American Politics Research

CONTENTS

Printed on acid-free paper

GROUP STEREOTYPES AND
POLITICAL EVALUATION

EWA A. GOLEBIOWSKA
Tufts University

Nontraditional candidates for elective office—including non-Whites, women, and homosexuals—have been rare in American politics, with the exception of a virtual explosion of nontraditional candidates in recent years. In reflection of these trends, research on political evaluation concerning nontraditional candidates has blossomed. Although significant advances have been made in our understanding of the role that gender and race play in political evaluation, we know much less about how members of other political minority groups, particularly gays and lesbians, are evaluated in electoral politics. Drawing on two experimental investigations, using highly realistic audio-visual vignettes of ostensible candidates for office, I explore how voters' responses to politically identical gay and lesbian candidates differ depending on whether their attributes are consistent or inconsistent with their respective group's stereotypes. I also investigate differences in political responses to gay and lesbian candidates as a function of respondents' gender, ending with a discussion of the findings' political implications.

Nontraditional candidates for elective office in the United States, including non-Whites, women, and homosexuals, have been historically rare in American electoral politics; a traditional candidate, conversely, has been a White, straight, Protestant man. In recent years, in contrast, there has been a virtual explosion of nontraditional candidates running for and winning elective office. In reflection of these trends, research on the dynamics of political evaluation concerning nontraditional candidates has blossomed, particularly in the area of gender in electoral politics (e.g., Alexander & Andersen, 1993; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993b; Kahn, 1992, 1994; Sigelman, Sigelman, Walkosz, & Nitz, 1995; Witt, Paget, & Matthews, 1994).

Although significant advances have been made in our understanding of the role that candidates' gender plays in political evaluation, we know much less about how members of other political minority groups, particularly gays and lesbians, are evaluated in electoral politics.[1]

Taking the literature on gender and race/ethnicity in political evaluation as well as extensive psychological research on stereotypes and stereotyping as a point of departure, I propose that candidate homosexuality in low-information campaigns is likely to serve as a proxy for information more directly available in high-information campaigns. By virtue of stereotypic beliefs and affects associated with it, candidate homosexuality may enable voters in low-information races to make a variety of inferences about the candidate that may or may not be otherwise warranted. Those may include assumptions about the candidate's ideological leanings, the types of groups likely to benefit from his or her election, and the leadership attributes he or she is likely to possess. Drawing on two experimental investigations, I examine how such stereotype-based inferences influence political responses to openly gay and lesbian candidates. To this end, I compare and contrast voters' evaluations of politically identical gay and lesbian candidates whose attributes are either consistent or inconsistent with their respective group stereotypes. I investigate, in addition, gender differences in those responses, ending with a discussion of the findings' political implications.

POLITICAL EVALUATION AND STEREOTYPE USE

In low-information races involving nontraditional candidates, several reasons exist why the candidate's group membership should serve as an important heuristic (McDermott, 1997). To the extent that low-information races are covered in the media, nontraditional candidates' group membership tends to attract a lion's share of attention (Golebiowska, in press; Witt et al., 1994). The relative novelty of non-White, nonmale, nonheterosexual candidates in American electoral politics makes the media's and voters' attention to the candidate's group membership inevitable, as suggested by the social psychological solo status hypothesis (Taylor, 1981).[2] Psychological

research suggests, in addition, that candidates' group memberships are likely to function as heuristics in low-information races because group stereotypes are most influential in person perception when little or no other information is available about the individual (Brewer, 1996; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Riggle, Ottati, Wyer, Kuklinski, & Schwartz, 1992).

In low-information contests, candidates' group memberships, by virtue of stereotypes—or generalized beliefs and affects—associated with them, can be expected to supplement, if not substitute, the heuristic value historically offered by the candidate's party affiliation (Rahn, 1993). Like party affiliation, information about a nontraditional candidate's group membership may be used as a source of assumptions about his or her political priorities and social groups likely to benefit from his or her victory. In addition, such information may be used to infer the candidate's personality attributes. Candidates' gender, for example, is tightly linked with assumptions about his or her attributes, areas of policy interest and expertise, ideological leanings, and the social groups likely to benefit from his or her election (e.g., Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993b; Witt et al., 1994). That candidates' group memberships may be employed for unwarranted inferences is not to argue that it is a normatively wise strategy. It likely describes how voters maximize cognitive efficiency under conditions of low information and, arguably, even lower motivation (Popkin, 1994).

Because group stereotypes are predominantly negative (Kunda, Sinclair, & Griffin, 1997), individuals perceived through the lens of their group's stereotype (or whose traits are consistent with/assumed to be consistent with the stereotype) tend to be evaluated less favorably than those whose traits are in some fashion incongruent with the stereotype (e.g., Fein & Hilton, 1992; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Golebiowska, 1996; Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, & Hepburn, 1980; Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1995; Peffley, Hurwitz, & Sniderman, 1997; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993).[3] This would seem to suggest that members of negatively stereotyped groups running for office should generally fare less well when they are assimilated to their group's stereotype (either in the absence of other information about them or because their attributes are stereotype-consistent). The consequences of group stereotypes for political appraisal may, however, depend on stereotype content because candidates for elective

office are judged against the good politician prototype (expectations about a good politician's desirable attributes) (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a), and some group stereotypes overlap with the good politician prototype to a greater degree than others. Good politicians are expected to be assertive, active, tough, rational, and self-confident (or, simply, masculine) and are generally not rewarded for stereotypically feminine traits (e.g., warm, gentle, emotional, talkative, compassionate, and cautious), particularly when they campaign for higher level and/or executive office (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a).[4] Thus, when women compete for elective office in low-information campaigns, stereotypic beliefs about women as unassertive can hurt them, all else being equal, because good politicians are expected to be assertive, a stereotypically masculine trait (e.g., Best & Williams, 1990; Hoffman & Hurst, 1990).

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND POLITICAL APPRAISAL

Historically, gays and lesbians have not been welcome in public life and continue to elicit lukewarm feelings at best and outright hostility at worst (Herek, 1999; Yang, 1997). Because more and more openly gay and lesbian candidates have been making entry into electoral politics, therefore, the question of whether gays and lesbians running for office compete on a level playing field is important not only from the standpoint of candidate appraisal but also from the perspective of liberal democratic theory. The question is also worth pursuing because of the overlap in group memberships defined by sexual orientation and gender (existence of both male and female homosexuality, that is). Scrutiny of this topic, for this reason, promises not only to advance our knowledge of the role of sexual orientation in political evaluation but also to contribute to the literature on gender in politics (see below for elaboration).

Whether candidate homosexuality serves as a political liability, asset, or has no bearing on electoral fortunes is a topic that has received scant systematic scrutiny (c.f. Golebiowska, in press; Golebiowska & Thomsen, 1999; Herrick & Thomas, 1999; Victory Fund, 1999). Three principal questions have been posed in up-to-date research: (a) whether majorities of Americans are prepared to elect unspecified gay/lesbian candidates for office (Victory Fund, 1999),

(b) whether openly gay/lesbian candidates for office fare less well politically than their heterosexual opponents (Golebiowska, in press; Herrick & Thomas, 1999), and (c) whether openly gay/lesbian candidates who are evaluated through the prism of their respective groups' stereotypes (or whose attributes match their group's stereotype) fare better or worse than openly gay/lesbian candidates who do not fit or are perceived not to fit their groups' stereotypes (Golebiowska & Thomsen, 1999). With the paucity of research and the limited generalizability of the most in-depth studies (Golebiowska & Thomsen, 1999, and Herrick & Thomas, 1999 relied on college student samples), we know very little about the dynamics of electoral support involving openly gay and lesbian candidates, and in particular how responses to such candidates differ depending on whether they are channeled through the lens of their groups' stereotypes. This is the principal question on which I focus in this article.

EXPECTATIONS

STEREOTYPES AND POLITICAL RESPONSES
TO GAY AND LESBIAN CANDIDATES

Gay men and lesbians are generally stereotyped as possessing stereotypical attributes of opposite-sex heterosexuals (Kite & Deaux, 1987). Thus, feminine traits and behaviors are stereotypically ascribed to gay men (e.g., unassertiveness), whereas masculine traits and behaviors are stereotypically imputed to lesbians (e.g., assertiveness) (e.g., Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Kite, 1994; Madon, 1997; Page & Yee, 1985). Orthogonal to the femininity-masculinity dimension, gay men are also stereotyped as sexually promiscuous and predatory (Golebiowska, in press). When gay men and lesbians launch campaigns for elective office, they are in addition assumed to care primarily about gay rights issues (Golebiowska, in press; Herrick & Thomas, 1999).[5] The negative connotations of stereotypic beliefs and affects associated with gay men and lesbians may hurt electoral outcomes of both gay and lesbian candidates, consistent with extensive social and political psychological research cited above (suggesting that candidates whose attributes match or are perceived to match their group's

stereotype will be evaluated less favorably than those whose attributes are inconsistent with their group's stereotype).[6] More likely, because of differences in their descriptive content and differential overlap with the stereotype of a good politician, the impact of gay and lesbian stereotypes on evaluation of gay and lesbian candidates may be conditioned by the candidate's gender. Because the content of the gay stereotype conflicts with the stereotype of a good politician (stereotype-consistent gay men are feminine, good politicians are masculine), gay candidates evaluated through the lens of their group's stereotype should be evaluated less favorably than gay candidates whose attributes challenge that stereotype. Because the lesbian stereotype partially overlaps with the stereotype of a good politician (both stereotype-consistent lesbians and good politicians are masculine), in contrast, stereotypical lesbian candidates should be evaluated more positively than lesbian candidates whose attributes contradict that stereotype. In sum, I predict an overall effect of stereotypic consistency on political evaluation concerning gay and lesbian candidates or, more likely, an interaction between a candidate's stereotypic consistency and his or her gender.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN RESPONSES
TO GAY AND LESBIAN CANDIDATES

Overall differences in evaluations of stereotype-consistent and -inconsistent gay and lesbian candidates may mask theoretically interesting and important individual differences. Gender differences are particularly important to investigate in this context because women constitute an influential voting bloc (especially because of the disappearance of the gender gap in voting turnout in recent elections), and in a related vein, women and men tend to differ in their attitudes toward homosexuality and homosexuals (Kite & Whitley, 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998). If men and women both rely on the good politician prototype as an anchor against which to evaluate aspirants for public office, they should not differ in their use of stereotype-relevant information about a gay or lesbian candidate (both should favor masculine gay and lesbian candidates over their feminine counterparts). On the other hand, because men's gender role expectations are significantly more rigid than women's (Kerns & Fine, 1994), they may inte-

grate stereotype-relevant information into their judgments differently than women because of its implications for gender role expectations. Two patterns are possible here. Men may respond more negatively to both stereotype-consistent gay and lesbian candidates because both violate gender role expectations appropriate for their sex, whereas women may not differentiate in their evaluations of stereotype-consistent and inconsistent candidates because their gender role expectations are more flexible and they tend to be more accepting of homosexuality than men (in regression terms, an interaction between candidate's stereotypic consistency and respondents' gender would occur). Alternatively, men may dislike both stereotype-consistent candidates more than those whose attributes contradict the stereotypes whereas women may rely on the good politician stereotype in evaluating both gay and lesbian candidates' fit for office, favoring stereotype-inconsistent gay candidates and stereotype-consistent lesbian candidates over their stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent counterparts (an interaction between stereotypic consistency, candidates' gender, and respondents' gender would be significant).

In summary, I advance two principal sets of expectations concerning the influence of gay and lesbian stereotypes on political evaluation involving gay and lesbian candidates: (a) I expect that stereotypic consistency will influence political responses to gay and lesbian candidates and that this effect will be most likely conditioned by the candidate's gender, and (b) I anticipate that the influence of stereotypic consistency on political evaluation concerning gay and lesbian candidates will be moderated by the respondents' gender and/or the candidate's gender.

MINOR EXPECTATIONS

Of lesser interest to the main focus of this article, I also compare and contrast overall evaluations of gay and lesbian candidates and gender differences in those overall evaluations. It is unclear from previous research whether gay or lesbian candidates will be favored in voter responses. Some evidence demonstrates that gay men are disliked more than lesbians (Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Herrick & Thomas, 1999; LaMar & Kite, 1998), suggesting that

gay candidates will be evaluated more negatively than lesbian candidates. On the other hand, lesbian candidates may suffer from a double malison while waging campaigns for elective office by virtue of their sexual orientation as well as gender, suggesting that lesbian candidates will be evaluated more negatively than gay candidates (Golebiowska & Thomsen, 1999).

Men and women, in addition, may differ in their overall responses to the gay and lesbian candidates. Because women tend to be more approving of homosexuality and gay and lesbian rights (LaMar & Kite, 1998), women may evaluate both gay and lesbian candidates more favorably than men. Alternatively, men's and women's evaluations may be conditioned by the candidate's gender. Because straight men and women tend to dislike opposite-sex homosexuals (this is especially true for straight men) (LaMar & Kite, 1998), men may favor the lesbian candidate in their evaluations whereas women may favor the gay candidate in theirs (an interaction between candidates' gender and respondents' gender would occur).

RESEARCH DESIGN

In an effort to disentangle the influence of gender and stereotypic consistency on responses to gay and lesbian candidates running for elective office, participants were asked to watch a carefully constructed videotape of an ostensible candidate for office who was either gay or lesbian and whose traits were either consistent with the gay/lesbian stereotype or inconsistent with the gay/lesbian stereotype.[7]

Experimental method was chosen because it is virtually impossible to determine what role, all else being equal, candidate sexual orientation—and related stereotypes—plays in electoral politics through an examination of real-life campaigns and/or voting returns. In real-life campaigns, too many variables distinguish competing candidates in addition to their sexual orientation, potentially giving voters many reasons to camouflage their homophobia (Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, & Mentzer, 1979). Survey inquiries about gay and lesbian candidates' electability, although useful for establishing a general threshold of homophobia, are likely colored by social acceptability biases as direct expressions of group-based antipathy, including homophobia, are socially pro-

scribed in this cultural milieu. The experimental method allows the researcher to simulate the dynamics of political evaluation in the real world while, by varying only one variable at a time, permits more confidence in the findings' internal validity.

OVERVIEW OF METHOD

A 2 (candidate's gender: male vs. female) $\times$ 2 (stereotypic consistency: stereotype-consistent vs. stereotype-inconsistent) $\times$ 2 (participants' gender: male vs. female) experimental design was used to test the expectations outlined above.

Participants were placed into the stereotypic consistency and candidates' gender conditions on the basis of random assignment and were told they would watch a brief presentation by a member of the local community thinking about running for elective office. The candidate deliberately did not specify what office he or she was seeking so that questions asking about candidate evaluation in different electoral contexts could be included. Depending on the condition into which they were placed, participants viewed either a male or a female candidate who, they were led to believe, was either gay or lesbian and whose attributes were either consistent or inconsistent with the gay or lesbian stereotype. Participants were asked to form their impressions and report them in a questionnaire, including various measures of political support (both direct and indirect) as well as respondents' demographics. The former consisted of questions about voting for the candidate if he or she ran for five different offices (city council, state legislature, U.S. House of Representatives, mayor, and governor), assessments of candidate's viability in those five electoral contexts, and assorted measures of candidates' leadership potential. The latter included, among other things, questions about the participants' education, age, gender, family income and approval of homosexuality.

CANDIDATE SELF-PRESENTATIONS

Professional actors, all in the early 30s and similar in physical attractiveness,[8] were hired to play the candidates and were videotaped by professional technicians. The actors, following a carefully con-

structed, pretested script, created stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent versions of the candidate (with each actor creating both depictions). All takes were taped in the same location, against a white background, with the candidate standing in front of a podium, showing him or her from the waist up. In a small departure from this format, the female candidates were initially shot standing away from the podium to underscore differences in their stereotype-relevant outfits (a pantsuit in the stereotype-consistent case and a skirt suit in the stereotype-inconsistent case). Each presentation was preceded with a brief introduction by an ostensible political advisor conveying information about the candidate's sexual orientation. Each presentation, including the introductory advisor segment, was about 7 minutes in duration.

Candidate presentations were constructed to vary the candidate's stereotypic consistency with respect to gay or lesbian stereotypes while holding other information about the candidate constant. To this end, a variety of information about the candidate relevant to his or her masculinity and femininity was manipulated. In addition, to accomplish a high degree of experimental realism and provide the participants with a variety of other information about the candidate of the sort they might acquire in an actual election, the candidate's prior experience, both in and outside politics, as well as more personal background information was provided.

INFORMATION HELD CONSTANT

In each condition, the candidate indicated that he or she was born and raised in Massachusetts and was currently 34 years old, had an older brother and sister, and that his or her parents retired a couple of years ago. The candidate said that he or she had spent a few years working as a customer service representative at the Somerville Savings Bank and, after graduating from college, as an administrative assistant to congressional leadership. In discussing his or her political background, the candidate mentioned serving on the Governor's Commission on Recycling, an advisory neighborhood commission, and a city council.

The candidate also discussed his or her political vision, based on the speech delivered by former Nebraska governor Kay Orr (Republi-

can) while she was campaigning for office.[9] This speech was chosen for its ambiguity with regard to the author's partisan or ideological inclinations (verified in a pretest), and with a couple of exceptions explained in the section below, was held constant across conditions.[10]

MANIPULATION OF STEREOTYPIC CONSISTENCY

Several dimensions of stereotypic consistency were manipulated in the candidate presentations. First, nonverbal cues, including the candidate's tone of voice and clothing, were used to vary the candidate's fit with respect to his or her group's stereotype. Second, the verbal portion of the presentation contained stereotype-relevant segments (either stereotype-consistent or stereotype-inconsistent). The differences between each of the four presentations are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

The specific stereotype-relevant items were chosen to represent the candidate's consistency with regard to his or her group's stereotype while creating a plausible political aspirant. For example, the lesbian stereotype-consistent female candidate was shown wearing a pantsuit rather than, say, denim overalls (which might have led to a more powerful manipulation of stereotypic consistency) because the latter would not have resulted in a plausible political candidate. I have also made an effort, within this general constraint, to make all candidates' occupational backgrounds equally (non)diagnostic of their ability to win the election and succeed in elective office. For example, the stereotype-consistent and -inconsistent male candidates' occupations as engineer and commercial artist were intended to make them appear equally electable. Finally, in manipulating the candidates' political priorities that were either stereotype-consistent or -inconsistent, I chose *relatively* uncontroversial issues to make sure that responses to the candidates were not primarily driven by respondents' attitudes toward the issues. Hate crimes and domestic partner benefits (for both gay/lesbian and straight couples), for example, were chosen as likely associated stereotypically with gay/lesbian politicians' political agendas (Golebiowska, in press), yet uncontroversial enough (*relative* to legalization of same-sex marriages for example), not to overwhelm responses to the stereotype-consistent candidate.[11]

TABLE 1
Stereotype-Consistent and -Inconsistent
Depictions of the Male Candidate

	Stereotypic Consistency	
Element of Stereotype	Consistent	Inconsistent
Tone of voice	Relatively feminine (higher pitch)	Relatively masculine (lower pitch)
Clothing	Dark brown suit, light yellow shirt, multicolored matching tie	Black suit, white shirt, red tie
Relationship status	Single, has had a lot of brief relationships	In a long-term relationship for 10 years now, plans to spend the rest of his life with his partner
College major	Double-major in theater and graphics design	Engineering
Current employment	Commercial artist	Mechanical engineer
Organizational involvement	Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance; Arts and Entertainment Board of Massachusetts[a]	Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance; Engineers for a Better Society[a]
Hobbies	Painting nature and human portraits, cooking, working in his garden	Restoring old cars, watching sports on television, going to Fenway (local baseball park)
Political priorities	Enforcement of hate crimes legislation; pushing for domestic partner benefits legislation for all citizens (whether gay or straight)	Increasing penalties for drunk driving; identifying solutions to the problems of inadequate health care

a. Hypothetical organizations.

Both personal and political information was included in candidate self-presentations not to suggest that candidates for elective office necessarily divulge the former in their self-presentations. Rather, this decision was made on the basis of psychological research suggesting that group stereotypes are automatically activated upon exposure to a member of a stereotyped group and/or information identifying an individual as a group member (e.g., Devine, 1989). In addition, although having the candidate discuss his or her hobbies may seem unorthodox by some campaigning standards, discussion of his or her familial connections (parents and siblings as well as relationship sta-

TABLE 2
Stereotype-Consistent and -Inconsistent
Depictions of the Female Candidate

Element of Stereotype	Stereotypic Consistency	
	Consistent	Inconsistent
Tone of voice	Relatively masculine (lower pitch)	Relatively feminine (higher pitch)
Make-up	No make-up	Make-up
Clothing	A black pantsuit with a white shirt	A dark burgundy skirt suit, white shirt, a colorful scarf
Relationship status	In a long-term relationship for 10 years now, plans to spend the rest of her life with her partner	Single, has had a lot of brief relationships
College major	Double major in engineering and women's studies	Economics
Current employment	Engineer working for a contractors' company	Loan officer
Organizational involvement	Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance; Engineers for a Better Society[a]	Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance; Arts and Entertainment Board of Massachusetts[a]
Hobbies	Restoring old furniture and doing woodwork more generally, playing softball	Painting nature and human portraits, cooking, working in her garden
Political priorities	Enforcement of hate crimes Legislation; pushing for domestic partner benefits legislation for all citizens (whether gay or straight)	Increasing penalties for drunk driving; identifying solutions to the problems of inadequate health care

a. Hypothetical organizations.

tus) is arguably more common. Copies of candidate scripts can be requested from the author.

The important point to keep in mind when examining differences in responses to the experimental targets is that regardless of the condition into which they had been placed, experimental participants were faced with candidates whose political priorities were essentially identical (and where they did differ—on stereotype-relevant issues—the differences pertained to relatively noncontroversial issues). To the extent that differences in responses to the experimental targets are

uncovered, therefore, one can have greater confidence that the differences arose in response to stereotype-relevant information rather than political disagreement with the candidate.

EXPERIMENTAL PARTICIPANTS

A total of 213 adult residents of The Greater Boston area took part in the experiment in exchange for a $15 payment.[12] Participants were recruited via newspaper ads and a flyer distributed in various public locations in the Tufts University campus area. They came to campus to participate in the experiment in the evenings and on weekends. Participant profile is compared and contrasted with national demographics, based on the 1996 *General Social Survey* (Davis & Smith, 1996) and local community demographics (Medford, Massachusetts) in Table 3.

The sample is quite diverse and mirrors the local community and the GSS sample on many important variables (race and sex in particular). The findings based on this nonstudent sample promise to make an important contribution to the literature on attitudes toward gays and lesbians, primarily based on student samples, because of the challenges inherent in using students in this day and age to study attitudes toward gays and lesbians (in particular, generally low tolerance on college campuses for open expressions of any antigay/antilesbian attitudes). Yet, because a convenience sample has been used, it is also unlike the local community or the GSS sample on other attributes, raising questions about the extent to which the findings based on this sample have general application. This sample is, arguably, problematic to the extent that it raises the hurdle of finding evidence supportive of the hypotheses motivating this research because an "average" participant in this study has been better educated, wealthier, younger, more liberal, and more approving of homosexuality than an "average" GSS respondent. The sample parameters raise the challenge of finding evidence supportive of the hypotheses linking stereotypes and political appraisal because the well educated and those relatively approving of homosexuality may be less responsive to stereotype-relevant information about openly gay/lesbian candidates than their poorly educated counterparts (Golebiowska, 1996; see Peffley, Hurwitz, & Sniderman, 1997, for similar findings concerning racial stereotypes). This diverse sample composed of nonstudent participants is, in addi-

TABLE 3
Comparison of Sample Demographics With
National and Community Demographics (%)

Variable	My Sample	Local Community[a]	National Sample[b]
Education (%)			
Less than high school	1.9	[c]	17
High school degree	11.3	[c]	29.3
Some college	33.5	[c]	27.2
College degree	32.5	[c]	13.5
Postgraduate degree	20.8	[c]	12.8
Mean	College	[c]	Some college
Income ($)			
Less than 24,999	33.3	30.8	34.6
25,000-49,999	28.5	33.1	30.8
50,000-74,999	18.3	22.0	15.7
75,000 or more	13.5	14.4	12.0
Mean	35,000-49.999	[c]	25,000-29,999
Mean age	35	[c]	45
Race			
White	83.3	92.2	80.9
Black	3.8	3.9	13.8
Other	12.9	3.9	5.3
Gender			
Male	47.9	46.6	44.2
Female	52.1	53.4	55.8
Approval of homosexuality			
Disapproving	15.7	[c]	65.6[d]
Not sure	10.8	[c]	6.2
Approving	73.6	[c]	28.2
Mean	Approving	[c]	Disapproving
Ideological self-identification			
Liberal	51.7	[c]	25.4
Moderate	35.0	[c]	38.1
Conservative	10.7	[c]	36.5

a. Medford, Massachusetts.
b. 1996 *General Social Survey* (Davis & Smith, 1996).
c. Data not available.
d. The GSS question was coded on a different scale, which I recoded in the following manner: (a) *always wrong* or *almost always wrong* = disapproving, (b) *sometimes wrong* = not sure, (c) *not wrong at all* = approving.

tion, arguably appropriate in the context of this inquiry because my interest lies in understanding the *processes* through which members of stereotyped groups running for office receive more or less favorable

evaluations rather than the *distribution* of public attitudes toward openly gay and lesbian candidates for office or those attitudes' *etiology*. Because stereotypic beliefs concerning gays and lesbians suffuse American political culture, their influence on political responses to gay and lesbian candidates should be similar across population subgroups (although perhaps differing in magnitude), as predicted by the sociocultural theories of stereotype acquisition (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986).

FINDINGS

MANIPULATION CHECKS

Difference of Means tests were performed on perceptions of stereotypic consistency as a function of experimental condition (stereotype-consistent vs. stereotype-inconsistent), separately for the gay and lesbian candidates. Perceptions of stereotypic consistency were measured by asking participants in each condition to judge how well the target matched the stereotype that most Americans have of a typical gay/lesbian (on a 1-7 scale anchored with "very well" and "very poorly" endpoints). As intended, the average judgments of the "stereotype-consistent" and "stereotype-inconsistent" gay and lesbian candidates were distinct ($p < .00$ in both cases). The average judgments of the stereotype-consistent candidates, also as intended, were "typical," or matching the gay/lesbian stereotype well; the average judgments of the "stereotype-inconsistent" gay/lesbian candidates were "untypical," or matching the gay/lesbian stereotype poorly.[13]

GROUP STEREOTYPES AND POLITICAL EVALUATION

I employ three measures of political evaluation, willingness to vote for the candidate for different levels and types of office, assessments of candidate viability in different electoral contexts, and judgments of candidate leadership ability, to analyze the influence of stereotypic consistency on evaluations of gay and lesbian candidates. Willingness to vote for the candidate and assessments of candidate viability are measured with additive scales composed of questions asking about the

likelihood that respondents would vote for the candidate and that the candidate would win elections for the city council, state legislature, school board, mayor and governor. Judgments of candidate leadership ability are measured with an additive scale composed of ratings of the candidate on the following seven-point scales: "leader-follower," "strong-weak," "qualified-unqualified," "knowledgeable-unknowledgeable," "competent-incompetent," and "assertive-unassertive."[14] All measures are coded such that lower scores represent less positive responses (lower willingness to vote for the candidate, predictions that the candidate will lose the elections and less positive leadership assessments). The model also includes controls for education, ideological self-identification, age, approval of homosexuality, perceived similarity of respondents' political beliefs to those of the candidate,[15] and self-reported level of interest in politics.[16] All control variables are coded with an expectation of a positive correlation with the dependent variables.[17] The general regression model has the following form:

Political evaluation = stereotypic consistency + candidate gender + respondents'
    gender + interaction between stereotypic consistency and candidate gender +
    interaction between stereotypic consistency and respondents' gender +
    interaction between candidate gender and respondents' gender + interaction
    between stereotypic consistency, candidate gender, and respondents' gender +
    control variables (approval of homosexuality, perceived similarity of beliefs,
    interest in politics, education, ideological self-identification, and age),

where political evaluation is the willingness to vote for the candidate, viability assessments, or leadership ability assessments.

Four variables in the model are designed to test the principal hypotheses of interest: (a) a dummy variable representing the candidate's stereotypic consistency (0 = consistent, 1 = inconsistent), aggregated across gender, to test the hypothesis suggesting that stereotype-consistent candidates will be evaluated less positively than stereotype-inconsistent candidates; (b) an interaction term involving the candidate's gender (0 = gay, 1 = lesbian) and stereotypic consistency to test the hypothesis suggesting that the influence of stereotypic consistency on political evaluation will vary with the candidate's gender; (c) an interaction term involving stereotypic consistency and respondent's gender (0 = male, 1 = female) to test the hypothesis that men will respond less favorably to both stereotype-consistent candi-

dates whereas women will not be influenced by the candidates' attributes; and (d) an interaction term involving stereotypic consistency, candidate's gender, and respondents' gender to test the hypothesis that men will respond less favorably to both stereotype-consistent candidates and women will respond more favorably to the stereotype-inconsistent gay candidate and the stereotype-consistent lesbian candidate. A dummy variable coding for the candidate's gender, aggregated across stereotypic consistency, and an interaction term involving the candidate's gender and respondents' gender are designed to test the minor expectations underlying this analysis (overall differences in evaluations of the gay and lesbian candidates and gender differences in overall responses to the gay and lesbian candidates).[18]

Table 4 contains the results of the three models' estimation. The overall effect of stereotypic consistency on evaluations of the gay and lesbian candidates is not significant, as expected. Political responses to the gay and lesbian candidates differ as a function of their stereotypic consistency, however, when their gender is taken into consideration, in line with the argument that the implications of group stereotypes in electoral politics may vary with stereotype content. This is evidenced by significant coefficients associated with an interaction term involving candidate's gender and stereotypic consistency on the voting and leadership assessments measures (and a marginally insignificant coefficient ($p < .26$) on the viability measure). Because the interaction terms, created by multiplying the dummy variables for stereotypic consistency and candidate's gender, are correlated with their component parts, I perform hierarchical F tests to determine whether the interactions add significant explanatory power to each model (Jaccard, Turrisi, & Wan, 1990, p. 24).[19] These additional tests confirm that both interactions are significant: $F(1, 96) = 4.15, p < .05$ on the measure of willingness to vote for the candidate; $F(1, 94) = 5.26, p < .025$ on the measure of assessments of the candidate's leadership ability.

To establish *how* the effect of stereotypic consistency varies with the candidate's gender, I re-estimate each model separately for the gay and lesbian candidates and find that the interactions in question are driven by differences in responses to the gay candidates only (results not shown). The stereotype-consistent (more feminine) gay candidate

TABLE 4
Influence of Stereotypic Consistency, Candidate Gender,
and Respondents' Gender on Political Evaluation
Involving Gay and Lesbian Candidates

	Willingness to Vote for the Candidate		Viability Assessments		Leadership Assessments	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Consistency[a]	−.36	1.44	−.02	1.21	−1.08	1.35
C gender[b]	.90	1.56	.99	1.32	1.50	1.43
R gender[c]	−.61	1.51	.55	1.26	1.98	1.41
Consistency × C gender[d]	−5.84**	2.88	−2.72	2.4	−6.15**	2.68
Consistency × R gender[d]	−5.46*	2.85	2.99	2.38	−.97	2.66
C gender × R gender[d]	.57	2.97	−.42	2.47	.40	2.77
Consistency × C gender × R gender[d]	−13.44**	5.76	−13.20***	4.80	−11.22**	5.41
Control variables						
Approval of homosexuality	1.31*	.72	.06	.60	−.39	.65
Perceived similarity of beliefs	1.61***	.54	.30 .46	1.29***	.49	
Interest in politics	−.23	.62	.29	.52	1.18**	.57
Education	.04	.77	−1.17*	.64	−.86	.69
Ideological self-identification	−.28	.78	−.76	.67	.71	.70
Age	.03	.05	.05	.04	−.04	.05
Intercept	6.38	6.18	18.74***	5.23	21.32***	5.58
R-squared	.27		.21		.27	
F/sig F	2.76***		1.92**		2.71***	

a. A dummy variable coding for the candidate's stereotypic consistency, aggregated across his/her gender (0 = consistent, 1 = inconsistent).
b. C gender = a dummy variable coding for candidates' gender (0 = gay, 1 = lesbian).
c. R gender = a dummy variable coding for respondents' gender (0 = male, 1 = female).
d. Interaction terms created by multiplying the listed variables.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

is evaluated *less* favorably than the stereotype-inconsistent (more masculine) candidate ($p < .20$ on willingness to vote for the candidate; $p < .04$ on perceptions of the candidate's viability; and $p < .05$ on assessments of the candidate's leadership ability). As suggested by a negative sign of the coefficient associated with stereotypic consistency in the models of the lesbian candidates' evaluation, the stereotype-consistent lesbian is evaluated somewhat (although not significantly, except for a marginally insignificant difference on the leadership assessment measure, $p < .17$) *more* positively than her stereotype-

inconsistent counterpart. Further confirming the evaluative penalties awarded the stereotype-consistent gay candidate, this candidate is evaluated significantly less favorably than the stereotype-consistent lesbian candidate when the general models are re-estimated separately for the stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent candidates (voting: $p < .05$; viability assessments: $p < .07$; and leadership assessments: $p < .02$). There are no significant differences on any of the three measures, in contrast, in average judgments of the stereotype-inconsistent gay and lesbian candidates.

If the results discussed thus far are examined in terms of the content of the gay and lesbian stereotypes, in sum, they suggest that the feminine gay and lesbian candidates are evaluated less favorably than their masculine counterparts, although only in the gay candidates' case are these aggregate differences significant. The feminine gay candidate, in addition, is evaluated significantly less favorably than the masculine lesbian candidate. These findings make sense in light of the literature demonstrating that gender roles expectations concerning men are more rigidly defined and enforced (LaMar & Kite, 1998). The magnitude of the difference in reactions to the stereotype-consistent (violating gender roles) and stereotype-inconsistent (more conforming to gender roles) gay candidates is, therefore, more pronounced and significant, unlike the difference in responses to the stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent lesbian candidates. Further buttressing this interpretation, the gay candidate whose attributes contradict gender role expectations also suffers in his evaluations relative to the lesbian candidate who does not conform to those expectations.

A marginally significant interaction between stereotypic consistency and respondents' gender reported in Table 4 ($p < .06$) suggests that men and women integrate stereotype-relevant information into their voting decisions differently when differences in candidates' gender are disregarded (a hierarchical F test confirms the marginal significance of this interaction, $F(1, 95) = 3.68$, $p < .06$). When separate models of willingness to vote for the candidate are estimated for men and women to interpret this interaction, men are marginally *less* willing ($p < .10$) to vote for a stereotype-consistent candidate (whether gay or lesbian) than a candidate whose attributes contradict his or her group's stereotype. When their judgments are aggregated across the categories of candidates' gender, on the other hand, women's judg-

ments are not significantly affected by the candidate's stereotypic consistency. As expected, men's attitudes toward both candidates who violate gender role expectations (stereotype-consistent gay and lesbian candidates) are less favorable, likely because of their lower tolerance for deviations from expected gender roles (Kerns & Fine, 1994).

Highly significant three-way interactions involving stereotypic consistency, candidate's gender, and respondents' gender on all three measures of political evaluation add further texture to the story (hierarchical F tests: voting, $F(1, 96) = 5.50$, $p < .03$; viability, $F(1,94) = 7.56$, $p < .01$; leadership ability, $F(1, 94) = 4.30$, $p < .05$). Going beyond the implications of the two-way interaction discussed in the preceding section, these additional multiplicative effects suggest that men and women not only differ in their integration of stereotype-relevant information overall but also discriminate in their judgments depending on the candidate's gender. I estimate separate models of voting, viability, and leadership assessments for female and male respondents to sort out the meaning of each interaction. The sources of women's responses to the gay and lesbian candidates are summarized in Table 5. For the sake of simplification, only coefficients associated with the factors of principal interest are listed in the table. I do not present equivalent findings for the male respondents because their responses were not significantly influenced by the candidate's gender and stereotypic consistency when the latter's influence was examined separately for the gay and lesbian candidates.

The overall effect of stereotypic consistency on judgments of female respondents is not significant, consistent with the two-way interaction between stereotypic consistency and respondents' gender discussed above. The influence of stereotypic consistency on female respondents' judgments is, however, conditioned by the candidate's gender, as demonstrated by the highly significantly coefficients associated with the interaction terms between stereotypic consistency and candidate's gender (hierarchical F tests: voting, $F(1, 50) = 11.72$, $p < .001$; viability, $F(1, 50) = 8.73$, $p < .01$; leadership assessments, $F(1, 50) = 15.53$, $p < .001$). I illuminate each interaction by estimating separate models accounting for women's responses to the gay and lesbian candidates. These additional results are displayed in the bottom half of Table 5.

TABLE 5
Influence of Stereotypic Consistency and Candidate Gender
on *Women*'s Evaluations of Gay and Lesbian Candidates[a]

	Willingness to Vote for the Candidate		Viability Assessments		Leadership Assessments	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Consistency[b]	−2.98	1.92	1.37	1.59	−1.54	1.60
C gender[c]	1.08	2.29	.99	1.89	1.77	1.90
Consistency × C gender[d]	−13.55***	3.96	−9.68***	3.28	−12.95***	3.29
R-squared	.28		.29		.40	
F / sig F	2.15**		2.26**		3.77***	
Disaggregated interaction (effect of consistency)[e]						
Gay candidate	3.22	2.84	6.06***	2.04	5.33**	2.12
R-squared	.24		.45		.44	
F / sig F	1.23		3.29***		3.08**	
Lesbian candidate	−10.39***	2.31	−3.42	2.41	−8.04***	2.78
R-squared	.63		.40		.42	
F / sig F	3.89***		1.51		1.69	

a. Controlling for approval of homosexuality, perceived similarity of beliefs, interest in politics, education, ideological self-identification, and age.
b. A dummy variable coding for the candidate's stereotypic consistency, aggregated across his/her gender (0 = consistent, 1 = inconsistent).
c. C gender = a dummy variable coding for candidate's gender (0 = gay, 1 = lesbian).
d. Interaction terms created by multiplying the listed variables.
e. Disaggregated by estimating two separate models of political evaluation, one for the gay candidate and one for the lesbian candidate.
*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$. ***$p < .01$.

The data in question indicate that women prefer the stereotype-inconsistent gay candidate over his stereotype-consistent counterpart on two of the three measures of political evaluation (marginally insignificantly on the voting measure, $p < .27$). When evaluating the lesbian candidate, in contrast, women favor the stereotype-consistent candidate over her stereotype-inconsistent counterpart on two of the three measures (marginally insignificantly on the viability measure, $p < .18$). Women, in sum, prefer the masculine candidate regardless of his or her gender, suggesting they primarily rely on the good politician anchor while forming impressions of gay and lesbian candidates.[20]

Male respondents, in contrast, respond similarly to the gay and lesbian candidates described with different attributes when their

responses are examined separately for the gay and lesbian candidates. Men are marginally less willing, however (as noted above), to vote for a stereotype-consistent candidate (whether gay or lesbian) than a candidate whose attributes contradict his or her group's stereotype, supporting the prediction that they will penalize both gay and lesbian candidates who fit their group's stereotypes.

None of the minor expectations underlying this analysis, finally, received empirical support. Overall evaluations of the gay and lesbian candidates were statistically indistinguishable, somewhat unexpectedly, but in line with Herrick and Thomas's (1999) findings. Male and female respondents, in addition, did not differ in their overall responses to the gay and lesbian candidates, somewhat counterintuitively, given a sizable literature that identifies gender differences in attitudes toward homosexuals (e.g., LaMar & Kite, 1998). On the other hand, gender differences in attitudes toward homosexuals are attitude-specific and may not extend to the area of electoral politics.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

In the aggregate, my empirical findings based on experimental research using highly realistic stimuli, suggest that political responses to gay and lesbian candidates differ as a joint function of their gender and the extent to which their attributes are consistent with their respective group stereotypes. The effects of stereotypic consistency were, in the aggregate, strongest for the gay candidates, with the masculine gay candidate (fitting his group's stereotype) evaluated less favorably than his feminine counterpart (contradicting his group's stereotype). The aggregate findings, however, concealed important gender differences in evaluations of gay and lesbian candidates presented with different attributes. Generally speaking, female "voters" evinced a preference for the masculine candidate (gay candidate who did not fit his group's stereotype over the gay stereotype-consistent candidate and the lesbian candidate who fit her group's stereotype over her stereotype-inconsistent counterpart). Male "voters," in contrast, were less willing to vote for the stereotype-consistent candidate, regardless of his or her gender, than his or her stereotype-inconsistent counterpart (although

they did not make such distinctions on the viability and leadership assessments measures).

The results summarized herein have important implications for electoral strategies of openly gay and lesbian candidates. Although they do not directly address the question of whether their group membership hurts or helps their electoral efforts when they are faced with (ostensibly) heterosexual political opponents, they suggest that gay and lesbian candidates are well advised to consider how stereotypes associated with their groups resonate with their constituency generally speaking and specific constituency groups in particular. Justifying the need to consider public reactions to gay men and lesbians separately, these results suggest that stereotypic beliefs associated with their group may not be as harmful to openly lesbian candidates for office, particularly when they are evaluated by female constituents. Because the lesbian candidates' stereotypic consistency is likely to help them among female voters and hurt them among male voters, on the other hand, openly lesbian candidates may face a greater challenge than their male counterparts when devising appropriate campaign strategies. An optimal strategy for lesbian candidates may entail simultaneously stressing their feminine and masculine sides (unless they are appealing specifically to women's groups). Although stereotypic beliefs concerning gay men as a group can hurt openly gay candidates' political outcomes, openly gay candidates' challenge is easier, on some level, because male and female constituents alike reward them when their attributes fit the good politician stereotype (or challenge the gay stereotype). Gay candidates' optimal strategy, therefore, should include playing up the ways in which they do not fit the gay stereotype.

Gay and lesbian candidates and their political advisors who have competed for office in recent elections have echoed an intuitive version of the data- and theory-based prescriptions that emanate from this research. These candidates and their campaign staffs have stressed the need to get voters to move beyond seeing them as gay/lesbian candidates—stereotypically interested in promoting the so-called "gay agenda"—and to see them instead as multidimensional candidates who happen to be gay or lesbian. Out of recognition that attention to their sexual orientation may make it an issue in their campaigns, many openly gay and lesbian candidates have taken pains to

distance themselves from their group's stereotype by striving to deflect the media's and voters' attention from their sexual orientation (Golebiowska, in press; Nelson, 1998).

More generally, these findings make an important contribution to scholarship on political implications of group stereotypes. Previous scholarship on the role of group stereotypes in electoral politics, whether that focusing on gender or racial/ethnic stereotypes (e.g., Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a, 1993; Sigelman et al., 1995) as well as previous work on willingness to allow individual members of unpopular groups to exercise their democratic rights and freedoms (Golebiowska, 1996, 2000, 2001), shows that members of those groups generally suffer when evaluated through the prism of their respective groups' stereotypes. The findings reported here suggest that the picture of the linkages between group stereotypes and political evaluation may be more complicated. Unlike in the context of individual-targeted political tolerance judgments or judgments of female/African American/Hispanic American politicians, whether stereotypic consistency leads to more positive or negative evaluations in electoral politics may depend on stereotype content and, more specifically, whether that content parallels or contradicts the prototype of a good politician.

These findings also buttress the insights from the literature on gender and candidate evaluation. Because masculine candidates have been generally favored by participants in this research, these findings provide additional, albeit indirect evidence, that stereotypes of women as feminine can (potentially) hurt women running for office when no other information is available about them or when their attributes fit that stereotype.

A critic might suggest, finally, that this research only partially illuminates the role of group stereotypes in political evaluation because ideological conservatives have been underrepresented in the sample. Yet, precisely because the sample is somewhat left-leaning is why the findings are so compelling. Because an overwhelming majority of openly gay and lesbian candidates compete on the Democratic ticket, understanding the Democratic/liberal voters' responses to their candidacies is most relevant to understanding variation in gay and lesbian candidates' electoral success, at least in partisan races. Under the worst case scenario, these findings may not directly apply to the few

cases of openly gay Republican candidates competing for Republican identifiers'/ideological conservatives' votes.

NOTES

1. The term *gay* will refer to male homosexual candidates, whereas the term *lesbian* will refer to female homosexual candidates.

2. The solo status effect suggests that, in an otherwise homogeneous environment, information about individuals who are in some fashion distinguished from the environment (whether by virtue of their gender, or race, or sexual orientation) will be processed differently from information about members of the majority group (Taylor, 1981).

3. A number of different processes could account for this, including subtyping (creating a separate cognitive category for the individual who does not fit the stereotype), contrast effects (contrasting the individual away from the group), differential liking for the atypical group member (liking the atypical group member more), to mention just a few.

4. One exception here is the case of the U.S. presidency: candidates for the U.S. president are expected to possess a mix of masculine and feminine attributes (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993a).

5. Given that gay men and lesbians are stereotyped to possess typical attributes of opposite-sex heterosexuals (women and men, respectively), it could be expected that gay and lesbian candidates would also be assumed to care about issues stereotypically associated with straight female and male candidates, respectively. Herrick and Thomas (1999) have not found that to be the case, however.

6. Although their surface content may not be uniformly or seemingly negative, stereotypes associated with members of different social groups may differ in their affective content. Otherwise positive traits (e.g., sensitive) may take on more negative connotations in the context of group stereotypes (e.g., in the context of the stereotype of gay men as sensitive). The same trait may be associated with different meanings and behaviors when applied to members of different groups because "stereotypes associated with different groups may influence the meaning of traits used to describe these groups and their members" (Kunda, Sinclair, & Griffin, 1997). For example, describing a woman as aggressive does not have the same meaning and evaluative connotation as describing a man as aggressive. Describing a lawyer as aggressive similarly has different connotations than describing a construction worker as aggressive (Kunda, Sinclair, & Griffin, 1997).

7. This design was part of a larger project including the "straight" conditions. Consideration of differences in responses to gay/lesbian candidates and their heterosexual counterparts, however, is outside the scope of this article.

8. Judgments concerning the general equivalence of the actors' physical attractiveness were verified using a convenience sample ($N = 31$) of college students.

9. Leeper (1991) and Herrick and Thomas (1999) also used a variation of this speech.

10. I chose a nonpartisan speech, full of platitudes political aspirants inject into their campaign rhetoric, to test the influence of the manipulated factors with greater confidence. Had I "created" a candidate who was clearly liberal or conservative, to put it differently, I would have had a harder time establishing whether participants' responses to the candidate were a function

of his or her ideological inclinations or the effects of his or her attributes manipulated in the experiment.

11. Although majorities of national public disapprove of same-sex marriage, domestic partnership is much less contentious. In a California poll, for example, a majority disapproves of same-sex marriages, but a larger majority (67%) approves granting domestic partner benefits (Boxall, 1997).

12. An important question to consider here is how paying people to participate in the study may be affecting their responses. People may feel more obliging when provided with a financial incentive, perhaps offering more socially acceptable answers than they might otherwise (i.e., reporting more favorable attitudes toward the experimental targets). This would be problematic in the context of this study if there were any reason to expect that this tendency would interact with the experimental condition (and I cannot think why this would be the case).

13. I performed an additional check on the success of experimental manipulations by examining perceptions of gay and lesbian candidates' masculinity broken down by condition. As expected, the stereotype-consistent male candidate was perceived as marginally less masculine than his stereotype-inconsistent counterpart ($F = 2.36$, $p < .13$), whereas the stereotype-consistent female candidate was perceived as significantly more masculine than her stereotype-inconsistent counterpart ($F = 12.02$, $p < .00$).

14. All three sets of items have been factor analyzed and subjected to reliability scaling. All three satisfy those two different criteria of scalability. The three sets of items load on single factors, accounting for 70.2% of the variance in the case of voting scale, 55.6% of the variance in the case of the viability assessments scale, and 57.9% of the variance in individual items in the case of the leadership ability scale. The reliability coefficients for the three scales are voting, .89; viability, .77; and leadership, .85.

15. Because the candidate's party affiliation is veiled in his or her presentation, a most appropriate measure of political fit is the perceived similarity of respondents' and candidate's political views

16. I include interest in politics in the model to capture potential differences in the processing of information about the candidate as a function of political expertise (of which interest in politics is a component) (Knight, 1985; Sniderman, Glaser, & Griffin, 1990).

17. Low scores on "approval of homosexuality" indicate a "disapproving" response; low scores on "perceived similarity of beliefs" indicate a "dissimilar" response; low scores on ideological self-identification indicate a "conservative" response; low scores on age indicate a "young" response"; low scores on education equal a "low education" response; and, finally, low scores on interest in politics indicate a "very uninterested" response (without an expectation, in this case, as to the sign of the coefficient).

18. Given that the multiplicative terms exhibit strong correlations with their component parts, resulting in inflated standard errors, and because this problem is compounded in the equations I estimate due to the presence of multiple interaction terms, I perform a simple transformation of the component variables prior to creating each multiplicative term. This transformation, recommended by Jaccard, Turrisi, and Wan (1990, p. 31) and developed by Cronbach (1987), involves centering the component variables (by subtracting the raw scores from the mean) to correct for multicollinearity (see also, Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

19. The essence of the F test in question is to evaluate the incremental explained variance associated with the interaction term by subtracting the squared multiple correlation in the equation without the interaction term from the squared multiple correlation in the equation including the interaction term (Jaccard et al., 1990). The following equation was used to compute the F statistic:

$$F = \frac{\left(R_2^2 - R_1^2\right)\big/\left(k_2 - k_1\right)}{\left(1 - R_2^2\right)\big/\left(N - k_2 - 1\right)}$$

where R_2 is the multiple R for the equation including the interaction term, R_1 is the multiple R for the equation without the interaction term, k_2 is the number of predictors in the equation including the interaction term, k_1 is the number of predictors in the equation without the interaction term, and N is the total sample size. "The resulting F is distributed with $k_2 - k_1$ and $N - k_2 - 1$ degrees of freedom" (Jaccard et al., 1990, p. 18).

20. Women also prefer the stereotype-consistent lesbian candidate to her gay counterpart when separate models for the stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent candidates are estimated (voting: $p < .02$, viability: $p < 01$; and leadership: $p < .02$) but do not differentiate in their responses to the stereotype-inconsistent gay and lesbian candidates.

REFERENCES

Alexander, D., & Andersen, K. (1993). Gender as a factor in the attribution of leadership traits. *Political Research Quarterly*, *46*(3), 527-545.

Best, D. L., & Williams, J. E. (1990). *Measuring sex stereotypes: A thirty-nation study*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Boxall, B. (1997). A new era set to begin in benefits for gay couples; Domestic partners: Hawaii law, which takes effect Tuesday, will allow unmarried couples to qualify for many things typically reserved for wedded couples. *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, Part A, p. 3.

Brewer, M. B. (1996). When stereotypes lead to stereotyping: The use of stereotypes in person perception. In C. N. Macrae, C. Stangor, & M. Hewstone (Eds.), *Stereotypes and stereotyping*. New York: Guilford.

Cohen, J., & Cohen, P. (1983). *Applied multiple regression*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cronbach, L. J. (1987). Statistical tests for moderator variables: Flaws in analyses recently proposed. *Psychological Bulletin*, *102*(3), 414-417.

Davis, J. A., & Smith, T. W. (1996). *General social surveys, 1972-1996*, Machine-readable data file. Principal investigator, J.A. Davis; Director and co-principal investigator, T. W. Smith. NORC ed. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, producer, 1996; Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, distributor. 1 data file and 1 codebook.

Deaux, K., & Lewis, L. L. (1984). Structure of gender stereotypes: Interrelationships among components and gender label. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *46*, 991-1004.

Devine, P. G. (1989). Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*, 5-18.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (Eds.). (1986). *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Dyer, R. A. (1998). Gay candidates do battle in unprecedented texas race. *The Houston Chronicle*, October 11, p. 1.

Fein, S., & Hilton, J. L. (1992). Attitudes toward groups and behavioral intentions toward individual group members: The impact of nondiagnostic information. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *28*, 101-124.

Fiske, S. T., & Neuberg, S. L. (1990). A continuum of impression formation, From Category-Based to Individuating Processes: Influences of Information and Motivation on Attention and Interpretation. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology: Vol. 23* (pp. 1-74). New York: Academic Press.

Golebiowska, E. A. (1996). The "pictures in our heads" and individual-targeted tolerance. *Journal of Politics*, *58*(4), 1010-1034.

Golebiowska, E. A. (2000). The etiology of individual-targeted intolerance: Group stereotypes and judgments of individual group members. *Political Psychology*, *21*(3), 443-464.

Golebiowska, E. A. (2001). Timing of group membership disclosure and tolerance judgments concerning groups and individual group members. *Journal of Politics*, *63*(4), 1017-1040.

Golebiowska, E. A. (in press). Political implications of group stereotypes: Campaign experiences of openly gay political candidates. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.

Golebiowska, E. A., & Thomsen, C. J. (1999). Dynamics of attitudes towards openly gay and lesbian political candidates. In E. Riggle & B. Tadlock (Eds.), *Gays and lesbians in the democratic process* (pp. 192-219). New York: Columbia University Press.

Herek, G. M. (1999). *Prevalence: Homophobia and heterosexism [Online]. Available: http:// psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/phobprev.html#tech_text*

Herek, G. M., & Capitanio, J. P. (1996). "Some of my best friends:" Intergroup contact, concealable stigma, and heteroesexuals' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *22*(4), 412-424.

Herek, G. M., & Glunt, E. K. (1993). Interpersonal contact and heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men: Results from a national survey. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *30*(3), 239-244.

Herrick, R., & Thomas, S. (1999). The effects of sexual orientation on citizen perceptions of candidate viability. In E. Riggle & B. Tadlock (Eds.) *Gays and lesbians in the democratic process* (pp. 170-191). New York: Columbia University Press.

Hoffman, C., & Hurst, N. (1990). Gender stereotypes: Perception or rationalization? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *58*(2), 197-208.

Huddy, L., & Terkildsen, N. (1993a). The consequences of gender stereotypes for women candidates at different levels and types of office. *Political Research Quarterly*, *46*(3), 503-525.

Huddy, L., & Terkildsen, N. (1993b). Gender stereotypes and the perception of male and female candidates. *American Journal of Political Science*, *37*(1), 119-147.

Jaccard, J., Turrisi, R. & Wan, C. K. (1990). *Interaction effects in multiple regression*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Kahn, K. F. (1992). Does being male help? An investigation of the effects of candidate gender and campaign coverage on evaluations of U.S. senate candidates. *Journal of Politics*, *54*, 497-517.

Kahn, K. F. (1994). Does gender make a difference? An experimental examination of sex stereotypes and press patterns in statewide campaigns. *American Journal of Political Science*, *38*, 162-195.

Kerns, J. G., & Fine, M. A. 1994. The relation between gender and negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians—Do gender-role attitudes mediate this relation? *Sex Roles*, *31*(5/6), 297-307.

Kite, M. E. (1984). Sex differences in attitudes toward homosexuals: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *10*(1/2), 69-81.

Kite, M. E. (1994). When perceptions meet reality: Individual differences in reactions to lesbians and gay men. In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kite, M. E., & Deaux, K. 1987. Gender belief systems: Homosexuality and the implicit inversion theory. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *11*, 83-96.

Kite, M. E., & Whitley, B. E., Jr. (1996). Sex differences in attitudes toward homosexual persons, behaviors, and civil rights: A meta-analysis. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *22*(4), 336-353.

Knight, K. (1985). Ideology in the 1980 election: Ideological sophistication does matter. *Journal of Politics*, *47*, 8828-53.

Kunda, Z., Sinclair, L., & Griffin, D. (1997). Equal ratings but separate meanings: Stereotypes and the construal of traits. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*(4), 720-734.

LaMar, L., & Kite, M. (1998). Sex differences in attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Sex Research*, *35*(2), 189-96.

Leeper, M. S. (1991). The impact of prejudice on female candidates: An experimental look at voter inference. *American Politics Quarterly*, *19*, 248-261.

Locksley, A. B., Borgida, E., Brekke, N., & Hepburn, C. (1980). Sex stereotypes and social judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *39*, 821-831.

Lodge, M. G., McGraw, K. M., & Stroh, P. (1989). An impression-driven model of candidate evaluation. *American Political Science Review*, *83*, 399-420.

Macrae, C. N., Milne, A. B., & Bodenhausen, G. V. (1995). Stereotypes as energy-saving devices: A peek inside the cognitive toolbox. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *66*, 37-47.

Madon, S. (1997). What do people believe about gay males? A study of stereotype content and strength. *Sex Roles*, *37*, 663-85.

McDermott, M. L. (1997). Voting cues in low-information elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, *41*(1), 270-283.

Miller, A. H., Wattenberg, M. P., & Malanchuk, O. (1986). Schematic assessments of presidential candidates. *American Political Science Review*, *80*, 505-540.

Nelson, R. T. (1998). Cammermeyer shapes her image—Lesbian candidate projects moderation. *The Seattle Times*, February 22, p. B1.

Page, S., & Yee, M. (1985). Conception of male and female homosexual stereotypes among university undergraduates. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *10*(1/2), 23-37.

Peffley, M., Hurwitz, J., & Sniderman, P. M. (1997). Racial stereotypes and Whites' political views of Blacks in the context of welfare and crime. *American Journal of Political Science*, *41*, 30-60.

Popkin, S. L. (1994). *The reasoning voter: Communication and persuasion in presidential campaigns*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Rahn, W. M. (1993). The role of partisan stereotypes in information processing about political candidates. *American Journal of Political Science*, *37*(2), 472-496.

Rahn, W. M., Aldrich, J. H., Borgida, E., & Sullivan, J. L. (1990). A social cognitive model of candidate appraisal. In J. Kuklinski & J. Ferejohn (Eds.), *Information and democratic processes*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Riggle, E. D., Ottati, V. C., Wyer, R. S., Kuklinski, J., & Schwartz, N. (1992). Bases of political judgments: The role of stereotypic and nonstereotypic information. *Political Behavior*, *14*, 67-87.

Sapiro, V. (1981-1982). If U.S. Senator Baker were a woman: An experimental study of candidate images. *Political Psychology*, *2*, 61-83.

Seltzer, R. A., Newman, J., & Voorgees Leighton, M. (1997). *Sex as political variable: Women as candidates and voters in U.S. elections*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Sigelman, C. K., Sigelman, L., Walkosz, B. J., & Nitz, M. (1995). Black candidates, White voters: Understanding racial bias in political perceptions. *American Journal of Political Science*, *39*(1), 243-265.

Sniderman, P. M., Glaser, J. M., & Griffin, R. (1990). Information and electoral choice. In P. M. Sniderman, R. A. Brody, & P. E. Tetlock (Eds.), *Reasoning and choice: Explorations in political psychology*. Cambridge University Press.

Sniderman, P. M., & Piazza, T. (1993). *The scar of race*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Snyder, M. L., Kleck, R. E., Strenta, A. & Mentzer, S. J. (1979). Avoidance of the handicapped: An attributional ambiguity analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *37*, 2297-2306.

Taylor, S. E. (1981). A categorization approach to stereotyping. In D. L. Hamilton (Ed.), *Cognitive processes in stereotyping and intergroup behavior*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Victory Fund. (1999). Landmark new research shows hope and hurdles: Bipartisan majority of voters would consider supporting gay candidates for office [Online]. Available: http://204.179.124.29/templates/victoryfund/press/index.html?record=4

Witt, L., Paget, K. M., & Matthews, G. (1994). *Running as a woman: Gender and power in American politics*. New York: Free Press.

Yang, A. S. (1997). The polls—Trends: attitudes toward homosexuality. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *61*, 477-507.

Ewa A. Golebiowska is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.

THE LEGITIMACY-CONFERRING AUTHORITY
OF THE U.S. SUPREME COURT
An Experimental Design

ROSALEE A. CLAWSON
Purdue University
ELIZABETH R. KEGLER
University of Texas, Austin
ERIC N. WALTENBURG
Purdue University

Convention holds that the Supreme Court, because of its special constitutional role, can confer an element of legitimacy on a policy simply by endorsing it. In this study, we conducted an experiment to test the legitimacy-conferring effect of Court rulings on public opinion in two policy areas—affirmative action and regulation of phone rates. We found that in both cases, the Supreme Court had an impact on policy agreement and behavioral intentions that was moderated by other important variables. We conclude that the Supreme Court plays an important role in shaping public opinion and political behavior.

Received wisdom holds that the U.S. Supreme Court, because of its nature and constitutional role, can confer an element of legitimacy on a policy simply by endorsing it. Steeped in tradition and ritual, operating behind the "purple curtain," the Court's members perceived as "high priests" of the Constitution and endowed with a special warrant to protect and interpret that "Sacred Text," Court pronouncements can move the public to accept the policy outputs of itself and other agents of government. Or so the notion goes. But is that notion correct?

Much evidence and scholarship seem to fly in its face. For instance, there is circumstantial evidence suggesting the Court lacks the necessary public attention or recognition for it to legitimate a policy (Adamany & Grossman, 1983; Franklin & Kosaki, 1995; Murphy & Tanenhaus, 1968). As Jaros and Roper (1980) put it, "Few have the necessary awareness to give—or withhold—support" (p. 102). Then there are the impact and implementation studies that show compliance with the Court's rulings has been, at best, hit or miss (Dolbeare & Hammond, 1970; Rodgers & Bullock, 1972). If the Court's capacity to confer legitimacy on a policy results in compliance with that policy, then these studies must raise serious doubts about the High Bench's abilities. Finally, there is concrete, direct evidence that seems to demonstrate the Court's *incapacity* to confer legitimacy. Marshall's (1989) research, for example, indicates that the Court lacks the persuasive power to validate controversial policies. In the 18 instances where the necessary data are available, he finds the average shift of public opinion in the direction of the Court's decision to be a meager .06%. Bearing even more directly on the question, Baas and Thomas (1984) used an experimental design to test the Court's legitimacy-conferring capacity and concluded, "Mere endorsement by the Supreme Court alone, or as interpreter of the Constitution, is not sufficient to elevate significantly mass acceptance of an issue or policy" (pp. 351-352).

"Nevertheless," Caldeira (1991) avers, "most political scientists harbor a belief in the Court to affect public opinion" (p. 304). Are judicial scholars, then, quixotically tilting at legitimacy-conferring windmills? From our reading of the literature, we believe not. Several recent studies have breathed new life into the possibility that the Court, through its mandates, can validate policies. The data and analysis presented here are very much in line with this recent scholarship. We use an experimental design to gauge the relative capacity of the Court to confer legitimacy with its policy pronouncements.

Beyond presenting just another test of the legitimacy-conferring hypothesis, however, the present study takes on three additional tasks. First, we seek to continue to use sophisticated experimental methods on a question that we believe lends itself quite nicely to experimental tests. Second, and more importantly, we take a sounding on the

Court's capacity to bring about legitimacy by affecting people's behavioral intentions. As Caldeira (1991) pointed out,

> General professions of support for a policy do not predict very well the actions of individuals in specific situations; and attitudes and behavior do not coincide. Thus, although the Supreme Court might not change what people say about an issue, the justices could provide legitimation in the form of *behavioral* compliance [emphasis in original]. (p. 310)

To our knowledge, this question has not been put to experimental tests (but see Gibson, 1989). Finally, we take into account the "group-centric" nature of American public opinion by examining how the legitimacy-conferring effect of the Court is moderated by attitudes toward important political groups in American society (Nelson & Kinder, 1996).

In the next section we briefly review the current body of scholarship that better bottoms the discipline's belief that the Court can move public opinion. In section three, we lay out our hypotheses and describe our research design—a between-subjects experiment. We then turn to a discussion of our quantitative results. We find that a policy attributed to the Supreme Court enjoys greater levels of relative support—either measured in terms of professions of support or in terms of prospective behavior—than the same policy attributed to another actor. However, these levels of support are moderated by group-centric attitudes and an individual's level of interest in politics. We conclude by taking stock of our findings, and we suggest a number of questions for future research in the area.

THE COURT'S ABILITY TO MOVE PUBLIC OPINION

The ability of any political institution, especially the Supreme Court, to sway public opinion hinges on its level of support and credibility (see, e.g., Mondak, 1992, 1994). And here, recent analyses show the Court to fare quite well. In perhaps the most carefully planned study of the public's evaluations of the Court to date, Marshall (1989) finds that aggregate support for the Court consistently outpaces levels for Congress and the executive branch. And on a complementary note,

Mondak and Smithey (1997) report, "Support for the Court is characterized by a relatively high level of stability over time" (p. 1119; but see Caldeira, 1986). Thus, it appears the Court's level of public support is better able to weather the effects of disruptive political and social events. Finally, Mondak (1992) shows that the Court possesses enough "political capital" that its decisions can "purchase" public approval for a policy. In other words, the Court's public prestige promotes its policy authority.

Another, related, thread of research has shown that the Court, through its opinions, fundamentally shapes and can even change deeply held beliefs. Franklin and Kosaki (1989), for instance, show that in highly salient cases, Supreme Court opinions, although not necessarily resulting in greater support for a policy (they may if, in the aggregate, public opinion tilts in the direction of the Court's decision), do crystallize public attitudes. In short, reactions to the Court's decision are dependent on the individual's political context. Thus, certain decisions can increase the intensity of within-group attitudes about an issue, and, in turn, bring about greater polarization between groups.

Johnson and Martin (1998) likewise show that a Court opinion crystallizes public attitudes. They go on to demonstrate that once those attitudes are elaborated, subsequent decisions on the same issue, even decisions that alter precedent, have only marginal effects. Thus, they show that the first time the Court speaks on an issue, it structures overall public opinion, but "when the Court speaks more than once, its effect is minimal in later cases" (p. 306).

Of course the most direct tests of the Court's ability to move public opinion rely on experimental designs.[1] As noted above, the initial effort using this methodology (Baas & Thomas, 1984) failed to find any legitimacy-conferring effect for the Court. The design Baas and Thomas (1984) utilized, however, may have contained the seeds for their null results.[2] First, as Mondak (1990; see also Hoekstra, 1995) has pointed out, those participants in the control group may have been attributing the policies to a variety of political actors—*including the Supreme Court*. Second, the Baas and Thomas study employed a relatively artificial stimulus—unadorned policy statements with minimal substantive information. It may be that they found no ability of the Court to influence opinion because they bored with an auger too dull to take hold; that is, their experimental stimuli were unrealistic and too

weak. Third, Baas and Thomas (1984) assumed that there is a uniform legitimacy-conferring effect (p. 342). But as Franklin and Kosaki (1989) show, two individuals could react quite differently to a Court pronouncement validating a policy depending upon their predispositions toward the issue or the Court (see also Johnson & Martin, 1998; Hoekstra & Segal, 1996). Consequently, indicators of the Court's impact may have been diluted beyond usefulness because they merely represented aggregate effects across heterogeneous populations.

Subsequent experimental designs have attempted to overcome these deficiencies. Mondak (1992, 1994; see also Hoekstra, 1995), for example, attributes policies to alternative actors (e.g., a high school principal, the police, "bureaucrats" in Washington), allowing him to gauge the relative ability of the Court to sway opinion. Furthermore, it ensures that the control group attributes the policy to an actor other than the Court. With this modification, Mondak found (1992) policy legitimation increased "when decisions are attributed to the Supreme Court rather than actors with lower approval ratings" (p. 470). Mondak (1994) also examined the mediating effect of the content of the news media's coverage of the Court's decisions. Designing experimental manipulations to reflect variance in reporting context, he found that the Court's ability to legitimate a policy was largely unaffected by the nature of the media's reporting. "Variance in media reports does not limit the Supreme Court's power of legitimation" (p. 689).

Like Mondak, Hoekstra (1995) examined the Court's relative capacity to persuade participants of the correctness of its position. Furthermore, she utilized fictitious newspaper articles as her test stimulus, thereby improving the experimental design's "external validity."[3] Similarly, in an elegant quasi-experiment, Hoekstra and Segal (1996) examine the effect of a Court decision on local community opinion, where the policy being articulated is far from hypothetical and the impact is immediate and genuine. Here, again, they find the Court—under certain conditions (namely, whether the issue at hand was especially proximate to an individual's daily life)—to have a substantial effect on public support.

Finally, Hoekstra (1995) and Hoekstra and Segal (1996) examine the effect of the Court's pronouncements across subgroupings of respondents. In the analyses, they find that the Court's legitimacy-

conferring effect is somewhat contingent on the characteristics of the individuals exposed to the Court's message.[4] Thus, Hoekstra (1995) finds that the Court is more able to persuade those who hold it in high esteem. Hoekstra and Segal (1996) show that the persuasive power of the Court is affected by the degree to which an individual has strongly held preexisting views as well as the salience of the decision.

The scholarship outlined above demonstrates the Court's legitimacy-conferring effect in the form of professed support for a policy. Support is typically measured on a single dimension, with citizens expressing either agreement or disagreement with a particular policy. In this study, we conceptualize legitimation more broadly, in terms of both policy agreement and *behavioral intentions to act*. We are drawing from social psychological theories that emphasize the componential nature of attitudes, that is, that affect, cognition, and behavioral intentions are important and nonredundant facets of one's general evaluation of an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Thus, we argue that the Court not only shapes agreement with the policy pronouncement, but also influences behavioral intentions to act in response to the policy ruling. To fully gauge the Court's legitimation capacity, then, it is important to examine both general agreement with a policy, as well as behavioral intentions.[5]

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Our analysis focuses on the U.S. Supreme Court's relative capacity to confer legitimacy on a policy. Our data come from a between-subjects experimental design that examines the impact of Court rulings on policy agreement and behavioral intentions in two policy domains, one highly controversial and one less polarizing. Therefore, the experiment was composed of four conditions: two sources of policy legitimation (the "bureaucracy,"[6] in the form of the Department of Education or Federal Communications Commission, and the Supreme Court) and two issue areas (affirmative action and regulation of phone rates). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions.[7]

The participants were students enrolled in political science courses at Purdue University during the Fall 1999 semester ($N = 206$). Of the

total, the majority of our participants were male (59%) and White (87%).[8] Their median age was 21, and 49% were seniors. In addition to the obvious differences between college students and the general public, our participants were substantially more Republican than a representative sample of U.S. citizens, with a full 50% indicating an affinity for the GOP. Although our participants were enrolled in political science courses, they were not uniformly interested in politics. Indeed, student interest in politics mirrors quite closely the interest of Americans generally.[9] See Table 1 for a comparison of our sample with data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the 1996 National Election Study.

From our reading of the extant experimental based analyses, we are especially mindful of issues of internal and external validity (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1990). And we believe our experiment is particularly well designed in this regard. In terms of internal validity, we created a strong experimental manipulation to ensure that the participants paid attention to, and thought about, the source of the policy decision. We informed the participants that we were interested in learning how people gather political information from the media and asked them to read (fictitious) newspaper stories that they were told had appeared in *The New York Times*. Each newspaper article had a prominent headline attributing the policy decision to either the bureaucracy or the Supreme Court. The story contained detailed information about the policy decision and the impact of that decision. In the Supreme Court condition, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor[10] was quoted, and a specific case and docket number were mentioned. In the bureaucracy condition, either William Kennard (FCC Chair) or Richard Riley (Education Secretary) was quoted. Aside from the variation just noted, the stories were identical in length, facts presented, and writing style. (Appendix A displays the text of the newspaper stories.)

We were also concerned with issues of external validity as we designed our experiment. To ensure our experiment had "mundane realism" (Aronson et al., 1990, p. 70), our articles were carefully constructed to mirror actual newspaper stories on Supreme Court rulings.[11] In addition, we based the articles on facts drawn from recent circuit court decisions; however, we reversed the affirmative action

TABLE 1
Demographic and Political Characteristics of Participants (%)

	Study Participants	1998 Census Bureau Estimates for Indiana[a]	1996 National Election Study[b]
Gender			
Male	59	49	45
Female	41	51	55
Race			
White	87	88	85
Non-White	13	12	15
Median age	21	35	44
At least some college	100	38	37
Class in college			
First year	5		
Sophomore	20		
Junior	26		
Senior	49		
Graduate	1		
Party identification			
1 = Strong Democrat	5		19
2	8		20
3	13		14
4 = Independent	24		9
5	24		11
6	20		15
7 = Strong Republican	6		13
Interest			
1 = Not interested	4		13
2	8		
3	9		27
4 = Somewhat interested	23		
5	20		39
6	17		
7 = Very interested	19		21

NOTE: Table entries are the percentage of respondents who fall into each category for each variable. Missing data are excluded. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.
a. The gender, race, and age data are 1998 estimates obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site (http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/state). The education data are based on the 1990 Census, and they are taken from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1993*.
b. The National Election Study (NES) uses a branching and fully labeled measure of party identification. Our measure was a 7-point scale that was labeled only on its midpoint and endpoints. NES measures political interest on a fully labeled 4-point scale, while our interest item was a 7-point scale labeled on its midpoint and endpoints.

decision, indicating in our story that the Court had ruled in favor of the policy. We did this to provide a more demanding test of our hypothesis. If the Supreme Court can confer legitimacy on a highly contested, fiery issue like affirmative action, then it suggests the Court has a great deal of power to shape public opinion in many policy arenas.

After reading the newspaper article, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire. To ensure that the stories were carefully read and processed (and to reinforce our cover story), participants were asked to indicate whether the article was well written and whether they gained new information from the story. The heart of the questionnaire, though, concerned the participants' level of agreement with the policy. Specifically, participants indicated their opinion regarding the policy on a 5-point scale, from 1 (*strong disagreement*) to 5 (*strong agreement*), with the decision of either the Supreme Court or the bureaucracy.

When assessing the effect of a policy source on our participants' level of support for that policy, we recognize the "group-centric" nature of American politics (Nelson & Kinder, 1996). Decades of empirical research have demonstrated that social groups are central to the way many citizens think about politics; group loyalties and enmities strongly influence citizens' political perceptions and evaluations (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Conover & Feldman, 1981; Converse, 1964). Many public policies disproportionately affect members of certain social groups, and opinion on these policies depends in large part on citizens' attitudes toward the groups involved. The two policy areas we are interested in—affirmative action and phone regulation—are no exception. Affirmative action is an issue that is popularly understood to pit Blacks against Whites. Indeed, attitudes toward Blacks, the subgroup most commonly linked to affirmative action, have been shown to influence support for this policy (Nelson & Kinder, 1996; Kinder & Sanders, 1996). Therefore, we expect that the legitimizing effect of the Court will be moderated by the degree to which our participants are "warm" toward Blacks and Whites as social groups. It is also possible that attitudes toward groups affect opinion on phone regulation. Our newspaper article on the deregulation of phone rates discusses the conflict between consumers and big business. Thus, attitudes toward these groups may figure into the equation.

But attitudes toward social groups are not the only force affecting public opinion. Partisanship often structures political thought and debate, and few issues on the modern American political landscape cast as long a partisan shadow as affirmative action. Accordingly, we suspect that the impact of the Supreme Court on support for affirmative action will be moderated by partisan identification. We do not expect partisan identification, however, to play a large role in the phone regulation condition. Simply put, conflict over phone rates does not fire the same partisan intensities.

To measure whether the source of the policy neutralized intentions to protest, we asked those participants *who disagreed* with the policy pronouncement if they would engage in political activity to express their displeasure with the policy.[12] Specifically, participants were asked if they would be willing to write a letter to the newspaper, write a letter to their Member of Congress, participate in a campus demonstration, participate in a demonstration in front of the Supreme Court or the relevant bureaucracy, or contribute to an interest group that supports their position in protest of the ruling.[13] Participants indicated their responses on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (*not willing at all*) to 3 (*very willing*). We computed a mean from those five items to create our measure of behavioral intentions.

When explaining behavioral intentions, we expect that participants' interest in politics will be an important explanatory factor. We hypothesize that participants who are disinterested in politics will not be affected by the experimental manipulation, their apathy leaving them unwilling to participate regardless of the circumstances. On the other hand, participants who are interested in politics should be more likely to participate. This tendency to action of the politically attentive, however, will be moderated by the source of the policy. Participants who read that the policy was the child of the bureaucracy will profess a greater propensity to protest than participants who believe that the Supreme Court fostered it. In other words, interested participants will foresee greater compliance when the policy is attributed to the Supreme Court because of the Court's greater legitimacy and these participants' increased likelihood of accepting its authoritative decisions.[14]

Finally, before turning to our analysis, we should also say a few words about the role that diffuse support for the Court plays in this

study. Because Hoekstra's (1995) analysis demonstrated that citizens with a high level of diffuse support are more influenced by the Court's decisions, we included questions measuring that concept in our survey. Among our participants, levels of diffuse support were quite high, and there was very little variation. The mean was 4.06 on a 5-point scale, with a standard deviation of .63. Furthermore, the level of diffuse support did not differ by experimental condition.[15] Consequently, we are effectively holding diffuse support constant at a high level across the four treatments. Not surprisingly given the lack of variation in the concept, initial analyses showed that we were unable to replicate Hoekstra's finding that diffuse support interacts with the policy attribution condition.

Measurement and operationalization of the dependent and independent variables are described in Appendix B. The procedures we use to analyze the data are quite straight-forward, consisting of Independent Samples *t* tests and multivariate regression techniques.

ANALYSIS

Policy legitimation. First, we examined the bivariate relationship between policy attribution condition and agreement with the ruling on affirmative action. The results of an Independent Samples *t* test indicate that the Supreme Court has a legitimacy-conferring effect in this policy area. When participants read that the Supreme Court ruled in favor of affirmative action, they were more supportive of the policy. In the Department of Education condition, participants leaned toward opposition to the policy ($M = 2.26$), whereas participants were more neutral toward the policy in the Supreme Court condition ($M = 2.74$, $p = .02$).

To test our hypotheses that partisanship and group attitudes affect support for affirmative action, we conducted a regression analysis to observe the effects of the experimental manipulation in a multivariate context (see Table 2). To begin, both party identification and attitudes toward Blacks have a significant main effect on support for affirmative action: conservatives and prejudiced individuals are more opposed to the proaffirmative action ruling. Attitudes toward Whites do not influence support for the policy.

TABLE 2
Multiple Regression Explaining Agreement
With Affirmative Action Policy

Variable	Coefficient	SE
Constant	2.62***	.67
Policy attribution condition (1 = Supreme Court, 0 otherwise)	−.56	.94
Party identification	−.23**	.09
Policy attribution condition × Party identification	.17	.12
Attitudes toward blacks	.16*	.07
Policy attribution condition × Attitudes toward blacks	.27*	.12
Attitudes toward whites	−.05	.07
Policy attribution condition × Attitudes toward whites	−.21	.12
N	107	
Adjusted R^2	.27	

NOTE: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients and standard errors.
*$p \leq .05$, two-tailed. **$p \leq .01$, two-tailed. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

Contrary to our expectation, there is not a significant interaction between policy attribution condition and party identification ($b = .17$; $t = 1.38$). Likewise, the effect of the policy attribution condition is not moderated by attitudes toward Whites ($b = -.21$; $t = -1.74$). On the other hand, there is a significant interaction between policy attribution condition and attitudes toward Blacks ($b = .27$; $t = 2.26$). The Supreme Court proaffirmative action ruling does not persuade subjects who are "cold" toward Blacks to support the policy. It is not particularly surprising that people who indicate a strong dislike for Blacks are not moved by the Supreme Court decision. Even though the survey was anonymous, there are still "social desirability" pressures that make it uncomfortable for those students who do not like Blacks to actually admit their antipathy (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1989). Therefore, students who *did reveal* their aversion to Blacks are probably quite committed to their views, making them immune to the weight of the Court ruling. In contrast, participants who have warmer feelings toward Blacks are more likely to support the policy when it is attributed to the Court, further evidence of the "group-centric" nature of American public opinion.

For the phone regulation issue, the policy attribution condition did not have a significant effect on opinion in the bivariate case, although

the direction of the relationship was as predicted. When the policy decision was attributed to the FCC, the average level of support for phone deregulation was 3.25. In the Supreme Court condition, the mean level of support for the policy was 3.41 ($p = .42$).

Turning to the multivariate analysis presented in Table 3, attitudes toward both consumers and business have a significant main effect on agreement with the phone regulation policy ($b = -.23$; $t = -3.55$ and $b = .17$; $t = 2.81$, respectively). Citizens who have favorable attitudes toward consumers tend to dislike the ruling, whereas individuals who feel warmly toward business are more likely to support the policy. But more importantly, there is a significant interaction between the source of the policy and attitudes toward consumers. Unpacking this interaction shows that the Supreme Court has little effect on those who are neutral toward consumers; but participants who are favorable toward consumers were influenced by the Supreme Court ruling, becoming less opposed to phone companies setting their own rates ($b = .26$; $t = 2.38$).[16] This is a sizeable effect, moving citizens one-quarter of a point on a 5-point scale.

Finally, for the phone rate issue, partisanship does not influence agreement with the policy pronouncement. Furthermore, a significant interaction between policy attribution condition and party identification does not emerge. As noted above, this is not surprising given the nature of this topic. Where affirmative action stirs partisan and ideological humors, deregulation of telephone rates is not an issue likely to provoke strong partisan responses among citizens.

Behavioral intentions. To explain the propensity to protest against the proaffirmative action ruling, our model included all of the main effects discussed above, as well as the significant interaction term between policy attribution condition and attitudes toward Blacks. To test our hypothesis concerning the moderating effects of political interest, we added a measure of interest in politics and a policy attribution condition by interest interaction to the model.

As displayed in Table 4, there is a main effect of interest on participation, such that participants who are more interested in politics are more likely to participate than those participants who are disinterested ($b = .18$; $t = 3.04$). The interaction of condition and interest in politics, however, is of greater note. Delving into this relationship shows that a

TABLE 3
Multiple Regression Explaining Agreement
with Phone Regulation Policy

Variable	Coefficient	SE
Constant	3.79***	.52
Policy attribution condition (1 = Supreme Court, 0 otherwise)	−1.38	.83
Party identification	.04	.08
Policy attribution condition × Party identification	.15	.12
Attitudes toward consumers	−.23***	.06
Policy attribution condition × Attitudes toward consumers	.26*	.11
Attitudes toward business	.17**	.06
Policy attribution condition × Attitudes toward business	−.18	.09
N	99	
Adjusted R^2	.12	

NOTE: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients and standard errors.
*$p \leq .05$, two-tailed. **$p \leq .01$, two-tailed. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

TABLE 4
Multiple Regression Explaining Behavioral
Intentions with Affirmative Action Policy

Variable	Coefficient	SE
Constant	1.52***	.38
Policy attribution condition (1 = Supreme Court, 0 otherwise)	.35	.47
Party identification	−.05	.04
Attitudes toward blacks	−.08	.04
Policy attribution condition × Attitudes toward blacks	.00	.06
Attitudes toward whites	.05	.04
Interest	.18**	.06
Policy attribution condition × Interest	−.17*	.09
N	72	
Adjusted R^2	.10	

NOTE: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients and standard errors.
*$p \leq .05$, two-tailed. **$p \leq .01$, two-tailed. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

Supreme Court ruling does not have much impact on those who are not particularly interested in politics. In contrast, interested participants were significantly *less likely* to say they would protest the affirmative action policy *when the Supreme Court was its source* ($b = -.17$; $t = -1.98$). To put it in concrete terms, when the Supreme Court speaks, it discourages those most likely to protest from protesting.

A similar pattern of results emerges for the phone regulation condition (see Table 5). Disinterested participants are unwilling to participate regardless of the condition. Interested participants, on the other hand, are *less likely* to take actions *when the policy decision is attributed to the Court* ($b = -.20$; $t = -2.21$). Here again we see the Supreme Court, because of its higher levels of abstract mass approval vis-à-vis the bureaucracy, dampens the propensity to protest among those who are most likely to do so.

CONCLUSIONS

Does the Supreme Court confer legitimacy on a policy? The results presented here indicate that in different situational contexts it most certainly does. Its pronouncements can validate policies and, perhaps more importantly in a democracy of more than 300 million citizens, discourage political protest among the portion of the public most apt to take actions against the policy.

In relative terms, the Supreme Court is a strong and credible persuasive source. It enjoys stable and high levels of public support, and it appears to be able to tap a large reservoir of "political capital" that can be replenished (Mondak, 1992; Mondak & Smithey, 1997). But even this relatively unique institution's influence on the American public is not unalloyed. Like so much else in the realm of American public opinion, it is moderated by attitudes toward social groups. They are the filters that structure and condition the Court's capacity to throw the cloak of legitimacy on a policy. Future studies should further delineate their effects.

Aside from forces intrinsic to the individuals "receiving" the Court's message, questions concerning the nature of the Court's message itself deserve some attention. For instance, is the legitimacy-conferring authority this and other studies have found enjoyed only by the U.S. Supreme Court, or is it an attribute generally held by the judiciary? (See Gibson, 1989, for a first step in addressing this question.) For instance, state supreme courts are also significant actors in the policy process. They construe their state constitutions and speak to the constitutionality of a variety of state governmental actions. Can their rulings confer legitimacy on unpopular state policies? Furthermore, at

TABLE 5
Multiple Regression Explaining Behavioral
Intentions With Phone Regulation Policy

Variable	Coefficient	SE
Constant	1.20**	.39
Policy attribution condition (1 = Supreme Court, 0 otherwise)	−.44	.60
Attitudes toward consumers	.00	.04
Policy attribution condition × Attitudes toward consumers	.14	.08
Attitudes toward business	−.03	.03
Interest	.18**	.06
Policy attribution condition × Interest	−.20*	.09
N	42	
Adjusted R^2	.21	

NOTE: Table entries are unstandardized regression coefficients and standard errors.
*$p \leq .05$, two-tailed. **$p \leq .01$, two-tailed. ***$p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

the state level there is notable variation in the institutional structure of the high courts, and perhaps this affects their legitimacy-conferring authority. For instance, are those state courts that are chosen through partisan elections less credible and persuasive among their state's population than courts chosen through some form of merit system?

Turning back to the U.S. Supreme Court, can it structure its decisions in ways that make them more or less capable of conferring legitimacy? For instance, are unanimous decisions more influential than divided ones? In perhaps the most momentous decision of the past half-century, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Chief Justice Warren certainly believed so (see Ulmer, 1971), but was his belief well founded? Mondak (1994) provides evidence indicating that the strength of the Court's majority has, at best, minimal effects on the mass public's attitudes. Yet, perhaps the Court structures its decisions for different publics. Are political and legal elites influenced by the structure of the Court's decisions? Even among the mass public, perhaps there is variation in the effect of the content of the decision. For example, are basic facets of individuals—orientations toward liberty or social order, say—associated with the potential effect of a decision's structure on policy legitimation?

Finally, our experimental analysis, like all experimental analyses in this area, really speaks only to what the Court *could* do, should the public become aware of its decision.[17] And it is important here to reit-

erate that for the most part, the public is unaware of the Court's business. All the same, we should not take this to mean that the Court's legitimacy-conferring capacity operates only in the thin air of abstraction. First, as Hoekstra and Segal (1996) point out, the Court does influence public opinion at the local level where its decisions are especially salient, noticeable, and immediate. Thus, the Court's presence as a credible and persuasive source of policy certainly resonates with those citizens most directly affected by many of its policy pronouncements. Second, Franklin and Kosaki (1995) note that the public is most aware of the Court's particularly controversial decisions. Seemingly, these would be the policies most in need of the Court's ability to instill them with legitimacy. And finally, although the Court's capacity to confer legitimacy on a policy is contingent on the public's awareness of the Court's position on that policy, it does not take much to increase the scope of that awareness. As Franklin and Kosaki (1995) noted, "A modest amount of [media] coverage can enlighten a substantial fraction of the public" (p. 370).

APPENDIX A

SUPREME COURT RULES FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Washington, D.C.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of affirmative action earlier this week in a case involving a 15-year-old White female student. Sarah Wessman claimed she was illegally denied admission to Boston Latin, a merit-based public high school, in favor of less qualified minority students.

Boston Latin is one of four public schools in Boston that admits the first 50% of its students solely on exam scores and grades, while the remaining 50% are weighted by race. For example, if 15% of the remaining applicants are Black, 15% of those admitted must be Black. The Supreme Court supported this policy in their ruling.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor spoke for the Court in the majority opinion, "School admission committees like that at Boston Latin have a compelling interest in promoting diversity within public merit-based educational programs."

Kweisi Mfume, the President of the NAACP, praised the ruling as a victory. Mfume said, "The ruling allows minorities a better chance at admittance to esteemed schools throughout the United States."

The Supreme Court decision will force Wessman and other students like her to attend other public schools.

The case was *Wessman, et al. v. Boston Municipal Board of Education, No. 99-1723.*

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RULES
FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Washington, D.C.

The Department of Education approved a new rule favoring affirmative action earlier this week. The ruling affects a case involving a 15-year-old White female student. Sarah Wessman claimed she was illegally denied admission to Boston Latin, a merit-based public high school, in favor of less qualified minority students.

Boston Latin is one of four public schools in Boston that admits the first 50% of its students solely on exam scores and grades, while the remaining 50% are weighted by race. For example, if 15% of the remaining applicants are Black, 15% of those admitted must be Black. The Department of Education's ruling supported this policy.

Education Secretary Richard Riley said that "School admission committees like that at Boston Latin have a compelling interest in promoting diversity within public merit-based educational programs."

Kweisi Mfume, the President of the NAACP, praised the Department of Education's new rule as a victory. Mfume said, "The ruling allows minorities a better chance at admittance to esteemed schools throughout the United States."

The Education Department's rule will force Wessman and other students like her to attend other public schools.

SUPREME COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF BABY BELLS

Washington, D.C.

Ruling in favor of the Baby Bells, the Supreme Court today protected the right of local telephone service carriers to set their own rates. The case involved a challenge of a provision of the 1996 Telecommunications Act that allowed the market to dictate the price of local telephone service in rural areas.

Writing for the majority, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor stated, "One of the basic foundations of our economic system is the free market and the power of its 'invisible hand' over prices."

Michael Joseph Zpevak, an in-house lawyer with GTE Services Corp., praised the FCC's decision. He noted that the rule was largely in line with the emphasis on the free market system Congress had in passing the legislation. "Prior to this ruling," stated

Zpevak, "local phone companies were forced by federal regulation to lose money on rural telephone service."

The 1996 Act removed regulations of the local phone companies, which had forced the rates charged rural customers well below the cost incurred by the Baby Bells. But critics of the ruling claim that the lack of regulation will lead to higher rates than rural telephone customers can afford. "Today's decision ignores the reality of the situation," said Angela Julia Campbell, spokesperson for Rural Customers for Affordable Phone Service, the group that brought the suit. "Local phone service is such a basic necessity," Campbell says. "To call the fire department, to call schools, to have a connection with the world you need a phone. This ruling means that this is no longer guaranteed for citizens."

The case was *Rural Customers et al. v. GTE Services Corp. et al.*, No. 99-564.

FCC RULES IN FAVOR OF BABY BELLS

Washington, D.C.

Announcing a new rule in favor of the Baby Bells, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today protected the right of local telephone service carriers to set their own rates. The ruling is in response to a challenge of a provision of the 1996 Telecommunications Act that allowed the market to dictate the price of local telephone service in rural areas.

FCC Chairman William Kennard stated, "One of the basic foundations of our economic system is the free market and the power of its 'invisible hand' over prices."

Michael Joseph Zpevak, an in-house lawyer with GTE Services Corp., praised the FCC's decision. He noted that the rule was largely in line with the emphasis on the free market system Congress had in passing the legislation. "Prior to this ruling," stated Zpevak, "local phone companies were forced by federal regulation to lose money on rural telephone service."

The 1996 Act removed regulations of the local phone companies, which had forced the rates charged rural customers well below the cost incurred by the Baby Bells. But critics of the ruling claim that the lack of regulation will lead to higher rates than rural telephone customers can afford. "Today's decision ignores the reality of the situation," said Angela Julia Campbell, spokesperson for Rural Customers for Affordable Phone Service, the group that initiated the challenge. "Local phone service is such a basic necessity," Campbell says. "To call the fire department, to call schools, to have a connection with the world you need a phone. This new rule means that this is no longer guaranteed for citizens."

APPENDIX B

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

POLICY LEGITIMATION

Affirmative Action

Do you agree or disagree with the Education Department's new rule/Supreme Court's ruling in favor of affirmative action?

1 Strongly Disagree
2 Disagree
3 Uncertain
4 Agree
5 Strongly Agree

Phone Regulation

Do you agree or disagree with the FCC's new rule/Supreme Court's ruling allowing local phone companies to set their own rural rates?

1 Strongly Disagree
2 Disagree
3 Uncertain
4 Agree
5 Strongly Agree

BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

(This variable was created by taking a mean of the five items below.)

Affirmative Action

If you disagree with the Department of Education's new rule/Supreme Court's ruling in favor of affirmative action, would you be willing to engage in the following activities to protest the ruling?

Phone Regulation

If you disagree with the FCC's new rule/Supreme Court's ruling allowing local phone companies to set their own rural rates, would you be willing to engage in the following activities to protest the ruling?

Write a letter to the newspaper

    1 Not Willing At All
    2 Somewhat Willing
    3 Very Willing

Write a letter to your Member of Congress

    1 Not Willing At All
    2 Somewhat Willing
    3 Very Willing

Participate in a demonstration on campus

    1 Not Willing At All
    2 Somewhat Willing
    3 Very Willing

Participate in a demonstration in front of the Department of Education/FCC or Supreme Court

    1 Not Willing At All
    2 Somewhat Willing
    3 Very Willing

Contribute money to an interest group that opposes affirmative action/local phone companies setting their own rates

    1 Not Willing At All
    2 Somewhat Willing
    3 Very Willing

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

POLICY ATTRIBUTION CONDITION

    0 Department of Education/FCC
    1 Supreme Court

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

    1 Strong Democrat
    2
    3
    4 Independent
    5
    6
    7 Strong Republican

ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACKS, ATTITUDES TOWARD WHITES, ATTITUDES TOWARD CONSUMERS, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD BUSINESS

    0 Cold
    1
    2
    3
    4
    5 Neutral
    6
    7
    8
    9
    10 Warm

INTEREST

(This variable was originally measured on a 7-point scale, from 1 (*not interested*) to 7 (*very interested*). Only 21% of the participants responded as a 1, 2, or 3, so those participants were collapsed into one category.)

1 Not Interested
2
3
4
5 Very Interested

INTERACTION TERMS

The interaction terms were created by multiplying the variables as indicated in the name of each interaction term. For example, the Policy Attribution Condition $\times$ Party Identification variable was computed by multiplying Policy Attribution Condition by Party Identification.

NOTES

1. Experiments provide the analyst with a tremendous amount of "internal validity" (i.e., the degree to which one can draw valid conclusions about causality) because the researcher has control over the conditions of the study and the independent variables. People conduct experiments. Occasionally, nature and chance interact to allow the researcher to approximate experimental conditions. These designs are referred to as "quasi-experiments." In this section, we discuss both types of designs.

2. Baas and Thomas (1984) made use of a split-ballot experimental procedure. Here, one half of the participants read a policy statement attributed to the Court, while the remaining participants read the same policy statement without any source attribution. Baas and Thomas then compared the relative acceptance of a policy attributed to the Court versus the same policy attributed to no source.

3. External validity is the extent to which the results are relevant to participants and settings beyond the immediate study. Mondak (1992, 1994) was also particularly conscious of this.

4. Mondak (1990, 1992, 1994) also examines the effect of different persuasive contexts.

5. We are not arguing that a behavioral intention automatically leads to action. "Turning intentions into behaviors is not necessarily easy and may require considerable cognitive work as various routes to engaging in the behavior are evaluated" (Eagly & Chaiken 1993, 211). But as Gibson (1989) correctly pointed out, there are good reasons to examine what he refers to as "hypothetical behavior." First, "hypothetical behavior may be thought of as a behavioral propensity. . . . The propensity represents the central tendency (or most likely response, on average) of a larger distribution of actual behaviors" (p. 476). Second, it is impossible, given the design of our analysis, to study the actual behavioral responses to the various policy pronouncements and their sources. Finally, although actual behavior and behavioral intentions are not the same, "it is useful to take a step beyond the simple focus on attitudes to determine if respondents themselves foresee behavior consequences of their beliefs" (p. 476).

6. Our choice of the bureaucracy is a calculated one: It ensures the participants will attribute the policy to a specific source, thereby avoiding confusion when interpreting our results. This

allows us to vary the source of the policy while holding the nature of the message constant and thus measure the Court's influence on levels of support and behavioral intentions.

7. An anonymous reviewer suggested that a within-subjects design would be more appropriate because individual-level attitude change could be tracked. Conducting a pretest, however, raises external validity questions because the observed effects could result from an *interaction* between the pretest and the experimental treatment, that is, "pretest sensitization" (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1990, p. 140). In their defense of between-subjects designs, Campbell and Stanley (1963) state that a pretest "is not actually essential to true experimental designs" (p. 25).

8. The overrepresentation of men is not surprising given the gender breakdown at Purdue University: 58% male and 42% female.

9. There is some slippage in this comparison because we measured political interest on a 7-point scale, while the National Election Study used a 4-point scale.

10. As the first woman to take a seat on the High Court, O'Connor is more likely recognizable than her brethren. Also, despite being a Reagan appointee, O'Connor is less identified with the arch-conservative majority on the present Court.

11. Many thanks to Professor Rorie Spill for her help in this regard.

12. By examining the behavioral intentions of only those participants who disagreed with the policy, we are able to assess whether the Court, as the source of the policy, makes people who should be more apt to protest less likely to do so than if the policy is articulated by some other political actor. Because this analysis focuses only on those participants who disagreed with the policy pronouncement, the sample size decreases from 107 to 72 in the affirmative action condition and from 99 to 42 in the phone regulation condition.

13. See Cook and Barrett (1992) for an example of research using similar items to measure behavioral support for social welfare policies.

14. An anonymous reviewer cautioned that people protesting for purely symbolic reasons might be *more likely* to challenge the legitimate authority—the Supreme Court.

15. For the affirmative action issue, the mean support for the Court was 3.95 in the Department of Education condition and 4.15 in the Supreme Court condition. For the phone regulation policy, the mean support was 4.11 in the FCC condition and 4.01 in the Supreme Court condition. These differences are not statistically or substantively significant.

16. Very few people were cold toward consumers.

17. We are thankful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this point home to us.

REFERENCES

Adamany, D. W., & Grossman, J. B. (1983). Support for the Supreme Court as a National Policymaker. *Law and Policy Quarterly*, *5*, 405-437.

Aronson, E., Ellsworth, P. C., Carlsmith, J. M., & Gonzales, M. H. (1990). *Methods of research in social psychology* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Baas, L. R., & Thomas, D. (1984). The Supreme Court and policy legitimation: Experimental tests. *American Politics Quarterly*, *12*, 335-360.

Caldeira, G. A. (1986). Neither the Purse Nor the Sword: Dynamics of Public Confidence in the Supreme Court. *American Political Science Review*, *80*, 1209-1226.

Caldeira, G. A. (1991). Courts and public opinion. In J. B. Gates & C. A. Johnson (Eds.), *American courts: A critical assessment* (pp. 303-334). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Books.

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E. & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American voter.* New York: John Wiley.

Campbell, Donald T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Conover, P. J., & Feldman, S. (1981). The origins and meaning of liberal/conservative self-identifications. *American Journal of Political Science*, *25*, 617-645.

Converse, P. E. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In D. E. Apter (Ed.), *Ideology and discontent* (pp. 206-261). New York: Free Press.

Cook, F. L., & Barrett, E. J. (1992). *Support for the American Welfare State.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Dolbeare, K. M., & Hammond, P. E. (1970). Inertia in midway: Supreme Court decisions and local response. *Journal of Legal Education*, *23*, 106-122.

Eagly, A., & Chaiken, S. (1993). *The psychology of attitudes.* Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Franklin, C. H., & Kosaki, L.C. (1989). Republican school master: The U.S. Supreme Court, public opinion, and abortion. *American Political Science Review*, *83*, 751-771.

Franklin, C. H., & Kosaki, L. C. (1995). Media, knowledge, and public evaluations of the Supreme Court. In L. Epstein (Ed.), *Contemplating courts* (pp. 352-375). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Books.

Gibson, J. L. 1989. Understandings of justice: Institutional legitimacy, procedural justice, and political tolerance. *Law and Society Review*, *23*, 469-496.

Hoekstra, V. J. (1995). The Supreme Court and opinion change: An experimental study of the court's ability to change opinion. *American Politics Quarterly*, *23*, 109-129.

Hoekstra, V. J., & Segal, J. A. (1996). The shepherding of local opinion: The Supreme Court and *Lamb's Chapel*. *Journal of Politics*, *58*, 1079-1102.

Jaros, D., & Roper, R. (1980). The U.S. Supreme Court: Myth, diffuse support, specific support, and legitimacy. *American Politics Quarterly*, *8*, 85-105.

Johnson, T. R., & Martin, A. D. (1998). The public's conditional response to Supreme Court decisions. *American Political Science Review*, *92*, 299-309.

Kinder, D. R., & Sanders, L. M. (1996). *Divided by color.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marshall, T. (1989). *Public opinion and the Supreme Court.* New York: Longman.

Mondak, J. J. (1990). Perceived legitimacy of Supreme Court decisions: Three functions of source credibility. *Political Behavior*, *12*, 363-384.

Mondak, J. J. (1992). Institutional legitimacy, policy legitimacy, and the Supreme Court. *American Politics Quarterly*, *20*, 457-477.

Mondak, J. J. (1994). Policy legitimacy and the Supreme Court: The sources and contexts of legitimation. *Political Research Quarterly*, *47*, 675-692.

Mondak, J. J., & Smithey, S. I. (1997). The dynamics of public support for the Supreme Court. *Journal of Politics*, *59*, 1114-1142.

Murphy, W. F., & Tanenhaus, J. (1968). Public opinion and the United States Supreme Court: A preliminary mapping for some prerequisites for court legitimation of regime changes. *Law and Society Review*, *2*, 357-382.

Nelson, T. E., & Kinder, D. R. (1996). Issue frames and group-centrism in American public opinion. *Journal of Politics*, *58*, 1055-1078.

Rodgers, H., & Bullock, C., III. (1972). *Law and social change: Civil rights laws and their consequences.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. (1999). Available online: http://www.census/gov/population/estimates/state

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. (1993). *Statistical abstract of the United States, 1993: The national data book*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Ulmer, S. S. (1971). Earl Warren and the *Brown* decision. *Journal of Politics*, *33*, 689-702.

Weisberg, H. F., Krosnick, J. A., & Bowen, B. D. (1989). *An introduction to survey research and data analysis* (2nd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Zanna, M. P., & Rempel, J. K. (1988). Attitudes: A new look at an old concept. In D. Bar-Tal & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *The social psychology of knowledge* (pp. 315-334). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rosalee A. Clawson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

Elizabeth R. Kegler is a graduate student at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at University of Texas, Austin.

Eric N. Waltenburg is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN.

GAPS IN AMERICANS' KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT THE BOSNIAN CIVIL WAR

STACI L. RHINE
Wittenberg University
STEPHEN EARL BENNETT
University of Cincinnati
RICHARD S. FLICKINGER
Wittenberg University

This study applies the knowledge gap theory to the American public's knowledge of the Bosnian civil war between September 1992—when the conflict was in its early days—through June 1995. Our goal was to determine if a knowledge gap existed in the case of the Bosnian civil war, and if so, whether it increased or decreased over time. *Times Mirror* Center polls clearly establish that the better educated knew more about Bosnia from September 1992 through June 1995. But people from all educational levels showed dramatic improvements in knowledge. The so-called knowledge gap declined rather than increased. Our surprising results may be due to the changing context and duration of the conflict. Attention to the Bosnia crisis increased over these 3 years, with people from all backgrounds more motivated to pay attention. In addition, the nightly network news provided frequent coverage of Bosnia. Thus, all segments of the American public learned more about the crisis.

Two findings recur in research on political information: (1) individuals with higher socioeconomic status attributes—particularly the well educated—are more informed about public affairs than those on the socioeconomic status (SES) ladder's lower rungs (Hyman, Wright, & Reed, 1975; McLeod & Perse, 1994; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996); and (2) as information about a topic begins flowing through mass media channels, the already knowledgeable will acquire more information than the initially uninformed (Horstmann, 1991; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Kleinnijenhuis, 1991; Star & Hughes, 1950; Wade & Schramm, 1969). Hence, the knowledge gap between the best and least informed segments of society usually widens as the media dis-

seminate new information about a topic (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970, 1980).[1] If "knowledge is power" (Brown, 1989) and the well informed acquire the most knowledge when new information enters a social system (Converse, 1975), knowledge gaps have important normative implications for political equality in democracies (Dervin, 1980; Murdock & Golding, 1989).

This is a study of gaps in the American public's knowledge of a key fact about the Bosnian civil war between September 1992—when the conflict was in its early days—through June 1995, nearly 4 years after the former Yugoslavian republics' troubles began.[2] We look at gaps in Americans' awareness that ethnic Serbs had taken over much of Bosnia. We assess knowledge gaps[3] in the context of SES, particularly education, how much the media had covered the civil war, and the amount of attention Americans pay to media coverage of the war.

Although a large corpus on knowledge gaps has been produced over the past quarter-century (for recent reviews see Gaziano, 1997; Gaziano & Gaziano, 1996; Viswanath & Finnegan, 1996), we add to it in several ways. First, although several older studies presented evidence of knowledge gaps on international topics (see e.g., Gamson & Modigliani, 1966; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Robinson, 1967; Starr & Hughes, 1950; Wade & Schramm, 1969), few have explored the phenomenon within the context of the knowledge gap hypothesis (Gandy & El Waylly, 1985). Second and more important, none of the knowledge gap studies has explored the same topic over a period as long as 3 years.

Several features of the Bosnian civil war make it an ideal subject for a study of knowledge gaps. First, Bosnia's troubles have taken place in the aftermath of the cold war's end, and the pattern of conflict there and the outside world's reaction to it may typify international crises in the "new world order" (see Ullman, 1996). Second, because Bosnia is a far-off land from which relatively few Americans hail, the crisis there would seem likely to produce knowledge gaps (Gaziano & Gaziano, 1996). Third, unlike many international imbroglios, which last only a short time, the struggles in Bosnia seemed to go on forever; the longer a crisis persists and the more controversial it becomes, the less likely are knowledge gaps to expand (Gaziano, 1997; Gaziano & Gaziano, 1996). Fourth, the American media have devoted substantial coverage to Bosnia for most of the period since the conflicts broke out.

Most of the data come from polls conducted on behalf of the *Times Mirror* Center for The People and The Press between July 1991 and January 1996.[4] We also use data on the amount of media coverage of events in Bosnia, which were part of a study of Americans' attention to and awareness of the Bosnian civil war (S. E. Bennett, Flickinger, & Rhine, 1997). These data enable us to compare attention and knowledge with information about media coverage of Bosnia.

Before exploring knowledge gaps on Bosnia, let us first consider the knowledge gap hypothesis as it has evolved since 1970.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE "KNOWLEDGE GAP" HYPOTHESIS

Although evidence of SES-based differences in public affairs knowledge had existed for some time, Tichenor et al. (1970) first articulated the "knowledge gap" hypothesis. The notion's essence is

> As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease (pp. 159-160).

Even though they wrote about socioeconomic status, Tichenor and his associates used education to operationalize the concept. They focused mainly on four factors: the amount of media coverage of an issue/ event, the passage of time, level of formal schooling, and knowledge of the event/issue.

Although Tichenor and his colleagues focused on community-level issues, their ideas have stimulated a good deal of empirical research, much of it centered on individual-level characteristics. Gaziano's review essays (1983, 1997; Gaziano & Gaziano, 1996; see also Viswanath & Finnegan, 1996) identify nearly 100 studies that either directly test knowledge gaps or contain data relevant to the subject. The original research team has revisited the topic several times, pinpointing the conditions under which knowledge gaps do or do not exist and increase or decrease over time (Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor,

1987; Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1975; Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1983; Tichenor et al., 1980; Tichenor, Olien, & Donohue, 1987; Tichenor, Rodenkirchen, Olien, & Donohue, 1973).

Ettema and Kline (1977) challenged Tichenor and his associates' contention that societal factors cause knowledge gaps, calling attention instead to the importance of motivation (see also Chew & Palmer, 1994; Genova & Greenberg, 1979; Lovrich & Pierce, 1984; Miyo 1983; Viswanath, Kahn, Finnegan, Hertog, & Potter, 1993). Ettema and Kline (1977) reformulated the knowledge gap hypothesis as follows:

> as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population motivated to acquire that information and/or for which that information is functional tend to acquire the information at a faster rate than those not motivated or for which it is not functional, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease. (p. 188)

An important question left unexplored by most analyses of knowledge gaps is the impact of variation in the amount of mass media coverage of an issue/event. When Miyo (1983) first explored the issue, the evidence was equivocal. Gaziano (1997, p. 242) argues that "[t]he best test of the knowledge gap hypothesis occurs when *media publicity of issues varies . . . .*" However, because the topic has been explored only sporadically, the question remains largely unresolved (see Gaziano 1997, p. 243).

Eveland and Scheufele (2000) show that knowledge gaps between the well and poorly educated vary according to the amount and type of mass medium relied on for public affairs information. Data from the 1996 National Election Study suggest that knowledge gaps between education groups were greater for light rather than heavy television news viewers. A similar, albeit weaker, pattern emerged for those who relied on newspapers, perhaps because of "ceiling effects."

Several studies have identified differences in the type of issue/event that bear on knowledge gaps. Knowledge gaps are least likely when a topic universally concerns a populace, such as a presidential assassination (Spitzer & Denzin, 1965). Local topics, particularly when they are controversial, are less likely to produce knowledge gaps than

national ones (Donohue et al., 1975; Tichenor et al., 1980). Election campaigns sometimes reduce knowledge gaps, but not always (Lemert, 1993; Miyo, 1983; Moore, 1987). Finally, international topics, because they are often geographically and psychologically remote, invariably produce knowledge gaps (J. B. Adams, Mullen, & Wilson, 1969; Gamson & Modigliani, 1966; Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947; Robinson, 1967, 1972; Star & Hughes, 1950; Wade & Schramm, 1969).

A SYNOPSIS OF AMERICANS'
KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Scholars generally agree that Americans know little about foreign affairs (Almond, 1960; S. E. Bennett, Flickinger, Baker, Rhine, & Bennett, 1996; Kriesberg, 1949; Smith, 1970; Wittkopf, 1990; however, see also Graham, 1988, 1994). Most students of public opinion about foreign policy agree that information levels degrade from upper to lower SES strata. Ignorance allegedly stems from international politics' ambiguity, complexity and remoteness to most people's daily lives, the belief that elites—not citizens—make foreign policy, and Americans' habitual indifference to public affairs. The ways in which the mass media—particularly television—cover world affairs and Americans' patterns of exposure to the media also result in ignorance of international politics (W. C. Adams, 1982; W. L. Bennett, 1994; Sahin, Davis, & Robinson, 1982).

Knowledge of foreign affairs has practical consequences. Scholars have found that when elites agree on a course of action, the more knowledgeable segments of the populace are more inclined to concur than the less informed (Gamson & Modigliani, 1966; Rogers, Stuhler, & Koenig, 1967). John Zaller (1992) calls this the "mainstream" phenomenon. However, he argues that when elites disagree on a course of action, it is the better informed among the mass public who are better able to sort out which side "they are on." Zaller refers to this as the "polarization" effect.

The Bosnian civil war presents a good example of what Americans know about a crisis in a far-off land. *Times Mirror* Center data show that although knowledge about the civil war rose over time, large

slices of the public remained uninformed even after U.S. troops were sent there following the Dayton (OH) peace accords in late 1995. In September 1992, for example, 24% of the public could name the ethnic group that had conquered most of Bosnia and surrounded Sarajevo. Awareness that ethnic Serbs had overrun most of Bosnia would inch upward in the next 12 months, reaching 29% in September 1993. As late as January 1994, only 32% of adult Americans knew the correct answer. Between early 1994 and mid-1995, knowledge climbed to 51%. At that however, after nearly 4 years of conflict in Bosnia and sizable amounts of media coverage of the civil war, almost half the American public could not identify the ethnic group that had taken over most of Bosnia.

Americans were also uninformed about other facets of the Bosnian civil war. The *Times Mirror* Center plumbed the public's knowledge of why war had broken out in Bosnia twice in 1993, in January and September. On the first occasion, 35% of the public knew that the fighting there stemmed from Serbians' determination to drive other ethnic groups out of Serbian-held territory. The figure was 40% in September. Moreover, only two fifths of adult Americans could correctly state what *ethnic cleansing* meant when the Center asked about it in January 1993. Even after U.S. troops had been introduced into Bosnia in January 1996, only one fifth of the public knew that they comprised less than one half the NATO forces sent to Bosnia under the Dayton accords.

In short, surveys show that most Americans were uninformed about key aspects of the Bosnian conflict from the early days of that land's troubles through several years of armed conflict.[5] In this regard, at least, the Bosnian civil war seems typical of Americans' general lack of knowledge about foreign affairs. Does it also present another instance of knowledge gaps? Before considering that topic, we need a brief review of how the media covered the crisis in Bosnia.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF BOSNIA

Despite declining coverage of foreign affairs in U.S. media (Moisy, 1996; Utley, 1997), Bosnia received considerable attention on the network newscasts and in the printed press. In 1991 and early 1992, net-

work coverage of Bosnia was sporadic. But from May 1992 to January 1996, Bosnia was a regular feature on the nightly news. ABC, CBS, and NBC each carried an average of about 15 stories per month during this period (calculated from data in the Vanderbilt Television News Archive). *The New York Times* provided even more coverage.[6] From January 1992 to January 1996, an average of 84 stories per month appeared about Bosnia (calculated from *The New York Times Index*). Therefore, for people who were interested in Bosnia, there were many opportunities to gather information.

However, the level of coverage does fluctuate over time based on events in Bosnia and U.S. reactions and proposals. Television coverage peaks occurred in August 1992, May 1993, August 1993, February 1994, and December 1995. In each of these months, there was scarcely a network newscast without at least one story covering Bosnia. Not surprisingly, the possibility of U.S. involvement sparked considerable coverage at different points over the 4 years. When the U.S. was considering its role from a humanitarian perspective, coverage shot up. Debates about the use of NATO and perhaps U.S. forces also stimulated stories. The rescue of a downed U.S. pilot generated a lot of coverage. Finally, the debate about committing U.S. troops as peacekeepers made Bosnia a lead story.

Thus Bosnia had many of the elements that might have stimulated public interest in the U.S. The media carried numerous stories about the war's effect on the Bosnian population, including potential war crimes. American elites debated the role that the U.S. should assume during and after the Bosnian civil war. U.S. troops were involved peripherally for most of the conflict and then eventually deployed to Bosnia. Finally, the duration of coverage should provide opportunities for the American public to learn some basic information about the war. However, Bosnia had been difficult for the media to interpret and portray. Because it was a civil war, it has been more difficult to assign blame, which might have provided a point of reference. Therefore, we do not expect perfect diffusion of information to the entire U.S. population. Nonetheless, by 1995 the network news had provided considerable coverage of Bosnia.

AN ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE GAPS ON BOSNIA

Drawing on the *Times Mirror* polls, we use logistic regression to assess the effects of motivation, education, family income, age, race, gender, region, media coverage, and time on knowledge. The knowledge question remained unchanged between September 1992 and June 1995: "Do you happen to know the name of the ethnic group that has conquered much of Bosnia and surrounded the city of Sarajevo?" Does the fact that we have only one item—a dichotomy, at that—invalidate the study? We think not, for three reasons. First, the ethnic Serbs' attempt to seize much of Bosnia was the heart of the war in that unhappy land (Ullman, 1996). Second and equally important, when the *Times Mirror* asked additional knowledge questions about Bosnia, the one probing awareness of ethnic Serbians' takeover of most of Bosnia resonated well with them. In January 1993, for example, the *Times Mirror* asked the ethnic group takeover item and two others: one probing knowledge of why fighting was occurring in Bosnia and another asking what "ethnic cleansing" meant in the Bosnian context. The item calling for knowledge that ethnic Serbians had conquered most of Bosnia had an average correlation of $r = .39$ with the other two items. Had the three been included in a scale, it would have had a Kuder-Richardson KR-20 coefficient of .62.[7] In short, the knowledge question employed here provides good purchase on what Americans knew about the conflict in Bosnia. The third reason for using the ethnic group knowledge question is because, as scholars such as Converse (1975) and Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) show, specific information questions such as the one used here resonate with other indicators of political knowledge.

Because the dependent variable—knowledge that ethnic Serbs had conquered most of Bosnia—is dichotomous, we employ logistic regression (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1989; Menard, 1995) to estimate a multivariate model of the factors affecting knowledge about the civil war. We pooled the five *Times Mirror* polls that included identical questions probing the knowledge question and how much attention respondents claimed to have paid to recent media coverage of the civil war in Bosnia (9/92, 1/93, 9/93, 1/94, and 6/95). Each poll contained the respondent's educational attainment, self-report of family income,

age, gender, race, and region, coded 1 for non-South and 0 for south. We add attention paid to media coverage of the civil war, which is a useful indicator of motivation to learn about the crisis. We include the number of network stories on the topic for the 3 months prior to the survey. We expect that the availability of information will affect knowledge levels. We compute a time measure that captures the number of months that have passed since the beginning of the crisis. We use March 1992, 6 months before our first poll, as the starting point because fighting began that spring. Finally, we create an interaction variable for education and time. This multiplicative term should reflect whether education's effect increased over time in explaining knowledge. The logistic regression equation was estimated in which the knowledge of which ethnic group had conquered most of Bosnia was regressed on these variables. The results are depicted in Table 1.

Not surprisingly, people who reported paying attention to the Bosnia crisis were much more likely to know which group had conquered Bosnia. People who were older, better educated, and had higher family incomes were more informed. Men were more informed, and Whites were more knowledgeable about the crisis. The regional variable never reached statistical significance. Given our understanding of political knowledge, these results are to be expected.

However, we need to focus on the gap in knowledge to test the theory. We do find that time matters. As time passes, more people are informed, even after controlling for many of the individual-level characteristics. Surprisingly, our media measure is not significantly related to knowledge. However, this variable measures short-term media effects by including only the previous 3 months. The time variable likely taps the cumulative effect of media coverage since the beginning of the crisis.

Most important for our research agenda, we are curious if the knowledge differences increase between people of different education levels. Looking at our interaction term, we find that the effect of education does not increase with time. In fact, the coefficient is negative. This means that the knowledge gap contracted rather than expanded over the course of 3 years. Thus, our findings contradict some of the tenets of the knowledge gap theory. It is true that people who are older, better educated, and have higher family incomes are more informed. But in contrast to our expectations, the advantages of education do not

TABLE 1
Predicting Which Ethnic Group Conquered Most of Bosnia

Attention to Bosnia crisis	.609**
Age	.007**
Education	.289**
Family income	.151**
Race (non-White/White)	.695**
Gender (female/male)	.789**
Region (South/non-South)	.076
Network coverage	.000
Education × Time	−.003*
Time in months	.078**
Constant	−9.257**
Number	7,021
−2 log-likelihood	7,215.231
Goodness of fit	6,789.45
Cox & Snell R^2	.212
Nagelkerke R^2	.295
Overall correct classification (%)	73.96

SOURCE: *Times Mirror* polls from September 1992, January 1993, September 1993, January 1994, and June 1995.
NOTE: Unstandardized coefficients for logistic regression. Dependent variable is knowledge of which group conquered most of Bosnia.
*$p \le .05$, two-tailed. **$p \le .01$, two-tailed.

produce greater gulfs of knowledge over time. Instead, information spread to larger portions of the population with the passage of time and increased individual motivation. In dealing with a foreign policy topic, we do not find evidence of the knowledge gap theory.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Students of public opinion have long noted the tendency for the upper SES strata, and particularly the better educated, to know more about public affairs than those from the lower classes. As Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) note, members of the upper classes are more likely than those from the lower classes to have the intellectual skills, motivation, and opportunity to become knowledgeable about government and politics. Because old knowledge makes it easier to process new information, it makes sense that when the media convey information about a topic or event, those on the upper rungs of the SES

ladder acquire knowledge more efficiently than persons on the lower rungs. Hence, save for a few exceptions—such as a presidential assassination—differences between the social classes' knowledge grow when a new story moves through media channels.

Our goal was to determine if a knowledge gap existed in the case of the Bosnian civil war and if so, whether it increased or decreased over time. *Times Mirror* Center polls clearly established that those from the upper SES strata knew more about Bosnia from September 1992 through June 1995 than did persons from the lower classes. But people from all educational levels showed dramatic improvements in knowledge. The so-called knowledge gap declined rather than increased. Our surprising results may be due to the changing context. Attention to the Bosnia crisis increased over these 3 years, with people from all backgrounds more motivated to pay attention. Add to this the cumulative effect of the media coverage. The nightly network news provided frequent coverage of Bosnia. In some months the coverage dwarfed other stories; in other months, it was an occasional mention. Yet taken together the American public had numerous opportunities to learn about the region.

Similarly, the duration of the conflict combined with the media coverage may have produced our anomalous findings. We are fortunate that *Times Mirror* questioned the public on the same issue over several years. This may demonstrate that knowledge does spread through the population, but more slowly than could be detected by past research. Polling organizations often do not ask factual questions of their respondents and rarely ask the same factual questions over a long period. We may have been uniquely situated to test the knowledge gap theory.

Thus our findings may indicate that knowledge gaps do not have to increase, even when the topic deals with foreign affairs. Unfortunately, we do not have subsequent measures of this same question.[8] But our results raise intriguing questions about citizen participation in public policy.

As Barbara Bardes (1997) notes, the collapse of communism and the cold war's end has denuded many Americans of the psychic superstructure upon which they based opinions about international politics. Bereft of comfortable assumptions on which to structure foreign pol-

icy opinions, the public becomes even more dependent upon knowledge about specific instances of foreign affairs. But our findings suggest that despite this loss, all segments of the public can learn about foreign affairs. The crisis in Bosnia, devoid of cold war overtones, has become the more common foreign policy struggle for Washington. In this context, these results are heartening for those who believe that citizens can and should understand more complex entanglements.

NOTES

1. There are exceptions to the rule. Depending on the nature of the community and the type of information, knowledge gaps may either not exist or narrow over time (see Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor, 1987; Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1975; Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1983; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980; Tichenor, Olien, & Donohue, 1987; Tichenor, Rodenkirchen, Olien, & Donohue, 1973).

2. Richard Ullman (1996, pp. 1-2) notes that four wars raged in what once was Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995. The "civil war" between ethnic Serbians and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina began in the spring of 1992 and lasted until NATO and Russian troops entered the country following the Dayton (OH) peace accords in late 1995.

3. We follow Cecilie Gaziano (1997) in distinguishing between information ("data available to be learned") and knowledge ("information acquired and retained by people through a learning process") (p. 238).

4. All the polls are telephone interviews of residents of the 50 states, and are intended to represent voting-age Americans. The data were released directly to us by the *Times Mirror* Center, located in Washington, DC. On January 1, 1996, the Center was renamed the Pew Research Center for The People and The Press. We wish to thank Center Director Andrew Kohut, as well as Carol Bowman, Margaret Petrella, and Mark Cottrell, formerly associated with the Center, for their help. We are responsible for all analyses and interpretations.

5. We do not wish to enter the debate over whether such "surveillance-type" information items (the term is Delli Carpini & Keeter's, 1996) are sufficient indicators of people's knowledge and understanding of public affairs (cf. Graber, 1994; Page & Shapiro, 1992; Popkin, 1994 with Converse 1975, 1990, 2000; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Suffice it to say that the type of information item used here is typical of what has been studied by previous students of knowledge gaps. Moreover, Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) and others have shown that items like this correlate robustly with other types of knowledge measures.

6. Many media scholars use newspapers of record such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* as indicators of likely patterns of coverage in newspapers around the country.

7. Kuder-Richardson's KR-20 coefficient is equivalent to Cronbach's coefficient *alpha* when all items in a scale are dichotomies (Zeller & Carmines, 1980).

8. The Pew Center poll in March 1999 asked if people knew the province in Yugoslavia "where there is conflict between Serbians and ethnic Albanians." A total of 46% replied correctly "Kosovo." Both income and education resonated with knowledge.

REFERENCES

Adams, J. B., Mullen, J. J., & Wilson, H. M. (1969). Diffusion of a "minor" foreign affairs news event. *Journalism Quarterly*, *46*(4), 545-551.

Adams, W. C. (1982). Covering the world in ten minutes: Network news and international affairs. In W. C. Adams (Ed.), *Television coverage of international affairs* (pp. 3-14). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Almond, G. A. (1960). *The American people and foreign policy.* (Rev. ed.) New York: Praeger.

Bardes, B. (1997). Public opinion and foreign policy: How does the public think about America's role in the world? In B. Norrander, & C. Wilcox (Eds.), *Understanding public opinion* (pp. 150-169). Washington, DC: C.Q. Press.

Bennett, S. E., Flickinger, R. S., Baker, J. R., Rhine, S. L., & Bennett, L.L.M. (1996). Citizens' knowledge of foreign affairs. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, *1*(2), 10-29.

Bennett, S. E., Flickinger, R. S., & Rhine, S. L. (1997). American public opinion and the civil war in Bosnia: Attention, knowledge, and the media. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, *2*(4), 87-105.

Bennett, W. L. (1994). The news about foreign policy. In W. L. Bennett & D. L. Paletz (Eds.), *Taken by storm: The media, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy in the gulf war* (pp. 12-40). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brown, R. D. (1989). *Knowledge is power: The diffusion of information in early America, 1700-1865*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chew, F., & Palmer, S. (1994). Interest, the knowledge gap, and television programming. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *38*(3), 271-287.

Converse, P. E. (1975). Public opinion and voting behavior. In F. I. Greenstein & N. W. Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of political science* (Vol. 4, pp. 75-169). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Converse, P. E. (1990). Popular representation and the distribution of knowledge. In J. A. Ferejohn & J. H. Kuklinski (Eds.), *Information and democratic processes* (pp. 369-388). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Converse, P. E. (2000). Assessing the capacity of mass elections. In N. W. Polsby (Ed.), *Annual review of political science* (Vol. 3, pp. 331-353). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dervin, B. (1980). Communication gaps and inequalities: Moving toward a reconceptualization. In B. Dervin & M. J. Voigt (Eds.), *Progress in communication sciences*, 2 (pp. 73-112). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Donohue, G. A., Olien, C. N., & Tichenor, P. J. (1987). Media access and knowledge gaps. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *4*(1), 87-92.

Donohue, G. A., Tichenor, P. J., & Olien, C. N. (1975). Mass media and the knowledge gap: A hypothesis reconsidered. *Communication Research*, *2*(1), 3-23.

Ettema, J. S., & Kline, F. G. (1977). Deficits, differences, and ceilings: Contingent conditions for understanding the knowledge gap. *Communication Research*, *4*(2), 179-202.

Eveland, W. P., Jr., & Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Connecting news media use with gaps in knowledge and participation. *Political Communication*, *17*(3), 215-237.

Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1966). Knowledge and foreign policy positions: Some models for consideration. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *30*(2), 187-199.

Gandy, O. H., Jr., & El Waylly, M. (1985). The knowledge gap and foreign affairs: The Palestinian-Israeli conflict. *Journalism Quarterly*, *62*(4), 777-783.

Gaziano, C. (1983). The knowledge gap: An analytical review of media effects. *Communication Research*, *10*(4), 447-486.

Gaziano, C. (1997). Forecast 2000: Widening knowledge gaps. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *74*(2), 237-264.

Gaziano, C., & E. Gaziano. (1996). Theories and methods in knowledge gap research since 1970. In M. B. Salwen & D. W. Stacks (Eds.), *An integrated approach to communication theory and research* (pp. 123-138). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Genova, B.K.L., & Greenberg, B. S. (1979). Interest in news and the knowledge gap. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *43*(1), 79-91.

Graber, D. A. (1994). Why voters fail information tests: Can the hurdles be overcome? *Political Communication*, *11*(4), 331-346.

Graham, T. W. (1988). The pattern and importance of knowledge in the nuclear age. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 32(3), 319-334.

Graham, T. W. (1994). Public opinion and U.S. foreign policy decision making. In D. A. Deese (Ed.), *The new politics of American foreign policy* (pp. 190-216). New York: St. Martin's.

Horstmann, R. (1991). Knowledge gaps revisited: Secondary analyses from Germany. *European Journal of Communication*, *6*(1), 77-93.

Hosmer, D. W., & Lemeshow, S. (1989). *Applied logistic regression*. New York: Wiley.

Hyman, H. H., & Sheatsley, P. B. (1947). Some reasons why information campaigns fail. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *11*(4), 412-423.

Hyman, H. H., Wright, C. R., & Reed, J. S. (1975). *The enduring effects of education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kleinnijenhuis, J. (1991). Newspaper complexity and the knowledge gap. *European Journal of Communication*, *6*(4), 499-522.

Kriesberg, M. (1949). Dark areas of ignorance. In L. Markel (Ed.), *Public opinion and foreign policy* (pp. 49-64). New York: Harper.

Lemert, J. B. (1993). Do televised presidential debates help inform voters? *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *37*(1), 83-94.

Lovrich, N. P., Jr., & Pierce, J. C. (1984). "Knowledge gap" phenomena: Effect of situation-specific and transsituational factors. *Communication Research*, *11*(3), 415-434.

McLeod, D. M., & Perse, E. M. (1994). Direct and indirect effects of socioeconomic status on public affairs knowledge. *Journalism Quarterly*, *71*(3), 433-442.

Menard, S. (1995). *Applied logistic regression analysis*. Sage university paper series on quantitative applications in the social sciences, Series No. 07-106. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miyo, Y. (1983). The knowledge-gap hypothesis and media dependency: In R. N. Bostrom (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 7* (pp. 626-650). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Moisy, C. (1996). *The foreign news flow in the information age*. Discussion paper D-23. Cambridge, MA: The Joan Shorenstein Center, Harvard University.

Moore, D. W. (1987). Political campaigns and the knowledge-gap hypothesis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *51*(2), 186-200.

Murdock, G., & Golding, P. (1989). Information poverty and political inequality: Citizenship in the age of privatized communications. *Journal of Communication*, *39*(3), 180-195.

Nie, N. H., Junn, J., & Stehlik-Barry, K. (1996). *Education and democratic citizenship in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Olien, C. N., Donohue, G. A., & Tichenor, P. J. (1983). Structure, communication and social power: Evolution of the knowledge gap hypothesis. In E. Wartella & D. C. Whitney (Eds.), *Mass communication review yearbook*, 4 (pp. 455-461). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Page, B. I., & Shapiro, R. Y. (1992). *The rational public*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pew Center. (1999, March 29). *Support for NATO air strikes with plenty of buts: Few see strategic interests, humanitarian concerns cited*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center for The People & The Press.

Popkin, S. L. (1994). *The reasoning voter*. (2nd ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robinson, J. P. (1967). World affairs information and mass media exposure. *Journalism Quarterly*, *44*(1), 23-31.

Robinson, J. P. (1972). Mass communication and information diffusion. In F. G. Kline and P. J. Tichenor (Eds.), *Current perspectives in mass communication research* (pp. 71-93). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Rogers, W. C., Stuhler, B., & Koenig, D. (1967). A comparison of informed and general public opinion on U.S. foreign policy. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *31*(2), 242-252.

Sahin, H., Davis, D. K., & Robinson, J. P. (1982). Television as a source of international news: What gets across and what doesn't. In W. C. Adams (Ed.), *Television Coverage of International Affairs* (pp. 229-244). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Smith, D. D. (1970). "Dark areas of ignorance" revisited: Current knowledge of Asian affairs. *Social Science Quarterly*, *51*(4), 668-673.

Spitzer, S. P., & Denzin, N. K. (1965). Levels of knowledge in an emergent crisis. *Social Forces*, *44*(2), 234-237.

Star, S. A., & Hughes, H. M. (1950). Report on an educational campaign: The Cincinnati plan for the United Nations. *American Journal of Sociology*, *55*(3), 389-400.

Tichenor, P. J., Donohue, G. A., & Olien, C. N. (1970). Mass media flow and differential growth in knowledge. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *34*(2), 159-170.

Tichenor, P. J., Donohue, G. A., & Olien, C. N. (1980). *Community conflict and the press*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Tichenor, P. J., Olien, C. N., & Donohue, G. A. (1987). Effect of use of metro dailies on knowledge gap in small towns. *Journalism Quarterly*, *64*(3), 329-336.

Tichenor, P. J., Rodenkirchen, J. N., Olien, C. N., & Donohue, G. A. (1973). Community issues, conflict, and public affairs knowledge. In P. Clarke (Ed.), *New models for mass communication research* (pp. 45-79). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Ullman, R. H. (1996). Introduction. In R. H. Ullman (Ed.), *The world and Yugoslavia's wars* (pp. 1-8). New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

Utley, G. (1997, March/April). The shrinking of foreign news. *Foreign Affairs*, *76*, 2-10.

Viswanath, K., & Finnegan, J., Jr. (1996). The knowledge gap hypothesis: Twenty-five years later. In B. R. Burleson (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 19* (pp. 187-227). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Viswanath, K., Kahn, E., Finnegan, Jr., J. R., Hertog, J., & Potter, J. D. (1993). Motivation and the knowledge gap: Effects of a campaign to reduce diet-related cancer risk. *Communication Research*, *20*(4), 546-563.

Wade, S., & Schramm, W. (1969). The mass media as sources of public affairs, science, and health knowledge. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *23*(3), 197-209.

Wittkopf, E. R. (1990). *Faces of internationalism: Public opinion and American foreign policy*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zeller, R. A., and E. G. Carmines. (1980). *Measurement in the social sciences*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Staci L. Rhine is associate professor of political science at Wittenberg University. Her research interests are in political communication, public opinion, and electoral behavior.

Stephen Earl Bennett is professor emeritus of political science at the University of Cincinnati. His research interests are in political communication, public opinion, and political psychology. He also is writing a book on the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Richard S. Flickinger is professor of political science at Wittenberg University. His research interests are in comparative public opinion and electoral behavior.

Their recent publications have appeared in The British Journal of Political Science*,* The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, and* Political Behavior*.*

EXPLAINING CAMPAIGN INTENSITY

TRACY SULKIN
University of Washington

This article develops and tests a causal model of campaign intensity in U.S. Senate elections. Although campaign intensity has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention in recent years, no study has explicitly attempted to model the factors contributing to varying levels of intensity across campaigns. This article draws on data from the NES 1988-1992 Pooled Senate Election Study, a content analysis of newspaper coverage of Senate races, and a data set of candidates' positions across a wide variety of issue dimensions to develop and test a model of intensity. Results indicate that aspects of incumbent vulnerability, challenger quality, and the political environment all significantly influence intensity levels.

A number of recent studies have singled out campaign intensity as an important influence on voters' information about the candidates and the campaign. Intensity, defined variously as the degree to which a race is "hard fought" (Westlye, 1991), the level of information provided to voters during the election period (Zaller, 1992), and the "culmination of the interplay among candidates, the media, and the perceived closeness of the election" (Kahn & Kenney, 1997) has been shown to increase voters' recall of and contact with candidates (Krasno, 1994) and the incidence of ideological and issue voting (Westlye, 1991), to decrease partisan defection rates (Westlye, 1991; Zaller, 1992), and to induce individuals to use more sophisticated decision-making processes when evaluating candidates and making vote choices (Kahn & Kenney, 1997). As of yet, however, no study has explicitly modeled the factors contributing to variations in intensity across races. Understanding what causes these variations is important, however, both for scholars interested in understanding campaign dynamics and for practitioners interested in promoting informative campaigns.

In this article, I examine campaign intensity in the 1988, 1990, and 1992 U.S. Senate elections. Senate races are chosen because they allow for a broad sample and, because compared to House races, they are generally more competitive (Abramowitz & Segal, 1992; Hinckley, 1980; Ragsdale, 1981) and so should exhibit more variation in intensity levels (Kahn, 1991; Westlye, 1991). I first present a causal model of intensity, then develop theoretical and operational definitions of intensity and its predictors, and conclude by testing the model.

MODELING CAMPAIGN INTENSITY

As both intuition and recent empirical studies suggest, high intensity races are, first and foremost, competitive. Intense races are characterized by high candidate visibility, a real competition for votes, and a large and balanced information flow (Kahn, 1991; Westlye, 1991; Zaller, 1992). To model the determinants of intensity, it is necessary to examine the factors that contribute to these characteristics. Past research on competitiveness in congressional elections has focused particularly on the role of the challenger, concluding that the challenger's visibility in the campaign is "probably the most important variable" influencing an incumbent's chance of re-election (Abramowitz, 1988, p. 386; see also Hinckley, 1980; Lublin, 1994; Squire, 1989). The strength and visibility of the challenger is usually attributed to some notion of his or her "quality" as a candidate (generally operationalized as the level of prior experience in public office). Experienced, high quality challengers should therefore produce more intense campaigns.

However, characteristics of the challenger cannot alone determine intensity because his or her quality is always relative; it is assessed in comparison to the incumbent. Although previous researchers have clearly acknowledged the role of both incumbents and challengers, they have paid much less attention to operationalizing incumbent vulnerability and assessing the direct impact of incumbent qualities on competitiveness and intensity.

In addition, there may be elements of the political environment that have independent influences on intensity. These include both state-level demographic variables and characteristics of the national politi-

cal scene. Although these factors are less central to the theoretical model developed here, a well-specified statistical model of intensity must account for them as well. This model is presented below in Figure 1.

DATA

As discussed above, the unit of analysis for this study is selected Senate races in the 1988, 1990, and 1992 elections (see Appendix A for a list of included races). Because the model focuses on explaining intensity in races contested by both an incumbent and a challenger, those contests that were "open" (i.e., no incumbent) or had an incumbent running unopposed are not included. In these three election cycles, 79 races met this criterion, and 45 are included in the analysis on the basis of the availability of newspaper coverage about the race on electronic databases like Lexis-Nexis and Datatimes.[1] The sample comprises 11 races in 1988, 15 races in 1990, and 19 races in 1992 across a total of 28 states.

MEASURING CAMPAIGN INTENSITY

Operationalizing intensity using quantitative indicators has been difficult for researchers, generally because of its multidimensionality. To accommodate this, most researchers have chosen to focus their analysis on one or more indicators that they deem particularly important. Many studies dealing with intensity or competitiveness rely, at least in part, on summary reports about each race published in the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*'s special election issues, which are distributed during October of each election year (see for example, Franklin, 1991; Kahn, 1991; Krasno, 1994; Westlye, 1991). Although these reports are easily accessible and make it fairly simple to classify campaigns dichotomously (i.e., intense or not intense), there is little reason to believe that intensity is actually bimodally distributed (Westlye, 1991) and the reports are generally anecdotal rather

Incumbent Vulnerability

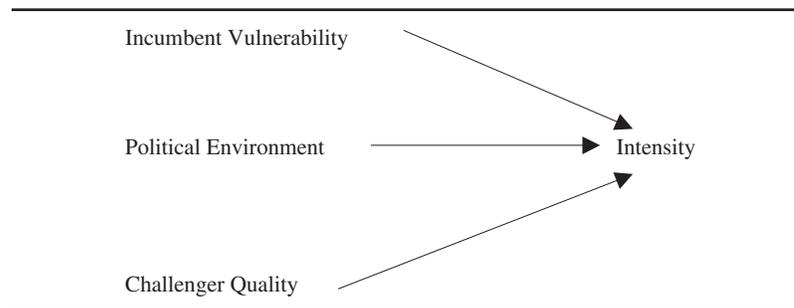Political Environment ──────────▶ Intensity

Challenger Quality

Figure 1: Causes of Campaign Intensity

than systematic in nature. An in-depth investigation of campaign intensity thus requires more valid measures.

To select these measures, we must go back to the general conception of an intense race—that is, one that is "hard fought," in which both candidates run visible, vigorous campaigns, are successful at raising funds, and attract a good deal of media attention. From this definition, it appears that there are three main categories of indicators—those that measure media coverage, those that measure campaign spending, and those that measure the level of uncertainty about the outcome of the race. Each of these indicators is discussed in detail below.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Newspaper coverage is the preferred measure of media attention in studies of statewide races because past studies suggest that it provides the best indicator of campaign intensity and most closely approximates the level of information provided by the campaigns (Hale, 1987; Kahn, 1991; Kahn & Kenney, 1997; Westlye, 1991). For this study, the major newspaper in each state for each of the races was identified, and all articles pertaining to the Senate race (i.e., mentioning either candidate) appearing in these papers between Labor Day and Election Day were included in the analysis. A total of 5,443 articles were read by coders who noted the percentage of each that was relevant to the Senate race. For purposes of measuring intensity, I use the number of newspaper articles and the total number of relevant lines devoted to each race.

CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING AND EXPENDITURES

A second way to measure intensity is to examine levels of campaign spending. Previous studies have indicated that the amount of money raised and spent serves as an appropriate proxy for the quantity of advertising (Westlye, 1991) and can impact the outcome of congressional elections (Gerber, 1998; Green & Krasno, 1988; Jacobson, 1980). I use two indicators of spending—the ratio of candidate spending and total per capita campaign expenditures. For the first, I assume that the closer the two candidates' spending ratio is to 1:1 (i.e., in races where candidates spend almost equal amounts), the more intense the race. I supplement these ratios with a measure of per capita spending to account for differences between races in total expenditures.

OUTCOME UNCERTAINTY

To measure the level of uncertainty about the outcome of the race, I include two indicators: the perceived and actual closeness of the election. To measure the perceived closeness, I use the assessments of each race published by *Congressional Quarterly* and the *Cook Report*. Both of these organizations rate races as "safe" for one party, "favoring" a party, "leaning toward" a party, or "too close to call," creating a 1- to 4-point scale. The actual closeness of the election is measured by the final vote margin in the two-party vote for each race.

For purposes of analysis, the six indicators of intensity discussed above were combined into a single index. Each of the measures was normalized to a 0 to 100 scale, and then the average of all six scales was calculated. Thus, the possible range for intensity is 0 to 100, with the actual range from 8.70 to 86.31, a mean of 40.07, and a standard deviation of 18.58. Individual measures all correlate reasonably well with the index—Pearson correlation coefficients range from .63 to .83, with a mean of .75.

PREDICTORS OF CAMPAIGN INTENSITY

In testing the causal model of intensity, it is important to recognize the potential recursiveness between its indicators and its predictors

(e.g., Do vulnerable incumbents generate more media coverage or does more media coverage make incumbents more vulnerable?). To address this, measures for all predictor variables in this study (with one exception, discussed in detail below) are constructed from data that is temporally antecedent to the start of the general election campaign, where the dependent variables are measured. This allows for increased confidence that there is no reciprocal causation between intensity and its predictors. A brief description of each independent variable is provided below and descriptive statistics for both indicators and predictors of intensity are presented in Table 1.

INCUMBENT VULNERABILITY

As predictors of intensity, I use five indicators of incumbent vulnerability—the level of challenge the incumbent encountered in the primary, the number of years in office, the extent to which he or she is associated with scandal, the extremity of issue positions, and the level of disapproval ratings from the constituency.

The first three measures are fairly straightforward. I assume that the higher the incumbent's vote margin over his or her nearest primary opponent, the less vulnerable he or she should be because he or she either enjoyed an easy victory over the challengers or was spared altogether the potential divisiveness of the primary election process. Similarly, the incumbent's years in the Senate are used as a measure of incumbent vulnerability because as suggested by Kahn and Kenney (1997), more senior incumbents have, by definition, more experience running successful campaigns. Thus, they should be better at anticipating and thwarting problems, making them less vulnerable. The third measure of incumbent vulnerability is scandal, one of the "broader" issues included in the candidate positions data set described below and in Appendix B. Low scores on this scale indicate that the incumbent is relatively free from scandal, and high scores indicate that he or she is closely associated with it. In the sample, the incumbents with the highest scandal scores include those closely involved with the S&L scandal (e.g., "Keating Five" members Dennis DeConcini of Arizona and Donald Riegle of Michigan) and those like Bob Packwood of Oregon, who was accused of sexual harassment.

TABLE 1
Indicators and Predictors of Campaign Intensity

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Indicators			
Number of newspaper articles	8	368	120.96
Lines of newspaper text	425	28742	8710.67
Ratio of candidate spending	.01	.99	.39
Per capita spending ($)	.54	10.54	3.53
Margin of victory (%)	1.0	66	19.13
CQ projection	1.0	4.0	2.13
Predictors			
Incumbent vulnerability			
Incumbent primary margin (%)	14	100	84.47
Incumbent extremity score	1.33	4.19	2.59
Incumbent scandal score	2.0	9.0	4.98
Disapproval score (%)	1.89	27.58	9.24
Years in office	2	36	12.04
Challenger quality			
Challenger political experience	0	2	0.80
Challenger primary margin (%)	-7	100	50.78
Challenger extremity score	1.56	4.44	2.94
Environmental factors			
Presidential election year?	0	1	0.67
Voting age population (k)	962	20362	5222
State unemployment rate (%)	2.0	10.10	5.80
Partisan polarization	3.28	70.84	29.16
Median voter extremity score	39.0	240.5	110.70
$N = 45$			

The last measures, position extremity and constituency approval, require a bit more explanation. First, as predicted by median voter models, incumbents whose positions are more extreme relative to their constituency's median voter should be more vulnerable. To examine this, each incumbent's "extremity score" was calculated from an issue positions data set compiled to examine candidate and median voter positions in selected races in the 1988, 1990, and 1992 elections. This data set consists of positions on a series of substantive and broader issues (coded on a 1-10 scale where one is most liberal and ten is most conservative) for incumbents, challengers, and median voters from each race studied. Appendix B contains a discussion of the methodology used in constructing this database and a list of the

TABLE 2
Estimates of Influences on Intensity

Independent Variable	B	SE
Incumbent vulnerability		
Primary margin	–0.147	0.102
Extremity score	4.540*	2.596
Scandal score	2.250	1.365
Disapproval score	2.068***	0.417
Years in office	–0.629**	0.310
Challenger quality		
Political experience	7.755***	2.775
Primary margin	0.147**	0.070
Extremity score	8.857***	3.014
Environment		
Presidential election year?	–8.830**	4.271
Median voter score	–0.085**	0.040
Partisan polarization	–0.187	0.179
Unemployment rate	0.459	1.485
Voting age population	–0.00002	0.001
Constant	–3.445	19.664
$N = 45$		
Adjusted R^2 = .58		

*$p < .10.$ **$p < .05.$ ***$p < .01.$

dimensions included. For each of the eighteen substantive dimensions included in the data set, the incumbent's score was subtracted from the state's median voter's score on that dimension. The average of the absolute values of these deviations was then calculated and is used here as the extremity score. Thus, those candidates with higher scores had positions that deviated more, on average, from their state's median voter.

Secondly, it seems logical that incumbents who are less highly rated by their constituents should be more vulnerable than those held in high esteem. The SES asks respondents to indicate their approval or disapproval with the way the incumbent Senator "has been handling his or her job," their level of agreement or disagreement with the votes the Senator made while in office, and their assessment of how good a job the Senator was doing at keeping in touch with the people of the state.[2] For each of these questions, the percentage of respondents giving the incumbent the lowest possible rating on the scale was calcu-

lated. These figures were then averaged to form a summary measure of disapproval.

CHALLENGER QUALITY

If more vulnerable incumbents lead to more intense races, then we should expect that higher quality challengers should have a similar effect. The literature on congressional elections shows numerous methods of measuring challenger quality (see for example, Bond, Covington, & Fleisher, 1985; Green & Krasno, 1988; Krasno, 1994; Jacobson, 1987; Lublin, 1994; Squire, 1989). Most of these measures focus on the candidate's prior experience in elected public office, with those candidates who have held "prestigious" offices considered of higher quality than those with lesser or no experience. Challenger political experience is thus one of the most important measures of challenger quality. For the measure used here, challengers who have been governors or members of the House of Representatives are coded as high experience, those who have been state officials or state legislators are coded as medium experience, and those who have held only local office or no office at all are coded as low experience.

Other characteristics of the challenger's campaign may also influence his or her quality. These include the challenger's margin over his or her nearest primary opponent and the extremity of his or her positions. As was the case for incumbents, challengers who do well in their primaries and who express issue positions in line with those of their potential constituency should be stronger, more viable candidates and should therefore be more likely to be involved in intense races.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The final factors hypothesized to influence intensity levels are those relating to the political environment. Numerous scholars have underscored the importance of including national and state or district level variables in analyses of congressional election campaigns and voting. In particular, demographic characteristics such as the size of the state (as measured by the size of its voting age population) and the health of its economy (reflected by states' unemployment rates the December before the election) may influence constituents' evalua-

tions of incumbents and so may also impact campaign intensity (see for example, Abramowitz, 1988; Ayala & D'Onofrio, 1999; Jacobson, 1987; Oppenheimer, 1996; Wright & Berkman, 1986).

Additional environmental variables include the presence or absence of a concurrent presidential election and measures of states' ideological and partisan leanings. First of all, levels of campaign intensity in Senate races are likely lower in presidential election years than in off-years because information about the Senate campaigns is swamped by coverage and advertising about the presidential race. However, it is possible that the presence of a presidential election may increase overall levels of intensity because of the greater attention to and interest in politics during those years, so this is a relationship that must be tested.

Similarly, states in which the parties are exceedingly polarized may have more intense races because the outcome of the election should be viewed as of higher stakes. The level of partisan polarization is calculated by subtracting the Democratic party ideology score from the Republican party ideology score (provided in the SES and derived from the party liberalism and conservatism scores in Bartels, 1988). High scores on this measure indicate high levels of polarization.

Finally, the extremity of the state's median voter may influence intensity by advantaging candidates from one or the other of the parties. The median voter from each state was assigned a score on each of the eighteen issue dimensions in the positions data set described in Appendix B. The mean score for any given dimension across all of the states approximates 5.5 (the center of the scale). Deviation scores are calculated by subtracting the race's median voter scores on each of the eighteen dimensions from 5.5. These deviation scores are then summed and squared to form median voter extremity scores. Higher scores indicate that the state's median voter deviates more from the center of the spectrum.

EXPLAINING CAMPAIGN INTENSITY

To analyze the factors that influence campaign intensity, I estimated an ordinary least squares (OLS) model that enables us to examine the effects of incumbent vulnerability, challenger quality, and

political environmental variables on the intensity index. The results for the model provide support for the theoretical model of intensity discussed here—the majority of the coefficients are statistically significant in the predicted direction. Looking first at the incumbent vulnerability variables, we see that the incumbent's extremity and constituency disapproval scores are both positively related to intensity. Incumbents who stray from the positions of the median voter or are less highly approved of by constituents are more likely to find themselves involved in intense races, perhaps because strategic challengers capitalize on their weakness in this area. Also as expected, the incumbent's number of years in office is negatively related to intensity, with more experienced incumbents involved in less intense races. Finally, the coefficients for involvement in scandal and the incumbent's primary margin, while in the predicted direction, indicate that these variables do not exert a significant independent effect on intensity levels.

Results for challenger quality also largely conform to predictions. For instance, challenger political experience is positively related to intensity, with more experienced challengers resulting in more intense races. Challengers' performance in their own primaries also influences intensity, with intensity increasing as the challengers' margin over their nearest primary opponents increases. A somewhat unexpected result, however, is that challengers' extremity scores are positively related to intensity. According to median voter theory, we should expect that challengers whose policy stances are close to the median voter's would be more competitive than those whose views were farther away, leading us to predict that the closer the challenger is to the median voter, the more intense the race. These results indicate that the opposite is true. Several possible explanations exist for this finding. Perhaps challengers who hold more extreme positions are more likely to appeal to primary electorates and contributors and so are more likely to win primary elections. However, in this data, challenger extremity scores are actually negatively related to primary margins ($r = -.26$). Another hypothesis, that more extreme challengers obtain more media attention (and the visibility and perhaps credibility that come with it) receives more support ($r = .39$).[3]

Only two of the political environmental variables discussed above are found to significantly influence intensity. All other things being equal, intensity drops by about nine points on the 0- to 100-point scale

in presidential election years. As discussed before, this likely occurs because attention to the Senate race is swamped by the focus on the more prominent presidential race. However, with races from only one nonpresidential year (1990) included in this sample, this finding should be interpreted with caution.

Median voter scores are also negatively related to intensity, with more intense races occurring in more moderate states. This is logical because in states in which the median voter is clearly liberal or clearly conservative, one candidate is likely to enjoy an obvious advantage. For instance, the state with the highest score on the extremity measure is Massachusetts, which is considerably more liberal than average. Thus, Democratic candidates are likely to be particularly advantaged, and this advantage leads to less intense races.

CONCLUSION

These findings provide considerable support for the causal model of intensity developed here. In particular, they show the powerful impact that candidate characteristics exert on campaign intensity and its components. The results presented above support the conclusions from past research about the role of quality challengers in influencing competitiveness and intensity, but perhaps more interestingly, also underscore the important and independent role that incumbent vulnerability plays. Past work on the strategic calculations of potential challengers suggests that vulnerable incumbents beget strong challengers who sense the incumbents' weakness and decide to run (Jacobson, 1987). Although this is undoubtedly true, this analysis suggests that the vulnerability of the incumbent is important in its own right in predicting and explaining intensity.

This analysis further shows that variations in intensity levels are measurable and predictable. Knowing just a few characteristics of the incumbent, the challenger, and the political environment in a given race can help us to explain that race's intensity level, an ability that should be encouraging to those looking to promote more informed electorates and more democratic elections. For instance, equalizing spending among incumbents and challengers and encouraging active primary campaigns should both increase intensity, raising the media's

and the public's interest in campaigns. This increase in interest and information about the race should make voters more likely to have the information they need to make knowledgeable choices on Election Day. Together with research on other aspects of campaign context, the study of intensity should provide scholars and practitioners alike with a much fuller understanding of the dynamics of contemporary elections.

APPENDIX A
Senate Races Included in Analysis

Year	State	Democratic Candidate	Republican Candidate	Newspaper
1988	AZ	Dennis DeConcini	Keith DeGreen	*The Arizona Republic*
	CA	Leo McCarthy	Pete Wilson	*Los Angeles Times*
	MA	Edward Kennedy	Joseph Malone	*The Boston Globe*
	MI	Donald Riegle	Jim Dunn	*Detroit Free Press*
	MN	Hubert Humphrey III	Dave Durenberger	*Star Tribune*
	MO	Jay Nixon	John Danforth	*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*
	NE	Bob Kerrey	David Karnes	*Omaha World-Herald*
	NJ	Frank Lautenberg	Pete Dawkins	*The Record*
	NY	Daniel P. Moynihan	Robert McMillan	*The New York Times*
	OH	Howard Metzenbaum	George Voinovich	*The Columbus Dispatch*
	TX	Lloyd Bentsen	Beau Boulter	*The Dallas Morning News*
1990	IL	Paul Simon	Lynn Martin	*Chicago Tribune*
	IN	Baron Hill	Daniel Coats	*Indianapolis News*
	KS	Dick Williams	Nancy Kassebaum	*Wichita Eagle*
	KY	Harvey Sloane	Mitch McConnell	*Louisville Courier-Journal*
	MA	John Kerry	Jim Rappaport	*The Boston Globe*
	MI	Carl Levin	Bill Schuette	*Detroit Free Press*
	MN	Paul Wellstone	Rudy Boschwitz	*Star Tribune*
	NC	Harvey Gantt	Jesse Helms	*The Charlotte Observer*
	NE	James Exon	Hal Daub	*Omaha World-Herald*
	NJ	Bill Bradley	Christine Whitman	*The Record*
	OK	David Boren	Stephen Jones	*The Daily Oklahoman*
	OR	Harry Lonsdale	Mark Hatfield	*The Oregonian*
	SC	Bob Cunningham	Strom Thurmond	*The State*
	TN	Al Gore	William Hawkins	*The Commerical Appeal*
	TX	Hugh Parmer	Phil Gramm	*The Dallas Morning News*
1992	AZ	Claire Sargent	John McCain	*The Arizona Republic*
	CT	Christopher Dodd	Brook Johnson	*The Hartford Courant*
	FL	Bob Graham	Bill Grant	*St. Petersburg Times*
	GA	Wyche Fowler	Paul Coverdell	*The Atlanta Constitution*
	IA	Jean Lloyd-Jones	Charles Grassley	*The Des Moines Register*

APPENDIX A
Continued

Year	State	Democratic Candidate	Republican Candidate	Newspaper
	IN	Joseph Hogsett	Daniel Coats	*Indianapolis News*
	KS	Gloria O'Dell	Bob Dole	*The Kansas City Star*
	KY	Wendell Ford	David Williams	*The Courier-Journal*
	MD	Barbara Mikulski	Alan Keyes	*The Sun*
	MO	Geri Rothman-Serot	Christopher Bond	*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*
	NC	Terry Sanford	Lauch Faircloth	*The Charlotte Observer*
	NV	Harry Reid	Demar Dahl	*Las Vegas Review-Journal*
	NY	Robert Abrams	Alfonse D'Amato	*The New York Times*
	OH	John Glenn	Mike DeWine	*The Columbus Dispatch*
	OK	Steve Lewis	Don Nickles	*Tulsa Tribune/World*
	OR	Les AuCoin	Bob Packwood	*The Oregonian*
	PA	Lynn Yeakel	Arlen Specter	*The Philadelphia Inquirer*
	SC	Ernest Hollings	Tommy Hartnett	*The State*
	WI	Russ Feingold	Bob Kasten	*Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel*

APPENDIX B

CANDIDATE POSITIONS DATABASE

On each of the substantive issue dimensions, coding was done on a 1- to 10-point scale, with extreme liberal positions on the low end and extreme conservative positions on the high end. Hence, the hypothetical median voter's position on each issue was 5.5. Information on each of the candidate's positions on each issue was obtained by examining information available prior to the start of their campaign (to ensure that no reciprocal relationship exists between positions and intensity levels). Information sources include "key votes" (for incumbents and challengers serving in Congress) as defined by the *Almanac of American Politics* and *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* and ratings assigned to a candidate by groups like the ACLU, ACU, and LCV. A complete listing of these groups is available upon request. Further information about all candidates was obtained by searches in the Lexis-Nexis media archives. The use of these archives was especially useful in locating information about lesser-known challengers. In the cases where insufficient information was available to code a candidate's position ($< 1\%$ of the 1,620 codes), the candidate was given a score on that dimension equal to that of his or her party's mean.

Two separate teams of coders compiled information about each candidate. Codes for each candidate on each dimension were assigned based on a rubric. In those cases where the two teams' assigned codes for a given dimension differed significantly, these differences were further researched and reconciled by the author. Overall, intercoder reliability was high, with inconsistencies occurring on less than 5% of the codes.

ISSUE DIMENSIONS

Substantive issues

Abortion
Agriculture
Civil rights
Crime/Drugs
Defense
Economy
Education
Foreign policy
Health care
Immigration
NAFTA/Trade
Regulation
Social security
Spend/Deficit
Taxes
Welfare
Women's issues

Broader issue

Scandal

NOTES

1. These databases are limited to newspapers with relatively large circulations, so smaller states are underrepresented in the sample. A comparison of regression results examining the impact of variables available for all races (i.e., all except media coverage and position extremity) on intensity for the full population and the study sample indicates that few differences exist.

2. These questions were asked of respondents during or after the general election period, so reciprocal causation between intensity and disapproval is a possibility. I investigated this by using lagged disapproval scores of incumbents from the previous election cycle (when they were classified by the SES as "incumbents not up") for the 1990 and 1992 races as a replacement for current disapproval scores. When the two regression models for intensity in the 1990 and 1992 races (one using lagged scores and one using current scores) are compared, no significant differences exist in any of the coefficients and the adjusted R^2 is nearly the same. Thus, we can conclude that the use of current disapproval scores presents no endogeneity problem.

3. Additional analyses, not reported here, demonstrate that the majority of the predictor variables with significant coefficients influence all three intensity subindices (media coverage, fundraising, and outcome uncertainty). The exceptions are incumbent years in office and challenger primary margin, which primarily impact fundraising, and the challenger extremity score, which predicts media coverage and outcome uncertainty, but not fundraising.

REFERENCES

Abramowitz, A. I. (1988). Explaining senate election outcomes. *American Political Science Review*, *82*(2), 385-403.

Abramowitz, A. I., & Segal, J. (1992). *Senate elections*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Ayala, L., & D'Onofrio, R. (1999). *The effect of state size on senatorial and constituency relations*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL.

Bartels, L. (1988). *Presidential primaries and the dynamics of public choice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bond, J. R., Covington, C., & Fleisher, R. (1985). Explaining challenger quality in congressional elections. *Journal of Politics*, *47*(2), 510-529.

Franklin, C. (1991). Eschewing obfuscation? Campaigns and the perception of senate incumbents. *American Political Science Review*, *85*(4), 1193-1214.

Gerber, A. (1998). Estimating the effect of campaign spending on senate election outcomes using instrumental variables. *American Political Science Review*, *92*(2), 401-411.

Green, D., & Krasno, J. (1988). Salvation for spendthrift incumbents: Reestimating the effect of campaign spending in house elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, *32*(4), 884-907.

Hale, J. F. (1987). The scribes of Texas: Newspaper coverage of the 1984 U.S. senate campaign. In J. P. Vermeer (Ed.), *Campaigns in the news: Mass media and congressional elections*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Hinckley, B. (1980). House reelections and senate defeats: The role of the challenger. *British Journal of Political Science*, *10*(4), 441-460.

Jacobson, G. C. (1980). *Money in congressional elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Jacobson, G. C. (1987). *The politics of congressional elections* (2nd ed.). Boston: Little, Brown.

Kahn, K. F. (1991). Senate elections in the news: examining campaign coverage. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *16*(3), 349-374.

Kahn, K. F., & Kenney, P. (1997). A model of candidate evaluations in senate elections: The impact of campaign intensity. *Journal of Politics*, *59*(4), 1173-1205.

Krasno, J. (1994). *Challengers, competition, and reelection*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Lublin, D. (1994). Quality, not quantity: Strategic politicians in U.S. senate elections, 1952-1990. *Journal of Politics*, *56*(1), 228-241.

Oppenheimer, B. (1996). The representational experience: The effect of state population on senator-constituency linkages. *American Journal of Political Science*, *40*(4), 1280-1299.

Ragsdale, L. (1981). Incumbent popularity, challenger invisibility, and congressional voters. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *6*(2), 201-218.

Squire, P. (1989). Challengers in U.S. senate elections. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *14*(4), 531-548.

Westlye, M. C. (1991). *Senate elections and campaign intensity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wright, G. C., & Berkman, M. (1986). Candidates and policy in U.S. senate elections. *American Political Science Review*, *80*(2), 567-590.

Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tracy Sulkin is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington, Seattle.

THE EFFECTS OF BALLOT INITIATIVES ON
VOTER TURNOUT IN THE AMERICAN STATES

CAROLINE J. TOLBERT
JOHN A. GRUMMEL
Kent State University
DANIEL A. SMITH
University of Denver

With few exceptions, voter turnout continues to decline in the United States. Although normative theorists, journalists, and defenders of participatory democracy frequently suggest that citizen-initiated ballot measures can increase voter turnout, previous research has not supported this claim. Yet, in the past 25 years, usage of direct democracy has exploded in the United States. Using pooled time series data for the 50 states over a 26-year period (1970-1996), we find that the presence and usage of the initiative process is associated with higher voter turnout in both presidential and midterm elections. The disparity in turnout rates between initiative and noninitiative states has been increasing over time, estimated at 7% to 9% higher in midterm and 3% to 4.5% higher in presidential elections in the 1990s. Our analysis suggests that the initiative process can and does play a positive role in increasing electoral participation.

As the number and importance of citizen-initiated ballot measures continue to grow in the American states, scholars are increasingly turning their attention to this particular brand of plebiscitory democracy. There has been a growing use of initiatives and referenda in the United States and European countries to decide policy issues (Bowler, Donovan, & Tolbert, 1998; Butler & Ranney, 1994). In some American states, such as California, direct democracy has become a preferred mechanism of governing as the state's most important policies—taxes, spending, education, health, environment, affirmative action, immigration, welfare—are now decided via initiatives and referenda (Schrag, 1998). As we shift into an information-technology age, worldwide trends highlight the increased use of referenda and more participatory models of governing (Mendolsohn & Parkin, 2001; Peters, 1996). Since the late 1970s, usage of the initiative process in

the American states has exploded, comparable only to the Progressive era (1900-1920).

At the same time, voter turnout continues to decline in American politics. Hovering at 55% of registered voters in the 1996 presidential elections, turnout rates in the United States are among the lowest of the advanced industrialized nations. Increasing citizen participation is a primary goal of those proposing Internet voting, same-day voter registration, mail voting ballots, Motor Voter, nonpartisan primaries, and other reforms to update our electoral system. Some suggest that those states that have been leaders in using direct democracy will be the first to allow Internet voting and voter registration. An unsuccessful citizen initiative circulated for the 2000 California ballot, for example, would have required the Secretary of State to implement Internet voting and voter registration (Initiative and Referendum Institute, Washington, DC). Do electoral reforms, such as the initiative process, stimulate increased electoral participation? Do states that allow citizens to place policy questions on the ballot for a popular vote have higher voter turnout? This research examines whether the increased use of direct democracy in the past three decades has had an effect on turnout rates for the period 1970-1996 across the 50 states.

The merits and defects of the initiative process is the subject of a hotly contested debate in the scholarly and popular literature. Proponents of direct democracy argue that allowing citizens to vote directly on policy questions should increase citizen participation, citizen efficacy, and trust in government, while opponents argue that the process has little impact. The effects of direct democracy on turnout rates is one of the most frequently cited arguments made by proponents of participatory models (Peters, 1996). Opponents of the initiative process, and especially the policies adopted by voter initiatives such as term limits and tax limitations, argue that it threatens to weaken state legislatures (Rosenthal, 1997), tyrannize minority groups (Bell, 1978; Gamble, 1997; Schrag, 1998), and even supplant representative democracy (Broder, 2000; Schrag, 1998). While there has been an extended debate in the popular and scholarly literature about ballot initiatives and turnout, there is little solid empirical evidence to support either side. This research is an attempt to clarify this debate. The findings presented here are applicable to policy makers (state lawmakers), the

popular press, and scholars of turnout and direct democracy in the American states.

THE CITIZEN INITIATIVE PROCESS AND VOTER TURNOUT

In the two dozen states that currently permit the process, initiative politics are shaping not only policy outcomes, but also the nature of the democratic process itself. Nineteen states adopted the initiative process during the Progressive era. The reforms were passed in response to widespread corruption and the perceived strong influence over state politics by the powerful railroads. The initiative process allows citizens to draft new state laws or amend the state constitution by collecting a specified number of voter signatures (Cronin, 1989; Gerber, 1999; Magleby, 1984).[1] If the threshold of signatures is collected, an initiative can qualify for a state primary or general election ballot. If the proposal is adopted by a majority of voters, it amends the state's constitution or statutory law. In the referenda (popular or legislative), in contrast, voters can respond only to policy formulated by the legislature. The initiative has been a common tool for state government reform, largely due to its agenda-setting power. Because groups outside of the legislature can propose new legislation, the subject matter of citizen initiatives tends to be more controversial than policy referred by state legislatures. Citizen initiatives are thus the focus of this research.

The initiative, both directly and indirectly, has changed the political landscape of nearly half the states. In terms of public policy, citizens have initiated state statutes and constitutional amendments altering affirmative action, reproductive rights, gay rights, bilingual education, public health, immigration, environmental protection, taxes, spending, education, welfare policy, and a host of other substantive issues (Bowler & Donovan, 1998; Bowler et al., 1998; Broder, 2000; Cronin, 1989; Gamble, 1997; Gerber, 1996, 1999; Lascher, Hagen, & Rochlin, 1996; Magleby, 1984; Schrag, 1998). Proponents have also used the citizen initiative to directly enact procedural reforms. Citizens have passed initiatives capping campaign finance contributions, providing for the public financing of candidates, limiting the terms of elected officials, opening "closed" primaries, enacting mail voting,

and restricting legislatures' ability to tax and spend (Rosenthal, 1997; Smith, 1998; Tolbert, 1998). Indirectly, the initiative process has altered the democratic process by compelling candidates and their state and national parties to debate divisive issues during political campaigns (Chavez, 1998), and it has elevated the stature of political consultants in state elections due to the large amounts of money spent on some measures (Magleby & Patterson, 1998).

One of the more important indirect procedural consequences of direct democracy is the effect that ballot initiatives may have on participation levels of citizens—specifically voter turnout. Participation is one of the dominant political themes of the 1990s as advocates search for more political, democratic, and collective mechanisms for sending signals to government (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Peters, 1996). Normative theorists in particular have long argued that direct forms of democracy can motivate participation by energizing citizens with a sense of civic duty and political efficacy (Morrell, 1999; Pateman, 1970). Calling for more "discursive democracy" (Dryzek, 1990), "strong democracy" (Barber, 1984), "teledemocracy" (Toffler & Toffler, 1995), and "deliberation" (Fishkin, 1993), scholars have offered a variety of participatory models of decision making.

The general prescription for making government function better is to foster greater individual and collective participation within segments of government organizations and structure institutions to include mass citizen participation (Peters, 1996). In its simplest form, participatory government is plebescitarian, with the public being asked to decide public issues by a direct vote. These participatory models imply that the system of representative democracy is far from perfect in transmitting the wishes of the public into policy, and that direct democracy procedures can improve the situation, even in a complex modern society (Barber, 1984, pp. 235-236; Dryzek, 1990). While the degree to which government policy actually reflects citizens' desires is a matter of debate, there is evidence suggesting that policy more closely matches mass preferences in American states with direct democracy (Gerber, 1996; Gerber & Hug, 2001; Matsusaka, 1995; but see Comobrecco, 1998; Lascher et al., 1996).

There is also a common perception among journalists and supporters of direct democracy that ballot initiatives often stimulate voter

interest, and in turn, increase turnout on election day. Consumer activist Ralph Nader has claimed that direct democracy could mobilize "people who ordinarily would not be part of the political process" (quoted in Magleby, 1984, p. 77). In 1978, *The New York Times* editorialized, "Direct democracy offers another benefit: It is a powerful stimulus to political participation" ("Making Democracy More Interesting," 1978), while more recently, an article in *Congress Daily*, an outlet of the *National Journal*, claimed, "High-profile initiatives on statewide ballots could dramatically affect voter turnout in some House and Senate races this fall [1998], and potentially influence who wins" ("Turnout Could Hinge on Initiatives," 1998). Advocates of direct democracy refer to this apparent increase in voter turnout in initiative states as the "spillover effect" (Schmidt, 1989, p. 27).

Despite the popular view, normative literature and claims made by proponents of direct democracy, previous scholarship based on empirical data suggests that voter turnout does not increase appreciably when initiatives are placed on the ballot (Cronin, 1989, pp. 227-228; Everson, 1981; Magleby, 1984, pp. 96-98). Two landmark studies in particular downplay the positive effects direct democracy may have on voter turnout. Using independent sample *t* tests and cross-sectional 50-state data to compare voter turnout in initiative and noninitiative states between 1960 and 1978, Everson (1981) finds that in presidential and midterm elections turnout is slightly higher in initiative than noninitiative states. However, after removing Southern states from the equation, which for cultural and historical reasons have had lower turnout, he finds that noninitiative states actually have higher turnout during presidential elections than initiative states, with turnout during midterm elections staying roughly the same. Everson's analysis did not control usage of the initiative process, concurrent statewide races for political office (i.e., governor, U.S. Senate), election years, registration requirements or other socioeconomic variations among the states. Building on the findings of Everson, Magleby (1984, pp. 96-98) suggests that on average, northern states with the initiative have no greater voter turnout than northern states without the initiative between 1960 and 1980. With respect to one aberrant year, 1978, when voter turnout was indeed 3% higher in initiative states than noninitiative states, Magleby (1984) speculates that voters in initia-

tives states may have been "responding to the stimulus of candidate contests and not initiatives" (p. 98), for on the whole, "over the last twenty years, turnout generally has been the same whether or not states had the initiative process" (p. 98).

Previous research, including the influential study by Everson (1981), did not use statistical methods appropriate for pooled time series data, and did not control for other factors that may shape variation in turnout rates across the states. Some initiative states, such as California, have a large number of policies on the ballot every election, while other states, such as Wyoming have used the process only rarely. Previous research on voter turnout measured only the presence of the initiative process in a state, not usage of the process over time (Tolbert, Lowenstein, & Donovan, 1998). Furthermore, scholars have not analyzed turnout rates in the 1990s, a period of the greatest activity in direct democracy in the past century.

In the realm of initiative politics, much has changed since the early 1980s, when Everson conducted his study. Not only has the amount of spending on ballot propositions increased exponentially over the past two decades, usage of the process has exploded over the past two decades, comparable only to the first two decades of the twentieth century. In the 1990s, more than 300 statewide initiatives qualified for the ballot, an average of 60 per general election nationwide. The number of statewide initiatives on the ballot across the nation during the 1990s surpassed all other decades, even the previous high set during the 1910s (Cronin, 1989; Magleby, 1994; Price, 1975; Schmidt, 1989). A primary focus of this analysis is whether the increased usage of initiative process in the last two decades has translated into higher turnout rates.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY AND VOTER TURNOUT

MEASURING VOTER TURNOUT

Reconsidering the indirect impact of the initiative on voter turnout in the states, this study examines voter turnout over the period 1970-1996 using pooled cross-sectional time series data for the 50 states controlling for variation between states and over time. The

dependent variable in the analysis is voter age turnout (VAT) every 2 years, which is available from the *Statistical Abstracts of the United States* (U.S. Census Bureau). The data are a measure of the votes cast for president or for U.S. Representative in midterm years, divided by the population older than age 18.

MEASURING THE CITIZEN INITIATIVE PROCESS

Consistent with the normative theorists, states with the initiative process and with more frequent usage of the process are hypothesized to have higher turnout rates over time. A dummy variable is used to measure the presence of the initiative process with the twenty-four initiative states coded 1 and all others coded 0.[2] With a few exceptions, most states with the initiative process have at least one initiative or referendum on the ballot each election.[3] The dummy variable for the initiative process is also used as a proxy for a participatory state political culture that has developed over the past century (Elazar, 1984). In initiative states, citizens are accustomed to frequently voting on ballot propositions placed on the ballot by interest groups or the state legislature (Tolbert, 1998). This variable does not measure variations in state usage of the initiative process over time.

We anticipate states with more initiatives on the ballot (and thus more frequent usage of direct democracy) will also have higher voter turnout. We include a measure of the actual number of initiatives appearing on the statewide ballot every 2 years from 1970 to 1996 to measure usage of the process. The data are from the Initiative and Referendum Institute (Washington, DC) (1998), which supplies the most accurate source of information available on direct democracy in the states. There is only a moderate correlation between the presence of the initiative process and the number of initiatives on the ballot in any given year.

Increased voter turnout in initiative states is hypothesized to be the most pronounced in midterm elections when ballot initiatives do not compete with presidential candidates for media attention. Thus, even if only one or two initiatives qualify for the ballot in midterm elections, this may be sufficient to stimulate increased citizen participation, especially if they are controversial policy questions. When ballot initiatives must compete with presidential candidates for media cover-

age, they may require a larger number of initiatives to increase turnout rates. That is, the threshold for the initiative process to have an impact on turnout rates may be higher in presidential than in midterm elections.

Another way of conceptualizing variation between midterm and presidential elections is in terms of voter information. Midterm elections are low information elections with very few sources of mobilization, thus making the electorate more sensitive to those sources of mobilization that do exist, such as the initiative process. Presidential elections, however, are high information elections in which there are multiple sources of mobilization. As a result, the simple presence of the initiative is unlikely to mobilize more voters, but the presence of several items on the ballot may be enough to bring out a few extra votes. We thus suggest that the presence and usage of the initiative process may have a different substantive impact in midterm versus presidential elections.

Research by Smith (2001), using different explanatory variables, provides a useful comparison study. Arguing that not all initiatives are the same, Smith measures the "salience" of initiatives and popular referenda on the ballot by the percentage of front-page newspaper coverage devoted to ballot issues on the day following an election. Smith examines the impact of ballot measures on voter turnout between 1972 and 1996. He finds that states with "salient" initiatives and popular referenda on the ballot do tend to have higher turnout in midterm elections than noninitiative states, but not in presidential years. Without a presidential race on the ballot, voter, and media attention focuses instead on state level issues and candidate contests. Ballot initiatives that spark interest from a wide cross-section of the public appear to increase voter turnout in elections. Smith's measure raises some questions of content validity.[4] A more direct and simple measure of saliency is the actual number of initiatives on the ballot each election, as used here.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR VARIATIONS IN TURNOUT RATES OVER TIME

Difficulties collecting data for all states over a lengthy time period limit the number of variables that can be controlled. Following

Everson (1981), we control for Southern states. Southern states are coded 1 and 0 if otherwise. Southern states have traditionally had considerably lower turnout rates as a legacy of Jim Crow laws (poll taxes, literacy tests, etc.) and one-party dominance. We also include a covariate for the presence of statewide races—namely gubernatorial and U.S. Senate elections. A dummy variable for gubernatorial races is coded 1 if the state had a gubernatorial race and 0 if otherwise. The same coding scheme is used for U.S. Senate races. Previous research has shown voter registration requirements have an important effect on statewide turnout—more stringent registration laws leads to lower voter turnout (Erikson, 1981; Rosenstone & Wolfinger, 1978). We measure registration requirements by the number of days before the election one can register to vote (closing data) in each state over time. States with election day registration are coded 0, for example, and states requiring registration a month before the election are coded 30. Raw data are from the biannual *Book of the States* for the years 1970 to 1998.

At the individual level, differential voter turnout rates by socioeconomic status in American politics have long been recognized by scholars and policy makers alike: individuals with higher income, education, and occupational status are considerably more likely to vote (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). We include variables controlling for the percentage of the population with a high school degree or higher in each state over time (U.S. Census, 1970-1990). States with higher income inequality are also likely to have lower turnout rates. Yearly income inequality is measured by a Gini index for each state from the period 1970-1996 (Langer, 1999).

In addition, many scholars have found that race plays a central, if not defining role, in both national and subnational politics in the United States (Hero 1998; Key, 1949). Using state level cross-sectional data, Hill and Leighley (1999) demonstrate that racial diversity is strongly associated with lower levels of voter turnout, weaker mobilizing institutions, and more restrictive voter registration requirements over the past half century. State minority diversity, or the proportion of the population that is minority, is measured with an index developed by Hero and Tolbert (1996) and Hero (1998) using 1980

and 1990 census data on the percentage of the Latino, Black, White, and Asian populations in each state.[5]

MODELING THE DATA

Previous research on voter turnout suggests it is necessary to analyze presidential and midterm elections separately (Smith, 1999; Jackson, 1997) given the substantially higher turnout in presidential elections across states. Chow tests indicate the constant terms for the models for presidential and midterm elections were statistically different, confirming the need to run separate regression analyses for midterm and presidential election years.[6] In his preliminary study, Smith (1999) suggests that the presence of salient initiatives on the ballot may be particularly important in midterm elections.

We are interested in accounting for variation in turnout rates over time to see if the increased use of direct democracy has had a positive effect on turnout, and across states to see if states that use the initiative process have higher levels of voter turnout.[7] Beck and Katz (1995) have made a strong argument against using the random effects model for pooled data and instead recommend use of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE).[8] Beck and Katz show that when the number of time periods is small relative to the number of panels ($T < N$), the coverage probabilities based on the OLS point estimates with panel-corrected standard errors are closer to nominal levels than the coverage probabilities of the general least squares (GLS) estimators with associated model-based GLS standard errors. Our models of midterm and presidential elections have seven time periods (T) and seven panels (N), where $T = N$. The panels in our study are election years (1970-1996) with the 50 states as cross-sectional observations. Using PCSE allows us to control for variation across cross- sectional units, which in this case are states. Through the inclusion of dummy variables for election years, we are also able to control for variation over time. The combination of accounting for between-state variation and dummy variables for years provides a two-way control model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Table 1 displays the impact of the presence and usage of the initiative process on voter turnout in presidential elections from 1972-1996 using an OLS regression model with panel corrected standard errors. Consistent with previous findings, states with the initiative process do not have higher turnout rates on average during this period (Smith, 1999). However, consistent with our hypothesis, *voter turnout rates are higher in presidential elections in states with more initiatives on the ballot*, even after controlling for state specific variations, other candidate races, registration requirements, idiosyncratic differences in specific elections, state racial/ethnic composition, and socioeconomic conditions. The data indicate states with frequent usage of the initiative process have higher turnout rates in presidential elections than states with low or no usage of the process. This suggests that in order for the process to stimulate turnout in high information presidential elections, a number of initiatives must appear on the ballot. This finding suggests that salient issue contests can encourage citizens to turn out and vote in presidential elections, lending support to participatory models of political organization (Peters, 1996).

Scholars of direct democracy suggest too many initiatives on the ballot can lead to "ballot-fatigue" (Magleby, 1984) decreasing voter turnout. To test this hypothesis, we examine a nonlinear transformation of the number of initiatives variable by adding a covariate (number of initiatives squared) to estimate a quadratic model. The quadratic model in the last column of Table 1 suggests there is little evidence of decreasing returns from having too many initiatives on the ballot in presidential elections.

Our findings contradict previous research reporting that states with the initiative process do not have higher turnout rates than noninitiative states (Everson, 1981; Magleby, 1984) and research finding higher turnout rates in midterm elections only (Smith, 1999). While Smith (1999) finds higher turnout rates in midterm elections in states with "salient initiatives" on the ballot, he does not detect higher turnout rates in presidential elections as we have shown here.

TABLE 1

Impact of Direct Democracy on Voter Turnout in 1972 to 1996 Presidential Elections: 50 State Data

Presidential Election: Variable	Presence of the Initiative Process				Presence and Usage of Initiative Process				Quadratic Model of Initiative Use			
	β	PCSE	p	Tolerance	β	PCSE	p	Tolerance	β	PCSE	p	Tolerance
State initiative process$_{i,t}$	−.28	.50	.58	.74	−.96	.56	.09	.59				
Number of initiatives on ballot$_{i,t}$					.32	.12	.01	.68	.28	.24	.24	.18
Number of initiatives on ballot squared$_{i,t}$									−.004	.02	.84	.19
Senate election$_{i,t}$	.39	.46	.39	.99	.44	.46	.33	.99	.43	.46	.34	.99
Southern state$_{i,t}$	−5.29	.82	.00	.38	−5.34	.81	.00	.38	−5.38	.82	.00	.38
Gubernatorial election$_{i,t}$	.90	.55	.11	.78	.81	.54	.14	.77	.81	.55	.15	.77
Percentage high school graduates$_{i,t}$	.22	.06	.03	.10	.20	.06	.00	.10	.17	.06	.00	.10
Index of minority diversity$_{i,t}$	−23.70	1.83	.00	.52	−24.45	1.83	.00	.50	−23.67	1.80	.00	.53
Income inequality (Gini coefficients)$_{i,t}$	65.65	15.24	.00	.22	66.63	15.09	.00	.22	60.16	14.83	.00	.23
Registration requirements$_{i,t}$	−.14	.02	.00	.73	−.14	.02	.00	.72	−.15	.02	.00	.72
Constant	31.36	8.55	.00		32.06	7.49		.00	35.69	7.35	.00	
Number of groups (i)	50				50				50			
Wald chi-square	847.03		.00		871.90	.00		861.86			.00	
Log-likelihood	−985.52				−981.92				−983.37			
N	350				350				350			

NOTE: Ordinary least squares (OLS) model with time series cross-sectional data for the 50 states. Unstandardized regression coefficients with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE). Probabilities based on two-tailed test. Subscript i contains the unit to which the observations belong, in this case state id, and controls for variation in turnout rates between states. White t represents time or the year the observation was measured. The tolerance statistic is the proportion of variability of that variable that is not explained by its linear relationship with the other independent variables in the model. Since tolerance is a proportion, its value ranges from 0 to 1. A value close to 1 indicates that an independent variable has little of its variability explained by the other independent variables. A value close to 0 indicates a collinear relationship. When the variable for percentage of high school graduates was omitted from the model (low tolerance statistic), the substantive interpretation of the model was unchanged. Intercepts for dummy variables for elections every 4 years, 1976-1996, were not reported due to space constraints, with 1972 as the base year. There is minimal collinearity between the dummy variable for the initiative process and the number of initiatives on the ballot (r = .51).

In contrast to previous research, our model distinguishes between states that have the initiative process and rarely use it (e.g., Illinois, Mississippi, Wyoming) and states that frequently use the process (e.g., California, Colorado, Oregon). The models confirm our hypothesis that states with more frequent usage of the initiative process have higher voter turnout in presidential elections over the past 26 years.

Consistent with previous research, we find that Southern states on average tend to have lower turnout than non-Southern states, after controlling for other factors and that states with more stringent registration requirements have lower voter turnout. Confirming research by Hill and Leighley (1999), our time series model shows that states with higher racial diversity have considerably lower voter turnout rates in presidential elections over the 26-year period.

MIDTERM ELECTIONS

The findings differ slightly from presidential to midterm elections (Jackson, 1997; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). Confirming previous research (Smith, 1999), during midterm elections (1970-1994) the dummy variable for the presence of the initiative process is positive and has a statistically significant impact on voter turnout (see Table 2). States with the initiative process, but not necessarily more frequent usage of the process, have higher turnout rates in midterm elections. As in presidential elections, usage of the process, measured by the number of initiatives on the ballot is *also* positively related to higher turnout rates. Why is the initiative dummy variable significant in midterm elections, but not presidential elections?

As suggested earlier, midterm elections are generally low information elections, with few sources of mobilization. Thus the lower threshold of only one or two propositions (initiatives or legislative referenda) on the ballot per election cycle (measured by the dummy variable) appears to be sufficient to stimulate turnout in midterm elections, when media coverage of candidate races is lower. Many ballot initiatives, however, may transform low information midterm elections to high information elections (Bowler & Donovan, 1998), stimulating turnout. Ballot propositions may add information to already high information presidential elections, also increasing turnout.

TABLE 2

Impact of Direct Democracy on Voter Turnout in 1970-1994 Midterm Elections: 50 State Data

Midterm Elections: Variable	Presence of the Initiative Process				Presence and Usage of Initiative Process				Quadratic Model of Initiative Use			
	β	PCSE	p	Tolerance	β	PCSE	p	Tolerance	β	PCSE	p	Tolerance
State initiative process$_{i,t}$	2.32	.76	.00	.74	1.62	.82	.05	.61				
Number of initiatives on ballot$_{i,t}$					.40	.19	.04	.72	1.22	.37	.00	.19
Number of initiatives on ballot squared$_{i,t}$									−.07	.03	.04	.20
Senate election$_{i,t}$	1.32	.70	.06	.99	1.44	.70	.04	.98	1.37	.69	.05	.98
Southern state$_{i,t}$	−8.02	1.26	.00	.36	−7.94	1.26	.00	.36	−7.83	1.25	.00	.36
Gubernatorial election$_{i,t}$	.62	.77	.42	.88	.59	.76	.44	.88	.66	.76	.39	.88
Percentage high school graduates$_{i,t}$	.18	.09	.04	.08	.17	.09	.05	.08	.20	.08	.01	.09
Index of minority diversity$_{i,t}$	−20.05	2.66	.00	.55	−20.60	2.67	.00	.54	−21.14	2.62	.00	.56
Income inequality	−17.74	.42	−17.75	.42	13.47	.53						
Gini coefficients$_{i,t}$	22.13	.18	22.00	.18	21.58	.19						
Registration requirements $_{i,t}$	−.09	.03	.01	.74	−.09	.03	.01	.74	−.09	.03	.01	.74
Constant	48.31	10.42	.00	48.89	10.36	.00	46.34	10.06	.00			
Number of groups (i)	50				50				50			
Wald chi-square	593.00		.00		604.58		.00		605.32		.00	
Log-likelihood	−1124.01				−1121.88				−1121.75			
N	349				349				350			

NOTE: Ordinary least squares (OLS) model with time series cross-sectional data for the 50 states. Unstandardized regression coefficients with panel corrected standard errors (PCSE) in parentheses. Probabilities based on two-tailed test. Subscript *i* contains the unit to which the observations belong, in this case state number, and controls for variation in turnout rates between states. White subscript *t* represents time or the year observation was measured. Intercepts for dummy variables for elections every 4 years, 1974 to 1994, were not reported due to space constraints, with 1970 as the base year. There is minimal collinearity between the dummy variable for the initiative process and the number of initiatives on the ballot ($r = .46$).

But can too much of a good thing—voting on ballot measures—decrease turnout? In contrast to the model for presidential elections, the "ballot fatigue" hypothesis is suggested for midterm elections. In the quadratic model reported in the last column of Table 2, the coefficient for the squared number of initiatives on the ballot is inversely related to voter turnout. While more ballot initiatives lead to higher turnout, too many policy questions may have a negative effect of decreasing turnout. This suggests that claims made by proponents of a pure (e.g., electronic) direct democracy in America—where voters would continually be asked to make public policy decisions—may actually be detrimental for widespread democratic participation (Barber, 1984; Budge, 1996; Toffler & Toffler, 1995).

COMPARING INITIATIVE TO NONINITIATIVE STATES

The previous analysis suggests there is a significant difference in turnout levels in initiative and noninitiative states in presidential and midterm elections. Since 1978, the year that California's tax limitation Proposition 13 sparked a renewed interested in direct democracy in the states, roughly a 5% gap in voter turnout is evident between initiative and noninitiative states in midterm and presidential elections not controlling for other factors (see Figure 1). Figure 2 shows on average a 10% gap in voter turnout between initiative and noninitiative states in midterm elections, while Figure 3 shows a somewhat smaller 5% gap in turnout rates in presidential elections. While a rough indicator, this is a non-trivial difference in voter turnout rates between states with and without the citizen initiative process.

We also examine the impact of the number of initiatives on voter turnout in only those states with the initiative process (analysis not shown due to space constraints). Controlling for other factors, initiative states with more initiatives on the ballot do indeed have higher turnout in both midterm and presidential elections over time, than states that use the process only rarely. The size of the unstandardized coefficient is roughly the same for midterm and presidential elections. This is further confirmation of the positive impact of the initiative process on electoral participation rates in the states. In quadratic models, the coefficient for the number of initiatives squared was nearly zero
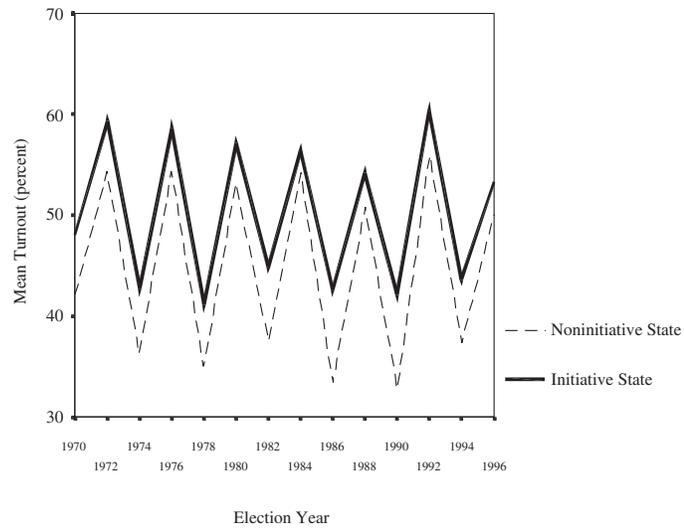
Figure 1: Voter Turnout in Initiative Versus Noninitiative States
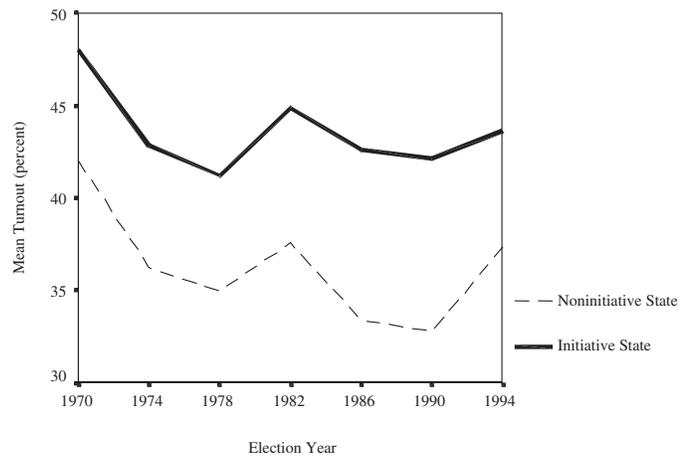
Figure 2: Voter Turnout in Midterm Elections: Initiative Versus Noninitiative States

and not statistically significant, providing little evidence of decreasing
returns with more ballot propositions.
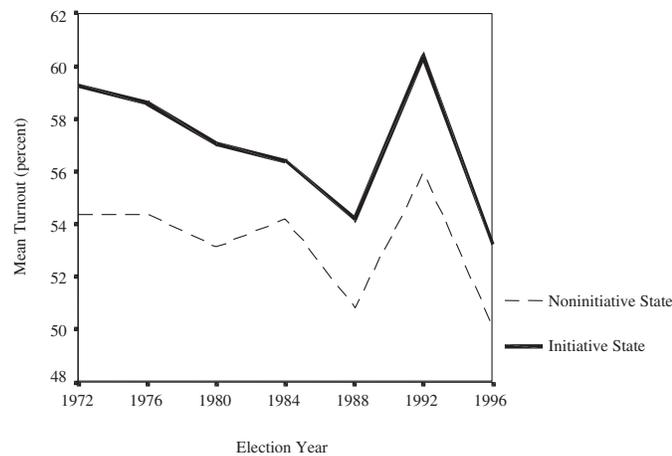
Figure 3: Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections: Initiative Versus Noninitiative States

Table 3 presents the predicted probability of voter turnout based on the complete 50 state models reported in Tables 1 and 2 (Model 2) by varying the presence and number of initiatives on the ballot for the 1994 midterm election and 1996 presidential election. Our baseline Model 1 is voter turnout in noninitiative states (variables for presence and number of initiatives on the ballot set to 0), estimated at 41% in the midterm election (1994) and 52% in the presidential election (1996). The estimates of turnout in each election with varying numbers of ballot initiatives are also based on the 50 state data. If a state has the initiative process, but no citizen initiatives on the ballot, voter turnout is estimated at 1.5% higher in 1994, but 1% lower in 1996 than the baseline model. If a state has two initiatives on the ballot in each election, voter turnout is estimated at 2.5% higher in the midterm election and roughly the same as the baseline model (noninitiative states) in presidential elections. If a state has four initiatives on the ballot in the 1994 and 1996 elections, turnout is estimated at more than 3% higher on average in midterm elections and .35% higher in presidential elections.

In presidential elections, the presence of the initiative process does not independently effect turnout rates. Each additional initiative on the ballot corresponds to an increase in turnout of approximately one

TABLE 3
Predicted Probability of Voter Turnout

Number of Initiatives on Election Ballot	Midterm Election (1994)	Presidential Election (1996)
Baseline 1: Noninitiative states[a]	41.13	52.05
Baseline 2: Noninitiative states[b]	35.72	48.25
0	42.75	51.08
1	43.15	51.41
2	43.55	51.74
3	43.95	52.07
4	44.34	52.40
5	44.74	52.72

NOTE: Estimated probabilities based on coefficients reported in Table 1 and 2. For both presidential and midterm elections it is assumed that there is a senate and gubernatorial race on the ballot, and that it is a non-Southern state. For presidential and midterm elections, the following variables were set at their mean: high school graduation rate, minority diversity, Gini coefficient, and voter registration.
a. Estimated probability based on coefficients reported in Tables 1 and 2 (column 2) using 50 state data.
b. Estimated probability based on model with only 26 noninitiative states and identical set of predictor variables as in Tables 1 and 2.

third of a percentage, after controlling for other factors. There is no evidence of ballot fatigue from too many initiatives on the ballot in presidential elections. In midterm elections, the presence of the initiative process appears to raise turnout rates by 1.5% more than noninitiative states, while each additional initiative on the ballot corresponds to an increase in turnout of almost one half of a percentage (.40%), after controlling for other factors. While this finding is promising, in midterm elections a very high number of initiatives is associated with a decrease in turnout rates, cautioning against excessive use of the process.

For comparison purposes we present a second baseline model based on a sample of only the 26 noninitiative states over time and an identical set of predictor variables used in Tables 1 and 2. It is possible that estimated turnout for noninitiative states is inflated in baseline Model 1 given the 50-state sample. The disparity in turnout between initiative and noninitiative states using baseline Model 1 is lower than what would be expected given the graphs reported in Figures 1-3. A Chow test indicates that mean turnout for initiative and noninitiative

states are different and should be analyzed separately. Baseline Model 2 reports a more reliable estimate of voter turnout in noninitiative states based on a model of only the 26 noninitiative states. These estimates suggest voter turnout in the 1994 midterm election in initiative states was between 7% to 9% higher than in noninitiative states, while turnout in the 1996 presidential election in initiative states was between 3% to 4.5% higher than in noninitiative states, after controlling for other factors. Again, each additional initiative on the ballot raises turnout by one third of a percentage in presidential elections and almost one half a percentage in midterm elections.

Although earlier studies (Everson, 1981; Magleby, 1984) did not detect a relationship between direct democracy and electoral participation, higher voter turnout in initiative states in presidential and midterm elections should not come as a surprise. Ballot initiatives dominate media headlines, shape candidate elections, and even national party politics. Some of the most salient and emotional policy questions—from taxes, gay rights, immigration, the environment, and affirmative action—are decided by voters in initiative contests. In some states, the salience of ballot initiatives among voters has even eclipsed that of candidates running for office (Chavez, 1998; Smith, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The empirical evidence presented here suggests states with frequent usage of citizen initiatives have higher voter turnout over a 26-year period than noninitiative states in both presidential elections and midterm elections, after controlling for alternative explanations for variation in turnout rates across the 50 states. The research suggests in order for ballot initiatives to stimulate turnout in presidential elections, the higher threshold of frequent usage of the process is required, while in midterm elections, the lower threshold of even one initiative ballot is sufficient. This suggests that both the presence and usage of the initiative process are related to higher citizen participation rates over time. This is an important finding, as the evidence contradicts previous research by Everson (1981) and Magleby (1984), both of whom found the initiative process to have a negligible impact on voter turnout. Our analysis suggests instead that the initiative pro-

cess can and does play a positive role in increasing electoral participation.

Ballot propositions may increase voter turnout by transforming low information midterm elections into high information elections, and adding additional information to already high information presidential elections. In high information elections, such as presidential elections, a higher threshold appears to be operating, in which a larger number of ballot propositions are necessary to stimulate extra votes, relative to low information elections when initiatives do not compete with presidential candidates for media coverage. Future research should explore in more detail the relationship between information, ballot propositions, and voter turnout.

Previous research showing a relationship between the initiative process and voter turnout, reports a relationship only during midterm elections (Smith, 2001). The research presented here, in contrast, suggests that ballot initiatives are systematically associated with higher turnout rates in both midterm and presidential elections. The disparity in voter turnout rates among initiative and noninitiative states has increased during the 1990s, as more propositions have qualified for state election ballots than at any other period in the century. Depending on the baseline model employed and number of initiatives on the ballot, estimates of voter turnout between initiative and noninitiative states vary. Our most reliable model estimates voter turnout in the 1994 midterm election in initiative states at 7% to 9% higher than in noninitiative states, while turnout in the 1996 presidential election in initiative states at 3% to 4.5% higher than in noninitiative states, after controlling for other factors. As initiative elections gain in their importance, they may play a growing role in presidential and midterm elections. As we have witnessed in California and several other states during the past decade, ballot measure proponents and opponents likely will continue to fuse their campaigns with the presidential, U.S. Senate, and gubernatorial candidates, and vice versa. In the future, the initiative process and more participatory modes of governance, including mail or Internet voting, as well as a national referendum, may serve to increase voter participation in both presidential and midterm election years.

NOTES

1. In the indirect initiative, a group drafts and qualifies a proposition, then submits it to the legislature for consideration. If the legislature passes the measure, then it becomes law. Otherwise, the policy is placed on the ballot and the voters decide whether it passes or fails.

2. Mississippi adopted the citizen initiative process in 1992. The state is coded 0 (noninitiative state) for the years 1970 to 1990 and 1 (initiative state) for the years 1992 to 1996.

3. See the Web site for the Initiative and Referendum Institute, Washington, DC, for a listing of citizen initiatives and legislative referenda appearing on state election ballots over time (www.ballotwatch.org).

4. Most notably, is the front page news coverage measuring what it is intended to measure (i.e., the saliency of initiative contests), or is it measuring the opinions of newspaper editors who decide what issues get front-page billing?

5. The index is a measure of a state's racial/ethnic population. The index was computed with the following formula:

$$\text{Minority diversity} = 1 - [(\text{proportion Latino})^2 + (\text{proportion Black})^2 + (\text{proportion White})^2 + (\text{proportion Asian})^2]$$

6. A Chow test based on ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models indicate that models for presidential and midterm elections should be estimated separately: $F(15, 669)$, $H0 = 2.87$ $F = 3.30$, $p = .01$ (reject null).

7. This research faces a common ecological inference problem that is probably familiar to most readers—using geographically aggregated data at the state level to make inferences about individual level behavior. While our primary interest is in understanding general voting patterns across states, due to this condition, there is the potential for misleading inferences about individual level voting decisions. Consistent with our findings, previous research using survey data and controlling for whether the respondent was from an initiative or noninitiative state, suggests that voter turnout is higher in initiative states in midterm elections (Schecter, 2000).

8. Similar substantive findings were found when using a random effects general least squares (GLS) model and feasible general least squares (FGLS) model. Model specifications are available from the authors. The random effects model assumes that variation in the individual specific constant terms are randomly distributed across cross-sectional units (Greene, 1997, p. 623).

REFERENCES

Barber, B. (1984). *Strong democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Beck, N., & Katz, J. (1995). What to do (and not to do) with time-series–cross-section data in comparative politics. *American Political Science Review*, 89, 634-647.

Bell, D. A., Jr. (1978). The referendum: democracy's barrier to racial equality. *Washington Law Review*, *54*, 1-29.

Bowler, S., & Donovan T. (1998). *Demanding choices*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bowler, S., Donovan, T., & Tolbert C. J. (Eds.), (1998). *Citizens as legislators: Direct democracy in the United States*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Broder, D. S. (2000). *Democracy derailed: Initiative campaigns and the power of money.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Budge, I. (1996). *The new challenge of direct democracy.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Butler, D., & Ranney, A. (1994). *Referendums around the world: The growing use of direct democracy.* Washington, DC: AEI Press.

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1960). *The American voter.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chavez, L. (1998). *The color bind: California's battle to end affirmative action.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Comobrecco, J. (1998). Preferences, fiscal policies and the initiative process. *Journal of Politics*, *60*(3), 819-829.

Cronin, T. (1989). *Direct democracy: The politics of initiative, referendum, and recall.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dryzek, J. S. (1990). *Discursive democracy: Politics, policy and political science.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Elazar, D. J. (1984). *American federalism: A view from the states.* New York: Crowell.

Erikson, R. (1981). Why do people vote? Because they are registered. *American Politics Quarterly*, *9*, 259-276.

Everson, D. (1981). The effects of initiatives on voter turnout: A comparative state analysis. *Western Political Quarterly*, *34*, 415-425.

Fishkin, J. (1993). *Democracy and deliberation.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gamble, B. (1997). Putting civil rights to a popular vote. *American Journal of Political Science*, *91*, 245-269.

Gerber, E. R. (1996). Legislative response to the threat of popular initiatives. *American Journal of Political Science*, *40*, 99-128.

Gerber, E. R. (1999). *The populist paradox.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gerber, E. R., & Hug, S. (2001). Legislative response to direct legislation. In M. Mendelsohn & A. Parkin (Eds.), *Referendum democracy: Citizens, elites, and deliberation in referendum campaigns*. New York: Palgrave.

Greene, W. H. (1997). *Econometric analysis* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Hero, R. E. (1998). *Faces of inequality: Social diversity in American politics.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hero, R. E., & Tolbert, C. J. (1996). A racial/ethnic diversity interpretation of politics and policy in the states of the U.S. *American Journal of Political Science*, *40*, 851-871.

Hill, K. Q., & Leighley, J. E. (1999). Racial diversity, voter turnout, and mobilizing institutions in the United States. *American Politics Quarterly*, *27*, 275-295.

Initiative and Referendum Institute. (1998). (Online). Washington, DC. Available: www.IandRInstitute.org

Jackson, R. (1997). The mobilization of U.S. state electorates in the 1998 and 1990 elections. *Journal of Politics*, *59*, 520-537.

Key, V. O., Jr. (1949). *Southern politics in state and nation.* New York: Knopf.

Langer, L. (1999). Measuring income distribution across space and time in the American states. *Social Science Quarterly*, *80*, 55-67.

Lascher, E., Hagen, M., & Rochlin, S. (1996). Gun behind the door? Ballot initiatives, state policies and public opinion. *The Journal of Politics*, *58*, 760-775.

Magleby, D. (1984). *Direct legislation: Voting on ballot propositions in the United States.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Magleby, D. (1994). Direct Legislation in the American States. In D. Butler & A. Ranney (Eds.), *Referendums around the world*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Magleby, D., & Patterson, K. (1998). Consultants and direct democracy. *PS, 31*, 160-169.

Making democracy more interesting. (1978, November 27). *The New York Times*, p. A18.

Matsusaka, J. (1995). Fiscal effects of the voter initiative: Evidence from the last 30 years. *Journal of Political Economy, 103*, 587-623.

Mendelsohn, M., & Parkin, A. (2001). *Referendum democracy: Citizens, elites and deliberation in referendum campaigns*. New York: Palgrave.

Morain, D. (1999, April 18). Wealth buys access to state politics. *Los Angeles Times*.

Morell, M. (1999). Citizens' evaluations of participatory democratic procedures: Normative theory meets empirical science. *Political Research Quarterly, 52*(2), 293-322.

Mundlak, Y. (1978). On the pooling of time series and cross sectional data. *Econometrica, 46*, 69-86.

Osborne & Gaebler. (1992). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and democratic theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Peters, B. G. (1996). *The future of governing: Four emerging models*. Lawrence: Kansas University Press.

Price, C. (1975). The initiative: A comparative state analysis and reassessment of a Western phenomenon. *Western Political Quarterly, 28*, 243-262.

Rosenstone, S., & Hansen, J. M. (1993). *Mobilization, participation, and democracy in America*. New York: MacMillan.

Rosenstone, S., & Wolfinger, R. (1978). The effect of registration laws on voter turnout. *American Political Science Review, 72*, 22-45.

Rosenthal, A. (1997). *The decline of representative democracy*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Schmidt, D. (1989). *Citizen lawmakers: The ballot initiative revolution*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Schrag, P. (1998). *Paradise lost: California's experience, America's future*. New York: New Press.

Schecter, D. (2000). *Evaluating the impact of direct democracy on voter turnout*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.

Smith, D. (1998). *Tax crusaders and the politics of direct democracy*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, M. (2001). The contingent effects of ballot initiatives and candidate races on turnout. *American Journal of Political Science, 45*, 700-706.

Toffler, A., & Toffler, H. (1995). *Creating a new civilization: A proposal for reshaping society*. Turner.

Tolbert, C. J. (1998). Changing rules for state legislatures: Direct democracy and governance policies. In S. Bowler, T. Donovan, & C. J. Tolbert (Eds.), *Citizens as legislators: Direct democracy in the United States*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press

Tolbert, C. J., & Hero, R. E. (1996). Race/ethnicity and direct democracy: An analysis of California's illegal immigration initiative. *The Journal of Politics, 58*, 806-818.

Tolbert, C. J., Lowenstein, D., & Donovan, T. (1998). Election law and rules for using initiatives. In S. Bowler, T. Donovan, & C. J. Tolbert (Eds.), *Citizens as legislators: Direct democracy in the United States*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press

Turnout could hinge on initiatives. (1998, October 6). *National Journal's Congress Daily*.

Wolfinger, R., & Rosenstone, S. (1980). *Who votes?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Caroline J. Tolbert is an assistant professor of political science at Kent State University. She is coeditor (with Shaun Bowler and Todd Donovan) of Citizens as Legislators: Direct Democracy in the United States *(Ohio State University Press, 1998). Her research focuses on the public policies adopted by initiatives and referenda, specifically issues of governance (electoral/political reform, race/ethnicity), and health policy. She has published in the* American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Women and Politics, *and* Party Politics.

John A. Grummel received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Kent State University in 2001. His research focuses on the impact of economic voting in initiative and referenda elections.

Daniel A. Smith is an associate professor of political science at the University of Denver. He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1994. His book, Tax Crusaders and the Politics of Direct Democracy *(Routledge, 1998), examines the financial backing and the populist-sounding rhetoric of three antitax ballot initiatives in the United States. He has published in* Social Science History, Social Science Journal, State Politics and Policy Quarterly, Economic Development Quarterly, *and* Presidential Studies Quarterly. *His chapter, "Campaign Finance of Ballot Initiatives in the American States" is being published in* Taking the Initiative: New Ideas on a Growing Phenomenon.

VOTER REGISTRATION RECONSIDERED
Putting First Things First Is Not Enough

RANDALL D. LLOYD
Eastern Kentucky University

Research on voter participation has led to the conventional wisdom that registered people will vote and that registration requirements inhibit voter turnout. However, research on which this belief is based improperly tests registered people who have no registration needs, and thus, it does not accurately identify the contextual influences associated with the registration decision. Contrary to past research, this analysis of January unregistered individuals from the 1980 ANES panel study suggests longer registration-closing periods increase the likelihood of November registration. An expectation of voting and uncertainty about the future may explain the phenomenon. Also, this analysis finds that registration requirements do not appear to inhibit registration for election-year movers.

An often expressed truism in U.S. voter-turnout studies says that people vote because they are registered and higher turnout levels will first require active voter registration efforts. This belief is based on studies that show registration and turnout to be closely related and that the low levels of turnout in the United States are, to a large extent, a product of registration requirements (Erikson, 1981; Kelley, Ayres, & Bowen, 1967; Piven & Cloward, 1988; Rosenstone & Wolfinger, 1978; Teixeira, 1992). However, the analyses of registration requirements on which this conventional wisdom is based have been misspecified and do not adequately model the contextual influences on registration.

The closing date for registration is the central contextual influence under suspicion in this continuing research (Fenster, 1994; Huang & Shields, 2000; Highton, 1997; Jackson, 1996). The closing date is the point, up to a month before an election, after which a prospective voter is no longer eligible to register. The conventional view holds that because many people will not start to think about their vote until very soon before an election, "the longer before an election people must act to ensure their eligibility to vote, the more likely they will fail to do so"

and that "early closing dates, by requiring people to register long before campaigns have reached their climax and mobilization efforts have entered high gear, depress voter participation in American elections" (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993, p. 208).

The theory suggests that influences that increase interest, such as might occur with salient races and large levels of campaign spending, mobilize people to vote. Mobilization may be related to elite activity, voter interest, or both in some direct or indirect manner (Berch, 1993; Cox & Munger, 1989; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). Political and party elites in competitive-party states may attempt to mobilize people to turn out at the election (Key, 1949), or active, top-of-the-ticket campaigns themselves may excite voters and provide easier sources of information (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954). However, these efforts and influences may not peak until after the close of registration, and therefore, conventional wisdom suggests, long closing periods preclude greater levels of participation.

Figure 1 illustrates the conventional view of registration closing dates with regard to mobilization influences. Mobilization levels increase as the election nears and registration levels increase as well if unhindered by longer closing dates, to the left. This perspective results from faulty sample selection and model specification, however. The consideration that registration laws deter already registered people is a major shortcoming of this research. Three approaches highlight this. In one approach, registration-law variables are employed to analyze November turnout influences on data samples with both unregistered and registered people (Teixeira, 1992; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980); other November turnout models test registration laws on samples of registered people alone but make no distinction for long-term registrants whose status is uninfluenced by the election (Jackson, 1996; Timpone, 1998); and some analyses model November registration rather than turnout but include long-term registered individuals not subject to election year registration requirements (Erikson, 1981; Mitchell & Wlezien, 1995a). Substantively, this research investigates registration status for many people who have no registration need. The reasons unregistered people do or do not register are not assessed, however. The research implicitly suggests that registered people have problems with registration laws; they do not. To properly assess the
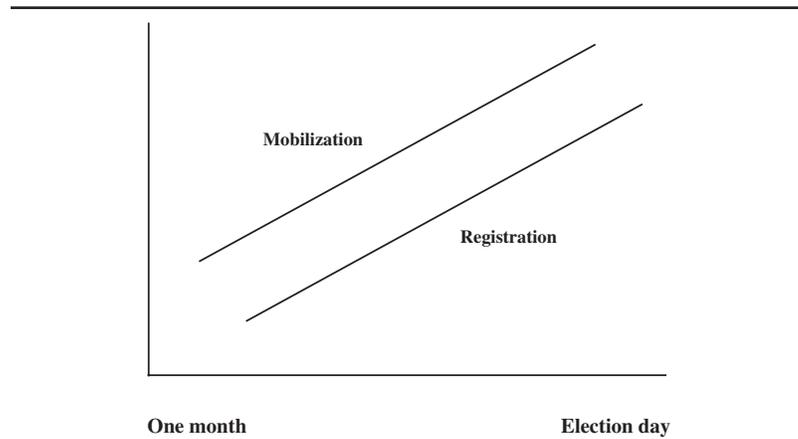
Figure 1: Standard Expression of the Relationship Between Campaign Mobilization Influences and Registration Levels Preceding an Election

influences of registration activity, long-term registered people should be excluded. Conclusions that differ from conventional wisdom arise when this distinction is understood.

This article considers registration influences on early election-year unregistered people. The 1980 American National Election Study panel study is used. The model includes variables for the expected impact of election-specific mobilization on registration, and the personal attributes of survey respondents related to their likelihood of voting. Also, a January indication of the intention to vote in November is proposed as an important predictor of a person's likelihood of registration. In addition, the analysis reconsiders the conventional view that registration laws have a detrimental effect on registration for people who move during the election year.

REGISTRATION THEORY

Presented here are theoretical illustrations of registration, which highlight differences between current and past assumptions and provide guidance for the model.

SAMPLE SELECTION

To begin, let us assume that the same factors associated with turnout—demographic identifiers, psychological affect, and contextual settings of the elections—are also associated with registration levels (Erikson, 1981). Thus, a person's decision to register at time t is a function of these individual traits at time t:

$$\text{Registration}_t = F(\text{demographic}_t, \text{psychological}_t, \text{contextual}_t).$$

Once registered, these influences for future registration are necessarily undefined: There are no current barriers to registration for a person who is already registered. For some point in the future, $t + i$,

$$\text{Registration}_{t+i} = F(\text{Registration}_t),$$

and the time $t + i$ influences on the current registration decision are irrelevant.[1] Conversely, influences at time t for previously registered people are described by

$$\text{Registration}_t = F(\text{demographic}_{t-i}, \text{psychological}_{t-i}, \text{contextual}_{t-i}),$$

where $t - i$ is the point in the past when the person registered. The influences on registration behavior are election-year specific only for people who need to register. Past research applies current contextual influences for past registration decisions by failing to distinguish the two groups. The standard treatment may be represented by

$$\text{Registration}_{(t,\, t-i)} = F(\text{demographic}_t, \text{psychological}_t, \text{contextual}_t),$$

where both past and present registration decisions are based on present circumstances because election specific influences are employed to explain the registration decisions for everyone. The inclusion of previously registered people leads to misspecification. To model current influences, the sample should not have long-term registered people in it.

When properly selected, the sample may still indicate that larger closing dates negatively effect registration levels. Therefore, the

working hypothesis for the following model continues to use past expectations:

Hypothesis 1: Longer registration closing periods will deter people from registering to vote.

PARTICIPATION ATTRACTION

A possible predilection for some people to participate, but not others, requires a distinction be made for a desire to vote and its effect on registration probabilities. Past research assumes that all people desire to vote. The evidence for this belief is found in arguments that assert registered people will vote or that first things must be put first: Registration barriers must be lowered to get people to vote. However, not everyone has an interest in voting (Ragsdale & Rusk, 1993). Only someone who may want to vote might be deterred by registration laws. Registration requirements are less likely to deter politically unengaged people because they never reach that stage of the process. Unlike the traditional view that registration status is the equivalent of turnout and thus is an end in itself, this view suggests that registration activity is an intermediate step toward another end, undertaken for a specific purpose. A focus on the latter point in the process (turnout) to explain the former (registration) may appear tautologous at first blush but is necessary when considered against the practice where turnout is explained with reference to registration status.[2] This distinction may be assessed through a model specification that distinguishes participation-interest levels. A hypothesis for this possibility may be stated:

Hypothesis 2: People who expect to vote will register.

Finally, voter mobility and associated registration levels have been the focus of recent policy initiatives. Past research suggests that registration requirements hinder registration for election-year movers (Brians, 1997; Squire, Wolfinger & Glass, 1987). This work does not differentiate the people as registered or unregistered before they move, however. The proposition that politically interested people are likely to participate suggests that we should not expect registration laws to influence previously unregistered movers in the same manner

that they influence people registered prior to a move. Thus, registration status prior to a move should be addressed. If movement and registration requirements are the cause of low activity as past research suggests, separation of the groups should have no effect on registration probabilities. Two related hypotheses are, therefore,

> *Hypothesis 3A:* Unregistered people who move in an election year will be deterred from registration after the move.
> *Hypothesis 3B:* Registered people who move in an election year will be deterred from registration after the move.

If, however, movement and registration requirements are not related to registration activity, the two groups will diverge.

DATA

The data exclude respondents registered prior to the start of the election cycle. The beginning of the year is chosen for this cutoff point because people registered before or during January are unlikely to be motivated by the election.[3] The registration decision should be related to the developing campaign after this point. In addition, the sample includes election-year movers. The 1980 American National Election Study panel survey is used.[4] This survey has a unique validated registration-date indication, as well as the often used validated registration status that minimizes possible problems from self reports of registration and turnout (Abramson & Claggett, 1984; Claggett, 1990). The sample is selected according to the validated registration date, or from self-reports if missing, and movers are determined by survey information.

The indication of registration status in November 1980 is the dependent variable. This dichotomous variable is coded to differentiate the November unregistered respondents from the registered respondents. The survey validation section indicates the November registration status, or turnout and therefore registration status; however, some observations lack this information. The multi-wave registration self reports are used as appropriate for these people.[5] Because some people's registration status might change due to mobility, self

reports, or validated data if available, determine the registration status both before and after the move. One fourth of the sample had moved during the election year.

Besides the indications of closing dates and mail registration, independent variables include commonly used indicators for demographic background, for community involvement and activity, for psychological attributes related to political affect, and for election context (Erikson, 1981; Leighley & Nagler, 1992; Rosenstone & Wolfinger, 1978; Teixeira, 1992; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). In addition, the model presents a refinement of election year registration influences for movers with variables to distinguish previously registered movers from previously unregistered movers. Nonmovers are the reference category. Also, to more fully understand registration behavior, the January indication of an intention to vote in November considers whether people have a reason to register.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the logistic regression results of voter registration influences for those who needed to register in 1980, 63% of whom ultimately did so.[6] The logit model attains a .0001 significance level, with 75% of the responses correctly predicted and a 33% reduction of error.[7]

For this sample, many influences considered in past research did not attain statistical significance.[8] This includes most community-oriented influences such as home ownership and union membership, and demographic indicators such as age, race, gender, and income. Mobilization influences do not appear salient for registration either, although this does not reflect upon the mobilization and turnout relationship for registered people. Other demographic and psychological-affect variables do meet previous expectations for influence. These include education, marital status, certain occupations, southern residence, civic duty, and the partisan attachment indications.

Counter to past research, the registration-closing-date variable yields conventionally inconsistent results and Hypothesis 1 is not confirmed. With disinterested individuals differentiated, the longest closing dates appear to enhance November registration among the January

TABLE 1
Logit Results for Registration Influences on
January Unregistered and Election-Year Movers

Independent Variable	Parameter Estimate (M.L.E.)	SE	Impact
Intercept	–4.96	1.26***	
Age	0.03	0.04	—
Age-squared	–0.00	0.00	—
White	–0.08	0.42	—
Male	–0.23	0.36	—
Education	0.40	0.16	.35*
Income	–0.01	0.02	—
Married	1.06	0.30	.45***
Church attendance	0.39	0.55	—
Home owner	0.04	0.32	—
Union household	–0.32	0.33	—
Occupation			
Professional/technical	1.69	0.79	.26*
Managerial/administrative	0.65	0.62	—
Clerical/service	0.39	0.47	—
Blue collar	0.88	0.53	—
Student	2.53	1.26	.30*
Retired	0.94	0.69	—
Unemployed	0.77	0.79	—
South	–0.96	0.45	–.21*
10+ years residence	0.83	0.43	—
Sense of duty	0.77	0.38	.45*
Party distinction	0.80	0.46	—
Strong partisan identification	0.95	0.39	.18*
Registration laws			
Closing dates	0.05	0.02	.36**
Mail registration	–0.01	0.36	—
Election year movement			
Prior registration	1.03	0.51	.36*
Prior nonregistration	0.62	0.54	—
Expect to vote	1.50	0.31	.55***
Governor's race	0.02	0.46	—
Senate race	–0.34	0.43	—
Presidential primary	–0.44	0.46	—
House race spending	0.00	0.00	—

ROE = 33%
Correctly Predicted = 75% (false positive = 25%; false negative = 26%)
–2xLLR = 546.6
Model chi-square = 151.9; df = 31

(continued)

TABLE 1 Continued

Independent Variable	Parameter Estimate (M.L.E.)	SE	Impact

Model significance $p \leq .0001$
$N = 414$
Mean of dependent variable = .63

SOURCE: Honaker, Joseph, King, Scheve, and Singh (1999). Data source: 1980 ANES panel study; Mitchell and Wlezien (1995b).
NOTE: The dependent variable is November registration status for those not registered in January 1980, or who required registration after an election-year move; unregistered = 0, registered = 1. The data are calculated from the combined parameter estimates of five imputed data sets.
$*p \leq .05$, two-tailed. $**p \leq .01$, two-tailed. $***p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

unregistered. The most onerous interval is associated with a 36% increase in registration probability. We might consider that the larger closing periods increase registration probabilities through the influences of expectation and uncertainty. Thirty days before an election, some people think they may wish to vote but are uncertain about that future event and register so they have the choice to participate at a later date. Mobilizing influences of the campaigns have not provided an impetus or information to decide one way or the other. Given the ability to delay registration until nearer the election, a person is more likely to have made a decision about participation, but often, that decision will be to abstain from voting. This makes registration unnecessary. Thus, registration does not lead to voting but provides the opportunity to do so. Further support for this theory is found with the indication of an intention to vote. The null hypothesis of Hypothesis 2 is rejected, and the importance of a separate influence is clear. People who expect to vote in November are 55% more likely to register than those who did not expect to vote.

Figure 2 presents an alternate expression of registration behavior compared to that of the Figure 1 conventional view. Here, registration levels follow uncertainty, not mobilization. Registration levels decrease as the election nears, yet as mobilization efforts increase. At the same time, uncertainty about the desire to vote necessarily decreases as the election nears. The decision to vote once registered is not addressed. However, the idea that registration leads to voting does not track because the fundamental assumptions underpinning the
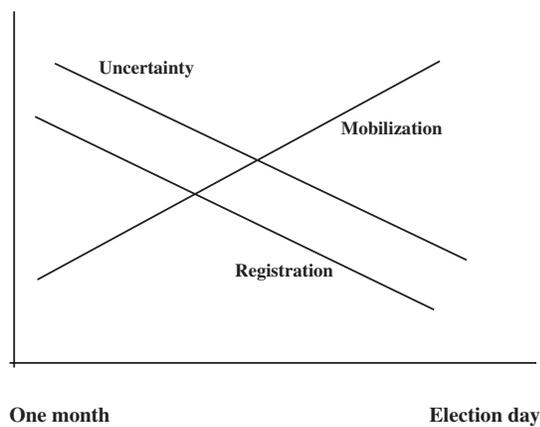
Figure 2: Alternate Expression of the Relationship Between Campaign Mobilization Influences and Registration Immediately Preceding an Election, With Uncertainty About the Turnout Decision

view are suspect. Closing dates and mobilization efforts are not the influences commonly perceived.

Finally, election-year movement does not conform to past results. Neither Hypothesis 3A nor Hypothesis 3B are confirmed. Respondents were separated into two election-year-movement groups where the nonmovers make up the reference category. People who move during the year are coded as registered or unregistered before the move. Previously unregistered movers are no more nor less likely to register after the move than respondents who did not move: Movement does not influence their registration probability. The previously registered movers, however, were 36% more likely to register after their move than the January unregistered who never moved. Here as well it appears that registration activity arises from the desire to vote, which is an affect toward some participation ideal already evident. A person interested in voting continues to register regardless of movement and registration requirements. A person disinterested in voting is unlikely to register, not because of the move or registration laws but precisely because he or she is not interested.

CONCLUSION

Several new distinctions presented here reconsider past research on the influences that predict registration activity. First, contextual influences are analyzed for unregistered rather than registered people. The common expectation that extended closing periods deter registration is not supported when long-term registrants are excluded. Instead, longer closing periods appear to increase registration, perhaps through uncertainty about the future among people who think they may vote.

Second, the analysis suggests that people who are unregistered at the beginning of the election year, and who plan to vote, are likely to register, and those who do not plan to vote will not register. Registration status does not necessarily predict turnout but a desire to turn out does predict registration activity. Last, where some research expects election-year movement to lower registration and therefore turnout levels, this analysis suggests registered people who move will register again; unregistered people who move are not likely to register but are not hindered by registration laws or their move. All three propositions suggest that political engagement, and not contextual influences, are associated with registration activity.

Conventional wisdom holds that registration leads to voting, or that people vote because they are registered. Therefore, barriers to registration deter turnout, and increased turnout requires putting first things first: Registration barriers must be eased. But registration laws do not appear to be the culprit in lower registration levels. Rather, it appears that a separate interest in participation is at work. Should disinterested individuals become registered, they will not necessarily turn out on election day. In other words, people who register are "voting kinds of people," and efforts intended to increase registration levels will not have the hoped for effect on turnout so long as some people are not. Therefore, putting first things first is not enough.

APPENDIX

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Age. Age in November.

Race. Non-White and Hispanic = 0, White = 1.

Gender. Female = 0, male = 1.

Education. Ordinal coding: 8 years or fewer, 9-11 years, high school graduate, some college, and a college degree.

Income. Family income is coded to the midpoint of the ANES category, divided by $1,000. The topmost, open-ended category is set to $7,500 above the bottom of the range, which reflects the total range of the penultimate category.

Married. Dummy variable, married = 1.

Church attendance. Regular church attendance = 1; frequent, infrequent, or no attendance = 0.

Home owner. Dummy variable, home owners = 1.

Union household. Dummy variable, union household = 1.

Occupation. Dummy variable categories (0, 1) are as follows: housewife (omitted reference category), blue collar (which includes farm workers), professional and technical workers, managerial and administrative workers, clerical and service workers, students, retired people, and the unemployed, all coded from the first wave.

South. Dummy variable, Southern states in the first wave as categorized by the ANES = 1.

Residency length. Dummy variable, ten years or more in January = 1. Election year movers = 0.

Election year movement. Dummy variables, movers are coded 1 or 0 for prior registration, and 1 or 0 for prior nonregistration. Nonmovers are 0 for both movement variables. Election laws are coded for the post-move state.

Sense of duty. Dummy variable: A person should vote even if he or she does not care who wins = 1.

Party distinction. Dummy variable, 1 if the person sees a difference between the parties.

Strong partisan identification. Dummy variable, identifies strongly with any party = 1.

Closing date. Number of days, 0 to 32 (Source: Mitchell & Wlezien, 1995b).

Mail registration. Dummy variable, states with mail registration = 1 (Source: Mitchell & Wlezien, 1995b).

Expect to vote. Dummy variable, January wave expectation for November vote, or probably will vote = 1; "it depends," "probably not," or "no" = 0.

Mobilization. Dummy variables, states with a U.S. Senate race, gubernatorial race, or presidential primary = 1.

House race spending. Total spending by the candidates and the parties on the candidates' behalf, divided by $10,000.

MISSING DATA

Many influences for this analysis are coded from the complete first wave of the panel or from outside sources. Attrition and nonresponse in subsequent waves are less problematic and where data are missing—primarily in three variables: income, duty, and party distinctiveness—multiple imputation is used to replace the missing data (Honaker, Joseph, King, Scheve, & Singh, 1999; King, Honaker, Joseph, & Scheve, 1998).

NOTES

1. This does not consider the special case of registration purging, which is more appropriately related to the decision to vote than to register.

2. The intention to vote is not the same as interest in a campaign. In January, interest in a campaign should not exist because no campaign has begun and is more properly a turnout related influence. Antecedents of a vote expectation are outside the scope of this article and should be the subject of a separate analysis.

3. A sample of people who are unregistered at the beginning of the year leads to concerns of selection-bias. Bias may exist if the same influences of sample selection are related to the out-

come influences. (The traditional approach that chooses registered voters to assess registration influences is itself a selection problem.) In this analysis, the bias may be that the people sampled will never register. The influences believed to predict registration may also predict past registration decisions and therefore the selection of the sample of unregistered people. However, 63% of the sample did ultimately register. Thus, at least some of the selection influences do not predict the outcome. One way to minimize the problem, and employed in the analysis, is to model possible causes of selection to the sample, which can help to counteract selection bias effects (Achen, 1986).

4. The use of a 1980 panel study cannot answer questions about recent Motor Voter reforms, but it can illuminate underlying influences on participation, which will have implications for the success of Motor Voter legislation in practice. Recent surveys would be preferable except no recent one has the very important date-of-registration indication.

The data utilized in this research were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data for the *American National Election Study, 1980*, were originally collected by the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan, for the National Election Studies under the overall direction of Warren E. Miller; Maria Elena Sanchez was the director of studies in 1980. The data were collected under a grant from the National Science Foundation. The registration data for the *Voter Registration and Election Laws in the United States, 1972-1992*, were originally collected by Glenn E. Mitchell, II and Christopher Wlezien. Neither the original collectors of the data nor the consortium bear any responsibility for the analysis or interpretations presented here.

5. The dependent variable for one fourth of the sample was based on self reports. Several separate analyses were run in which 2% to 20% of self reports used for November status were randomly reversed. The main variables of interest maintained their general magnitudes, directions, and levels of statistical significance each time.

6. Because the dependent variable in this model is dichotomous—registration status in November—logistic regression is employed rather than ordinary least squares regression (Aldrich & Nelson 1984; Hanushek & Jackson, 1977). Impact is an indication of the probability that an independent variable is related to the occurrence of the dependent variable versus a reference point within the independent variable or category. The impact range is between 0 and 100%.

7. The reduction of error represents the model improvement in prediction over an assumption that the best probability for outcome prediction is the mean of the dependent variable.

$$\text{ROE} = 100 \times (\% \text{ correctly classified} - \% \text{ in modal category}) / (100\% - \% \text{ in modal category}).$$

8. Earlier models employed multiple alternate formulations of dummy, continuous, and interaction variables. Most did not attain statistical significance, while others reached significance but for reasons of parsimony had interval or ordinal variables substituted for them.

REFERENCES

Abramson, P. R., & Claggett, W. (1984). Race-related differences in self-reported and validated turnout. *Journal of Politics*, *46*, 719-738.

Achen, C. H. (1986). *The statistical analysis of quasi-experiments*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Aldrich, J. H., & Nelson, F. D. (1984). *Linear probability, logit, and probit models* (Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, series number 07-045). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Berch, N. (1993). Another look at closeness and turnout: The case of the 1979 and 1980 Canadian National Elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, *46*, 421-432.

Berelson, B. R., Lazarsfeld, P. L., & McPhee, W. (1954). *Voting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brians, C. L. (1997). Residential mobility, voter registration, and electoral participation in Canada. *Political Research Quarterly*, *50*, 215-227.

Claggett, W. (1990). Reported and validated voter registration. *American Politics Quarterly*, *18*, 197-207.

Cox, G. W., & Munger, M. C. (1989). Closeness, expenditures, and turnout in the 1982 U.S. House Elections. *American Political Science Review*, *83*, 217-231.

Erikson, R. S. (1981). Why do people vote? Because they are registered. *American Politics Quarterly*, *9*, 259-276.

Fenster, M. J. (1994). The impact of allowing day of registration voting on turnout in U.S. elections from 1960 to 1992. *American Politics Quarterly*, *22*, 74-87.

Hanushek, E. A., & Jackson, J. E. (1977). *Statistical methods for social scientists*. San Diego: Academic Press, Inc.

Highton, B. (1997). Easy registration and voter turnout. *Journal of Politics*, *59*, 565-575.

Honaker, J., Joseph, A., King, G., Scheve, K., & Singh, N. (1999). *Amelia: A program for missing data* (Windows version) [Online]. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. Available: http://GKing.Harvard.edu/

Huang, C., & Shields, T. G. (2000). Interpretation of interaction effects in logit and probit analyses. *American Politics Quarterly*, *28*, 80-95.

Jackson, R. A. (1996). A reassessment of voter mobilization. *Political Research Quarterly*, *49*, 331-349.

Kelley, S., Jr., Ayres, R. E., & Bowen, W. G. (1967). Registration and voting: Putting first things first. *American Political Science Review*, *61*, 359-379.

Key, V. O., Jr. (1949). *Southern politics in state and nation*. New York: Knopf.

King, G., Honaker, J., Joseph, A., & Scheve, K. (1998). *Listwise deletion is evil: What to do about missing data in political science*. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston.

Leighley, J. E., & Nagler, J. (1992). Individual and systemic influences on turnout: Who votes? *Journal of Politics*, *54*, 718-740.

Mitchell, G. E., II, & Wlezien, C. (1995a). The impact of legal constraints on voter registration, turnout, and the composition of the American electorate. *Political Behavior*, *17*(2), 179-202.

Mitchell, G. E., II, & Wlezien, C. (1995b). *Voter registration and election laws in the United States, 1972-1992* (ICPSR No. 6496).

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1988). *Why Americans don't vote*. New York: Pantheon.

Ragsdale, L., & Rusk, J. G. (1993). Who are nonvoters? Profiles from the 1990 Senate elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, *37*, 721-746.

Rosenstone, S. J., & Hansen, J. M. (1993). *Mobilization, participation, and democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.

Rosenstone, S. J., & Wolfinger, R. E. (1978). The effect of registration laws on voter turnout. *American Political Science Review*, *72*, 22-45.

Squire, P., Wolfinger, R. E., & Glass, D. P. (1987). Residential mobility and voter turnout. *American Political Science Review*, *81*, 45-65.

Teixeira, R. A. (1992). *The disappearing American voter.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Timpone, R. J. (1998). Structure, behavior, and voter turnout in the United States. *American Political Science Review, 92*, 145-158.

Wolfinger, R. E., & Rosenstone, S. J. (1980). *Who votes?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Randall D. Lloyd is a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Government at Eastern Kentucky University. His major research interests are in electoral behavior and judicial decision making. His work has appeared in the American Political Science Review*,* Terrorism and Political Violence*, and the* Justice System Journal*.*

INDEX

to

AMERICAN POLITICS RESEARCH

Volume 29

Authors:

Articles: