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EXAMINING PERSUADABLE VOTERS AND BASE MOBILIZATION IN THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE CASE OF WEDGE ISSUE BALLOT MEASURES

by

JAMES BENJAMIN TAYLOR

Under the Direction of Sean Richey

ABSTRACT

In the 2004 Presidential Election social and wedge issues were among the most publicized mobilization tools utilized by the Bush Campaign. Specifically, same-sex marriage has been suggested as a key wedge issue that may have mobilized voters, although research differs on its impact. My contention is that these previous studies miss the point with regard to wedge issues, which is that they are useful on persuadable voters, and persuadable voters live in swing states. I estimate a logit model using 2004 American National Election Studies survey data. I utilize voters' decisions to turn out as the dependent variable and control for respondents' positions on terrorism, the economy, same-sex marriage, political interest, party identification, and socio-economic status. These findings demonstrate, consistent with my hypothesis, voters in swing same-sex marriage ballot measure states were more likely to turn out. These voters may not have been persuadable, but rather the Republican base.

INDEX WORDS: Persuadable voters, Mobilization, Presidential elections, Base voters, Swing states, Swing voters, Same-sex marriage, Ballot measures, Wedge issues

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JAMES BENJAMIN TAYLOR

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Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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by

JAMES BENJAMIN TAYLOR

Committee Chair: Sean Richey

Committee: Richard Engstrom
Jason Reifler

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
May 2009

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to those people who have helped me get to where I am today—my wife, family and friends. I appreciate your support and understanding while I work toward my ultimate goal—a Ph.D. I hope this project demonstrates the distance I have come in two short years because I know it displays the distance I have to go before I am truly a scholar. The point is, I am on my way, and for that I must thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the work and help of my committee: Sean Richey, Jason Reifler, and Rich Engstrom. These three gentlemen have not only advised me on this project, but have shown me what it takes to do meaningful, dedicated scholarship. I will be eternally grateful for the guidance they have provided during my Master's at Georgia State. Whatever I do well in the future I do only because I have had the distinct honor of working with these scholars.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

The 2004 Presidential Election and the use of the same-sex marriage wedge issue as a tactic to mobilize voters in it has been the subject of much debate in the last four years (Abramowitz 2004, Burden 2004, McDonald 2004, Hilligus and Shields 2005, Lewis 2005, Guth et al. 2006, Kaufmann 2006, Smith et al. 2006, Smith et al. 2006, Knuckey 2007, Campbell and Monson 2007, Campbell and Monson 2008). Agreement on the effect of wedge and social issues, however, has proven elusive. Using 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) data I estimate a logit model and find, consistent with the literature, that same-sex marriage ballot measures (SSMBM) at-large were insignificant predictors for voter turnout. However, I find that the interaction of swing states with SSMBM makes respondents more likely to vote at a statistically significant level. Respondents most opposed to same-sex marriage were also predicted to turnout by the model. Thus, in states like Ohio and Michigan—two heavily sought swing states—those who would mobilize on social issues were able to use the issue of same-sex marriage, made salient by ballot initiatives, to make voters more likely to vote.

While the topic of religious conservatives and their mobilization in the 2004 campaign is a worthwhile topic to study (see Campbell (ed.) 2007 for an extended discussion), I am specifically concerned with the use of wedge issue ballot measures and their effect on increasing the probability of voting. Using same-sex marriage in 2004 as a test case for wedge issue ballot measures, my results suggest that wedge issues on ballot measures can increase the likelihood of a voter turning out if certain conditions apply. Thus, in states like Ohio and Michigan—swing states—those who would mobilize on wedge issues were able to use the issue of gay marriage, made salient by ballot initiatives, to make voters more likely to vote.

This project continues as follows. Part I reviews the relevant literature on wedge issues, mobilization and the 2004 election. Part II presents a theory of how SSMBM was used as a wedge issue to mobilize conservative voters, particularly in swing states. Part III identifies my methods and data collection, as well as the coding for the models presented. Part IV demonstrates my findings, and outlines the next step in data analysis for this project. And finally, Part V discusses limitations for the models presented, and adds suggestions for the next step of this research.

CHAPTER 2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Issue Voting

Issues can be divided into "position" and "valence" categories (Stokes 1963). Position issues are defined by their "advocacy of government actions from a set of alternatives over which the distribution of voter preferences is defined" (Stokes 1963, 373). More simply put, position issues are those issues where voters must prescribe to one candidate's policy remedy over the others—the voter must take a position. Valence issues, conversely, need only have the voter make a positive or negative assessment of the candidate or party with whom an issue is associated (Stokes 1963). Wedge issues are positional issues (Hillygus and Shields 2008). Candidates use these issues to set out some policy objective (i.e. limit or prohibit abortion, same-sex marriage, stem cell research, allow school vouchers, etc.) in an effort to siphon off some portion of their oppositions' minimum winning coalition (Hillygus and Shields 2008). Wedge issues are, however, not destined to remain as such forever.

Issues generally, but wedge issues specifically, evolve (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Hillygus and Shields 2008). Issue evolution affects actors in the political process in two ways. It, as the name suggests, changes issues in such a way that they may or may not be effective in mobilizing or attracting voters the way the issue once did, and it shifts the region of acceptability such that what may once have seemed extreme could be considered general popular opinion (Rabinowitz and McDonald 1989; Carmines and Stimson 1989). Carmines and Stimson's (1989) theory of issue evolution is grounded on the notion that issues go through processes—not unlike biological natural selection—to determine which issues are best suited for public discourse or debate, and those that are best suited for exploitation by politicians. Of course, the

"best" issues may not be the normatively "best," or even the most important policy question before the citizens. They are, instead, those issues that have meet era-specific requirements that enable them to move through the evolutionary mechanisms. No matter where they are in the evolutional process, issues are constantly being used in elections and campaigns and can be categorized based on the ease of their use.

For the purposes of elections issues fall into two categories: hard issues and easy issues (Carmines and Stimson 1980). Hard and easy issues differ in the types of responses voters give them. Easy issues get what have been termed "gut" responses from voters (Carmines and Stimson 1980). Although hard issues elicit gut responses as well they must be thought about in careful, nuanced ways. One distinction that Carmines and Stimson draw between voters is that "easy issue voters" are no more informed than the average non-voter (Carmines and Stimson 1980). Hard issue voters, conversely, are much better informed, and can sometimes be categorized as "single issue" or simply "issue" voters because they are focused so intently on their given issue (Carmines and Stimson 1980). With this in mind, wedge issues can be classified as easy issues for three reasons.

First, most wedge issues, while position, met the requirement that the issue must be symbolic, not technical (Kandel 2006, Carmines and Stimson 1980). The debate around same-sex marriage, for instance, is symbolic because it focuses on the highly symbolic institution of marriage (Kandel 2006, Wedgewood 1999). Additionally, the main avenue employed by those who would outlaw same-sex marriage is to have state constitutional amendments, despite the fact that George W. Bush declared he would seek an amendment to the constitution of the United States (CNN.com 2008). These state initiatives would almost certainly come under the scrutiny of courts at some point in the future, whereas a U.S. constitutional amendment, assuming it

passed, would be above judicial review. More to the point, ballot initiatives banning same-sex marriage simply rehash a debate ended by the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA (Pub. L. 104-199, 100 Stat. 2419) (Domawatch.org 2008). The DOMA first defined legal marriage as between a man and woman and then abdicated states from any responsibility of recognizing any relationship between individuals of the same sex. Thus, the ballot initiatives themselves can be thought of as symbolic because they were not implementing new law, but codifying for states what had already been sanctioned in statue at the federal level.

The next indicator of an easy issue is that it must deal with policy ends, not means (Carmines and Stimson 1980). This is true of the same-sex marriage debate because the focus of the debate was solely on the prohibition same-sex marriage instead of what the actual constitutional channels were, or how difficult it would be to get a constitutional amendment passed that would officially declare it illegal (CNN.com). Jonathan Kandel states that it was the focus on the ends of the policy—prohibiting same-sex marriage—that gave the issue some of its salience (Kandel 2006). He points out that the gay rights frame—which focused primarily on the means of banning same-sex marriage and the problems with them—pushed by critics of the proposal never gained salience, so the ends were the only aspect of the policy considered in public debate (Kandel 2006).

Finally, the last criterion to be met for an issue to be easy is for it to have been "long on the political agenda" (Carmines and Stimson 1980). Same-sex marriage, or least gay rights, has been a prominent national issue since at least 1969 with the Stonewall riots (Brittanica.com 2009; Haider-Merkel and Meier 1996). Ballot measures have also been used before to affect policy with regard to gay rights. In 1992, Oregon and Colorado placed initiatives on their ballots to eliminate sexual orientation from consideration in discrimination cases and new anti-

discrimination laws (Haider-Merkel and Meier 1996). By 2004, the debate about gay rights—which culminated with the same-sex marriage bans on 11 states' ballots and a possible amendment to the U.S. constitution—had 12 years to be on the political agenda, and was sufficiently primed to motivate voters to go to the polls. Whether or not it worked is another question.

Mobilization and Ballot Measures

Mobilization for electoral contests is a war fought on many fronts. Campaigns and parties rely on a combination of face-to-face canvassing, phone banks, media strategies, and candidate appearances to energize their supporters. Some studies support the general theory—without explicitly stating it—that as mobilization efforts have become more impersonal their effectiveness has also decreased (Putnam 2000, Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Testing that theory using experimental methods, Alan Gerber and Donald Green (2000) state that personal contact is in fact a more effective mobilization strategy. Personal contact suggests a 9.8% increase in turnout, while direct mail—according to their model—increases turnout about 0.6% (Gerber and Green 2000). Successful mobilization on wedge issues is generally dependent on person-to-person contact, and this is certainly the case for 2004 (Campbell and Monson 2008). Churches and religious organizations were vital to getting out the message and knocking on doors (Campbell and Monson 2007). The key point about 2004 and wedge issues is that those who would be most activated by those issues were not mobilizing for an esoteric goal or ephemeral hope. They had concrete evidence—in the form of a legally binding ballot measure—that their policy objectives could be achieved with their efforts.

Stephen Nicholson, in *Voting the Agenda* (2005), claims that ballot measures can increase salience for an issue, prime voters to evaluate candidates differently that they would in the absence of that ballot measure, and mobilize voter turnout. He demonstrates compelling evidence for ballot measure priming with Proposition 187—a ballot initiative to bar illegal immigrants from schools, social services, and non-emergency health facilities—and the 1994 California governor's race (2005). His probit analysis shows that voters who mentioned the ballot proposition significantly increased their likelihood of voting for the Republican Pete Wilson, regardless of their self-identified party. Nicholson states that is was Republicans' campaigning on illegal immigration via Prop 187's presence on the ballot that primed voters just enough to give Wilson the victory (2005). Furthermore, Nicholson shows that some voters would not vote at all in the absence of Prop 187 (2005). There can certainly be problems for parties and candidates if they rely on ballot measures. One such problem is absurdly high reading levels for ballot measure language (Reilly and Richey 2008), which could have the effect of confusing some voters. The research on SSMBM readability has yet to find significant results, but the trend is toward more difficult readability. Even with this potential hazard, research suggests that it can be effective in presidential elections as well.

Ballot initiatives, like same-sex marriage in the 2004 presidential election, have a varied literature with respect to their effects. One aspect that is certain about ballot initiatives is that they have educative effects (Smith 2001). That is, with all things equal, a ballot initiative raises awareness of an issue and increases its salience (Tolbert and Smith 2005). Though there is conflicting scholarship on whether ballot initiatives are more important for mid-term or presidential elections, the general consensus is that initiatives mobilize voters—particularly ones with a deep interest for the issue in question—to the polls (Smith 2001; Tolbert et al. 2001;

Tolbert and Smith 2005). Tolbert and Smith do go so far as to make the claim ballot initiatives have the capacity to effect the results of presidential elections given their uses by increasing the visibility and salience of an issue (2005). Ballot initiatives that receive high amounts of spending—through mobilization efforts by candidates or issues advocacy groups—on their behalf have also been shown to increase issue salience and awareness (Nicholson 2003).

Even though ballot initiatives have proven educative effects, same-sex marriage and social issues were prominent news stories, and mobilization was predicated on both of these facts, same-sex marriage is not universally accepted as a motivator for turnout in 2004 (Abramowitz and Stone 2006, Abramowitz 2004, Burden 2004, Hillygus and Shields 2005). The only studies SSMBM having an effect do so with voting for Bush as the dependent variable (Campbell and Monson 2007), or at the aggregate level within very small geographic areas (LaFrance and Fredrick 2007, Smith, DeSantis and Kassel 2006). It is because of this debate that I propose to examine the issue once more to discern what effect same-sex marriage had on respondents to the 2004 Nation Election Study. Scholarship on this topic has implications for ballot initiatives and social issues as mobilization tools.

2004 Presidential Election

The 2004 presidential election is notable because of the wedge issues and the role they are suspected to have played in that election (Campbell and Monson 2008). The issue of same-sex marriage (or social issues in general) and its effect in the 2004 presidential election has been the subject of much debate. As was mentioned in the introduction, most media commentators and indeed the Bush campaign themselves attributed their victory—the first winning majority since 1988—to social issues and social conservatives coming out to vote (Abramowitz 2004,

Guth et. al. 2006, Campbell and Monson 2007). Research, however, has offered myriad explanations for Bush's victory in 2004 including, but not limited to, support of President Bush's handling of terrorism, the general expansion of the Republican Party, and social issues.

Approval of the handling of terrorism as an explanation was one of the first issues to receive traction in scholarly literature, and seems plausible as a motivator in 2004. Because the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001 were still fresh in the minds of voters they could have been primed to evaluate the candidates on how they would handle another attack (Abramowitz 2004; Kaufmann 2006; Burden 2004; Hillygus and Shields 2005). Abramowitz, for instance, finds no significant relationship between same-sex marriage amendments being present on ballots and an increase in aggregate turnout by state in the 2004 election (2004). He does find significant evidence for increased Bush support in the states most clearly affected by the 9/11 attacks: New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.[1] As an explanation of those findings Abramowitz suggests that Bush's win in 2004 was a simple expansion of his vote share from 2000 because of terrorism, and in spite of same-sex marriage amendments (2004).

Other research has shown that women—who have generally tended to vote Democratic (Kaufmann 2006)—voted for Bush because of questions about terrorism and who was best suited to lead the country on that issue, thus showing again that Bush's victory was a function of Republican Party expansion (Burden 2004). As previously mentioned, however, terrorism was not the only issue that seemed to be on the minds of voters.

The previous null findings notwithstanding, same-sex marriage and social issues have been found to have been important—to varying degrees—for the 2004 general election in a number studies (Lewis 2005, Smith, DeSantis and Kassel 2006, Knuckey 2007, Kaufmann 2006,

[1] This finding seems moot given that all three of these states are considered, and were in 2004, "Blue States." Kandel offers his own perspective on the Red State-Blue State divide (2006).

McDonald 2004, Guth et. al. 2006, Campbell and Monson 2007, Campbell and Monson 2008). This research lacks a unified voice, however, because none of them have used dichotomous turnout as a dependent variable, and none of the studies seem to highlight where, if anywhere, the SSMBM were more effective. There is agreement, even among those who demonstrate null findings for same-sex marriage as a predictor of voting, that same-sex marriage or social issues were important to voters in the abstract (Hillygus and Shields 2005; Knuckey 2007). Hillygus and Shields point to exit polls for the 2004 election showed that "moral values" were important to 22% of voters, which is at least a percentage higher than any other category in the survey (Hillygus and Shields 2005).[2] So, there is still room to clarify where the wedge issue of the 2004 Presidential election had its effect, if it had any at all.

[2] I share the authors' complaint about same-sex marriage being lumped into the "moral values" category, and it is for that reason that I use the term "social issues" throughout the paper. The point is, however, that those in favor or against same-sex marriage could declare it a moral issue. Thus, the exit poll only serves to illustrate the fact that people thought same-sex marriage—or social issues in general—were important.

CHAPTER 3.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Research Question

Theories on voter turnout and mobilization fall into two primary schools of thought. The first is the base mobilization theory. It states that voters will most often follow their partisan identification in the ballot box, and parties are the most effective at winning elections when they mobilize their partisan identifiers (Campbell et al. 1960; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wielhouwer and Lockerbie 1994; Bartels 2000; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Holbrooke and McClurg 2005). Scholars note that that party mobilization is useful in mobilizing those who are the least likely to vote under normal circumstances—the poor, minorities, and the less educated (Rosenstone and Hanson 1993). Most often, however, targets for mobilization by parties are not these groups, but instead those readily identify with a party (Brady, Scholzman, and Verba 1999). Brady et al. state that this base mobilization is the result of parties seeking to maximize their scare resources (1999). The work by Holbrooke and McClurg (2005) succinctly illustrates the prevailing position for adherents to the base mobilization thesis.

Holbrooke and McClurg use three consecutive Presidential Elections—1992, 1996, and 2000—to test the effect of campaign activity on aggregate turnout. Their equivalent test for base mobilization is a measure of the "party transfers" between national and state political parties during an election. Holbrooke and McClurg point out that these funds are used primarily to mobilize core part supporters, so an increase in these funds should demonstrate two substantive effects: increased base mobilization and attention to the electoral outcome in that state. In all of their aggregate turnout models the party transfer variable is positive and significant. They test their theory, as well, by making the proportion of independent from election to election the

dependent variable, and find that electoral context—things like Senate races and third party candidates—make the percentage of independents go up. The variable that makes aggregate turnout more likely, party transfers, has no effect on the percentage of independents. Holbrooke and McClurg summarize their project by saying the question for election scholars is no longer "*do* campaigns mobilize," but "*whom* do campaigns mobilize (2005)?"

Research offers more than one answer to that question. For the preceding groups of scholars the answer is clearly partisans, but another school of thought would claim that campaigns mobilize persuadable voters (Hillygus and Shields 2008). The persuadable voter thesis is the primary challenger to the established base mobilization theory. Building off of the considerable issue voting literature (Stokes 1963; Carmines and Stimson 1980; Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Petrocik 1996; Campbell 2002), Sunshine Hillygus and Todd Shields develop a new theory on voting in Presidential Elections. Though rooted in issue voting, the persuadable voter thesis presumes the existence of "wedge issues" (Hillygus and Shields 2008).

Wedge issues have been discussed in popular media for some time (see Hillygus and Shields 2008 for an extended review of newspaper and political operative quotes). Hillygus and Shields' definition is as follows, "any policy concern that is used to divide the opposition's potential winning coalition (2008)." They state that moral issues such as same-sex marriage and stem cell research are the classic wedge issues, but the war in Iraq or certain tax policies could very well serve the same goal—persuade people vote for a candidate based on one issue (see Bartels 2005 for an example of taxes being a wedge issue). They test this theory using vote defections by identified partisans. They demonstrate that the odds of Democrats voting for Republicans and vice versa are made less likely the more partisan a voter is. Also, they show

that being cross-pressured on moral issues in 2004 makes voters more likely to vote against their party's candidate. They also infer that leaning partisans and voters who typify one party's typical voter (i.e. church-going Democrats) are more likely to receive direct mail, or get a door-to-door canvasser. All of this leads Hillygus and Shields to claim that voters can be persuaded, and that it is persuasion on wedge issues that can make the difference in an election.

With the preceding discussion in mind, I propose my own method to test both the base mobilization thesis and the persuadable voter thesis. I do so with American National Election Study (ANES) data from 2004 when same-sex marriage was the primary wedge issue of the campaign. My theory is that if one is to see the effects of a *persuasion* campaign it will be seen in two places, one geographical and one voter characteristic. The geographic locations are swing states. We know that campaigns spend an inordinate amount of time on specific states that are possible for either candidate to win. Daron Shaw (2005) states that voters in swing states are less knowledgeable than voters generally, which suggests that they may not be as effective at countering arguments made by opinion leaders like political candidates. The voter characteristic that would demonstrate the presence or absence of mobilization is that of religion. Numerous studies have demonstrated that religion played a large role in the 2004 campaign (Campbell and Monson 2007, Campbell and Monson 2008). Hillygus and Shields also note the effort of the Bush campaign to target those who were even marginally religious (2008). Given what we know about ballot measures, the knowledge levels of swing state voters, religion, and the role of party identification the key persuadable voters in the 2004 election were anti-same-sex marriage Democrats. Same-sex marriage ballot measures should make them more likely to vote. Also, swing states with same-sex marriage ballot measures will be made more likely to vote because of the concentration of media coupled with low political knowledge generally.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework there are two hypotheses for how the state level factors—swing state status and SSMBM—will affect turnout. They are as follows:

H_1: Voters in swing states will be more likely to turn out.

H_2: Voters in states with SSMBM will be more likely to turn out.

Hypothesis one should be confirmed in spite of low political knowledge, and because campaigns concentrate a large portion of their effort on these states (Shaw 2008). Testing these hypotheses will fill in the gaps in the literature with regard to wedge issues and ballot measures. At this point, scholarship is silent on if these are useful or effective tools for mobilization.

To adequately test the persuadable voter and mobilization theses I propose two hypotheses. Hypothesis three test for persuasion.

H_3: Democrats who are against same-sex marriage should be more likely to turn out.

If, however, the mobilization thesis is correct for the 2004 Presidential Election we should expect hypothesis four.

H_4: Republican should be more likely to vote than Democrats.

Hypothesis three is tested using an interaction of Democrats and those against same-sex marriage. Hypothesis four is tested under the full model with no conditioning interaction.

CHAPTER 4.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data

The data I used to construct my dataset was taken from the 2004 ANES. My dependent variable, the choice of the respondent to vote or not to vote, was coded dichotomously with "1" equaling the decision to vote. A discrete dependent variable requires that I use a logit model to estimate the probabilities of turning out. The variables that literature suggests predict turnout—age, education, income, gender, and race—are controlled for in the models (Campbell et al. 1960, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Lewis-Beck et al. 2008).[3] To gauge the attention and interest of the NES respondents I develop an index from 5 questions on the survey ($\alpha = .66$). I have created this index because research tells us that those who pay more attention are more likely to be politically knowledgeable and vote (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). The scores range from "0," implying that the respondent has little to no interest or attention in the 2004 race, to "1," meaning that the respondent is highly attentive or has close to maximum interest in the campaign. A control for party identification—a strong indicator of turnout (Campbell et al. 1960)—is developed by making two dichotomous variables. I take all ANES respondents who claim to be at least Independent-Republicans (so too with Democrats) to be "Republicans." Thus, there is a Republican variable and a Democrat variable with Independents being the absent category.

Controls for issues in the 2004 election are respondents' approval of the economy and their emphasis on terrorism as a foreign policy challenge. Both of these issues were important to the campaign, and they have proven significant in previous research (Abramowitz 2004, Hillygus and Shields 2005, Elder and Greene 2007, LaFrance and Fredrick 2007). The respondents'

[3] A detailed explanation of the coding process, survey questions, and possible responses are included in Appendix 2

positions on same-sex marriage are made dichotomous from the original ANES variable. The ANES asked respondents to choose between marriage, civil unions, and no formal recognition of any kind. Similar to the party identification specification, this trichotomous position scale allows me to control for those for and against same-sex marriage. There are some who would disagree with "civil unions" being a separate category (Wedgewood 1999) because it is considered anti-same-sex marriage; however I follow Hillygus and Shields' (2008) contention that some citizens do see civil unions as compromise policy position. Finally, the presence of a SSMBM was dichotomous with the presence equal to "1."

Throughout literature on voter turnout the "South" (i.e. the 11 states of the former Confederacy) is controlled for based on its historically low turnout (Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1978), so I, too, control for respondents from southern states with a dichotomous variable. Research indicates that higher income earners, better educated, and older voters are more likely to vote (Campbell et al. 1960, Piven and Cloward 2000). I expect these variables to hold to their historical pattern. For the presence of a gubernatorial or senate race I use CNN.com's election webpage from 2004. A summary of the variables is displayed in Table 1.

Methods

I use Stata 10.1 to estimate a logit model. Logit models estimate the probability of some event occurring. The coefficients are not directly interpretable, and the interpretation of interaction terms is also problematic (Ai, Norton, and Wang 1999). To avoid the complications with these interpretations I use Clarify (King et al. 2000). Clarify estimates predicted probabilities that are directly interpretable, and allows for the manipulation of those estimates. Thus, when all variables are set to mean or modal categories one can observe the direct effect of

a one unit change by the variable of interest on the odds of the dependent variable—in this case voting—occurring. Clarify also produces a confidence interval for each predicted probability

Table 1: Summary of Variables

Variable	*Observations*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Min.*	*Max.*
Swing State w/ SSMBM	1212	0.137	0.344	0	1
Anti-GM Democrat	1146	0.227	0.419	0	1
SSMBM	1212	0.200	0.400	0	1
Swing State	1212	0.410	0.492	0	1
Anti-SSM	1146	0.615	0.486	0	1
Pro-SSM	1146	0.349	0.476	0	1
Terrorism	1101	2.890	0.324	1	3
Economy	1171	1.238	1.252	0	3
Republican	1212	0.438	0.496	0	1
Democrat	1212	0.403	0.490	0	1
Senate	1212	0.736	0.441	0	1
Governor	1212	0.109	0.312	0	1
Attn. Index	1212	0.469	0.288	0	1
Education	1212	4.188	1.621	1	7
Income	1042	11.894	6.368	1	23
Age	1212	48.684	17.086	18	90
Age^2	1212	2661.91	1735.31	324	8100
White	1186	0.744	0.418	0	1
Male	1212	0.554	0.497	0	1
South	1212	0.348	0.476	0	1

which assists in the interpretation of the change in independent variable. Box plots based on the Clarify estimates testing the hypotheses are contained in the Discussion. To account for heteroskedasticity, which could bias my results, I calculate robust standard errors clustered on the respondent's state for the models making Type 1 errors less probable (Graves 2003). To test model fit I use both receiver operator characteristic curves (ROC) and estimated percent correctly predicted calculations (Herron 1999). ROC curves demonstrate how much of the variance of the dependent variable is explained by the model (Richey 2008), while ePCP represents the percentage of correctly predicted 0s and 1s in the model.

CHAPTER 5.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The model in Table 2 is the basic version of this project's turnout model. Included are the socio-economic status indicators that have historically predicted turnout in the American electorate. This model conforms to the expected direction for each variable with the exception of income. Income is generally predictive of higher turnout, but education could be soaking up most of income's statistical power. Also in the model are two state-level variables—SSMBM and swing state status. Per the theory, swing state voters should be less likely to turnout, while SSMBM states should be more likely. Swing state status is negative and statistically significant, but SSMBM are negative as well. This is contrary to the theory, but because the coefficient lacks statistical significance there is little we can glean from it at this time. The estimated percent correctly predicted (ePCP) is about 80% suggesting that this model specification is accurately predicting about 80% of the turnout decisions in 2004. This model is presented to make the point that the ANES 2004 sample performs the way American electoral behavior scholars expect.

Table 2: Basic Model for Voter Turnout in 2004

Variable	*Coefficient*	*Robust S.E.*
SSMBM	-1.120	1.046
Swing State	-1.946	0.561***
Republican	3.394	0.743***
Democrat	1.477	0.907
Education	0.931	0.411*
Income	-0.023	0.062
Age	0.204	0.104^{+}
Age^2	-0.001	0.001
White	1.207	0.778
Male	-0.274	0.738
South	-0.748	0.490
Constant	-8.619	3.478*

$N = 913$; $^{+}$ $p < .10$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Robust Standard Errors are clustered on 27 states; ROC Curve = .8591; Wald $\chi^2 = 30.49$, $p < .001$; ePCP = .791

Table 3 demonstrates the full model without interactions. Added to this model are the attention index, issue positions, state-level electoral races, and party identification for each respondent.

Table 3: Full Model for Voter Turnout in 2004

Variable	*Coefficient*	*Robust S.E.*
SSMBM	-1.281	0.772^{+}
Swing State	-1.035	0.637
Anti-Gay Marriage	-0.247	0.466
Pro-Gay Marriage	-0.456	0.371
Terrorism	0.161	1.022
Economy	-.0173	0.073*
Senate	-0.370	0.907
Governor	2.546	1.710
Democrat	1.889	1.534
Republican	4.211	1.688*
Att. Index	10.006	2.471***
Education	0.653	0.350
Income	0.111	0.071
Age	0.183	0.087*
Age^2	-0.001	0.0008*
White	1.394	0.800
Male	-2.369	1.220^{+}
South	-0.0257	0.737
Constant	-12.699	4.379

N = 843; + p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001; Robust Standard Errors are clustered on 27 states; ROC Curve .9566; Wald χ^2 = 1906.91, p < .001; ePCP = .878

Swing states are still negative, but they are no longer significant predictors of (non) turnout. The issue positions are all insignificant as well. Interestingly, voters with SSMBM are less likely to turnout according to this model. This is contrary to the hypothesized direction, but the interaction of SSMBM and Swing States still poses some possibility. Other variables that are significant—Republicans and Attention Index—have interesting implications. Specifically, if the persuadable voter thesis is correct, we should not see a difference between the likelihood of Republicans and Democrats to vote. This appears to be the case, but the Democrat coefficient is

insignificant. To fully test the persuadable voter hypothesis, I now move to the interactive models.

Table 4 displays the tests for the interactive hypotheses. Specifically, I expect that voters in swing states with SSMBM will more likely to vote, and that Democrats who are against same sex marriage should be made more likely to vote if the SSMBM are to be considered effective mobilization tools. I include the constituent terms so as not to bias the model (Brambor et al. 2006). In the first model, I test for swing states with SSMBM. The effects of party identification—Republicans being likely to vote—are present and still significant, which gives weight to the proponents of base mobilization.

Table 4: Interaction Models for Voter Turnout in 2004

Variable	*Coeff.*	*Robust S.E.*	*Coeff.*	*Robust S.E.*
Swing x SSMBM	2.687	1.632^{+}	--------	---------
Anti-GM x Dem	----------	----------	0.271	0.406
SSMBM	-2.815	1.118^{+}	-1.279	0.771^{+}
Swing State	-1.833	0.721*	-1.057	0.653
Anti-GM	-0.261	0.442*	-.416	0.641
Pro-GM	-0.390	0.355	-.465	0.372
Terror	0.392	1.026	.178	1.010
Economy	-0.151	0.076*	-.170	0.072*
Senate	0.066	0.972	-.372	0.903
Governor	2.385	1.623	2.500	1.683
Democrat	1.824	1.484	1.682	1.361
Republican	4.078	1.649*	4.178	1.661*
Att. Index	9.366	2.152***	9.989	2.479***
Education	0.602	0.334^{+}	.657	0.348^{+}
Income	0.117	0.071	.110	0.070
Age	0.179	0.089*	.182	0.087*
Age^2	-0.001	0.0009^{+}	-.001	0.0008^{+}
White	1.127	0.968	1.417	0.806^{+}
Male	-2.264	1.164^{+}	-2.345	1.228^{+}
South	0.719	0.966	-.0251	0.740
Constant	-13.206	3.914	-12.585	

N=843; + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Robust SE are clustered on 27 states; ROC Curve = (1) .9559, (2) .9569; Wald χ^2 = (1) 725.71, $p < .001$, (2) 4503.98, $p < .001$; ePCP = (1) .883, (2) .879

The variable of interest is "Swing SSMBM." It is significant at the .10 level, and positive. The ePCP and ROC curves both demonstrate that the models are generally good at estimating the decision to turnout in 2004. Though the positive and significant coefficient in the first Table 4 model suggests that my theory is correct, further investigation is warranted.

Tested in the second model is the anti-sex marriage Democrat interaction. This interaction is also positive, but statistically insignificant. As with the swing states with SSMBM, the positive direction of the coefficient is hopeful for the persuadable voter theory, but without significance there is not much that can be inferred. A better test is a three-way interaction using Democrats who are anti-same sex marriage and live in SSMBM states. There is simply not enough data to appropriately test that variable with the data presented here. I larger dataset or a panel data model could allow for such an interaction. To further parse the effects of the interactions I estimate predicted probabilities using Clarify (King et al. 2000) presented in Figure 1[4].

The first box plot of the table displays the results of the basic model by estimating the probability for voting in 2004 with the variable values set at their mean or modal categories. A white man[5], living in a non-swing state without a SSMBM, but who is generally concerned about terrorism, disapproving of the economy, making around $30,000 a year with a high school diploma, who pays some attention to the campaign, and average party identification—one might say an "average voter" at-large—has about a 70% chance of going to the polls on Election Day. This finding is difficult to square with reality when turnout was actually around 60% for the voting eligible population (McDonald 2004). Consequently, over-reporting of turnout in the

[4] At-Large: Swing (0), SSMBM (0), Terror (mean), Economy (mean), Anti-SSM (1), Pro-SSM (0), Index (.25), South (0), Senate (1), Governor (0), Rep (mean), Dem (mean), Education (mean), Income (mean), Age (mean), Age^2 (mean), White (mean), Male (mean), South (0); Estimated in Stata 10.1, See King et al. (2000) for information on Clarify

[5] Research suggests that men who did not turnout in 2000 were the targets of the Bush Campaign. This is the reason men are referenced for the predicted probabilities (Kauffman 2006, Elder and Greene 2007).

ANES is one limitation to this project. Other problematic aspects are the confidence intervals. They are quite wide making substantive interpretation difficult. The chances of the average voter at-large turning out range from less than 40% to over 85%, which is too large to draw any solid conclusions, and does not directly test the hypotheses.

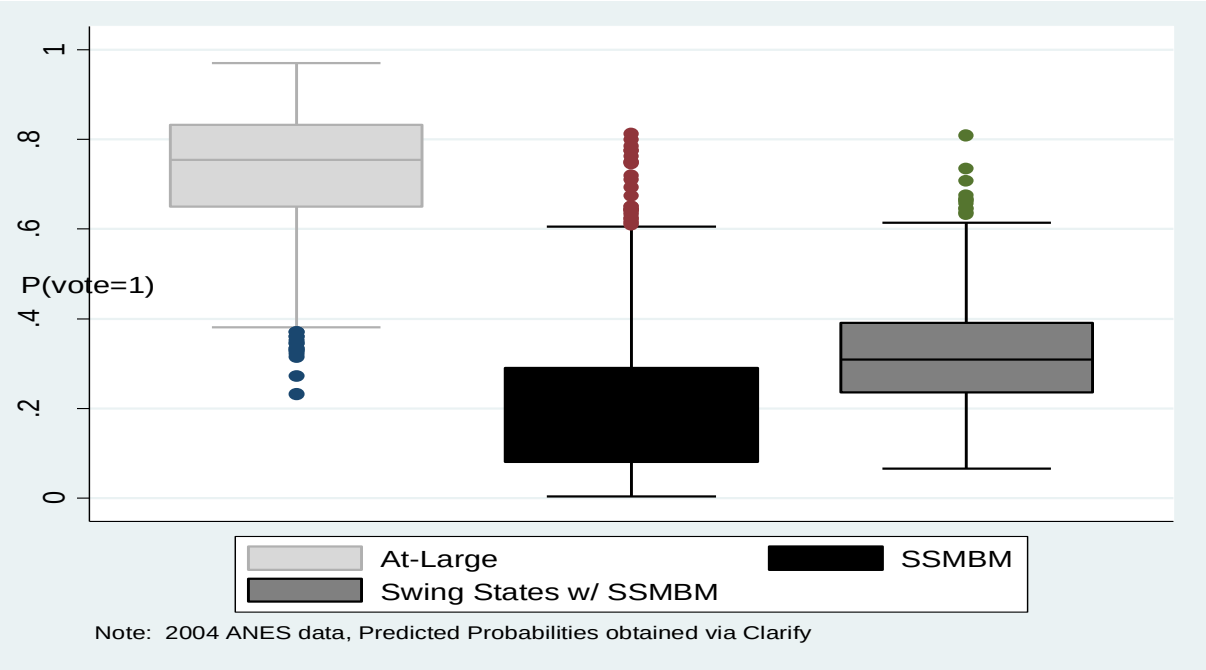

Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities for Voter Turnout in 2004

Per the theory, I expect that SSMBM will make voters more likely to turn out. The average voter at-large has about a 70% chance of turning out. McDonald (2004) states that turnout was actually around 60%. According the data used in this project, voters who lived in states with SSMBM with all of the average characteristics had between 15 and 30% chance of turning out, within the 90% confidence intervals. This is an underwhelming result, and suggests that the presence of SSMBM may not have been enough to motivate voters to turnout.

The last box plot displays the result for the swing states with SSMBM interaction hypothesis in Table 3. The chances for average voters to turnout in these states are somewhat better. The high-end of the 90% confidence interval around 40%, but this is still well below the

chances of the average voter to turnout. These box plots indicate that average voters in swing states with SSMBM are only marginally more likely to vote than voters in SSMBM generally. Thus, the theory and hypotheses remain unconfirmed by these estimations.

A robust test of the theory would be to estimate the probability of a Republican or Democrat turning out to vote in SSMBM swing states. Unfortunately, the data would be compromised to such an extent as to render any results difficult to justify with reality. I therefore refer to Table 4 to conclude the findings for the last hypothesis. Democrats against same-sex marriage were not predicted to turnout at a statistically significant level. The coefficient is positive, but without significance there is little one can say about this finding. Furthermore, the anti-same-sex marriage variable tests these voters at large. There is no way to know if these voters live in swing states, non-swing states, or SSMBM states. Three-way interactions would prove useful, but, as has been stated, the data would be compromised in such as way as to render it useless. A dataset with more respondents or a cross-sectional time series could make a three-way interaction more viable. Though the theory is not confirmed the death knell has yet to sound.

CHAPTER 6.

CONCLUSIONS

The debate about persuasion versus base mobilization is a persistent one in American electoral behavior. Each election there appears to be one issue that trumps all others presumably making voters rethink their eventual vote choice, and is given credit for taking one candidate to victory. In 2004, that issue was same-sex marriage (Campbell and Monson 2007). Some scholars claim that wedge issue made the difference for George W. Bush in 2004 by persuading Democrats to vote for him—the Republican—in contradiction to their other policy positions (Hillygus and Shields 2008). Also, there is ample reason to think that the presence of wedge issue ballot measures and the state in which they were found affected the degree to which voters turned out in 2004 (Nicholson 2005, Shaw 2008). I test those theories by using a logit model and calculating predicted probabilities in Clarify.

For the persuadable voter thesis to be correct Democrats who lived in the swing states with SSMBM should be more likely to vote, all else being equal. Testing the persuadable voter theory on turnout is important because what politicians ultimately want to do is change the electorate in their favor. This can be accomplished, as Hillygus and Shields state, by observing party identifying vote defectors. A more robust test is, as this project does, to utilize turnout because if wedge issues are able to entire portions of the electorate—Democrats who are against same-sex marriage, for instance—then persuasion is certainly a profitable tactic. Unfortunately for those in the persuadable voter camp, this project finds no evidence to substantiate their claim. The coefficient for Democrats who are against same-sex marriage is positive but insignificant. Furthermore, the models presented here lack the statistical power to estimate three-way interactions for the location of these voters.

It seems that the presence of SSMBM at-large had no effect on turnout in 2004. In fact, the insignificant coefficient is negative contrary to the hypothesized direction. Living in a swing state is indicative of lower probabilities for turnout, but again the lack of statistical significance limits the amount one can say about that finding. Voters living in swing states with SSMBM were more likely to vote at the .10 level. The extreme significance of Republicans turnout out to vote coupled with the insignificance of Democrats turnout out to vote seems to suggest that there was little persuasion going on in 2004. The SSMBM in swing states may have motivated turnout, but those voters were likely the Republican base. However, to substantiate that claim more research will have to be done. A cross-sectional time series using two decades or more of Presidential Elections would be better able to test that hypothesis.

One of the limitations is the over-reporting of voter turnout in the 2004 NES. While this is an unavoidable problem, the results must be taken into consideration with the over-reporting in mind. Secondly, using more than one election and more than one wedge issue would be the next evolution of any project like this. There is limited generalizability from any study using only one election, but this research does suggest that this is an area worthy of scholarship. Knowing if the electorate can be changed—rather than campaigns mobilizing the same voters over and over—is important both for academic purposes and practical political reasons.

In summary, those who suggest that wedge issues as a mobilization tools are red herrings may not be correct. Growing research suggests that wedge issues may have, in fact, played a role in the 2004 campaign helping George W. Bush get reelected (Lewis 2005, Smith et al. 2006, Hillygus and Shields 2008, Campbell and Monson 2008). This research adds to that chorus and goes further to suggest that it was in swing states where same-sex marriage ballot measures and possible mobilization efforts had the most effect. The proposals for further research should

make the results of this research more solid, and move the literature on wedge issues, ballot measures, and their effects on mobilization forward.

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APPENDIX: ANES QUESTION NAMES AND WORDING

v043299: What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you?
White (non-hispanic) = 1
Hispanic = 2
Black = 3

V041109a: Respondent's gender
Male = 1
Female = 0

v043294: Respondent's income
01. A. None or less than $2,999
02. B. $3,000 -$4,999
03. C. $5,000 -$6,999
04. D. $7,000 -$8,999
05. E. $9,000 -$10,999
06. F. $11,000-$12,999
07. G. $13,000-$14,999
08. H. $15,000-$16,999
09. J. $17,000-$19,999
10. K. $20,000-$21,999
11. M. $22,000-$24,999
12. N. $25,000-$29,999
13. P. $30,000-$34,999
14. Q. $35,000-$39,999
15. R. $40,000-$44,999
16. S. $45,000-$49,999
17. T. $50,000-$59,999
18. U. $60,000-$69,999
19. V. $70,000-$79,999
20. W. $80,000-$89,999
21. X. $90,000-$104,999
22. Y. $105,000-$119,000
23. Z. $120,000 and over

v043254: Respondent's education level
0. NA/DK number of grades; no HS diploma
1. 8 grades or less and no diploma or equivalency [0-8 in Y3, 5 in Y3a]
2. 9-11 grades, no further schooling (incl. 12 years without diploma or equivalency) [9-12 in Y3, 5 in Y3a]
3. High school diploma or equivalency test [0-12 in Y3, 1 in Y3a]
4. More than 12 years of schooling, no higher degree (13-17 in Y3, 96 in Y3b)
5. Junior or community college level degrees (AA degrees) (07 in Y3b)
6. BA level degrees; 17+ years, no advanced degree (01 in Y3b)
7. Advanced degree, including LLB [13-17 in Y3, 2-6 in Y3b]

v043250: Respondent's age
17- 90

v045018x: Summary: vote and registration status
1. R voter
0. R nonvoter - registered
0. R nonvoter - not registered
0. R nonvoter - DK/RF if registered
0. R nonvoter - not required to register

v041202: Respondent's home state
01.Alabama, 02. Alaska, 04. Arizona, 05. Arkansas, 06. California, 08. Colorado, 09. Connecticut, 10. Delaware, 11. Washington DC, 12. Florida, 13. Georgia, 15. Hawaii, 16. Idaho, 17. Illinois, 18. Indiana, 19. Iowa, 20. Kansas, 21. Kentucky, 22. Louisiana, 23. Maine, 24. Maryland, 25. Massachusetts, 26. Michigan, 27. Minnesota, 28. Mississippi, 29. Missouri, 30. Montana, 31. Nebraska, 32. Nevada, 33. New Hampshire, 34. New Jersey, 35. New Mexico, 36. New York, 37. North Carolina, 38. North Dakota, 39. Ohio, 40. Oklahoma, 41. Oregon, 42. Pennsylvania, 44. Rhode Island, 45. South Carolina, 46. South Dakota, 47. Tennessee, 48. Texas, 49. Utah, 50. Vermont, 51. Virginia, 53. Washington, 54. West Virginia,55. Wisconsin, 56. Wyoming

Attention/Interest Index (Cronbach's α = .66)
v045001: Interest in political campaigns
Very = 1
Some = .5
Not = 0

v045002: Did R watch programs about the campaign on TV
Yes = 1
No = 0

v045004: Did R read about campaign in any magazines
Great deal = 1
Quite a bit = .75
Some = .5
Very little = .25
None = 0

v45005: Did R listen to campaign speeches or discussions on radio
Yes = 1
No = 0

v45006: How much attention did R give to presidential campaign new in general
Great deal = 1
Quite a bit = .75
Some = .5
Very little = .25
None = 0

v043026: Does R approve or disapprove of president's handling of the economy

Approve = 1
Disapprove = 0

v043116: Party Identification (folded into partisanship scale)
Strong R/D = 4
Weak R/D = 3
Ind. R/D = 2
Independent = 1

v045107: US foreign policy goals: combat int'l terrorism
Very important = 5
Somewhat = 3
Not = 1

V043210: R position on gay marriage
Illegal = 5
Civil Unions = 3
Legal = 1