50%	4.13%	2.73%
Iraq (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	3.17%	1.79%	2.86%	2.60%
Iraq (McCain) - Strong Leader	3.17%	1.79%	2.86%	2.60%
Hope (McCain) - Shares My Values	3.33%	3.17%	0.74%	2.41%
Terrorism (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	2.38%	2.38%	2.38%	2.38%
Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic	4.26%	2.79%	0.00%	2.35%
September 11 (McCain) - Strong Leader	0.00%	2.78%	1.56%	1.45%
September 11 (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	0.00%	0.00%	1.56%	0.52%
September 11 (McCain) - Patriotic	0.00%	0.00%	1.09%	0.36%
George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Terrorism (McCain) - Patriotic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Terrorism (McCain) - Strong Leader	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.30%</b>	<b>4.25%</b>	<b>2.95%</b>	

At least in terms of the mentions selected here, McCain was at once more varied and less prominent in his messaging than Obama, crossing 10 of the 11 mentions (compared to 7 for Obama), but running just over half as many ads on those mentions in total (190,795 compared to

339,790). However, this variety makes sense given the mentions included in the Wisconsin data – McCain’s only absence was on mentioning Bill Clinton positively, and his unique mentions were positive mentions of George W. Bush, mentioning God, September 11, and the troop surge in Iraq. Somewhat surprising are the prominence of Hope and Change for McCain, though as later analyses will discuss in greater detail these appear to have been mostly negative ads attacking Obama that mentioned those terms (likely in a disparaging fashion) rather than mentions looking to present McCain as the avatar of optimism and revolution.<sup>42</sup>

One mention that appears to have been particularly helpful for McCain in 2008 is that of Experience. This makes sense, given the disparity in time in government and age between the two candidates in 2008, and McCain made it a point to mention experience often, with 27,794 ads over 48 days using the term. These mentions appear to have been particularly effective at changing perceptions of McCain as Too Old for the presidency *as well as* perceptions of Obama as Too Young for the office.<sup>43</sup> Too Old sees the most successes on average, with substantive changes occurring across all three time period groupings (17.22% / 17.74% / 17.78%); Too Young is a bit more constrained, with a success rate of 13.61% for the 5-day groupings and 9.97% for the 7-day groupings. These results are intriguing, in that mentioning Experience appears to be reminding voters of McCain’s tenure in office without overly presenting him as an ossified member of the political elite; one possibility that will be explored below is that since the vast majority of McCain’s Experience mentions were in attack ads, the intention was to more paint Obama as too young than worry about countering the perception that McCain was too old.

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42 This is a pattern generally for both candidates, but more for McCain – in total, 19.84% of McCain’s total mentions here are promotional, compared to 30.86% of Obama’s.

43 As mentioned above, these are not comparative questions like the others; rather, these are straightforward questions asking respondents to rate separately whether McCain (Obama) is too old (young) to be president. Movement in McCain’s favor, then, is in the negative direction on too old and positive direction on too young.

Regardless, it appears that in 2008 making mention of one's own experience (or one's opponent's lack of it) did help to benefit McCain on the age questions.

Experience mentions, however, appear to have been less effective in benefitting McCain on questions about Having the Right Experience to Be President and who is more Trustworthy. While the former sees higher success rates generally than the latter, both are substantively quite small – 4.86% / 4.41% / 2.78% and 3.47% / 3.14% / 2.22%, respectively. While mentions of Experience helped McCain on general, age-based perceptions, they did not do as much to help him present himself as comparatively more prepared for the presidency or bolster his trustworthiness (which may also be attributable to the overwhelmingly negative nature of these mentions).

Unfortunately for McCain, the mentions of his time in government implicitly set up a connection between him and the current incumbent, whose popularity was going to be a drag on any Republican running for national office in 2008. McCain's history with Bush was particularly fraught, though voters in 2008 probably better recalled the senator as a staunch supporter of the Iraq war than the victim of dirty tricks eight years earlier or a recalcitrant voice pushing back against early administration policies (see, for example, the ad quoted in Jamieson 2009, 112). Thus, it makes sense for McCain to make a push to overtly distance himself from the president and reclaim some of his independent appeals; though only limited to 33 days, McCain and his allies took aim by mentioning the sitting president in a negative way. These mentions did have some varied effects, though effects that generally fit with the likely strategy of such criticism.

The most prominent effects appear in the pairing with Says What He Believes; here exposure to negative mentions of Bush corresponded with increased perceptions of McCain on this trait in 12.50% of the 5-day groupings, 10.00% of the 7-day groupings, and 5.88% of the 14-day groupings. Given that the likely intention here was to remind voters of McCain as a maverick

and someone willing to go against his party on matters of principle, these success rates do demonstrate some traction for such an appeal. On the other pairings – Has Judgment to Be President and Erratic<sup>44</sup> - few successes are seen in the former and none in the latter. While McCain’s Judgment was benefited more in the long-term relative to the other two, the overall percentages are both quite similar and slight (1.56% / 2.50% / 4.13%).

Oddly enough, while criticizing the incumbent only slightly benefitted McCain on the question of Judgment, *praising* Bush had a much more substantive effect on this question, especially in the short-term. 13.29% of the 5-day groupings were significant and in the correct direction, compared to 7.50% of the weekly groupings and 5.50% of the biweekly groupings. As with the negative mentions, positive mentions of Bush had no successes when paired with Erratic. These mentions, though, were quite rare: only 13 days of the campaign had a positive mention of Bush, so sample size may be a concern here.

A particularly interesting dynamic given his opponent’s campaign themes is that McCain mentioned Change more than any other topic (at least of the list used here), making almost 70,000 more mentions of Change than the next most prominent (Experience, with 27,794 mentions). Though these will be analyzed separately below, it is helpful to note here that these mentions were predominantly negative – only 17.66% of the Change mentions appeared in ads primarily used to promote McCain. This helps better contextualize the successes observed when Change is paired with Trustworthy and Shares My Values, as it appears that McCain may be benefitting here by pushing Obama down more than lifting himself up (that is, his usages of Change in attack

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<sup>44</sup> This latter one, as discussed above, is a bit tenuous, given that the Erratic question was likely included more as a response to McCain’s behavior after the financial crisis began to worsen, but given the presence of both positive and negative mentions of Bush here it was determined that this could be a sign of McCain’s erraticism as well. In the absence of a 2004-style “Flip Flop” question, this was the best option to see if McCain trying to have it both ways on Bush hurt him.



ads may be swaying voters to perceive that Obama is more out of line rather than McCain actually being in line with their values). Both pairings see similar results, with more short- and medium-term successes generally. 8.35% of 5-day groupings, 9.22% of 7-day groupings, and 5.95% of 14-day groupings are successes for Trustworthy, compared to success rates of 5.00% / 8.27% / 5.36% for Shares My Values. This fits with a strategy of using Change to paint Obama as out of touch or risky, as McCain becomes a more trusted option even without articulating a positive case for himself.

A significant portion of McCain's messaging, unsurprisingly, focused on national security issues. Traditionally an advantageous area for Republicans, this was especially salient in 2008 given the ongoing debate over the war in Iraq and the fight against terrorism broadly. While domestic concerns became highly important late in the campaign, the McCain strategy appears to have had a substantive focus on trying to make much the same appeal that Bush had made in 2004, at least on foreign policy and national security issues. The debate over the "Surge" in Iraq, an infusion of significant numbers of troops, became a way for McCain to make the difference between him and Obama clear (as well as appeal to Republicans who may have needed reminding that McCain was a staunch partisan on some issues). Mentions of the surge saw some substantive successes at shifting perceptions of McCain as a Strong Leader, as Patriotic, and as Ready to Be Commander in Chief. All three pairings saw fairly similar success rates on average, with Strong Leader (6.52% overall average success rate) doing slightly better than Patriotic (5.84%) and Ready to be Commander in Chief (5.27%). In terms of individual time-periods, the three pairings also were generally similar, with the success rates tending to diminish as the groupings got larger. Strong Leader, however, saw greater successes in the 14-day groupings than the other two, with 5.44% of these biweekly groupings both statistically significant and in McCain's direction, compared to 1.29% of Patriotic and 2.86% of Ready to Be Commander in Chief.

Though it appears that mentions of Iraq and the Surge came together for McCain quite often, mentioning the war by name appears to have had less traction for McCain on traits associated with patriotism or national security. As with the pairings with Surge, the pairings with Iraq did tend to see similar success rates on the whole, though they are as a group much smaller than the success rates for mentions of the Surge. Iraq – Has Judgment to Be President saw the highest overall average success rate (3.90%), with Ready to Be Commander in Chief and Strong Leader slightly lower at 2.60%. Finally, Patriotic’s overall average was only 2.35%. The general pattern seen with Surge appears to hold here, with each pairing tending to see declining success rates as the groupings get larger (though this is not the case for Ready to Be Commander in Chief and Strong Leader, but the percentages are so small that concerns over spuriousness cannot be rejected). While some successes are seen, mentioning the country by name appears to have been less effective at helping McCain cement perceptions of him as ready to take on the office or being a strong leader.

Perhaps because of the focus on the key issue of the war in Iraq rather than the general fight against terrorism, mentions of the more generic threat and references to the September 11 attacks were generally very limited at helping McCain shift perceptions of his readiness and strength. Only one of the three Terrorism pairings saw any successes (Ready to Be Commander in Chief), though here the rate across all three groupings is a scant 2.38%. While all three September 11 pairings did have some successes, they all tended to be quite rare. Ready to Be Commander in Chief and Patriotic only saw successes in the biweekly groupings, and here only 1.56% and 1.09% of the groupings were significant and in McCain’s favor, respectively. Strong Leader saw some successes in the 7-day groupings, though the quantity is still quite small here (2.78% in the 7-day, 1.56% again in the 14-day). Terrorism and references to the most significant terrorist attack on United States soil appear to have not had the cachet in 2008 they had in 2004; the

presence of a more prominent foreign policy issue, as well as larger domestic concerns later in the campaign, appear to have limited the efficacy of these appeals as a means to bolster perceptions of one's leadership.

Finally, mentions of God and Hope do appear to have some successes at shifting perceptions of McCain as someone who Shares the respondents' Values, but here too the substantive successes are slight, short-lived, or both. God does fairly well at shifting perceptions in the short-term, with 12.50% of the 5-day groupings being significant and in the correct direction; however, these successes dissipate quickly, with 0.00% of the 7-day groupings and only 1.62% of the 14-day groupings similarly successful. Hope sees some consistency in the 5- and 7-day groupings, with 3.33% and 3.17% of groupings significant and correct, respectively. Only 0.74% of the biweekly groupings for Hope are successful, though. While God makes a more direct appeal to values, it appears that religion and concerns over Obama's vision of what "Hope" represented were not areas in which values were being considered. While some short-term benefit accrued to McCain after making mention of God, these effects did not persist in any meaningful way.

For McCain, then, the overall successes appear to revolve mainly around mentions of his experience, his maverick status (at least as it touches on pushing back a co-partisan president), and concerns about what the Democratic challenger's vision of "Change" represented. While some national security-oriented mentions had some traction, overall the more personalistic mentions do better at shifting perceptions of the two men vying for the presidency.

***Table 6.0.4 - Overall Success Rates - John McCain (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) - Says What He Believes</b>	30.00%	25.00%	15.79%	23.60%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Old (McCain)</b>	10.07%	12.52%	13.85%	12.15%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Young (Obama)</b>	10.38%	9.89%	4.78%	8.35%
<b>George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	12.70%	6.67%	0.00%	6.45%
<b>God (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	10.53%	4.76%	0.00%	5.10%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	5.50%	6.21%	2.67%	4.79%
<b>Change (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	5.44%	5.08%	2.93%	4.48%
<b>Change (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	6.21%	4.44%	2.39%	4.34%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	2.50%	4.35%	2.67%	3.17%
<b>September 11 (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	2.50%	3.41%	2.59%	2.83%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	3.50%	4.35%	0.00%	2.62%
<b>September 11 (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	4.29%	3.41%	0.00%	2.57%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	3.33%	3.43%	0.00%	2.25%
<b>Terrorism (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	1.19%	1.11%	4.17%	2.16%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	2.00%	3.70%	0.00%	1.90%
<b>Hope (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	1.85%	1.73%	0.65%	1.41%
<b>George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	0.00%	0.00%	4.17%	1.39%
<b>September 11 (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	1.25%	1.14%	0.00%	0.80%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	0.83%	0.93%	0.00%	0.59%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Has Right Experience to be President</b>	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.33%
<b>Terrorism (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.81%	0.27%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.67%	0.22%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Terrorism (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	4.26%	3.78%	2.15%	

Compared to the results factoring in number of mentions for Obama, McCain's results in the second iteration are a much more varied mix of increases and decreases. Only 3 of the 27 pairings stay static from the first to second set of results, and 11 of the remaining 24 see increases in their overall average success rates. For McCain, then, repetition appears to have been generally more helpful; this may further suggest the existence of something of a "sweet spot" for repetition, as the average mention category for McCain saw only 19,079.5 mentions over the course of the campaign.

The biggest change in this second set comes from a pairing that does suggest a personalistic view of McCain and his qualifications for office. Taking into account the 18,213 negative mentions of George W. Bush sees a stark increase in the success rates for this mention as a source of change for the trait question Says What He Believes. Given that these mentions of the incumbent are likely touching on McCain's "maverick" nature and showing that while he is a Republican he will not necessarily represent a third Bush term, these results are understandable and heartening. The overall average success rate for this pairing increases by 14.14 percentage points, with 30.00% of the 5-day groupings, 25.00% of the 7-day groupings, and 15.79% of the 14-day groupings seeing significant results in McCain's favor. The connection between criticism of Bush and McCain's presentation of himself as someone who is willing to stick to his beliefs is furthered by comparing the trajectory of the average for this pairing and the others that utilized negative mentions of the incumbent. While Erratic continues to have no successes, the question of whether or not McCain has the Judgment to Be President sees a slight decline when the counts for negative Bush mentions are included. While the overall average only decreases by 1.34 percentage points, the original overall average success rate was already small; this average is also a bit misleading, given that the only successes for Judgment are found in the 14-day groupings (4.17% of these groupings). On a trait question that has less to do with McCain's relationship with the incumbent, little to no benefit is found; on one that touches directly on a core component of McCain's appeal, though, the number of mentions being made demonstrates a clear multiplier effect – as more of these ads aired, the effects of exposure on perceptions of McCain as a candidate who says what he believes got stronger.

Given the almost 28,000 mentions of experience from the McCain campaign in 2008, it is surprising that including these counts in the analysis have different effects on the success rates for perceptions of McCain as too old and his opponent as too young. The overall average success rate

for Too Old drops by almost five and a half percentage points (though this still leaves it with a substantive overall average success rate of 12.15%), while the overall average success rate for Too Young increases by almost half a percentage point. Part of the explanation for this disparity may lie in the disproportionately negative nature of the experience mentions (only 534 mentions were made as part of ads intended more to promote, as coded by the Wisconsin researchers). Given that the tone of these ads was more likely to attack Obama for *not* having experience (recall that the coding scheme utilized here only counts the presence of the word or phrase, independent on context), it makes sense for perceptions of McCain as Too Old to suffer by comparison; it is likely that many of these ads were not making the case that McCain's experience or tenure in office was not a matter for concern in the first place. It is perhaps more notable, then, that the results for Too Young stay so static even when taking into account the large number of mentions being made; further evidence for the relative ineffective nature of negative advertising is observed here.

These more attack-focused mentions may also explain the substantive decline in the success rates for the trait question Has Right Experience to Be President. While already slight, the second iteration of the results sees the overall average success rate decline by 3.69 percentage points, with only 1.00% of the 5-day groupings being successful. Taking into account the high repetition of negative mentions of Obama's experience (or using McCain's experience as a means to attack his opponent) appears to have backfired; respondents in periods after these ads ran tended to view McCain as less qualified for the job, another argument for the lack of benefits from a primarily negative campaign. Experience continues to have no significant and correct effect when paired with questions about McCain being Erratic or on relative perceptions of the candidates as Trustworthy.

Though they are quite sparse relative to other mentions, taking into account the 157 positive mentions of the incumbent president in 2008 see no clear benefits for McCain on the traits of Has Judgment to Be President or Erratic. While Erratic continues to not be significantly correlated with these mentions, the success rates for Has Judgment to Be President decline slightly. The overall average success rate is diminished by 2.31 percentage points, though this appears to be mainly driven by the complete evaporation of effects in the biweekly groupings. While some substantive effects remain in the 5- and 7-day groupings, any traction the positive mentions of Bush may have had appear to disappear after a week from exposure. Given that almost all of the ads mentioning Bush positively air after October 19, this lack of traction is not particularly surprising; however, this gives greater credence to the theory that events closest to Election Day can have the most impact simply because they have not had time to dissipate. While this theory works against the running tally approach utilized here, the low success rates even in the short and medium-term suggest that simply being proximate to Election Day does not guarantee a substantive effect (especially in this case, where it is difficult to assume that a large number of voters either were undecided on how they felt about Bush at that point in the campaign or could be shifted from negative perceptions).

However, the relatively few mentions of God made by the McCain campaign – only 546 – see an increase in average overall success rate when included in analysis for Shares My Values. It should be noted here, though, that the overall average increase is quite slight – only 0.39 percentage points – and the within-group rates change in ways that do not suggest an strong overall benefit. While the 7-day groupings see new successes (going from 0.00% to 4.76%), both the short- and long-term groupings see declines, with the 14-day groupings losing their (albeit initially small) successes entirely. Taking into account repetition, then, does still seem to not be particularly effective when the numbers are small; the fact that all the mentions of God come on

consecutive days does suggest that the exposure-only results may have been limited due to a lack of variation on the exposure variable, as well.

The limited number of mentions of God, though, do not appear to be the sole explanation for these minor effects when counts are included in analysis. Two much more prominent mentions – Hope and Change – see only small declines as well, though their counts are magnitudes larger than those for God. On the trait question of Shares My Values, the average overall success rate decline for Change is 1.87 percentage points, while for Hope the decline is only a single percentage point. Interestingly, the grouping declines are different for these two; Change’s declines come more in the 7- and 14-day groupings, while Hope’s are present more in the 5- and 7-day groupings. This may be a function of the dispersion and counts of these mentions – the McCain camp made almost 70,000 more mentions of Change over 41 more days, with a substantial number of Change mentions coming in the final weeks of the campaign. This creates somewhat more limited observations for the longer categories, which may explain why Hope and Change operate slightly differently when their counts are included. Regardless, it does not appear that small counts or large counts are beneficial in these areas as well.

The lack of utility from massive amounts of repetition are further shown in the results for Change – Trustworthy, where the overall average success rate falls by 3.36 percentage points once counts are included. Here the declines are similar across the three groupings, further suggesting that message saturation may place a limit on effectiveness. The fact that only 17,253 of the Change mentions come in promotional ads compounds this fact; negative repetition appears to be quite limited in effecting positive change on candidate trait perceptions.

The four national security mentions present quite a confusing set of results overall, with some mentions doing quite well once counts are included and others showing diminished successes. Especially surprising are the divergent results for mentions that – theoretically –



should be quite related in the minds of observers and the increased effectiveness for mentions that would seem to be less important relatively given the landscape in 2008. Mentions of Iraq and the Surge therein are especially divergent, both in direction and extent of the changes once counts are included. Given that these are mentioned in relatively equal numbers (5,319 Iraq mentions, 4,392 Surge mentions) and across relatively equal days (58 days for Iraq, 49 days for the Surge), these differences are curious. While three of the four Iraq pairings see positive changes in the overall average success rate (with the fourth seeing a negative change), none of these changes are particularly stark. The largest – Iraq paired with the question Has Judgment to Be President – is an increase of 0.89 percentage points, with the only substantive grouping change being an increase in the 7-day results. The next highest – Iraq paired with the question concerning Strong Leader – is an overall average success rate increase of 0.57 percentage points, though here the increase in the 7-day successes is off-set but a decline in the 5-day success rates. The remaining two pairings – Iraq and Ready to Be Commander in Chief and Iraq paired with Patriotic – see an increase of 0.02 and a decrease of 0.1 percentage points, respectively (though this hides a substantive change in the Ready to Be Commander in Chief pairing on par with that of Strong Leader; Patriotic is effectively unchanged in terms of individual group success rates). While some slight benefits accrue on average when factoring in the number of mentions of Iraq, it does not appear as though these counts dramatically change the understanding of how these mentions of a prominent national security matter affected perceptions of McCain on security-related traits for the presidency. This may fit with an understanding of traits and messaging as dependent on the larger political environment – just as certain traits may be more or less important in different election years, certain political figures (whether due to party affiliation, personal background/abilities, or some other individual factor) may simply find less traction, even when using messages or mentions that should be important to voters.

This individualized changeability of messaging effectiveness may be reinforced when examining the highly divergent results for the Surge. The three pairings used here – Surge paired with Ready to Be Commander in Chief, Patriotic, and Strong Leader – all see substantive declines in their overall average success rates, drastically differing from the Iraq results even though *they are effectively mentioning the same topic*. What is different in mentioning the Surge is that it is a specific policy that McCain supported. While he could be somewhat more flexible on the issue of the war itself, making his overall support clear even though he disagreed with strategy (see Jamieson 2009, 109 for one ad example), support for the Surge represented a more concrete demonstration that McCain was willing to continue to dedicate resources and troops to the struggle. This may explain why taking into account the number of ads being aired sees such a dramatic shift in effectiveness – more constant reminders that McCain may simply continue the war makes the distinction clearer than vaguer mentions of the war itself. The fact that these ads tend to come in the same numbers *at the same time* (indeed, the correlation for daily counts of these two mentions is 0.9785) strongly suggests that the content of the mentions themselves does have an important independent effect, even when the mentions are generally or thematically related.

For traits paired with mentions of the Surge, Ready to Be Commander in Chief sees the smallest effect, with an overall average success rate decline of 3.37 percentage points, with most of that decline coming in the 5-day grouping (though the 7- and 14-day groupings do see declines as well). Patriotic's overall average success rate diminishes by 5.25 percentage points (with the individual groupings all declining to effectively zero successes), with a similar wipeout occurring in the Strong Leader pairing (the overall average success rate drops by 6.30 percentage points, leaving only a miniscule success rate for the 14-day groupings). While mentioning the war generally appears to have (slightly) been helpful to McCain, mentioning a specific war policy

appears to have been detrimental to helping perceptions of McCain as a leader who loved his country and was ready to take on the hard decisions of the office.

Finally, while mentions of terrorism would seem on their face to be ill-suited for the concerns of 2008 (where the Iraq war and, later, domestic economic issues dominated), including the counts for mentions of Terrorism generally and September 11 specifically almost always see increased success rates for McCain. This is further confounding, as these mentions do *not* come in equal numbers (September 11 is only mentioned 2,116 times, compared to 11,134 mentions of Terrorism broadly). Furthermore, every single one of these mentions came in an ad coded as primarily intended to attack, complicating the conclusions above regarding the ineffective nature of negative messaging. However, it should be noted that the changes in effectiveness (and the resulting success rates) tend to be very slight, so some caution should be utilized in extending these results too broadly.

It is perhaps not too shocking that specifically mentioning the attacks of September 11 stir some responses that benefit McCain; though it had been seven years, the images of the attacks still had the potential to stir feelings of fear and may have reminded voters of the strong response from the Bush administration. The increases in successes for McCain on the trait questions of Strong Leader, Patriotic, and (to a lesser extent) Ready to Be Commander in Chief, may then be attributable to the emotional appeal of using references to the attacks on New York City and Washington, DC. Patriotic sees the largest benefit, with its overall average success rate increasing 2.19 percentage points (though, oddly, this is driven by an appearance of effects in the 5- and 7-day groupings and the complete disappearance of effects in the 14-day grouping), with Strong Leader close behind (overall average success rate increase of 1.38 percentage points, though here the effects are stable across the three groupings). Ready to Be Commander in Chief only sees an increase in the overall average success rate of 0.28 percentage points, and the quantities for the

individual groups raise concerns of spuriousness. While the second iteration of results does see an increase in the overall average success rate of 2.16 percentage points for Terrorism – Strong Leader, the individual group success rates are still substantively small (though the 14-day grouping does have a success rate of 4.17%). Patriotic sees an increase of 0.27 percentage points overall, but here, too, the individual rates are small enough to raise concerns. Finally, when taking into account the number of mentions airing during exposure periods, all the successes for Terrorism – Ready to Be Commander in Chief disappear. This suggests, again, that the content of the mentions can be critical – though terrorism was something of a secondary national security concern behind Iraq, specific mentions of memorable events did still have some ability to shift perceptions in a positive direction for McCain, while more generic mentions found less traction. As with Iraq, the general policy mentions appear to have been benign, with the specific mentions generating more of a response; given the nature of the specific event utilized here, though, drawing generalized conclusions may be difficult.

## CHAPTER 7 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The multitude of traits, mentions, and combinations thereof presented in the previous three chapters makes drawing general conclusions about the effectiveness of campaign advertising on perceptions of presidential candidates' personality traits difficult. The differing political contexts, electoral circumstances, advertising strategies, and mention balancing mean that one-to-one comparisons across elections and campaigns are difficult to make (the uniqueness of presidents seems to also apply to the campaigns in which they attain the office [extending the “ $n = 1$ ” problem, though see King (1993)]). However, while the individualized trait-mention combinations are not directly comparable across elections (and, indeed, each election contains unique pairings, not only due to the different mentions made by the candidates but also due to methodological differences across the three elections' datasets – the 2008 Wisconsin data, for example, differs substantially from the previous two in terms of relevant mentions, making those results particularly indirect compared to 2000 and 2004), some general patterns are observable that do provide some insights into when and how advertising can influence perceptions of candidate personality.

### ***Lack of Consistent and/or Substantive Effect***

The first pattern is the most important – overall, there does not appear to be a highly consistent or highly substantive effect between campaign advertising that makes specific mention of candidate traits and survey respondent perceptions of the relative applicability of trait

descriptors to presidential candidates. As described in more detail below, this lack of results may be attributable to methodological limitations contained in the analyses conducted here; however, it is quite likely that this lack of clear and meaningful relationships would continue to be observed even under different methodological approaches. Even when significant results were observed, the substantive value of the regression coefficients suggest that this effect on trait perceptions is still quite small (typically under a value of 1, which – on the 10-point scales used in 2004 and 2008 – does not give much evidence of dramatic shifts in perceptions for the two major-party candidates). Advertising, then, is not the source of consequential swings in perceptions of candidate personality; indeed, as will be explored in more detail below, there does not generally tend to be much change in the values of these perceptions over the timeframes examined here (also, as discussed at times in the election-specific chapters, there does not appear to be very many examples of these perceptions changing much *over the entirety of the campaign*).

Advertising, then, might not be able to change perceptions quickly or substantially because that is not how perceptions are typically altered over the course of the presidential election cycle (and, in fact, the running tally approach utilized here would argue against these types of dramatic changes absent some massive event warranting reconsideration of pre-existing perceptions). Advertising, then, may be having some effect on perceptions of the candidates, but it does not appear that that effect entails clearly and meaningfully changing the way in which survey respondents assess the candidates when asked questions about their personality traits.

This lack of persuasion, however, fits with much of the extant work on campaign advertising and appeals more generally. It may not be the case that advertising making mention of candidate traits is *persuading* voters to think of the candidates more positively (or negatively, as the case may be), but it may be that these types of advertisements prompt voters to consider the traits as more salient in their decision. As past works have shown (Matthes & Marquart 2015), the

focus in campaign advertising or other campaign appeals is increasingly less on persuasion and more on activation, prompting observers to consider some aspect of the candidate's background, platform, or, indeed, personality as more relevant to the voting decision. This consideration of the potential effects of campaign advertising making mention of personality traits seems to be understood by campaign practitioners; as an example, much of the negative advertising against Kerry run by the Bush campaign and its allies in 2004 was not necessarily intended to absolutely *convince* voters that John Kerry was an untrustworthy candidate or one who would change his positions for political reasons but instead to *reframe* the decision between Kerry and Bush as one of unknown and uncertain risk versus a known quantity.<sup>45</sup> This understanding is made even clearer when the Bush team discusses this depiction of Kerry and how it structured the decision versus Bush, as they also appeared to understand that persuasion would be difficult for those who may have been leaning toward Kerry due to a dislike of Bush. As Mark McKinnon states quite plainly,

With John Kerry we were going to argue 'unsteady' as in 'not consistent, politically.' Steady meant steady convictions or principles, which we knew people believed about the president. We wanted to articulate the idea that, even if you didn't like this guy you knew where he stood, you knew what he believed, you knew where he was headed (2006, 39-40)

These types of mentions, then, may be intended more to function as reminders or reinforcers of a general perception of the candidate rather than serving as isolated, independent reasons to vote for or against a particular candidate. Thus, while generally it does not appear that the presence of these ads does much to change perceptions of the candidates on those traits *directly*, they still may serve a purpose by helping to frame the choice in a particular way, reminding voters of those

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45 This distinction, of course, is tough to observe; the difference between convincing voters Kerry is untrustworthy and only suggesting it to the point where it is a consideration would not seem to be substantively different. However, the point here is more that the campaign understood that their abilities to dramatically change perceptions of Kerry in such a negative way were limited.

traits as a means of generating a more general appeal for the candidate, or reinforcing a larger campaign message (see, for example, Rudd 1986).

### ***Quantity Matters, but Not Always***

The reinforcing angle for the true effectiveness of these types of ads is further solidified by the differences between the two approaches taken here, where one regression uses only the *exposure* to ads (measured in diminishing values across the five days after a type of ad is aired) and the other uses that exposure multiplied by the number of ads in the field on the days where exposure is being measured (see the individual election chapters for a more detailed summary of this method). From a methodological standpoint, this approach was necessary due to the fact that for the exposure-only results any sustained period of advertising would lead to unobservable results due to the value of the exposure variable not changing (that is, the value of the exposure variable stays at its maximum value for the days in the middle of a sustained airing); including the number of ads helps introduce some more variation during these sustained ad campaigns. However, the quantity of ads being aired is also important in that mentions only being made in a small number of ads would logically be assumed to have a lesser effect than a more widespread and dedicated ad campaign.<sup>46</sup> If campaigns are dedicated more resources to make particular mentions (that is, airing more iterations of the same ad or airing more ads making the same mentions of particular traits), that can be assumed to be a major theme they are looking to pursue and thus it would be assumed that those mentions should be more likely to have substantive effects on perceptions of the candidates.

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<sup>46</sup> Increased quantities also suggest – though do not always mean – that the mentions are being made across more media markets. A single airing can only exist in a single media market, while dozens, hundreds, or thousands of ads are much more likely to be airing in different markets across the country. Given that the NAES respondents cannot be confirmed as having observed the ad on the day it aired, the greater quantity increases the potential overlap and thus would be assumed to have a greater effect.



However, in keeping with the general pattern observed above, including the quantity of ads does not overwhelmingly show an increased effectiveness when the number of mentions is more prevalent. Though oftentimes the differences between the two approaches did see some greater effectiveness and success for the more complex regressions, this pattern was not universal, and it is just as likely that the increased effectiveness is attributable to there being more observations than some independent effect due to quantity (that is, there does not appear to have been substantially greater effects for only high-quantity periods versus low- or mid-quantity periods). Introducing the count of ads helps overcome some methodological limitations and increase observations of perceptions across greater periods of sustained advertising, but it is not clear from the results presented previously that airing more ads making mention of a trait consistently leads to a stronger benefit for the candidate making the mentions. While indeed at times it appears quantity can have a quality all its own, teasing out the independent effect of the *number of ads* from the potential effect of just *sustaining mentions across days* is difficult to do with the current research. Future iterations of this work will require a means of determining when quantity matters as an independent aspect of the advertising strategy, if it ever does.

The same note about the nature of the dependent variable made generally also applies here – quantity may be important in some aspects of reinforcing messaging but not actually persuading voters to change their perceptions of the candidates. While the number of observable days increases under the regressions including the counts, the coefficients in these periods do not differ dramatically from the observable periods in either table (indeed, even in the overlapping periods, taking into account the number of ads being aired over the exposure periods often does not substantially change the coefficients, certainly never to an extent where a more substantive effect is found). Part of this limitation for the quantity component, of course, is the limitation of knowing whether or not the NAES respondents actually were cognizant of the ads being aired; as

footnote 2 above suggests, increased quantity raises the *probability* of a respondent being aware of a particular mention, but this is nowhere near a guarantee. Quantity may matter on its own, but the approach taken here limits the ability to measure it. Regardless, it does not appear that having a much more sustained presence as measured by number of mentions being aired dramatically changes the processes of changing perception as described here.

### ***Transition Times Typically See the Greatest Effect***

Though the sustained periods of advertising do not appear to often correspond with significant changes in how respondents viewed the presidential candidates' personal characteristics, the periods at the front and end of advertising pushes appear to be much more likely to correlate with statistically significant movement in these perceptions. Put simply, the handful of days that cover when advertisements begin to appear and the handful of days that cover when advertisements have ended are where the most movement tends to occur. While even these days are typically not substantive in terms of the coefficient values<sup>47</sup> these periods appear to be much more likely to have significant results on the whole compared to days that come in the middle of advertisement airings or as part of sustained campaigns of mentions. From a theoretical standpoint, this differentiation makes sense. Especially for a "new" mention in advertising, the running tally approach utilized here would expect that initial airings or mentions would be more effective in that it introduces new considerations about the candidates and, thus, new potentials for those considerations to become relevant or influential in the minds of observers. A novel appeal on the part of the campaigns, then, would be expected to be more influential; put simply,

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47 This is less true for the ending periods, where advertisements are stopping airing, where the coefficients are often quite large, if not dramatically so (in the tens or hundreds, in some cases). These values, though, are likely more a function of the declining exposure values or days – being included as part of the cross-sections, meaning that the ending period results should be taken with this methodological quirk in mind.

the difference between the effect of the first and second time a mention is made should be expected to be greater than the difference between the effect of the fiftieth and fifty-first mention. New mentions are a circumstance where new information and considerations are most plausible, meaning that the effectiveness should be heightened there. While the coefficients are not dramatically stronger in these cases, the fact that significant findings tend to occur most often during initial periods of advertising suggest that the running tally approach does accurately depict how observers internalize and utilize advertising that makes mention of candidate characteristics.

From a general advertising standpoint, this initial effect is also understandable due to the sheer novelty of the mention. While sustained periods of advertisements making particular mentions are likely covering multiple ads that all use similar language, it is also quite likely that for a number of these mentions the sustained ad periods observed are re-airings of the same ad across multiple days (that is, it is unlikely that if the campaigns are looking to promote a particular trait that they are making new ads every single day – there is likely some turnover and replacement, but not universally so). Advertising effectiveness may be helped by sustained repetition of messages (Schmidt & Eisend 2015), but in political advertising – specifically advertising that might change perceptions or persuade voters – it is not clear that a sustained message does much to move minds. Rather, the purpose of the sustained advertising from campaigns may be to reinforce or help voters remember particular messages (making ads more salient not in terms of persuasion but more framing, as has been discussed previously); the measures used here, then, would appear to suggest advertisements do not have an effect because the sustained periods are not intended to move those perceptions consistently over time (that is, it is not expected that a sustained ad campaign will *continue* to move perceptions over the length of the campaign) but rather initially move *and then solidify* those changed perceptions. Given the finding that significant effects tend to occur early on (indeed, right at the beginning of the

covered periods in most cases), this understanding of advertising strategy appears to be justified. Airing an ad once, then, might be a good way to change the way a voter thinks about the candidates; airing it a hundred times might be a good way to ensure that the changes that occurred early on take root.

This assumption of the nature of the effect is further solidified by the finding that these initial effects occur even if mentions have been made before. That is, say a candidate runs a number of ads in August making mention of his honesty – the opening days in August where the ads are present, then, is likely to see some statistically significant movement on the honesty balance. Say the candidate ends these ads in September but starts them up again (or makes mention of honesty in a different type of ad, the difference is likely not important) in October. The opening days in October *also are likely to see statistically significant movement*, suggesting that the fallow period in September began to see honesty lose its importance as a consideration for voters, with October re-prompting them to take this trait into account as a relevant perception. While further research is necessary to determine if this type of consideration-prompting effect is truly occurring, the general pattern of opening days being the most fertile for significant effects suggests that something like the effect described here is occurring. Introducing new mentions, even if they have been made at some point in the past, seems to be effective in a way that sustaining mentions are not.

### ***Negative Messages Have Greater Potential for Blowback***

Finally, one content-specific pattern that can be generalized from the three elections covered is that advertisements that make harsh, negative mentions of the opposing candidate do appear to run the risk of blowback for the candidate running the ads. Though most prominent in 2008, examples of this pattern exist across all three elections (though it should be noted that, like

all of the patterns described here, this is not universal for all traits or mention pairings across the three elections). In 2008, for example, John McCain making negative mentions of Iraq appears to have lessened perceptions that he was ready to be president, while for Barack Obama also making negative mentions of Iraq corresponded to diminished perceptions of the Democratic candidate as patriotic. While these effects may be attributable to specific considerations inherent to the campaigns (that is, for McCain being negative on Iraq may have just reminded voters of the similarity between his stances on war and the incumbent's positions), there does appear to be some potential for blowback if the attacks are seen as unfair or unwarranted (for example, Obama's attacks on Iraq might seem unwarranted given McCain's status as a military figure; the finding that McCain tended to do worse when using experience to characterize Obama as too young versus characterizing himself as not too old is a similar consideration). This potential seems to exist even when the likely meaning of the mention itself is positive, as the change mentions for Obama suggest. Though for Obama in 2008 mentions of "change" were likely intended to be positive, there were a number of ads that the Wisconsin researchers coded as attacking or negative that included these mentions; when this occurred, Obama tended to suffer – particularly on whether or not respondents viewed him as sharing his values. For McCain, a similar result occurred when the dependent variable was trustworthy. These messages would appear to be less vulnerable to electorally-specific factors and instead suggest something critically important for campaigning that touches on personal characteristics: these mentions, if intended to make a negative point, can just as easily harm the candidate running the ad as the candidate who is being attacked. This result, though not quite as direct or substantive, fits in with previous research on the demobilizing or derogatory effect of negative campaign advertising more generally; when personal characteristics are being discussed, positive messaging appears to be less risky (though, again, not substantially more beneficial in terms of moving perceptions).

### ***Changing Perceptions (and Other Effects) is a Process, Not an Outcome***

Perhaps the largest contribution being made by the preceding research is a reconceptualization of how campaign effects can and should be understood. Typical research that has focused on measuring campaign effects via a single, post-election question that allows respondents to provide their own rationales for why they made the voting decision that they did can provide a clear understanding of what voters remember or found salient about the campaign, but it overlooks many of the informational sources and content that those respondents were exposed to over the (increasingly long) length of the presidential election season. Given the assumptions of the running tally approach discussed above, it is highly likely that most of the influential pieces of information are not remembered or that rather than there being a single, determinant piece of information that sways vote choice (barring some major campaign scandal) the process by which campaigns affect voter perceptions and by extension vote choice is a more drawn-out process than current research attempts to measure. Understanding that *contemporary* information affects *contemporary* perceptions is an important first step in developing a fuller, more direct understanding of how exactly campaigns shape the eventual election outcome. This process-based understanding could (and likely should) connect with marketing research more generally; though past research has already explored this area (see, for example, Newman 1994), more current research that better reflects the best practices of both market and political advertising can be a useful component of a renewed campaign effects research project. Though the effects presented and discussed above do not present a clear, singular story, there are still effects to be found. More needs to be done to better understand both how these effects are generated by political advertising as well as better understand the larger effects of advertising on voter behavior.

## CHAPTER 8 – DISCUSSION

While the preceding chapters have taken a first look at the potential effects of television advertising on altering perceptions of the major-party candidates running for president, a number of limitations exist in the current work that will require attention in future iterations of this – and related – research.

One major limitation of the current work is its singular focus on television advertising as the only source of influence on perceptions of traits possessed by the major party candidates. While the theory presented here is focused on examining just these effects, the idea that these sources of campaign messaging are the only paths by which candidates can change the assessments of themselves and/or their opponents is implausible – most, if not all, of the major perception changes remembered from past elections (and, indeed, even the elections studied here) have tended to come in more informal or less-scripted venues,<sup>48</sup> meaning that television advertising may be much more limited in its ability to actually be an independent shaper of perceptions of candidates. However, the fact that “outside of candidate performance and unforeseen events, ad campaigns are perhaps the most critical component of modern presidential campaigns...[with] by far the single biggest campaign expenditure” (Katz 2013, 166) being

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48 Gore’s sighing at the first debate in 2000, Kerry’s bad answer to the Iraq funding question in 2004, and perhaps even McCain’s odd decision to act disrespectfully to Obama in the second debate (refusing to make eye contact with him, referring to him as “that one”, etc.) are all examples; while these events can and sometimes are included in advertising that may be more of a reinforcing rather than instigating effect for changes in perceptions and assessments.

spending on television ads, the idea that this source of messaging is not at least a component of the shaping of perceptions and assessments seems unjustified (and will likely continue to be important, even as online advertising continues to grow). The research here does not propose that television advertising is the only way that campaigns can change voters' views of the candidates as people; rather, it is an important – and comparatively much more prominent – part of the overall strategy. Understanding how and to what extent these ads can shape perceptions, then, remains an important research project, even if the entirety of campaign messaging is not included.

This limited nature, however, is also potentially problematic from a methodological and/or theoretical angle due to limitations inherent to the datasets utilized in this particular project. An issue with the traits utilized as the dependent variable (from the NAES datasets) may be that they are overlapping too much with the mentions utilized as the independent variables (the Wisconsin datasets). While this overlap is important as a direct test of the linkage between campaign advertising and voter perceptions, it may be complicating the overall ability to describe the extent to which these messages from the candidates are independently affecting the ways in which voters view those running for president. Put simply, the fact that many of the NAES trait questions are direct replications of the traits mentioned in the Wisconsin data may be meaning that voters are more *remembering* the mentions than actually being *affected* by them, meaning that any effects observed may be stemming from voters being reminded of the ad in the process of measuring the dependent variable, rather than the ad changing perceptions on its own.

While this possibility is concerning, the usage of these datasets makes this overlap both unavoidable and, more importantly, beneficial to the research project being pursued here. While having trait questions that overlap significantly (if not entirely) with the language of the campaign advertisements does complicate the measuring and understanding of the true independent effect of advertising (that is, discerning persuasion and changing opinion versus simply recall), it is



unclear how this problem can be avoided given that the language of politics lends itself to more direct and understandable messages in the first place (Bischof & Senninger 2018). Put differently, it is hard to criticize the NAES for including words like “honest” or “trustworthy” given that it is unclear what words, if any, candidates would tend to use in their advertisements to make the claim that those traits applied to them. While a candidate *could* make an appeal touting his “veracity” on the issues or reassuring the voters that they are “unimpeachable”, the appeals tend to be more direct and easily understood. While politicians can certainly find themselves dipping into more cerebral and verbose appeals on the campaign trail, in campaign commercials the more simplistic and straightforward message works best. Furthermore, the consistency that does tend to occur in the NAES trait sets is less influenced by the campaign messages but rather the general tendency for particular traits to *always* be important in a campaign. While certain years may lend themselves to greater attention for particular traits (honesty in 2000 and 2004 versus 2008, strong leadership in 2004, experience in 2004 and 2008, for example), that is not to say that these traits are ever *unimportant*. While voters may have been more concerned with domestic issues in 2008 and foreign affairs in 2004, they still cared about the president’s honesty, even if it was not as big a theme as in the 2000 election. Thus, some overlap is always going to happen because campaigns are highly likely to touch on certain evergreen traits, the only change from year to year being the level of mentioning.

As noted, this overlap is less of an issue given that that connection between campaign advertisement and trait assessment is the heart of the current research project. If an influence from advertisements is to be found, one would assume that it would be most likely found in the most direct cases: if the campaigns mention X, do perceptions of the candidates on X change? If so, how? While the nature of that influence may simply be prompting voters to remember that the campaigns talked about a particular trait, remember that the hypotheses here suggest *differential*

and *changing* effects. Candidates are very rarely talking about the same thing at the same time (as will be discussed in more detail in the individual chapters), so contemporaneous mentions from the candidates are more often than not one-sided; what is being measured here, then, is whether or not those mentions change perceptions in the moment. The distinction between persuasion and recall, then, is less of a concern given that what is being measured is not voters' perceptions based on ads months prior, but rather voters' perceptions based on at most 14 days prior. Furthermore, the effect that is being measured is how advertisements change perceptions over a particular period, so the more direct the overlap the more likely it is that some effect should be found. Thus, while the NAES traits are somewhat tailored to meet each election, this should not represent a major methodological concern. Given that the current project is looking solely to determine if *any* effect exists, then the direct overlaps represent the most effective test; if no effect exists even when the wordings are the exact same, then that represents a clear challenge to the idea that what candidates talk about can influence how voters see them.

Finally, the difference between recall effects stemming from the prompting in the NAES and independent effects stemming solely from the ads is likely a distinction without a difference. Given the importance of the running tally conceptualization, recall is *critical* to the process being described here. If voters do not recall the ads, then they can have no effect; being reminded of an ad through the NAES instrument, then, is a way for voters to access their running tally rather than an external prompting that warrants concern.<sup>49</sup> Given that the NAES questions do not mention advertising at all in their introductions to the trait questions, these represent fairly direct tests of the running tally approach (as mentioning the trait should lead to voters recalling the ad and their

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<sup>49</sup> This, of course, assumes voters have seen the advertisements; as discussed previously, the larger issue here is not so much the NAES inordinately prompting voters to reassess candidates on particular traits but rather separating out the effect of contemporaneous advertising from other sources of campaign messaging that may be mentioning the traits and thus are also activated through the NAES questioning.

related perceptions of the candidates). Furthermore, the relatively constrained timeframe in which effects are measured minimizes the large-scale possibilities for the NAES to overly influence voter perceptions and assessments; reminding respondents taking the survey in October of a controversial advertisement in June may be complicating the picture, but reminding respondents of an ad airing at most 14 days prior is less worrisome. This prompting may be leading to some overstating in results (as ad effectiveness may be dropping off earlier than 14 days), but the lack of consistently higher effects in the biweekly compared to the 5- and 7-day groupings in the prior results suggests that this is not a major issue.

Generally, the work presented here is limited in its ability to assign causal responsibility to the television advertising itself. For a number of methodological reasons, the conclusions here can only be summarized as correlational rather than causal; while limiting, the correlational nature of the analyses discussed here should not be understood as totally invalidating the findings presented above. The inconsistent nature of the significant findings does suggest that fluctuations exist in perceptions of the candidates that are unrelated to television advertising, but the fairly consistent findings that significant effects tend to be strongest at periods of transition – that is, when ad campaigns ramp up and taper off – does suggest that advertising does have some relationship with changes in perceptions of candidate traits. Whether or not these advertising effects are *driving* the changes in perception, however, remains an open question. One possibility is that the directional arrow is the opposite, that changes in perception are shaping advertising decisions. However, if this is true, that does not necessarily mean that the findings here are any less valid or *that the theory presented here is also not true*. Because of the limitations inherent in the method used here – that is, that changes in perception on traits before ads are fielded are only minimally included in the analyses – what is happening with trait perceptions while ads are not running cannot be included as part of the analyses. However, if ads are fielded in response to

changing numbers on trait perceptions (or for a related reason), any effects in the advertising candidate's favor are still suggestive of effects stemming from the advertisement itself. That is, say that a candidate's campaign finds that voters are starting to view the candidate as not particularly trustworthy; in response, the campaign begins fielding ads touching on trustworthiness, honesty, or something related to that trait. Even though the initial advertising is prompted by the changing trait perceptions, the analysis here is only concerned with what happens after the mentions are made. While the causal arrow may operate (and likely often does, in reality) in this direction, where a change in perception leads to an increase in ads, it is whether or not those ads are successful in changing the direction and nature of perception that is important here.

This possibility, though not particularly problematic for the theory or results presented here, does touch on a second limitation of the presented analysis. Though more a matter of theoretical validity and complexity than a methodological limitation, the approach taken here treats each advertising mention as an isolated portion of the overall campaign strategy as well as treats the campaign timeline as uniform from beginning to end. This is not particularly problematic in terms of the validity of the findings themselves (as noted multiple times in the individual election chapters, one possibility for diminished findings in the fall for many of the combinations is diminishing effects of advertising and/or ossification of the perceptions of the candidates), but does call into question a number of the assumptions being made as part of the methodological approach used here. By assuming that the effects would be the same throughout, important differences between early-, mid-, and late-stage campaign effects are lost. While certain strategies and mentions are only developed for particular portions of the campaign (see, for example, McCain's "experience" mentions in the final weeks of the 2008 contest), a number of themes are often developed before the general campaign begins and are tweaked or updated

over the course of the campaign (for example, the Gore theme of being a “fighter” in 2000 spun out of the primaries, while the Bush theme of being a “steady” leader was intended to be tweaked depending on who the Democratic nominee ended up being). These changes in context, emphasis, and even content (for example, if the messaging becomes increasingly more negative or positive over the course of the campaign) would suggest that the nature of the potential advertising effects are not consistent over the course of the campaign, even though the mention itself is unchanged.<sup>50</sup> This assumption becomes especially theoretically problematic given that the mentions for each candidate are taken in isolation, both within the overall candidate’s strategy and across the two major candidate’s strategic space.

The former concern recognizes that candidate strategy is multifaceted, with mentions possibly intended to function on their own but more often intended to be a part of an overall whole. Oftentimes, related mentions appear at the same time and frequency as each other, suggesting that they are likely being included in the same ad rather than airing separately (for example, McCain’s mentioning of “Iraq” and “Surge” were nearly identical over the course of the 2008 campaign, not particularly surprising given the prominence of the Bush administration’s policy of increasing troops in McCain’s messaging that the war in Iraq was improving). This creates a difficulty in terms of attributing responsibility to any observed changes in perception of candidate traits corresponding to the airings of these ads – if multiple mentions are being included

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50 A related issue mentioned multiple times in the individual chapters stems from the nature of the Wisconsin dataset coding themselves – the “mentioning” of a term is only a binary yes/no question noting whether or not the specific word or a close relation was used; this notation separates the mention from context, a thorny issue when looking to determine the effects of those mentions on perceptions of candidates. While the connotative meaning of the word (positive/negative) is generally understood on its own (“failure”, for example, is likely not meant to be a compliment in the 2004 ads) and this context can be somewhat derived from taking into account the overall tone of the ad (as in 2008), taking the mentions straight and not in context does limit the measurement of direct relationships stemming from those mentions as campaign appeals.

in the same ad or multiple mentions are prevalent in campaign advertisements over the same time period, then which mentions are having effects on which perceptions is difficult to ascertain. This is especially difficult for major campaign themes that may become less noticeable on the part of voters over time – as new mentions and messaging become part of the individual candidate’s strategies, how preexisting (but still airing) mentions get noticed or remembered becomes an important question. A general finding from the regressions conducted here is that sustained messaging (where little or no breaks occur over the course of months of the campaign) tends to lose effectiveness, with the sustained periods seeing little effective change in perceptions; understanding if this is because of a diminished effectiveness from repetition or if this is because of a diminished effectiveness due to the presence of novel messaging approaches (that is, new mentions airing concurrently that garner more attention through novelty more than anything else) is an important question for future research. As it stands, taking each mention from the candidates in isolation can help determine if some effects from advertisement do exist, but the atomized nature of these analyses are limited in fully understanding how messaging effects exist given the overall strategy of the candidates.

The true nature of the effects of these mentions is also obscured given that the approach used here does not take into account countering and competing messages from the other side. This can be especially problematic when, as often happens, the two major party candidates are competing for the same ground or using the same mentions at the same time (“Change” for both the Obama and McCain campaigns in 2008, for example). Furthermore, understanding how individual mentions influence perceptions is limited if the possible countervailing effects of mentions from the other side are not accounted for; as an example, the effect of Kerry attempting to portray himself as a strong leader in 2004 is likely being influenced by the presence of ads either from or in support of the Bush campaign describing him as a flip-flopper, liar, and possible

traitor. In terms of the analyses presented here, this may not be an issue (in fact, it might help account for the lack of findings in some cases, though this is a fairly large assumption); however, in terms of understanding the true nature of advertising effects, the individualized mentions and single-candidate approach to analysis leaves much unclear. While it could be assumed that the individualized approaches undertaken here take the campaign landscape as is (that is, including all the competing and countervailing messages being presented), that is a fairly broad assumption. Future research will need to work to include mentions simultaneously in order to better understand what types of mentions tend to be effective, whether competing messages create different possibilities for effectiveness, and how these dynamics operate as the campaign gets more complex and proceeds to its election day conclusion.

The individualized analyses offered here also may be masking a logical possibility of competing messaging – while the individual regressions may be demonstrating some contemporary effect, what may be occurring is simply a return to baseline perceptions of the candidates. Put differently, while the advertising studied here may have an effect on changing perceptions, that “effect” may not be doing much to actively benefit the candidates discussed. In some ways, this interacts with the initial issue discussed above; if ads are fielded in response to the other candidate’s attacks or declining perceptions in some area, then the ads that are included in these regressions may only be serving to put the candidates at some pre-advertising baseline of perception. In this regard, campaign advertising may be highly consistent with the extant literature on campaign events, which find that while fluctuations in polling occur around campaign events, these fluctuations tend to settle down into a fairly consistent baseline in the medium- to long-term (Erikson and Wlezian 2012). Something similar may be occurring with advertising, where for the major party candidates a baseline of perceptions exists and the “changes” or “effects” that are seen here are not attributable to the ads themselves but rather just

the baseline reasserting itself. This may be especially applicable when ads are aired in response to attacks from the opposing candidate – the initial “event” of the attacks changes perceptions, but those perceptions quickly return to normal. There are good reasons, however, to believe that perceptions of candidates (and advertising making mention of candidate traits) do not work the same way as campaign events.

First, the baseline perceptions concept would seem to be an issue if it consistently and substantively exists for the candidates running for president; however, this is likely not the case. As research on political scandal suggests (Funk 1996), weathering scandal is not so much a matter of political familiarity or longevity but rather hinges more on whether the scandal fits with pre-existing conceptions of the political figures themselves. Baseline perceptions, then, might not function like campaign events, where fluctuations occur around events or messaging and then return to normal; rather, it may be more likely that baseline perceptions differ in their ability to be changed at all depending on how well known the political figures are. The presence of fluctuations, then, in perceptions of the candidates’ traits are likely more indicative of actual changes in perceptions rather than short-term aberrations that quickly return to some long-standing baseline of perception.

Second, findings that an already existing reputation helps protect a candidate against some scandals are important in suggesting that baseline perceptions are unimportant given that it appears that most presidential candidates are *actually not that well known to most voters!* While Al Gore in 2000 and George W. Bush in 2004 are clear outliers in terms of familiarity regarding the office of the (vice) presidency, the Republican challenger in 2000, the Democratic challenger in 2004, and both candidates in 2008 appear to have been relative strangers to the electorate, particularly in terms of personal characteristics. As demonstrated by the campaign debriefings for 2004 and 2008 especially, there appears to be an understanding on the part of the campaigns that



they needed to work to define their candidate in personal terms to the American people (the Kerry and Bush campaigns in 2004 are particularly clear on this in regards to Kerry – the Bush team often states explicitly that their initial goal was to define Kerry as soon as possible because the average voter did not know much about him). When one of the most well-known facts about a candidate is that “he’s old” (Mottola 2009, 113), it is highly unlikely that a strong pre-existing baseline exists on such aspects of personality as strong leadership or honesty. For most of the candidates listed here, messaging from the campaigns appears to be understood as a critical way to introduce the candidate and his personality to the voters.

Finally, the potential for a regression to the baseline – if it does occur in perceptions of traits – appears to not be a guaranteed occurrence in the absence of action on the part of the opposing campaign. While campaign events operate in much the same way (it would be unlikely that a convention bump would dissipate, for example, if the opposing campaign just ceased operations), advertising would appear to be especially susceptible to this requirement; attacks that go unopposed are unlikely to dissipate in effectiveness, and if a baseline does exist (or is created over the course of the campaign), the unopposed attacks may create a new baseline altogether – the theorization of this work in the first place. A clear example of this exists in the 2004 election after the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads begin airing. As multiple campaign officials and observers suggest, Kerry’s hesitancy in responding to the ads (while strategically justified as a means to not validate the claims made by the group by dignifying them with a response) allowed the perceptions suggested by them to circulate easily among voters. Without a response from Kerry, it appears as though the “baseline” perceptions that may have existed of him as a military leader and patriot did not (or *could not*) reassert itself; without a response from the campaign, the change in perceptions effected by the Swift Boat ads were allowed to solidify. While the effectiveness of campaign events are limited due to the underlying baseline shaped by more

objective fundamentals of the political environment that reassert themselves as time goes on, the effectiveness of advertisements likely operates differently due to the underlying “baseline” being less stable and itself shaped by subjective perceptions in the first place. While the effects seen here may simply be countervailing or reassertion of a pre-existing balance of perceptions, the question at hand here is whether or not advertising has effects on perceptions in the first place. There is good reason to believe that it does, though its true nature requires further research.

While there may not be “baseline” perceptions that present issues of measuring the effect of advertising, the nature of the dependent variable in this case may be presenting separate issues hindering effective measurement of any influence stemming from campaign mentions of personal characteristics. Stated simply, there just might not be substantive amounts of variation in the trait measurement questions asked in the NAES batteries to suggest any real effect correlating with campaign advertising. Though not reported in the tables above due to practicality concerns (rather, summarizing effects by month), the coefficients in the regression analyses conducted in the previous chapters tended to be quite small in value – very rarely were values above 1 observed, and these tended to be in the very early or late stages of advertising campaigns (that is, as ads making mention of a particular trait were entering into or falling out of broadcast).<sup>51</sup> Thus, while the significant results observed over the course of this work suggest that some relative movement is occurring at times when advertising is present, the substantive values of the coefficients suggest that that relative movement is marginal at best (recall that the range of possible values was -4 to +4 in 2000 and -10 to +10 in 2004 and 2008). While the values in the

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<sup>51</sup> These numbers, it should be noted, are also measuring relative advantages in perceptions (based on different scales across elections) rather than a change in approval, support, or vote intention. Future research should focus on translating these changes in perception into more concrete measures of impact on support for the candidates (especially as 2016 and 2020 show that even unpopular candidates or candidates perceived as lacking in important traits can still garner significant vote totals).

first election studied are suggestive of a greater impact by dint of a more constrained range of possible values, the greater range in the other two suggest that even when movement was occurring the qualitative nature of that movement was not particularly dramatic. One major limitation, then, is that over the course of the three campaigns and the multitude of traits studied, *opinions did not dramatically change over the course of the campaign*. From a theoretical standpoint, this is to be expected: if the running tally approach framing this research is correct, then the major fluctuations in opinion should occur early on in the campaign with opinion becoming more stable over time (barring any massive events that would disrupt previously held beliefs and attitudes about the people being assessed). Given that the NAES sampling pools are asked their opinions about the major party candidates during the primary season, the timeframes utilized here may be missing the points at which large amounts of learning and change in opinion are occurring (that is, given that the eventual major party nominees must compete in the primaries, the early stages of the running tally have already occurred by the time the nomination is locked up). While some variation does inevitably occur over the course of the campaign, that variation tends to be fairly minimal, especially when taken in five-, seven-, or 14-day intervals, as is done here. While campaign events often can and did impinge on candidate personality, no major scandals or controversies occurred in the three elections studied here that would dramatically upset the already-occurring process of respondent learning and assessment.<sup>52</sup> Thus, while the general public may not have known much about the candidates (and thus were more susceptible to influence from advertising introducing them as people), the respondents to the

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52 And if such an event were to occur, it is equally likely that the trait in question would become a new question in the ANES battery rather than an already occurring one – see, for example, the late addition of “Erratic” for McCain in 2008, likely prompted more by the Obama campaign beginning to use that in its messaging in response to McCain’s, well, erratic behavior in October (suspending then unsuspending his campaign, traveling to Washington to make a major deal on economic legislation, canceling then un-canceling his debate appearance).

NAES surveys may have already had some understanding of the candidates by the time the general election matchup was solidified. Whether because of this pre-existing familiarity or a general tendency to not dramatically change opinions on the trait questions absent some major reason for upheaval, a limiting factor in these analyses is the relative lack of variation in the dependent variables used. While a different approach (such as a panel study, tracing perceptions of the same people over the entirety of the campaign) could potentially lead to clearer understandings of the exact magnitude of change possible, the data unfortunately do not exist to test these elections. Future research can – and should – utilize this more longitudinal approach, though this comes with a number of concerns as well.<sup>53</sup>

This lack of variation is likely partially explained by the lack of major controls utilized here, most prominently the lack of controls on partisanship. Given the increasing link between partisan polarization and personal affect, particularly for partisan leaders of the opposite side (Kingzette 2021), not taking partisanship into account may be an explanation for the relative paucity of variation occurring in the dependent variables used here. However, there are a number of reasons to believe that controlling for partisanship would not dramatically change the observed results here. First, while the idea of “partisan” traits (Hayes 2005) suggests that candidates can be successful in swaying partisans of the opposite side by making strong attempts to portray themselves in particular ways (Democrats as strong on security issues, Republicans as caring and concerned with disadvantaged groups, for example), it is not clear that this cross-party appeal

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<sup>53</sup> While it isn’t important to fully list these here, foremost among them is the potential for a panel study to introduce priming effects that will overstate the effects of advertising – the benefit of the Lau & Redlawsk (2006) approach, in particular, is its external validity, presenting subjects with a fairly realistic depiction of the information environment existing in a presidential campaign. Specifically asking the same people questions about television advertising over time is likely going to make them more cognizant of these ads, more likely to pay attention to them, and thus not wholly accurate representations of the average voter. While not the only concern with a panel approach to this research question, it is a significant one.

would significantly affect perceptions of the candidates' traits across the timeframes used. Furthermore, taking partisanship into account would not erase the larger issue of pre-existing conceptualizations described above (which is more a function of the NAES schedule than any methodological choices made here). One possibility would be to just analyze the Independents in each dataset, though this would likely be limiting given the relatively small number of observations of Independents across each day in the dataset (just as an illustration, Independents are 28.91% of the observations in 2000, 26.99% of the observations in 2004, and 29.83% of the 2008 observations). While in the aggregate thousands of Independents are in the datasets, across individual days (or the cross-sectional groupings used here) only small numbers would be observable, presenting other statistical limitations and concerns. Including Independents only would also not remedy (and would likely be more harmed by) the running tally point discussed above, as Independents would be most likely to be taking in information about *both* primaries rather than their own parties' (though this is less of an issue in 2000 and 2004 given the presence of a sitting vice-president and president on the ticket, respectively).

However, the largest argument against concern with a lack of partisan control is that there does not generally appear to be strong differences across the parties when it comes to rating the major party candidates on the traits included in these analyses. As one example, take Table 8.1 below, describing the percentage of respondents who gave either of the two most positive responses to the trait questions in 2000 for Bush and Gore.

Table 8.0.1 - % Answering "Yes" (2000 NAES)

	<b>Bush</b>	<b>Gore</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Cares</b>	81.40%	82.92%	-1.52%
<b>Honest</b>	88.15%	81.57%	6.58%
<b>Inspiring</b>	81.29%	76.79%	4.50%
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	90.12%	93.65%	-3.53%
<b>Hypocritical</b>	74.14%	78.87%	-4.73%
<b>Trustworthy</b>	86.59%	83.71%	2.88%
<b>Leadership</b>	89.05%	86.38%	2.67%

Given that the percentages in each cell far outweigh the partisan breakdowns for Republicans or Democrats, it can be assumed that the partisan differences in these ratings are minimal at best. In all cases, over a majority (and, in most cases, more than three-quarters) of the respondents rate the candidates highly on these individual traits. While partisan differences may exist, there does not appear to be the level of polarization in trait perceptions (in 2000, at least) to suggest that partisan balancing is contributing to the lack of results (that is, there does not appear to be strong divisions in partisan assessments that would cancel each other out). This, however, may be attributable to the more constrained and qualitative scale for 2000 – the 10-point scales create more possibilities for differentiation and initial comparisons do suggest a greater amount of polarization in 2004 and 2008 (particularly in 2004). Further research should include some consideration of partisanship, though in the current case it does not appear as though the benefits would outweigh the statistical costs in controlling for partisanship.

One other different approach that should be considered is looking at the effects more longitudinally than conducted here; while the short-, medium-, and long-term groupings do help shed some light on the sustained effect of advertising in a contemporary sense, one possibility is that the effect of advertising is more cumulative or long-term than is assumed or measured here.

Especially given the possibility of advertising and/or other campaign events creating altered baselines for candidate traits (as discussed above), assuming the effect is the same across the campaign *as well as assuming that the effects are always independent and contemporaneous* is likely flawed. Given that a number of mentions were parts of massively sustained campaigns extending over months of the campaign, an approach that attempts to determine possible cumulative or cascading effects is warranted. While the results here suggest that sustained advertising has limited effectiveness in the moment, that may be more a function of the chosen methodology than a true reflection of how advertising affects perceptions of the candidates. As the initial discussion of this research project notes, advertising must be assumed to work in some way, otherwise campaigns would not dedicate the amounts of resources that they do to it; relatedly, sustained advertising must be assumed to work, otherwise campaigns would have opted for a different approach. The effects, then, might not be in the moment but rather intended to operate in a reinforcing or cumulative way over the course of the campaign. A more extended or complex time-series approach that looks to determine the effects of advertising at one point on other points in the campaign would appear warranted.

Finally, it should be recognized that television advertising is just one component of the overall campaign media environment, a component that is increasingly losing its share to other, newer forms of technology. The assumption here that television advertising is ubiquitous enough that NAES respondents are assumed to at least be familiar with the themes of the campaign even though they may not have seen the television ads likely is less safe in more modern campaigns; though major campaign themes are still likely quite prominent across media venues, more targeted advertising is complicating the field and ensuring that specific audiences are getting specific messages, rather than the more general forms of advertising and messaging contained in the elections studied here. Even in 2004 and 2008 (Wiese & Gronbeck 2005, Dunn 2009), online

advertising was starting to become quite useful and important to campaigns, meaning that the television messaging may only be one part of the larger campaign message rather than highly reflective of the basic themes at the heart of the candidates' appeals. The elections studied here still appear to be highly televisual in nature; the time since the 2008 campaign has seen the advertising landscape become more complex and variegated as venues for campaign appeals have proliferated. That said, it should also be noted that even in these past elections the television advertising was still only part of the whole. Television news, radio ads, mailers, and any number of other vectors for information about the candidates are not covered in this study, which is a key limitation. While it can be assumed that the television messaging echoed the larger themes being presented by the campaigns' depiction of the candidates' personalities, these were not the only sources of information about these aspects of the men seeking the presidency. Future research should also look to take a more comprehensive approach to candidate messaging; while the visual nature of television would be assumed to work best in depicting aspects such as personal characteristics (an assumption that applies equally to online video), other sources may be just as competent on some traits and perhaps better on others. The totality of campaign advertising should be included in future iterations of this research in order to better understand when, where, and how campaign advertising can influence voters' perceptions of who the candidates are and what they are like.



## APPENDIX I – 2000 ELECTION RESULTS BY MONTH

The tables discussed below will describe the trait effects using monthly breakdowns – this will allow for a more general discussion towards the end of the chapter about the effect of sustained ad campaigns generally and the possibility for greater or lesser effects as the campaign moves closer to Election Day more specifically. Given the finding of greater effects towards the end of campaigns due to lack of time to dissipate (Erikson & Wlezien 2012), this monthly approach will allow for some greater insight about when campaigns potentially have their greatest effects. For each table, the values for each month are given as percentages – first the percent of days (more specifically, starting days for the five-, seven-, and fourteen-day cross-sections) where significant effects were found and second the percent of those significant days where the regression coefficient was in the hypothesized direction (positive for Bush, negative for Gore). This approach was utilized in order to account for the variation in the number of days in which there were ads across the months and the combinations as well as to help better depict the true nature of the effects (as just giving the number of days for significant/correct effects would be confusing without also noting the number of possible days where there could have been effects in the first place).

## *Results – Bush*

***Table AI.0.1 - Bold (Bush) - Inspiring***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-00</b>	25.00	33.33	12.50	0.00	37.50	11.11
<b>Aug-00</b>	15.79	66.67	19.05	75.00	40.00	70.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	25.00	50.00	33.33	50.00	34.62	55.56
<b>Oct-00</b>	9.09	0.00	9.09	0.00	9.09	0.00

***Table AI.0.2 - Bold (Bush) - Inspiring (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-00</b>	7.14	0.00	6.25	0.00	30.43	0.00
<b>Aug-00</b>	7.14	100.00	6.25	100.00	4.35	0.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	7.14	100.00	20.00	100.00	22.73	100.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

This first set of pairings demonstrates both the differences between testing only exposure and exposure combined with numbers of ads as well as the limited effects of advertising overall. For Bush, mentioning his “bold” character had an inconsistent effect on helping respondents view him as inspiring relative to Gore. In July, neither approach generated much of a consistent effect, and even when significant effects were found that did benefit Bush those effects were short-lived (the percent correct for the five-day cross-section is greater than the other two, suggesting that these effects for Bush tended to dissipate quickly – when the number of ads is included as part of the independent variable, the overall effect diminishes and is never in Bush’s favor). However, both patterns are reversed in August and September, where a slight uptick is found in terms of both percent significant and correct as the cross-sections gain days and for the logged exposure

times number variables Bush is consistently benefitting from these mentions (though it should be noted that the overall percent significant drops noticeably across the two tables). In October, either no benefit or no effect at all is found for Bush – Bush only ran six “bold” ads in October, which makes this decline in effectiveness more understandable.

**Table AI.0.3 - Caring/Compassionate (Bush) - Cares**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
May-00 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jun-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.4 - Caring/Compassionate (Bush) - Cares (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Despite one of the centerpieces of Bush’s campaign being his branding himself as a “compassionate conservative”, there is only a single ad included in the Wisconsin dataset where Bush mentions the traits of being either caring or compassionate. This ad aired on June 11<sup>th</sup>, meaning that the two-week cross-sections at the very end of May catch it, but this single ad (unsurprisingly) has no effect on respondents’ perceptions of the two candidates when it comes to rating the extent to which Bush or Gore care about people like them.

The disconnect between the perceived centrality of “compassionate conservative” to the Bush campaign and its noted absence in the television advertised measured by the Wisconsin dataset demonstrates a limitation in just relying on television advertising that will be elaborated on in later chapters. For now, though, it should be noted that in the diverse media environment in which modern campaigns are run, particular media will be better suited for particular messages; one possibility here is that Bush’s stressing of compassion or being caring were more prominent in speeches made by him and others rather than television advertising (where the use of such a term of art may have been less viable). This likelihood is bolstered by the fact that these terms do not appear even in Bush’s *primary* television advertising, where such a phrase would have been important in helping Bush distinguish himself from his opponents (Bartels 1980). Television advertising will tend to be better suited to particular types of messaging, which may not always reflect the totality of the candidates’ appeals, as illustrated plainly here.

**Table AI.0.5 - Committed (Bush) - Trustworthy**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-00</b>	0.00	0.00	20.00	100.00	10.53	100.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	9.09	0.00

**Table AI.0.6 - Committed (Bush) - Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-00 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Sep-00	4.76	0.00	4.35	0.00	16.67	0.00

Describing himself as committed similarly has very little effect for Bush, at least in terms of highlighting his trustworthiness in the minds of respondents. While the seven- and fourteen-day cross-sections (exposure only) perform well in August in terms of being correct, these are only two days in each grouping, and these effects are not found in the overall log regressions due to statistical constraints: Bush only ran these ads on one day in August, running 10 on August 24<sup>th</sup>. This creates a situation where the overall log regressions have no values in that month, as the 10 ads are being multiplied by 0 (exposure only begins the day after ads run) and the days following those 10 ads are also being multiplied by 0 (as no ads ran in the following five days after August 24<sup>th</sup>). A tradeoff thus occurs, where the overall log allows for better analysis during sustained periods while losing analysis in intermittent or individual ad days.

These pairings also suffer due to a feature of the NAES instrument itself. While Bush did run ads mentioning “committed” outside of August and September, the timing of the questions regarding the candidates’ trustworthiness prevents analysis of possible effects from those ads. The trustworthy question was only included from February 7<sup>th</sup> to April 3<sup>rd</sup> and then again from August 25<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup>, meaning that the 7528 ads Bush ran in June and July mentioning “committed” were not included as part of this analysis (especially disheartening considering this was the most common positive mention Bush made).

**Table AI.0.7 – Common Sense Leader (Bush) – Leadership**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-00	12.50	100.00	20.00	50.00	11.76	50.00
Sep-00	0.00	0.00	25.00	100.00	19.23	80.00
Oct-00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00

**Table AI.0.8 – Common Sense Leader (Bush) – Leadership (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-00	7.14	100.00	6.25	100.00	4.35	100.00
Sep-00	7.14	100.00	20.00	100.00	27.27	100.00
Oct-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Despite common sense leader being one of Bush's most frequent mentions in his campaign advertising (7759 mentions, second only to committed), most of these mentions either were unable to be analyzed or did not tend to significantly affect the perception respondents had of Bush's leadership skills. As the initial exposure table shows and the overall log exposure table reinforces, Bush did generally well when it came to significant effects working in his favor in August and September (particularly when looking at exposure multiplied by ad numbers, where the significant effect was always in the correct direction). However, these significant effects were generally few and far between, at best occurring just over a quarter of the time but often less than 10% of the time. The months also present some contradictory patterns in terms of sustainability – August has the effect diminishing as the cross-sections get longer, while September sees the opposite (at least in the second table – when just exposure is measured the percent significant declines slightly). As with trustworthy, date restrictions on the NAES question measuring leadership limits analysis here – this question was only asked starting on August 17<sup>th</sup>, meaning

the more than 3300 ads Bush ran mentioning common sense leadership in July are not included in these tables.

**Table AI.0.9 – Hard Working (Bush) – Leadership**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.10 – Hard Working (Bush) – Leadership (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Fortunately for this particular combination, the NAES leadership timing has no effect – Bush ran all his ads mentioning hard working as a character trait after the question started being included on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, at no point in either October or November did Bush depicting himself as hard working significantly affect respondents’ relative perception of him as a strong leader.

**Table AI.0.11 - Honest (Bush) - Honest**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
May-00 -	-	-	-	-	50.00	0.00
Jun-00	22.22	100.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.12 - Honest (Bush) - Honest (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

The first directly comparable combination offers little support for the effect of campaign advertising, though this is likely due to the severe dearth of mentions on the part of Bush for this particular trait. Despite the Bush campaign’s stated goal of returning integrity to the White House (CITE), Bush’s advertising makes only one mention of the governor as honest.<sup>54</sup> This single ad, also aired on June 11<sup>th</sup>, unsurprisingly has little substantive effect on perceptions of either men as truth-tellers.

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<sup>54</sup> It should be noted, though, that Bush does use “dishonest” in over 15,000 ads, suggesting that the strategy for this particular trait was more to tear Gore down than build Bush up – this is not surprising given the ammunition the vice president seemed to provide regularly to the Bush campaign through his “exaggerations” (CITE) on the campaign trail.



**Table AI.0.13 - Protector (Bush) - Cares**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-00</b>	0.00	0.00	6.25	0.00	4.35	0.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.14 - Protector (Bush) - Cares (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-00</b>	33.33	0.00	18.18	0.00	5.56	0.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While this combination shows diminishing returns over longer and longer periods of time, that consideration is less important than the finding that mentioning himself as a protector never positively affects Bush's standing relative to Gore on the "cares" NAES question. This may be due to a number of factors – the relatively late nature of many of these appeals (occurring for less than a week at the end of July and then again in the last two weeks of the campaign) may have limited the potential for influence (as it may be the case that absent any large shocks the relative perceptions of the two candidates are fairly solid by the end of the campaign).

Furthermore, the relatively short shrift given by Bush to this trait may also be explaining the lack of effects – Bush did split these mentions about evenly between the summer and fall, but in total his ads made mention of "protector" only 183 times. Recall from above that "protector" is one of the two mentions also used in attack ads; however, for Bush this is not an issue, as all 183 were used in ads categorized by the Wisconsin coders as "contrast" ads. This, too, may have had an effect (the relative effects of pure promotion or attack versus contrasting messages is unclear), but

whatever the reasoning this particular trait mention did not help Bush when it came to being viewed as more caring than Gore.

***Table AI.0.15 – Proven/Tested/Experienced (Bush) – Knowledgeable***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	25.00	50.00	18.18	50.00	20.00	20.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AI.0.16 – Proven/Tested/Experienced (Bush) – Knowledgeable (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	6.25	100.00	11.11	50.00	4.00	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Somewhat surprising given he was a (relatively) unknown governor campaigning against a sitting vice president, Bush waited until the last three weeks of the campaign to make mention of himself as being proven, tested, or experienced. These 473 ads, though, did seem to have some benefit, though as with the previous pairings this effect tends to be inconsistent. While the significant effects ranged from being in the correct direction from a fifth of the time to all the time, these tended to be only a handful of days (one day in October for both the five- and seven-day cross-sections using the exposure multiplied by ad numbers, for example). While running ads touting his experience in government may have some slight effect at chipping away at Gore's advantage on the knowledgeable trait, these effects are not sustained enough to suggest a systematic effect stemming from the campaign advertising itself.

**Table AI.0.17 – Reformer (Bush) – Inspiring**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	50.00	100.00
Oct-00	18.75	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.18 – Reformer (Bush) – Inspiring (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	50.00	100.00
Oct-00	8.33	50.00	3.85	100.00	6.45	100.00
Nov-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with the previous pairings, Bush depicting himself as a reformer has little consistent effect on respondents' perception of him as an inspiring figure. While the significant effects tend to be in Bush's favor more often than not, the percent of days that are significant in a month tends to be incredibly limited (and even when large, as in September, this is misleading – only two days were covered by the fourteen-day cross-sections). As in the preceding pairing, there is little to suggest that sustained mentions have a systematic effect on voter perceptions of candidate traits.

**Table AI.0.19 - Tough/Fighter (Bush) - Leadership**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	50.00	100.00
Oct-00	25.00	100.00	20.00	100.00	13.33	100.00

**Table AI.0.20 - Tough/Fighter (Bush) - Leadership (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-00 -</b>	-	-	-	-	50.00	100.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	4.17	100.00	3.85	100.00	9.68	100.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Continuing the pattern, the final combination for George W. Bush in 2000 shows little consistent effect of advertising on respondent perceptions of leadership. While depicting oneself as tough or a fighter can clearly be linked to leadership ability, Bush's experience with this mention here sees little significant effect. As with the previous pairing, which the significant effects were always in Bush's favor, the percent of days per month that are significant are still incredibly sparse (the preceding caveat about September applies here). One possibility here may be that time simply ran out for Bush – while Bush ran over 3000 ads mentioning either of these two traits, many of them were concentrated in the last four weeks of the campaign. One other possibility that will be unpacked a bit more towards the end of this chapter may simply have to do with a lack of variability in perceptions in the first place. On the leadership question, for example, 89.05% of respondents over the course of the campaign gave Bush a non-zero score while the similar figure for Gore was 86.38%. While this does not measure the individual gradations across days or over the cross-sections created, it may suggest that the tendency was for respondents to rate the two men fairly equally on this trait. Indeed, only 8.51% of respondents *overall* gave Bush (5.00%) or Gore (3.51%) the full advantage on this question; 21.76% gave either man a two-point advantage. Almost 70% of those responding to the NAES question, then, rated the men within a point of each other or equally; across the totality of the campaign, then, there simply just may not be enough day-to-day variation to capture the effects of advertising. Similar studies have tended

to highlight the marginal nature of campaign effects (CITE that Sides post), and the findings here are no different.

For Bush in 2000, then, campaign advertising appears to have had a limited effect on depicting his personal characteristics in a positive light to the electorate. The findings here generally suggest little to no consistent effect, no matter the pairing examined, and finding consistent patterns even where there are significant results is similarly difficult. Sometimes the later months have a diminished effect; sometimes they are the only times significant results are found. Sometimes the effects found over a five-day period fail to persist over a seven- or fourteen-day scope; other times, the longer cross-sections have similar if not better results. The lack of significant differences between the two tables (exposure only versus exposure times ad numbers) does suggest an interesting result that including the number of ads in analysis does not dramatically change the results; however, the implications of this lack of difference are unclear. It may be that exposure to ads in a highly saturated media environment works the same no matter how many times the ads are seen (CITE Shane), though whether or not that conclusion can be drawn from this survey is unclear. In many cases, the exposure only variable tended to have *more* significant days than the variable including ad numbers, though this might also be a function of there tending to be more days in the latter regressions than the former (though as noted, this is not always the case if the advertising tends to be intermittent or take place on a single day). For an electoral campaign that took great pains to stress Bush's personality as an alternative to the failings of the Clinton years, it does not appear that positive personality mentions affected perceptions of Bush over the course of the campaign (or, at least, contemporaneously with the running of the ads themselves). For all the conventional wisdom regarding Bush's advantage on the personality front (CITE someone have a beer with), it does not appear that that advantage was generated by the campaign's television advertising.

## *Results – Gore*

**Table AI.0.21 – Caring/Compassionate (Gore) – Cares**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-00	5.26	0.00	4.35	0.00	6.67	0.00

**Table AI.0.22 – Caring/Compassionate (Gore) – Cares (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-00	11.76	100	5.26	100.00	4.00	0.00

As with Bush’s campaign, the Gore campaign made surprisingly little mention of the vice president as “caring” or “compassionate”, especially given both the vice president’s specific campaign priorities on identifying with the interests of the many rather than the few (CITE) and the Democrats’ more general tendency to have an advantage on this area (CITE), though this perceived advantage may help explain the Gore campaign’s lack of focus on this issue. Whatever the rationale, these mentions are concentrated in a two-week period in mid-October and while the overall pattern of significant effects is in the vice president’s favor, the overall significance is fairly limited and appears to evaporate quickly (compare the significance percentages for the five- and seven-day periods in either table).

**Table AI.0.23 - Common Sense Leader (Gore) - Leadership**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-00</b>	7.69	100.00	5.88	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	14.29	0.00	28.57	0.00	71.43	0.00

**Table AI.0.24 - Common Sense Leader (Gore) - Leadership (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-00</b>	16.67	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Similar to the patterns discussed above, mentions of Al Gore as a “common sense leader” did not often significantly affect respondents’ perceptions of the relative leadership ability of the two major-party candidates. Even more interesting in this case is the dramatic shift in effect from August to September; while in August Gore making mention of his common sense leadership style does work in his favor (though again, the significance is inconsistent and sparse for these cross-sections and is never significant in the two-week groupings), in September the pattern flips entirely, never working in his favor. The comparison between the exposure-only and exposure-times-number of ads tables is also interesting; while in the exposure-only regressions September tends to be incredibly useful for perceptions of *Bush* (particularly when examining the fourteen days after ads were aired, where over 70% - 10 of 14 – of the days were significant), these effects dissipate almost entirely when the independent variable becomes exposure multiplied by the number of ads being run, suggesting that taking into account how many ads are being run is an important step in better understanding the true nature of advertising. It is highly likely that the dissipated effect in the latter table is due to the relatively small number of ads being aired in

September (22 ads over a nine-day period), further validating the importance of differentiating between exposure only and exposure measures that also take into account how sustained the ad campaigns the candidates are running are.

**Table AI.0.25 – Hard Working (Gore) – Leadership**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-00	6.25	0.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.26 – Hard Working (Gore) – Leadership (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-00 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-00	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Continuing the pattern, mentions of Gore as “hard working” did almost nothing to significantly (and/or positively) affect respondents’ perceptions of his leadership abilities. While Gore did run almost 700 ads mentioning this trait, they were concentrated over a 12-day period in mid- to late-October; as with caring/compassionate it is clear that this was not a priority of the Gore campaign; however, it may also be the case (as mentioned previously) that the effects of these types of ads have a diminished effect in the later stages of the campaign, as voters may be fairly well-established in their perceptions of the candidates by the fall (and, indeed, some may have already voted by this point, which may also affect how they answer trait questions).



Regardless of the reason, this particular combination finds little significant affects (and those limited only to the shortest cross-sections) and never positively affects perceptions of Gore.

***Table AI.0.27 – Protector (Gore) – Cares***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-00</b>	15.38	0.00	26.67	0.00	47.62	0.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	0.00	0.00	15.38	0.00	8.33	50.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	10.00	0.00	7.14	0.00	9.52	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AI.0.28 – Protector (Gore) – Cares (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-00</b>	18.75	0.00	25.00	0.00	81.25	0.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	3.45	0.00	3.23	0.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Given the strategy of the Bush campaign to claim some traditional Democratic ground, particularly on education and entitlements (CITE), it is no surprise that ads depicting Gore as a protector are consistent throughout the summer and fall (indeed, in terms of positive traits mentioned “protector” is second only to “tough/fighter”, with the Gore campaign making mention of Gore as a protector just over 10,000 times). However, it is unclear if these ads did anything to help Gore’s image as a person who cares about people like those responding to the NAES survey;

in these regressions, a significant effect is found more in the early months than the latter (again suggesting some type of diminishing returns over time), but these significant effects are almost never in Gore's favor. When measuring exposure only, the effect of running these ads is in Gore's favor only over one 14-day period in late September/early October (starting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>). Otherwise, when a significant effect is found just using exposure only it benefits the Republican, suggesting that if anything these mentions on the part of the Democrat tended to have the opposite effect; further reinforcing this is the fact that in the exposure times ad number table the effect is *never* in Gore's favor, even in August where 13 of the 16 biweekly cross-sections (81.25%) are significant. That percentage, however, is far from standard; keeping in line with the Gore discussions so far, the significant effects for this combination are few and far between.

**Table AI.0.29 – Proven/Tested/Experienced (Gore) – Knowledgeable**

<i>Proven/Tested/Experienced (Gore) - Knowledgeable</i>						
	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.30 – Proven/Tested/Experienced (Gore) – Knowledgeable (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	100.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

One of the more confounding patterns from the Wisconsin dataset is the fact that Al Gore, a sitting vice president and former Senator, running against a (relatively) unknown governor for the office of the presidency, waited until November 1<sup>st</sup> to run an ad mentioning himself as proven, tested, or experienced.<sup>55</sup> The relatively late and concentrated nature of these mentions unsurprisingly leads to little effect being found in the regressions conducted (especially given that, unsurprisingly, the NAES stopped asking respondents their opinions on the two men's personal characteristics after the day of the election). While the exposure times number of ads table does have some evidence in favor of a positive effect for Gore, this is a single 14-day period starting on October 29 (which, as mentioned, is truncated to begin with) and thus is likely just a random occurrence rather than a significant demonstration of the predicted effect. No other cross-sectional group is ever significant in these regressions.

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<sup>55</sup> This odd bit of strategy also raises one of the difficulties with the Wisconsin coding, which relies on direct mentions of the words listed for inclusion; it is very likely that a large amount of Gore's advertising *implicitly* discussed his time in government (for example, his "protector" and "tough/fighter" ads likely made some reference to past acts or that he has long been a factor in important decisions in government) or even explicitly referenced his experience without using any of those words (for example, an ad that simply stated Gore had been vice president for eight years but never uses the word "experienced" would not be counted under the Wisconsin coding scheme). However, as will be discussed later on, it is not clear if a coding scheme relying on implied themes would be any better; the use of direct mentions better avoids coder bias at what the ad is *meaning* to say about the candidates versus what is *actually* being said. Research on the overlap between personality and policy in areas such as verbal rhetoric, candidate dress and appearance, and even video unrelated to what is being said (CITE) all suggest that attempting to derive some intended meaning is a difficult and complicated project at best.

**Table AI.0.31 - Reformer (Gore) - Inspiring**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.32 - Reformer (Gore) - Inspiring (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While the Gore campaign ran almost 4,000 ads mentioning the vice president as a “reformer”, these ads were – as in a number of previous combinations – highly concentrated over two-and-a-half weeks in mid-October up to Election Day. The lack of effects found for these mentions, then, may be a consequence of the relative lateness of their appearance; however, it should also be noted here that certain appeals are more or less likely to have any effect at all given the particular circumstances of the men running and the overall political environment. While the Gore campaign has been noted by political scientists for its use of more challenger-oriented versus incumbent-style language (CITE) and its decisions to not rely on the Clinton achievements but rather suggest that a different approach was needed (CITE), it is unclear if the “reformer” mantle would have ever been a viable one for Gore to claim. As will be discussed a bit more in the chapter covering the 2008 election, it is highly difficult for established political figures – much less those directly associated with and involved in an incumbent president’s administration – to depict themselves as effective agents of change. The strategy behind these late “reformer” mentions are unclear, but it is also likely that no matter when the Gore campaign

chose to air these ads the effect would be minimal. As such, it is not particularly surprising that no significant effects are ever found in these regressions.

***Table AI.0.33 – Tough/Fighter (Gore) – Leadership***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-00</b>	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	11.76	100.00

***Table AI.0.34 – Tough/Fighter (Gore) – Leadership (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-00</b>	16.67	100.00	7.14	100.00	4.76	100.00
<b>Sep-00</b>	3.33	0.00	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-00</b>	9.67	100.00	9.67	100.00	32.26	100.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Describing himself as “tough” or a “fighter” was the cornerstone of Gore’s campaign, at least in terms of the number of positive appeals being made by the candidate. Specifically, Gore made a focus of portraying himself as a populist hero, fighting for the little guy against the interests arrayed against them (on an additional note, the most often negative mention for Gore from the Wisconsin data is mention of “special interests”). For Gore, this was the most prominent trait mentioned, with 26,340 mentions in the Wisconsin data, more than double the second-most prominent (“protector”, with 10,013). However, this sustained campaign works against the method of analysis used here – as table AI.33 shows, the exposure-only regressions only return results in August; this is because from August 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup> Gore does not skip a day when mentioning tough/fighter. As the exposure variable is consistently the same over most of

this period (the maximum value of 3), there is no variation on the independent variable and thus no regression can be conducted. This further demonstrates the utility of also including a measure of the number of ads being aired along with exposure. Table X.X shows that the effects of this sustained ad blitz for Gore were overall fairly mixed – the number of significant periods actually *increases* in October, going against the pattern found in other combinations, but more surprisingly the direction of the effect changes dramatically from month to month. While these effects always worked in Gore’s favor in August and October, they never work in the intended direction in September (though it should be noted that the percent of days significant in September are relatively much smaller – only one five-day period and three seven- and fourteen-day periods, respectively – so this may just be randomness rather than a direct shift in the effect of these ads). On the whole, this set of regressions presents perhaps the most direct evidence in favor of the theories being presented in this dissertation – Gore running a sustained ad campaign describing himself as tough or a fighter did seem to benefit his relative standing on leadership abilities, though this effect was not consistent over the three months when most of these ads were occurring, and even then were not significant most of the time (the best month is the biweekly groupings in October, where less than a third of the days were significant).

A final note for this pairing is that the effect of the more than 7,000 ads Gore ran mentioning this trait in June and July is unmeasurable due to the absence of this question from the NAES instrument before mid-August. While a large number of ads are still analyzed, the nature of the effect is made less clear due to the comparison with the summer being lost.

**Table AI.0.35 – Visionary (Gore) – Inspiring**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	9.09	100.00	23.08	100.00	15.00	100.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AI.0.36 – Visionary (Gore) – Inspiring (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

This final pairing also suffers from the potential lateness effects described above – while Gore ran over 1,000 ads mentioning himself as a “visionary”, these came in the final two weeks of the campaign (including 350 on Election Day itself, thus making them unavailable to analysis as the NAES questions were asked for the final time on the day before). While past research has suggested that these late-airing advertisements should have an outsized effect relative to other periods (as the information does not have time to dissipate in relevancy before Election Day), such an increased effect is not found here. Campaign advertising that does not drastically introduce new information, though, may not be expected to function like an “October Surprise”; rather, given the on-line processing approach utilized here, late-stage advertising that fits with past appeals should have very minimal influence on the overall perceptions in voters’ minds. While Gore did introduce a new *mention* (“visionary”) in the final fortnight of the campaign, it is highly unlikely that these represented a massive shift in his overall presentation of himself, an assumption borne out through the relative lack of influence for this “novel” depiction. While exposure-only did have something of an effect in October, the extent of these effects should not

be overstated (representing one grouping in the five-day column and three groupings in the other two periods). When the number of ads being aired was included, these significant effects dissipated entirely.



## APPENDIX II – 2004 ELECTION RESULTS BY MONTH

As with the 2000 results tables, the tables discussed below will describe the trait effects using monthly breakdowns – this will allow for a more general discussion towards the end of the chapter about the effect of sustained ad campaigns generally and the possibility for greater or lesser effects as the campaign moves closer to Election Day more specifically. Given the finding of greater effects towards the end of campaigns due to lack of time to dissipate (Erikson & Wlezien 2012), this monthly approach will allow for some greater insight about when campaigns potentially have their greatest effects. For each table, the values for each month are given as percentages – first the percent of days (more specifically, starting days for the five-, seven-, and fourteen-day cross-sections) where significant effects were found and second the percent of those significant days where the regression coefficient was in the hypothesized direction (positive for Bush, negative for Kerry for positive mentions, vice versa for negative mentions). This approach was utilized in order to account for the variation in the number of days in which there were ads across the months and the combinations as well as to help better depict the true nature of the effects (as just giving the number of days for significant/correct effects would be confusing without also noting the number of possible days where there could have been effects in the first place).

***Results – Bush (Positive)***

***Table AII.0.1 – Caring (Bush) – Cares About People Like Me***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	5.88	100.00

***Table AII.0.2 – Caring (Bush) – Cares About People Like Me (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	6.25	100.00	11.11	50.00	4.00	100.00

As in 2000, presenting himself as caring was not a significant priority for George W. Bush (while Bush did use this word or a close equivalent in over 5800 ads, all of these came in the final two weeks of the campaign. While exposure to this messaging did always work in Bush’s favor (increasing the gap between him and Kerry when it comes to rating the two men on the trait of “Cares About People Like Me”, the effect was very inconsistent and seems to dissipate as a longer time frame is considered (though this analysis is constrained given that the cross-sections with exposure only all stop on October 23 (as the value for exposure from October 24 to November 1 is the same, for the reason discussed above); however, the exposure times number of ads measure shows a similar inconsistent effect and declining significance as the groupings get longer. While running ads mentioning Bush as Caring did seem to work in his favor rather than

help Kerry, the overall effect is not highly substantial or consistent over the course of the ad airings.

***Table AII.0.3 – Leader (Bush) – Strong Leader***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	33.33	75.00	35.71	80.00	23.81	80.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	5.88	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	6.25	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	31.58	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.11	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	40.00	25.00	33.33	0.00	36.84	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	12.50	0.00	11.11	50.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	16.67	0.00	11.11	0.00	5.56	100.00

***Table AII.0.4 – Leader (Bush) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	13.79	50.00	13.79	75.00	17.24	80.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	8.33	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	9.09	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.53	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	20.00	0.00	33.33	0.00	57.89	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	4.00	0.00	3.70	0.00	3.33	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	7.41	0.00	6.90	0.00	12.90	0.00

Depicting himself as a leader was Bush’s highest priority in the 2004 election, unsurprisingly given the orientation of the election around his conduct as president in guiding the nation through the reaction to the attacks of September 11. “Leader” was Bush’s most common positive mention in the 2004 Wisconsin data, with its 31567 mentions representing almost two-thirds (65.42%) of Bush’s positive mentions, almost four times that of the next most-frequent

mention (Protector, with 8149 mentions). In terms of total mentions, Bush only made mention more often of Kerry as “Taxing” (40966 mentions) or a “Liberal” (40661 mentions). Despite this clear focus, these mentions appear to have done little in terms of consistently moving Bush’s score on being seen as a clear leader, and even when these ads were associated with significant movement on the NAES question, the direction of that effect was just as likely to be in *Kerry’s* favor than Bush’s. The effects for this pairing appear to be more sustained than the previous grouping, with the 14-day cross-sections often more significant, though the direction is often the opposite of the predicted effect (for example, while over half – 11 of 19 – of the biweekly groupings in August are significant none of them are in Bush’s favor). While some months are better than others, the overall nature of the effect of airing ads mentioning leadership is something of a wash – at times, particularly early in the campaign, Bush benefited, but those benefits were temporary and often reversed as the campaign wore on.

**Table AII.0.5 – Patriotic (Bush) – Shares Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.6 – Patriotic (Bush) – Shares Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While national pride and honor were certainly themes in the election, the specific mention of “patriotic” by President Bush never significantly affected perceptions of the two candidates’ values. Given the relatively miniscule number of ads (448) and days (five) given over to this topic, this lack of effect is not particularly surprising.

***Table AII.0.7 – Protector (Bush) – Cares About People Like Me***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>May-04</b>	12.50	0.00	10.00	0.00	17.24	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	5.88	100.00

***Table AII.0.8 – Protector (Bush) – Cares About People Like Me (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>May-04</b>	20.00	0.00	17.65	0.00	45.83	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	6.25	100.00	5.56	100.00	8.00	100.00

Depicting himself as a protector did not help Bush in a consistent way – in late spring, when significant the effect was to increase Kerry’s relative standing on the Cares NAES question, though this direction was reversed (in Bush’s favor) when airing ads in October (though here the exposure only effect was significant at most for 12.5% of the five-day groupings, with that effect dissipating as the groupings got larger; for exposure times number of ads a slight uptick in significant groupings occurred from the weekly to biweekly groupings, but this change is minimal). While these tables do suggest that the timing of particular ads can affect their utility in

changing voters' perceptions, the overall lack of consistent significance makes the solidity of this conclusion unclear.

**Table AII.0.9 – Religious (Bush) – Shares Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	16.67	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	20.00	25.00	4.55	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.10 – Religious (Bush) – Shares Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	33.33	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	16.67	0.00	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00

While Bush's personal religious journey was a strong component of his story in the 2000 election, in 2004 mentions of himself as a man of faith appeared to do more harm than good when looking at the connection between these mentions and voters' perceptions of which candidate shared their values. While the exposure-only results suggest more of a mixed effect (in the short term sometimes helpful to Bush but the trend reversing as the groupings get larger), the exposure times number of ads results suggest that when these ads were significantly associated with changes in the values gap, it was in Kerry's favor (though, as Table X.X shows, these changes were rarely significant). Furthermore, this mention was not a priority for Bush – in total the

Republican campaign mentioned this trait only 15 times, with 14 of those across a three-day span in early July. Though some conventional wisdom points to the usage of religious matters strategically being highlighted as a means to drive turnout (CITE), there appears to have been a divide between presenting Bush himself as a crusader and the messages of his surrogates or co-partisans at the state and local level. As with “compassionate conservative” in 2000, the multifaceted and complex nature of modern campaigns is further demonstrated here; though the push for marriage amendments is seen as a substantial part of the 2004 Republican campaign messaging, religion is fairly muted on the part of Bush’s *personal* campaigning. Other venues and media were better suited for these types of messaging, with the Bush campaign specifically coming at the religious angle more obliquely.

**Table AII.0.11 – Tough/Fighter (Bush) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>May-04</b>	12.50	0.00	15.00	0.00	31.03	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.39	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	5.56	0.00	4.55	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	66.67	100.00	80.00	100.00	91.67	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	15.38	100.00	15.38	100.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.50	0.00	10.00	0.00	17.65	33.33

***Table AII.0.12 – Tough/Fighter (Bush) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	<i>Tough/Fighter (Bush) - Strong Leader (Overall Log)</i>					
	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>May-04</b>	6.67	0.00	5.88	0.00	33.33	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	-	-	-	-	5.71	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	12.50	100.00	5.56	100.00	22.22	75.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	66.67	100.00	80.00	100.00	91.67	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	37.50	100.00	12.50	100.00	37.50	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	9.52	0.00	8.70	0.00	13.33	0.00

Presenting himself as tough or a fighter appears to have been more successful for Bush as the campaign went on, though this effect reversed in the last month of the general election timeline. However, some caution is warranted when discussing the high percentages for Bush, particularly in August. While at least two-thirds of every grouping were significant (and this number increased as the groupings got larger), only three, five, and twelve days of the month were included in the five-, seven-, and 14-day groupings, respectively (so, for example, the 66.67% of the five-day cross-sections means that two of the three were significant). These effects, however, come at the “start” of a period of ads, suggesting that the introduction of these mentions does have something of an immediate effect on shifting voter perceptions. While the percentage of significant groupings varies substantially over the months, more often than not the effect was in Bush’s favor, suggesting that reminding voters of the president’s strength and dedication to a cause did have an effect on changing the relative standing of Bush as a strong leader.

One note is necessary that does demonstrate a particular quirk of the comparison between exposure and exposure times number of ads. As mentioned above, the “overall log” table contains the exposure variable but then multiplies that exposure value by the number of ads *on the day with the exposure value*; this means that if there is only an isolated day of advertising (that is, a day



where a mention is made but then a number of days following with no mentions) that the exposure times number of ads variable will take on the same value for all the days in the five-, seven-, or 14-day sequence (0 times the exposure value). This is why, in the tables above, the exposure-only table has values for five- and seven-day groupings in June, while the second table does not; Bush's two ads on June 20 allowed for exposure values to be analyzed, but not the overall log values (as the values for the five-, seven-, and fourteen-day periods after the 20<sup>th</sup> would all be 0).

### ***Results – Bush (Negative)***

Before exploring the negative pairings, a quick note about the relative strategies of the two candidates deserves discussion. Despite being a sitting president who could conceivably make a much stronger argument about having the experience to lead the nation through troubled times, the messaging from the Bush campaign and its allies was surprisingly more negative than positive. In total, the Bush ads only made mention of six of the nineteen positive traits included in the Wisconsin dataset<sup>56</sup> (compared to Kerry, who made mention of all nineteen); of the sixteen Wisconsin negative traits, Bush made mention of twelve (thirteen for Kerry). In terms of sheer numbers, while Kerry's ads made just slightly more negative mentions overall (135837 versus 135096 for Bush), proportionally Bush ran a much more negative campaign – almost 75% of Bush's mentions were negative compared to 52.99% of Kerry's. Some of this is certainly strategic – Bush's advisers admit openly that the plan was to define Kerry early on in the campaign, particularly in the first few weeks and months after Kerry clinched the nomination but

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<sup>56</sup> Of course, it should be noted here that Bush may have made mention of some positive trait not included in the Wisconsin data. However, Bush's ads tended to be more attacking than anything else – 61.33 of the general election ads included in the Wisconsin data that were either run by Bush or run on the president's behalf were negative, compared to 37.89% of Kerry's.

had essentially run out of money (CITE – Jamieson); almost a quarter of Bush’s negative mentions were made before the end of May. The Bush campaign also went incredibly negative in the waning days of the campaign – a quarter of his negative mentions aired after October 14, meaning the last three weeks of the campaign represented a surge of negative mentions on the part of the Bush campaign. The larger strategic rationale of negative campaigning generally and the timing of these ads specifically is outside the scope of this chapter, but suffice it to say that the Bush strategy in 2004 appears to have been to rely on the fact that being the president allowed for his positive traits to be taken for granted while the focus was instead on defining his relatively unknown opponent as a clearly inferior option for the presidency.

***Table AII.0.13 - Dishonest (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04</b>	20.00	100.00	25.00	100.00	78.95	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	28.57	75.00	27.78	80.00	16.67	80.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	7.14	100.00	16.67	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	20.83	60.00	26.67	37.50	25.81	37.50
<b>Sep-04</b>	12.50	66.67	11.54	66.67	10.00	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.50	0.00	20.00	0.00	23.08	0.00

***Table AII.0.14 - Dishonest (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	12.50	100.00	12.50	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	9.52	0.00	4.35	0.00	10.34	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	11.11	100.00	17.39	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	9.09	50.00	15.38	75.00	25.81	37.50
<b>Sep-04</b>	7.14	0.00	18.75	33.33	3.70	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	30.77	62.50	32.14	55.56	29.03	11.11

Advertisements on Bush's behalf making use of the word "dishonest" were consistently part of the negative messaging coming out of the Republican campaign in 2004. However, despite the presence of these ads throughout the campaign, the overall effect appears remarkably inconsistent. While the initial airings in April appear to be highly effective when examining the exposure-only results (particularly over the biweekly cross-section groupings, where 15 of the 19 groupings were significant), this effectiveness tapers off quickly going into May (where at most four of the 14 five-day groupings were significant) and almost entirely disappears in June and July, only slightly picking back up in the late summer and fall. When the number of ads is factored in alongside exposure, the overall effectiveness of these ads in shifting perceptions of Kerry as a person who says one thing and does another declines precipitously.

This early success coupled with declining results (and possible increases in effectiveness later on) touch on a larger issue with this approach that future research should look to address more directly – the relationships examined here, whether they be at the five-, seven-, or 14-day individual groupings or the monthly aggregations, treat the pairing as independent from those that have come before it, no matter where in the campaign this analysis is looking; put simply, exposure in April is treated the same as exposure in October, even for ads that may have been running the length of the campaign. This obviously creates some possibility for diminishing returns of a message that the current research method does not include in its model of the proposed relationship. While ads mentioning "dishonest" only ran for 76 of the 244 days included in this chapter, it is highly likely that in cases where there is a sustained messaging campaign (especially for days with even more presence, such as Kerry's 192 days of mentioning Bush as a friend of special interests or Bush's 107 days making mention of "taxing" as an attack) that the

effects of later repetitions of this messaging have different effects than those made at earlier stages of the campaign. However, this conclusion is uncertain due to the fact that for the average voter the early messages of the campaign go unignored, with attention ramping up as Election Day approaches (CITE). Whether or not different areas of the campaign lead to different advertising effects is a question for further study; it is mentioned here only as a tentative explanation for why later months may be demonstrating weaker effects.

Weaker effects are also to be expected in later months of a sustained campaign if the on-line processing model utilized here is an accurate reflection of voters' consumption and application of information. Early information, under this model, is presumed to have more of an effect in shaping views, with later pieces of information being weighed relatively less important unless they dramatically differ from past pieces of information and pre-existing perceptions. Thus, in this particular case, mentions of Kerry's "dishonesty" may be more important in April, as it may be one of the earliest pieces of information a voter is getting about Kerry. Early perceptions are the easiest to change, so later iterations would be expected to have diminished utility both for those who are already inclined to believe Kerry is dishonest (where the mentions in October are just another grain of sand in a pre-existing dune) *and those who are inclined to believe Kerry is not dishonest* (as the dishonest message is fighting against months of different views, a raindrop trying to wear down a mountain). These myriad expectations demonstrate the difficulty of directly attributing effects from advertising, especially sustained advertising over a number of months that is also competing with a large number of other messages, both positive and negative.

**Table AII.0.15 – Extremist (Bush) – Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.16 – Extremist (Bush) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The Bush campaign only made mention of their opponent as an “extremist” late in the campaign, running 64 ads in the final 12 days before the election. It is not particularly surprising, then, that these ads had no significant effect on portraying either man as “out of touch”.

**Table AII.0.17 - Hypocrite (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	5.56	100.00	4.00	100.00
Oct-04	16.67	100.00	37.50	100.00	53.33	100.00

**Table AII.0.18 - Hypocrite (Bush) - Says One Thing, Does Another (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00	5.00	100.00
Oct-04	16.67	100.00	25.00	100.00	33.33	100.00

Further complicating the temporal effect of sustained advertising, discussed above, is some evidence that in particular cases a sustained campaign can have stronger effects later on; even more confounding, these stronger effects occur despite a constrained period of time towards the end of the election timeline and a relatively small number of ads. While some minimal effect is found for the September groupings, in October a much more significant and successful pattern emerges, one that sees stronger effects as longer timeframes as considered. While some decline is found when factoring in the number of ads alongside exposure, it appears that mentioning his opponent as a hypocrite did seem to help Bush in shifting perceptions of him and Kerry as men who would say one thing and then do another – in all cases, when this relationship was significant it widened the gap between perceptions of the two men in Bush’s favor, with respondents applying the term more strongly to Kerry than the president<sup>57</sup>

**Table AII.0.19 - Incompetent (Bush) - Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	9.09	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	28.57	50.00	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	5.88	100.00	4.76	100.00	4.00	100.00

57 An interesting possibility given the relative freedom Bush had to define his opponent before Kerry was able to get his campaign on a general election footing is that the effectiveness of Kerry’s own advertising may have suffered if a perception of him as a hypocrite or flip-flopper or dishonest candidate had already started to take hold; many voters may have discounted Kerry’s messages without being actively distrustful of him. Finding such an effect is difficult with these data, but the advantage in time for the Bush campaign is directly referenced by his campaign team on multiple occasions, so the possibility is certainly one to consider.

**Table AII.0.20 - Incompetent (Bush) - Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-04 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Aug-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sep-04	42.86	33.33	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Raising the idea that his opponent is incompetent, on the other hand, appears to have done almost nothing to help George W. Bush in terms of shifting perceptions of the two candidates' disconnect from the day-to-day realities facing the country. While some minor short-term effects are present in the five-day groupings, these exist only in a small number of cases and diminish substantially when the number of ads is considered alongside exposure-only; While there is still some perceptible effect in the short-term September groupings in the latter table, this effect is highly inconsistent and often only significant in a small number of cases.

**Table AII.0.21 – Liberal (Bush) – Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Apr-04	0.00	0.00	16.67	100.00	31.58	100.00
May-04	14.29	100.00	16.67	66.67	13.33	75.00
Jun-04	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	50.00	0.00
Jul-04	6.25	0.00	5.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
Aug-04	7.69	100.00	0.00	0.00	3.70	100.00
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AII.0.22 – Liberal (Bush) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	4.76	0.00	4.35	100.00	13.79	75.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	-	-	-	-	71.43	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	14.29	0.00	25.00	0.00	15.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	12.50	100.00	8.33	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.90	0.00	19.35	33.33	32.26	20.00

Using “liberal” as a pejorative appears to have worked somewhat well for Bush at portraying Kerry as out of touch, though the effectiveness of this term seems – as with many others discussed so far – to be highly inconsistent over the course of the campaign. As discussed above, part of the drop-off in effectiveness from the spring and (less so) early summer may be due to the fact that Bush made mention of this characteristic every day from September 17 to Election Day (as discussed in more detail above, this consistent mentioning is why no results are listed for October in the exposure-only table – the value of the exposure value was at the maximum for each day in October). While in April (in exposure-only) and in May (both) some evidence suggests some benefit for Bush in making this mention, this effect disappears in the summer months and – at least in the number of ads multiplied by exposure results – reverses course, with some significant results but those results more often than not corresponding to *Bush* being seen as more out of touch than his opponent. On the whole, the beginning stages of this sustained advertising push appear to have been more beneficial than the later stages, though the



overall effects are still highly inconsistent and oftentimes end up benefitting Kerry even before the end months (see, for instance, June and July in the second table).<sup>58</sup>

***Table AII.0.23 - Negative (Bush) - Out of Touch***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Mar-04	14.29	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AII.0.24 - Negative (Bush) - Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)***

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Describing Senator Kerry as “negative” appears to have been of limited utility to the Bush campaign – while the short-term effects are the only significant effects, this is only significant in one out of seven five-day periods covered in March. “Negative” was not a strong priority for the Bush campaign – in total this term was mentioned only 36 times over four days, and the variation in terms of exposure multiplied by the number of ads in the exposure periods was not enough to generate results. Overall, this term appears to have done very little in terms of changing perceptions of the two men being out of touch.

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58 Though this benefit is likely not directly due to voters switching on their perceptions of the favorability of “liberal” as a descriptor; it is likely that Kerry’s own messaging was helping him or that sustained messaging was just losing its effectiveness by the later months (as discussed earlier).

**Table AII.0.25 - Reckless (Bush) - Reckless**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.26 - Reckless (Bush) - Reckless (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	22.22	100.00	27.27	100.00	27.78	100.00

While the Bush campaign made mention of the word “reckless” almost 6500 times, the entirety of these ads were aired in the last week of the campaign. While the difference between the first and second table give some credence to the idea that ad quantity is a quality of its own, the relatively inconsistent significance of these results does suggest that concentrated timeframes can limit the effectiveness of ads, especially as the end of the campaign approaches. When these pairings were significant, they always worked in Bush’s favor (increasing relative perceptions of Kerry as reckless), but at most these ads were significant in under 30% of the groupings analyzed. More often than not, these ads were having no statistically significant effect.

**Table AII.0.27 – Right Wing (Bush) – Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04 -	-	-	-	-	14.29	100.00
Oct-04	5.26	0.00	8.70	50.00	3.33	0.00

**Table AII.0.28 – Right Wing (Bush) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04 -	-	-	-	-	14.29	100.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	4.35	100.00	0.00	0.00

In one of the odder quirks of the 2004 campaign, the Wisconsin dataset reports that Bush or allies of his campaign used the phrase “right wing” to describe his opponent an exact total of 5100 times. Why Bush, the Republican candidate, would be doing so seems confusing at first glance – one possibility was the coding nature of the Wisconsin data separating mentions from contexts: given that the coding question is simply whether or not the ad mentions the word, phrase, or some close equivalent, it is possible that a Bush ad quoting a Kerry attack for the purposes of refuting it may have been categorized as using this phrase (that is, if Kerry used the phrase “right wing” to describe Bush and then Bush mentioned that attack in its own advertising, the Wisconsin coding may have counted the mention twice, once for each candidate). This seems unlikely, however, given that over 2500 of these mentions from Bush come *before* Kerry uses “right wing” in any of his advertising. It is certainly possible that the Bush ads are quoting from some other, non-television source of Kerry campaign messaging, though looking at the creative name in the Wisconsin dataset, the ad appears to be about medical malpractice, so even this postulation might not be accurate. Regardless, the effectiveness of this attack on Bush’s part appears to have been somewhat successful, though the usual caveats about the percentage of days significant corresponding to a small number of days in practice holds here as well. Particularly in the middle-range (seven-day) groupings, these mentions did more often than not (or at least as often as not) shifted perceptions of the two men’s relative standings on being out of touch in

Bush’s favor. Outside this range, little effectiveness was found (the results for September, for example, are one grouping out of seven being significant). The rationale behind using right wing as an attack is still somewhat mysterious, though on the whole it does not appear to have made a huge impact on the perceptions of the two candidates.

**Table AII.0.29 – Risky (Bush) – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-04</b>	16.67	100.00	12.50	100.00	20.00	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	50.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.30 – Risky (Bush) – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-04</b>	33.33	100.00	25.00	100.00	20.00	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.90	25.00	12.90	25.00	22.58	0.00

Mentions of “risky” fall into the same category as the “liberal” pairing discussed above – this mention was a major focus of the Bush campaign, with over 15,000 mentions over a 35-day period beginning on September 28 and running until Election Day. As such, the exposure-only regressions only capture two days in October, making the results context-dependent. The latter table is much more helpful, and shows that the effectiveness of this mention was somewhat limited late in the campaign – it is either rarely significant and only somewhat in Bush’s favor (five- and seven-day groupings), or somewhat more often significant but in *Kerry’s* favor (14-day grouping), suggesting an odd effect where the further out from this mention people got, the more

it possessed the potential to backfire on Bush (though the consistent nature of this mention makes this conclusion difficult to confirm – it simply may be that the effect is random or a function of exhaustion about the mention specifically or the campaign generally). While highlighting Kerry’s risk was a critical point for the Bush campaign, it seems to have had only a slight and somewhat inconsistent effect on helping convince voters to perceive the senator as someone who changes his mind or flip-flops.

**Table AII.0.31 – Soft (Bush) – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	15.38	100.00	11.76	100.00	7.14	100.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	25.00	66.67	16.67	100.00	16.67	100.00

**Table AII.0.32 – Soft (Bush) – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.90	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	14.29	0.00	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00

While the Bush campaign depicted his opponent as “soft” more than 6200 times over a 25-day period in March and April, the overall effects appear to fit the pattern of many other pairings and, surprisingly, are less dependent on the quantity of ads being aired than some other previous pairings. In examining exposure-only, this mention appears to be rarely effective and diminishes as longer groupings are used (15.38% of the March and 25% of the April five-day groupings, with declining percentages in the seven- and 14-day groupings), but is almost always

in Bush's favor. However, when the number of ads is factored in alongside exposure, many of these significant findings disappear – compare the percentage of days significant in the first and second table. While something of an important theme in the early stages of the Bush campaign, this mention appears to have had a limited effect on depicting Kerry as soft in his beliefs or decisions.

**Table AII.0.33 – Taxing (Bush) – Arrogant**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	26.67	75.00	21.05	75.00	20.00	66.67
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	10.53	50.00	16.00	25.00	19.35	16.67
<b>Sep-04</b>	18.18	50.00	16.67	50.00	26.32	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	22.22	100.00	11.11	100.00

**Table AII.0.34 – Taxing (Bush) – Arrogant (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	3.70	100.00	3.70	100.00	10.71	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	14.29	0.00	17.39	0.00	24.14	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	50.00	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	23.53	0.00	23.81	40.00	29.03	22.22
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	42.86	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	3.33	0.00	6.45	100.00	6.45	100.00

As mentioned above, “taxing” was the most common negative trait mentioned by the Bush campaign in 2004, being used almost 41,000 times and on 107 days over the course of the

campaign. However, the effects of these mentions appear to differ substantially between the first and second halves of the campaign – in April, May, and June, the effects are more sustained when looking at just exposure, but in both cases the direction varies month-to-month. In April, Kerry benefits when the Bush campaign makes use of this mention, in May Bush benefits, and then in June no one benefits. Starting in July and especially in the fall, a more complicated picture emerges and stark differences exist depending on which version of the independent variable is used – in exposure-only Bush does better in September and October, especially when larger groupings are used, while in the second table Bush does much worse in August and slightly worse in September (though this is tough to compare, as while the short- and medium-term groupings end up never being significant, the 14-day groupings are more likely to be significant). Overall, then, the effect of mentioning Kerry as “taxing” appears to have had an inconsistent effect on relative perceptions of the two men when it comes to being arrogant.

**Table AII.0.35 - Unpatriotic (Bush) - Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-04</b>	50.00	75.00	36.36	75.00	16.67	66.67
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	4.55	100.00	3.85	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	15.00	100.00	16.67	100.00	35.48	100.00

**Table AII.0.36 - Unpatriotic (Bush) - Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-04</b>	22.22	0.00	18.18	50.00	5.55	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	7.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Finally, mentions of his opponent as unpatriotic appears to have helped Bush in the later stages of the campaign, though this pattern is evident only when examining exposure-only – when the number of ads in the exposure period is also factored in, many of the significant results become insignificant (and, curiously, some of the earlier insignificant results become significant – the percentage of days significant flips considerably in September and October, and the direction of these results also changes substantially between the two tables). When just exposure is used, the mentions appear to become more effective as longer timeframes are considered and are – in September and October, at least – always in Bush’s favor. In August, the effects are more often than not in Bush’s favor, though it should be mentioned again that the number of groupings that are significant are still relatively small (the 50% significant in the five-day groupings, for example, represent four out of eight). While the differences between the two tables may be more a function of methodology than anything else, the overall picture suggests that while painting his opponent as unpatriotic did have some benefit for Bush, this effect was not highly consistent over the later months of the 2004 campaign.

***Results – Kerry (Positive)***

**Table AII.0.37 – Bipartisan (Kerry) – Effective**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



**Table AII.0.38 – Bipartisan (Kerry) – Effective (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While bipartisanship was not highly stressed by Kerry, part of the limited effects found here are potentially due to the timing of questions by the NAES – only 86 of the 295 mentions of this trait are covered by these regressions, and these 86 mentions are all in the final four days of the campaign (the remaining 209 were run in May, when the “Effective” question was not being asked). Whether due to the relatively small number or the late presence (or both) of these mentions, it is not highly surprising that no significant effects are found. Kerry perhaps could have bolstered perceptions of himself as an effective politician with a more concentrated push that came earlier in the campaign, but as it stands these mentions appear to have had no effect on respondents’ perceptions of him or the president.

**Table AII.0.39 – Caring (Kerry) – Cares About People Like Me**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	5.88	0.00	4.76	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.40 – Caring (Kerry) – Cares About People Like Me (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	10.53	50.00	14.29	100.00	14.29	100.00
Oct-04	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Something odd occurs when comparing the effects of ads mentioning Kerry as caring using the exposure-only versus the exposure multiplied by the number of ads variables – in the former, only rarely are the cross-sectional groupings significant and never are they working in Kerry’s favor (the small percentage of significant groupings suggest that this is more a random effect than something systematic); however, when examining the more complex independent variable, the effect changes dramatically. While in September the percentage of groupings that are significant only increases slightly, they are almost always in Kerry’s favor, and in October the groupings are always significant and always in Kerry’s favor (though it should be noted that these groupings over cover two days in October).

**Table AII.0.41 – Committed (Kerry) – Trustworthy**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Apr-04</b>	25.00	50.00	10.00	0.00	13.64	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	15.38	0.00	29.41	60.00	11.54	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	11.11	100.00	22.22	100.00	15.38	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	37.50	100.00	40.00	100.00	29.41	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	5.26	100.00	10.53	100.00	5.26	100.00

**Table AII.0.42 – Committed (Kerry) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04</b>	15.38	0.00	20.00	0.00	22.73	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	33.33	75.00	35.71	40.00	9.52	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	4.55	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	12.50	100.00	30.00	100.00	29.41	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While John Kerry made a point of highlighting himself as committed throughout the campaign, this monthly breakdown is a bit deceiving; while Kerry (and his allies) mentioned this word over 10,000 times from April to September, over half (53.73%) were in April, and these concentrated in the last ten days of the month and 37.84% were aired in the first week of May. While mentions were made every month from June to September the numbers are much smaller by comparison (312, 525, 56, and 2, respectively). Thus, while it appears that these mentions become more effectively for Kerry as the campaign rolls on, it must be remembered that these percentages are higher because fewer and fewer days are being covered in the later months. In the early months, where mentions were much greater, it appears that these mentions only rarely corresponded to significant movement on the perceptions of the two candidates' trustworthiness. Additionally, a shift appears to occur between April and May (suggesting differential effects as the mentions disseminate more, as the April/May comparison is over an unbroken string of days with mentions of this characteristic); in April, these mentions appear to do Kerry little good, and any positive effects appear to be short-lived (compare the percentage of days correct from five- to seven- to 14-day cross-sectional groupings). In May, things get much better for Kerry, and the effect appears to get *stronger* over the longer cross-sections (though there is a dip between the

five- and seven-day groupings when the more complicated independent variable is used). In the later months, no consistent pattern emerges and substantive changes in the significant/correct percentages occur when comparing the two approaches. While the April/May transition offers some interesting findings regarding the changing effects as an advertising campaign becomes more sustained, no consistent effect for this grouping seems to persist.

**Table AII.0.43 – Common Sense Leadership (Kerry) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-04</b>	25.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	5.26	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.44 – Common Sense Leadership (Kerry) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-04</b>	42.86	83.33	43.75	85.71	30.43	85.71
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.76	0.00

Contrary to the potential pattern discussed above, the combination of Common Sense Leadership and Strong Leader suggests a *diminishing* effect as the ad campaign becomes more sustained (Kerry's 6,630 mentions of this characteristic occur over a 28-day period from mid-August to mid-September, with only a single day – September 11 – going adless). Examining exposure-only in August, effects are still more often not significant than significant and are just as often in Bush's favor than Kerry's, while in September no significant results are found. However,

when including the number of ads being run over the course of the cross-sectional groupings, August changes dramatically; while still more likely to be not significant than significant, the direction of the significant effects shift substantially in Kerry's favor (especially in the 14-day groupings). While in this second set of regressions some significant results are now found for September, these are always in Bush's favor. For some mentions, then, sustained advertising appears to have a diminishing effect, dropping off noticeably from month-to-month.

**Table AII.0.45 – Competent (Kerry) – Effective**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	5.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	30.00	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	37.50	100.00	12.50	100.00	12.50	100.00

**Table AII.0.46 – Competent (Kerry) – Effective (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	11.11	0.00	10.34	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	28.57	100.00	33.33	100.00	67.74	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	3.33	0.00	10.00	0.00	30.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	3.23	100.00	12.90	50.00	3.23	100.00

Unsurprising for a (relatively) unknown challenger running against an incumbent president, John Kerry stressed his own competence strongly throughout the 2004 campaign,

mentioning this word almost 25,000 times over 126 days total (as a reminder this study covers 244 days, from the day after Kerry clinched the Democratic nomination in early March to the first day of November). For all this focus, however, little effect appears to have been made; only in August (and then only in the 14-day cross-section) and October does exposure alone correlate to a consistent significant effect in Kerry's favor, and even here the effects are more often than not insignificant (though when significant they are always in Kerry's favor). The picture is a bit more promising when including the number of ads being aired, though the overall image is still rather inconsistent (for example, while significant effects are much greater in August, some more significant effects in September occur that are in Bush's favor and the overall percentage of significant effects in October diminishes between the two tables). However, it must be noted that August was by far Kerry's more dominant month when it came to this mention, with almost 43% coming in those 31 days. The fact that the month with the most airings is also the month with the most prevalent effects does suggest that there is some positive effect to be gained from advertising.

***Table AII.0.47 – Family Man (Kerry) – Shares Values***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	33.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	7.69	100.00	5.88	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.48 – Family Man (Kerry) – Shares Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	83.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	11.54	100.00	10.71	100.00	0.00	0.00

Describing himself as a family man appears to only slightly impact perceptions of Kerry as a man who shares the values of those responding to the NAES survey. The exposure-only approach finds generally rare significant effects that diminish as the groupings get larger (while June appears to do somewhat better it should be noted that this is mostly catching the beginning of these mentions in early July; while this does reinforce the potential discussed above that ads can have their greatest effects when first introduced to viewers, the number of days covered here is small to be particularly confident). In July, this combination is rarely significant, but when it is it is always in Kerry's favor, a finding duplicated in the exposure multiplied by number of ads regressions. The general lack of results in August and September is mainly due to there being almost no mentions over these periods (indeed, only one mention is made in September, meaning that the August results are capturing the *end* of the advertising in July – this lack of mentions is why only June and July show up in the second table).

**Table AII.0.49 – Fatherly (Kerry) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	18.18	100.00	16.67	100.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.50 – Fatherly (Kerry) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Alex Castellanos’s comments regarding perceptions of the president as a national father appear to have not substantially operated in respondents’ minds when Kerry tried to depict himself as “fatherly” – while some positive effect is found in July, more often than not these effects were not significant (and these effects disappeared entirely when moving from the simple to more complex model). One limitation stems from Kerry’s relatively half-hearted approach with this trait – “fatherly” is mentioned only 254 times over an eight-day period, suggesting this was not a major theme of the campaign. As such, it is unsurprising that little sustained effect appears to have come from these advertisements.

**Table AII.0.51 - Fiscally Conservative (Kerry) - Trustworthy**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



**Table AII.0.52 - Fiscally Conservative (Kerry) - Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with “bipartisan”, Kerry seems to have made a rather late push to paint himself as a fiscally conservative candidate (indeed, the numbers for the two mentions in the final four days of the campaign are the same, suggesting these were all contained in the same ads – fiscally conservative was not a part of the bipartisan ads aired in May, however). As with the late push for bipartisan, these ads in the final days appear to have had no significant effect on changing perceptions of either men as trustworthy – the pairings are never significant, no matter what approach is utilized or which grouping is examined.

**Table AII.0.53 – Hard Working (Kerry) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	10.00	0.00	8.33	0.00	18.75	33.33

**Table AII.0.54 – Hard Working (Kerry) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

“Hard Working” also appears to have been only a light focus for the Kerry campaign – while the ads run over a concentrated 17-day period in late September and early October, this trait is mentioned only 326 times in total. Exposure appears to have something of a strange effect – in the short- and medium-term groupings, these ads appear to rarely have a significant effect and when they do the effect is in Bush’s favor; however, in the 14-day groupings the effects become significant more often and move more in Kerry’s favor (though on the whole the effects are still more likely to accrue to Bush’s benefit). When the number of ads is included as part of the independent variable, however, all of these effects dissipate (and some significant effects appear in the short-term for September, but these are rare and not in Kerry’s favor).

**Table AII.0.55 - Honest (Kerry) - Honest**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.56 - Honest (Kerry) - Honest (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

For how much of the Kerry campaign focused on the Bush administration’s mistakes in the leadup to war with Iraq, it is somewhat surprising that the Massachusetts senator’s advertising only made mention of himself as honest 694 times (though, like with Bush in 2000, the approach

appears to have instead been to attack Bush rather than raise Kerry – “dishonest” is mentioned over 16,500 times in advertisements for Kerry, almost 24 times more than the positive trait). Especially confounding is the decision by the NAES researchers to not ask about perceptions of the candidates as honest throughout the entire campaign; this question was only posed to respondents from September 17 to 26, meaning that only a handful of the (already) few Kerry ads mentioning this trait were able to be analyzed. Given the relative paucity of ads from Kerry mentioning this trait and the highly constrained number of days for measurement of the dependent variable, it is not particularly surprising that no significant effects were found.

***Table AII.0.57 – Leader (Kerry) – Strong Leader***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04 -</b>	-		0.00	0.00	33.33	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	25.00	66.67	14.29	100.00	4.76	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.11	50.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	18.18	0.00	20.00	33.33	8.00	50.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	20.00	100.00	40.00	100.00	40.00	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AII.0.58 – Leader (Kerry) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04 -</b>	-		50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	19.35	33.33	16.13	40.00	35.48	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	7.69	50.00	3.57	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Again unsurprising given that he was challenging a sitting president, John Kerry focused strongly on depicting himself as a leader in his advertising. In total, this characteristic was mentioned over 16,200 times and only mentioned on 68 days, with May and July being by far the most dominant months for this message (with 8,453 and 7,195 mentions, respectively). While not part of a sustained daily campaign, the results for these two months in particular show a diminishing effect for these mentions, especially when examining the more complex approach. When only exposure is used, Kerry tends to do fairly well in May particularly as the groupings get larger, though the percentage of days significant also goes down, making the increase in percentage of days correct somewhat misleading. In July, exposure-only regressions also diminish as the groupings get larger, with effects more in Kerry's favor as the groupings get larger (though the same caveat applies here). However, when the number of ads is included alongside exposure, the pattern reverses in a number of ways – the percentage of days significant overall goes up in May as the cross-sectional groupings get larger, while in July the percentage of days significant still declines but the percentage correct does so as well. Under this second approach, sustained advertising appears to reverse the positive effects found in later periods (though it should be mentioned here again that these months are treated as isolated events rather than iterative events). Some marginal effects are found in the less-dominant months, but these are either rarely significant or covering too few days (August in the exposure-only table, for example) to give much confidence that they are non-random effects.

**Table AII.0.59 - Patriotic (Kerry) - Shares Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	16.67	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	18.18	25.00	15.38	25.00	19.35	16.67
<b>Sep-04</b>	16.67	60.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	8.33	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.60 - Patriotic (Kerry) - Shares Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	28.57	75.00	36.67	63.64	6.45	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	10.34	0.00	10.00	0.00	33.33	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	9.68	66.67	9.68	33.33	3.23	100.00

While Kerry did tend to mention his patriotism fairly regularly throughout the campaign, over 95% of his almost 10,250 mentions of this characteristic came in August. Results for that month suggest a fairly limited benefit from just exposure, with some additional benefit found when including the number of ads being aired mentioning that trait. In the former table, the effects are significant only somewhat often (less than 20% of the time in all groupings), and are more often benefitting Bush rather than Kerry. However, when looking at the latter table the effects are significant somewhat more often (though more often in the short- and medium-term groupings, with a substantial *drop* in the long-term groupings). That being said, these effects are much more often in Kerry's favor (though the caveat about declining percentages of days significant applies heavily for the 14-day grouping here). A similar effect is partially found for the October results across the two tables, though the percentage of days significant is much

smaller in these cases (especially in the second table); it is likely that these effects are more random than evidence of a sustained effect of the advertising.

**Table AII.0.61 – Progressive (Kerry) – Inspiring**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	5.00	100.00	14.29	100.00

**Table AII.0.62 – Progressive (Kerry) – Inspiring (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	3.33	100.00	9.68	100.00

While not quite as late as bipartisan or fiscally conservative, the Kerry campaign did wait until almost the second week of October to try to depict the senator as a progressive figure, airing 2,611 ads from October 7 to November 1, with only one day off in that period. These ads, however, appear to have had minimal effect in the short- and medium-term, with only slightly more effect in the longer-term groupings. These pairings are never significant in the five-day groupings, only rarely significant (but always in Kerry's favor) in the seven-day groupings, and only slightly more often significant in the biweekly groupings (again always in Kerry's favor).

**Table AII.0.63 – Protector (Kerry) – Cares About People Like Me**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	12.50	100.00	10.00	0.00	11.76	50.00

**Table AII.0.64 – Protector (Kerry) – Cares About People Like Me (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Surprising for an election where Social Security was again a major point of contention between the two candidates (perhaps even more than in 2000, given President Bush’s proposed privatization of the program [CITE]), John Kerry barely made mention of himself as a protector, waiting until the final 20 days of the campaign and then only mentioning it 532 times. As with a number of previous pairings, substantial differences exist between the two approaches; looking at just exposure, the short- and long-term pairings are more likely to be significant and in Kerry’s favor (though the percentage of days significant are small in both cases), while in the medium term the effect is in Bush’s favor when significant. In the exposure multiplied by the number of ads approach, these pairings are never significant.

***Table AII.0.65 – Proven (Kerry) – Has Right Experience***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Mar-04	6.25	100.00	0.00	0.00	6.90	100.00
Apr-04	11.11	33.33	6.90	50.00	13.79	25.00
Jun-04 -	-	-	-	-	33.33	100.00
Jul-04	12.50	100.00	15.00	66.67	4.17	100.00

***Table AII.0.66 – Proven (Kerry) – Has Right Experience (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Mar-04	5.56	100.00	0.00	0.00	3.45	100.00
Apr-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jun-04 -	-	-	-	-	33.33	100.00
Jul-04	25.00	75.00	11.11	50.00	15.79	100.00

Likely in response to the Bush campaign’s strategy of attempting to define Kerry quickly following his clinching of the Democratic nomination (CITE), the Kerry campaign or (more likely, given the campaign’s money situation coming out of the primaries – “On March 10 we had 2.3 million cash on hand...[versus] the Bush campaign ha[ving] 114 million dollars” [Mary Beth Cahill, quoted in Jamieson (2006, 33)]) ran over 6,800 ads describing the senator as proven, with 80.61% of those airing in March and a further 13.39% airing in April (and most of those in the first few days of the month). As with the previous pairing, exposure-only suggests a much stronger effect than exposure multiplied by the number of ads, particularly in these more dominant months. In the former table, only the shortest and longest groupings have any significant effects in March and, while rare, they are always in Kerry’s favor. The effects appear to be more often significant in April, though the effectiveness drops substantially, with the effects either being split equally between the two candidates (seven-day grouping) or more often in



Bush's direction rather than Kerry's (five- and 14-day groupings). Some slight effects are found for June and July, though the numbers of days with ads in these months are much smaller. Examining the second table sees some stark differences – while the March results are fairly similar (the only change being a slight decline in the percentage of days significant), all the significant effects for April dissipate when using this more complicated approach.

**Table AII.0.67 – Reformer (Kerry) – Inspiring**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	83.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	23.08	33.33	23.53	50.00	20.00	60.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.68 – Reformer (Kerry) – Inspiring (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	83.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	19.23	20.00	28.57	37.50	17.24	80.00

While describing himself as a reformer was not a major focus for Kerry (just over 1,800 mentions over 23 days in July), there does appear to have been some impact from these mentions. As noted, July is the only month where these ads actually aired, meaning that the June results above are catching the change period before and after ads started airing. As with a number of previous results, this appears to be a period of substantial effect – the biweekly groupings that

contain pre- and post-beginning days are more often than not significant and are always in Kerry's favor. In July, some substantive results are found, though the positive effect for Kerry appears to diminish over time. While the days are more likely to be insignificant than significant, at least a fifth of the groupings in each column are significant, with positive effects for Kerry more common as the groupings get longer (a pattern replicated in the exposure multiplied by number of ads results, though the short- and medium-term effects are less often in Kerry's favor).

**Table AII.0.69 – Religious (Kerry) – Shares Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	33.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	7.69	100.00	5.88	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.70 – Religious (Kerry) – Shares Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04</b> -	-	-	-	-	83.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	11.54	100.00	10.71	100.00	0.00	0.00

While the effect of religious mobilization on the part of the Bush campaign is widely cited as a possible contributor to his victory in 2004 (CITE), John Kerry also attempted to highlight his faith as a credit in his favor (albeit it a tortured one given his difficulties with squaring his abortion stances with that faith, an issue that would bring in not only the candidate

but high-ranking Catholics as the campaign wore on [CITE]). Kerry or his allies made mention of him as a religious man 6,370 times over the course of the campaign, though all but one of these mentions came in the month of July (one mention was made on September 15 – the June and August results in the exposure-only table, then, are catching the beginning and end of the campaign in July, respectively). As with the previous pairing, the June results suggest that the beginning of the advertising push was helpful to Kerry, though the July results suggest that this effect began to diminish as the campaign went on. While significant effects were always in Kerry’s favor, these effects decline in prevalence as the groupings get larger, with none of the 14-day groupings significant in either table. Depicting himself as religious may have had slight and short-lived benefits for Kerry, but these do not appear to be particularly consistent over the course of the advertisements mentioning his religious convictions.

**Table AII.0.71 – Self Made (Kerry) – Has Right Experience**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04 -</b>	-	-	-	-	33.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	12.50	100.00	15.00	66.67	4.17	100.00

**Table AII.0.72 – Self Made (Kerry) – Has Right Experience (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-04 -</b>	-	-	-	-	33.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	25.00	75.00	11.11	50.00	15.79	100.00

While not a large part of his background, Kerry did make some mention of himself as “self made” in July, with just slightly over 400 ads mentioning this trait. As with the previous pairings, the June results continue to catch the beginning of this campaign and show some substantive effect as the ads are introduced to voters. In July, the effects are more often than not in Kerry’s favor (in both tables, though the seven-day results in the second table are evenly split between the two candidates) though significant results are relatively rare in the exposure-only results and only slightly more common in the exposure multiplied by the number of ads results. In terms of swaying respondents to the NAES that he had the right experience to be president, mentioning himself as self made appears to have had only a slightly positive effect for Kerry.

**Table AII.0.73 – Tough/Fighter (Kerry) – Strong Leader**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Apr-04</b> -	-		0.00	0.00	33.33	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	25.00	66.67	14.29	100.00	4.76	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.41	50.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00	6.67	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	25.00	100.00	40.00	87.50	45.16	92.86
<b>Sep-04</b>	17.65	100.00	10.53	100.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.74 – Tough/Fighter (Kerry) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Apr-04</b> -	-		50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>May-04</b>	19.35	33.33	16.13	40.00	35.48	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.55	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	9.67	33.33	6.45	0.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	29.41	100.00	31.58	100.00	38.46	90.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	12.50	100.00	8.33	100.00	4.76	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	3.23	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with Gore in 2000, the Democratic candidate in 2004 made a point of describing himself as tough or a fighter over the entirety of the general election campaign, mentioning these traits (or a close equivalent) over 25,000 times. Over 94% of these mentions came in the months of May (33.64%), July (32.25%), and October (28.25%), with substantial drop-offs in the months in between (3.43% of the total was aired on November 1, but were not included in analysis). The results for these dominant months present something of a mixed bag – in May Kerry tends to do fairly well, especially when examining the more complex results, though more often than not the results are not significant. When they are significant, however, they tend to benefit Kerry, a pattern that gets stronger as the groupings get larger. In the exposure-only table, however, July and October tend to be much worse for Kerry – when the results are significant they are always in *Bush*'s favor (though this pattern is reversed for July in the exposure multiplied by number of ads table; October is still less effective for Kerry in this table). The in-between months tend to be very good for Kerry, but given the much smaller number of days being covered the percentages of days significant should be taken with the usual caveats. Kerry's push to describe himself as tough or a fighter appears to have started somewhat strongly and diminished in effectiveness over the course of the campaign. As has been mentioned before, whether or not this is a consequence of

the law of diminishing returns or a more complicated interplay with other ads being run mentioning candidate traits is beyond the scope of this research. Some effect appears to have been generated from these ads, at least early on in their airings; what caused the diminishment and reversal of these effects requires more exploration.

***Results – Kerry (Negative)***

***Table AII.0.75 – Career Politician (Kerry) – Out of Touch***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	12.50	0.00	10.00	0.00	5.88	0.00

***Table AII.0.76 – Career Politician (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While Kerry attempted late in the campaign to depict his opponent as a career politician, this was not a major focus of his strategy (in many ways it is more surprising Kerry tried this line at all, given he had been a senator for almost 20 years). Running just over 2700 ads across the final eight days of the campaign, Kerry’s attempts to raise the perception of the president as someone who had been too long involved in politics did little to influence views of either candidate as out of touch – in the exposure-only regressions, the pairings are rarely significant and never in Kerry’s favor, while in the more complex regressions they are never significant.

***Table AII.0.77 – Dangerous (Kerry) – Reckless***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-04</b>	25.00	100.00	40.00	100.00	76.47	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	12.50	100.00	10.53	50.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.50	0.00	10.00	0.00	17.65	66.67

***Table AII.0.78 – Dangerous (Kerry) – Reckless (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-04</b>	0.00	0.00	10.00	100.00	52.94	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	5.56	100.00	8.00	100.00

Despite the themes of national security and the importance Kerry put on better stewardship of foreign policy, the Democratic nominee did not make a presentation of his opponent’s re-election as particularly “dangerous”, running only 117 ads that used that word (or a close equivalent) across 20 days in the late summer and fall. These truncated numbers help contextualize the results above – while it appears that these ads were particularly effective in August (especially as the timeframe being considered grew), in reality these percentages correspond to relatively small numbers (though as the seven- and 14-day groupings suggest, some benefit did appear to accrue to Kerry as these ads were disseminated). The single mention in September makes the more complex regressions fall victim to unchanging independent variables (as the ad numbers for the days after that airing were all 0), but in the exposure some effect still is found (though it is hard to reject random chance or some other explanation for the movement here). In October the effect appears to be reversed, although in the 14-day groupings Kerry still does receive an advantage more often than not. As with a number of previous pairings, the effect

here appears to be stronger when the mentions are first made and then decline as the campaign continues, though the relative paucity of ads in this pairing do suggest some interesting effects are possible even in lighter campaigns.

***Table AII.0.79 – Dishonest (Kerry) – Says One Thing, Does Another***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Mar-04</b>	0.00	0.00	8.33	100.00	29.63	100.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	28.57	12.50	26.67	12.50	30.00	22.22
<b>May-04</b>	13.33	0.00	10.53	0.00	7.41	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	15.38	100.00	11.54	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	0.00	0.00	14.29	0.00	44.44	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	11.11	0.00	9.09	0.00	6.25	0.00

***Table AII.0.80 – Dishonest (Kerry) – Says One Thing, Does Another (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Mar-04</b>	5.56	100.00	4.55	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	18.18	100.00	15.38	50.00	11.11	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	11.11	0.00	15.00	0.00	11.11	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	19.35	83.33	25.81	100.00	22.58	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.90	100.00	25.81	100.00	29.03	100.00

As mentioned above, Kerry made the focus on honesty in the 2004 election through a more negative mention, attacking the president as being dishonest rather than highlighting himself as an honest man. Mentions of “dishonest” were the third most common negative trait for



Kerry, as measured by the Wisconsin researchers (second only to failure and friend of special interests, both discussed below). In total, 16,584 ads made mention of this word (or a close equivalent) over 152 days of the 244 measured here (including a 51-day barrage from September 12 to Election Day that would have been 92 days if Kerry had not chosen to avoid airing these negative ads on September 11). While there was a sustained push for these ads in mid-March (3365 in a week from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>), the summer sees a much greater attempt to raise questions about Bush's honesty with the voters (indeed, only 3443 are aired at all from March to the end of May, meaning that less than 100 were aired outside the busy week in March). This disparity in focus appears to reinforce some of the lessons found in the previous pairing – in these early months, the message appears to be more effective than in the later months. In the exposure-only results, the pairings are not often significant in March and April but are especially beneficial for Kerry (at least when examining the mid- and long-term groupings) in March. While April does see a more mixed result, some significant results and positive effects for Kerry persist (it should be reiterated that in April a much smaller number of ads were aired – the comparison between the two approaches suggests that the effect for Bush is more a factor of exposure than the numbers, however, potentially reinforcing the largest argument developing that sustained ad campaigns are more effective when they begin and lose effectiveness as time goes on). Exposure-only analyses of May and June see a further diminishment of effect, both in terms of overall significance and correct direction (though the biweekly groupings in May are always in Kerry's favor). July sees a similar pattern as in March, with August again seeing a retreat in effectiveness that is mirrored in September (October was unable to be included in this approach, as the exposure variable was the same for every day of the month due to there being no breaks in the ads being aired).

The exposure multiplied by number of ads approach demonstrates more beneficial results for Kerry – while the overall pattern is fairly similar in both cases, the percentage of correct pairings jumps substantially across the two tables. May and June are retreats from the more successful months of March and April (with April being viewed as more effective under this approach, as noted above). July is less effective in this reading than when using exposure-only, though August is much better for Kerry in the more complex regressions. This approach allows for examination of October, which finds continued success late in the campaign – as more ads were aired (the exposure variable would also be unchanged in this approach), respondents tended to be more likely to rate Bush higher than Kerry when asked to measure the two men’s tendencies to not practice what they preached. Surprisingly, the results at the beginning (particularly in April) and end of the campaign using this approach suggest that similar successes can be found using both small and large numbers of ads, though whether this success is attainable on traits that are less salient to voters is still unclear.

***Table AII.0.81 – Failure (Kerry) – Out of Touch***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Mar-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	29.41	20.00	35.29	0.00	52.94	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	18.75	66.67	25.00	80.00	25.93	71.43
<b>Aug-04</b> -	-		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	5.56	100.00	0.00	0.00	21.43	100.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	10.00	100.00	9.09	100.00	27.27	100.00

**Table AII.0.82 – Failure (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Mar-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	8.33	100.00	8.33	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	7.69	100.00	6.67	100.00	4.55	100.00
<b>Aug-04</b> -	-		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	8.70	0.00	3.85	0.00	6.67	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	3.23	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As mentioned previously, Kerry made substantial mention of the president as a failure throughout the campaign, airing 16,790 ads that made mention of this term. Unlike with dishonest, though, this was not spread out over the course of the campaign but rather much more concentrated – these almost 17,000 mentions came across only 67 days, less than half of the days that Kerry mentioned dishonest. Almost half of these mentions (7,329) came in the last four weeks of the campaign (including 26 straight days starting on October 7). The spring/summer disparity is even starker in this pairing – before June only 122 ads mentioning Bush as a failure aired. These early ads appear to have tended to benefit Bush more than Kerry when respondents were asked to rate the two men as out of touch – particularly in April and especially as the cross-sectional groupings got larger (over half of the 17 days where these groupings started were significant in the exposure-only regressions, and none of them were in Kerry’s favor). June, September, and October tended to be much better for Kerry, with the direction of the significant groupings reversed to more often than not benefit the challenger. However, these results are altered dramatically when looking at the more complex regressions – April now becomes highly beneficial for Kerry, while September and October lose much of their positive findings (June stays the same). As September and October contained the bulk of these mentions (15,176 in

total), this reversal may be more in line with past findings regarding the possible distaste voters have for negative campaigning (CITE), though it does clash with the results from the previous pairing. These differential effects may stem from “failure” being perceived as somehow more negative (or perhaps unfair) than “dishonest”; more research is needed to explore the differential effects of mentions such as these.

***Table AII.0.83 – Friend of Special Interests (Kerry) – Out of Touch***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Mar-04</b>	0.00	0.00	4.76	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	29.41	80.00	35.29	100.00	64.71	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	0.00	0.00	10.00	100.00	11.76	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	3.85	100.00	10.71	100.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	14.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	13.64	66.67	12.50	33.33	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AII.0.84 – Friend of Special Interests (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Mar-04</b>	11.11	0.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	10.00	100.00	10.00	100.00	30.00	100.00
<b>May-04</b>	0.00	0.00	9.68	33.33	6.45	100.00
<b>Jun-04</b>	25.93	85.71	29.63	100.00	33.33	100.00
<b>Jul-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	12.90	50.00	9.68	100.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	3.33	100.00	3.33	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	6.45	100.00	12.90	50.00	25.81	75.00

As noted above, attempting to portray the president as beholden to special interests at the expense of the national interest was the most prominent line of attack undertaken by the Kerry

campaign and its allies in 2004. Over the course of 192 days (including an unbroken streak of 36 days from late September up to Election Day), ads promoting Kerry made mention of this trait a total of 62,309 times. The final months saw the lion's share of these mentions – in that previously mentioned unbroken streak in the fall, almost half of the mentions (35,779) were made. As with a number of Kerry's more prominent mentions, this approach appears to peak more in the mid-spring and mid-summer and diminish in between, though in this case even many of the "sparse" months are still incredibly active (3,562 mentions in March, 7,329 in April, 5,401 in May, 2,819 in June, 1,291 in July, 5,322 in August, 819 in September, and 35,228 in October). This particular mention, then, is more of a mainstay for Kerry than even some of the more prominent mentions, being aired consistently over the course of the entire campaign. The exposure-only analysis here presents both confirmations and reversals of the preceding patterns – while effects benefitting Kerry are somewhat prevalent in March and grow substantially in April, these effects begin to taper off in the summer months (May had no days without a mention of this trait, making the exposure-only approach fall victim to the previously mentioned lack of variation on the independent variable). Beginning in August, the effects become much less likely to be significant and when they are they more often than not work in Bush's favor, a marked shift from the effectiveness rate of the earlier period.

For the exposure multiplied by number of ads results, a substantial change occurs in the later months, continuing the same pattern in the spring months into the late summer and fall. April sees an increase in effectiveness relative to March (albeit with much fewer significant days overall), and while May is highly ineffective for Kerry June sees an April-like rise in effectiveness (with much *better* numbers compared to the first model). July becomes less beneficial for Kerry in this model, with August, September, and October all presenting better results for Kerry when the number of ads being aired during the exposure periods are taken into

account. As with a number of the pairings explored above, the reasoning for these shifts in results is unclear; suffice it to say at this point that quantity of airing does appear to play some role in overall effectiveness, though the lack of consistency in these differences across models continues to make the nature of this role uncertain.

**Table AII.0.85 – Hypocrite (Kerry) – Says One Thing, Does Another**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00	16.00	75.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	12.50	0.00	22.22	50.00	33.33	0.00

**Table AII.0.86 – Hypocrite (Kerry) – Says One Thing, Does Another (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	14.81	25.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While not a major part of his campaign, Kerry did make a sustained push in September and the first few days of October to depict the president as not being a man of his word, or a man who preached differently than he practiced. Here, too, substantial differences exist across the two regressions, though both generally tell a story of limited effectiveness. Despite the conceptual similarities between the Wisconsin trait and NAES characteristic, September only sees some benefit for Kerry in changing perceptions in his favor in the longest time period examined, though the overall percentage of significant days is still quite small. This benefit in September is diminished when taking into account the number of ads being aired during the exposure period,

and while some moderate-term effects are found in October (though only a small number of days are covered in this month in the first place), these effects disappear entirely in the second group of regressions. One possibility that has been previously mentioned is the relative lateness of this campaign as a limiting factor – by the fall, perceptions of the two men may be hardened relative to earlier periods (though for the president this hardening likely occurs much earlier in the process, another topic for future examination), meaning that any late-stage attempt to shift the focus and perceptions of voters may be running into stauncher resistance.

**Table AII.0.87 – Incompetent (Kerry) – Out of Touch**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-04</b>	25.00	0.00	30.00	0.00	10.53	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	26.67	100.00	29.41	80.00	3.85	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.88 – Incompetent (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-04</b>	13.64	100.00	8.33	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	11.54	0.00	7.14	0.00	6.45	0.00

Along the lines of Kerry focusing more on “dishonest” to push the president down rather than highlighting “honest” to raise himself up, the Democratic candidate appears to have made an effort to present the president as unable to be effective in his job in the late summer and early fall

– while 11,021 mentions were made of this trait in total, almost 99% (10,904) came in a 29-day period in August and early September. These ads appear to have had a diminishing effect over time, with (again) substantive differences depending on which design of the independent variable is used. For exposure-only, August appears to have been highly ineffective in the short- and medium-term groupings, with beneficial results for Kerry only coming when examining the long-term groupings. This benefit persists in the short-term measures in September and then begins to decline as the groupings get larger. In October, exposure-only has no significant effect on perceptions of the two men being out of touch. In the more complicated regressions, August becomes highly effective in the short- and medium-term groupings but loses all its significant results in the long-term groupings. September and October are reversed, with September never being significant but some significant findings appearing for October (though these are all in Bush’s favor). On the whole, stressing the president’s failures at competence appears to have had little consistent effect on changing perceptions of either candidate as disconnected from the political realities facing the country in 2004.

***Table AII.0.89 – Negative (Kerry) – Out of Touch***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	4.76	100.00	4.17	100.00	3.45	100.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	4.16	0.00	10.00	33.33
<b>Aug-04</b>	50.00	25.00	40.00	25.00	22.22	50.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	20.00	0.00	14.29	0.00	7.14	0.00



**Table AII.0.90 – Negative (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Mar-04</b>	16.67	0.00	9.09	0.00	10.34	0.00
<b>Apr-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	22.22	100.00	27.27	66.67	5.55	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	20.00	0.00	14.29	0.00	7.14	0.00

In a somewhat ironic twist, given that Kerry’s campaign and its allies actually ran *more* negative mentions than the Republicans (albeit by only 741), the Kerry campaign used the word “negative” to describe its opponents almost 3,900 times over the course of the year. Almost all of these came in the opening weeks of the general election, likely a pushback on the part of the Kerry campaign (or, more likely its allies) to negate the Bush strategy of going strongly early on to define its opponent in less-than-glowing terms (CITE). While the exposure-only results suggest that the March pushback did have some effect on perceptions of the president as out-of-touch, these effects are reversed in the exposure multiplied by number of ads regressions (with more days overall becoming significant in the latter approach, as well). April sees the same pattern across tables, and in both cases August becomes much more effective in this pairing for Kerry (with stronger effects in favor of Kerry found in the more complex approach). September and October are identical across the two tables. Overall, attempting to take the high ground (a relative proposition, to be sure) when being attacked does appear to have some benefit, at least when only measuring exposure to the ads in question. Picking the campaign back up does appear to have garnered some benefit as well, continuing to suggest that it is the beginning of these ad campaigns where the most effect can be achieved.

**Table AII.0.91 - Reckless (Kerry) - Reckless**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AII.0.92 - Reckless (Kerry) - Reckless (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

The last-ditch effort to paint President Bush as “reckless” may have had some effect on its associated trait, but it is highly likely that the two ads mentioning this trait that aired on November 1<sup>st</sup> had no effect on the election the next day. Coming as they did on the last day covered in these analyses, no days after could be studied.

**Table AII.0.93 – Right Wing (Kerry) – Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.94 – Right Wing (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	4.35	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though the Kerry campaign made a concerted push in the final three weeks of the campaign to describe his opponent as “right wing”, the over 3,000 mentions made appear to have had little to no effect in changing perceptions of the president as disconnected from the people. Only in the short-term groupings in the second table are any significant effects found and, while these are always in Kerry’s favor, the relatively small percentage of significant days overall suggests this is more likely a random occurrence than an indication of a true effect. As suggested above, and particularly among groups for whom “right wing” would be motivating, it is highly likely that perceptions of the president were fairly solid by the time these ads aired (starting on October 12<sup>th</sup>), making the lack of findings for this pairing not particularly surprising.

**Table AII.0.95 – Risky (Kerry) – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	14.29	33.33	25.00	33.33	32.26	50.00

**Table AII.0.96 – Risky (Kerry) – Changes His Mind/Flip Flops (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-04	16.67	0.00	22.73	0.00	35.48	36.36

Unsurprising given that he was running against an incumbent president, Kerry did not make the idea that his opponent was untested and unknown a major party of his campaign. However, the fact that almost 2,000 ads were aired making mention of Bush as “risky” may suggest that a different context was used for this term; the surprising effectiveness of these ads in shifting perceptions of the two men as changing their mind or flip-flopping further suggests that “risky” in this case meant something different than how Bush was likely using it. In the exposure-only model, the effectiveness of these mentions grows as the cross-sections get larger, though most of the benefit for Kerry disappears between the first and second tables (however, the long-term groupings stay generally effective, only diminishing slightly). The Kerry campaign appears to have gleaned some minor benefit from describing the sitting president as a risky proposition; the fact that these ads aired late in the campaign raises further questions given the relative lack of effectiveness late-stage pushes have shown thus far.

**Table AII.0.97 – Taxing (Kerry) – Arrogant**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-04 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Oct-04	7.14	100.00	6.67	50.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.98 – Taxing (Kerry) – Arrogant (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-04</b>	4.76	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Attempts to attack the president on taxes appears to have been half-hearted at best on the part of the Democrats – over 11 days in October and November, the Kerry campaign or its allies mentioned this trait a total of 22 times, most of the time only once or twice a day. The significant effects in the short- and medium-term (exposure-only) and short-term (exposure multiplied by number of ads) are likely random rather than systematic evidence of an effect in changing perceptions of Bush and Kerry as arrogant.

**Table AII.0.99 – Unpatriotic (Kerry) – Out of Touch**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-04 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	16.64	0.00	3.85	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	10.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AII.0.100 – Unpatriotic (Kerry) – Out of Touch (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-04 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-04</b>	14.29	100.00	23.33	100.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Sep-04</b>	10.34	0.00	3.33	0.00	26.67	0.00
<b>Oct-04</b>	9.68	66.67	12.90	25.00	12.90	25.00

Though Kerry and his allies attempted to paint the president as unpatriotic across a total of 59 days over the course of the campaign, over 99% of these (9,776 of 9,837) came in a two-week period in early- to mid-August. The exposure-only analysis suggests minimal effectiveness from these ads – the groupings are rarely significant and are even less often in Kerry’s favor (the only difference between the short-term groupings in September, though even here Bush benefits more often than Kerry). In the exposure multiplied by number of ads approach, however, benefits for Kerry are prevalent in August (though the overall percentage of days significant remains relatively small) and, surprisingly, fairly prevalent in October despite there only being one ad per day mentioning this trait, on average (31 total). As with risky, it is unclear why late-stage ads questioning the sitting president’s patriotism was have a sustained effect, especially when the previous month had seen the complete opposite pattern. As with a number of the patterns highlighted in this and the previous chapter, more research is needed to fully explore when and why particular appeals can be beneficial for presidential candidates.

## APPENDIX III – 2008 ELECTION RESULTS BY MONTH

### *Results – Obama (Overall)*

**Table AIII.0.1 - Experience (Obama) - Erratic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.2 - Experience (Obama) - Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Somewhat surprising given the lines of attack levied against him in both the primary and the general election, Senator Obama gave little attention to attempting to discuss “experience” in the general election, only running 32 ads total making mention of the term across five days in late October. It is not particularly shocking, then, that these late, sparse ads had no significant effect on changing perceptions of John McCain as erratic.

**Table AIII.0.3 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.4 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

One late-election quirk of the NAES is the inclusion of the Erratic question in the first place; this question began to be asked on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and continued up to Election Day. This late inclusion clearly presents some minor issues when attempting to measure the effects of advertising, though in this case the issue is more with the Obama campaign's carpet bombing campaign when it came to making negative mentions of George W. Bush toward the end of the general election timeline. Unsurprisingly, negative mentions of George W. Bush were a major theme for the Obama campaign – almost 40% of his total mentions were in this category, with a total count of 134,132 over the 154 days of the general election campaign. 118 days total of the campaign had an ad with this kind of mention, and not a single day went by starting on August 4<sup>th</sup> without a negative mention of George W. Bush. When using exposure only, however, this blanket coverage becomes an issue; since there is no break in the airing of ads the value of the exposure variable is the same for most every day in the sequence (with slight changes only coming as the ads start and stop). This prevents any useful results from being found, as no variation in the independent variable exists; hence, the blank first table. Including the number of ads being run as



a multiplier helps circumvent this lack of variation, though as the results in Table X.X show, these ads – numerous though they were – did little to change perceptions of the Republican candidate as erratic over the waning days of the campaign.

**Table AIII.0.5 – Iraq (Obama) – Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.6 – Iraq (Obama) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

While not as prevalent as targeted mentions of the incumbent he hoped to replace, Iraq was a fairly consistent presence in advertising for Obama. With almost 45,000 mentions over 109 days, the war was a major issue for Obama. Though not as dominant in terms of days or consistency as mentions of George W. Bush, the unbroken streak from October 17<sup>th</sup> through November 3<sup>rd</sup> overlaps with the timing of the Erratic question and thus presents the same lack of variation issue for exposure-only as noted above. Even when the more complex independent variable is used, however, no significant effects are found; while McCain’s positioning on Iraq was something of an issue for him over the course of the general election campaign, Obama’s

making mention of the war seems to have had no effect on changing perceptions of his opponent as erratic as the campaign came to a close.

***Table AIII.0.7 – Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Sep-08</b>	20.00	50.00	21.43	66.67	3.70	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.8 – Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Sep-08</b>	22.22	50.00	10.00	50.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Despite the intense competition between his wife and Senator Obama in the primary and the seemingly personal dislike Bill Clinton had for Barack Obama (at least in the primary, see Balz and Johnson/Heilemann and Halperin), positive mentions of the former president were a strong focus for the Democratic candidate, at least in September. For just over two weeks starting in mid-September, the Obama campaign ran almost 10,800 ads making positive mention of Bill Clinton; these ads appear to have had only a limited impact on changing perceptions of the two candidates' having the correct judgment to be president, however. The exposure-only results are bit more optimistic, particularly in the middle- (seven-day) and long- (14-day) term cross-

sections, though results are not strong overall. For the most part, these groupings were not significant, suggesting that exposure or exposure multiplied by number of ads was not corresponding to any substantive movement in the gap between Obama and McCain on this trait; while the effects that were found were more often than not in Obama's favor (or at the very least 50-50), the percent of days significant in each grouping are often small, meaning that these large correct *percentages* are corresponding to relatively small numbers of actual *days*.

One possibility that will occur multiple times throughout this analysis should be mentioned here; given the relatively late-stage nature of these pairings (a function of when Obama ran these ads, but this concern is a possibility for any September or October discussion), it is possible that opinions about the two candidates begin to harden as Election Day draws near. That is, barring any massive event that shakes the contours of the campaign, the volatility and changeability of the NAES trait questions may diminish more as a function of people becoming firm in their opinions about the two men running for the presidency. While this is not a unique issue to 2008, there is reason for optimism that this concern is potentially *less* operant in this election than in the previous two. Unlike the previous two, there were some fairly late-stage yet still consequential events that were viewed, at least contemporaneously, as having upended the campaign to date; more importantly, these events offered a chance for voters and observers to reexamine their thoughts about aspects of the candidates, such as judgment. In particular, the economic developments in the fall, McCain's suspension of his campaign in late September, the drama over McCain's participation in the first debate, and both his and Obama's participation in negotiations and discussions over the proper course of action all represent fairly substantive occurrences that may have presented opportunities for change in perceptions of the two men (especially given how involved Obama was perceived to have been in responding to the crisis versus McCain [CITE]). While there may be some hardening on the part of voters in regards to

perceptions of character traits, the 2008 election is likely less vulnerable to that sort of ossification than the previous two elections discussed.

However, the particulars of the Wisconsin “traits” available do present an issue given the previous discussion. While early campaigning focused heavily on national security generally and Iraq in particular, the shift to economy issues over the summer and fall may mean that those mentions will be less influential generally – this may be a possible alternative explanation for any lack of consistent, substantive findings in the fall when examining the more national security-oriented Wisconsin mentions. As noted above, these were selected for inclusion due to their being highlighted as individual questions in the dataset itself; the Wisconsin dataset does contain a more general policy mention question (coded along the lines of the previous chapters’ trait questions) that does include economic matters, but outside of this no specific questions about economic mentions are asked. Future research can and should look to determine if there was a shift in effectiveness as certain policy issues became more or less salient but given that this current project is more concerned with personality traits instead of policy stances, such an examination is outside the scope of this chapter.

***Table AIII.0.9 – George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-		20.00	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	6.25	100.00	4.00	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	0.00

**Table AIII.0.10 – George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President**

**(Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	20.00	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	14.81	25.00	24.14	14.29	12.90	25.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	22.58	0.00	29.03	0.00	32.26	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	100.00	3.33	100.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.90	0.00	16.13	0.00	22.58	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As noted above, negative mentions of the incumbent president were a major part of the Obama campaign advertising in 2008. When it comes to shifting perceptions of the two men's judgment in office, though, a generally inconsistent (and diminishing) effect in Obama's favor is found. In the exposure-only results, the airing of these ads in June and July corresponds to positive effects for Obama but very little overall significance (one note – the June results are only listed for the 14-day cross-sections, as these groupings cross into July, when the ads actually started airing). A similar result is found for August, though in these groupings the effects are in *McCain's* direction instead. This general pattern of a beginning success followed by a reversal are continued when the scope is expanded via the exposure multiplied by number of ads regressions (as noted above, exposure only causes many of the days in August, September, October, and November to be dropped from analysis due to their being no variation in the independent variable – exposure times ads avoids this). While in September some positive effects are found in the five- and seven-day groupings (though again very small amounts of significant results generally), the reverse is found for the 14-day groupings. In October, more days are significant but the effect is always working against Obama. In November no significant results are found (though it should

be noted that the results for November in these regressions only cover three days, as no questions [and hopefully no ads!] were in the field after Election Day).

This general pattern of declining utility and reversed effects has been noted in multiple other pairings in the previous chapters – one possibility is that continued hammering of a particular theme wears out voters and begins to taint the source of messaging rather than the intended target (assuming, in this case, that negative mentions of Bush were primarily used for attack – later regressions that break out the ads by overall purpose will allow for a more direct test of this possibility). The pattern also seems to be stronger significant effects in the months when the turn is occurring (compare August and October to July and September), though why this would be occurring is unclear.

**Table AIII.0.11 – Iraq (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	5.56	100.00	15.00	66.67	48.15	92.31
<b>Jul-08</b>	17.65	0.00	26.32	20.00	11.54	33.33
<b>Aug-08</b>	46.15	33.33	53.33	37.50	17.65	33.33
<b>Sep-08</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	20.00	0.00	23.53	0.00	14.29	0.00

**Table AIII.0.12 – Iraq (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	11.76	100.00	26.32	100.00	34.62	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.00	0.00	29.63	12.50	25.81	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	22.73	0.00	37.50	0.00	45.16	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	100.00	3.33	100.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	6.45	50.00	6.45	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The results for Obama campaign ads mentioning Iraq and perceptions of his and McCain’s judgment to be president follow a somewhat similar pattern to the previous grouping, though in many cases the Iraq results suggest these mentions were more favorable to Obama than mentions of the incumbent. In the exposure-only results, a clear benefit is found for June, with increasing effectiveness as the groupings get larger (both in terms of overall significance and correction direction). July represents a drop-off, though the pattern of increasing effectiveness across the three cross-sectional groupings remains. August is generally effective, though there is a steep decline from the middle- to long-term groupings. September and October are highly ineffective – there are much fewer significant groupings comparatively and they are never in Obama’s favor.

Looking at the more complicated regressions, a generally similar pattern is found but some substantial changes exist across the two tables. The drop-off from June to July persists, though in the latter table August is much less beneficial for Obama, while September and October present some successes (though much less significant results overall). This decline in effectiveness might again be suggesting that by the end stage of the campaign there is simply less variation in perceptions, that by that late point people have made their minds up about the

candidates' traits; in this case, however, that does not appear to be the issue. On the contrary, the variance in responses for Obama increases as the campaign goes on, as does McCain's.

Substantively, these changes are very small (one or two points, total, with a large jump in November that is more attributable to a much smaller sample size for the month), but the pattern holds for both men.

**Table AIII.0.13 – Experience (Obama) – Has Right Experience to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	7.69	0.00	6.67	0.00	9.09	0.00

**Table AIII.0.14 – Experience (Obama) – Has Right Experience to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	12.50	0.00	10.00	0.00	11.76	0.00

Though one of the most direct pairings discussed yet, Obama making mention of experience appears to have had little substantive impact on perceptions of him having the right experience to be president relative to McCain. Though some minor significant results are found, none of them are in Obama's favor and the relatively small percentages of significant results (in either table) limit the confidence in these results as representing real shifts in the balance between perceptions of the two men. A large constraint here is the independent variable itself – as noted



above, Obama barely made mention of this trait and did so in the waning days of the campaign, meaning that there is relatively little chance that this push could be incredibly effective. A second possible limit is the lateness of the results themselves – given how central experience was to both the primary and general election messaging against Obama, it is highly likely that most people had made up their mind about his relative experience by October (or, put differently, that those who had doubts but were persuadable had already been persuaded). Indeed, the mean and variance of the experience gap variable are remarkably stable from June to November (with McCain typically having a two-point lead for the month); Obama’s individual rating is even more stable, its mean moving only about 0.3 units over the entirety of the general election campaign (and with this increase coming rather steadily from June to October). Why the Obama campaign or its allies chose to reinforce the experience theme at the late stage that it did is something of a mystery; regardless, the advertising itself appears to have had little direct impact on boosting perceptions of the young senator as having the right experience to be president.

***Table AIII.0.15 – Iraq (Obama) – Patriotic***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	11.11	100.00	25.00	100.00	29.63	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.75	33.33	5.26	0.00	3.85	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	38.46	40.00	40.00	50.00	23.53	50.00
<b>Sep-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	13.33	0.00	11.76	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.16 – Iraq (Obama) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	16.00	50.00	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	31.82	0.00	45.83	0.00	58.06	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	3.23	0.00	6.45	0.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Making mention of Iraq appears to follow something of the same pattern as a number of the previous pairings, though this only appears to be the case for the exposure-only results. For the first table, June, July, and August see generally positive results for Obama (with some variation in July and August, particularly in the five- and seven-day groupings), though still generally low percentages of significant days overall. In September and October, however, no benefit for Obama is found; yet again, early patterns of benefit shift to negative results in the fall. The exposure multiplied by number of ads results, on the other hand, find much fewer significant days overall and only rare instances of positive benefits for Obama (the five-day groupings in July and the 14-day groupings in October being the only instances of any positive benefit for the Democratic candidate). Any positive effect on changing perceptions of Obama's patriotism relative to McCain, then, appears to have been limited to the summer.

**Table AIII.0.17 - Terrorism (Obama) - Patriotic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	60.00	23.08	60.00	11.11	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	6.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.18 - Terrorism (Obama) - Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.00	25.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	14.29	100.00	31.25	100.00	34.78	100.00

Unsurprisingly given the national security angle of much of the campaign, terrorism was mentioned quite a bit by the Obama campaign, though mainly in the mid-to-late summer (with only slight attention paid to the matter in the fall, when economic issues had become more prominent). Of almost 17,000 mentions, over 93% came in July and August, with the remainder concentrated in late October. Once again, a picture of declining effectiveness results, though in the more complex approach the later ads are seen as much more effective than in the exposure-only results. In the first set of results, July is always beneficial to Obama, though the number of significant days overall remains slight. August sees a boost in overall significance but a relative decline in effectiveness for Obama (though the effects are still more often than not working in his favor). In October and November, however, very rare significant effects are found (only for the five-day groupings in October) and are never in Obama's favor. By comparison, the second set of results sees less effectiveness in July, a decline still existing in August, but a substantial positive

shift in October – rather than only rarely being significant, the percentage of significant groupings increases across all three groupings and is always working in Obama’s favor. This differential, and the seeming reversal of the typical pattern of late-stage effects being rarer compared to earlier points in the campaign, is confusing. The overall monthly results for the patriotic gap do not show a significant jump across months; rather, the mean and variance of the gap for each month are remarkably stable as the campaign progresses. While Obama’s individual means do increase from the beginning to end of the campaign, most of this jump occurs between June and July; McCain’s scores are stable for most of the campaign, though a slight dip does occur between September and October. Why the exposure-only and exposure multiplied by the number of ads results would be so different (and in such a counterintuitive way, given the substantial decline in the number of ads between the summer and fall) is something of a mystery.

**Table AIII.0.19 – Iraq (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	16.67	100.00	30.00	100.00	40.74	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	50.00	5.26	100.00	7.69	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	46.15	33.33	40.00	33.33	17.65	33.33
<b>Sep-08 -</b>	-	-	-		0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	13.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.76	0.00

***Table AIII.0.20 – Iraq (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	5.88	100.00	15.79	100.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.00	0.00	25.93	14.29	16.13	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	27.27	0.00	45.83	9.09	51.61	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	3.23	0.00	3.23	0.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Even though the more specific nature of the dependent variable in this case would appear to raise the possibility that mentions of Iraq could have increased bearing (especially given that the discussion surrounding the policies of the two men were not simply about whether or not the war was a good idea but also, particularly in McCain’s case, about the best strategy to bring the war to an end one way or the other), though here a similar pattern as previous pairings is found. Though Obama made Iraq a central position of his advertising throughout the campaign, the early months find much more overall effectiveness and much more benefit accruing to the Democratic candidate than the later months (particularly in June and July, though a pattern of substantive decline in benefit for Obama occurs consistently across the summer months). The exposure-only results, however, see much more varied effect and benefit in July and August compared to the more complex model – in the latter table the late summer months see the significant effects occurring both more often and more against Obama (particularly in the mid- to long-term groupings). While some differences in the occurrence of significant results appear across the two tables in the fall, both find generally effects working against Obama (though the 14-day grouping in October in the second table sees the opposite, however, the percentage of days significant in that case remain very small).

***Table AIII.0.21 - Terrorism (Obama) - Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	37.50	66.67	20.00	100.00	10.53	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	60.00	46.15	66.67	16.67	66.67
<b>Oct-08</b>	6.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.22 - Terrorism (Obama) - Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	15.00	33.33	13.64	33.33	3.45	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	7.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.35	100.00

The results for terrorism mirror very strongly the results for Iraq, with early mentions having more significant effects and more benefit for Obama than later mentions. However, it appears that these early mentions were less effective in influencing perceptions of the two men's readiness to be a military leader compared to mentions to Iraq; one possibility is that in 2008 Iraq was a more salient issue than terrorism when it came to perceived threats (indeed, in terms of just mentions Obama's advertising mentioned Iraq over 2.5 times more than terrorism), meaning that when it came to the rubric by which potential voters were assessing a future commander in chief, terrorism was weighed much less heavily compared to Iraq. As with the previous pairing, the exposure-only typically finds both more significant days overall and more days working in Obama's favor (though again the long-term groupings in the second table are generally more

effective; however, the relatively small percentage of days significant continues to suggest that that is more random chance than a consistent pattern of effectiveness). Whether due to depressed salience in terms of political environment, comparatively less attention from the Obama campaign and its allies, or a mixture of both, terrorism appears to have been less effective than Iraq in benefitting perceptions of Obama as ready to be commander in chief.

**Table AIII.0.23 - Bill Clinton (Positive) - Ready to Be President**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.24 - Bill Clinton (Positive) - Ready to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Perhaps because of the presence of more specific questions regarding readiness, the NAES question asking generally if the candidates were ready to be president were only asked from February 1<sup>st</sup> until April 16<sup>th</sup>, and then again from May 5<sup>th</sup> through June 24<sup>th</sup>. As the general election scope for this study only began on June 4<sup>th</sup> (after Obama had become the presumptive nominee for the Democrats), much of the responses are not contained in this chapter. As Obama only made mention of President Clinton in the fall, none of those mentions are captured in this scope.

**Table AIII.0.25 - Experience (Obama) - Ready to Be President**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.26 - Experience (Obama) - Ready to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

As noted above, Obama only began mentioning experience in the waning days of the campaign; as such, the timing once again prevents those mentions from being linked to changes in perceptions of the two candidates' general readiness to be president.

**Table AIII.0.27 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct



**Table AIII.0.28 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

As with “Ready to Be President”, the NAES survey only asked respondents their thoughts on how well “Says What He Believes” described McCain and Obama until June 24<sup>th</sup>. The first Obama advertisement mentioning the incumbent president negatively aired on July 8<sup>th</sup>, once again keeping these mentions outside the range of potential influence on this trait.

**Table AIII.0.29 – Iraq (Obama) – Says What He Believes**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	20.00	50.00	41.67	80.00	57.89	90.91

**Table AIII.0.30 – Iraq (Obama) – Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	40.00	0.00	41.67	20.00	57.89	63.64

While the truncated nature of the NAES question limits a full discussion of these effects, generally there does seem to be some positive effect for Obama on perceptions of him as

someone who says what he believes when his advertising mentions Iraq. The overall effectiveness for the period in June when this trait was asked is fairly consistent across the two tables (somewhat more significant effects in the short-term in the second table, though much less significant effects in Obama's favor overall in this more complex model).

***Table AIII.0.31 – Change (Obama) – Shares My Values***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>% Days</b>	<b>Correct</b>	<b>% Days</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00		0.00		7.69	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	9.52		50.00		12.00	33.33
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50		33.33		40.00	25.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	25.00		0.00		50.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.32 – Change (Obama) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>% Days</b>	<b>Correct</b>	<b>% Days</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00		0.00		6.67	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	36.36		0.00		54.17	7.69
<b>Sep-08</b>	3.33		0.00		6.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	9.68		0.00		6.45	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00		0.00		0.00	19.35

While a focus on change was a major component of Obama's campaign messaging and advertising, these mentions appear to not have substantially benefited the perceptions of voters that he shared their values (at least relative to McCain). Looking at exposure-only, a different pattern than the typical ones discussed above is seen; early mentions in June have little significant effect on these perceptions, and this only slightly rises in July. In August, however, these

mentions become much more likely to correspond to significant changes in perceptions of the two men on “shares my values”. In September some substantive effects remain (except in the long-term groupings), but the direction shifts decidedly against Obama. While a similar pattern exists in terms of overall significance in the second table (low in July, higher in August, and declining afterwards), the effects in this model are almost never in Obama’s favor (the 7-day groupings in August being the only exception). While change was never really defined in a concrete way by the Obama campaign, it appears that even that general appeal was not connected strongly to perceptions of values in the minds of NAES respondents.

**Table AIII.0.33 – Hope (Obama) – Shares My Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	10.00	0.00	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.34 – Hope (Obama) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with his messaging on change, hope appears to have done incredibly little to influence perceptions of Obama as someone who shared respondents' values – in the exposure multiplied by number of ads approach, no significant findings are shown, and the exposure-only results are not far off (there are some slight significant effects in the short- and middle-term groupings, but these are relatively still very rare). A large part of this lack of effectiveness, though, is likely attributable to the fact that – while a large part of the conventional remembrance of the Obama campaign – hope was barely mentioned in advertising. Though this word was mentioned 11,766 times over the course of the campaign, 99.8% of those mentions came in the final five days before election day, leaving just 18 mentions for the summer months. This suggests that the limited effects found in the first table are likely random occurrences rather than substantive shifts caused by the advertising; despite the aspirational nature of appeals to hope, this appears to have been more of a campaign speech theme than a major advertising theme.

**Table AIII.0.35 – Iraq (Obama) – Strong Leader**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	11.11	100.00	25.00	100.00	51.85	92.86
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.75	33.33	5.26	100.00	7.69	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	46.15	33.33	46.67	42.86	23.53	25.00
<b>Sep-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	33.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	13.33	0.00	5.88	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.36 – Iraq (Obama) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	5.88	100.00	10.53	100.00	42.31	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.00	0.00	14.81	25.00	12.90	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	31.82	0.00	50.00	8.33	51.61	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	3.33	100.00	13.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

When determining how well the two candidates personify the concept of a “strong leader” mentions of a highly salient national security issue do not stand out as dramatically different from other important traits or mentions discussed previously. The exposure-only results show a highly effective first month (particularly when examining the long-term groupings), with dramatic drops in both overall significance and correct direction of effects for candidate Obama in the succeeding months (though August is much better than July for overall significance but worse on percentage of significant days that are in Obama’s favor). By September, little positive effect is found and by October little overall significant results are found. For the more complicated model, the generally pattern holds at the beginning but the drop-off in effectiveness is much starker – only in the 7-day groupings are any positive effects for Obama found in July, August, or September, and overall significant effects become highly rare in July and August, dissipating almost entirely by September (with percentages much lower than the first model across the board). While foreign policy and, specifically, Obama’s relative inexperience with this area was something the campaign took great pains to bolster as the campaign wore on, specifically mentioning the central national security issue of the campaign appears to have been highly limited in shaping perceptions of the two men as strong leaders.

***Table AIII.0.37 – Terrorism (Obama) – Strong Leader***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	25.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	5.26	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	60.00	38.46	60.00	22.22	75.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.38 – Terrorism (Obama) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	13.64	66.67	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00	15.38	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	6.25	100.00	0.00	0.00

One possible explanation for the relative ineffectiveness of the mentions of Iraq is that those mentions were not particularly salient for “strong leadership”, being usually depicted by the candidates (particularly Obama) as a matter more of judgment and honesty than tough stewardship (CITE, probably the Obama dumb wars comment); alternatively, terrorism might be better suited for this particular trait, given its more undefined presence as a threat and its easier connection to themes of protecting the country and being tough (see, for example, some of the Bush 2004 campaign ads discussed in the previous chapter). This theorization, however, is not strongly borne out by the results above, which find something of an inconsistent pattern of effectiveness for mentions of terrorism on perceptions of strong leadership, both within and across the models utilized.

While July and August are once again strong months for the exposure-only approach, the pattern is flipped from previous pairings; both in terms of overall significance and correct direction, August is much better than July in this case. However, in October and (the few days of) November, no significant results are found. In the exposure multiplied by number of ads approach, however, July and August are still the best months (with August once again showing increases in both percentages), but the overall percentages are much smaller overall and tend to be limited to the mid- and long-term groupings (except for July, where only the mid-term groupings have significant results). Unlike the first table, these results also show some significant results for October, though the relatively small percentage of days significant overall warrants some concern that these are random occurrences (the same could be said for August, at least the 7-day groupings). While terrorism could theoretically be more likely to influence perceptions of strong leadership, no consistent effect appears to have been generated by those types of mentions in 2008 (one possibility for the lack of effectiveness in this case is that by the late summer and certainly by August the salience of foreign policy and terrorism had waned in favor of a stronger focus on economic matters and leadership).

**Table AIII.0.39 – Experience (Obama) – Too Old (McCain)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	23.08	0.00	46.67	0.00	68.18	0.00

**Table AIII.0.40 – Experience (Obama) – Too Old (McCain) (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	50.00	0.00	90.00	0.00	94.12	0.00

While “too old” was (understandably) only asked about Senator McCain, Barack Obama mentioning experience had some substantive effects on changing respondents’ perceptions of how well that trait applied to the Republican candidate. However, some caution is warranted here given the extremely limited number of ads and days (32 ads over five days) that are included here. That said, the effect is highly consistent even across these limited time frames, especially when taking into account the number of ads being run over the exposure periods (for example, in the mid- and long-term groupings in the second table almost every single grouping sees significant movement, though in McCain’s direction). While the limited timeframe makes divining a strong effect difficult, the fact that there was still significant movement about McCain being too old just a handful of weeks before the election suggests that these ads may have contributed to shifting perceptions, especially important given that this movement occurred on a potential weakness for one of the candidates.

**Table AIII.0.41 – Experience (Obama) – Too Young (Obama)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.09	100.00



**Table AIII.0.42 – Experience (Obama) – Too Young (Obama) (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

Surprisingly, these same mentions did almost nothing to influence perceptions of the Democratic candidate as “too young” – though all the significant days were in Obama’s favor (suggesting that they were *decreasing* perceptions of him as too young while they were also decreasing perceptions of McCain as too old) the percentage of significant days is overall much smaller than in the previous tables. One possibility has to do with the nature of the ads themselves – all the experience ads running in late October were categorized in the Wisconsin dataset as being primarily focused on attacking McCain rather than promoting Obama; with this in mind it is more understandable that the general trend would be to mitigate perceptions of McCain as too old with only mild effects on mitigating perceptions of Obama as too young. The Obama ads mentioning experience were likely attempts to reinforce perceptions of McCain as a continuation of politics as usual, a tack that – while raising spectres of current politicians and dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs – also reminds viewers that John McCain has been in government for a significant period of time. While attacks on the “wrong kind of experience” (CITE) were common as part of the Obama arsenal, these lines may have had a counterintuitive effect of making respondents to the NAES poll more comfortable with having a more aged president, with some slight benefits redounding to Obama’s relative youth being seen as less of an issue (though the rationale for this effect is less obvious right away).

***Table AIII.0.43 – Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) – Trustworthy***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-08	10.00	100.00	7.14	100.00	3.70	100.00
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.44 – Bill Clinton (Positive) (Obama) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Sep-08	11.11	100.00	5.00	100.00	3.70	100.00
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As discussed above, one possible rationale for making mention of the last Democratic president was to help settle concerns about Obama’s abilities to handle the job of president. Though perhaps more an indictment of Clinton’s reputation than Obama’s, this appeal to a past president appears to have only minorly affected perceptions of the two candidates’ trustworthiness, and even these effects are likely random rather than consistent changes driven by the mentions themselves. In both models, the significant effects found are always in Obama’s direction, but at best these effects are found across 10 to 11% of the covered days, with declining percentages as the groupings get larger. While the intended strategy may have been to connect Obama with a well-known and (relatively) well-respected political leader from the past, the effect on boosting the candidate’s perceived trustworthiness appears to have been highly limited.

**Table AIII.0.45 - Change (Obama) - Trustworthy**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.08	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	43.75	28.57	45.00	33.33	51.61	12.50
<b>Sep-08</b>	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.46 - Change (Obama) - Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	7.69	0.00	13.33	0.00	9.09	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	40.91	11.11	58.33	14.29	64.52	5.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	9.68	33.33	6.45	0.00	12.90	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

In a similar vein, though somewhat more understandable, mentions of “change” appear to have generally worked *against* perceptions of Obama as trustworthy, at least when there were significant movements associated with the presence of these ads in the first place. Though some slight movement occurs in June in the exposure-only model, July sees very few groupings with significant relationships (more in the exposure multiplied by number of ads model, but even here the overall percentages are small) and these are never working in Obama’s favor. In August, however, both models see substantial upticks in the overall percentage of days significant and (albeit less so than the overall percentage) percentage of days in the correct direction. The consistent presence of stronger results in August is likely attributable in part to the presence of

convention effects, though it should be noted that the Democratic National Convention did not begin until August 25<sup>th</sup>, limiting these effects until late in the month. September sees some effects, at least in the exposure-only model, with a return to only slight effects in October (in the second table) and no significant results in November (unsurprising given the relatively few days included as part of the NAES survey). Though Obama’s discussions of change were a major component of his overall campaign messaging, their effect on helping potential voters see him as more trustworthy (at least relative to McCain) appear highly limited.

**Table AIII.0.47 – Experience (Obama) – Trustworthy**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.55	0.00

**Table AIII.0.48 – Experience (Obama) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Whether due to a limited number of ads/days and/or to the fact that the entirety of the mentions were in ads attacking instead of promoting, it is not particularly surprising to see that mentions of experience from the Obama campaign had almost no significant effect on perceptions of the two candidates’ trustworthiness (the only significant results were in the 14-day groupings in the exposure-only model, but even these results are a small percentage of overall days included

in the analysis). While experience mentions could theoretically help sway voters that the candidate can be trusted with the office they are seeking, the particulars of the Obama usage of those mentions appear to have limited their abilities to affect perceptions in this case.

***Results – McCain (Overall)***

***Table AIII.0.49 – Experience (McCain) – Erratic***

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

***Table AIII.0.50 – Experience (McCain) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As noted above, the inclusion of the “erratic” question in the NAES instrument began only on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, creating a limit for analysis of the effects of this particular mention on the part of McCain. Unsurprisingly given his clear advantages on the measure (and exacerbated by the criticism the Republican candidate received as his vice-presidential choice became more vetted in the fall [CITE]), experience was a large part of the McCain campaign, though somewhat surprising is the relative lack of these mentions until August and the ramp-up from the late summer on. For the purposes of this question, it is important to note that McCain was consistently running ads mentioning experience over the last two weeks of the campaign; as such, the

exposure-only variable does not change over this period and thus no results are reported. Even in the more complex model, though, no significant change at all is associated in perceptions of McCain as erratic when his experience is mentioned in advertising.

***Table AIII.0.51 – George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) – Erratic***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.52 – George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The McCain campaign (or, perhaps more accurately, non-campaign affiliated groups working on McCain’s behalf) had something of an inconsistent approach when it came to the incumbent president – over the 154 days measured here, over 18,000 ads supporting McCain made negative mention of George W. Bush (much more than the 157 positive mentions over this time period – more on those below). Over half of these mentions came across a three-week period in late June and early July, with the remainder mostly coming in a 10-day period in mid-to-late October. As such, only these later mentions were included (and of these only about 1250 across four days) in combination with the erratic question in the NAES. These mentions, as with the experience mentions above, appear to have had no significant effect on perceptions of McCain as

erratic. One possibility, as discussed above but perhaps more of an issue here than with some of the Obama mentions, is the lateness of the analysis – with a fortnight left to go in the campaign, it is highly unlikely that McCain could have shifted whatever perceptions voters had of him and him as connected to (or continuing) the presidency of George W. Bush. While it is clear someone working on McCain’s behalf had been trying over the course of the campaign to undercut the incumbent in order to distance the Republican candidate, by late October any connection (or independence) from the incumbent was likely established and unshakeable, despite the push to reinforce the perception in the waning days of the campaign.

**Table AIII.0.53 – George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) – Erratic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.54 – George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As mentioned above, over the course of the campaign only 157 ads making positive mention of George W. Bush were aired by the McCain campaign or its allies; of these, 138 (about 88%) were aired across a week in late October, with the remainder peppered over seven days throughout the rest of the campaign. Fortuitously, the bulk of these lines up with the window in

which the erratic question was included as part of the NAES survey; however, as with the negative mentions no significant results are found when McCain mentioned Bush positively. Given the relative lack of focus on this matter earlier in the campaign, continuing poor ratings of the incumbent, and the solidifying possibility mentioned above, this lack of results is not particularly surprising; attempting to tie himself positively to the incumbent president seems an odd late-stage gamble for McCain, and the possibility that it benefitted him in any substantive way does not appear borne out, at least when it came to diminishing perceptions of him as erratic.

**Table AIII.0.55 - Iraq (McCain) - Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.56 - Iraq (McCain) - Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Though advertising by (or on behalf of) McCain made mention of Iraq over 5,300 times, the last mention of this topic in the Wisconsin dataset was aired on October 10<sup>th</sup>, meaning that in the constrained range in which the NAES instrument asked about perceptions of McCain as erratic no ads on this topic were being aired by the Republican. As such, no results are available to report.



**Table AIII.0.57 – George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	25.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	47.62	10.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.76	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	11.11	0.00	18.18	0.00	77.78	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.50	50.00	20.00	50.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.58 – George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President**

**(Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	11.76	0.00	31.58	0.00	73.08	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.50	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though McCain did not need to make comparisons to George W. Bush to bolster his credentials as presidential material in the same way the Obama may have needed to rally the support of former president Clinton (whether due to McCain’s own experience, Bush’s unpopularity, or both), it is possible that some of the advertising mentioning George W. Bush in a negative light was – either implicitly or, less likely, explicitly – making the comparison that McCain was a better choice than even the incumbent due to his superior competence and political judgment. While this reasoning is speculative, the results above demonstrate that even if this were the intended purpose of the anti-Bush messaging, little positive benefit redounded to McCain when these ads ran, at least on this trait. The exposure-only results show a fairly inconsistent and

not very substantive effect – June and October are the months where these ads were being run the most, and present opposite and not particularly overwhelming results; October is the most consistent success for McCain, but the small percentage of overall significant days warrants caution here, and the lack of success in June is partially prone to this issue, though the long-term groupings do present a relatively high percentage of overall significant days (though little positive effect for McCain). The exposure multiplied by number of ads results are even more pessimistic – in these high-coverage months, the results are either more demonstrative of an effect in Obama’s favor (June) or see no significant results at all (October). The July results in this table warrant even more caution – the fact that only 20 of these ads aired in that month suggest that what it is likely happening is more the trailing off effect of these ads and the effects from the end of June than strong, consistent effects from the in-month ads. Overall, the picture is one of inconsistent and/or weak effects on perceptions of McCain’s judgment stemming from negative mentions of the incumbent president.

**Table AIII.0.59 – George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-08</b>	22.22	100.00	15.00	100.00	11.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	4.35	100.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.60 – George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President**

**(Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Sep-08</b>	23.08	66.67	13.33	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

*Positive* mentions of Bush, on the other hand, appear to have been something more of a boon for McCain, with the significant effects found in both approaches generally working in his favor. It should be noted, however, that the relatively small values of percentage of days significant limits the confidence that this is a meaningful, consistent effect (the percentage of significant days being so small means that in this case while most of the days/groupings are in McCain's favor, in reality these are usually only a handful out the month). Limiting this effectiveness is likely the relatively small number of ads being included here (as discussed above, the number of positive Bush mention ads was barely over 150). While it cannot be ruled out confidently that these results are more random than causal, it is interesting that even in this constrained window a more consistent pattern of benefit was found for McCain than in ads attempting to distance the Republican candidate from the co-partisan incumbent.

***Table AIII.0.61 – Iraq (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	6.25	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	16.67	100.00	14.29	100.00	23.81	60.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.04	33.33	8.00	0.00	6.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00

***Table AIII.0.62 – Iraq (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.00	100.00	18.52	80.00	3.33	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.53	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.33	0.00	10.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	20.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	10.00	100.00

Given his continuing support for the war and the depiction of Iraq as something of a matter of judgment (at least in terms of starting the war), it is perhaps surprising that any positive effects exist for McCain on this pairing. However, as with a number of previous pairings the relatively small percentage of groupings that are significant in the first place should be considered when assessing how substantial that benefit was in reality. One other surprising aspect of this particular pairing is the differences between the two approaches – the first table sees the strongest effects (relatively, anyway) in August, with minor effects in September, while the second sees July as the best month and October as the second-strongest (while the first sees little significant effects in October and these effects never working in McCain’s favor). The October differential may be reinforcing the importance of taking into account the number of ads being run instead of simply exposure, though even these results are not particularly strong (the number of significant

days being relatively small). Regardless of the methodological differences, mentioning Iraq does seem to have helped perceptions of McCain’s judgment more often than not when these mentions were having a significant effect, but those significant effects tended to come fairly infrequently.

***Table AIII.0.63 – Experience (McCain) – Has Right Experience to Be President***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	15.38	0.00	36.84	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.33	100.00	7.69	100.00	6.67	50.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	6.25	100.00	5.55	100.00	5.00	100.00

***Table AIII.0.64 – Experience (McCain) – Has Right Experience to Be President (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	10.00	0.00	33.33	0.00	84.21	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	14.29	0.00	13.04	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	4.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Despite the fact that his opponent was established by June (and this conclusion was certainly possible months before that), McCain’s first mention of “experience” in the Wisconsin dataset comes on August 25<sup>th</sup>, almost halfway through the general election campaign. Once that mention comes, this turns into a major theme of the Republican candidate’s advertising, with almost 27,800 mentions and over half of those appearing in the final three weeks (another odd

choice, given the late stage and the events that had occurred that had likely eroded the potential for the experience differential to be meaningful – see, for example, the discussion of Obama’s response to the financial crisis and the pick of Palin above). Like with the previous pairing, though some consistent positive effects are observed, particularly in the exposure-only model, it is hard to be confident that these are not simply random occurrences given how small the overall percentage of significant groupings are. Additionally, as mentioned above, it is perhaps less likely that the later months have the potential for significant movement on a trait such as this – in October, barring some massive surprise, it is highly likely that potential voters had made up their mind about whether or not McCain had the right experience to be president, further suggesting that the observed effects are more random than substantive.

**Table AIII.0.65 - Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	16.67	50.00	7.14	100.00	14.29	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.04	66.67	4.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.66 - Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.00	0.00	3.70	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50	0.00	50.00	0.00	70.59	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	33.33	13.33	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

The pairing of mentions of Iraq and patriotic present some similar patterns as the previous McCain-centric pairings, with some minor findings that suggest these mentions may have been working against him (though this only really seems to be the case for the groupings in August in the second approach). Overall, the percentage of significant days per month remains low, meaning that the results that are working in McCain’s favor might not be consistent evidence of the ads themselves having an effect. One key possibility here, though, may be the fact that for both candidates (but especially McCain), perceptions of patriotism were remarkably stable on a month-to-month basis, with McCain’s monthly average moving from 8.1 to 8.5 over the course of the campaign and Obama’s moving from 5.9 to 6.2 (it should be noted that this is not a monotonic increase – both men decrease from September to October, but Obama continues to decrease into November while McCain increases). It is possible that in the aggregate, little could be done to bolster perceptions of McCain’s patriotism given his history; as will be examined in more detail below, it may be more likely that specifically *attacking* while mentioning Iraq may have a greater impact than these results (as these results combine promotion and attack advertising). While the vast majority of McCain’s Iraq mentions (88.1%) were in ads categorized as primarily attacking, the combination may still be muddying the results and partially explaining the relative lack of effectiveness seen in this pairing.

**Table AIII.0.67 – September 11 (McCain) – Patriotic**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	36.36	0.00	60.00	0.00	86.96	5.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	14.29	0.00	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.68 – September 11 (McCain) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	35.71	20.00	56.25	0.00	86.96	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	13.64	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

In total, the McCain campaign or its allies made mention of the September 11 attacks just slightly more than 2,100 times throughout the campaign, with a large majority (81.9%) airing in the last week and a half of August (likely timed to coincide with the Democratic convention from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>). This concentration allows for an interesting conclusion to be drawn from the results presented above – in both the exposure-only and exposure multiplied by number of ads results, these ads in August appear to have worked *against* the McCain campaign, with a substantial number of significant days and most of those days coinciding with the gap in perceived patriotism moving in Obama’s favor. While the second table does see some minor effects for McCain in October, the usual caveats about the percentage of days significant is



potentially an issue in that month (though October did contain 13.1% of the total mentions). The promotion/attack grouping is not an issue here, as every single one of the September 11 mentions came in advertisements categorized as primarily intended to attack. The results suggesting that these ads may have weakened McCain on this trait may be demonstrating one of the potential pitfalls of negative advertising – especially on an event as politically weighted as this. McCain may have suffered the same effect as Romney would in 2012 in attempting to use an attack on Americans for perceived political gain, with the hit coming in this case to perceptions of his (or, more likely, his opponent’s) patriotic spirit.

**Table AIII.0.69 – Surge (McCain) – Patriotic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	23.53	75.00	19.05	100.00	9.68	66.67
<b>Aug-08</b>	16.67	50.00	7.14	100.00	14.29	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.04	66.67	4.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.70 – Surge (McCain) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.00	0.00	3.70	100.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50	0.00	50.00	0.00	70.59	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	33.33	13.33	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with Iraq, the pattern for mentions of the surge strategy is quite different across the two approaches: in exposure-only, the effect seems to generally be a positive one for perceptions of McCain's patriotism, though the typical caveats about small numbers of days being overall significant apply somewhat (July, the short-term groupings in August and September, and the long-term groupings in August are possible exceptions). Given that over two-thirds of McCain's almost 4,400 mentions of this topic came in July, the most positive effects in the exposure-only model occurring in that month suggest some possibility for these mentions to have shifted views of the two men's love of country. However, in the second table these effects diminish starkly for July with substantial increases in the percent of days significant in August (though the direction of these effects is always in Obama's favor). A similar shift is seen across the two tables in September, though the substantive nature of this shift is not as great. Exposure-only appears to have benefitted McCain more; when taking into account the number of ads being aired the nature of the effect changes dramatically. As with the September 11 mentions, the tone of the ad is not a complicating issue here – over 98% of the McCain mentions of the surge came in ads primarily intended to attack, with the rest coming in comparison ads (which were not tested separately). Mentioning the shift appears to have been more effective for McCain in bolstering perceptions of his patriotism (or undermining perceptions of Obama's) than mentioning Iraq generally, though here the effects are still not particularly consistent in terms of significant groupings overall.

**Table AIII.0.71 – Terrorism (McCain) – Patriotic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50	0.00	50.00	0.00	88.24	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	33.33	0.00	20.00	0.00	8.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	7.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.72 – Terrorism (McCain) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with mentions of September 11 specifically, general mentions of terrorism on McCain's part appear to have generally worked against him rather than for him when it came to relative perceptions of terrorism. Though McCain made token mentions of this threat in August (23 mentions from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup>), October was by far the most prevalent month for these mentions (perhaps as an attempt to draw attention from economic issues), with just under 11,000 mentions coming in those 31 days (an additional 170 came in November). While the August and September results in the exposure-only table suggest some substantive effect, the relatively small days in August warrant concern; the September results, however, are catching the start of the October push and should give some support to the idea of these mentions having some effect, particularly in the short- and medium-terms. In October, the percentage of days significant drops off substantially, though a large reason for this is the consistent presence of these ads across days, limiting the variation of the exposure variable for this month. The second table, however,

suggests that this was not the major issue limiting significance – the exposure multiplied by number of ads approach only finds significant effects in the long-term groupings, and these are rare (though in McCain’s favor). The general pattern, at least for exposure-only, appears to reinforce the findings when September 11 was examined: mentioning terrorism appears to not substantially benefit the candidate behind the ads, at least when it comes to perceptions of patriotism. This finding is further reinforced by the tonal breakdown of the ads: as with September 11, every one of the McCain mentions of terrorism were contained in attack ads. Whether due to its linkage to a tragic event or (more likely) the disconnect between mentions of this issue and the pressing issues facing the country at the time of their airing, mentions of terrorism did not provide McCain with any positive perceptions when it came to love of country.

**Table AIII.0.73 – Iraq (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	8.33	0.00	6.25	0.00	3.85	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	8.33	100.00	7.14	100.00	28.57	50.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00

***Table AIII.0.74 – Iraq (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.00	100.00	11.11	66.67	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.41	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

As noted above, the vast majority of McCain’s advertisements making mention of Iraq were primarily intended to attack his opponent, with just over 10% primarily intended as promotional for the Republican. This strategy, unsurprisingly given public opinion on the war and other findings discussed above regarding the efficacy of negative advertising on perceptions of presidential characteristics. The differences between the exposure-only and exposure-multiplied by number of ads results only serve to reinforce the relative ineffectiveness of these particular mentions on bolstering perceptions of McCain as ready to be commander in chief relative to Obama. In both models, the early months present either a mild benefit for Obama when McCain mentions Iraq (exposure-only) or a change from benefit to Obama to a (very slight) benefit for McCain from June to July (exposure including number of ads). August is substantially different across the two tables; in the first, McCain gets the benefit of most, if not all, of the significant groupings, while in the second table only the long-term groupings have any significant results and they are always working against McCain. September and October see a similar deviation across the two tables as in June and July, though here the flip is even more complete (positive McCain results in September in the first table disappear in the second, while the opposite is true for October). All told, mentioning Iraq does not appear to have consistently benefitted McCain when attempting to depict himself as relatively better prepared to lead military forces as president;

whether this is due to the primarily negative nature of these ads, the public disenchantment with the matter at the heart of the mentions, or possible solidified perceptions of the two men on this trait is hard to say. Regardless, little positive effect is found in this pairing.

***Table AIII.0.75 – September 11 (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	0.00	56.25	0.00	86.96	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	42.86	0.00	33.33	0.00	6.25	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.76 – September 11 (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	21.43	0.00	43.75	0.00	82.61	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.00	100.00	4.55	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Generally, mentions of September 11 continued the trend of backfiring for McCain, leading to Obama more often than not benefitting in relative perceptions of the two men as ready to be commander in chief. As with the previous discussion, substantive differences exist across the two models, those these are more often differences of amount rather than direction of significant effects. August appears to be terrible for McCain when making mention of the terrorist

attacks – in both tables a large percentage of groupings in each column are significant, and the effects are always in Obama’s favor. September mostly continues this pattern in the first table (though the 14-day groupings see a shift in McCain’s favor, though the percentage of significant days here is quite small), while in the second no significant effects are found at all. October sees generally rare significant results in either table, and while the direction does change from the first to the second, the percentage of days significant are small enough to be unable to discount the possibility of randomness explaining these deviations. As with previous pairings including the 2001 attacks, making mention of these events (especially in the negative, attacking way McCain and his allies did) only served to bolster the perceptions of his opponent more than help the source of the messaging.

**Table AIII.0.77 – Surge (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	23.53	75.00	19.05	75.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	8.33	100.00	7.14	100.00	28.57	50.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.78 – Surge (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	8.00	100.00	14.81	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.41	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Mentions of the surge are slightly better for McCain in terms of changing perceptions regarding his readiness to be commander in chief, but the overall picture is again one of ineffectiveness (though less so benefit for Obama). Once more, the different approaches generate slightly different results, though the differences here are much smaller than the previous pairings on this trait. July (and August, at least in the exposure-only results) see some fairly substantive benefit for McCain in the short- and medium-term groupings, though these effects tend to disappear (or reverse, in the second table) from July to August. September has some slight benefit for McCain in the exposure-only results, but the direction again changes across the two tables (and again, the percentage of significant days overall remains quite small in this month). October has no significant results in either table. While mentioning the surge does appear to have had more of a positive effect for McCain (likely due more to policy specificity and perceived success of the surge), these effects do not persist into the fall. Whether due to general ineffectiveness of the mentions or the decline in salience of foreign policy matters as the campaign wore on is unclear.



***Table AIII.0.79 – Terrorism (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	12.50	0.00	30.00	0.00	70.59	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	100.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	8.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	14.28	50.00	7.14	100.00	7.14	100.00

***Table AIII.0.80 – Terrorism (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \*  
Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.33	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	3.57	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with many of the previous pairings for both candidates, the differences between the two approaches taken for this pairing are illustrative and, particularly in this case, provide important context for understanding the true effect of these mentions on trait perception. While the exposure-only approach suggests generally strong amounts of significant effects, the reality is that these results are not as strong as they appear; the 100% significant results for the 5-day groupings in September, for example, encompass only three starting days. However, this should not be used as a categorical bludgeon – the August results for the 14-day groupings encompass 17 starting days, suggesting that, in the late summer at least, mentions of terrorism were correlated with changes in perceptions of the two men on this particular trait question. Unfortunately for McCain they were once again in Obama’s favor. The strong benefit for McCain in October in the exposure-only model should also be considered in light of the relatively small percentage of

groupings that were significant in the first-place. Overall, then, this approach presents a diminishing effect overall, and one that tends to work against McCain rather than for him.

The second approach sees even more pessimistic conclusions – only rarely are any significant effects found at all when taking into account the number of ads being aired over the length of the groupings, and these are also never in McCain’s favor. Depending on which approach is used, it could be said that mentioning terrorism either had a backfiring effect on McCain or no effect at all; either way, mentions of this policy area as a source of argument for McCain’s readiness to handle military matters appears to not have struck home.

**Table AIII.0.81 - Experience (McCain) - Ready to Be President**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.82 - Experience (McCain) - Ready to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Though, as described above, McCain did make a point late in the campaign to mention experience, all of these mentions came after the June 24<sup>th</sup> cutoff for the “ready to be president” question’s inclusion in the NAES instrument. As such, no results could be generated for this pairing.

**Table AIII.0.83 – George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) – Says What He Believes**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	12.50	100.00	40.00	25.00	58.82	10.00

**Table AIII.0.84 – George W. Bush (Negative) (McCain) – Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	30.00	100.00	33.33	75.00	52.63	30.00

Making negative mention of a president whose trustworthiness was fairly diminished by 2008 appears to have had some substantive impact on relative perceptions of McCain as someone who spoke his mind rather than obfuscating his language or telling people what they wished to hear; however, these effects tended to be short-lived. Though limited to only the month of June, the exposure-only results find increasing amounts of significant days as the groupings get larger, but diminishing percentages of those significant days working in McCain’s direction. The trend in the exposure multiplied by number of ads results is the same, although less steep in terms of the correct percentages (at least from the five- to seven-day groupings). Over time, negative mentions of Bush appear to have lost their effectiveness in influencing perceptions of Obama and McCain on this trait.

**Table AIII.0.85 - George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.86 - George W. Bush (Positive) (McCain) - Says What He Believes (Exposure \*  
Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

While the McCain campaign did make some rare mentions of the incumbent in positive ways, all of these mentions came after the June 24<sup>th</sup> cutoff for this NAES trait. As such, there are no results to report for this particular pairing.

**Table AIII.0.87 - Iraq (McCain) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIII.0.88 - Iraq (McCain) - Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

While Iraq was a major theme of the campaign for both candidates, McCain's first mention of the country did not come until the second week of July, therefore preventing any analysis from being conducted on this particular pairing as well.

**Table AIII.0.89 – Change (McCain) – Shares My Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	11.76	0.00	19.05	50.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	30.00	83.33	36.36	87.50	32.14	100.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	41.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.90 – Change (McCain) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	75.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.00	0.00	7.41	0.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	35.71	40.00	43.75	28.57	34.78	12.50
<b>Sep-08</b>	3.85	100.00	3.57	0.00	30.00	33.33
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.90	100.00	9.68	100.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though change is remembered better as a mainstay of the Obama campaign, McCain in fact dedicated more of his mentions (at least in the Wisconsin data) to this topic, with 51.21% of his mentions being change compared to 35.74% of Obama's. Though Obama made more mentions overall (121,428 to McCain's 97,703), it is clear that McCain made a concerted effort to also attempt to depict his candidacy as a force for change in American politics (though, as will be explored in more detail below, it should also be noted that a strong majority of McCain's mentions of change were used primarily in attack ads, suggesting that these mentions may have been intended more to undercut Obama's message than promote McCain's own style of change). For the most part, these mentions of change do not appear to have convinced NAES respondents that the Republican candidate shared their values, however.

As with a number of the previous pairings, there are substantive differences across the two tables, though the general pattern is still fairly consistent. In the exposure-only results, there are only slight significant effects in June and July, and more often than not these are working in Obama's favor (the only exception is the seven-day groupings in July, though here there is a 50/50 split in the direction of the effects). August is a much better month for McCain in this approach, with more significant effects overall and a more consistent benefit for his relative standing on this trait. September sees a stark decline in both benefit for McCain and overall effectiveness, and by October the significant effects have disappeared entirely. In the second table, June and July continue to be unhelpful for McCain (with little significant effects and no benefit found for McCain). August is better than the preceding months, but the second set of results sees a much more pessimistic view for McCain, with fewer significant effects overall and even more of a decline in the observed percentage of days with effects working in McCain's favor. September and October are a little better for McCain relative to the first table, though the

small percentage of days significant in October make these results especially tentative. No significant results are observed for the few days in November included in the analyses. While August does appear to have seen some substantive correlation between McCain mentioning change and being better perceived as sharing respondents' values, the overall results continue to present an inconsistent effect from these advertisements.

***Table AIII.0.91 – God (McCain) – Shares My Values***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	100.00	0.00	0.00	6.45	50.00

***Table AIII.0.92 – God (McCain) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	10.53	100.00	4.76	100.00	0.00	0.00

Somewhat surprising for a Republican running for president (though perhaps not surprising for McCain given his past clashes with the more religious parts of the Republican base), “God” is only mentioned 546 times by McCain or his allies over the course of the campaign. With such a paucity of mentions (and perhaps persistent skepticism on the part of those who would be most receptive to a religious appeal), these mentions appear to have had little effect on changing perceptions of McCain as someone who shares the respondent’s values. There

is some slight evidence of a benefit for McCain, particularly in the short-term groupings, but the overall slight percentage of days significant make confidence in these results limited.

***Table AIII.0.93 – Hope (McCain) – Shares My Values***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	5.26	0.00	21.74	40.00	14.81	25.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	25.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	6.25	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	41.67	40.00	35.71	20.00	23.53	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.56	0.00	13.64	0.00	10.34	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.94 – Hope (McCain) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	80.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	25.93	28.57	20.69	33.33	19.35	16.67
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	15.38	0.00	17.65	0.00	20.69	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with “change”, McCain actually made more of an effort to associate himself with the concept of “hope” than Obama, despite the Democratic candidate being more associated with that appeal. 12.28% of McCain’s mentions in the Wisconsin data were of hope, compared to only 3.46% of Obama’s; McCain also made more mention of this concept in terms of sheer numbers, almost doubling Obama’s total (23,421 for McCain, 11,766 for Obama). While none of these mentions from McCain came in the form of ads primarily intended for attack, only 3.23% came in



the form of promotional ads. The remaining 96.77%, then, were in comparison ads, which can be intended to both promote or attack (or perhaps both simultaneously). As with change, then, it may be the case that the bulk of these mentions from McCain were more to undercut the appeal being made by Obama than to present his own message of hope; regardless, this concept was a substantive component of McCain's overall advertising message.

The effectiveness of these mentions, however, appear to have been highly limited. In the exposure-only results, June and August are the only months where significant results worked in McCain's favor, and even in these cases the direction was more often than not in Obama's favor. Most of the time where significant effects were found the Democratic candidate was being viewed as more in line with people's values instead of the Republican. The same holds for the second set of results, though here the benefit for McCain is even more limited, with effects in his direction only existing in July. The second table also finds a diminished percentage of significant days across the board. While the potentially optimistic message of hope for a better future might be a means to persuade voters that a candidate shares their values and wants to work to achieve goals in line with them, this does not appear to be the case for McCain in 2008. Whether that is more due to his execution (using hope more negatively than positively) or the presence of an opponent who made this message a key component of his campaigning is unclear; either way, mentioning hope appears to have had little consistent benefit for McCain on this trait.

**Table AIII.0.95 – Iraq (McCain) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	6.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	8.33	100.00	7.14	100.00	33.33	42.86
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.96 – Iraq (McCain) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.00	0.00	14.81	50.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	25.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	47.06	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	0.00	3.33	0.00	16.67	20.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	20.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	10.00	100.00

Unlike many of the previous pairings, perceptions of McCain as a strong leader appear to have been more likely to be influenced by mentions of Iraq *late* in the campaign, with stronger effects found in August, September, and October across the two approaches. Though these are still somewhat rare (particularly in the five- and seven-day groupings in August in the exposure-only results), the pickup in September and October is the reverse of many of the previously discussed pairings. While September and October were relatively more dense in terms of the number of these mentions being made by McCain, it is also surprising that Iraq would take on greater salience given the perceived decline in importance of foreign policy late in the fall relative to domestic economic concerns. While the percentages are not overwhelming, the finding that some correlations were occurring at a time when the overall political environment would seem to

suggest the relative unimportance of this topic and at a time where perceptions should have been fairly solidified is interesting.

***Table AIII.0.97 – September 11 (McCain) – Strong Leader***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	54.55	0.00	66.67	0.00	86.96	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	28.57	0.00	33.33	33.33	6.25	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.98 – September 11 (McCain) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	28.57	0.00	50.00	0.00	82.61	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	13.64	100.00	10.34	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Mentions of the September 11 attacks also appear to work differently when pairing them with strong leader compared to some of the previous discussions. Though these mentions do continue to backfire strongly for McCain throughout the late summer and fall (particularly in August and especially as the groupings get larger), there is some late-breaking benefit for him, either in September (exposure-only) or October (exposure multiplied by number of ads). Though these results are not overwhelming (in September the results are either only sometimes in McCain's favor [seven-day] or part of a relatively slim number of significant days overall [14-

day], while in October the latter concern holds across all three grouping sizes), the observed late-stage effect here fits with the finding above; the concern over strong leadership may be such that respondents are still concerned about it even when conditions would seem to require a different focus of leadership or even as the campaign is drawing to a close.

**Table AIII.0.99 – Surge (McCain) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	17.65	100.00	19.05	100.00	12.90	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	8.33	100.00	7.14	100.00	33.33	42.86
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.100 – Surge (McCain) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	3.70	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	25.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	47.06	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	0.00	3.33	0.00	16.67	20.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Unlike with ready to be commander in chief, mentions of the surge appear to have some substantive benefit in changing perceptions of McCain as a strong leader, though this is more found in the exposure-only results than in both tables. In July and August, exposure to ads that mentioned this particular policy almost always worked in McCain’s favor (the only exception

being the long-term groupings in August, which were more often than not in Obama's favor). While the usual caveat about small percentages of days significant applies here (particularly in August), there is some evidence of a consistent shift in McCain's favor over these two months. There are some slight beneficial effects in the short-term groupings in September, but not much else in these results. The second table sees rare benefits for McCain (only the long-term groupings in September are in his favor, and even here this is rare). Otherwise, when there are significant effects Obama is the one benefitting.

**Table AIII.0.101 – Terrorism (McCain) – Strong Leader**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	25.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	88.24	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	33.33	0.00	20.00	0.00	8.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	14.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.14	0.00

**Table AIII.0.102 – Terrorism (McCain) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	46.67	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	-	-	-	-	16.67	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	3.57	100.00	3.33	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Mentioning terrorism, on the other hand, does appear to still backfire for McCain when the trait of strong leadership is being assessed, particularly in the exposure-only results. In August and September, there are substantive numbers of groupings that are significant in this approach,

but they are always working in Obama's favor. There are some similar results in October, though the percentages here tend to be smaller overall. The second set of results presents more of a mixed bag – while the long-term groupings in August still present substantive benefits for Obama rather than McCain, the September and October results are a bit more optimistic for McCain (though it should be noted that the overall percentages are still very small in October and correspond to a small number of days overall in September). As with many of the other national security-themed mentions discussed, there appears to be little consistent benefit for McCain when raising the spectre of terrorism as part of his campaign messaging in 2008.

**Table AIII.0.103 – Experience (McCain) – Too Old (McCain)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	50.00	16.67	50.00	10.53	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	20.83	80.00	11.54	100.00	23.33	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	31.25	80.00	38.89	85.71	30.00	100.00

**Table AIII.0.104 – Experience (McCain) – Too Old (McCain) (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	50.00	25.00	0.00	15.79	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	28.57	50.00	26.09	50.00	30.00	55.56
<b>Oct-08</b>	16.00	100.00	37.04	100.00	38.71	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

McCain making mention of experience appears to have generally tempered perceptions of him as too old for the presidency. In both approaches, while the percentage of days significant tended to hover around 20 to 30% (getting above that in October in the second table, particularly), these effects were almost always in McCain’s favor, suggesting that more mentions of experience tended to correspond to declining scores on the “Too Old” question. The presence of *greater* amounts of significant effects in the last month of the campaign (discounting the quartet of days in November) also suggests that these mentions were having more of an impact as voters were preparing to go to the polls.

**Table AIII.0.105 – Experience (McCain) – Too Young (Obama)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	100.00	16.67	100.00	21.05	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	12.50	66.67	7.69	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.50	100.00	11.11	50.00	5.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.106 – Experience (McCain) – Too Young (Obama) (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	100.00	16.67	100.00	15.79	100.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	19.05	50.00	13.04	33.33	10.00	33.33
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.00	100.00	22.22	83.33	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Similarly, mentions of experience from McCain also tended to increase perceptions of Barack Obama as too young for the presidency; however, these effects tended to be observed less often and fluctuated a bit more in terms of consistent direction. Also, there tends to be a *decreased* effect over the course of the late summer and fall months, the opposite effect observed in the previous pairing. August appears to be the most effective month for these mentions, though in the exposure-only model the direction abruptly changes from the five- and seven-day groupings to the 14-day groupings (this is also the case for September and October in this table). The exposure multiplied by number of ads results see similar changes, as well as general declining benefits for McCain across the groupings and months (though generally the significant effects are in the correct direction). This difference in effect makes logical sense from a certain standpoint – it is more likely that talking about experience would help McCain appear seasoned and prepared rather than doddering and incapable of the responsibilities of the job; though the majority of McCain’s experience mentions came in the form of attack ads (56.06%), a strong amount also came in the form of comparison ads (42.02%, with promotional ads constituting only 1.92% of the total), suggesting that the general shape of the experience mentions tended to portray McCain’s longevity in government as a positive and Obama’s relative newness as a clear negative (either directly or as part of a side-by-side comparison). This difference in results, then, also fits with the pattern established in the literature (and reinforced through a number of the security-centric pairings above) that negative messages may have a diminished effect generally. More specific analyses looking at promotional and attack advertising below will also explore this more directly.



**Table AIII.0.107 – Change (McCain) – Trustworthy**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	11.76	100.00	14.29	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	35.00	85.71	40.91	77.78	35.71	100.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIII.0.108 – Change (McCain) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	3.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	35.71	40.00	43.75	28.57	34.78	12.50
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.67	60.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.90	100.00	12.90	100.00	3.23	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

For the most part, McCain mentioning change appears to have substantially benefitted the relative perception of him as trustworthy in the summer months and much less so in the later stages of the campaign. Across the two approaches, August is the most consistent month, with July also showing some benefit in the exposure-only results. The more complex approach also sees some minor benefits in October, which do not appear at all in the exposure-only table (the same is also true for the 14-day groupings in September, though these might be partially capturing some of the October results). One possibility is that the announcement of Sarah Palin as the vice president had a substantial benefit for McCain’s attempts to take over the “change” ground from Obama, though this announcement came relatively late in August (the 29<sup>th</sup>,

specifically). Regardless, these effects appear to have only manifested before the conventions and the home stretch of the campaign; as the calendar turned to the fall (and McCain began to be criticized more for his pick of Palin and his response to the economic crisis) the effectiveness of an attempted change message on making McCain seem more trustworthy relative to Obama diminished if not outright disappeared.

***Table AIII.0.109 – Experience (McCain) – Trustworthy***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	10.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	68.42	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	4.17	100.00	3.85	100.00	10.00	66.67
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.50	50.00	5.56	100.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIII.0.110 – Experience (McCain) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	40.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	14.29	0.00	13.04	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Similarly, though surprisingly, McCain making mention of experience seems to have had little consistent effect on his relative trustworthiness. Though the exposure-only results show some groupings that are remarkably consistent in benefitting McCain, the overall percentages of significant results again make these conclusions highly tentative; furthermore, August shows a

more general tendency for these mentions to benefit Obama, a pattern seen in greater amounts in the August and September rows of the second table. Perhaps the more antagonistic nature of the McCain mentions (see above) undermined perceptions of him as a steady candidate who could be trusted to guide the ship of state; regardless of the reason it is quite surprising that mentions of experience seem to have been so ineffective (or counterproductive) for the long-serving senator.

APPENDIX IV – 2008 ELECTION RESULTS BY TONE OF AD (MONTHLY AND  
SUCCESS RATES)

***Monthly Results***

***Results – Obama (Positive)***

In terms of the Wisconsin advertising data mentions, Barack Obama's tendency was to run advertisements coded more as primarily attacking rather than primarily promoting, though his ratio is much more even than that for McCain (discussed in the next section). 104,856 ads are coded as primarily promotional for Obama, compared to 180,799 coded as primarily attacking. These positive ads, however, tended to be highly concentrated. Obama did not have as much diversity in his mentions generally (at least those selected for analysis here), only mentioning seven topics compared to 10 for McCain; of these seven, only five are contained in purely promotional ads (mentions of President Clinton in positive terms and mentions of experience are the two omissions). When running promotional ads, Obama tended to (unsurprisingly) focus on change – 71,371 ads that mentioned change were coded as promotional in the Wisconsin data, 68.06% of the total promotional ads. The next most common, somewhat surprisingly, was terrorism, with 15,871 ads (15.14%), and hope (11,762 ads, or 11.22%). Rounding out the list are negative mentions of George W. Bush (3,989, or 3.80%) and mentions of Iraq (1,863, or 1.78%).

It should also be noted that these differing numbers of ads represent dramatically different percentages of totals of the mentions themselves – for example, while the 71,371 change mentions represent over two-thirds of the promotional mentions, those mentions only constitute 58.78% of the total mentions of change made by Obama overall. While terrorism is only 15.14% of the total positive mentions overall, those 15,871 ads represent 93.53% of Obama’s terrorism mentions. The 11,762 mentions of hope represent almost all (99.97%) of the total hope mentions, and the Bush and Iraq mentions make up 2.97% and 4.17% of their total category mentions, respectively. This comparison allows for the proper contextualization of the results below – while the numbers are fairly large generally, mentions of Iraq and Bush are perhaps less likely to have an influence overall (and generate less significant and substantive results compared to the ones above) due to the other tones coming from the Obama campaign and its allies – for these two mentions, attacking and comparative advertising were much more prevalent. For change, the effectiveness may also be diminished when examining purely promotional advertising, though this is unclear given the larger associations of change with the Obama campaign. For hope and terrorism, the effects should be fairly close to those seen above when utilizing them as part of a pairing, due to the high (and, in the case of hope, almost complete) similarity between the independent variable values used in the regressions.

What follows are the results for the same regressions as above, with the independent variables now measuring exposure (and exposure multiplied by the number of ads) for just primarily promotional advertising. As such, this will be a shorter set of results than the previous Obama section – no positive ads for two of the mentions precludes analysis of them.

**Table AIV.0.1 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Promotion) (Obama) - Erratic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.2 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Promotion) (Obama) - Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though the Obama campaign did run a substantive number of ads mentioning George W. Bush in negative terms but still primarily attempting to promote Obama, the bulk of these aired before the October 22<sup>nd</sup> start date for the Erratic question in the NAES instrument. Only 23 of these ads aired from October 22<sup>nd</sup> to Election Day, making it not particularly surprising that no significant results at all were found.

**Table AIV.0.3 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Erratic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.4 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Similar to the Bush mentions above, the vast majority of Obama’s promotional ads mentioning Iraq aired before the Erratic question was posed to respondents; in total, only four of these ads aired from October 22<sup>nd</sup> to Election Day, and they all came on either the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> of October. As such, it is not shocking to see a lack of statistically significant effects stemming from exposure to this handful of advertisements.

**Table AIV.0.5 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Promotion) (Obama) - Has Judgment to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.6 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Promotion) (Obama) - Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-08</b>	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.90	25.00	12.90	25.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The exposure-only results for promotional ads mentioning George W. Bush in a negative way show no significant results overall. However, the exposure-multiplied by number of ads results seem some significant results, but overall the effects appear to be more in McCain's favor when respondents are asked to assess the two men on whether or not they have the judgment to be president. While there is some benefit for Obama in the short- and medium-term groupings in October, overall the tendency is for the effects to work in the opposite way. Though Obama did spend a large number of days throughout the campaign running ads criticizing the incumbent he was hoping to replace, the first appearance of a purely promotional was not until the last day of September; the mixed nature of a generally negative attack with an ad more clearly intended to be promotional may be explaining the lack of effectiveness here, though it may also be more attributable to familiarity with the critiques and declining effectiveness of the anti-Bush messaging overall (by the time this first promotional ad aired, Obama had already run almost 57,900 ads pure attack ads mentioning Bush over the previous 36 days). Whatever the reason, trying to spin an attack on the incumbent into a positive reason to choose the candidate appears to have had limited success, at least on this particular trait measure.

***Table AIV.0.7 - Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) - Has Judgment to Be President***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	15.38	100.00	17.65	66.67	51.85	28.57
<b>Jul-08</b>	7.14	0.00	12.50	50.00	8.70	50.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	14.29	100.00	8.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	21.43	16.67	17.86	20.00	17.86	20.00



**Table AIV.0.8 - Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) - Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.25	100.00	16.67	100.00	8.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

When mentioning Iraq in a purely promotional sense, however, the results tend to be a bit better for candidate Obama (though the overall pattern is not consistent). In the exposure-only results, June is perhaps the best month, with increasing effectiveness as the groupings get larger (particularly between the seven- and 14-day groupings). July's results are less significant overall and also less consistent for Obama – at best the directions are an even split, though the relatively small percentages of significant days introduce some caution with these results. However, it should be noted here that in June and July a total of three promotional ads mentioning Iraq were aired, suggesting that even the substantive results in June are relatively infrequent in terms of the overall month.

The medium- and long-term groupings in September are similarly good for Obama, yet relatively rare overall. October is much better in terms of finding significant results generally, but McCain benefits more often than not in these groupings. The second set of results are limited only to September and October due to the infrequent nature of the ads in the preceding months (single ads airing with no ads in the immediate five days lead to no variation on the independent variable in this setup), and see some changes compared to the exposure-only results: September is slightly better but relatively unchanged, but October now sees no significant results (likely due to the massive drop-off in terms of the number of ads in October – 21 ads aired overall, with a

number of days in between airings, limiting the effectiveness of this particular approach). Overall, running promotional ads mentioning Iraq may have had some minor positive effect on Obama, but this either dissipated or reversed by the fall, or the results here are more the result of randomness than consistent effect (the number of ads run in many of these months presents a limited ability to attribute a strong effect stemming from the advertising). Some of the same factors are described with the negative mentions of Bush may be operating, but it is telling that in September, by far the most prevalent month for these mentions, only slight effects are found.

***Table AIV.0.9 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Patriotic***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	23.08	100.00	5.88	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	7.14	0.00	6.25	0.00	4.35	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	7.14	100.00	4.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	14.29	25.00	7.14	50.00	7.14	100.00

***Table AIV.0.10 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	5.55	100.00	8.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The results for relative perceptions of patriotism and mentions of Iraq are remarkably similar to previous pairing, though overall the results appear somewhat better for Obama when patriotism is the dependent variable (though the same caveats regarding number of ads apply here

as well). In exposure-only, June sees some strong benefit in the five-day groupings and some fewer significant days in the seven-day but still benefitting Obama categorically. In July the direction changes, though there are very few significant days in any of the groupings in this month. September sees some slight benefits in the seven- and fourteen-day groupings, but the usual concern about small percentages of significant days once again applies. October sees more significant days overall, but much less consistent benefit for Obama.

The exposure multiplied by number of ads results again have results only for September and October, and while September is about the same substantively the significant results once again disappear in October (though again, likely due to relatively few days with ads in this month combined with those days being spaced out). Overall, the effect here is not particularly overwhelming or consistent – some slight benefit may have occurred in the early summer but the miniscule numbers of ads in these months make confidence in those effects uncertain. Once again, the most prolific month for these ads (September) sees some of the weakest benefits for Obama, suggesting that overall these mentions were having little substantive effect on perceptions of his patriotism relative to McCain.

***Table AIV.0.11 – Terrorism (Promotion) (Obama) – Patriotic***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	60.00	38.46	60.00	11.11	100.00

***Table AIV.0.12 – Terrorism (Promotion) (Obama) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.00	25.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00

Though Obama and his allies did run quite a large number of ads mentioning terrorism that were primarily intended to promote the Democratic candidate, these are highly concentrated in July, with only a handful airing in August (only 86 of the 15,781 ads aired in August, meaning that July represents 99.46% of the total promotional mentions). The exposure-only results, surprisingly given this disparity, see some benefit in both months but more significant days overall in August (though the benefit for Obama diminishes from July to August; for the most part, though, significant effects are usually in Obama's favor). These effects, not surprisingly given the more spaced out nature of the advertising, dissipate when examining the month-to-month comparison in the second table; the results for July also become less beneficial overall and certainly less beneficial for Obama. Overall, there does not appear to be much benefit in terms of patriotism for making mention of terrorism; even in a month where Obama was blanketing the airwaves with this particular mention used as a means of promoting himself, significant effects were found at best a fifth of the time.

***Table AIV.0.13 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	15.38	100.00	17.65	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	6.25	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	100.00	21.43	100.00	24.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.71	33.33	7.14	0.00	3.57	0.00

***Table AIV.0.14 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	5.55	100.00	8.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.26	0.00	4.76	0.00	13.04	0.00

Mentions of Iraq appear to generally fit the same pattern when paired with ready to be commander-in-chief as in the previous pairings, though the key month of September appears to demonstrate stronger effects in this case, at least in the exposure-only results. June and July continue the pattern of June being more significant and beneficial for Obama generally, but the small number of ads should again be taken into account. The September results, though, are much stronger here than in previous regressions, and these effects continue somewhat into October, though here only the short-term groupings are in Obama's benefit (and even then more often than not they work in the other direction). The more complex approach, however, continues to see a diminishment of effectiveness, especially in September. While there is some evidence for the presence of promotional ads mentioning Iraq as having a benefit on relative perceptions of Obama's preparedness to handle military matters as president, these effects remain still

inconsistent; however, the stronger showing for the most prominent month of advertising helps give some greater confidence in the effectiveness of this particular pairing.

**Table AIV.0.15 – Terrorism (Promotion) (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	37.50	66.67	10.00	100.00	10.53	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	60.00	46.15	66.67	16.67	66.67

**Table AIV.0.16 – Terrorism (Promotion) (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

**(Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	15.00	33.33	13.64	33.33	3.45	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00

Mentions of terrorism, on the other hand, appear to have been much more effective generally than Iraq, particularly in the short-term (more so in July than August – again, the disparity is great here between the two months in terms of number of ads). Both months see fairly substantive percentages of days significant in the exposure-only model, and though the percentage of days correct fluctuates the balance is almost always in Obama’s favor in this first set of results (the worst being a 50% correct rate in the 14-day groupings for July). The exposure multiplied by number of ads results, however, again see a diminished effectiveness – given the high number of ads in July, what may be occurring is a loss of effectiveness through sheer

overload; taking into account the (often high) number of ads being aired over the exposure periods may be demonstrating a loss of effectiveness because the message is so prevalent. This is speculative, but the substantive decline in overall significance suggests that taking into account these values is having some limiting effect on changing perceptions of preparedness for the military responsibilities of the office.

**Table AIV.0.17 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Promotion) (Obama) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.18 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Promotion) (Obama) - Says What You Believe**  
**(Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

As noted above, this particular NAES trait question was only asked until June 24<sup>th</sup>, over three months before Obama would air his first promotional ad mentioning George W. Bush. As such, no results are able to be reported for this pairing.

**Table AIV.0.19 - Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) - Says What He Believes**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	33.33	100.00	36.36	100.00	27.78	100.00

**Table AIV.0.20 - Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) - Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Though the dependent variable is again limited in this pairing, mentioning Iraq does appear to have had some substantive effect on perceptions of Obama as more of a straight-talker than his opponent. However, it should be noted here that in the window in which this NAES question was asked only one promotional ad mentioning Iraq was aired – while this single ad does correspond to a number of significant days of movement, the confidence in this findings should be limited (also, to reiterate, the single ad followed by days with no ads is why there are no results in the second table for this pairing).

**Table AIV.0.21 – Change (Promotion) (Obama) – Shares My Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	9.52	50.00	12.00	33.33	6.45	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	42.86	88.89	52.17	75.00	29.03	66.67
<b>Sep-08</b>	25.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	25.00	75.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00



***Table AIV.0.22 – Change (Promotion) (Obama) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	43.75	0.00	55.56	0.00	61.54	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	9.09	50.00	16.67	75.00	13.33	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	3.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.45	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

One of the possible explanations for the decided lack of benefit found for this pairing above is that the prior analysis mixed promotional and attack mentions of change coming from the Obama campaign. Given the Democratic candidate’s focus on depicting himself as an agent of positive change, the ads that are solely intended to promote him should have a clearer effect. The results above, however, present a very mixed picture: in the exposure-only results, Obama tends to do quite well on the whole. While June sees very rare significant effects over all, the results get slightly better in July, though the direction is not consistently in Obama’s direction (and, taken overall, is more often in McCain’s favor). However, in August and September the story changes; in August especially, these ads become much more associated with positive balances for Obama on being perceived as sharing respondents’ values, and though this pattern tapers off a bit in September the general effect persists.

In the exposure multiplied by number of ads results, however, the story is almost entirely reversed. July and August are worse for Obama, with effects never in his favor (and, at least in August, effects tend to be more often significant across the three groupings). September is better in terms of direction but worse in terms of overall significance, undercutting the directional benefit found. October has more significant results here, but they are again never in Obama’s direction. While simply having the change message out there seems to help Obama’s case over

the course of the campaign, taking into account how often he is making these appeals seems to undercut it.

***Table AIV.0.23 – Hope (Promotion) (Obama) – Shares My Values***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	10.00	0.00	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.24 – Hope (Promotion) (Obama) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The results gleaned from examining only promotional advertisements mentioning hope are exactly the same as the general pairing discussed above; as noted in the introduction to this section, most of the hope ads were promotional, with only four of the 11,766 being comparative. As such, the lack of any clear differences in results is not particularly surprising. Hope appears to have had minimal impact on benefiting perceptions of Obama as a candidate who shared respondents' values relative to McCain.

***Table AIV.0.25 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Strong Leader***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	7.69	100.00	23.53	100.00	14.81	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	21.43	100.00	31.25	100.00	13.04	66.67
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	7.14	100.00	12.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.71	33.00	7.14	50.00	10.71	33.00

***Table AIV.0.26 – Iraq (Promotion) (Obama) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	5.56	100.00	4.00	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.26	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Making mention of Iraq in purely promotional ads appears to have generally worked very well for Obama in portraying himself as a strong leader, though the usual concerns about relatively small percentages of significant days overall continues through this pairing. In the exposure-only results, significant groupings are almost always in Obama's favor in the summer (except for the 14-day groupings in July), with a more decidedly mixed record in the fall (October is more generally in McCain's favor). In the exposure multiplied by number of ads results, both September and October are always in Obama's favor though the percentage of days significant remains very low no matter the grouping examined.

***Table AIV.0.27 – Terrorism (Promotion) (Obama) – Strong Leader***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	25.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	5.26	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	45.45	60.00	38.46	60.00	22.22	75.00

***Table AIV.0.28 – Terrorism (Promotion) (Obama) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	13.64	66.67	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00	15.38	100.00

Mentions of terrorism, at least when only paired with exposure to advertising, appears to be somewhat better for Obama in terms of raising the perception of him as a strong leader. In July and August a large percentage of days are significant in the five- and seven-day groupings, and they are either split evenly in terms of direction or slightly in Obama's favor (the 14-day groupings in August are better on both measures). The more complex approach, however, sees substantially fewer significant days overall, though the effect is more often in Obama's favor. Some mentions of national security issues that highlight Obama in promotional terms seem to have a positive effect on perceptions of him as a strong leader, though these effects are not particularly overwhelming or consistent.

***Table AIV.0.29 – Change (Promotion) (Obama) – Trustworthy***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.08	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	42.86	88.89	26.09	100.00	45.16	71.43
<b>Sep-08</b>	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	6.25	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.30 – Change (Promotion) (Obama) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jul-08</b>	7.69	0.00	13.33	0.00	9.09	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	56.25	11.11	55.56	0.00	65.38	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	4.55	100.00	4.17	100.00	6.67	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	9.68	33.33	6.45	0.00	6.45	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Finally, mentions of change in primarily promotional ads appears to have had a similar effect on trustworthy as on shares my values, discussed above. In the early summer, effects are rare and/or more usually in McCain’s favor (the exposure-only results see much fewer significant days compared to the more complex approach in June and July, though the direction stays consistent across the two in July). Across the two tables, however, August differs substantially – in the first set of results Obama is more often than not benefiting when mentioning change, but in the second set McCain is the beneficiary when these mentions are aired. September is fairly consistent across the two tables, but October has more significant results (though not much more in Obama’s favor) in the exposure multiplied by number of ads results than in exposure-only. Mentioning change, then, appears to benefit Obama more when exposure is just mentioned and

less when the number of ads being aired with this mention are taken into account, a similar finding to the pairing discussed above.

### ***Results – McCain (Positive)***

Compared to the balance for Barack Obama, John McCain’s advertising (at least as determined by the Wisconsin variables selected here) was *much* more negative than positive. All told, only 37,849 ads were categorized as promotional, with 109,555 classified as attacking, a ratio of over 2.89 to 1. McCain was also limited in the types of mentions he made in these positive ads – of the 10 mentions McCain made that were selected for this analysis, the promotional ads only cover six of them. McCain never makes positive mention of George W. Bush in his promotional ads, nor does he mention September 11, the surge, or terrorism generally.

McCain’s promotional mentions demonstrate a clear theme – he is not George W. Bush and he is bringing change. Negative mentions of George W. Bush are the most prominent mention in promotional advertising, with 48.12% of the promotional mentions (18,213 of 37,849). A close second is mentions of change, with 45.58% of the promotional mentions (17,253 of 37,849). The remaining 6.3% of the promotional mentions are split between hope (757 mentions, or 2.00%), Iraq and God (both with 546 mentions, or 1.44%), and experience (534 mentions, or 1.41%).

Like Obama, McCain’s promotional messages represented varying percentages of the total within the mentions themselves. However, unlike Obama, the split for McCain appears to be a bit more inclined towards all or nothing – either all of the ads in a mention are promotional, or a very small percentage of them are. Two of these categories – George W. Bush (Negative) and God – are 100% promotional; that is, all their mentions in the Wisconsin dataset were categorized as promotional in tone. As such, the results for any pairing involving either of these would be the

exact same as the general pairings discussed above. This means that the results below will not contain duplications of the following pairings:

- Erratic – George W. Bush (Negative)
- Has Judgment to be President – George W. Bush (Negative)
- Says What He Believes – George W. Bush (Negative)
- Shares My Values – God

The remaining four categories tend to represent small minorities of their overall mention total – the most prevalent is change (17,253 promotional mentions out of 97,703, or 17.66%), followed by Iraq (546 out of 5,319, or 10.27%). The other two are much smaller proportions – hope (757 of 23,241, or 3.23%) and experience (534 of 27,794, or 1.92%). McCain tended to be much more comparative or negative when making mention of the terms selected here.

**Table AIV.0.31 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Erratic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.32 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Despite a well-known presence in Washington, making promotional mention of his experience appears to have had no significant effect on perceptions of McCain as erratic, though this is likely more attributable to the combination of very few days where that trait was included as part of the NAES and the very few mentions of experience McCain made in purely promotional ads.

**Table AIV.0.33 - Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) - Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.34 - Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) - Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

The last promotional ad for McCain mentioning Iraq aired on July 26<sup>th</sup>, almost three months before the Erratic question was offered to NAES respondents. As such, no results are available for this particular pairing.



**Table AIV.0.35 – Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-08	12.50	100.00	15.00	33.33	12.90	50.00

**Table AIV.0.36 – Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) – Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-08	26.32	80.00	23.81	60.00	3.85	0.00

Generally, the small number of ads (relatively) the McCain campaign and its allies produced mentioning Iraq and primarily promoting the Republican candidate did not overwhelmingly correlate to changes in perceptions of either McCain or Obama has having the proper judgment to be president. The short- and long-term groupings tend to be somewhat beneficial for McCain in the exposure-only results (with the short- and medium-term groupings showing some diminished benefit in the exposure multiplied by number of ads results), but the small percentages of significant days tend to undermine confidence in these mentions having a consistent effect on the judgment trait question. McCain may have gotten some slight boost in the early stages of the campaign when being positive and mentioning Iraq, but the results here suggest that any substantive boost was rare and often just as likely to work in Obama's favor.

***Table AIV.0.37 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Has Right Experience to Be President***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	10.00	0.00	33.33	0.00	68.42	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	15.79	0.00	14.29	0.00	7.69	50.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	100.00

***Table AIV.0.38 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Has Right Experience to Be President***

***(Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	57.89	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.69	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

On the whole, primarily promotional advertising mentioning McCain’s experience appears to have been highly limited in its ability to change the balance of perceptions of either man having the right experience to be president. Though there is some slight benefit for McCain in the long-term groupings in September and October, significant effects were still highly rare in these later months. A large limiting factor here is the relative paucity of purely promotional ads mentioning experience – as noted above, while McCain made mention of experience in almost 27,800 ads, less than 2% were coded as promotional in the Wisconsin data. The general results for this pairing above were not particularly strong, and it seems as though ads generally intended to promote McCain are equally ineffective at changing the relative perceptions of his and Obama’s experience.

***Table AIV.0.39 - Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) - Patriotic***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.75	66.67	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.40 - Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) - Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	21.05	75.00	4.76	100.00	0.00	0.00

Once more, the relatively few ads mentioning Iraq that were intended to promote McCain appear to have had limited effects at changing perceptions of the candidates' patriotism.

However, there does appear to be some substantive effects in the short-term for this pairing, with July seeing a fair percentage of significant days and these effects more often than not working in McCain's favor. These effects, though, do not appear to sustain themselves long; most of them have dissipated when looking at the weekly groupings. Mentioning Iraq may have had some short-term benefit for McCain's ability to depict himself as more patriotic than Obama, but not much beyond that (and even then the direction was not always in the Republican's favor).

**Table AIV.0.41 – Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-08	12.50	100.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.42 – Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-08	21.05	100.00	14.29	100.00	3.85	100.00

Similarly, mentions of Iraq in promotional ads appear to have had more of a short- or medium-term effect than anything else, though in this pairing the differences between the two approaches are starker than in the previous one. The exposure multiplied by number of ads results see more significant days overall in the short-, medium-, and long-term (though less than 4% of the days were significant in this last grouping) compared to exposure-only; additionally, the percentage of days in McCain's favor is greater in the medium-term grouping in the second table relative to the first. It may be the case, as discussed above, that a more specific policy promotion tied in more directly to perceptions of the president as the director of military matters, making mentions of Iraq more salient for perceptions of commander-in-chief, though again these effects do not appear incredibly consistent or long-lived.

**Table AIV.0.43 - Experience (Promotion) (McCain) - Ready to Be President**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.44 - Experience (Promotion) (McCain) - Ready to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

As described above, the question about whether or not the candidates were ready to be president was asked until June 24<sup>th</sup>, almost two months before McCain would air his first promotional ad mentioning experience. As such, no results are able to be gathered for this pairing.

**Table AIV.0.45 - Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.46 - Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) - Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Similarly, the NAES question regarding whether or not the candidates say what they believe was restricted to the month of June, its last iteration coming almost three weeks before McCain would air a promotional ad mentioning Iraq. No results are obtainable for this pairing, either.

***Table AIV.0.47 – Change (Promotion) (McCain) – Shares My Values***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Sep-08	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.71	0.00
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00

***Table AIV.0.48 – Change (Promotion) (McCain) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Sep-08	0.00	0.00	3.57	0.00	20.00	0.00
Oct-08	30.00	100.00	40.00	100.00	70.00	100.00

One of the concerns discussed above regarding the general results for change as a mention was that McCain very likely criticized Obama’s proposals of “change” while making mention of that word. Since the Wisconsin coding scheme only looks for usage of the word regardless of context, there is a strong chance that the general results included a substantial number of ads from McCain that were using change as a derogatory mention; the promotional focus should help avoid that potential. That being said, it does not appear that McCain’s attempts

to use change as a positive for himself were very effective, especially not when looking at exposure only. In the second set of results, October does see some substantive effects, suggesting that a late-stage push to represent change (perhaps bolstered by the Palin vice-presidential pick, though this is speculative and unlikely given that she had been the nominee for months by that point and was receiving significant criticism for her own preparedness by October, a fact which reflected poorly on McCain [CITE]) was potentially changing some minds as election day drew nearer.

**Table AIV.0.49 – Hope (Promotion) (McCain) – Shares My Values**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	5.26	0.00	21.74	40.00	7.41	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	44.44	25.00	36.36	0.00	17.65	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	8.33	100.00	18.75	100.00	26.09	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.50 – Hope (Promotion) (McCain) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Something of a late push seems to occur for McCain when mentioning hope, as well, though this seems to be limited only to the exposure-only results. Taking into account the number

of ads being aired in the exposure period finds no significant relationships at all in October and November. While the exposure-only results demonstrate some substantive effects, it should be noted that the presence of promotional ads mentioning hope were actually quite rare for McCain until the final days of the campaign; of the 757 promotional ads mentioning hope, only *eight* aired before November 3<sup>rd</sup>, an incredibly odd choice. In the final two days of the campaign, McCain and his allies made 749 mentions of hope in promotional ads, significantly limiting the ability to discover an effect from these ads. While the singular airings across the summer do seem to have some correspondence with shifting perceptions of McCain as a candidate who shared NAES respondents' values, attributing these movements to the ads themselves seems highly tenuous given their general rarity.

**Table AIV.0.51 – Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	100.00	15.00	33.33	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.52 – Iraq (Promotion) (McCain) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	21.05	100.00	19.05	100.00	15.38	100.00



Perceptions of McCain as a strong leader relative to Obama appear to have been somewhat bolstered by promotional mentions of Iraq, though as with many of the previously discussed pairings the percentage of significant days overall is still relatively low. While the effects are more often than not in McCain's favor (the 7-day groupings in the exposure-only results being the only exception), the percentage of significant days only rarely breaks 20%. While the effects benefitted McCain generally when they occurred, they were not highly consistent overall.

**Table AIV.0.53 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Too Old (McCain)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	50.00	16.67	50.00	10.53	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.53	100.00	23.81	60.00	7.69	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.54 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Too Old (McCain) (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	15.79	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Promoting his own experience appears to have had a mixed effect on perceptions of McCain as too old to be president. The short- and medium-term groupings for August and

September in the exposure-only results show some general benefit for McCain (that is, the perception of him being too old declining over these periods), but the direction changes when examining the long-term groupings (the percentage of significant days also declines when making this comparison). The more complex results, however, see no significant effects in September and the remaining August significant effects working *against* McCain (that is, when exposure is being reinforced by increased airings over the groupings, perceptions that McCain is too old are *increasing*). No significant effects are found in either model for October or November, perhaps suggesting that perceptions of McCain's age had become fairly static by the end of the campaign.

**Table AIV.0.55 - Experience (Promotion) - Too Young (Obama)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	100.00	16.67	100.00	10.53	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	15.79	33.00	9.52	50.00	3.85	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.56 - Experience (Promotion) (McCain) - Too Young (Obama) (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	21.05	100.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	22.22	100.00	18.18	100.00	27.78	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

In examining the correlations between McCain mentioning experience in promotional ads and perceptions of Obama as too young, however, the reverse appears to be true. The differences across the two tables are a bit more muted when looking at this pairing, though the percentages are generally similar to the Too Old discussion above. McCain appears to have done generally well when making mention of his own experience in a promotional way, though the effects are somewhat inconsistent as the groupings get larger (for example, the 14-day groupings for August in the exposure-only results change direction entirely, while the percentage of days working in the correct direction increase as the groupings get larger for September). More often than not, when the effects were significant the direction was in increasing perceptions of Obama as too young for the office. As with Too Old, these effects fail to appear in the fall months, again suggesting the possibility that age perceptions were concrete as the end of the campaign approached.

***Table AIV.0.57 – Change (Promotion) (McCain) – Trustworthy***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.14	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00

**Table AIV.0.58 – Change (Promotion) (McCain) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Sep-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00
Oct-08	40.00	100.00	50.00	100.00	30.00	100.00

As with “shares my values”, late-stage promotional ads mentioning change appear to have benefited McCain in terms of being seen as trustworthy, though this conclusion is only supported by the second set of results. In the exposure-only results, mentions of change are only rarely significantly correlated with movement of the trustworthy variable, and when significant results are found the effect is always in Obama’s favor. In the second table, October sees some substantive results in each grouping that are always in McCain’s favor; one possibility is that competing messages of change were resonating with voters looking to finalize their decision, with McCain being viewed as the safer option relative to Obama. Regardless of the rationale, McCain’s sustained push of change in late September and early October appear to have been associated with some strong movement in terms of his perceived trustworthiness.

**Table AIV.0.59 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Trustworthy**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Aug-08	20.00	0.00	33.33	0.00	84.21	0.00
Sep-08	10.53	0.00	9.52	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.60 – Experience (Promotion) (McCain) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	10.00	0.00	41.67	0.00	100.00	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The importance of change as a message is clearly reinforced by the results of this final promotional pairing for McCain; though McCain did make relatively few mentions of his past experience, these mentions tended to be associated with substantive declines in the perception of the Republican as a trustworthy candidate. Whether due to his association with the incumbent president, his association with the incumbent party, or just his long-standing tenure in office, the mentions made by McCain of his experience in attempts to promote himself never benefited his perceptions of being trustworthy. It should also be noted that the vast majority of ads where the effect could be measured were in August, demonstrating that the increased presence of these ads was when effects were seen most (the modifier of observable effects is important here – 250 of McCain’s 534 ads mentioning experience in promotional tones aired in the last five days of the campaign, limiting any analysis of their effect on perceptions of him due to the election representing the end of NAES trait questions). When he mentioned change, people seemed to see McCain as more trustworthy; when he reminded them of his tenure in office, that trustworthiness tended to dissipate.

### ***Results – Obama (Negative)***

While Obama’s tone was a bit more balanced than McCain, Obama did run more attack ads than promotional ads (180,799 to 104,856). As noted above, Obama only covered seven of

the mention categories selected from the Wisconsin data set; of these, he ran attack ads in only five – Bill Clinton (Positive), Change, Experience, George W. Bush (Negative), and Iraq. Of those five, two were entirely attacking – Bill Clinton (Positive) and Experience. As such, like the McCain promotional results, any pairing using either of these wholly attacking mentions will not be duplicated below, as the results would be the exact same as the “general” regressions conducted above. For clarity, then, the following pairings will not be duplicated in this section:

- Erratic – Experience
- Has Judgment to Be President – Bill Clinton (Positive)
- Has Right Experience – Experience
- Ready to be President – Bill Clinton (Positive)
- Ready to be President – Experience
- Too Old (McCain) – Experience
- Too Young (Obama) – Experience
- Trustworthy – Bill Clinton (Positive)
- Trustworthy – Experience

**Table AIV.0.61 – George W. Bush (Negative) (Attack) (Obama) – Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

***Table AIV.0.62 – George W. Bush (Negative) (Attack) (Obama) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Attack ads mentioning George W. Bush in a negative way were a substantial component of Obama’s campaign, particularly the later weeks and months. Starting on August 25<sup>th</sup>, not one day passed without this type of mention being made in this type of ad (and in large numbers – over the 72 days from August 25<sup>th</sup> until the end of the campaign, the average number of ads per day was just over 1,300). This sustained airing limits the ability of the exposure-only variable to capture effects over the constrained period where the Erratic question was included; the exposure multiplied by number of ads approach is not vulnerable to this, but, as the second table above shows, these ads were never significantly related to movement on the question regarding McCain as erratic. Whether this is due to the mention and the trait not being closely related (it is unlikely that the main message of these attack ads was to bring into question McCain’s consistency – if anything, the ads were likely to note his steadfast support of Bush and Republican priorities) or message fatigue given the prominence of these ads as part of Obama’s campaign strategy, mentions of the incumbent intended to undercut McCain did not have a substantive effect on this particular trait.

**Table AIV.0.63 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.64 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though not quite as prominent as specific mentions of the incumbent, the Obama campaign put negative mentions of Iraq fairly central in its late-stage advertising. From October 17<sup>th</sup> to November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9,752 mentions of Iraq were made in attack ads, with no day breaking the streak. As such, the same issue as above prevents the exposure-only approach from generating results. As with the pairing above, the more complex independent variable sees no significant effects; whether this is from message fatigue or a disconnect between the traits and mentions (again, McCain’s consistency is more likely to be focused on rather than attacked in these mentions) is unclear; either way, mentions of the war in Iraq did not substantively correspond to changes in perceptions of the Republican candidate as erratic.



**Table AIV.0.65 – George W. Bush (Negative) (Attack) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be**

**President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	16.67	0.00	18.75	33.33	14.81	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	25.00	33.33	21.43	33.33	47.62	70.00

**Table AIV.0.66 – George W. Bush (Negative) (Attack) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be**

**President (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.83	0.00	30.77	12.50	26.67	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	20.00	50.00	25.00	33.33	73.68	64.29
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	66.67	3.33	100.00	6.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	9.68	0.00	6.45	0.00	6.45	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Mentions of the incumbent president in attack ads appear to have been somewhat successful at increasing Obama's relative position on the trait question of having the judgment to be president, though these effects diminish rapidly as the campaign moves into the fall (providing further evidence for the possible message fatigue argument discussed previously). In July (the biweekly results for June are capturing the introduction of these ads beginning on July 10<sup>th</sup>), some moderate effects are found, with the results more consistently in Obama's direction when examining exposure-only (the second set of results is quite pessimistic for Obama in July, with effects almost never in his favor). In August, however, significant results start to more consistently benefit Obama, in line with the ramping up of these messages (given that the first airings in August are the 25<sup>th</sup>, part of this is also the tapering off of the July ads). These results

generate some greater support for the findings (both in this chapter and in the previous two) that effects tend to be more prominent at the beginning and end of advertising campaigns; the stark drop-off from August to September and September to October in the second table further demonstrate this fatigue effect – as Obama consistently hammers this message, it stops being associated with significant and substantive changes on the associated trait.

***Table AIV.0.67 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	6.25	100.00	16.67	100.00	32.00	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.18	0.00	26.67	25.00	15.38	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	33.33	0.00	45.45	0.00	55.56	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	14.29	0.00	33.33	33.33	6.25	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	7.69	0.00	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.68 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.00	0.00	29.63	12.50	25.81	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	50.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	76.92	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.55	0.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Something of a similar pattern is observed when looking at mentions of Iraq rather than the incumbent, though here the effects vary much more wildly across the two models. June and July (minus the short-term groupings) are quite good for Obama in the exposure-only table,

though much worse in the second set of results. In contrast to the previous pairing, August sees *no* benefit for Obama at all, with results always working in McCain's direction in both tables. September is slightly better in each table, though again more in the exposure-only results. October is generally similar for both (better in the second table, but the overall percentages of significant days are generally too small to have much confidence in these differences). Once more, it appears early days are the more effective periods for these mentions, with effectiveness declining rapidly as the campaign goes on.

**Table AIV.0.69 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Patriotic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	12.50	100.00	11.11	100.00	16.00	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.18	50.00	0.00	0.00	3.85	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	33.33	0.00	36.36	0.00	61.11	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	14.29	0.00	11.11	0.00	6.25	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.70 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	16.00	50.00	11.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	75.00	0.00	83.33	0.00	84.62	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.56	0.00	10.00	0.00	3.70	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with a number of the previous pairings, mentions of Iraq in attack ads seem to benefit Obama more at the beginning stages of the advertising push and declines as the campaign goes on; in this particular pairing, however, these ads seem to begin to backfire almost immediately and the backlash to perceptions of Obama's patriotism continue throughout the rest of the campaign. Only in June and July (where 1,425 of the almost 29,000 attack ads mentioning Iraq aired) are positive benefits for Obama found. In August, September, and October, where Obama's campaign made Iraq a major component of its negative advertising, effects are always in McCain's favor. Whether due to the message fatigue possibility, backlash from making an ongoing war a negative issue, pushback against targeting a decorated war hero, or some combination of the three, Obama's negative messaging mentioning Iraq tended to undermine perceptions of his own patriotism rather than bolster it.

***Table AIV.0.71 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b>	6.25	100.00	16.67	100.00	20.00	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.18	50.00	6.67	100.00	7.69	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	22.22	0.00	36.36	0.00	55.56	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	42.86	0.00	22.22	0.00	6.25	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.76	0.00

**Table AIV.0.72 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	20.00	0.00	25.93	14.29	16.13	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	25.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	76.92	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	3.33	100.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	5.56	0.00	5.00	0.00	3.70	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Something of a similar pattern exists when examining Iraq and Obama’s perceived readiness to be commander-in-chief, though there are some slight differences both within and across the two approaches. In the exposure-only results, the pattern is generally consistent with the patriotic results above, though here July is somewhat more positive for Obama and there is some evidence of benefit in the long-term groupings in September (though given the small percentage of significant days this evidence is not overwhelming). In the exposure multiplied by number of ads results, June and July are much *worse* for Obama, the benefit in September moves to the short-term grouping, and October now has significant benefits in the long-term groupings (though there are also slight). Generally, it appears that these mentions tended to not benefit Obama’s standing as ready to handle military matters as president, though the mentions of Iraq did do him somewhat more good here than when examining perceptions of patriotism. As with the discussions about these types of mentions in promotional ads above, perceptions of the candidates that are more policy-oriented appear to be more influenced by policy-specific appeals; demonstrating some familiarity and concern with Iraq, then, is more likely to positively affect

perceptions of the president as policymaker rather than more nebulous, normative perceptions of the president.

**Table AIV.0.73 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Attack) (Obama) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.74 - George W. Bush (Negative) (Attack) (Obama) - Says What He Believes**

**(Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Though a major part of his campaign strategy, the first attack ad making negative mention of the incumbent did not air until July 10<sup>th</sup>, putting these ads outside the timeframe in which this trait question was asked. As such, no results can be reported for this pairing.

**Table AIV.0.75 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Says What He Believes**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	12.50	0.00	20.00	50.00	41.18	85.71

**Table AIV.0.76 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	33.33	0.00	27.27	0.00	50.00	66.67

Though only covering under a month and a fraction of the overall number of attack ads the Obama campaign ran mentioning Iraq, there does appear to be some slight benefit to Obama on perceived straightforwardness when making these types of mentions. These effects appear limited to the medium- and long-term groupings, perhaps suggesting that as these messages became repeated (at least in this early stage of the campaign), people began to recognize Obama's willingness to tackle hard issues or stand up for his convictions; given the criticism surrounding his position (or, more specifically, its lack of consistency) during the Democratic primary (CITE), these early ads might have served to shore up and more clearly state Obama's position on Iraq in a way that demonstrated to voters that he was taking a stand and sticking by it. While not overwhelming, the findings suggest that some connection was occurring, even during the small window in which this question was asked of NAES respondents.

**Table AIV.0.77 – Change (Attack) (Obama) – Shares My Values**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Aug-08</b>	38.88	28.57	54.55	16.67	56.67	11.76
<b>Sep-08</b>	25.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.78 – Change (Attack) (Obama) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	42.86	22.22	60.87	14.29	70.00	4.76
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	23.33	0.00	33.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	6.45	0.00	12.90	0.00	19.35	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Surprisingly given the general positive nature of Obama’s “change” message, almost 46,700 attack ads mentioning this term were aired by the Obama campaign or its allies, including an unbroken streak starting from August 31<sup>st</sup> until Election Day. As the results above demonstrate, it appears that these early mentions were the only ones to have any positive effect for Obama when it comes to perception of the candidates sharing respondents’ values; even here, though, the effects are still more often than not in McCain’s direction. This may be due to a potential inconsistency between the positive and negative change messages; for voters, it may have been difficult to square the generally optimistic or idealistic nature of Obama’s positive change appeals with these increasingly prominent attack ads that went after his opponent (likely arguing that McCain represented no change from Bush or the wrong kind of change – the context of the appeal is unclear given that the Wisconsin approach only notes the presence of the term or a close equivalent). Whatever the reason, going negative with a mention of change appears to have more often than not undermined Obama’s appeal as a candidate who shared the NAES respondents’ values.



**Table AIV.0.79 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	12.50	100.00	16.67	100.00	40.00	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	27.27	66.67	6.67	100.00	7.69	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	33.33	0.00	45.45	0.00	55.56	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	14.29	0.00	33.33	33.33	6.25	100.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.80 – Iraq (Attack) (Obama) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b>	9.09	100.00	7.69	100.00	34.78	100.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.00	0.00	14.81	25.00	12.90	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	50.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	76.92	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	3.33	100.00	0.00	0.00	16.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with patriotic and ready to be commander in chief above, mentions of Iraq in attack attacks appear to have had only limited effectiveness as helping to portray Obama as a strong leader relative to McCain. Mentions in June are helpful to Obama when they are significant, with some slight (in exposure-only) or substantive (in the second set of results) declines in effectiveness and benefit for Obama in July. August sees McCain benefitting, while September is a bit mixed – in exposure-only there are some benefits for Obama in the medium- and long-term groupings, while in the exposure multiplied by number of ads results only the short-term groupings have significant results (and these are exceedingly rare, though in Obama’s favor). There appears to be a decline again when mentioning Iraq – early mentions are more effective and beneficial than later mentions. While somewhere between ready to be commander-in-chief

and patriotic, perceptions of strong leader do not appear to be consistently benefitted by making attack ads mentioning a significant issue of military policy or national security.

**Table AIV.0.81 – Change (Attack) (Obama) – Trustworthy**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	50.00	33.33	54.55	16.67	66.67	10.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.82 – Change (Attack) (Obama) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Aug-08</b>	47.62	30.00	60.87	21.43	70.00	9.52
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.33	0.00	13.33	0.00	13.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	16.13	20.00	16.13	0.00	9.68	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Much like with “shares my values”, Obama’s attack ads mentioning change appear to have had only limited benefit on perceptions of his trustworthiness, almost always limited to the early airings of these mentions (though there is some slight benefit in October in the second set of results). More often than not, significant effects are working to McCain’s benefit; when Obama makes mentions of change in attack ads, his relative trustworthiness appears to drop more often than rise. Whether this is due to some of the inconsistencies in messaging discussed as part of the previous change discussion is unclear, though the logic is much the same here: given his focus on an optimistic message of change, to go on the attack using that language might have undercut

perceptions of Obama as a trustworthy figure making a clear stand. The results also demonstrate a declining effectiveness from month to month as the campaign continues, also suggesting some potential for message fatigue as these ads became incredibly common in the late summer and early fall.

### ***Results – McCain (Negative)***

In comparison to Obama, McCain was much more negative in terms of the balance between promotion and attack ads. For the traits selected from the Wisconsin dataset, McCain ran a total of 109,555 ads classified as primarily attacking his opponent compared to only 37,849 ads classified as primarily promoting himself, a ratio of almost 2.90 to 1. Of the 11 mentions selected, McCain ran attack ads for seven of them, omitting only negative mentions of George W. Bush, God, Hope, and positive mentions of Bill Clinton (McCain ran no ads with this last mention, not surprisingly).

Of the seven, the most common attack ad mention was “Change” (71,568 mentions, or 65.33% of the total), with a substantive drop in numbers between first and second (Experience, with 15,580 mentions or 14.22%). Terrorism was next (11,134, or 10.16%), followed by Iraq (4,686, or 4.28%), Surge (4,314, or 3.94%), September 11 (2,116, or 1.93%), and positive mentions of George W. Bush (157, or 0.14% of the total). It is not particularly surprising that McCain took aim at Obama’s promise of change and stressed his own experience relative to the younger Senator, nor that the other quartet of major mentions were concerning national security matters. The relative smattering of positive mentions of the incumbent are somewhat odd, especially given that they came in September and October, but these do not appear to be a substantive focus point for McCain (in fact, it is highly likely that these were aired on the part of

allies of McCain rather than the campaign itself – the Wisconsin data does not make a clear distinction in this regard).

As with Obama, a number of these mentions on McCain’s part represent the totality of their mentions in the dataset and thus do not require replication here (as the “attack only” results would be the same as the “general” results discussed above). For McCain, these mentions are: George W. Bush (Positive), September 11, and Terrorism. As such, any pairing that involves one of these three will not be replicated here. These are:

- Erratic – George W. Bush (Positive)
- Has Judgment to be President – George W. Bush (Positive)
- Patriotic – September 11
- Patriotic – Terrorism
- Ready to be Commander-in-Chief – September 11
- Ready to be Commander-in-Chief – Terrorism
- Says What He Believes – George W. Bush (Positive)
- Strong Leader – September 11
- Strong Leader – Terrorism

**Table AIV.0.83 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Erratic**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.84 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though McCain made substantial mention of experience in attack ads, all of these mentions came, surprisingly, in the final three weeks of the campaign – an unbroken streak from October 16<sup>th</sup> to Election Day. As such, the exposure-only measures were the same throughout this period, preventing any results from being gathered using that approach. The second table, however, demonstrates that even when taking into account the number of ads being aired during the exposure period no significant results are found. Whether this is due to the lateness of the ads limiting their effectiveness or perceptions of McCain’s experience being solidified well before the final month of the campaign, him touting his tenure in office or military service appears to have had no effect on perceptions of the Republican candidate as erratic.

**Table AIV.0.85 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Erratic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.86 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Erratic (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

Though over 4,600 attack ads mentioning Iraq were aired by McCain or his allies over the course of the campaign, none were aired in the small timeframe in which the erratic question was included in the NAES (the last of these ads aired on October 10<sup>th</sup>). As such, no results are available for this pairing.

**Table AIV.0.87 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Has Judgment to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	6.25	100.00	15.00	66.67	13.33	50.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.41	60.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.04	33.33	8.00	0.00	6.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00

**Table AIV.0.88 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Has Judgment to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	15.00	100.00	27.27	100.00	4.00	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	23.53	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.33	0.00	10.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	20.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	10.00	100.00

Much like Obama's negative mentions of Iraq, attack ads mentioning the war aired on behalf of McCain appear to have had a mixed effect on perceptions of him as having the correct judgment to be president, though a number of substantive differences are found across the two tables. Though McCain aired almost 4,700 attack ads making mention of Iraq, more than half aired in the month of July alone, with the rest mostly airing in September and somewhat in October (61 in total aired in August). When looking at exposure-only, the strong push in July appears to have had the largest effect, with some slight spillover or continuation in August. More often than not, these significant changes in movement worked in McCain's direction, but this was not always the case; while the number of significant groupings increase as the periods get larger in August, the percentage of those significant groupings in McCain's favor declines across the columns. These ads appear to be the most efficacious for McCain in the short-term, but lose (and often reverse) their effectiveness as time passes. Some short-term benefit is also found in September, another high point for these mentions.

Much of the same pattern is found when taking into account the number of ads being aired over the exposure periods, but the overall benefit for McCain suffers greater in August and September. July is always in McCain's favor, but when taking into account the numbers of ads the overall effectiveness drops substantively, perhaps suggesting that continuous mentions tend to be less effective than more spaced-out mentions. The presence of much more significant effects (and highly positive effects for McCain) in October would seem to support this reading as well; when ads are less inundating, there appears to be more potential for messages to resonate and influence perceptions of the candidates running for president.

**Table AIV.0.89 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Has Right Experience to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	12.50	100.00	10.00	100.00	5.88	100.00

**Table AIV.0.90 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Has Right Experience to Be President**

**(Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	5.26	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As noted above, though McCain made a large amount of mentions of experience in attack ads these only came in the last 20 days of the campaign, limiting the overall effectiveness of these types of advertisement. However, the exposure-only results show some substantive benefits, even in the closing days of a campaign where the typical voter was likely already very aware of the gap in terms of tenure between the two candidates. These prominent mentions corresponded to increases in McCain’s relative standing on the question having the right experience to be president, though these benefits dissipate almost entirely when looking at the second set of results. Once more, it may be the case that sustained advertising is less effective than it might seem on its face – at no point over the final 20 days does McCain or his allies skip a day, suggesting that this blanket coverage might quickly reach saturation and become more background noise than a source of persuasion.



**Table AIV.0.91 – Iraq (Attack) (McCain) – Patriotic**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	50.00	10.00	50.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.65	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.04	66.67	4.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.92 – Iraq (Attack) (McCain) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08 -</b>	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	10.00	50.00	4.55	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50	0.00	50.00	0.00	70.59	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	33.33	13.33	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

The effects of attack ads from the Republican campaign mentioning Iraq on perceptions of patriotism appear generally similar to the effects on perceptions of judgment, though overall this pairing shows a substantially less consistent benefit for McCain and a potential significant backfiring effect. In July, the effectiveness and benefits for McCain decline as the groupings get larger (for exposure-only), with the benefits for McCain increasing in the second table (though the percentage of significant groupings is very small in all these cases). In August, however, both tables show a more substantive benefit for Obama (particularly in the exposure multiplied by number of ads results). September sees the same pattern as July across the two tables, though

again the most beneficial groupings for McCain are limited by the relatively small percentage of significant groupings overall. The main takeaway for this grouping seems to be the same as this pairing for Obama's attack ads – while some small potential for benefit is possible, going negative on an important national security issue like this seemingly runs the risk of backfiring, worsening the attacker's relative standing on perceptions of patriotism.

**Table AIV.0.93 – Surge (Attack) (McCain) – Patriotic**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	50.00	20.00	50.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	17.65	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	13.04	66.67	4.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.94 – Surge (Attack) (McCain) – Patriotic (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	10.00	50.00	4.55	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50	0.00	50.00	0.00	70.59	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	33.33	13.33	0.00	10.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The results for attack ads making mention of the surge are nearly identical to the previous pairing. This is not particularly surprising, either from a general theoretical standpoint or a practical, numbers standpoint. The surge in Iraq and the general war in Iraq are obviously linked,

and it is indeed the case that mentions of one came along with mentions of the other – of the 4,314 mentions of the surge, only 19 come without a mention of Iraq, and of the 4,686 mentions of Iraq only 391 come without mentioning the surge. The only differences in results appear to be in the 7-day groupings for July in the first table (the surge is slightly more significant overall, though the percentage of days correct is unchanged), and in the short- and medium-term groupings for October in the second table (no significant effects are found for the surge advertisements – not surprising given that only 20 surge ads aired in October compared to 382 Iraq ads).

**Table AIV.0.95 – Iraq (Attack) (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	100.00	15.00	66.67	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.29	50.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	8.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00

**Table AIV.0.96 – Iraq (Attack) (McCain) – Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \***

**Count)**

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	15.00	100.00	22.73	100.00	4.00	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.41	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	10.00	100.00	10.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

Surprisingly given the finding above that Obama's negative ads mentioning Iraq were more beneficial on substantive, policy perceptions than more normative perceptions, McCain's attack ads on Iraq appear to be much less effective in terms of bolstering perceptions of him as ready to be commander-in-chief. July is still generally beneficial for the Republican candidate, with the second set of results more effective and in his favor compared to the exposure-only results. August once again appears to show some reversal or backfiring of these ads, though only in the long-term groupings. September is somewhat beneficial, though the small percentage of short-term groupings that are significant limit the confidence in this finding. Similarly, October in the second table sees some small benefit for McCain, though these percentages are also not overwhelming. Overall, it does not appear that McCain making mention of Iraq in ads targeting Obama did much to help perceptions of the Republican as a potential military commander, especially relative to the benefit gleaned by Obama in running the same type of ads. Whether this is due to a ceiling effect (McCain likely had much less room to grow in terms of being perceived positively as a potential commander-in-chief given his military background), a pushback against his positions (his arguments on Iraq may have caused some concern about his military plans that would not have existed for Obama), or a combination of the two is unclear. Regardless, attacking Obama while making mention of Iraq appears to have not strongly contributed to an increased sense that McCain was prepared to take on the military role of being president.

**Table AIV.0.97 - Surge (Attack) (McCain) - Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	12.50	100.00	15.00	66.67	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	35.29	50.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.98 - Surge (Attack) (McCain) - Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief (Exposure \*  
Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	15.00	100.00	22.73	100.00	4.00	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.41	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	6.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with the previous comparison of Iraq and surge ad effects, these results are almost identical to the ones preceding them. The only difference is October sees no significant effects when the surge ads are being examined, again understandable given the lack of airings for this mention relative to Iraq. The conclusions here are effectively the same as the previous discussion.

**Table AIV.0.99 - Experience (Attack) (McCain) - Ready to Be President**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.100 - Experience (Attack) (McCain) - Ready to Be President (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

As this trait question was only asked until June 24<sup>th</sup> and McCain did not begin airing attack ads mentioning experience until the final three weeks of the campaign, there are no results to report for this particular pairing.

**Table AIV.0.101 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Says What He Believes**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

**Table AIV.0.102 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Says What He Believes (Exposure \* Count)**

5-day		7-day		14-day	
% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct

McCain's first attack ad mentioning Iraq aired on July 9<sup>th</sup>, well after the NAES battery stopped including this trait question. As with the previous pairing, no results can be gathered here.

***Table AIV.0.103 – Change (Attack) (McCain) – Shares My Values***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	25.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.35	0.00	3.70	0.00	3.33	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	31.25	80.00	35.00	85.71	32.14	100.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	12.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	41.67	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

***Table AIV.0.104 – Change (Attack) (McCain) – Shares My Values (Exposure \* Count)***

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	75.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	15.00	66.67	22.73	80.00	20.00	83.33
<b>Aug-08</b>	35.71	40.00	43.75	28.57	34.78	12.50
<b>Sep-08</b>	3.85	100.00	7.14	50.00	23.33	14.29
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.90	100.00	9.68	100.00	3.23	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though McCain or his allies aired over 71,000 attack ads mentioning change over the course of the campaign, the bulk of these came over an unbroken 51-day streak from September 8<sup>th</sup> to October 28<sup>th</sup>, with some minor concentrations in July and August. In looking at exposure-only, this concentrated push appears to have been less effective compared to the more isolated airings, as beneficial effects for McCain are only found in August, and that month has generally more significant effects than the ones preceding or following it (both July and August have some effects, but these are either very rare, never in McCain’s direction, or both). Taking into account

the number of ads over exposure periods does see some increases in effectiveness throughout, both in general and directional terms. July, August, September, and October all have some beneficial results for McCain, though August's percentages are much smaller (with its general percentages of significant days increasing across the board). Beneficial results in July are particularly substantive; while September and October see some benefits for McCain they are typically associated with small percentages of significant days (particularly October) or see a more substantial percentage of significant days but a much smaller percentage of those days working in McCain's direction (see, for example, the 14-day grouping in September). All in all, it appears that attacking Obama on change did give some benefit to McCain in terms of being better perceived as sharing NAES respondents' values, though these effects tended to be more prominent when the ads were not as prominent, a pattern that fits with a number of the pairings discussed previously.

**Table AIV.0.105 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	18.75	100.00	20.00	50.00	3.33	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	41.18	42.86
<b>Sep-08</b>	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.106 - Iraq (Attack) (McCain) - Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	10.00	100.00	18.18	100.00	16.00	100.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	25.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	47.06	0.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	10.00	0.00	3.33	0.00	16.67	20.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	20.00	50.00	20.00	50.00	10.00	100.00



The pattern for attack ads mentioning Iraq and perceptions of McCain as a strong leader are generally similar to the previously discussed pairings involving Iraq. Some substantive benefits occur early on in this advertising campaign but begin to diminish over time. This pairing is slightly different, though, in that the reintroduction of this message in late August and (especially) early September appears to have a substantive effect as well – the 14-day grouping for August and the five-day grouping for September (in exposure-only) demonstrate a possible reinforcing effect occurring during the renewal of these messages being prominent starting on August 27<sup>th</sup> (and picking up rapidly starting on September 11<sup>th</sup>).

This pattern, however, is dramatically different in examining the exposure multiplied by number of ads results – while July stays fairly effective (decreasing slightly in the short- and medium-terms but increasing in the long-term), August and September now show signs of these ads working generally in Obama's favor, and at rates higher than in the previous model. Similarly, October now sees some significant results, with McCain seeing the benefit slightly more often than not. Taking into account the prominence and amount of ads over exposure periods suggests that as the campaign continues, the potential for the message to begin to backfire appears to grow (though October suggests that this can also be reversed). Overall, there does not appear to be a *general* backlash against McCain using Iraq to attack Obama when it comes to perceptions of the two men as strong leaders, but the change in direction does suggest that continued advertising can be a volatile approach.

**Table AIV.0.107 – Surge (Attack) (McCain) – Strong Leader**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-08	18.75	100.00	20.00	50.00	3.33	100.00
Aug-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	41.18	42.86
Sep-08	8.70	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.108 – Surge (Attack) (McCain) – Strong Leader (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Jun-08 -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
Jul-08	10.00	100.00	18.18	100.00	4.00	100.00
Aug-08	25.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	47.06	0.00
Sep-08	10.00	0.00	3.33	0.00	16.67	20.00
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

As with previous Iraq-Surge sequencing, the results in this pairing are nearly identical to the previous tables. The only difference, once more, is the lack of effectiveness in October in the second table (owing to the relatively few surge ads versus Iraq ads in the late fall). The general conclusions are the same here as above.

**Table AIV.0.109 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Too Old (McCain)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	25.00	100.00	30.00	100.00	5.88	100.00

**Table AIV.0.110 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Too Old (McCain) (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	10.53	100.00	28.57	100.00	25.00	100.00
Nov-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Though McCain only made mention of experience in attack ads over the final 20 days of the campaign, there does appear to have been some substantive association with these ads airing and declining perceptions of the Republican as being too aged to be president. While some of the percentages are not particularly strong (the 14-day period in the exposure-only table and the short-term period in the second table), some substantive results are found in the rest of the columns, and always working in McCain’s favor. Hitting Obama on experience appears to have given voters some confirmation that McCain, though he had been around for a long time, was still able to handle the duties of the office.

**Table AIV.0.111 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Too Young (Obama)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	25.00	100.00	20.00	50.00	11.76	50.00

***Table AIV.0.112 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Too Young (Obama) (Exposure \* Count)***

	<b>5-day</b>		<b>7-day</b>		<b>14-day</b>	
	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>	<b>% Days Sig.</b>	<b>% Days Correct</b>
<b>Oct-08</b>	15.79	100.00	28.57	83.33	3.57	100.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

These declines in McCain being viewed as too old coincide with generally increasing perceptions of Obama as too young for the presidency, though the correspondence between experience attacks and this trait measure are weaker than in the previous pairing. While McCain either tends to benefit or at least break even, the overall effectiveness is diminished here; while running attacks on experience may have suggested to voters that McCain was still up for the job, they do not appear to have been as successful at convincing voters that Obama was too young, an interesting finding given that it was likely the intention of the negative experience ads to make the latter point and highlight Obama's youth and relative inexperience in government. The combining of a negative message with a positive message (McCain is not too old) being more effective than a negative message with a negative message (Obama is too young) presents some intriguing questions for the effects and success of attack ads generally.

**Table AIV.0.113 – Change (Attack) (McCain) – Trustworthy**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	4.35	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	37.50	83.33	40.00	75.00	35.71	100.00
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.33	0.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.114 – Change (Attack) (McCain) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
<b>Jun-08</b> -	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
<b>Jul-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Aug-08</b>	35.71	40.00	43.75	28.57	34.78	12.50
<b>Sep-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.67	60.00
<b>Oct-08</b>	12.90	100.00	12.90	100.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Nov-08</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Unlike with the shares my values question, perceptions of McCain’s trustworthiness were much less responsive to his change attack messaging, especially the second round in late summer/early fall (at least in the exposure-only results). While there are some minor short-term effects in July, August sees the bulk of significant results when just examining exposure, with the direction almost always in McCain’s favor. Some long-term effects in September exist, but these are both not in McCain’s direction and relatively small generally. The exposure multiplied by number of ads results demonstrate much less effectiveness in August but increased benefit for McCain in September and October, suggesting that taking into account the number of ads highlighted the effectiveness of strong second efforts as well as the dangers of sustained messaging generally (the decline in benefit for McCain in August is substantive – effects are

more often than not in Obama’s direction in that month). Once more there appears to be a tradeoff between sustained advertising and more spaced out or subdued messaging – when McCain makes big pushes, attacking Obama on change, his perceptions of his trustworthiness tended to diminish, though the change in direction again suggests that the true nature of this type of negative advertising is quite volatile, at least as it affects perceptions of character of the attacking candidate.

**Table AIV.0.115 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Trustworthy**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Table AIV.0.116 – Experience (Attack) (McCain) – Trustworthy (Exposure \* Count)**

	5-day		7-day		14-day	
	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct	% Days Sig.	% Days Correct
Oct-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nov-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Finally, the late-stage push McCain made on experience appears to have had no significant association with perceptions of his trustworthiness; one possibility here is that understandings of his experience surplus relative to Obama and perceptions of his trustworthiness were fairly well-established by this point, though the substantive findings on age above suggests that these late ads could still have an effect. While trustworthy might have been a bit more stable

than perceptions of age, it is unclear when and how perceptions harden; in this particular case, no effect appears to have been made by the ads, but whether this is due to a lack of possible movement or just no association being seen in the minds of respondents or voters is unclear. As will be discussed in the concluding chapter, future research should look to determine what types of ads can be effective at which stages in the campaign but also examine more fully when and how trait perceptions of candidates become hardened or less malleable over the course of an election campaign.

### ***Results – Promotion/Attack Success Rates***

***Table AIV.0.117 – Overall Success Rates – Obama (Promotion)***

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
Iraq (Obama) - Says What He Believes	33.33%	36.36%	27.78%	32.49%
Terrorism (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	26.14%	20.39%	8.19%	18.24%
Terrorism (Obama) - Strong Leader	19.89%	16.54%	8.34%	14.92%
Terrorism (Obama) - Patriotic	19.89%	16.54%	5.56%	13.99%
Iraq (Obama) - Strong Leader	8.17%	16.37%	9.76%	11.43%
Change (Obama) - Shares My Values	11.07%	10.63%	7.62%	9.77%
Change (Obama) - Trustworthy	10.12%	7.22%	7.70%	8.35%
Iraq (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	7.24%	11.33%	6.00%	8.19%
Iraq (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	4.74%	8.97%	7.68%	7.13%
Iraq (Obama) - Patriotic	6.66%	4.15%	2.79%	4.53%
Hope (Obama) - Shares My Values	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.83%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Iraq (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Average	10.70%	10.61%	6.53%	

While it is difficult to know the exact distinctions in usage for these terms across ads categorized as purely promotional or purely attack, the coding scheme utilized by the Wisconsin

researchers would suggest that promotional mentions are more (if not uniformly) positive and the attacking mentions are correspondingly negative. As such, examining the results for promotional and attack ads separately may shed some further light on the changes in effectiveness across types of ads; particularly on divisive issues such as the Iraq war, how the candidates utilize these mentions may lead to differing perceptions of their traits and abilities.

For Obama in 2008, only five of the seven mentions were used in some promotional advertising. Obama or his allies never used positive mentions of Bill Clinton or mentions of Experience in these types of ads, saving them solely for ads categorized as attacking. Of the five with usage in promotional ads, two (Hope and Terrorism) are almost always used in this way – all but five of the Hope mentions come in promotional ads, while all but 1,098 of the Terrorism mentions are used in this way. While the results for these pairings, then, should be very similar, they are replicated here in order to more fully assess how differences in usage (albeit slight) affect the perceptions discussed. Two others – negative mentions of George W. Bush and mentions of Iraq – are very rarely used in this way; just under 3% of the Bush mentions and just over 4% of the Iraq mentions come in ads coded as promotional. While this may mean that the results that follow are limited, it is useful to see how promotional ads that either use negative language or that touch on a central and divisive issue affect perceptions of the candidate. The final mentions – Change – sees 58.78% of its mentions appearing in purely promotional ads.

Though only coming on 26 days, it is not particularly surprising to see that mentions of Iraq in promotional ads had clear, substantive correlations with positive changes in perceptions of Obama as a candidate who Says What He Believes. As noted earlier, a critical aspect of the Obama messaging on Iraq was that he would be a president who would deliver hard truths to the American people (CITE), so it stands to reason that many of his promotional ads mentioning the war would take a similar tack. These effects, furthermore, were not short-lived – while the



success rates are stronger in the 5- and 7-day groupings, the 14-day groupings still see a substantive 27.78% success rate. This is by far the most successful pairing seen here, especially when compared to the other pairings using Iraq. Strong Leader, Ready to Be Commander in Chief, Has Judgment to Be President, and Patriotic all see some successes, though nowhere near the rates of Says What He Believes. Strong Leader does make sense as a secondary area of success, as showing himself to be knowledgeable and forceful in his approach to the war may have bolstered perceptions here. While this pairing seems to do best in the medium-term (16.37%), the short- and long-term see fairly stable results, further suggesting that the effect of these ads on this trait did not diminish quickly.

Ready to Be Commander in Chief and Has Judgment to Be President see similar success rates, not surprising given the underlying similarity in the questions being asked. Given the martial nature of the mentions, it is heartening to see that the Commander in Chief question sees slightly more successes than the general President question, though the distinctions here are small. Commander in Chief has much the same pattern as Strong Leader, while Judgment sees more successes in the medium- and long-term than short-term. Patriotic, by contrast, declines in effectiveness as the groupings get larger, and is only ever slightly successful to begin with. Finally, being paired with Iraq sees no successes on the trait question concerning McCain as Erratic; this is not wholly shocking, as Obama's mentions of McCain in this way would likely be categorized as attacking and were more focused on domestic policy.

Terrorism, on the other hand, sees much more consistent and substantive successes when used in purely promotional advertising. Ready to Be Commander in Chief performs the best, followed by Strong Leader and Patriotic. The overall average success rates are skewed somewhat by the relative lack of success in the 14-day groupings; over a quarter and a fifth of the 5- and 7-day groupings, respectively, for Ready to Be Commander in Chief are statistically significant and

in the right direction, compared to only 8.19% of the biweekly groupings. The 5- and 7-day results for Strong Leader and Patriotic are identical, while curiously the biweekly results diverge, with Patriotic seeing a smaller success rate than Strong Leader. Why this is is unclear; the final Terrorism mention studied here aired August 13, so it is not due to any difference in timeframe when each question was being asked. While it is not assumed that both Strong Leader and Patriotic moved in lockstep, it remains confounding why the results are the exact same for two of the groupings and not the third. Regardless, here, too, the pattern is one of much higher successes in the short- and medium-term than the long-term.

Change also sees consistent results with its two pairings, Shares My Values and Trustworthy. Change appeared as a mention in promotional ads over 76 days of the campaign, so even the relatively small success rates here correspond to a substantive number of days. The general pattern for both Shares My Values and Trustworthy is declining effectiveness as the groupings get larger (though this is not quite true for Trustworthy, where the 7-day success rate of 7.22% is smaller than the 14-day success rate of 7.70%). Trustworthy does generally worse than Shares My Values, though this makes sense given that the Change mentions likely utilized more abstract, values-laden talk than specific policy proposals, so responses to it may have been more focused on general principles than trusting on a particular goal or policy priority.

Finally, Hope saw barely any successes and the negative mentions of George W. Bush saw absolutely none. These results both fit with the data. Though promotional ads mentioning Hope aired across 13 days, five of those were the final five of the campaign, and the other eight saw a total of 18 ads,<sup>59</sup> so only finding a slight success rate for the 5-day groupings makes sense;

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<sup>59</sup> While these results do not include the number of ads airing contemporaneously in the exposure periods, the relative presence of ads can be assumed to affect the underlying potential for effects in the first place. While the exposure variable treats all counts equally, the relative lack of presence can be an explanatory factor for why the exposure variables are more/less effective.

these mentions appear to have been short-lived and aired in at most a handful of markets on any one day (the final five days see a massive uptick in numbers, though the ability to observe results with the trait questions is limited by the hard deadline for these questions of the day before Election Day). No results for the negative mentions of George W. Bush are likely a combination of the Erratic question being asked only towards the end of the campaign and the disjunction between a promotional ad making negative mention of the incumbent. This is once again a function of the coding scheme – attack ads must attack the *opposing candidate*; all others are fair game.

***Table AIV.0.118 - Overall Success Rates (Exposure \* Count) - Obama (Promotion)***

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
Terrorism (Obama) - Strong Leader	0.00%	8.39%	7.69%	5.36%
Iraq (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	3.13%	8.34%	4.00%	5.15%
Terrorism (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	2.50%	2.28%	5.57%	3.45%
Iraq (Obama) - Strong Leader	2.63%	2.78%	2.00%	2.47%
Iraq (Obama) - Patriotic	0.00%	2.78%	4.00%	2.26%
Iraq (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	0.00%	2.78%	4.00%	2.26%
Terrorism (Obama) - Patriotic	2.50%	0.00%	3.85%	2.12%
Change (Obama) - Shares My Values	0.91%	2.50%	2.67%	2.03%
Change (Obama) - Trustworthy	2.81%	0.83%	1.33%	1.66%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	1.08%	1.08%	0.00%	0.72%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Iraq (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hope (Obama) - Shares My Values	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Average	1.20%	2.44%	2.70%	

When the number of mentions airing over the exposure periods are included in analysis, the success rates for the mentions in positive ads see declines in almost all cases. Only one of the

13 pairings above sees an increase in the overall average success rate, and this increase is both very small and highly insubstantial given the low rate to begin with. Two others see their averages remain the same, while the remaining ten all see declines, some of them quite substantial. On the whole, then, it appears repetition of positive mentions has almost no effect at boosting changes in perception on related trait questions. More importantly, it is not readily apparent why this lack of effectiveness is observed.

The two pairings where the results remain static – negative mentions of George W. Bush and mentions of Iraq paired with Erratic – continue to see no successes at all. As described above, this makes sense given that the descriptions of McCain as erratic were never tied into either his relationship with the sitting president or his positions on Iraq. While the Republican candidate did try to have some flexibility on both, it never appears that Obama mentioning these topics (especially in positive ads) did much to make the criticism of McCain stick more. The only pairing with a positive change in the overall average success rate is negative mentions of George W. Bush paired with the trait question Has Judgment to Be President. Here, though, the change is from no successes to an average success rate of 0.78% (1.08% for both the 5- and 7-day groupings), so this increase is highly insubstantial and likely spurious. Similarly, the pairing for Hope – Shares My Values sees a slight decrease in the overall average success rate of 0.83 percentage points, though in this case that represents the totality of the successes. Once counts are included, all the successes for this pairing disappear.

The changes in success rates for the two most common mentions in Obama’s promotional ads – Change and Terrorism – fit with the findings in previous chapters of highly repeated mentions seeing substantive drop-offs in effectiveness when those counts are included. Change, already limited in its effectiveness, sees substantial declines when counts are included in the regressions. Change – Trustworthy sees the overall average success rate decrease by 6.69

percentage points, leaving it with an average success rate of only 1.66% (2.81% in the 5-day groupings, 0.83% in the 7-day groupings, and 1.33% in the 14-day groupings). Similarly, Change – Shares My Values sees an overall average success rate decrease of 7.74 percentage points, leaving it with an overall average success rate of 2.03% (0.91% / 2.50% / 2.67% for each grouping). Given that 71,371 mentions of Change came in promotional ads over the course of the campaign, these results suggest that these repetitive messages were not strong motivators for observers to update their perceptions of Obama. While some positive results persist, they are strongly diminished compared to the exposure-only results; constant reminders of the message, then, may have caused observers to more quickly ignore them.

Though Terrorism is mentioned in promotional ads much less often than Change (15,871 times), the decreases in overall average success rates for the three traits paired with are much starker. Strong Leader sees the smallest overall average decrease, with the second iteration having an average 9.56 percentage points lower; while successes persist in the 7- and 14-day groupings, none are found in the 5-day grouping once counts are included. Patriotic sees the next highest decline, though the nature of the decline here is much more important; in the second version, the overall average success rate decreases by 11.87 percentage points, settling at a scant 2.12% (2.50% / 0.00% / 3.85%). While Strong Leader does maintain some substantive results, bringing counts in almost entirely wipes out the positive correlations between Obama mentioning Terrorism in a promotional ad and perceptions of him as Patriotic.<sup>60</sup> Finally, Ready to Be Commander in Chief sees the largest overall average decline, with its overall average success rate

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<sup>60</sup> One possibility here is that Terrorism is especially poorly suited as a promotional mention, especially if one is hoping to be seen as Patriotic. Though less of an issue in 2008 than in 2004, some of the same logic that led to the Kerry campaign restricting their usage of the images and language of September 11<sup>th</sup> may have still been operative in 2008 (CITE). Especially for an out-party candidate, usage of Terrorism may have been particularly fraught and led voters to push back against any usage of it, even in promotional ads.

falling by 14.69 percentage points, leaving it with a similarly small average of 3.45% (2.50% / 2.28% / 5.57%). It is curious why even in promotional ads these mentions would have such a substantive negative effect on relative perceptions compared to exposure-only; as noted below, one possibility may be that Terrorism is particularly dangerous as a mention for challenging candidates, as the emotional resonance tied into that term may lead to blowback.<sup>61</sup> Regardless of the reasoning, the declines in effectiveness for Terrorism seem outsized for the counts involved, at least compared to past instances. While Terrorism's counts here would seem to place it in the "sweet spot" between too few to be noticed and too many to be retained, the results are much less positive.

Finally, taking into account the number of ads for Iraq sees declines overall, though the substantive nature of those declines varies. Has Judgment to Be President and Patriotic both see relatively small declines, though Patriotic ends up with much smaller success rates overall. Has Judgment to Be President sees its overall average success rate decline almost two percentage points, but this still leaves it with an overall average of 5.15% (3.13% / 8.34% / 4.00%). The average for Patriotic diminishes by 2.27 percentage points, but this leaves it with an overall average success rate of only 2.26% (0.00% / 2.78% / 4.00%). Oddly enough, though they had slightly different results in the first iteration, bringing counts in leaves both Patriotic and Ready to Be Commander in Chief with the exact same results (though this represents an almost six-percentage point decrease in Commander in Chief's overall average success rate). Why this is is

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<sup>61</sup> It would be useful for future research to examine the contexts of these mentions more – while the Wisconsin coding has no instances of Obama's ads mentioning September 11 specifically, it is not too unrealistic to assume that imagery of those attacks were used (unclear if these would count in the Wisconsin coding schemes) or even general mentions of terrorism would spur remembrance of the most high-profile instance of the concept. Thus, while Terrorism here is understood as a general mention, it is inescapable that measuring the effects of those mentions must take into account that for a good number of voters in 2008 (and perhaps still) the general mention of terrorism and the specific mention of September 11 are interchangeable.

not readily clear. Finally, Strong Leader sees the starkest decline across regressions, with its overall average success rate falling by almost nine percentage points, leaving it with an average of 2.47% (2.63% / 2.78% / 2.00%).

On the whole, taking into account the number of mentions airing during exposure periods sees restricted success rates, with the few instances of positive change or no change representing slim to no successes. The finding that promotional ads see declines no matter if a large, moderate, or slight number of mentions are being made raises questions about the generalized nature of mention counts – repetition seems to have had no benefit at all in this case, though whether that is due to the nature of the mentions themselves (abstract mentions of Change or more specific topics that touch on emotional areas of policy, such as national security), the tone of the ads (promotional), or a combination of factors is unclear.

***Table AIV.0.119 – Overall Success Rates – McCain (Promotion)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	12.50%	10.00%	0.00%	7.50%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	12.50%	5.00%	3.23%	6.91%
<b>Hope (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	4.86%	6.86%	6.70%	6.14%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	12.50%	5.00%	0.00%	5.83%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Young (Obama)</b>	6.30%	5.36%	0.96%	4.21%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	4.17%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Old (McCain)</b>	5.13%	5.66%	0.00%	3.60%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Has Right Experience to be President</b>	0.00%	0.00%	3.51%	1.17%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Change (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Change (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	5.52%	3.16%	1.20%	

In terms of range, the McCain campaign was slightly more promotional than the Obama team in 2008; of the eleven categories utilized here, McCain made mention of six of them in ads categorized as promotional. The numbers of mentions, however, show a clear hierarchy, with two mentions (Change and negative mentions of the incumbent president) being far, far more prevalent than the other four (Experience, God, Hope, and Iraq). While these counts are not included in the first iteration of the regressions discussed here, this imbalance offers some insight into the relative strategic foci of the Republican as he tried to make a positive case for himself in 2008.

It is also the case for McCain that two of his promotional categories were entirely promotional (that is, all of the ads in the Wisconsin dataset with these mentions were coded as promotional). As such, there is no point in replicating the results here, as they would be the exact same as the pairings discussed above. All of McCain's mentions of God and his negative mentions of George W. Bush fall into this category.

Though only included in ads across 16 days of the campaign, it is not wholly surprising to find that mentions of Iraq in promotional ads tended to have the highest average success rates for McCain. Given McCain's background and notable connection to military matters (both in and out of government), these promotional ads had a rich history to mine and a relatively easy connection to forge (or reinforce) in the minds of voters through usage of the ongoing war in Iraq. The fact that McCain could easily rely on symbolic connections to the military and abstract discussions of associated martial values is borne out by the finding that the trait that was associated most strongly with positive change after exposure to these ads was Patriotic (7.50% average success rate). It should be noted, though, that the success observed here were limited to the 5-day (12.50%) and 7-day (10.00%) groupings only; while McCain did see some short-term



benefits in perceptions of him as Patriotic on days after these ads aired, those successes appeared to have dissipated quickly.<sup>62</sup>

Though likely symbolic in nature (that is, it is unlikely McCain got into the policy details in his promotional ads – most positive ads tend to be abstract or value-laden [CITE]), it is still useful to see that mentions of Iraq in promotional ads correlated with increasing perceptions of McCain as Having the Judgment to Be President, a Strong Leader, and Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief. What is intriguing is the relative similarities of the results, particularly in the short-term groupings. Each one of these pairings had the same success rate (12.50%, same as Iraq – Patriotic) in the 5-day groupings; Strong Leader and Has Judgment to Be President also had the same 7-day grouping success rate (5.00%), with the only difference here being the 14-day results (Has Judgment had a success rate of 3.23%, while no successes were found for Strong Leader in these groupings). Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief only had successes in the short-term pairings. While these trait questions are related, it is not expected that they would be all the same, so these discrepancies are not worrisome. However, some caution should be exercised in explaining away the differences as minor; what may be occurring is that the content of the ads may be touching on different traits in different measures (for example, playing up McCain's love of country instead of his experience as a military leader), but what may also be occurring is other events over the same time period that is affecting these results. As has been mentioned before and will be explored more in later chapters, the current research is limited in its ability to draw direct

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62 One possibility here is that perceptions of McCain as patriotic were already quite high, and therefore were highly limited in terms of observing positive change. While the results as presented here do not demonstrate the *amount* of change, high values may make it more difficult to observe positive changes in the longer-term groupings. See the discussion in Chapter # for a further exploration of the substantive effects and these possible situations.

responsibility for these trait question changes to the ads themselves; other aspects of the campaign are playing a role, as well.

Though only mentioned on nine days (four of which were the last days of the campaign), mentions of Hope did still have some substantive correlations with changing perceptions of McCain as someone who Shares the Values of the respondents. Furthermore, these successes were not limited to any particular grouping: 4.86% of the 5-day groupings, 6.86% of the 7-day groupings, and 6.70% of the 14-day groupings were in the correct direction and statistically significant. It is intriguing that McCain was able to find much more success in utilizing Hope this way than his opponent, whose campaign was more centrally oriented around the concept. However, given the small sample size of observable days and the relatively small success rates, some concerns about spuriousness are warranted here.

Similarly, though Experience was only made mention of in ads on 17 days (5 of them being the last of the campaign), some slight successes are observed. However, these seem limited more to traits that might be considered less crucial to the actual job of president, a further suggestion that these promotional ads are more abstract than informational. McCain sees the most success when Experience is paired with perceptions of Obama as Too Young (4.21% overall average success rate) and himself as Too Old (3.60% overall average success rate). Both of these pairings see successes concentrated in the short- and medium-term groupings, with almost no long-term successes (Too Young has success rates of 6.30%, 5.36%, and 0.96% across the three groupings, while Too Old has rates of 5.13%, 5.66%, and 0.00%). Compare these results to the more thematically connected (and arguably more important) trait of Has Right Experience to Be President, where the only successes are found in the 14-day groupings (3.51%). These purely promotional ads appear to have presented McCain more as a steady presence in government who

could still be effective, but gave less insight into whether or not his previous service had prepared him for office.

The remaining Experience pairings (Erratic and Trustworthy), as well as the two Change pairings (Shares My Values and Trustworthy), had no success rates in any of the three groupings.

***Table AIV.0.120 – Overall Success Rates (Exposure \* Count) – McCain (Promotion)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Change (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	15.00%	20.00%	23.33%	19.44%
<b>Change (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	20.00%	25.00%	10.00%	18.33%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	21.05%	19.05%	7.69%	15.93%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	21.05%	14.29%	1.93%	12.42%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	21.06%	14.29%	0.00%	11.78%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Young (Obama)</b>	10.56%	4.55%	12.21%	9.10%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	15.88%	4.76%	0.00%	6.88%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Has Right Experience to be President</b>	0.00%	0.00%	1.92%	0.64%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Hope (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Old (McCain)</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	10.38%	8.49%	4.76%	

The success rates for McCain’s promotional ads change dramatically when the number of ads airing during the exposure periods are included. Half see increases in their overall average success rate, while four see declines and two stay static. What’s more, the largest increases come for the mention made most prominently by McCain in his promotional ads, further suggesting that some inclusion of quantity is important to determining the true effectiveness of ads on

perceptions of candidates. While the other mentions are made less frequently, there is evidence that even small repetitions can have substantive effects (though this is mixed).

By far, the largest change from the first to second set of regressions are the pairings involving mentions of Change. While both of these saw no successes at all in the exposure-only regressions, including their counts sees a substantial increase, with the average overall success rate for Change – Shares My Values jumping 19.44 percentage points and for Change – Trustworthy jumping 18.33 percentage points. Shares My Values appears to be more successful in the longer groupings (15.00% / 20.00% / 23.33%), while the opposite pattern holds for Trustworthy (20.00% / 25.00% / 10.00%). As mentioned above, this was one of the most prominent mentions in positive ads for McCain (second only to negative mentions of George W. Bush), with 17,253 mentions over 33 days of the campaign. This presents a complicated picture, as previous results for massively repeated mentions such as this find highly limited effectiveness, especially when the counts are included in the analysis. The findings here, then, suggest that purely promotional ads may operate differently; alternatively, the fact that McCain is intruding on rhetorical ground already claimed by his opponent in using “Change” may make the messages more noticeable and effective (Hayes 2005). Regardless, taking into account how many ads McCain is running shows that these mentions may not have been as ineffective as the initial results suggested; quantity, in this case, may have had a quality of its own.

Massive repetition, however, does not appear to be a prerequisite for increased effectiveness, however. Over the course of the campaign Iraq is mentioned in only 546 ads, yet three of the four pairings see increased overall average success rates when these counts are included. Strong Leader, Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief, and Has Judgment to Be President see increases of 10.10, 8.25, and 4.87 percentage points, respectively (taking them up to 15.93%, 12.42%, and 11.78%). As with the exposure-only results, the individual rates are fairly similarly,

especially in the 5-day groupings (21.05% or 21.06% in all three). Some slight differences exist in the 7-day groupings (19.05% for Strong Leader, 14.29% for the other two), with more in the 14-day groupings (7.69% for Strong Leader, 1.93% for Ready to Be Commander-in-Chief, and 0.00% for Has Judgment to Be President). Overall, this suggests that these ads were highly salient, even though they did not appear nearly as often as Change; perhaps for the abstract content and clear connection to McCain's backstory suggested above, even slight mentions of Iraq had substantive correlations with increased perceptions of McCain.

Oddly enough, though, this does not hold for the most abstract and value-laden trait analyzed here: Patriotic. This is the only one of the four to see a decline in the overall average success rate (though the decline is only 0.62 percentage points), though in the individual groupings the 5-day success rate actually *increases* to 15.88%. Including counts, then, appears to have undercut the success rate for the 7-day period only, while increasing it in the short-term groupings. While this led to a decline in the overall average, the nature of the results are generally the same as the first iteration.

Including the 534 mentions of Experience in the analyses sees the opposite results, further complicating the quest for a general statement of the effects of repetition. Only one of the five pairings included here sees an increase in the overall average success rate, while two see declines and the remaining two see no change.

When counts are included, mentions of Obama as Too Young increase, a benefit for McCain. The overall average success rate for this pairing increases by 4.89 percentage points, with much of the increase coming in the 5- and 14-day groupings (the 7-day groupings see fewer successes in this iteration). These results are fairly substantive, with rates of 10.56%, 4.55%, and 12.21% for the three groupings, respectively. Too Old, though, sees all of its successes dissipate when counts are included, and Has Right Experience to Be President sees its overall average

decline to 0.64% (though this only represents a decline of 0.53 percentage points, as the successes in the initial regressions were already quite rare). Trustworthy and Erratic continue to have no significant results.

Finally, when the 757 mentions of Hope are included in the analysis, all of the successes in the Hope -Shares My Value pairing disappear. As with previous results, including counts does not appear to function consistently; similar counts operate quite differently even within analyses, as seen here. The most prominent mention by far sees the biggest gains, while fairly infrequent mentions see a mix of increasing, decreasing, and stabilizing success rates. Whether the promotional nature of the ads affects the nature of these results is left unclear, then.

**Table AIV.0.121 – Overall Success Rates – Obama (Attack)**

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
Iraq (Obama) - Says What He Believes	0.00%	10.00%	35.30%	15.10%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	4.17%	6.70%	13.58%	8.15%
Iraq (Obama) - Strong Leader	6.14%	6.89%	10.02%	7.68%
Iraq (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	1.25%	6.89%	9.19%	5.78%
Change (Obama) - Trustworthy	8.34%	4.55%	3.34%	5.41%
Iraq (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	3.07%	4.67%	6.02%	4.59%
Change (Obama) - Shares My Values	5.56%	4.55%	3.33%	4.48%
Iraq (Obama) - Patriotic	4.32%	2.22%	3.97%	3.50%
Average	4.10%	5.81%	10.59%	

Though the main contours of the Obama campaign in 2008 were shaped around optimistic messages of hope and transformative change, there were some major lines of attack in the Democratic candidate's advertising. Five of the eleven categories utilized here had mentions appearing in ads coded as focused on attacking McCain – positive mentions of Bill Clinton,

Change, Experience, negative mentions of George W. Bush, and Iraq. Two of these, however, appeared solely in these types of ads, so the results for the Bill Clinton and Experience pairings are not duplicated here (as they would be the same results as the main results presented above). The three remaining mentions all come across a large number of days and appear a substantial number of times; while this does not allow for the kind of varied analysis of the effects of repetition as other sections, the focus on mentions that solely attack is an important contribution, especially as presidential campaigns get more negative (CITE).

Given the Obama campaign's highlighting of Iraq as an area where the Democrat could make himself stand out via his willingness to be straight with the American people, it makes sense to see that the Iraq – Says What He Believes pairing has the highest overall average success rate of the regressions analyzed here. Over the 79 days of attacking ads where Obama made mention of Iraq, 10.00% of the 7-day groupings saw successes and over a third (35.30%) of the 14-day groupings saw successes, suggesting that these attacks did not dissipate quickly; respondents still viewed Obama more positively relative to McCain even when significant time had passed since initial exposure. It should be noted here, though, that there may be restricted observations here, given that there were unbroken strings of 22, 31, and 18 days, which can limit the observable days (as noted earlier). Regardless, there does appear to be some substantive linkage between these ads airing and Obama being viewed more positively as someone who will not obfuscate.

On the more value-laden or martial traits, Iraq fares less well but still sees some successes. Strong Leader sees an average success rate of 7.68% (with individual grouping results of 6.14%, 6.89%, and 10.02%); Has Judgment to Be President is close behind with an average of 5.78% (hindered by the small success rate for the 5-day grouping of 1.25%, otherwise the results here are quite close to Strong Leader). Ready to Be Commander in Chief is next, with an overall

average of 4.59% (3.07% / 4.67% / 6.02%), and finally Patriotic with an overall average success rate of 3.50% (4.32% / 2.22% / 3.97%). Overall, it appears as though these mentions of Iraq tended to stick in the minds of voters, though this is not to say that there were no short-term effects. Understandable for such a salient issue (and for a candidate whose position was increasingly in line with public opinion), attacking his opponent on Iraq reaped some benefits for Obama, though more in the area of being straight about the war rather than in areas regarding Obama's capabilities as president. It may also be that Patriotic does so poorly due to Obama going on the attack on a matter of national security, which has historically been a difficult needle to thread (especially for Democrats). While some of these results are sparse, the number of days over which ads were aired suggests that these results are likely not spurious; attacking on this issue, then, did have some substantive reputational benefits.

In a similar vein, the Obama campaign appears to have benefited through criticizing an unpopular incumbent. When paired with the trait question Has Judgment to Be President, negative mentions of George W. Bush correlated with significant movement in Obama's favor in 4.17% of the 5-day groupings, 6.70% of the 7-day groupings, and 13.58% of the 14-day groupings; again, this suggests that these attacks tended to stick in the minds of respondents (though again caution is warranted, as the fact that the ads aired in unbroken streaks of 21 and 72 days does suppress the number of observable days quite a bit). What is especially interesting about these mentions is that negative mentions of the incumbent do not necessarily indict Obama's opponent (though some likely did), yet Obama still benefited relative to perceptions of *McCain* on this trait question.

Finally, the two pairings with Change (Trustworthy and Shares My Values) see fairly similar results. Trustworthy does slightly better, with a breakdown of 8.34% / 4.55% / 3.34%, but Shares My Values is close behind with a breakdown of 5.56% / 4.55% / 3.33%. Here, too, some



caution is warranted, as the 79 days of ads came in two unbroken streaks of 13 and 66 days, so the observable days here are also somewhat depressed. Including the counts will help alleviate these concerns.

***Table AIV.0.122 – Overall Success Rates (Exposure \* Count) – Obama (Attack)***

	5-day	7-day	14-day	Average
Iraq (Obama) - Says What He Believes	0.00%	0.00%	33.34%	11.11%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	3.33%	3.10%	7.90%	4.78%
Iraq (Obama) - Strong Leader	2.07%	1.90%	5.80%	3.26%
Change (Obama) - Trustworthy	4.38%	3.26%	1.67%	3.10%
Change (Obama) - Shares My Values	2.38%	2.18%	0.83%	1.80%
Iraq (Obama) - Has Judgment to be President	1.67%	1.45%	0.00%	1.04%
Iraq (Obama) - Patriotic	1.33%	0.00%	0.62%	0.65%
Iraq (Obama) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief	0.56%	0.62%	0.62%	0.60%
George W. Bush (Negative) (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Iraq (Obama) - Erratic	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Average	1.57%	1.25%	5.08%	

Including counts in the regressions does provide observable results for two pairings that had previously been inaccessible: Iraq and negative mentions of George W. Bush paired with Erratic. However, both of these see no successes at all. For the ones that carry over, the results are consistently diminished; each pairing's overall average success rate declines by 2 to 4 percentage points. Given the similarly high number of days (93 for Bush, 79 for Iraq and Change) and that all three had 5-digit counts (though negative mentions of Bush far outweigh the other two), this does continue to suggest that high amounts of repetition do not tend to be beneficial (or, alternatively, that it can be for promotional ads but not attack ads; see above).

Even though its overall average is diminished, the Iraq – Says What He Believes pairing still has the highest overall success rate (declining almost 4 percentage points, to 11.11%) though in this second iteration the only successes are found in the 14-day groupings (33.34% of these groupings were significant and in the correct direction). That this high rate persists after increasing the number of observations continues to suggest that these attacks were particularly resonant at helping perceptions of Obama as someone willing to be straight with voters. The other Iraq pairings, however, see highly substantive declines, many of which that bring into question the presence of any successes at all. Strong Leader is less susceptible to this concern, though its overall average success rate does fall 4.42 percentage points, to 3.26%. The pattern of longer-term groupings doing better does hold here as well, though the breakdown of 2.07% / 1.90% / 5.80% does not suggest this was highly successful. The remaining three – Has Judgment to Be President, Patriotic, and Ready to Be Commander in Chief – see their overall averages decline by 4.74, 2.85, and 3.99 percentage points, respectively, leaving them with overall averages of 1.04%, 0.65%, and 0.60%, respectively. The internal breakdowns of these pairings inspire little confidence – the few successes that are seen may be occurring randomly, suggesting that attacks on these more substantively performative traits were ineffective at best and detrimental at worst.

Though its overall average success rate declines by 3.37 percentage points, negative mentions of George W. Bush still see some successes when paired with the trait question Has Judgment to Be President, especially in the 14-day groupings. The overall breakdown of 3.33% / 3.10% / 7.90% suggests that even with increased observations some long-term resonance still existed. The two Change pairings again see Trustworthy (4.38% / 3.26% / 1.67%) faring better than Shares My Values (2.38% / 2.18% / 0.83%), with Trustworthy's overall average success rate dropping by 2.31 percentage points and Shares My Values declining by 2.68 percentage points. These pairings, moreover, see more successes in the smaller groupings, suggesting that more

ubiquitous mentions may still lose their effectiveness even when compared to other prominent mentions (Change was mentioned 46,690 times compared to 28,946 for Iraq; Bush far outweighs both at 94,347 mentions, however).

***Table AIV.0.123 – Overall Success Rates – McCain (Attack)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Old (McCain)</b>	25.00%	30.00%	5.88%	20.29%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Young (Obama)</b>	25.00%	10.00%	5.88%	13.63%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Has Right Experience to be President</b>	12.50%	10.00%	5.88%	9.46%
<b>Change (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	7.12%	6.00%	5.95%	6.36%
<b>Change (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	5.00%	6.00%	5.36%	5.45%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	5.78%	2.50%	4.20%	4.16%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	5.78%	2.50%	4.20%	4.16%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	4.21%	2.50%	3.53%	3.41%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	2.65%	2.50%	4.86%	3.34%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	2.65%	2.50%	3.53%	2.89%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	3.74%	3.50%	0.00%	2.41%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	3.74%	2.25%	0.00%	2.00%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	7.93%	6.17%	3.79%	

For McCain, going on the attack appears to have been a fairly constant tactic, as only three of the mentions chosen from the Wisconsin dataset have no mentions in ads solely intended to attack Obama (negative mentions of George W. Bush, mentions of God, and mentions of Hope are the omitted categories). Three of the seven attack categories were all attacks, and are thus not included in the above regressions (positive mentions of George W. Bush, as well as mentions of September 11 and Terrorism). The remaining four, then, similarly saw the observed in the promotional mentions for McCain: two of the mentions were made much more frequently than

the other two. As the current analysis only discusses the presence of these mentions on individual days, the counts will be discussed in greater detail in the second iteration of the results below.

Given the disparities between the two candidates on age and time in government, it is not surprising that a prominent line of attack for McCain was on the trait of Experience. In these mentions, McCain appears to have found some substantive successes at exacerbating perceptions of his opponent as Too Young for the presidency, blunting perceptions of himself as Too Old for the office, and bolstering a sense that McCain's experience had left him well-prepared for the job. Both the age-related trait questions see high overall average success rates (20.29% for Too Old, 13.63% for Too Young) with almost identical within-group rates (both have a 5-day success rate of 25.00% and a 14-day success rate of 5.88%; the only difference is the 7-day success rates, where Too Old sees successes in 30.00% of groupings and Too Young only 10.00%). Has Right Experience to Be President does slightly worse, but still has some substantive rates. Its 7- and 14-day rates are the same as those for Too Young, but the 5-day success rate here is halved, only seeing significant and correct results in 12.50% of groupings. It should be noted here, as well, that all the attacks mentioning Experience came in an unbroken string across the final 20 days of the election, so some concerns about sample size may be valid (both due to the unbroken string and the inability to see effects beyond Election Day). The second iteration will be more confident in this regard. The other pairing with Experience – the trait question of Trustworthy – saw no successes at all.

Using Change against Obama appears to have been a substantive part of the negative campaign for McCain, as mentions of Change in attack ads come on over half (82) of the 154 days of the 2008 general election campaign. These appear to have had some minor effects on perceptions of the two candidates as Trustworthy or as someone who Shares the Values of the NAES respondents. Both sets of results here are fairly similar, with Trustworthy seeing slightly

more successes in the 5- and 14-day groupings. For Trustworthy, the breakdown is 7.12% / 6.00% / 5.95%, while for Shares My Values it is 5.00% / 6.00% / 5.36%. The stability across the three groupings suggest that these reversals in rhetoric had some long-lasting effect, likely a testament to the day-by-day repetition on the part of the McCain operation.

The remaining two mentions – Iraq and Surge – see fairly similar results in their individual pairings, so discussing them based on the trait question rather than the individual mentions makes more sense here. For example, both Iraq and Surge mentions see the same success rates for Strong Leader, with 5.78% of 5-day groupings, 2.50% of 7-day groupings, and 4.20% of 14-day groupings having significant results in the correct direction. This uniformity comes despite Iraq being mentioned on 7 more days than the Surge (53 vs. 46); however, the overlap in topic area here makes this closeness not particularly surprising. Ready to Be Commander in Chief sees some slight differences, with Surge seeing success rates of 4.21% / 2.50% / 3.53% and Iraq seeing rates of 2.65% / 2.50% / 3.53%. As speculated above, the difference here may be due to the specific vs. general nature of Surge mentions compared to Iraq mentions; taking Obama to task for opposing a specific policy may be more useful than critiquing him on Iraq generally. Surge similarly outperforms Iraq on Patriotic, with Surge's rates of 3.74% / 3.50% / 0.00% just slightly better than Iraq's rates of 3.74% / 2.25% / 0.00%. Though Patriotic is more abstract, it may be the case that the specific policy once again makes for a stronger critique on this trait. Finally, the mentions of Iraq only slightly affect perceptions of McCain's relative Judgment to Be President, with success rates of 2.65% / 2.50% / 4.86% (very close to the rates for Iraq – Ready to Be Commander in Chief).

***Table AIV.0.124 – Overall Success Rates (Exposure \* Count) – McCain (Attack)***

	<b>5-day</b>	<b>7-day</b>	<b>14-day</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Old (McCain)</b>	5.27%	14.29%	12.50%	10.68%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Too Young (Obama)</b>	7.90%	11.91%	1.79%	7.20%
<b>Change (McCain) - Shares My Values</b>	8.21%	8.79%	4.06%	7.02%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Has Judgment to be President</b>	6.25%	9.32%	2.80%	6.12%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	5.00%	7.05%	5.87%	5.97%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	6.25%	8.18%	0.80%	5.08%
<b>Change (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	5.44%	5.08%	2.39%	4.30%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Ready to be Commander-in-Chief</b>	3.75%	5.68%	0.80%	3.41%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Strong Leader</b>	2.50%	4.55%	1.47%	2.84%
<b>Iraq (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	4.58%	3.64%	0.00%	2.74%
<b>Surge (McCain) - Patriotic</b>	2.08%	1.14%	0.00%	1.07%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Has Right Experience to be President</b>	2.63%	0.00%	0.00%	0.88%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Erratic</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Experience (McCain) - Trustworthy</b>	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Average</b>	4.27%	5.69%	2.32%	

Taking into account the number of ads being aired over the exposure periods finds a mixed set of results for McCain. Of the 14 pairings analyzed here, six see depressed overall average success rates, five see increased overall average success rates, and three see static results (with one new observed pairing, though its success rate is 0.00%).

Experience still is the most successful mention for McCain, though the overall effects of this mention are mixed. Experience – Trustworthy continues to have no successes even when counts are included, and the previously unobserved Experience – Erratic similarly has no successes. The three other pairings all see substantive declines in their overall average success rates, though this still leaves some successes for two of them. Experience – Too Old still stops the list, though its overall average success rate is cut almost in half, dropping 9.61 percentage points. A similar decline is found for Experience – Too Old, where the overall average success rate drops

6.43 percentage points (almost cutting this rate in half as well). This was expected, though, given that including the counts increases the overall sample size for these pairings (see the caveat above). Too Old's overall average success rate of 10.68% and Too Young's overall average success rate of 7.20% still suggest that some effects persisted.

The same cannot be said for Experience – Has Right Experience to Be President. Here, the overall average success rate decline is 8.58 percentage points, leaving this pairing with an overall average success rate of 0.88%. The only successes are found in the 5-day groupings, and are rare enough (2.63% of groupings) to not be vulnerable to concerns of spuriousness. While the age-based questions appear to have benefited somewhat from attacks mentioning Experience, it is not clear that the more substantive question of McCain's relative experience better preparing him for the office holds here.

Change sees an interesting divergence across its two connected traits when counts are included. This is especially intriguing given that mentions of Change were by far the most prominent mention in McCain's attack ads (71,568 mentions, over four and a half times more than the next closest, Experience). Change – Shares My Values sees its overall average success rate increase by 1.57 percentage points, with individual rates of 8.21% / 8.79% / 4.06%.

Trustworthy, on the other hand, sees an overall average success rate decline of 2.06 percentage points, leaving it with rates of 5.44% / 5.08% / 2.39%. This may be a testament to the backlash potential of negative advertising, where McCain may have been able to utilize Obama's change rhetoric to suggest that his opponent was out of line with traditional values, but hurt his own trustworthiness in the process.

The Iraq and Surge divergences are also highly intriguing, given the conceptual closeness and the clear overlap in airings for these types of mentions. As noted above, Iraq mentions aired on seven more days than Surge mentions, and in total there were only 372 more Iraq mentions

than Surge mentions (4,686 vs. 4,314). However, all of the Iraq pairings see increased overall average success rates when counts are included, and all the Surge pairings see either no change or decreased overall average success rates. It should be noted, though, that none of these changes are particularly substantive, raising the possibility of randomness as an explanatory factor.

For instance, though Iraq sees increases across the board, the highest increase (for Has Judgment to Be President) is 2.78 percentage points, with the others either close behind or relatively insubstantial. Ready to Be Commander in Chief increases by 2.17 percentage points, Strong Leader by 1.81 percentage points, and Patriotic by only 0.74 percentage points. Similarly, for Surge the largest decline (Patriotic) is only 1.34 percentage points, with Strong Leader's decline of 1.32 percentage points close behind. Ready to Be Commander in Chief stays static in this second iteration (though the grouping rates change). A general pattern within these changes appears to be the diminishment of effects in the medium- and long-term groupings, further suggesting that the utility of attack ads may be more focused at short-term changes, though this does not appear consistent for all the pairings analyzed here.



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### **Chapter 7 – Summary of Findings**

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### **Chapter 8 – Discussion**

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