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Issues and The Presidential Primary Voter

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Abstract

Most agree that voting in presidential general elections is largely contingent on the evaluations of the candidates, issues, and parties. Yet in *presidential primary elections* the determinants of voter choices are less clear. Partisanship is inconsequential, information about candidate personalities and policy positions is scarce, and a fourth factor, expectations, may influence voters. In this paper, we reconsider the influence of *political issues* in presidential primaries. We argue that past work has not adequately considered how “issues matter” in primary elections. Primaries are intra-party affairs, and the political issues which typically divide the parties are not very relevant in primaries. Instead, we focus on the policy issues each candidate chooses to emphasize in their quest for the nomination, which we call policy priorities. With data gathered about media coverage of the presidential contenders in the 1988 primaries, and using exit poll data from the 1988 Super Tuesday primaries, we show that issues, as policy priorities, do matter in presidential primary elections. This research also implies that primary campaigns matter, since information concerning the policy priorities of the candidates reaches the intended audience.

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1 Introduction

Faced with a choice between two candidates in November of an election year, voters in presidential elections make their decisions based on partisan, policy, and character criteria. Few would disagree with that claim. But the source of lasting disagreement concerns the relative weight of these three factors, both within and across elections. This consensus is strained further when examining other electoral settings. Certainly, there is no consensus about which factors guide voter choice in *presidential primary elections*, let alone their relative weight. Partisanship cannot be consequential, since primaries are struggles within parties for nomination. More candidate specific factors — ranging from personality and leadership evaluations to their positions on policy issues — have been discounted by many who have written about primary voting. These conclusions have led some to be quite pessimistic about the quality of voting in American presidential primaries: primary voters appear to be poorly informed that their decisions look insubstantial (see, e.g., Keeter and Zukin 1983).

Others have been more sanguine. Brady and Johnston (1987) showed that primary voters knew about the 1984 candidates and that their information was heavily influenced by perceptions of the relative viability of each candidate. Popkin (1991) granted that perceptions of viability and expectations are important, yet argued that changes in perceived viability influenced the amount of information voters possess about candidates, and how they frame their decisions. Bartels (1988) examined the role of “political predispositions” in primary election voting, and found that these predispositions, in combination with candidate expectations, were important determinants of voter preferences. And others have looked for more direct influences of political attitudes on primary election voting (Gopioian 1982; Norrander 1986; Wattier 1983; Williams et al. 1976).

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Our concern is on the role of political issues in primary voting. Those who have found little impact of issues in primaries have missed a critical point: important differences exist between the institutions which frame the choices faced by voters in the spring and fall of an election year. Ignoring these institutional differences has led to a systematic underestimation of the role of policy issues in presidential nomination contests. Since primaries are contested within political parties, criteria like partisanship, retrospective evaluations, and ideological and policy distinctions *between* the parties matter less to primary voters. The implications for the role of policy issues is clear: the issues which traditionally divide the two major parties in the United States (“cleavage issues”) *should be* largely irrelevant in primary election decision-making.

If cleavage issues are irrelevant, then how can policy issues enter voter choice in a presidential primary? First, consider the problem from a candidate’s point of view. If the candidate’s positions on issues cannot distinguish himself from the other candidates, what can? We argue that the major focus on policy issues in primary campaigns concerns *policy priorities*, not *policy positions*. With relatively little difference among the candidates’ policy positions, the question the voter asks “which candidate has priorities which most closely match my own?” Our argument is presented fully in the next section. We then show evidence from the 1988 Super Tuesday primaries which supports our claims.

2 Partisan Cleavages and Policy Priorities in Primary Election Voting

While most of the literature on primary election voting has contrasted the basis of choice in the spring to that in the general election, a few have noted similarities. Wattier (1983) utilized a decision-making model developed for general election contests, which performed quite well in primary election data. Bartels (1988) and Popkin (1991), while studying choice in the context of the primary campaign, both describe a decision-making process which is more general, and thus equally applicable to general election voting.

There are a number of similarities between the primary and general election context facing the potential voter. First, those participating in the primary are also very likely to vote in the fall, and in both cases, are motivated by the same fundamental goal: supporting the candidate they believe will be the best president. Also, the general election campaign is now described as candidate-centered. The same is at least as true of the primary election campaign: candidates and their evaluations by the voters are central elements of voter choice in both election contexts (see Campbell 1983; Wattier 1983; Marshall 1984; Norrander 1986; Wattenberg 1990; Williams et al 1976). Lastly, both campaigns occur in a rich media environment. Thus there is a continuing flood of structured political information about the candidates (Aldrich 1980; Patterson 1980; Robinson and Sheehan 1983; Brady and Johnston 1987; Bartels 1988).

Yet the decision-making task in these two election contexts has important differences. First, primary contests occur within parties, and thus voter choices rarely hinge on the

typical elements of general election decision-making, such as party identification, policy and ideological cleavages between the parties, and retrospective evaluations. Second, the choice context in the primary election is often complex, since typically there are a number of candidates to choose among, and since these candidates often have not penetrated into the electoral consciousness. Third, the primary campaign is dynamic, being composed of many campaigns, in different states, at different times, with candidates entering the race and withdrawing, some gathering momentum and some never gaining substantial support.

The implication of these comparisons profoundly affect the study primary election voting. The decision-making process and goals of voters are quite similar in both election contexts. However, institutional differences require careful consideration of how specific components of the voter's decision, such as policy preferences, might differ. We take for granted — and show later — that policy preferences “matter” in primary contexts, just as they do in general election contexts. Yet we believe they take different forms in the different institutional contexts, which, if not taken into account, will lead to incorrect assessments of their affects on choice.

Most of the important and persistent policy debates in American politics are reflected in cleavages between the parties, especially at the elite level (e.g., Page 1978; Sundquist 1983). Cleavages between the parties on many policy issues have increased dramatically in recent years. The degree of party voting in Congress, for example, has risen sharply over the last twenty years (Poole and Rosenthal 1991; Rohde 1991). Furthermore, the substantial differences between convention delegates of the two parties has grown, as Democrats became increasingly liberal after 1972, and as Republicans became sharply more conservative in the Reagan-Bush years (Bruce, Clark, and Kessel 1992). Additional evidence indicates that this increased polarization may be reflected as well at the mass level, as the public now consistently perceives large differences between the parties, and their presidential candidates, on most policy issues (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1983, 1987, 1990). Perhaps as a result of the importance and permanence of these issue cleavages, most of the issue placement questions asked by the National Election Studies and other academic surveys concern policy domains reflecting these cleavages.

However, primaries are *intra-party* affairs. Noting this fact, many have concluded that policy issues do not matter in presidential primaries, since these within-party contests usually produce little differentiation among the candidates on the major policy cleavages which divide the parties. Sometimes, of course, intra-party differences on cleavage issues are important in primary elections. The Vietnam War in 1968 was certainly a case in point, since McCarthy and Kennedy differed sharply from Johnson and Humphrey over American involvement in the conflict. But the intrusion of such major cleavage issues in primary contests is rare.

With little differentiation among the candidates on these cleavage issues, voters necessarily find it impossible in most cases to distinguish among the candidate's stands on these issues. Combined with the sheer numbers of candidates in most primary races, little intra-party differentiation leads to relatively low levels of voter knowledge of candi-

date positions and to little choice based on issue position. But, intra-party similarity on cleavage issues does not imply that issues do not “matter” in primary elections. Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde (1987) utilized Gallup data from the 1984 primary race and found that Mondale was perceived to be the more effective candidate for dealing with traditional New Deal concerns like welfare, unemployment, and poverty, but that Hart was perceived to be better at handling “new issues” problems, like economic competitiveness and environmental issues. Mondale and Hart may have differed little in where they stood on these issues, but the themes of their campaign were reflected in how the primary electorate perceived where each might be most effective.

In the 1988 primaries, the candidates within each party were relatively similar. In Table 1 we give the average ideological positions of the candidates within each party as estimated from the 1988 NES Super Tuesday Study. The important point in this table is that the candidates in each party cluster quite closely together; while across parties the candidates are relatively distinct. Among the Democratic candidates, Jackson and Hart and the outliers on the left, while Gore is the outlier on the right. But there is only approximately one point on the seven-point ideological scale which separates these outlying candidates — hardly enough difference to be relevant for most primary voters. The Republicans are even more homogenous, with less than one point on the seven-point scale separating their ideological outliers (Dupont and Robertson).¹

Thus, primary candidates within the same party may not differ in their positions on cleavage issues, but often differ on the priorities they place on various problems. Typically, the policy-related aspects of campaigns are assertions about the problems candidates see as most important and to which they promise to devote their energies if elected. In the 1988 Republican primaries, for example, budget deficits became “Dole’s issue” not because he was the only Republican against large deficits, but because his campaign statements and his past reputation made him the most likely Republican to act decisively to reduce the deficit.

There is no doubt that this is a policy campaign, but is not a policy campaign attempting to persuade the primary electorate that the candidate has positions similar to theirs on policy issues. Rather, it is a policy campaign devoted to convincing voters that the candidate has concerns similar to their’s, and that the candidate will be the person most likely to commit the resources needed to solve those problems.

Two examples from early in the 1988 election season illustrate our claims. In New Hampshire, after Dole had won the Iowa caucuses and was shown to have five-percentage point lead over Bush in private tracking pools, the Bush campaign unleashed the first of

¹We examined the ideological homogeneity within and across the candidates of each party in the primary elections since 1976 and have found that, as a rule, there is substantial homogeneity within each party, and considerable heterogeneity across the two parties. Also, our examination of voter awareness of candidate policy positions on major cleavage issues shows that typically a third of respondents, who have already said they have heard of a particular candidate, cannot place the candidate on positional issues. These data are available from the authors upon request.

a series of memorable television advertisements – the “straddle” ad:²

Pictures of Bush and Dole. *Announcer: “George Bush and Bob Dole on leadership.”*

Cut to: Portrait of Bush, with heading “Led Fight for INF.” *Announcer: “George Bush led the fight on the INF treaty for Ronald Reagan.”*

Cut to: Two Dole portraits facing each other with heading “Straddled.” *Announcer: “Bob Dole straddled, until Iowans pushed him into supporting INF.”*

Cut to: Bush portrait, with heading “Against Oil Import Fee.” *Announcer: “George Bush is against an oil import tax.”*

Cut to: Dole pictures, with heading “Straddled.” *Announcer: “Bob Dole straddled, but now says he’s for an oil import fee.”*

Cut to: Bush portrait, with heading “Won’t Raise Taxes”; a period is shortly placed emphatically after “Taxes.” *Announcer: “George Bush says he won’t raise taxes, period.”*

Cut to: Dole pictures, with heading “Straddled.” The heading dissolves into “Taxes – He can’t say no.” *Announcer: “Bob Dole straddles, and he just won’t promise not to raise taxes. And you know what that means.”*

Cut to: Bush picture, with a flag and header “Bush — Presidential Leadership.” *Announcer: “George Bush – ready on Day One to provide presidential leadership.”*

This ad emphasized that Dole only ruled out tax decreases, not that he was necessarily in favor of raising taxes. The point of the ad was not the positions of the candidates on taxes (but, of course, if it persuaded some voters that Dole would increase taxes, so much the better). The point was to show that Bush was strongly resolved to keep taxes from increasing, period, while Dole might eventually increase taxes, perhaps to help alleviate the deficit. Thus, voters primarily concerned about tax increases would be attracted to Bush, while those concerned about the deficit would be attracted to Dole. The question here was who had which priorities, and many credit this ad with producing a nine-point victory for Bush in the anti-taxation state of New Hampshire.

The other example comes from the Democratic race. In late January, with polls producing volatile results, the Gephardt campaign moved to emphasize “the trade issue:”

Picture: Auto workers construct cars on an assembly line. *Gephardt: “They work their hearts out every day, trying to turn out a good product at a decent price. Then the Korean government slaps on nine separate taxes and tariffs*

²Both these transcripts are reprinted from Maloney 1989.

and when that government is done, a \$10,000 Chrysler K car costs \$48,000 in Korea.”

Cut to: Gephardt talking with and listening to auto workers. *Gephardt: “It’s not their fault we can’t sell our cars in a market like that, and I’m tired of hearing American workers blamed for it.”*

Cut to: Gephardt speaking in front of an industrial setting. *Gephardt: “I’ve been criticized for my trade policy, for saying it’s time to open up markets, to push down trade barriers like those Korean taxes and tariffs.”* Header appears on screen: “Dick Gephardt.” *Gephardt: “The Gephardt Amendment calls for six months of negotiation. If that doesn’t work, and I’m President, and we have to walk away from the table, the Koreans will know two things: They’ll know we’ll still honor our treaties to defend them, because that’s the kind of country we are. But they’ll also be left asking themselves how many Americans are going to pay \$48,000 for one of their Hyndais.”*

Cut to: Slogans for Gephardt.

Here Gephardt is making trade policy “his issue.” There is little mention of where he stands on specifics of trade policy, except that he will work to reduce overseas barriers facing American products. And apparently this advertisement worked in Iowa, since it is widely credited with having swung the victory to Gephardt.

Candidates conduct policy campaigns in two ways — issue emphasis and issue positions (Page 1978). Voters can use this information to answer two questions. First, what will the candidate focus his scarce resources on once in office? Second, what would the candidate do with these resources to solve that problem? Both sides of this question are necessary, but neither are alone sufficient. A candidate who agrees with the voter on the appropriate solution but does not desire to act on the problem is no better than a candidate who shares the concern but promises to take the incorrect action. In primary elections, in which there is little disagreement about what position to take, the question becomes, almost exclusively, which pressing problems will receive highest priority.

On some issues concern about the problem alone can be sufficient, since there is consensus on the outcome. Emphasizing unemployment, for example, means to citizens that the candidate is committed to reducing unemployment, not to increasing it. In such cases, the important point is the candidate’s priority, not stance. And when there are persistent and clear cleavages between the parties, priorities of the candidates of a homogeneous party are the meaningful basis of choosing among them.

Moreover, emphasis and other indicators of a candidate’s priorities suggest a great deal about the candidate. A candidate’s priorities provide important cues for voters assessing the personal and professional characteristics of the candidate. The candidate who identifies the same problems facing the nation as the voter sees as most in need of attention is likely to be seen by the voter as the candidate best suited to represent the voter and to act in office in a manner the voter sees appropriate (e.g., Popkin 1991).

Therefore, in general election contests where two candidates differ along persistent partisan cleavages, differences in stances on these issues may be the most important distinguishing characteristics between the candidates, and thus for voter choice between them. But in multi-candidate, intra-party contests with small differentiation in issue positions, these are insufficient criteria. Furthermore if evaluations of the candidates in the primary or general election are based on the belief that presidents should identify pressing problems and act to resolve them, then priorities are the appropriate criteria. There is evidence, even from general elections, to support these assertions. RePass (1971), for one, showed that responses to the “most important issues” question are strongly related to voter choice, and more recently, Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida (1989) have used similar data to argue that when voter concerns are emphasized in the campaign, those concerns become more accessible to the voter in their decision-making (see also Abramson, Aldrich and Rhode 1983, 1987, 1991).³

3 Policy Priorities in the 1988 Super Tuesday Primaries

We first need to understand the priorities of the candidates in the 1988 primaries. There are no available survey data which ask respondents to indicate their perceptions candidate priorities in the 1988 primary races. We can, however, examine candidates’ strategies, and in particular what issues candidates mentioned on the campaign trail leading up to the Super Tuesday primary, as reported in the published news media.

To collect these data, we turn to the *NewsBank* collection of regional and local newspapers, the *New York Times* index, and the chronological index in the *Almanac of 1988 Presidential Politics*. Campaign stories included in our sample fit three criteria: they concerned specific candidate; discussed at least one policy issue; and were published between January 1987 and March 1988. This meant, for instance, that general stories about policy issues in the Democratic campaign, or stories about campaign events are not examined. A total of 610 stories met these criteria and were coded for the major issue content and the candidate involved. Broad coding guidelines for 31 issue categories were established, covering the 14 candidates in the primary race.⁴

³Policy priorities should not be confused with valence issues (Stokes 1963). The latter are issues that typically are heavily laden with symbolic or emotional content. Candidates might choose to devote their issue emphases to valence issues, and voters who agree with such priorities should be more likely to support such candidates. But priorities can also be about substantive policy matters — education, job creation, or defense policy. Thus, policy priorities are not limited to valence issues.

⁴The fourteen candidates are Biden, Gephardt, Gore, Hart, Jackson, Simon, Babbitt, Dukakis, Haig, Kemp, Dupont, Robertson, Dole, and Bush. The issue mention categories are SDI, education, AIDS, foreign economic competition, national health care, national defense and security, plant closings, Middle East, MIA’s in South-East Asia, children’s health, welfare, crime drugs, fiscal policy and the deficit, trade policy, Iran-contra, tobacco subsidies, California oil exploration, abortion, jobs and unemployment, oil import taxes and fees, social security, environment, civil rights, Central America, school prayer, human rights, worker’s bill of rights, homelessness and housing, and women’s pay equity. All stories in the

To illustrate, we present these data on the four candidates in each party who generated at least 5% of the primary vote in more than one Super Tuesday state (Dukakis, Gephardt, Gore, and Jackson; Bush, Dole, Kemp, and Robertson). Furthermore, we aggregate the 31 issue categories into a smaller set: unemployment, trade policy, national defense, poverty, Central America, the deficit, social security, and, for Republicans, moral values. To determine the focuses of the debates within each party, we present in Table 2 the issue priorities for the four Democrats; similar information is given for the four Republican candidates in Table 3.

Differences in the policy campaigns of the two parties are clearly seen in both tables. The debate within the Democratic party focused largely on two concerns – economic and foreign policy issues. Unemployment and trade policy, in particular, dominated the Democratic policy campaigns, with national defense and poverty next in emphasis. Central America, the budget deficit, and social security did not loom especially large in the Democratic race.

The Republican candidates focused heavily on foreign policy, and somewhat on economic matters. Central America dominated the foreign policy discussion among Republicans, with much of it focused on Bush's involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal specifically, and on Contra aid and Nicaragua more generally. However, there are many mentions of national defense matters, especially arms control. The budget deficit, which we discussed above in reference to Dole, was mentioned often by the Republicans, as were references to moral values, but the rest of the categories all fell below 10%.

Even more dramatic are differences in the issue priorities of the various candidates. Among Democrats, Dukakis focused primarily on unemployment and job creation, followed by trade policy. Gephardt, as noted above, focused heavily on trade policy and on unemployment and jobs, to a lesser extent. Gore focused almost his entire policy campaign in this period on defense issues, mainly arms control, while Jackson emphasized jobs, unemployment, and poverty as his priorities during the campaign.

Differences among the Republican candidates' policy campaigns are also apparent. Bush spent a lot of effort refuting charges of his personal knowledge and involvement

three sources relating to campaign issues in the 1988 primary race (January 1987 to March 1988) were examined. Those stories referring specifically to a candidate and an issue were coded. If multiple issues are mentioned, we first ascertain the theme of the article, and if unsuccessful, we code the first issue mentioned. A total of 473 stories were culled from the *NewsBank* microfiche files, 71 from the *New York Times*, and 66 from the *Almanac of 1988 Presidential Politics*. The issue mentions are aggregated into these categories to facilitate interpretation and to mesh with the exit poll data. The specific issue priorities discussed above are aggregated: unemployment – mentions of plant closings, jobs and unemployment, and worker's bill of rights; trade policy – mentions of foreign economic competition, trade policy, and oil tariffs; national defense – SDI, national defense and security, Middle East, MIA's; poverty – mentions of children's health, welfare, crime, civil rights, homelessness; Central America – mentions of Iran-Contra, Central America; Deficit – mentions of the deficit and fiscal policy; social security – mentions of national health care and social security; and moral values – AIDS, drugs, abortion, and school prayer. All other categories of issues and candidates are dropped from this analysis, leaving a sample of 383 stories.

in the Iran–Contra affair; however, he did turn attention to taxes, the budget deficit, and general defense matters. Dole also spent a lot of his policy campaign discussing Central America, but he focused on Contra aid almost as much as he mentioned the Iran–Contra affair. Dole also mentioned other foreign policy matters relating to national defense (mainly arms control), but he spent almost as much time discussing the budget deficit and poverty. Kemp mentioned mainly the budget deficit and national defense, but devoted some of his campaign emphasis to social security. Robertson primarily discussed national defense, especially arms control, and moral values.

The important question is to what extent these candidate emphases are reflected in voter choices among these candidates in the 1988 Super Tuesday primaries. To examine this question, we turn to data drawn from the CBS News *New York Times* 1988 Super Tuesday Primary Election Exit Polls. These data are well-suited for testing our argument regarding policy priorities. Two distinct sets of exit polls were conducted. We use surveys given to Democratic (total cases 9176) and Republican (total cases 7598) voters in a southern exit poll on March 8, 1988 (Super Tuesday).⁵

Five sets of independent variables are available from these exit polls, and are coded in the following manner:

A. Demographic Variables:

Minority Status: coded 1 for minorities, zero otherwise (Democratic model);

Born-Again Christians: coded 1 for fundamentalist Christians (Republican model);

Gender: coded 1 for females and 0 for males;

Union Membership: coded 1 for union members and 0 otherwise;

Income: taken directly from the exit poll where 1 corresponded to a reported income of less than \$12,000, 2 of \$12,500 to \$24,999, 3 of \$25,000 to \$34,999, 4 of \$35,000 to \$50,000, and 5 of greater than \$50,000.

B. Issue Priorities:

A set of dummy variables, coded 1 if the respondent mentioned the issue as being important in their decision, and 0 otherwise. From the Democratic poll, variables for unemployment, trade, deficit, social security, poor, and defense are employed; from the Republican poll, variables for the Intermediate-Range

⁵The NES data from 1988 do not allow us to test our arguments adequately, since there is no readily-available information regarding priorities of either the candidates or the voters. Additionally, these exit polls are much richer in both respondents and useful control variables than the Gallup polls. The southern regional exit poll was conducted in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Another set of exit polls was gathered in each of the states holding primaries on March 8, 1992. We used the regional exit polls instead of the state-level polls to reduce the complexity of the analysis and discussion.

Missile Treaty, trade, deficit, Nicaragua, social security, taxes, and moral issues, are utilized;⁶

C. Candidate Evaluations:

For each of the candidates in the analysis, a variable coded 1 if the respondent reported a favorable opinion of the candidate, and 0 otherwise;

D. Reagan Approval:

coded so that 1 indicated Reagan approval and 0 indicated disapproval;

E. Viability and Expectations:

coded 1 if a respondent reported that whether the candidate could win in November was important, and 0 otherwise.

The dependent variable in each set of data was which candidate the respondent reported voting for. On the Democratic side, the candidates we include in the model are Dukakis, Gephardt, Gore, and Jackson, and on the Republican, they are Bush, Dole, Kemp, and Robertson. The model we estimate for each set of exit poll data is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Prob}(Y_i = j) / \text{Prob}(Y_i = k) = \\ \alpha_j + \beta_{1j}(\text{Demographics})_i + \beta_{2j}(\text{Priorities})_i \\ + \beta_{3j}(\text{Evaluations})_i + \beta_{4j}(\text{Approval})_i \\ + \beta_{5j}(\text{Expectations})_i + \varepsilon_{ij} \end{aligned}$$

where i represents the voter, j and k represent candidates, and ε_{ij} an independently distributed stochastic term.⁷ We use unordered logit to estimate this equation for Democratic and Republican Super Tuesday voters, since it is ideally suited for models with

⁶In the Democratic data, a dummy variable for Nicaragua as a priority was not included in the results reported here. Less than 10% of the exit poll respondents reported this as a concern. Excluding this dummy variables in no way changes the results.

⁷This specification was selected to insure that we obtain the most conservative estimates of the effects of policy priorities as possible. Two sets of the variables in this model might be problematic for the specification: the demographic control variables and the candidate evaluation indicators. Both vectors of variables are necessary to control for systematic factors which are likely to be present in the error terms of the unordered logit models. The demographic variables we include to understand the demographic profiles of support received by each candidate, and are important factors in our interpretation of the unordered logit models below (a similar set of variables are in Bartels' (1988) index of political predispositions). The candidate evaluation indicators are crude controls for the many dimensions of candidate trait evaluations. Their use raises the possibility of endogeneity, which is difficult to model in the unordered logit specification. We estimated our models without the vector of candidate evaluation terms, and their exclusion in general only reduces the magnitude of the variances of the estimates, which accordingly increases the statistical significance of most of the estimates — especially those of the policy priority variables (these estimates are available upon request). Thus the inclusion of these candidate evaluation terms, and the possible statistical problems raised by including them in this specification, only make for a more conservative test of our argument.

categorical dependent variables, such as our measure of candidate choice. For a dependent variable with K categories, $K-1$ equations are estimated, and the coefficients are interpreted as the difference that a particular independent variable has on the probability of supporting a particular candidate, relative to the baseline (or K th, excluded) candidate.⁸ The estimates of the unordered logit models for Democratic primary voters are in Table 4.

The columns in Table 4 give the maximum-likelihood estimates, followed by the standard error in parentheses, and stars for various levels of statistical significance. The first column is the equation for the likelihood that a voter would choose Gephardt over Dukakis, the second gives a similar comparison for Gore and Dukakis, and the third column presents the comparison for Jackson and Dukakis. First, note that these models fit the exit poll data extremely well. Comparing the log-likelihood for the model to the log-likelihood from a naive model (intercepts only) shows that this model improves upon the naive model dramatically ($\chi^2 = 9454.0$, which is significant at greater than $p=.01$); also, the model accurately classifies almost 74% of the choices made by the 6000 respondents in the sample.⁹

The estimates of most interest in Table 4 concern the issue priorities, and we focus on them. Recall that Dukakis emphasized unemployment and trade policy, that Gephardt mentioned trade policy and unemployment, that Gore discussed primarily defense issues, and that Jackson emphasized unemployment and trade. The estimates in Table 4 support our argument concerning the impact of issue priorities in primary election voting, especially the sign and statistical significance of each priority indicator variable. Dukakis emphasized unemployment and trade: we see in the results that voters who saw unemployment as a problem are less likely to support Gephardt or Gore relative to Dukakis, but more likely to support Jackson relative to Dukakis, yet none of these effects reaches significance. Gephardt discussed mainly trade, and in the first column it is apparent that voters who shared this priority are much more likely to support him over Dukakis.

⁸In the models we report here, the baseline candidates are Dukakis in the Democratic model, and Bush in the Republican model. Other possible combinations of candidate comparisons could have been examined. However, this specification is particularly interesting since it mirrors the evaluation process many primary voters may have followed. By the time of the Super Tuesday primaries, both Bush and Dukakis had considerable momentum, and were certainly covered widely by the press. Thus, voters not predisposed to support either of these candidates were probably looking for an acceptable alternative, as were many Democratic voters in the 1984 primaries (Bartels 1988). In any case, the choice of baseline for comparison does not affect the results. The use of unordered logit models requires an assumption about the choice process we are modeling. This assumption of “independence of irrelevant alternatives,” states that the stochastic term in each individual choice equation is independent from stochastic terms in all other choice equations in that set of alternatives. A standard approach to determine whether this assumption is met requires testing the stability of the logit estimates after changing the availability of alternatives in the choice set (Maddala 1983). Following McFadden (1976) we re-estimated our unordered logit models after deleting each of the choice alternatives respectively. We then compared the identified coefficients from the full model to those of the restricted choice set — in no instance did the coefficients vary by more than one standard error. This test indicates that our model is robust to this assumption. The unordered logit models are estimated using SST, version 2 (Dubin and Rivers 1991).

⁹In the Democratic primary voter sample, 1680 respondents reported voting for Dukakis (28%), 843 respondents for Gephardt (14.1%), 1640 for Gore (27.3%), and 1837 for Jackson (30.6%).

While voters who saw defense as an important problem are more likely to support Gore, this effect was not significant. And for Jackson, his discussion of jobs and unemployment slightly increased the likelihood that voters who shared those concerns would support him, his message about trade policy, however, was not very productive. Interestingly, voters concerned about social security and trade are more likely to support Gore instead of Dukakis. Also, voters concerned about the budget deficit and social security are more likely to support Dukakis relative to Jackson, but those seeing poverty as a priority are strongly supportive of Jackson relative to Dukakis.

We took two additional steps to analyze the importance of the issue priority variables in this model. First, we are interested in the *total contribution* of the issue priority variables in the unordered logit model. To document these effects, we utilize χ^2 tests, which are reported in Table 5. Here it is apparent that all of the issue priority variables jointly made a strong contribution to the model ($\chi^2 = 627.62$). Additionally, four of the six priorities contributed significantly to the model — the deficit, poverty, trade, and social security. Substantively these results are fascinating, since only two of the four priorities with substantial joint effects in the Democratic model received heavy emphasis by the candidates: trade and poverty, which were mentioned mainly by Gephardt and Jackson, respectively. Defense and unemployment, which formed the basis of the policy campaigns of Gore (defense), Jackson (unemployment), and to some extent Dukakis (unemployment), contribute little to the estimated support (refer to Table 4). But the issue priority variables clearly contribute to the overall performance of the model.¹⁰

To better understand the *magnitude* of the effect of each issue priority for the various candidates, we estimate the change in the likelihood of relative candidate support which would occur if a voter has a certain issue priority, for three hypothetical Democratic primary voters. These voter “profiles” are: Voter A — black, male, union member, lower income, who disapproves of Reagan’s performance, and who did not think that winning in November was important in the primary; Voter B — white, male, non-union, high income, approves of Reagan’s performance, and who did not think that winning in November was important; and Voter C — white, female, non-union, moderate income, disapproves of Reagan’s performance, and who thought winning in the fall was important. We focus on these three hypothetical Democratic primary voters since they represent reasonable combinations of demographic and attitudinal characteristics in this election. They also cover a range of possible types of voters in the Democratic primary, and we are interested in ascertaining the extent to which issue priorities may have different effects over this range of voter.¹¹

¹⁰The test computes the difference in -2 times the log-likelihood of a “constrained” model, estimated without issue priority variables, and the -2 times the log-likelihood of the “unconstrained” model. This test is useful for comparing two nested models, but with large samples the asymptotic theory underlying the test breaks down. This implies that as the sample size increases, significant joint effects are more likely to be found (see Aldrich and Nelson 1984; Maddala 1983; and McCullagh and Nelder 1991).

¹¹Also, none of these hypothetical voters are assumed to have favorable evaluations of the candidates. Estimating the relative likelihoods of candidate support, once the independent variables have been fixed at these values for each hypothetical voter, was straightforward. Given these values for a particular voter profile, we estimated the probability of supporting on candidate relative to Dukakis under the assumption

The results of these calculations are in Table 6. The upper panel gives the calculations for each voter profile for the probability of Gephardt relative to Dukakis support, the middle panel gives similar calculations for Gore over Dukakis, and the bottom panel gives the results for supporting Jackson compared to Dukakis. The first column for each voter type gives the estimated probabilities of relative support, and the second column gives the difference in probabilities.

In the top panel, it is clear that if any of these hypothetical voters mentioned trade as their priority, they are much more likely to support Gephardt over Dukakis – approximately 20% more likely for each voter. Voters concerned about unemployment, the deficit, or national defense, are slightly more likely to prefer Dukakis to Gephardt. In the middle panel, we see that voters concerned with trade policy and social security are approximately 8% (trade) or 6% (social security) more likely to support Gore. In the bottom panel are even stronger results. Notice that the two hypothetical white voters (B and C) are much more likely to support Jackson over Dukakis if they believe poverty was an important problem. Indeed, Voter B becomes 23% more likely to support Jackson by believing in the importance of this problem, and changes from a 1 in 4 to a 1 in 2 chance in supporting Jackson. Also, note that if a voter is concerned about trade policy, the deficit, or social security, they are more likely to support Dukakis over Jackson.

Next, the unordered logit results for Republican voters are in Table 7. The table is organized with the first column presenting the equation for the likelihood of Dole support, the second of Kemp support, and the third of Robertson support, each relative to supporting Bush.¹² This model also fits the data exceptionally well. The χ^2 for the comparison of the log of the likelihoods of the model here to a naive model is highly significant (9172.6, significant at $p=.01$), and the model predicts 76% of the choices by the 5735 respondents.

Before turning to the issue results, recall the priorities of the Republican candidates as reflected in their policy campaigns. Bush and Dole discussed mainly Central America and fiscal policy, while Kemp mentioned defense, fiscal policy and social security. Robertson mentioned primarily defense issues, and also discussed moral values.

In Table 7 the Republican primary voters who are concerned about the budget deficit are more likely to support Dole relative to Bush, and this effect was highly significant.

that they mentioned no issue priorities as important. This is accomplished by merely substituting the values of each independent variable into the model, computing a logit value, and then undertaking the appropriate transformation for the logit model (Aldrich and Nelson 1984). Then, the values are recalculated, assuming that the voter gave one of the issue priorities in their survey response. Last, the difference between the probability of relative candidate support if no priorities are mentioned by the voter and the probability of relative candidate support if a particular priority are mentioned by the voter is calculated. These calculations allow for the possibility that the voter believes only one of the priorities to be important. In fact, the survey format allowed them to check up to two issues as important in their decisions. We also computed these probabilities for all combinations of two priorities, and they are available from us upon request.

¹²In the Republican voter sample, 3068 respondents reported voting for Bush (53.5%), 1522 for Dole (26.5%), 348 for Kemp (6.1%), and 797 for Robertson (13.9%).

Also such voters are slightly more likely to support Kemp relative to Bush. Those concerned about increasing taxes, though, are more likely to support Bush relative to Dole and Robertson, but more likely to support Kemp relative to Bush, and this effect is significant in each equation. Those mentioning social security as a priority are consistently more likely to support Bush, but this effect was significant only in the Robertson model (but nearly so in the Kemp model). Trade policy strongly increased the likelihood of Dole support, and marginally increased the likelihood of Kemp support, relative to Bush; arms control had insignificant increases in the likelihood of Bush support relative to Kemp and Robertson. Interestingly, those concerned about American involvement in Nicaragua are only marginally more likely to support Bush relative to Dole, but less likely to support Bush relative to the other two candidates.

The joint effects of the issue priority variables in the unordered logit model are presented in Table 8. Notice first that the joint contribution of all the priority variables in this model is highly significant ($\chi^2 = 326.76$). Additionally, four of the seven issue priority variables have a significant joint impact — the deficit, moral values, taxes, and trade. Even though these four issues are overshadowed by discussion of Central America (especially Bush's relationship to Iran-Contra) and defense policy, these priorities are discussed by many of the Republican candidates, and they have a substantial influence on voter choice substantially (see Table 7).

To show the magnitude of these influences, we again calculate the estimated probabilities of relative candidate support for three hypothetical voter profiles. These voters are defined as: Voter A — white, male, fundamentalist Christian, low income, disapproves of Reagan's performance, and does not believe the ability to win in November is important; Voter B — white, male, not fundamentalist, high income, approves of Reagan's handling of the job, and does not think the ability to win in November is critical; Voter C — white, female, not fundamentalist, moderate income, disapproves of Reagan's performance, and thinks the ability of a candidate to win in November is very important.

Table 9 gives the calculated probabilities for these three hypothetical voters: the upper panel gives the estimated probabilities of Dole relative to Bush support, the middle panel for Kemp relative to Bush support, and the bottom panel for Robertson relative to Bush support. In the upper panel, it is apparent that if these hypothetical voters believe that trade policy or the budget deficit is an important policy priority, they are approximately 10% more likely to support Dole over Bush. However, if they believe taxes to be important, they are about 8% more likely to support Bush. In the middle panel, it is clear that voters who think moral values are an important issue, and who think the deficit, raising taxes, and trade policy are important, are more likely to support Kemp over Bush.

In the bottom panel, we show the extent to which arms control, social security, and raising taxes as voter priorities increase the likelihood of Bush support relative to Robertson support. If Voter A believes raising taxes is important, he is 17% more likely to support Bush relative to Robertson; while he is 8% more likely to support Bush if social security is an important priority to him, and 7% more likely to support Bush if arms

control is an important issue. For Robertson, like Kemp, the strong influence of moral values as an issue is also clear.

To summarize the results presented in this section, we highlight three points. First, the unordered logit models demonstrate that voter choice in presidential primaries is quite understandable. For these choices are consistent with voter attitudes and backgrounds, their evaluations of the candidates, and their issue priorities — and are highly predictable. Second, the models also document the extent to which issues “matter” in the primary election context, in the form of issue priorities. The issue priority indicators employed in this analysis have strong and systematic impacts in each of the models. Last, after our analysis of the issue emphases of the primary candidates, we see that the issue priorities of voters are reflected in their candidate choices.

4 Discussion

With data from the candidates’ policy campaigns, and voters’ choices as reported in exit polls, we show that voters reach their decisions in the primary election in quite sensible, and predictable, ways. Political issues, as *priorities*, do matter in primary elections, as shown in our empirical results. Controlling for a wide variety of factors, voters are more likely to support the candidate who shares their concerns about the important problems facing the nation, and to shun candidates who are emphasizing other concerns in their campaigns.

This is a new finding in the literature on primary voting. Other research on the effects of political issues in primary elections has conceptualized their influence in different ways, and has reached different answers. Policy positions are not very relevant in the primary election — and issues in that guise do not have much effect. But policy priorities are, we believe, a level of voter sophistication above simple reflections of a voters “political predispositions” toward a candidate (Bartels 1988). The empirical evidence presented above shows that voters are able, when candidates are discussing their own priorities, to choose candidates who share their concerns.

And this implies that the campaigns conducted by the candidates also must “matter.” The policy-related aspects of the 1988 primary campaigns, as reflected in the mass media, revealed consistent patterns in the priorities of most of the candidates. Thus, it does appear that candidates on the primary campaign circuit during the spring are deliberately discussing their policy priorities, emphasizing them time and again in speeches and advertisements, in an attempt to differentiate their candidacy from those of their opponents. And since voters clearly choose candidates with priorities that match their own, this information must be reaching the primary electorates. So, we believe that our results lend considerable support to the growing recognition that presidential election campaigns “matter” in the sense that they provide information upon which voters can make reasonable decisions (Popkin 1991).

But our results also demonstrate that this linkage is not always perfect. That is, there are issues which candidates prioritize which do not matter in voter decision making. Take one prominent example. In our issue mention data, Al Gore prioritized primarily defense issues (72.7% of all mentions). But in our model of Gore relative to Dukakis voting, the defense issue had a statistically insignificant (though correctly signed) impact. And even though Gore said little about trade or social security, both of these priorities had a statistically significant contribution to Gore support relative to Dukakis. This implies that either Gore's heavy emphasis on defense did not get through to Democratic Super Tuesday voters, or that those who supported Gore were doing so because of the inferences they made about the priorities he might place on trade and social security, relative to Dukakis.

Our argument, about the importance of candidate issue priorities in primary elections, also applies to the later portions of the primary season and the general election. In other words, we believe that issue priorities will matter even in a simplified decision making setting, where there are only two or three viable candidates. In such cases, when policy distance and salience are separable, the salience the candidates and voters attach to the policy issues will be important (Shapiro 1969; Rabinowitz et al. 1982; RePass 1971). Yet, priorities should become increasingly more important as the policy differentiation between candidates declines. So even in a two-candidate race, issue priorities will matter and issue positions will not, if the candidates take similar positions but present dissimilar priorities.

Additionally, these results also reinforce recent research on voter decision-making. Primaries are typically low-information events, and consequently voters quite naturally rely heavily on cues and short-cuts in their decisions (Popkin 1991). Our work meshes with this recent research, since reliance on priorities might be thought of as a reasonable means to cope with the information constraints and complexity of primary elections. The process we describe here also apply to other electoral contexts as well. Priorities have been shown to "matter" in presidential general election contests (RePass 1971), and they might also matter in other races where the differences on major cleavage issues might be quite small and information about the positions of the candidates on such issues quite imperfect. In elections such as these, it is very likely that voters are more concerned with choosing the candidate who will be best for the office based upon the priorities emphasized by the candidate.

And last, our research analyzes institutional influences on voting. Our argument hinges on important institutional differences in presidential primary and general election contexts, and upon how these different electoral institutions influence voters decision-making. Perhaps other important differences in electoral institutions — either in the United States or between nations — have understandable influences on voter decision-making. By understanding such differences, we will be better equipped to model voter choices and electoral outcomes.

Table 1: Ideological Positions in the 1988 Primaries

Candidate	Position	Distance
Democrats:		
Hart	2.92	0.60
Jackson	3.05	0.47
Babbitt	3.53	0.01
Dukakis	3.66	0.14
Simon	3.70	0.18
Gephardt	3.78	0.26
Gore	4.03	0.51
<i>Average</i>	3.52	0.31
Republicans:		
Dupont	4.66	0.39
Kemp	4.97	0.08
Dole	5.00	0.05
Haig	5.08	0.03
Bush	5.23	0.18
Robertson	5.35	0.30
<i>Average</i>	5.05	0.17

Note: Data taken from the 1988 NES Super Tuesday Study. The first column gives the mean placement of the candidate and the second column the absolute distance between the candidate and the average position of that party's candidates.

Table 2: Issue Mentions in the 1988 Democratic Primary

Issue	Democrats	Dukakis	Gephardt	Gore	Jackson
Central America	5.8	12.7	3.8	3.0	2.0
Defense	18.4	9.1	3.8	72.7	8.0
Fiscal Affairs	5.3	10.9	3.8	6.1	0.0
Poor	11.1	7.3	3.8	9.1	24.0
Social Security	2.1	1.8	5.8	0.0	0.0
Trade	24.7	20.0	63.5	6.1	2.0
Unemployment	32.6	38.2	15.4	3.0	64.0

Note: Entries are percentages of total candidate mentions. The content analysis methodology is discussed in the text.

Table 3: Issue Mentions in the 1988 Republican Primary

Issue	Republicans	Bush	Dole	Kemp	Robertson
Central America	29.3	47.1	33.3	6.1	10.2
Defense	21.6	12.6	12.8	24.2	42.9
Fiscal Affairs	14.9	16.1	20.5	27.3	0.0
Moral Values	10.6	4.6	7.7	6.1	26.5
Poor	5.3	4.6	12.8	6.1	0.0
Social Security	6.2	1.1	2.6	15.2	12.2
Trade	7.2	6.9	7.7	6.1	8.2
Unemployment	4.8	6.9	2.6	9.1	0.0

Note: Entries are percentages of total candidate mentions. The content analysis methodology is discussed in the text.

Table 4: Unordered Logit Model, Democratic Voters

Independent Variables	[Pr(Gephardt vote)/ Pr(Dukakis vote)]	[Pr(Gore vote)/ Pr(Dukakis vote)]	[Pr(Jackson vote)/ Pr(Dukakis vote)]
Constant	-.02 (.29)	.45* (.26)	-.41* (.30)
Minority	-.15 (.23)	-.54** (.21)	3.3** (.15)
Female	-.08 (.11)	-.13 (.09)	-.44** (.12)
Union	.36** (.13)	-.03 (.12)	.17 (.14)
Income	-.11** (.04)	-.14** (.04)	-.05 (.05)
Unemployment	-.15 (.14)	-.19 (.12)	.09 (.14)
Trade	.84** (.17)	.36* (.16)	-.44* (.25)
Deficit	-.20 (.14)	.10 (.11)	-.53** (.16)
Social Security	.12 (.13)	.25* (.11)	-.26* (.15)
Poor	.02 (.15)	-.14 (.13)	1.0** (.13)
Defense	-.21 (.17)	.13 (.13)	-.17 (.20)
Dukakis Rating	-4.0** (.19)	-3.8** (.18)	-3.6** (.20)
Gephardt Rating	4.1** (.21)	-.04 (.10)	-.01 (.13)
Gore Rating	-.37** (.12)	4.0** (.17)	-.30** (.13)
Jackson Rating	-.28** (.12)	-.41** (.10)	3.6** (.19)
Reagan Approval	.20* (.12)	.40** (.10)	-.38** (.15)
Expectations	-.35* (.19)	-.67** (.17)	-1.5** (.25)

Source: CBS News *New York Times* Super Tuesday Primary Election Exit Polls, 1988. Entries are maximum-likelihood estimates, and their associated standard errors are in parentheses; * corresponds to a p=.05 level and ** corresponds to p=.01 level of statistical significance (one-tailed tests).

Table 5: Priority Effects in Democratic Logit Model

Model Constraint	Log-likelihood	χ^2
No Issues	-3904.59	627.62*
Unemployment	-3593.03	4.5
Trade	-3609.45	37.34*
Deficit	-3811.01	440.46*
Social Security	-3596.58	11.6*
Poor	-3630.6	79.64*
Defense	-3593.12	4.68

The second column gives the log-likelihoods for models estimated with the respective coefficients in the model constrained to be zero. For the first row in the table, there were twelve restrictions, and for the other rows there were two restrictions (yielding 12 and 2 degrees of freedom, respectively). * indicates statistical significance at the $p=.05$ level on the χ^2 test.

Table 6: Issue Priorities and Probabilities of Candidate Support

[Pr(Gephardt vote)/Pr(Dukakis vote)]						
Issues	Pr(Voter A)	Δ	Pr(Voter B)	Δ	Pr(Voter C)	Δ
No Issues	52	—	40	—	33	—
Unemployment	48	-4	37	-3	30	-3
Trade	71	19	61	21	54	21
Deficit	47	-5	36	-4	29	-4
Social Security	55	3	43	3	36	3
Poor	52	0	41	1	34	1
Defense	47	-5	35	-5	29	-4
[Pr(Gore vote)/Pr(Dukakis vote)]						
Issues	Pr(Voter A)	Δ	Pr(Voter B)	Δ	Pr(Voter C)	Δ
No Issues	44	—	53	—	35	—
Unemployment	39	-5	49	-4	31	-4
Trade	52	8	62	9	43	8
Deficit	46	2	56	3	37	2
Social Security	50	6	60	7	41	6
Poor	40	-4	50	-3	32	-3
Defense	47	3	57	4	38	3
[Pr(Jackson vote)/Pr(Dukakis vote)]						
Issues	Pr(Voter A)	Δ	Pr(Voter B)	Δ	Pr(Voter C)	Δ
No Issues	95	—	26	—	8	—
Unemployment	96	1	28	2	8	0
Trade	93	-2	18	-8	5	-3
Deficit	92	-3	17	-9	5	-3
Social Security	94	-1	21	-7	6	-2
Poor	98	3	49	23	18	10
Defense	94	-1	23	-3	6	-2

Source: Unordered logit model presented in Table 7. The probabilities are simulations based on three different voter profiles; see the text for discussion of the specific profiles employed in this table. The second column for each “voter” gives the difference between the estimated probability of candidate support relative to Dukakis support were the specific issue identified by the voter as important and the estimated probability of relative support were no issues important to the voter.

Table 7: Unordered Logit Model, Republican Voters

Independent Variables	[Pr(Dole vote)/ Pr(Bush vote)]	[Pr(Kemp vote)/ Pr(Bush vote)]	[Pr(Robertson vote)/ Pr(Bush vote)]
Constant	-.16 (.24)	-1.3** (.34)	-1.2** (.35)
Minority	.03 (.21)	.33 (.30)	.13 (.30)
Female	.19* (.09)	-.14 (.13)	-.05 (.13)
Born-Again	.48** (.12)	.75** (.16)	1.6** (.14)
Income	.01 (.03)	-.03 (.05)	-.10* (.05)
IRMT	.04 (.14)	-.25 (.24)	-.29 (.25)
Trade	.42** (.14)	.24 (.23)	-.02 (.24)
Deficit	.40** (.10)	.20 (.15)	-.04 (.15)
Nicaragua	-.17 (.13)	.11 (.18)	.03 (.19)
Social Security	-.03 (.12)	-.31 (.21)	-.34* (.20)
Moral Values	-.21* (.12)	.47** (.16)	1.1** (.14)
Taxes	-.33** (.11)	.33* (.15)	-.68** (.18)
Bush Rating	-3.9** (.15)	-3.5** (.18)	-3.8** (.18)
Dole Rating	3.9** (.17)	-.21 (.13)	.09 (.14)
Kemp Rating	-.26** (.09)	3.0** (.22)	-.47** (.14)
Robertson Rating	.01 (.11)	-.17 (.16)	4.6** (.23)
Reagan Approval	-.65** (.14)	-.05 (.22)	-.34 (.21)
Expectations	-.06 (.15)	-1.3** (.34)	-1.6** (.34)

Source: CBS News *New York Times Super Tuesday* Primary Election Exit Polls, 1988. Entries are maximum-likelihood estimates, and their associated standard errors are in parentheses; * corresponds to a p=.05 level and ** corresponds to a p=.01 level of statistical significance (one-tailed tests).

Table 8: Priority Effects in Republican Logit Model

Model Constraint	Log-likelihood	χ^2
No Issues	-3527.44	326.76*
IRMT	-3365.42	2.7
Trade	-3369.08	10.04*
Deficit	-3452.59	177.06*
Nicaragua	-3365.52	2.9
Social Security	-3366.50	4.9
Moral Values	-3408.78	89.44*
Taxes	-3379.98	31.84*

The second column gives the log-likelihoods for models estimated with the respective coefficients in the model constrained to be zero. For the first row in the table, there were fourteen restrictions, and for the other rows there were two restrictions (yielding 14 and 2 degrees of freedom, respectively). * indicates statistical significance at the $p=.05$ level on the χ^2 test.

Table 9: Issue Priorities and Probabilities of Candidate Support

[Pr(Dole vote)/Pr(Bush vote)]						
Issues	Pr(Voter A)	Δ	Pr(Voter B)	Δ	Pr(Voter C)	Δ
No Issues	58	—	32	—	50	—
Irmt	59	1	33	1	51	1
Trade	68	10	42	10	60	10
Deficit	68	10	41	9	60	10
Nicaragua	54	-4	28	-4	45	-5
Social Security	57	-1	31	-12	49	-1
Moral Values	53	-5	28	-4	45	-5
Taxes	50	-8	25	-7	42	-8
[Pr(Kemp vote)/Pr(Bush vote)]						
Issues	Pr(Voter A)	Δ	Pr(Voter B)	Δ	Pr(Voter C)	Δ
No Issues	35	—	18	—	6	—
Irmt	30	-5	14	-4	4	-2
Trade	41	6	21	3	7	1
Deficit	40	5	21	3	7	1
Nicaragua	37	2	19	1	6	0
Social Security	28	-7	14	-4	4	-2
Moral Values	46	11	25	7	9	3
Taxes	43	8	23	5	8	2
[Pr(Robertson vote)/Pr(Bush vote)]						
Issues	Pr(Voter A)	Δ	Pr(Voter B)	Δ	Pr(Voter C)	Δ
No Issues	56	—	11	—	4	—
Irmt	49	-7	9	-2	3	-1
Trade	56	0	11	0	4	0
Deficit	55	-1	11	0	4	0
Nicaragua	57	1	12	1	5	1
Social Security	48	-8	8	-3	3	-1
Moral Values	80	24	28	17	12	8
Taxes	39	-17	6	-5	2	-2

Source: Unordered logit model presented in Table 4. The probabilities are simulations based on three different voter profiles; see the text for discussion of the specific profiles employed in this table. The second column for each “voter” gives the difference between the estimated probability of candidate support relative to Bush support were the specific issue identified by the voter as important and the estimated probability of relative support were no issues important to the voter.

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