

ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR IN U.S. SENATE ELECTIONS,
A SIMULTANEOUS CHOICE MODEL

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The turnout decision of citizens has traditionally been analyzed separately from the two-party vote decision of citizens. The presumption has been that citizens decide if they are going to vote, and then decide for which candidate to vote. In the present research, the two decisions are placed into a simultaneous choice framework, which presumes that the decisions of turnout and candidate choice are made jointly, implying that abstention is a vote for none-of-the-above. This research shows the effects of the simultaneous choice model with regard to understudied U.S. Senate elections using data gathered thru the Senate Election Studies from 1988-1992.

The research shows that levels of turnout in Senate elections are not equally distributed across the various demographic sectors of society. Efforts by campaigns to target particular constituencies should result in a higher probability of citizens casting a vote for the candidate.

With respect to evaluations of the economy and personal finances the research clearly shows support for the angry voter hypothesis. Citizens who are dissatisfied with the state of the national economy, angry voters, are more likely to turnout than those who are satisfied. Their dissatisfaction is expressed toward incumbents because they become more likely to vote for the challenging party. Personal financial evaluations are also shown to have a limited impact on electoral behavior.

Contrary to some previous research, substantive policy preferences are shown to affect electoral behavior in Senate elections. The findings clearly suggest the campaigns that understand short-term forces can utilize them to produce mobilization.

The research shows that use of self-reported media exposure variables can allow for a better understanding of electoral behavior. Citizens who are exposed to candidates via radio or magazines are more likely to vote for the candidate they had read or heard about. The greater their interest and exposure, the more likely it is that a citizen will vote.

Overall, the research provides political scientists with an alternative understanding of how electoral decisions are made. Readers will develop an understanding of the factors that influence turnout and mobilization for specific candidates.

Dedicated to Barb

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are two means to conceptualize the voting decisions of citizens in United States Senate elections. The first can be thought of as a two-step or sequential process that assumes citizens make an initial decision about whether they will vote prior to deciding for whom to vote (Republican or Democrat). The second conceptualization of electoral behavior postulates that citizens evaluate the candidates simultaneously with their decision to turnout. In other words, they choose from three choices at once: abstain, vote Republican, or vote Democratic.

Political science research has traditionally focused on the two-step model of electoral behavior, which assumes that citizens use the two-step approach when making their electoral decisions. My dissertation focuses on an alternate conception and provides reason for the field to consider the use of a different conceptualization of turnout and voting, the simultaneous choice model. Whereas most of the literature suggests that turnout and candidate choice decisions are separate, sequential actions, this dissertation suggests they are intertwined and simultaneous.

The underlying assumption of this dissertation is that the field has inadequately considered alternatives to the two-step model. By automatically placing turnout ahead of

the voting decision, the field has not allowed for measuring the substantive value that the decision to abstain has for citizens and how citizens can be mobilized to vote. To be sure, many American citizens are apathetic and some have consciously given up on the political system, however, I postulate that many citizens choose not to vote in order to protest the political system and show their dissatisfaction with the choice of candidates. This “protest” cannot be adequately reflected in the two-step process. I believe we have failed to accurately capture which candidate citizens actually prefer because by not voting, citizens have the ability to vote for none of the above. My dissertation allows for a more accurate analysis of the true preferences of the American electorate through the use of one parsimonious model that includes all available electoral choices.

My dissertation models citizen preferences with respect to elections for the United States Senate. Unlike House and Presidential elections, Senate elections continue to be an under-studied area of American politics. Senate elections are high-profile in nature and may often times be the “highest” election within a state in a given year (Westlye 1982). These are elections which as a result of media coverage and advertising citizens generally have sufficient information as to closely evaluate candidates and use that information to make a turnout or candidate choice decision.

Through an analysis of Senate National Election Study data, I will demonstrate the important effects of modeling the two-party vote when abstention is included as an option. This model creates what I refer to as the simultaneous choice conception of the vote. Much of the research on the simultaneous choice conception of the vote has been focused on Presidential elections. This research has shown the impact of the conceptualization on the parameters that are estimated and provides the impetus for

expanding the conception to other elections (Alvarez and Nagler 1995; Lacy and Burden 1999). I will show why I believe that the parameters the field has estimated in past analyses of voting have been inaccurate due to the exclusion of the turnout decision in the voting model and the empirical fact that citizens abstain in great numbers. Moreover, the predictions that come about from those parameters will be shown to be over-estimated because in reality, turnout is “winning” a major portion of the vote. In many elections, and certainly for many subgroups of the population, turnout comes close to “winning” a plurality of the vote. Perhaps most importantly however, I will show how substantive evaluations and preferences can impact voting in Senate elections independent of presidential elections.

Turnout and voting go hand-in-hand. One cannot vote if one does not turnout. In the United States, levels of turnout declined precipitously in the second-half of the 20th century. There is little reason to believe that the trend will reverse itself in the present century. Currently, turnout rarely exceeds fifty percent even in presidential elections. To be sure, some of this is due to disgust with the American political system, lack of efficacy, and the perception that little changes regardless of who is elected (Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Brody and Page 1973; Miller and Miller 1976). Some of this decline is attributable to the perception that there are insufficient differences between the two-party candidates to justify the effort required to vote (Ragsdale and Rusk 1995; Franklin 1995; Sanders 1996). Previous research has utilized the simultaneous conception to evaluate the effect candidates have on turnout. However, this research was focused at the presidential level, looking at the mobilization effect of a “legitimate” third-party

candidate such as Ross Perot (Lacy and Burden 1999; Lacy and Burden 2000) or how economic evaluations affect turnout and voting (Alvarez and Nagler 1995).

1.1 The Importance of the Research

My dissertation should be of interest to political scientists and political operatives alike. Through this research, political scientists should develop a better understanding of the decision processes that citizens engage in because the model is exhaustive of the choices that citizens can make. When we do not consider all of the choices citizens have we misspecify the model and cannot fully understand decision-making process. The research provides an opportunity to develop an understanding of the relationship between turnout and candidate choices. Perhaps most importantly, it will allow us to see how citizens can “cast a vote” against the political system.

This dissertation not only provides what may be a more realistic conception of Americans’ electoral decisions, it also analyzes elections to an office that have not been sufficiently studied, the U.S. Senate. Most political scientists would agree that much is known about the forces that underlie Presidential and House elections. Both elections have been the source of much quantitative and qualitative analyses of electoral and candidate behavior. However, the field does not have a good understanding of what impacts voting in U.S. Senate elections. This phenomenon is not due to a deliberate slight of the Senate on the part of political scientists; rather it is a function of the lack of available data on Senate elections. Through use of the Pooled Senate National Election Studies (SNES), some in-depth research has been carried out on Senate elections; however, there is far more room for research on this important topic (for examples see

Abramowitz and Segal 1992; Krasno 1994). Not only does this dissertation add to our knowledge about the impacts on turnout and voter choice, it adds to our knowledge about the forces that are at work in Senate elections.

From a political strategy perspective, political operatives know that elections are won and lost on the margins. The use of a three-way choice model like that advocated here would allow operatives to better understand what motivates people to vote and would allow them to understand who non-voters are. This research may help operatives to understand how they can motivate those who would otherwise not vote, to vote for their candidate, a mobilization effect. If we were to look at candidate strategy, we would find that candidates focus on the opposing party. In reality, however, they must also consider turnout. If they can successfully increase the turnout of those who have a greater likelihood of voting for them, and decrease the turnout of those who are likely to vote for their opponent, they will have helped themselves to achieve their goal of election.

Candidates have a self-interest involved in minimizing the degree to which citizens are apathetic to elections. At a minimum, candidates want to ensure that there are enough individuals who are not apathetic to guarantee them one more vote than their opponent. However, many candidates are interested in maximizing their votes at the expense of the votes for the opposing candidate. The literature has shown that greater margins of victory are beneficial because they may act to scare future competition (Jacobson 1989). The simultaneous choice model is well suited to identifying how a candidate can maximize their vote margins.

This finding regarding what factors can be used to mobilize citizens is relevant to political scientists, not just campaign strategists. For political scientists, the importance lies in developing a better understanding of the decline of participation in elections by citizens. One of the main foci of the study of American politics is on the electoral process. This alternative conception may provide further insight into why levels of turnout have not risen in years. Moreover, we want to understand why citizens choose a particular candidate. To do this, we must also understand why they made their ultimate decision to vote when they could have easily decided to abstain. After all, it is much easier to abstain than it is to vote. The influences covered in this dissertation are just four of many possible influences but they make clear how changes affect two-party vote choice and turnout, jointly.

The decision of a citizen to not vote, not only speaks ill of the present candidate offerings, it may send a message to future candidates. By not voting, citizens may be saying to future candidates that they would like to see different types of candidates and/or different policy positions. The application of the simultaneous choice model may also help prospective candidates to identify issues that could help them win in a future election.

Per theory in the field, we have always put citizens' decision to turnout as coming prior to the candidate decision. However, as one can see from the discussion above, there is an additional level of competition that we have not acknowledged which may exist. In fact, turnout can justifiably be considered the third "opponent." If turnout wins more of a party's voters than the other party's voters then that will mean a net loss for the first party and a net gain for the real opponent, the candidate from the opposition party. Though

turnout will never get elected, it acts as a substitute for another candidate that is not actually running in the race. This other “candidate” is a reflection of many things: dissatisfaction with candidate choices, disappointment in the political system, anger with governmental policies, as well as general apathy toward civic affairs. One might think of the number of votes that turnout wins as a measurement of the health of the political system.

I recognize that there is a cadre of individuals in the United States who simply will never vote, regardless of the circumstances, but there are many who will at least under the proper circumstances, reject apathy and vote. For these individuals, one might think that the decision to vote is temporally prior to the candidate decision because they never evaluate the candidates, they just do not vote. An alternative conception however, is that they have made permanent evaluations of the candidates that the two parties can offer while weighing the benefit of voting. Having weighed the alternatives, even once, they have utilized the simultaneous choice model. However, for those individuals who have a significant likelihood of voting, they may take the time to give at least some cursory evaluation to the candidates and then be able to make an informed decision as to whether or not to vote. Though it is difficult to parse out these two types of individuals, I believe it is important to utilize a model of citizen preferences that is exhaustive of all choices and does not select out those who do not vote.

Recent work in the literature has looked at the effects of third party candidates on election outcomes (Alvarez and Nagler 1995; Herron 1998; Lacy and Burden 1999; Lacy and Burden 2000). This literature has looked at what are best-termed “legitimate” third party candidates with a real chance at being elected. “Legitimate” is probably best

defined the same way that pornography was by Justice Potter Stewart, “I know it when I see it (Stewart 1964)”. Ross Perot in 1992 is the best, recent exemplar of a legitimate third-party candidate in a national election; Jesse Ventura is probably the best exemplar at the state-level. This is an important literature to consider given that the present political environment is ripe for individuals to attempt the third-party route in order to gain election because of dissatisfaction with the options citizens currently have. With regard to actual candidate choices, citizens are willing to look beyond Democratic and Republican candidates.

The emphasis on the literature of third party candidates is important because my dissertation puts turnout on the exact same level as candidates, providing a new theoretical notion of its effect on the political environment. This dissertation treats turnout as the third candidate that candidates from the two major parties must defeat in order to win election. In a close election, turnout may have a very significant impact on the outcome, in a runaway election, the effects of turnout, at least on the outcome, may be negligible. At a minimum, the number of votes cast for turnout may be a reflection of the overall health of our political system.

From a rational-voter perspective this research is also interesting. As we know, the likelihood of any one voter making a difference in a major electoral race is slim to none. Voting is an inherently irrational act, were it not for some of the intangible benefits that accrue such as a sense of doing one’s civic duty, helping to make democracy work. It is reasonable to presume that in the United States there are four kinds of people who have three kinds of default voting procedures (Marquette and Leighley 1983). There are groups of citizens who, by default, barring some compelling reason to not do so, will vote

Republican. Similarly, there is another group whose default is to vote Democratic. The third group would be those individuals who have a general propensity to vote though they do not vote for a single party consistently. Finally, there is a fourth group whose default choice is to not vote in any given election.¹ The question in the candidate context becomes what can be done to decrease the probability that the no-vote default person will become motivated to vote for a candidate? What factors help citizens to overcome the costs associated with voting such that they will ultimately cast a vote for a given candidate? These questions can only be answered in this three choice context where one can directly measure the probability of not voting and estimate to what extent changes in independent factors will result in an increase in the probability of a citizen voting for a candidate.

1.2 Why Senate Elections?

There are several reasons why Senate elections are relevant for a study of this nature and are appropriate to use.

The first reason is that Senate elections have not been studied as much as have Congressional elections. It is far easier to contribute to the literature when analyzing the oft overlooked Senate elections. The research showing the impacts on voting in Senate elections is limited and requires expansion.

The second reason for studying Senate elections is that they are thought to be relatively high-profile in nature (Hinkley 1981; Westlye 1982). As a result of this, voters

¹ For the purposes of this research, these individuals are included in the group classified as abstaining. As was described earlier, the logic behind this classification is that it is assumed that they have simply made a

will, generally speaking, have more information and more exposure to Senate elections than they will to House elections. Senate elections in some states may be the “highest” level election in any given year, whereas Congressional elections will rarely, if ever, be the “highest” level election. Even in years during which there is a gubernatorial election, the Senate race may rank at least as high as that election in terms of prestige and level of attention paid to it. Additionally, the information provided in Senate races may rival that of presidential races, allowing citizens to make electoral decisions based on the Senate campaign even in on-year elections.

The third reason why Senate elections are being used for this study is that the topic is of particular interest to myself. I have interned for a United States Senator and have interned at the United States Senate Republican Conference. Because of these two unique experiences, I have developed a particularly strong interest in understanding the Senate both from an electoral perspective as well as from an institutional perspective.

By showing the impact of turnout on Senate elections, I hope to encourage the field to reconsider some of its previous findings with regard to House and perhaps Presidential elections. The findings to be presented here will likely motivate similar research for state and local elections where sufficient information is available to citizens for making informed candidate choices.

permanent decision having at least at one point considered voting for the Republican or the Democrat so that they can be thought of as having used the simultaneous choice model at least once.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The Data

The data used most often for the study of American electoral politics come from the biennial National Election Studies (NES) conducted at the University of Michigan. These studies, conducted in every election year, provide the foundation for much of what we know about mass political behavior in the United States. While central to our knowledge of political behavior, they do not provide sufficient data for the present research effort.

For the elections that took place between 1988 and 1992, the NES conducted a special series of studies, which focused on the factors that influence elections for the U.S. Senate. Though general attitudinal and demographic data similar to that collected in other NES studies were collected, the focus of the research was on those factors which were thought to be most important and relevant in Senate elections. Detailed questions were asked regarding each of the candidates for Senate. These questions dealt not only with the candidates, but with the campaigns as well. Measurements were included in the study that ascertained exposure to campaigns and campaign messages. This kind of detailed gathering of data on Senate elections had not been conducted previously nor has it been conducted since.

This study of Senate elections is generally referred to as the Pooled Senate National Election Study (PSES or SNES) because of the invaluable information that was gathered over a four-year, three election cycle period that allowed for in-depth study of

Senate elections in each state.² The data were gathered in a manner such that at least seventy-five interviews were conducted in each state for each of the elections covered, providing for a total of at least 150 cumulative interviews in each state. The distribution ensured that there would be enough interviews in each individual state to allow for analysis.

Because of the four-year time frame of the study, limited analyses can be conducted for both “on” and “off” year elections; elections cycles when there was and was not a presidential race. It is important to take the on and off year factors into account in any study of voting, however, it is even more important when one is studying turnout. It has been established that more Americans tend to vote in elections when there is a Presidential race. This phenomenon became particularly evident in the later half of the 20th Century (Teixeira 1992). This increase in turnout for the Presidential election will invariably affect turnout for Senate elections since once a person is at the voting booth they will undoubtedly vote in at least several of the down-ballot elections before the phenomena commonly referred to as roll-off sets in (Burnham 1965; Engstrom and Caridas 1991). Still, Senate races are of sufficient stature that they should be able to motivate turnout on their own.

Another great advantage of the SNES over other NES studies is the way in which the data were gathered. The data were gathered to allow for analyses within each of the individual states. Much like apportionment in the Senate itself, roughly equal numbers of interviews were conducted in each state. In any given year, there are 32 or 33 Senate

²Because three election cycles were included in the study, an election for each of the 100 seats is covered once.

elections occurring, and this study, gives each of those elections equal weight. If one were to use traditional NES data, many of the smaller states would not be adequately represented, thereby giving more “weight” to the contests in the larger states and less to those in the smaller states.

While the SNES is the best data available to use for the study of Senate elections, it is not without faults and limitations that should be acknowledged. The first limitation is one that affects every study of electoral behavior; it is that the data gathered are from a snapshot in time. Elections are dynamic in nature. To capture all of the nuances of them is difficult to do in a quick one-hour survey that is taken only once. This is a limitation that in the literature too often goes unacknowledged and unconsidered. The SNES helps to overcome this limitation, in part, by collecting data over a time period of six years, albeit each time with different respondents.

The second limitation is that the data themselves are limiting because not all questions were asked in all years, nor were all of the questions asked that this researcher desired to use. The third limitation is that not all of the questions were asked with the wordings that would be most useful to this research. This is a limitation common to all second-party analysis of polling data, and again is one that is generally not acknowledged. The best that this researcher can do is hypothesize about what some of the other impacts may have been and make suggestions for inclusion in future surveys.

A third limitation is not so much a limitation as something which must be acknowledged and accounted for. Turnout in the SNES, as in many studies of electoral and voting behavior is over-estimated (Wright 1993). Table 1.1 shows the difference in the turnout percentage reported by the FEC and that evidenced in the SNES. Citizens

generally report higher levels of voting in surveys than are evidenced in the population at large. This is likely seen due to one of two reasons. The first reason is that there is a normative expectation in the United States that we should vote because it is part of our civic responsibility. Respondents may not want to admit to an interviewer that they did not do their civic duty by not voting. The other reason that turnout may be overestimated is that the survey itself may create a mobilization effect by getting citizens more interested in the elections than they would have been had they not been selected for the survey. What this means for the analyses is that in reality, abstention levels would be noticeably higher. It is not the expectation of this researcher that the over-estimation of turnout would impact the dynamics of the relationships; rather it is simply that turnout levels are inflated.

	<i>Actual turnout (%VAP)</i>	<i>SNES Reported Turnout</i>
1988	50.11	70.3
1990	36.52	64.0
1992	55.1	73.0

Table 1.1: Difference between actual turnout and SNES reported turnout.

Of more direct concern to political scientists is the fourth limitation, which may be the “unique” nature of the political environment during the time period of the studies. These studies were done during a time of complete Democratic control of the Congress and Republican control of the White House. Democrats had had nearly solid control of both Houses of Congress for about 40 years, though this was coming to a close. This

begs a question that is applicable to much of the research done on Congressional elections in the last thirty years: is there something unique about having a Democratic Congress that changes the underlying processes in the elections? The answer to this question is not straightforward. Being out of power for a long period of time can make one particularly “hungry” as was evidenced in the 1994 Congressional elections, which led to Republican control of both houses of Congress. This already points to the fact that further research of this kind must be undertaken but does not render the present findings moot or questionable. There is always room for more research in political science because of our need to account for all of the unique factors that can influence electoral behavior.

None of this is to say that the research to be presented is inherently compromised by these factors. On the contrary, it is the belief of this researcher that the factors to be considered can adequately be gleaned from the data gathered. The purpose of this digression is to acknowledge some of the weaknesses in the data and the impact of the political environment. This acknowledgement should be a part of any research and will be further addressed in the conclusion as I suggest further courses of research.

1.3.2 The Dependent Variable

Traditionally, models of voting have been dichotomous in nature, vote Republican or Democratic. Even though they have been dichotomous, much of the older literature used statistical tools that were inappropriate for that model of behavior. These early analyses were problematic because the critical assumptions underlying the statistical tools used were violated by the desired analyses. In recent years, researchers have come to

realize the inappropriateness of multiple regression for these dichotomous choice situations and have used estimation procedures such as logit and probit to properly measure the phenomena in which they are interested. The assumptions underlying these models are not violated when the choices are dichotomous in nature.

The primary dependent variable can take on three different values, reflecting the three choices that citizens may make, the only available choices. The first choice is vote Republican (coded 1), the second choice is vote Democratic(coded 0), and the third choice is to not vote/abstain (coded 2). The economics chapter of this research modifies the choices slightly, and will be explained in that chapter.

The other dependent variables to be included in the analyses are used for the purposes of comparing the simultaneous choice model to traditional models of voting and turnout. The first variable is the traditional two-party voting variable coded as vote Republican (1) or Democratic (0). The second variable is the traditional turnout variable coded abstain(0) or vote(1).

It is important at this point to note the coding of one of the variables included in the “traditional” turnout model. Previous research on turnout behavior has used two different approaches with regard to the inclusion of party identification in the model. The first approach is to not include party identification in the model (Patterson and Caldeira 1983, Jackson 1996, Sanders 1996). The second approach is a focus on strength of party identification rather than which specific party a citizen affiliates with (Boyd 1989, Nichols, et al. 1998). Both of the aforementioned approaches have advantages and disadvantages. By not including party identification one creates a more parsimonious model when one believes that PID is more connected to candidate choice than turnout

choice. By including a variable that takes into account strength of PID, one can take into account that the stronger a citizen's identification is with a party, the more likely it is that they would be driven to participate out of their desire to see their candidate win. In the present research, the variable included for the turnout model is the traditional PID variable, however, it has been coded on a seven-point scale to be able to take into account the strength of a citizen's PID as opposed to the more conventional three-point scale. It is important to consider here, that this model is not "central" to the present research. The traditional turnout model, like the traditional voting model, are included in the analyses to provide the reader with a baseline measurement of how our understanding of electoral behavior changes when viewed in the simultaneous choice context. For the purposes of the central model of this dissertation, the simultaneous choice model, the PID variable, as coded, provides an understanding of how the transition from Independent to Democrat and Independent to Republican impacts the ultimate electoral decision made by a candidate. In order to maintain the comparison from model to model it is important to use the same operationalization of PID, the variable that is central in our understanding of American electoral behavior.

1.3.3 Statistical Tools

Beyond the data, it is important to discuss the primary statistical method that will be used in the analyses because it is a method that has not been used very often. As researchers in the 1980's came to be more methodologically rigorous and the computer software to conduct the analyses became more readily available, probit and logit have come to be used more extensively. The advantage to both probit and logit over basic regression in the analysis of vote decisions is that these methodologies are specifically tailored to choice models where there are only two options (Alvarez and Nagler 1995; King 1998; Lacy and Burden 2000; Liao 1994; Long 1997).

Basic regression is not appropriate for these kinds of analyses because the underlying assumptions are violated when the dependent variable is not continuous or “relatively” continuous in nature. What is most important about the use of probit and logit analysis in the context of discrete-dependent variables is that it correctly confines the allowable range of the dependent variable estimates to be $[0,1]$. This is especially pertinent if one wants to use the model for predictive purposes as I am trying to do here in order to predict voter choice. Dyadic choice models do not violate probit and logit assumptions. Rather than directly estimate the value of the dependent variable, such as the percentage of vote that a candidate will have, probit and logit estimate the probability of an event occurring, such as winning or losing an election. This probability is determined through a link function, in the case of logit the cumulative logistic function, and in the case of the probit the cumulative normal.

Probit and logit are the appropriate statistical methods to use when looking at a choice that involves only two options. An example of this is the traditional two-party vote model, vote Republican or vote Democratic. These two models however, are inappropriate when there are three or more choices as is the case in the research to be presented here and as would be the case in an election that involves three candidates. In a three-way race, one cannot use simple probit or logit and one can certainly not use OLS regression. In recent years, probit and logit have seen their uses be extended as the methodology has expanded. These two methodologies now incorporate multinomial forms which allow one to model three or more choices.

For the purposes of this dissertation, multinomial logit (MNL) will be the statistical tool utilized. MNL will allow us to look at elections where there are more than two options [0, 1, 2] and be able to make substantive sense out of the results. The outcome of the statistical procedures are similar to multiple regression in that parameters are estimated along with standard errors that allow one to conduct tests of statistical significance and be able to determine what independent variables are having an important impact on the dependent variable. The MNL procedure produces an estimate of the probability that any given citizen chooses each of the given options. Because the area under the probability curve must equal one, the sum of the probabilities for each citizen must equal 100% (the probabilities shown throughout the research may have rounding error). The parameter estimates that are produced by the procedure do not directly show probabilities. These parameter estimates must be brought into the link function, the cumulative logistic link function and then probabilities may be estimated for each of the given options. The most interesting information produced by the procedure comes in

these estimated probabilities. For any given citizen, we can determine the probability of their casting a vote for each of the candidates or their probability of not voting given the choices of alternatives.

The results of the models presented here should be roughly analogous to determining the proportion of people who will vote Republican, vote Democratic, or abstain. For any given election, this can be determined across all of the elections included in the SNES.

Throughout the research presented in this document, a $p < .05$ level of significance was chosen to be used as the baseline. What this means is that the results presented would likely occur by chance in only 5 out of 100 trials. Given that the research presented herein does not involve life or death matters, this level of certainty is sufficient for being confident that the results being evidenced are real and reliable.

Maximum likelihood estimation procedures like MNL also allow for interesting counterfactual scenarios to be tested through the use of first differences. To better understand the effect of particular variables on the voting decision, values for these variables can be inputted that would alter the probabilities estimated. By entering these values one can see how the probabilities for each of the given decisions is affected by changes in a single independent variable holding all other variables constant. For instance, one can see what the effect of a slightly better economy might have been on each of the probabilities. These predicted probabilities will be used frequently throughout the analyses to make the findings clear.

1.4 The plan of the research

Throughout the following chapters, the reader will be exposed to the different influences on electoral behavior and the degree to which they affect a simultaneous choice model of voting.

In the following chapter, a presentation of the appropriate literature on the topics of two-party vote and turnout decision-making will be presented. Additionally, a presentation of some of the Senate election research will be provided. This presentation will provide the reader with a broad overview of the literature and will illuminate why this researcher has decided to take on the present course of analyses.

In Chapter 3, the reader will be presented with the traditional demographic model of electoral behavior. In this model, party identification is taken into account as an influence on electoral behavior as well as those variables that reflect an individual's background and experience. Other variables, which from previous research are thought to influence electoral behavior and reflect a citizen's experiences in society are race, gender, household union status, income, and of course, education. It will be shown how the various sectors of society show different capabilities for being mobilized to vote. The implication of this is that if the short-term forces favor issues relevant to older citizens the benefits of their mobilization may not be equally distributed across the candidates.

In Chapter 4, the simultaneous choice model will be presented in the context of retrospective economic and financial voting. For years, we have known that the state of the economy is an important influence on Presidential elections, but we have not looked at the topic in-depth with regard to Senate elections and other sub-Presidential elections. Senate elections are of sufficient magnitude and importance, and Senators are of such

stature that citizens can ascribe to them credit and blame for the economic fortunes of the country and their state. It will be clearly shown that the angry citizen, one who is not pleased with the state of the economy is measurably more likely to vote than the content citizen. Moreover, this person is more likely to vote for the challenging party. The literature has shown that personal finances generally do not influence electoral behavior. However, in this chapter evidence will be presented suggesting the contrary may be true in certain circumstances. By the end of this chapter the reader will understand how candidates for the Senate can use the economy as an effective issue to influence citizens.

In Chapter 5, the model will be presented in the context of a broad variety of issue positions reflected in citizen preferences for spending on various programs. Examples of these issues include defense spending and spending on welfare programs. Citizens should be capable of “sophisticated” voting which is to say, given the information that citizens are likely to have regarding Senate elections, they should be able to cast ballots and make turnout decisions based on issue preferences. Depending on the short-term forces that are active in the given election year, it will be clear which party’s candidate has the advantage and the greater ability to mobilize voters if he or she focuses on the right issue.

In Chapter 6, the concluding substantive chapter, the model will be presented with regard to the effect of the media. The model will rely on self-reports of the amount of attention paid to the elections by citizens. The models will also reflect the degree to which citizens say they watch news programs on a regular basis and how often they report reading the newspaper. The more exposure that citizens have to current events, the more resources they bring with them to making an intelligent electoral decision.

Exposure to a candidate breeds familiarity and therefore, a greater likelihood of voting for that candidate. Use of this model by a campaign may help them to determine where there advertising dollars should be spent in order to gain the maximum mobilization benefit.

Finally, in Chapter 7, the research will be summarized. A comprehensive model of the aggregated data that includes all of the variables found to be significant will be presented that shows how a wide variety of influences may interact with each other. It will provide the final evidence for why the simultaneous choice model is a viable and accurate representation of how citizens approach the electoral decision in Senate elections. Even when these disparate influences are put together in a single model, it will be shown that variables from each still are statistically and substantively significant influences on electoral behavior. By this point it should be clear how the simultaneous choice model provides a viable explanation of electoral behavior, one that provides greater insight into the implications of mobilization than either of the traditional models, individually. Still, avenues for future research will be proposed which may hopefully lead to the further adoption of the simultaneous choice model in the literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the political science literature as it pertains to the areas of study encompassed by this dissertation. To appreciate the material being put forth in this research, it is important to understand the previous research on which it is based and the holes in the research that it is trying to fill. The goal here is not to criticize previous research; rather it is to illustrate how the present research is influenced by it and how we might establish a new pattern of findings for Senate elections with a new conceptualization of voting and turnout.

Traditionally, the literature on American electoral behavior has been parsed out into two main categories. The first category is turnout. Researchers have been interested in developing an understanding of the factors that influence aggregate levels of turnout and individual decisions. Most of the research has looked at turnout in Presidential elections due to the tendency of these elections to overshadow others. There is however, a small body of literature on lower-level elections such as those for the Senate and Governor. The second category analyzed is the two-party, Democratic versus Republican vote. Similar to analyses of turnout, analyses of the two-party vote have been conducted to evaluate the factors that influence aggregate election outcomes and individual voter

The study of the influences has been both specific, covering areas like economic, socio-demographic, and media influences, as well as broad, covering multiple influences in one analysis. These analyses have been applied to elections at every level of government and virtually every office for which a partisan election is held.

Though somewhat limited, there have been several studies of Senate elections. These studies encompass the previous two categories discussed above but also include other areas of research. The influence of media advertising on voting in Senate elections has been analyzed. The effects of campaign spending on Senate voting has also been evaluated. Throughout the rest of this section highlights of the literature on voting and turnout will be presented, particularly those which focus on Senate elections.

2.1 The Literature on Turnout

The decline in turnout that began in the later half of the 20th Century is attributable to numerous factors. Dissatisfaction with the political system, lack of trust in government, and diminished efficacy, are just examples of these factors. Though the research described in this section is not often based on Senate election data specifically, the effects seen on other elections undoubtedly trickles down, or up, to the Senate level suggesting the relevance of understanding the wide-body of findings on turnout not just how it pertains with regard to the Senate.

In his thorough study of the matter, Teixeira (1987) showed that the decline in turnout is explained by several social and political factors. In his assessment, the social factors are a younger eligible electorate, fewer people married and living with their

spouses, and a more mobile population. These factors explain about 3/8 of the decline in turnout. The political factors are a less partisan electorate, less exposure to and information about campaigns, and a decline in political efficacy (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982). These explain the other 5/8 of the decline. Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995), however, argue that the decline in turnout is better explained exclusively by political factors, which may be correlated with social factors but are not themselves directly important to the turnout decision. Ragsdale and Rusk (1993) argue that there are simply dissatisfied voters, “Their reasons for staying home are seemingly political. They are effectively engaging in protest by not voting. Campaigners messages may actually be keeping some people away from the polls.”

Others suggest that the decline of turnout in non-presidential races is a function of the shift of many elections away from years where there is a presidential race, though this is not necessarily an issue for Senate races whose patterns have been set for decades rather than by laws which can be changed by state legislatures (Boyd 1989). For instance, many gubernatorial races were shifted to off-year election cycles in order to insulate them from the dynamics of the presidential campaign. Additionally, Boyd suggests that the burden of having an extra election, a primary, helps to depress turnout in general elections by adding to the costs of voting. While Boyd’s point is well-taken, Gubernatorial and Senatorial elections are considered “high-visibility” and as such should be able to draw a substantial level of turnout independent of other factors.

Caldeira, Patterson and Marko (1985) found that the existence of a Senate election did have a mobilization effect, albeit a modest one even in the presence of a

presidential election. Cohen, Krassa, and Hamman (1991) found that visits by sitting Presidents to a state for the purpose of campaigning for their party's candidate can produce modest increases in turnout. They argue that this largely happens as a result of the visit creating a higher level of stimulus which motivates citizens to vote.

From a theoretical perspective, political science has traditionally viewed turnout as the first part of a two-stage process during which individuals decide whether or not to cast a ballot. The theory is that the decision to vote is temporally prior to the decision for whom to vote.

Recently, the turnout decision has been broken down even further into another two-stage process (Timpone 1998). In the first phase, citizens must decide if they are going to make the effort to register. In the second phase, citizens who have registered must decide whether or not they will vote. The factors that influence these two stages are thought to not be identical. For instance, the strength of one's party identification and level of external efficacy, has traditionally been thought to affect the turnout decision. However, Timpone's research suggests that the effect is really seen at the registration stage, not at the turnout stage. Another example is education; while exerting a role in the turnout decision, it seems to play a more important role in the registration decision. While Timpone's research is relevant if one conceptualizes the two-party vote decision as being made after the turnout decision, it may not be relevant in a simultaneous choice model. It may be the case that dissatisfaction with choices affects citizens' sense of efficacy by not allowing them to accurately express their policy preferences. Their policy preferences may be more accurately expressed by voting for none of the above.

However, to theoretically allow them to make this decision one must use a model that accounts for the possibility that citizens evaluate candidates and turnout simultaneously.

There have been arguments in the literature over why people vote at all because the probability of their vote making a difference is so slim. The costs can be substantial in terms of time, particularly if voters are going to go through the effort to make a highly informed decision. Riker and Ordeshook (1968) presented the calculus of voting. They suggested that though the costs are relatively high and the benefits relatively low, people vote because they see it as part of their civic duty. Ferejohn and Fiorina (1974) suggest that the reason people vote is because they want to minimize their chances of having any regrets about the outcome (minimax regret). Individuals, even though they recognize that their vote is unlikely to make a difference, do not want to feel as though they were responsible for their least preferred outcome being elected. Aldrich (1992) disagrees with Ferejohn and Fiorina and suggests that voting, rather than being a high cost activity, is a low cost activity and has a commensurately low level of prospective benefit. Citizens vote because they see it as a long-term investment in a political system that must be sustained.

What do we know about non-voters? Generally speaking, it appears that the policy preferences of Republicans who vote are the same as the policy preferences of Republicans who do not vote. This principal is similar for Democrats. Voters however, are more likely to see differences between the two political parties; this difference provides the motivation to vote. The fall-off between on and off year elections is generally similar for Republicans and Democrats (Petrocik and Shaw 1991).

What effect does the level of turnout in the United States have on electoral outcomes? Turnout will have an effect when voters can be mobilized effectively by the parties and candidates (Cavanagh 1991). Citizens can be mobilized easiest in elections that are generally hard fought and where the level of competition is great. Patterson and Caldeira (1983) showed that the closeness of the election affected turnout in Gubernatorial elections. Cox and Munger (1989) argue that high stimulus elections for Governor, Senate, and the House can motivate turnout in midterm elections. It can happen when those who are not habitual voters are most easily influenced. The effect of mobilization on electoral outcomes is most likely to be seen in smaller elections that are usually local in nature, however, in small states this could possibly impact Senate elections.

The general stereotype of the effect of high turnout in elections is that it helps Democrats to win House and Senate elections. This stereotype, however, has come into question. DeNardo (1980) suggests that “the joke is on Democrats,” and there is no reason to assume that the composition of the electorate in a low turnout election is any different than the composition in a high turnout election. He suggests, however, that Democrats benefit more from higher turnout in Republican districts than do Republicans in Democratic districts. Nagel and McNulty (1996) suggest that the simplistic model of high turnout helping Democrats is only occasionally accurate. They suggest that turnout helps Democrats where they are less numerous and actually hurts them where they are more numerous in a voting constituency. Fenton (1979) suggests that rather than helping Democrats or Republicans, a high level of turnout merely increases the margin of victory

for the winning candidate. When Democrats win, it is a function of there simply being more Democrats; when Republicans win it is a function of “abnormal conditions” creating an environment where Republicans can win.

By re-evaluating the theoretical structure of the turnout decision in Senate races, this dissertation will add to our knowledge of what affects the decision of people to vote. This dissertation will provide an alternative and arguably better perspective on electoral decision-making resolving some of the contradictions in previous research.

2.2 Voting and Demographics/Social Groups

Most models of electoral behavior take into account the demographic characteristics of voters because the field has established that a relationship exists between social groups/classes, and the vote. At a minimum, it has been established that when looking at other more substantive influences on the vote, the relationship to socio-demographic factors must be controlled for. Because of its centrality in decision-making, party identification must also be controlled for because, from a political perspective, it acts in a manner that is similar to individual social groups and tends to be highly correlated with socio demographic characteristics.

We know that in general, older and more educated individuals turnout to vote (Petrocik and Shaw 1991; Teixeira 1992). We also know that those with lower incomes and less education are less likely to vote, but when they do vote, are more likely to vote Democratic. (Verba and Nie 1972). We know that Blacks are less likely to vote than whites, but that when they do vote, are more likely to vote Democratic.(Teixeira 1987).

It is easier to see the impact of socio-economic characteristics if we think about voting in terms of costs/burdens and benefits (Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Ferejohn and Fiorina 1974; Aldrich 1993). The burden of voting is higher for those who have fewer resources such as the younger and those who are less educated; hence we would expect them to be more likely to abstain. Their primary needs, such as obtaining food and shelter create a burden that outweighs any sense of civic duty they might feel. Those who have greater resources or experience with the civic system would commensurately feel a greater sense of civic duty and hence a higher likelihood of voting. Alternatively, their greater level of awareness might also make them less likely to vote if they perceive no differences between candidates or simply dislike the options from which they can choose.

With regard to political characteristics, it has long been known that party identification(PID) is the most salient characteristic with regard to the candidate choice decision (Campbell et. al. 1960; Miller and Shanks 1996; Petrocik 1996). This characteristic is the most enduring political one as it is a function of individuals' long-term experiences with and identification with one of the two major political parties. This single variable acts as a very powerful predictor of how an individual will vote.

We expect all things equal, citizens who decide to vote, will vote in accordance with their party identification (Campbell et. al 1960; Iyengar and Petrocik 1998). We would expect strong identifiers to be the most likely to cast ballots and cast them in accordance with their PID. Recent literature has suggested that there are not as many independents as previously thought. Citizens tend to have leanings to one party and

generally vote in accordance with those leanings (Keith et. al.1992). We would suspect however, that their leaning may be fickle enough that they have a greater probability of abstaining than strong identifiers. What the party identification and voting literature does not adequately account for is what citizens will do if they do not like their party's candidate. All things equal, it is unlikely they would vote for the opposition candidate; leaving them with the option of not voting. This option is made explicit in the simultaneous choice model and follows the logic directly by having the candidate decision be simultaneous to the turnout decision.

Looking at group characteristics, demographics, and the most basic political characteristics of citizens is the starting point for this research. Substantive evaluations of the state of the nation and policy preferences must also be taken into account.

2.3 Issue Ownership and Issue Voting

The notion that the Republican and Democratic parties each have issues that they are perceived as being “better on” is commonly referred to as issue ownership. The idea that voters actually perceive this ownership has been demonstrated multiple times, most powerfully by John R. Petrocik (1996; Blunt et. al. 1998). Examples of issues that are traditionally owned by Republicans include, but are not limited to, crime and national defense. Examples of issues that have been traditionally owned by Democrats involve social welfare and civil rights. In recent years however, and most importantly for this study with regard to the 1992 data, it has become somewhat less clear which party owns each issue. Self-professed centrist candidates like Bill Clinton obfuscate the line

sufficiently that it is often times difficult for citizens to adequately differentiate and thereby assess which party is better on an issue. There is little doubt that this blurring of the lines at the presidential level trickles down to the Senatorial level.

In terms of the vote decision, issue ownership is most relevant for the weakest of identifiers and for independents. Issue ownership interacts with what are commonly referred to as the “short-term forces” in an election to influence the decision of those voters who would be most likely to waver between candidates or perhaps not vote at all. Short-term forces can best be thought of as the factors that are unique to the given election. For instance national security may be the most important issue when a war is at hand. Candidates can utilize these issues to better position themselves among the swing voters who are likely to decide the outcome of the election. In any given election, there exist short-term forces of various kinds.

How does issue ownership tie into the voting decision of citizens, when abstention is considered a viable decision? The effect must be parsed out based on individuals’ levels of partisanship. For those who are the strongest identifiers of either party, the effect will be dependent on the balance of the short-term forces. If the balance of the short-term forces favors the opposing party, then rather than vote against their partisanship, members of the party with the deficit of short-term forces in their favor may decide not to vote. For example, if the most important issues listed by Democrats in a given year are crime and national defense, then rather than vote for the Republican who would probably be better on the issues, the partisans may allow others to make the

decision for them rather than exert the energy and effort that it actually takes to vote. The psychological dissonance involved in voting Republican may inhibit them from doing so.

For the independents in any given election, the short-term forces would likely have the greatest effect in terms of swaying them to vote for one party over the other. However, if these same independents do not perceive any difference between the candidates on the given issues, then the effect of the short-term forces may be negated and they may decide not to vote.

Taken more generally, it has been shown that issues do matter in Senate elections. Wright and Berkman (1986) point out that, "Policy effects are substantial and systematic in Senate elections, and cannot be omitted if we are to appreciate the importance of Congressional elections in the national policy-making process." They point out that particularly with regard to the electorate in Senate elections, citizens are "calculating and somewhat sophisticated" because they can identify the policy positions of candidates and see how the Senate impacts overall national policy. Moreover, they argue that candidates behave in a manner that suggests that they believe that policy positions matter to voters. There are other things that matter such as attributes like integrity and experience, and these might even matter more, but policy preferences do play a measurable role in influencing electoral behavior. Kahn and Kenney (1997) argue that this is particularly true in campaigns that are considered intense. The more intense a campaign the higher the information flow will be, thereby allowing for sophisticated (policy) voting. Westlye (1983) suggests that the high-profile nature of Senate elections allows for policy voting to

occur. Abramowitz (1988) showed that policy voting is particularly likely to be evidenced in states where there is a wider ideological disparity between the candidates.

Though there is limited research on the impacts of policy preferences on Senate elections, it is clear from the above paragraph that numerous researchers have found various types of support for the contention that citizens can vote based on policy. All of this research contends that it is the unique nature of Senate elections that allows issues to matter whereas they would not in the more frequently studied House elections.

2.4 The State of the Economy and Personal Finances

Throughout political science literature, it has been shown numerous times that the state of the national economy plays an important role in elections (Kinder and Kieweit 1979, 1981; Tufte 1975; Alvarez and Nagler 1995; Mackuen, Erikson and Stimson 1992; Rosenstone 1982; Markus 1992; Atkeson and Partin 1995). If the economy is doing well, an incumbent president can expect to win the election. His party should also fair relatively well in elections for the House and Senate. If the economy is faltering then that same incumbent can expect a struggle for re-election. Still some suggest that the effect of the economy is not universal; it will mater for “some types of elections at some particular times” (Fiorina 1978).

The state of the economy can draw emotional reactions from citizens. Those reactions may be enough of a catalyst to motivate turnout because blame can be put on the government (Schlozman and Verba 1979). The motivation to punish is thought to be greater than the motivation to reward (Kernell 1977). How a given party and that party’s

candidate may handle the economy should influence the decision-making process of citizens. If the economy is in poor enough condition, even partisans may be convinced that a change is necessary and may vote for a candidate of the opposing party if their own party's candidate is the incumbent. With regard to presidential elections, Lacy and Grant (1998) found that a good economy tends to hinder turnout, while a poor economy tends to increase voting for the challenger.

The economy may have its greatest impact however, not in how voters decide whom they will vote for, but rather as a mobilizing factor influencing turnout. If the economy is in poor condition, this should anger citizens, resulting in mobilization. If, however, the economy is in relatively good condition voters will be content, and contentment should not breed mobilization.

It is important to consider the effects of money from the perspective of the health of the national economy and the health of a citizens' pocketbook. These two factors are different and though they may be tied together, need to be evaluated independently. The literature suggests that individuals will withdraw from political affairs when they have personal financial difficulties because they have greater concerns than politics (Rosenstone 1982). When citizens have financial difficulties they will need to focus on improving their own situations and providing basic necessities at home, the "bread and butter" problem, rather than on elections (Brody and Sniderman 1977). With regard to the two-party vote, Kinder and Kiewiet (1979) found that citizens tend to vote based on their perspectives of the national economy rather than on their perceptions of their personal finances. According to them, citizens hold themselves accountable for their own

financial circumstances not the government, so they do not let their circumstances influence them. On the other hand, they do expect the government to take care of the national economy.

There has also been limited research which shows the economy's specific impact on Senate elections. Kuklinski and West (1981) showed that unlike in House elections, citizens can use evaluations of the state of the economy when determining which candidate to vote for. Interestingly, they noted that citizens can use prospective evaluations, as opposed to retrospective evaluations when making their assessments. They did not however, find support for the contention that personal finances can influence electoral outcomes. Atkeson and Partin (1995) suggest that economics affect Senate elections but they do so via the President's party. When the economy is doing well, his party will benefit whereas when it is doing poorly, his party will suffer.

Past research has looked at the effect of the economy and personal finances on electoral outcomes, particularly with regard to the two-party vote and has found important and significant effects. These effects may have been over-estimated as a result of not looking at the mobilization effects of an unhealthy economy.

2.5 Information, Knowledge, and the Media

In matters of politics and, in particular, voting, we would always expect that information and knowledge would play an important role in the decision-making process of citizens. Not all citizens come to the political arena with equal amounts of information about how the political system works or what is currently happening within

that system. Those with more knowledge have a greater understanding of the benefits and importance of participating and may better understand the trade-offs of the choices that they are making. Those with less knowledge, may feel alienated from the system and not have the desire to understand politics and make an effort to participate. Some candidates are better known than others because of incumbency, previous electoral experience, celebrity status, better commercials, or a host of other reasons (Abramowitz 1988; Cox and Katz 1996; Krasno and Green 1988). The more information one has, the more capable one will be of making informed comparisons and decisions. Information decreases the probability of indifference (Sanders 1996).

Knowledge and information have the tendency to come from media outlets that citizens must rely on to keep themselves informed about current affairs. There is a wide variety of research that contemplates the various effects that the media have on perceptions and thereby electoral behavior. Iyengar and Kinder (1986) showed through experimental research that the media does not tell citizens what to think but rather tells them what to think about, a so-called priming effect. Citizens then form their own opinions about the things they are thinking about. Additionally the media can frame the issue in such a way to get citizens to think about issues from one perspective, the two most common frames being episodic and thematic frames (Iyengar 1991). The frame may provide a perspective that is more advantageous to one of the two political parties. These same effects can also be produced by the campaigns via the messages they choose to focus on and the way they conduct political advertising.

Clear evidence has been found through experimental research that the media and campaigns exert a measurable impact on vote choice (Iyengar and Simon 1993; Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994). Through both priming and framing the media alters the way citizens think about politics creating an unavoidable effect on voting behavior. Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1995) found clear evidence through experimental research that negative campaigning produces a measurable and substantive impact on turnout by citizens. This finding was demonstrated thru the analysis of Senate election data providing greater evidence for the purposes of the present research. Citizens who see negative adds get turned off to politics and disgusted with the system, producing lower overall turnout. Of particular note to the present research, their findings were based on analyses of experimental research using U.S. Senate elections.

Through the manipulation of the media and through advertisements the campaigns can directly impact Senate election outcomes. Jacobson (1980) showed that at least challengers for the Senate faired better with increased expenditures. Westlye (1983) showed that the high-profile nature of Senate elections, including their coverage in the media allows for more sophisticated voting in these types of elections.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of just some of the literature that applies to this research. Throughout the rest of this dissertation, evidence will be presented to show how holes in previous research can be filled and explained by a model of electoral behavior that focuses on simultaneous choice.

CHAPTER 3

DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE SIMULTANEOUS CHOICE MODEL

Studies of electoral behavior have traditionally begun with a presentation and analysis of the demographic composition of the electorate. This is a part of the political scientist's paradigm of political behavior research. Our extensive body of research on the American electorate has shown a relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and levels of turnout (Verba and Nie 1972). Additionally, we have established that certain sectors of society tend to vote in consistent and similar ways (Campbell et al. 1960, Nie et al. 1976).

Examples of the relationship are abundant. With regard to turnout, political scientists have shown that the more educated an individual is, the more likely it is that they will vote (Teixeria 1987). With regard to the vote decision, research has shown that African-Americans are far more likely to vote for Democrats than they are for Republicans (Rosenstone et. al 1984).

Society can be broken down into an unlimited number of subcomponents. The United States is one of the most diverse countries in the world, composed of a plethora of ethnic, racial and religious groups. Individuals within each group share various values and notions about how to live life and what role government should have in their life.

These beliefs are often common across the group as a result of social interactions or through a sense of social cohesiveness, thereby impacting electoral behavior (Huckefeldt and Sprague 1995). However, in the United States, individuals are members of many different subcomponents of society and feel allegiances to each of them. These overlapping allegiances are often referred to as cross-cutting cleavages, meaning that an individual identifies with multiple sectors of society creating conflicts of expectations which must be reconciled in their private and civic lives. These factors must all be included and controlled for in electoral behavior models, because they are the variables that are most likely to confound the impacts of other variables.

This dissertation is interested in the impact of the sociological characteristics of groups on the simultaneous choice conception of electoral behavior. The theory driving this chapter is that individuals who are from advantaged parts of society have the resources necessary to evaluate the political environment and use that information to make electoral decisions. If citizens see little difference between the candidates or perceive a race whose outcome is predetermined, they may decide to not cast their ballot. For these individuals, the perception is that not casting a ballot is every bit as legitimate a decision as casting a ballot for a specific candidate. Additionally, citizens who are members of cohesive groups such as labor unions should also be expected to have more information as a result of the union providing information and a positive motivation to vote.

Citizens from disadvantaged sectors of society are more likely to not turnout than those from advantaged sectors because these citizens have more primary concerns to worry about. Citizens who are struggling to put food on the table are unlikely to take the

time to think about what impact government may have on them. Additionally, they generally do not have the ability to carefully evaluate candidates like those who are better off. Abstention for these individuals is more of an expression of indifference between the two-party candidates than it is an expression of how they feel about them.

Throughout the rest of this chapter I will show the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on electoral behavior in the simultaneous context, contrasting this to the traditional voting and turnout models.

3.1 The Variables of Interest

What follows in this section is a description of the specific demographic variables included in the analyses. Descriptive statistics are provided as well as the logic behind their inclusion in the analyses.

3.1.1 Union Membership

The literature on political behavior has shown relationships between household membership in a union and the amount and nature of political involvement in the household. For a household to be considered union, it is sufficient to have one union member residing within it because the benefits will accrue to all (the variable used in the analyses uses this consideration). A union provides a means by which individuals who share a common occupation can work together to achieve common goals. The primary goal of these unions is to improve the working environment for their members to include benefits and wages. Unions can also provide direct tangible benefits to members

including, expanded medical or life insurance, discounts to various entertainment venues, and perhaps most importantly for electoral purposes, opportunities for social interaction at union halls or picnics.

Traditionally, unions have also been a center for political activity. The social interactions that generally follow from a union breed this behavior (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). Union leaders rally their membership to vote for candidates and use dues to help provide “soft money” to candidates and parties. The existence of a union member in a household has meant that in the overwhelming majority of cases, those residing there would vote Democratic. Unions have generally seen the Republican Party as being hostile to their interests because of the party’s close association with large corporations.

	<i>1988 Sample</i>	<i>1990 Sample</i>	<i>1992 Sample</i>
Non-union household	85.3% (n=2683)	83.7% (n=2802)	85.9% (n=2371)
Union household	14.7% (n=462)	16.3% (n=547)	14.1% (n=388)

Table 3.1: Union households in SNES.

The proportions reflected in the survey are in rough proportion to those found in the population at large. During the timeframe of the study (1988-1992) the percentage of workers unionized in the United States was approximately 16.2% (LRA 2002).

3.1.2 Age³

Age is another demographic characteristic related to electoral behavior. Those who are older are more mature and have more experience with the political system; they have invested themselves in it. The older one is, the more likely it is that one is paying taxes or obtaining some sort of a government benefit (e.g. Medicare or Social Security) which should provide additional motivation to care about electoral outcomes.

In looking at the simultaneous choice model, one would expect older citizens to be more likely to choose a two-party candidate rather than abstention. These citizens should have the opportunity to closely evaluate candidates and notice subtle distinctions that will motivate them to vote vice abstaining. Conversely, younger citizens have less at stake with the government and have not had sufficient experience with the system to build an inherent loyalty to voting.

	<i>Voted Democrat</i>	<i>Voted Republican</i>	<i>Abstained</i>
18-24	22.6%	19.0%	58.4%
25-39	32.6%	29.2%	38.2%
40-54	40.8%	36.3%	22.9%
55-64	40.3%	38.7%	21.0%
65+	40.5%	38.8%	20.6%

Table 3.2: Age distribution in the SNES.

³Though a table is included in the analyses below, the variable was left coded as a continuous variable in the multivariate analyses.

3.1.3 Gender

Throughout the political science literature, and among the political pundits, a gender gap has been presumed. There is little evidence to suggest that there is a gap with regard to turnout; women and men vote in rough equal proportions. With regard to deciding whom to vote for, women have tended to slightly favor Democratic candidates (Cook and Wilcox 1995). For reference purposes, the table below shows the proportion of males and females interviewed in each of the studies.

	<i>1988 Sample</i>	<i>1990 Sample</i>	<i>1992 Sample</i>
Male	44.1% (n=1387)	45.9% (n=1538)	46% (n=1270)
Female	55.9% (n=1758)	54.1% (n=1811)	54% (n=1489)

Table 3.3: Gender distribution in the SNES.

In evaluating the simultaneous choice model there is little reason to believe that there is a difference in the electoral behavior exhibited by women and men. I presume that women and men would evaluate candidates and turnout similarly. A gender gap may be evidenced between the two-party vote options but should not be seen with respect to turnout.

3.1.4 Race

Much of the difference in electoral behavior between Blacks and Whites can be historically explained, particularly with regard to how Blacks had been disenfranchised (Verba and Nie 1972). It has only been 39 years, since President Lyndon Johnson signed the 1964 Voting Rights Act guaranteeing Blacks their rights with regard to electoral matters. While Blacks face little discrimination in the voting booth today, they continue to face it in other aspects of public life, which likely impacts their electoral behavior.

The table below shows the proportion of Blacks and Whites interviewed for each year of the study. It is important to note here, the relatively low number of Blacks that are interviewed in each of the election years. This is a common problem in political behavior survey research. Because of their small proportion in society relative to Whites, they are not interviewed as often in studies that use random sampling techniques without pre-survey stratification. Given the few number of Blacks interviewed, it becomes obvious why analyses cannot be conducted using other minority groups even though similar effects may be found for groups such as Latinos and Asians.

	<i>1988 Sample</i>	<i>1990 Sample</i>	<i>1992 Sample</i>
White	93.1% (n=2726)	94.1% (n=2859)	92.2% (n=2339)
Black	6.9% (n=202)	5.9% (n=178)	7.8% (n=198)

Table 3.4: Race distribution in the SNES.

One important note here is that analyses including race, must also take into account socio-economic status (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). Blacks who are better off should be at least somewhat more likely to vote Republican than those who are poorer. The effect of financial well-being can be controlled for in multivariate analyses.

3.1.5 Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic status (SES) is meant to be a summary measure of a citizen's place in society, generally measured by personal wealth and level of education. SES is a measurement of the amount of resources individuals can bring to bear in leading their civic and private lives. The presumption is that individuals with higher levels of SES have the time and other resources available to carefully look at the civic world and make "rational" choices based on their evaluations, resulting in "sophisticated" voting.

Those who have lower levels of SES presumably have more important issues to deal with in their lives than the political arena. These individuals are worried about putting food on the table and having shelter to live in. Previous research has shown that those who have fewer economic resources are less likely to vote (Brody and Sniderman 1977). Those in the upper levels of SES on the other hand, have the time and resources necessary to carefully evaluate the political world and have a higher motivation to do so (Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995). Additionally, these individuals also have much to lose as a result of government policies, particularly those affecting taxes. This author's presumption is that the vast middle-class in the US is far more similar to the upper-class than the lower-class. Middle-class America stands to gain or lose from government

policies regarding, education, crime, taxes, and other programs. Though these individuals do not have the time that the upper-class has, they make time to look at the civic world because marginal changes in taxation and government benefits have the potential for a great impact.

The two variables used most often to measure individuals' SES are their amount of education and annual income. While not a perfect measurement, these two variables do get at the fundamentals of what underlies SES in the United States.

3.1.5.1 Education

Education is one of the two critical subcomponents of socio-economic status. The highest level of schooling completed by an individual is how education is measured. As individuals obtain higher levels of education, they are taught the analytical tools necessary for a careful evaluation of the world around them. To be sure, there are differences to be seen among those with "equal" levels of education. For instance, one would presume that a person whose undergraduate degree is in political science would understand the political world better than an individual whose degree was in molecular biology. The table below shows the proportion of those with various educational levels interviewed in each of the election years.

	<i>1988 Sample</i>	<i>1990 Sample</i>	<i>1992 Sample</i>
Less than HS	13.1% (n=396)	13.0% (n=423)	12.6% (n=335)
HS grad	36.5% (n=1112)	30.9% (n=1002)	31.4% (n=836)
Some coll./assoc. degree	27.3% (n=829)	31.1% (n=1006)	31.2% (n=829)
Undergraduate degree	16.1% (n=491)	17.0% (n=550)	17.6% (n=468)
Graduate degree	7.1% (n=216)	8.0% (n=259)	7.4% (n=196)

Table 3.5: Education distribution in the SNES.

3.1.5.2 Income

Income is the second component of SES. Having sufficient funds to take care of oneself and one's family provides an opportunity to spend time on other matters such as politics. If there is not enough money to be able to sufficiently feed, clothe, and house a family, that individual cannot be expected to give any significant thought to political affairs. Though individuals may feel that the government can help them with their finances, they can have little guarantee that they will personally benefit from those policies. A higher level of income may also mean that one has the resources necessary to influence political leaders and elections. Those individuals who have the highest levels of income are undoubtedly the individuals who are helping to fund the individual elections vis a vis campaign contributions. These individuals have, for lack of a better phrase, "put their money where their mouth is" and by virtue of that are going to be sure that their voices are heard. Money provides far more opportunities for participation

beyond simply casting a vote (Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995). The table below shows the marginal statistics for the distribution of income across each year of the study.

	<i>1988 Sample</i>	<i>1990 Sample</i>	<i>1992 Sample</i>
<\$10K	10.5% (n=299)	7.3% (n=228)	8.0% (n=205)
\$10K-\$20K	19.4% (n=555)	17.6% (n=550)	16.4% (n=420)
\$20K-\$30K	24.7% (n=708)	22.7% (n=710)	23.1% (n=592)
\$30K-\$40K	18.9% (n=540)	19.9% (n=621)	16.8% (n=431)
\$40K-\$60K	16.4% (n=469)	19.6% (n=612)	20.0% (n=513)
\$60K-\$80K	10.1% (n=290)	13.1% (n=406)	7.7% (n=197)
>\$80K ⁴	-	-	8.2% (n=210)

Table 3.6: Income distribution in the SNES.

3.1.6 Party identification

No study of electoral behavior would be complete without the inclusion of party identification. Party identification is central to voting behavior in the United States, consistently proving itself in research to be the single greatest predictor of how a citizen will act. Its relationship to turnout is not as clear, however, one would expect strong partisans to be more likely to vote than weaker partisans or independents because of their strong political views. The table below shows the distribution of partisans in the study.

	<i>1988 Sample</i>	<i>1990 Sample</i>	<i>1992 Sample</i>
Strong Dem.	15.1% (n=446)	13.5% (n=424)	18.4% (n=476)
Weak Dem.	18.5% (n=545)	18.3% (n=572)	16.6% (n=430)
Lean Dem.	11.8% (n=347)	13.4% (n=421)	14.9% (n=386)
Independent	7.6% (n=225)	10.3% (n=322)	8.7% (n=226)
Lean Rep.	13.7% (n=404)	14.2% (n=445)	11.6% (n=300)
Weak Rep.	15.9% (n=470)	17.6% (n=550)	15.8% (n=409)
Strong Rep.	17.3% (n=510)	12.7% (n=398)	13.9% (n=360)

Table 3.7: Party identification distribution in the SNES.

3.2 Data analysis

In this section, the multivariate analyses showing the relationship between demographics and the simultaneous choice model are presented. The traditional voting and turnout models are presented first to provide a basis for comparison.

Predicted probabilities are included throughout the data analyses for the four variables found to have a consistent effect. To fully understand the probabilities, one must know how the variables were coded. For party identification, the comparison was made between the strongest Democrat, independent, and the strongest Republican. For age the comparison was made setting the variable to mean age as well as one standard deviation above and below that age. For education it was set to the average value of

⁴ Due to the limitations of the data, for 1988 and 1990 all those with incomes over \$60,000 were coded

education as well as one standard deviation above and below that average. For income, it was set to the mean level of income as well as one standard deviation above and below that value.

3.2.1 1988

Table 3.8 shows the traditional two-party vote choice model seen throughout the voting literature. In this model, only party identification is found to be statistically significant. The relationship is as predicted, with citizens tending to vote in accordance with their party identification. This is a result that one would expect based on the literature of two party voting (Campbell et. al. 1960; Nie et. al. 1974). Contrary to the expectations, however, no relationship is evidenced between socio-economic status and voting behavior.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-0.038	0.200	.85
Union	0.048	0.186	.80
Gender	-0.099	0.144	.49
Income	-0.052	0.054	.34
Education	0.004	0.003	.11
Age	0.005	0.005	.25
Party ID	0.488	0.036	.00
Constant	-1.551	0.487	.00
Pseudo R²=0.17			N=1041

Table 3.8: The traditional voting model based on demographic characteristics in 1988.

together for the purposes of the analyses.

Table 3.9 shows the traditional turnout model. Income, education and age all show a statistically significant relationship with the turnout decision. Higher levels of education and income, resources, lead to greater participation. Older citizens were also more likely to participate. These findings are similar to those found in the literature suggesting that those who are better off have the resources available to expend the effort to vote (Verba and Nie 1972; Abramson and Aldrich 1982).

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-0.133	0.161	.41
Union	0.270	0.179	.13
Gender	-0.035	0.132	.79
Income	0.171	0.050	.00
Education	0.023	0.003	.00
Age	0.042	0.004	.00
Party ID	-0.018	0.031	.58
Constant	-1.990	0.425	.00
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.12	<i>N</i>=1419		

Table 3.9: The traditional turnout model based on demographic characteristics in 1988.

Table 3.10 shows the simultaneous choice model analyses. In this model, income, education, age, and party identification all show a statistically significant ($p < .05$) impact on electoral behavior. These findings are noticeably different from those of the traditional models. The simultaneous choice model shows a melding of the two independent models. When abstention is considered a viable option, factors beyond party identification impact electoral behavior.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Race	-0.095	0.178	.59
Union	0.246	0.197	.21
Gender	0.007	0.149	.96
Income	0.193	0.056	.00
Education	0.021	0.003	.00
Age	0.039	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.261	0.037	.00
Constant	-2.034	0.474	.00
Voted Rep			
Race	-0.191	0.200	.34
Union	0.277	0.204	.18
Gender	-0.082	0.151	.59
Income	0.150	0.057	.01
Education	0.024	0.003	.00
Age	0.043	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.238	0.038	.00
Constant	-3.538	0.505	.00
Pseudo R²=0.15			N=1419

Table 3.10: The simultaneous choice model based on demographic characteristics in 1988.

Tables 3.11 and 3.12 show the predicted probabilities computed from the simultaneous choice model with regard to education and income (the two variables that best describe SES), respectively. It is clear that higher levels of education and income result in a lower level of abstention, a function of having the resources to participate. Level of education and income does not have a pronounced substantive effect on which candidate a citizen will vote for if they choose to vote. The impact of socio-economic status is more focused on the turnout component, implying that abstention is a viable consideration for citizens when considering all of their alternatives to include candidates. SES has its most direct impact on turnout in the simultaneous choice context, however, it

is apparent from the data below that higher levels of turnout would have helped Democrats. Because so many of those who have a high level of SES are already voting, increases in turnout would likely come from among those with lower levels of SES. These individuals would have had a greater probability of voting Democratic than Republican, which in many places would have likely exaggerated Democratic victory margins. It is clear from the tables below that SES is impacting electoral behavior by reducing overall levels of turnout taking away from the vote that candidates can obtain. It is a substantial indirect effect.

	<i>Less educated</i>	<i>Mean level of educ.</i>	<i>More educated</i>
Vote for Democrat	.33	.37	.40
Vote for Republican	.30	.37	.43
Abstain	.36	.26	.18

Table 3.11: Education's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

	<i>Less income</i>	<i>Mean level of income</i>	<i>Higher income</i>
Vote for Democrat	.33	.37	.40
Vote for Republican	.33	.37	.40
Abstain	.34	.26	.20

Table 3.12: Income's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

Table 3.13 shows that age has a considerable substantive impact on electoral behavior. Older citizens, because of their familiarity and loyalty to the system are far more likely to vote than younger citizens. These findings are similar to those of earlier studies but shows that the impact age has on citizens' complete electoral decision.

Because there is little difference in how citizens of different ages voted, increases in voting by younger or older citizens (holding all other factors constant) would not have likely impacted electoral outcomes.

	<i>Younger citizens</i>	<i>Mean citizen age</i>	<i>Older citizens</i>
Vote for Democrat	.31	.37	.41
Vote for Republican	.30	.37	.43
Abstain	.39	.26	.16

Table 3.13: Age's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

Table 3.14 shows the predicted probabilities for the party identification variable. Clearly, party identification impacts the two party component of the simultaneous choice model. Not surprisingly though, independents are found to have the highest likelihood of abstaining. Independents are lacking the loyalty to one of the political parties that would normally provide a level of motivation to vote (Petrock and Shaw 1991). This finding also makes sense from a rational choice perspective. Independents straddle the middle ground and will have conflicting viewpoints regarding both candidates. Because neither candidate is likely to accurately represent their positions they are more likely to abstain; this being particularly true in highly partisan elections where the middle is rarely approached. It is obvious, that increased turnout by partisans of each party would impact electoral outcomes, particularly if one party was mobilized over the other.

	<i>Strong Democrats</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Strong Republican</i>
Vote for Democrat	.63	.35	.13
Vote for Republican	.13	.35	.62
Abstain	.24	.30	.25

Table 3.14: Party ID's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

For 1988, the simultaneous choice model reflects a wide variety of factors which influence electoral behavior. Clearly, the traditional models do get at some of the important influences on turnout and voting behavior (affecting generally, only one of the two components), most of those factors are also shown to be important in the simultaneous choice model. They allow for ascertaining the influences on electoral behavior however, neither of them individually, show a majority of the variables as exerting an influence. The two traditional models do not individually provide a sufficient explanation of the influences on voting behavior. The simultaneous choice model shows how more than just party identification affects voting decisions and how more than just social background influences turnout decisions. Citizens can evaluate the candidates and ascertain their utilities for these candidates. If threshold levels are not met, they will decide not to vote. For those with the lowest levels of SES utilities may be difficult to compute or require such a high threshold that the decision to vote for a candidate will not be made.

3.2.2 1990

Table 3.15 shows the traditional two-party vote model for the 1990 Senate elections. Identical to the findings for 1988, only party identification exerts a statistically significant influence on the vote decision, with findings in the expected direction.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-0.186	0.340	.58
Union	-0.169	0.177	.34
Gender	-0.063	0.131	.63
Income	0.057	0.050	.26
Education	-0.002	0.002	.45
Age	0.002	0.004	.65
Party ID	0.511	0.035	.00
Constant	-1.550	0.553	.01
Pseudo R²=0.18			N=1220

Table 3.15: The traditional voting model based on demographic characteristics in 1990.

Table 3.16 shows the traditional turnout model for 1990. The relationships exhibited are identical to those seen in 1988 with socio-demographic characteristics, particularly those that make up SES exerting a statistically significant impact on turnout. Additionally, there is evidence to show that union membership may have had a marginal effect on turnout, with union members being more likely to vote than abstain.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	0.008	0.234	.97
Union	0.280	0.149	.06
Gender	-0.156	0.108	.15
Income	0.180	0.041	.00
Education	0.020	0.002	.00
Age	0.042	0.004	.00
Party ID	0.019	0.028	.51
Constant	-2.588	0.425	.00
Pseudo R²=0.11			N=1826

Table 3.16: The traditional turnout based on demographic characteristics model in 1990.

Table 3.17 shows the simultaneous choice model for the 1990 elections. Similar to those findings for 1988, those for 1990 show that income, education, age, and party identification all exert a statistically significant impact on electoral behavior. In addition, in 1990, union membership also exerted a significant impact on electoral behavior, influencing citizens to vote Democratic vice abstaining. As union members are overwhelmingly Democratic, this finding is not surprising. The GOTV drives that unions carry out are designed not only to motivate members to vote, they are designed to motivate members to vote for the union's preferred candidate.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Race	0.046	0.249	.86
Union	0.372	0.165	.02
Gender	-0.176	0.124	.15
Income	0.134	0.047	.00
Education	0.022	0.003	.00
Age	0.039	0.004	.00
Party ID	-0.238	0.034	.00
Constant	-2.386	0.473	.00
Voted Rep			
Race	-0.271	0.347	.44
Union	0.176	0.181	.33
Gender	-0.164	0.128	.20
Income	0.227	0.048	.00
Education	0.018	0.003	.00
Age	0.044	0.004	.00
Party ID	0.303	0.035	.00
Constant	-4.196	0.553	.00
Pseudo R²=0.14			N=1826

Table 3.17: The simultaneous choice model based on demographic characteristics in 1990.

Tables 3.18 through 3.21 show the predicted probabilities that were calculated from the simultaneous choice model. The patterns of the findings are very similar to those presented and discussed with regard to 1988. There is however, one noticeable difference between the findings of the two years; the overall likelihood of abstention is higher across the board, in all categories for 1990. This is likely explained by the fact that in general, levels of turnout are higher in Presidential election years (Boyd , 1990).

	<i>Less income</i>	<i>Mean level of income</i>	<i>Higher income</i>
Vote for Democrat	.32	.35	.37
Vote for Republican	.27	.32	.37
Abstain	.40	.33	.26

Table 3.18: Income's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

	<i>Less educated</i>	<i>Mean level of educ.</i>	<i>More educated</i>
Vote for Democrat	.29	.35	.32
Vote for Republican	.29	.32	.31
Abstain	.43	.33	.37

Table 3.19: Education's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

	<i>Younger citizens</i>	<i>Mean citizen age</i>	<i>Older citizens</i>
Vote for Democrat	.28	.35	.40
Vote for Republican	.25	.33	.40
Abstain	.47	.32	.20

Table 3.20: Age's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

	<i>Strong Democrats</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Strong Republican</i>
Vote for Democrat	.58	.33	.13
Vote for Republican	.10	.30	.59
Abstain	.32	.37	.28

Table 3.21: Party ID's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

Overall, the findings for 1990 are very similar to those for 1988 and lend credence to the argument that the simultaneous choice model produces a melding of the two traditions of electoral behavior research. Still, one of the most important pieces of

information to take away from this is the degree of “support” that abstention has. Most citizens have a relatively high likelihood of abstaining that does not bode well for the political system in the long-term.

3.2.3 1992

With 1992 being a very unique election year, one would expect the nature of the relationships to change. One would think that the inclusion of a legitimate third party candidate at the presidential level should have produced a change in the factors that influenced elections across the ballot.

Table 3.22 shows the traditional two-party model for 1992. Similar to previous models, party identification exerted a highly significant influence on electoral behavior. Unlike the other two years which are studied, race exerted a statistically significant influence with Blacks being more likely to vote Democratic than Whites. This finding is similar to previous research but it is the first time in the context of this research that it exerted a statistically significant effect. The finding of race showing a statistically significant influence in 1992 is not surprising given that the election was being held in the immediate aftermath of the verdict in the Rodney King case and the subsequent riots. This singular event undoubtedly made race a salient factor, particularly for Black voters. Elections are not held in a vacuum separate from the social circumstances of the times.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-1.114	0.459	.02
Union	-0.046	0.210	.83
Gender	-0.014	0.151	.93
Income	0.035	0.052	.50
Education	-0.003	0.003	.28
Age	0.005	0.005	.34
Party ID	0.486	0.038	.00
Constant	-0.571	0.687	.41
Pseudo R²=0.19			N=989

Table 3.22: The traditional voting model based on demographic characteristics in 1992.

Table 3.23 shows the traditional turnout model for 1992. The results are identical to those presented for the previous years. Surprisingly, however, the findings do not show that race exerts a statistically significant influence. Given the Rodney King verdict, one would have expected race to influence turnout by motivating higher numbers of Blacks to turnout as a means to create a change in the system.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-0.192	0.269	.48
Union	0.229	0.219	.30
Gender	0.325	0.148	.03
Income	0.316	0.053	.00
Education	0.023	0.003	.00
Age	0.040	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.029	0.038	.44
Constant	-2.927	0.534	.00
Pseudo R²=0.16			N=1268

Table 3.23: The traditional turnout model based on demographic characteristics in 1992.

Table 3.24 shows the relationship for the simultaneous choice model in 1992. In 1992, education, income, and age, all exhibit a statistically significant effect on electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice model. The results also show that race had an impact on the likelihood of citizens deciding to vote Republican vice abstaining.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Race	-0.096	0.278	.73
Union	0.271	0.234	.25
Gender	0.306	0.163	.06
Income	0.297	0.058	.00
Education	0.025	0.003	.00
Age	0.037	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.278	0.044	.00
Constant	-2.928	0.589	.00
Voted Rep			
Race	-1.116	0.479	.02
Union	0.163	0.253	.52
Gender	0.288	0.169	.09
Income	0.334	0.059	.00
Education	0.021	0.004	.00
Age	0.041	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.242	0.044	.00
Constant	-3.660	0.725	.00
Pseudo R²=0.18			N=1268

Table 3.24: The simultaneous choice model based on demographic characteristics in 1992.

The pattern in the predicted likelihoods exhibited in tables 3.25 – 3.28 are similar to those from the previous years for each of the individual characteristics. Those who have lower incomes and less education were less likely to vote than the better off and more educated. Older citizens were much less likely to abstain than younger citizens.

Independents were more likely than partisans to abstain. Of note, however, is that the overall likelihood of abstention is the lowest in 1992 for all of the years studied. This finding speaks to the likely effect that the unique presidential race had across all elections in the nation. We would have expected turnout levels to increase compared to those for 1990, however, without the unique presidential race they probably would not have been higher than those for 1988.

	<i>Less income</i>	<i>Mean level of income</i>	<i>Higher income</i>
Vote for Democrat	.36	.42	.47
Vote for Republican	.29	.35	.40
Abstain	.35	.22	.13

Table 3.25: Income's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

	<i>Less educated</i>	<i>Mean level of educ.</i>	<i>More educated</i>
Vote for Democrat	.35	.42	.47
Vote for Republican	.32	.36	.38
Abstain	.33	.23	.15

Table 3.26: Education's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

	<i>Younger citizens</i>	<i>Mean citizen age</i>	<i>Older citizens</i>
Vote for Democrat	.36	.41	.45
Vote for Republican	.29	.36	.41
Abstain	.35	.24	.15

Table 3.27: Age's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

	<i>Strong Democrats</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Strong Republican</i>
Vote for Democrat	.67	.40	.15
Vote for Republican	.12	.34	.63
Abstain	.22	.26	.21

Table 3.28: Party ID's impact on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

In 1992, the relationships exhibited are as expected and very similar to those for the other years when looked at as a whole. Once again, the results show that the simultaneous choice model is robust and better reflects all of the factors which may influence turnout. They also show that though Senate elections are important in their own right, that they will be influenced to some degree by the presidential race.

3.2.4 Aggregated Data

An analysis of the aggregated data provides a means to see how, in general, one would expect these models to represent electoral behavior in the United States. In this section, the data for all three studies are aggregated with two variables added to control for the unique effects of any given year (the variable is coded 1 or 0). Even when evaluating aggregated data, it is necessary to include variables that control for each of the years in order to capture external effects.

The findings for the traditional model are very similar to those presented above for each of the individual years. Only party identification exerts a statistically significant impact on the two-party vote choice. Also of note, is that the control variables added are not statistically significant, indicating that party identification is the critical

component of the two-party vote decision and that factors unique to each of the years were not as significant an influence on behavior as was party identification.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-0.241	0.159	.13
Union	-0.064	0.109	.56
Gender	-0.055	0.081	.50
Income	0.016	0.030	.59
Education	-0.00	0.002	.96
Age	0.004	0.003	.14
Party ID	0.497	0.021	.00
1988	0.135	0.097	.17
1992	0.007	0.099	.95
Constant	-1.505	0.311	.00
Pseudo R²=0.18			N=3229

Table 3.29: The traditional voting model based on demographic characteristics in the aggregated data.

The table below shows the results for the traditional turnout model. Unlike the findings presented above for the two-party vote, there is substantial evidence suggesting that socio-demographic characteristics influence behavior. This finding is identical to the pattern exhibited in the individual year analyses. Of note however, is the fact that the control variables for each of the years are statistically significant. This indicates that there are factors unique (not identified here) to the election years that had a meaningful impact on turnout (one of these factors may have been the existence of a presidential race). The turnout decision would appear to be far more fickle than the two-party vote decision.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Race	-0.111	0.118	.35
Union	0.274	0.101	.01
Gender	0.000	0.073	1.00
Income	0.212	0.027	.00
Education	0.021	0.002	.00
Age	0.042	0.002	.00
Party ID	-0.006	0.018	.76
1988	0.603	0.086	.00
1992	0.577	0.090	.00
Constant	-2.796	0.259	.00
Pseudo R²=0.13			N=4513

Table 3.30: The traditional turnout model based on demographic characteristics in the aggregated data.

The table below shows how socio-demographic characteristics consistently exhibit a statistically significant relationship with electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice context. All of the traditional demographic variables included in political science electoral behavior models exhibit at least some effect on electoral behavior.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Race	-0.049	0.127	.70
Union	0.314	0.111	.01
Gender	0.001	0.082	.99
Income	0.197	0.030	.00
Education	0.022	0.002	.00
Age	0.039	0.003	.00
Party ID	-0.255	0.022	.00
1988	0.532	0.097	.00
1992	0.565	0.100	.00
Constant	-2.722	0.288	.00
Voted Rep			
Race	-0.329	0.162	.04
Union	0.219	0.119	.06
Gender	-0.025	0.084	.76
Income	0.229	0.031	.00
Education	0.021	0.002	.00
Age	0.043	0.003	.00
Party ID	0.267	0.022	.00
1988	0.650	0.099	.00
1992	0.559	0.104	.00
Constant	-4.335	0.319	.00
Pseudo R²=0.16			N=4513

Table 3.31: The simultaneous choice model based on demographic characteristics in the aggregated data.

Tables 3.32 thru 3.35 show the predicted probabilities computed for the four most important socio-demographic variables. The patterns exhibited are very similar to those presented for each of the individual years.

	<i>Less income</i>	<i>Mean level of income</i>	<i>Higher income</i>
Vote for Democrat	.38	.39	.39
Vote for Republican	.28	.34	.39
Abstain	.34	.27	.22

Table 3.32: Income's impact on the simultaneous choice model in the aggregated data.

	<i>Less educated</i>	<i>Mean level of educ.</i>	<i>More educated</i>
Vote for Democrat	.33	.39	.44
Vote for Republican	.29	.34	.38
Abstain	.39	.27	.17

Table 3.33 Education's impact on the simultaneous choice model in the aggregated data.

	<i>Younger citizens</i>	<i>Mean citizen age</i>	<i>Older citizens</i>
Vote for Democrat	.32	.39	.44
Vote for Republican	.28	.34	.40
Abstain	.41	.27	.16

Table 3.34: Age's impact on the simultaneous choice model in the aggregated data.

	<i>Strong Democrats</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Strong Republican</i>
Vote for Democrat	.62	.36	.13
Vote for Republican	.12	.33	.60
Abstain	.26	.32	.27

Table 3.35: Party ID's impact on the simultaneous choice model in the aggregated data .

3.3 Summary

Many of the findings in this chapter were consistent with previous research. The field has already established that socio-demographic characteristics, and of course party identification exert a statistically and substantively significant result on electoral behavior in the United States. However, the focus of previous research has been on the two separate decisions of turnout and two-party vote choice, each of which having their own unique influences.

What has been shown in this chapter is a new model that takes into account socio-demographic characteristics and party identification but combines them into a comprehensive model. The discovery here is that all of these factors exert an influence in a joint-decision environment. One's income and education do not just influence the likelihood of turning out, they influence which candidate one will choose. The decision to turnout and the two-party vote decision are closely connected and inseparable. When voters consider abstention a real option, as they undoubtedly do, it becomes obvious that the factors that influence behavior are more numerable. Recall from all of the tables presented above that abstention has a very high likelihood of being chosen by citizens when they are evaluating candidates as well. This chapter shows how the influences are far deeper than traditional models of electoral behavior would allow for.

This chapter shows the importance of how the vote is conceptualized in determining what demographic factors are found to be important in influencing the electoral behavior of Americans. Because in any given election in the United States abstention would be a plurality winner if not a majority winner of an election, it is important to consider carefully the conceptualization. Abstention plays the vital role of "other" in the American electoral context. It is not unreasonable to believe that Americans evaluate the candidates while at the same time making their decision as to whether or not they will vote. It is clear from this chapter that the effect of demographics is far more important than either the traditional turnout or voting model allow for and is better measured in the context of the simultaneous choice model.

As has been seen in this chapter, different sectors of society respond to electoral stimuli in different ways. Not voting may be making as strong of a statement about the

electoral environment as voting does for some sectors of society. Frustration with the political system, historical experiences with the political system, and a multitude of other factors create the possibility that abstention is a real and meaningful choice for citizens. A “vote” for abstention is a vote against the choices and perhaps more disturbingly may be a vote against the overall actions of the system. It is not a good indication of the health of the political system when large sectors of society decide not to exercise their fundamental right to choose who governs them.

Continued evidence is also found in this chapter for the popular contention that turnout is higher in Presidential election years. Comparing the results for 1990 to those from the other two election years, no other conclusion can be drawn. Senate elections undoubtedly impact turnout but are also subject to impacts from other elections. This is an area for future research using the simultaneous choice model due to the availability of only one non-Presidential election year in the present study.

In the following chapters the research will go beyond demographic factors and look at how policy positions, substantive evaluations of the state of economy, and the media affect the voting decisions of U.S. citizens.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCES ON VOTING AND TURNOUT

Throughout the literature on voting, it has been established that individuals' retrospective evaluations of the state of the economy exert an impact on the decisions they make upon entering the voting booth (Fiorina 1978, 1981). Americans have come to be cynical of government and have low expectations with regard to the outputs government can produce (Miller 1974, Craig 1980). However, one expectation that citizens have is for the government, particularly the federal government, to create an environment that will foster a strong economy (Weatherford 1983). A strong economy affords individuals the opportunity to become successful and improve their own economic fortunes and quality of life. Conversely, a bad economy limits opportunities, diminishes quality of life, and creates discontentment.

For better or worse, citizens of the United States put much of the blame and credit for the state of the economy on the President (Alvarez and Nagler 1995, Erikson 1989, Lewis-Beck and Rice 1992). Senators, because of their prominent role in American politics, can also have their races affected by the state of the economy; a fact not

acknowledged well in the literature. The assumption of this dissertation is that when looking at incumbent parties, citizens are much more likely to punish for a bad economy than they are to reward for a good economy.

This impact on voting outcomes is particularly noticeable when one looks at the vote decision from the perspective of incumbent versus challenger rather than the traditional two-party, Republican versus Democrat perspective. In the context of this research the impact will be evaluated based on the incumbent party not the incumbent office holder. The logic of this classification is that citizens really hold parties accountable so that even if the election were for an open seat, evaluations of the previous office-holder would continue to impact decision-making. This view on incumbency is important because actions based on economics and finances are generally caused by retrospective evaluations of performance vice future expectations (Fiorina 1978, Fiorina 1981). One would expect to also see an impact on turnout with angry voters being more motivated to cast a ballot than satisfied voters via the “invisible foot.”(Lacy and Grant 1999). Specifically, angry voter should be more likely to vote anti-incumbent (Alvarez and Nagler 1995). The impact of these retrospective evaluations will be made clear in the context of the simultaneous choice model.

The electoral behavior literature has also looked at the impact of individuals’ financial circumstances on their decision-making (Kinder and Kiewiet 1979, 1981). One would assume that individuals’ electoral behavior should be influenced more by their own personal financial status rather than the state of the economy. If individuals feel that they are doing well, that should result in a positive assessment of the government, leading to support for the incumbent party. Conversely, if individuals are doing poorly, they

should blame the government for not creating an environment that would foster economic opportunity for them. This presumption has not borne itself out in the literature, at least with respect to Presidential voting (MacKuen et. al. 1992). It is assessed that the reason this is not evidenced is because of the American attitude toward success and economic opportunity. Americans tend to be individualists who do not look to the government or others to create success for themselves. They expect government to create an environment conducive to success (i.e. a good economy), but know they will ultimately be responsible for their own success.

Some may question the appropriateness of looking at economic perceptions with regard to Senators due to a perception that individual Senators can do little to exert a direct influence on the national economy. Furthermore, critics would assert that it is harder to establish accountability among 100 Senators (elected from 50 different states) than it is with one president (elected by all of the states). What this line of argument ignores, however, is the high profile nature of the Senate and the frequency that one sees Senators on television or reads about their actions in the newspaper. Senators can readily obtain television time to express their opinions and positions on matters of national importance, including the economy (Westlye 1991). A resident of the state of Ohio, will often see on television, Senators from California, Virginia, South Dakota, Kansas, and other states, not to mention Ohio Senators. If Ohio residents see these Senators, one can imagine the frequency with which these Senators are seen in their home states. Even if citizens do not see their own Senators on a regular basis, they frequently see the Senate majority and minority leaders on the national news speaking about issues of national

importance. Citizens can use the statements that these party leaders make as a benchmark for determining their own Senators' substantive policy positions.

The research on economic and financial voting has focused on the actual voting decision, that being which candidate a particular person decides to vote for. It has not assessed the impact of economic factors on the turnout decision. It certainly has not evaluated Senate elections. The research presented herein uses the simultaneous vote-choice model to evaluate the impact of the economy both economic and individual financial standing on electoral behavior.

4.1 Economics/Finances and the simultaneous choice model

Economics and finances may be the most important factors to consider in the simultaneous choice model. Recall from the introduction, that part of the idea of structuring voter decision-making in this manner is to allow for the expression of anger and discontent. There is probably no aspect of Americans' lives that has the potential to anger them more, than the economy and their financial status. Individuals expect to be able to provide for themselves and their families. If the state of the economy has created a situation that makes it difficult for them to do this, then one would expect them to express that anger and have that reflected in their decision as to how they will vote

If an individual's own financial situation is poor, one would expect that to create enormous frustration and lead to an expression of that frustration at the voting booth by voting for or against a particular candidate or party (the anger breeds action hypothesis). Alternatively, this frustration may lead to feelings that no matter how they vote, nothing is going to change, and therefore they may decide not to vote. This decision to not vote

would have an inherent meaning with respect to economics and finances that can only be expressed by abstention (anger breeds hopelessness and low efficacy hypothesis).

In the context of the simultaneous choice model, one would expect that three different evaluations are being made concurrently.⁵ If an individual is happy with both their own financial state and the overall state of the economy, one would expect them, controlling of course for party identification, to vote for the incumbent party, because they would expect continued good conditions were the incumbent party to be re-elected to the seat. If an individual is not happy with their own affairs but sees no reason to be dissatisfied with the economy, one may expect them to consider abstaining. This would be a reflection of their frustration with their own circumstances and a sense that the government either cannot or will not help them.

The third evaluation has two subparts. If a citizen is unhappy with both their own financial situation and the overall state of the economy, one would expect one of two actions, abstention or a vote for the challenging party. The individual may choose to vote for the challenging party in the hope that a change of leadership would improve the government's managing of the economy. Alternatively, these two circumstances combined, may lead them to make an assessment that neither, incumbent nor challenger, can make a difference in the state of the economy that would be sufficient to justify the expense of voting. These citizens would rather protest than cast a vote.

⁵ The order of these possible evaluations should not be construed to be the actual order that citizens are making their decisions in.

4.2 The economy in 1988, 1990, and 1992

It is important to have a general sense of the economic contexts in which each of these elections was held. In 1988, the economy was doing relatively well. President Reagan's success in managing the economy carried over to his Vice-President, George Bush. In 1990, the economy was doing well though there were signs of diminishing performance. The effect of the economy on the 1990 elections may have been ameliorated by the movement of thousands of troops in support of Operation Desert Shield and the ensuing rush of patriotism across the country and support for the government. In 1992, however, there is little doubt that the state of the economy influenced electoral outcomes. The economy had been in a recession late in 1991 through the beginning part of the 1992 and only started showing signs of improvement late in the general election cycle. The popular mantra of the election campaign was, "it's the economy, stupid."

Table 4.1 presents the summary statistics for the question asking if the economy had improved over the past year. In 1988 at least seventy percent of respondents indicated the economy was no worse than it was a year before. For the subsequent two election years, this figure did not exceed thirty-eight percent. Clearly, if citizens were going to be angry about the economy it was going to be in 1990 and 1992. Interestingly, sentiments were worse in 1990 than 1992, however, given the context of the question, and the state of the economy, it is hard to see how the economy could have been any worse in 1992 than it was the year before.

	<i>1988</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1992</i>
Much better	6	1	1
Somewhat better	23	4	11
Same	41	20	26
Somewhat worse	20	45	33
Much worse	9	30	30

Table 4.1: Perceptions of the economy throughout the study.

The table below shows the respondents' assessments of their own personal finances. In 1988 and 1990, more than sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that their own personal financial circumstances were at least as good as they were the year before. By 1992, this figure had dropped to less than forty percent. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 taken together, shows how there can be a disconnect between perceptions of the state of the economy and perceptions of personal finances. Based on previous research, one would expect that this variable would exert little or no impact on the decision. However, given the noted difference in 1992, one could also reasonably expect the angry voter hypothesis to take effect.

	<i>1988</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1992</i>
Much better	11	7	1
Somewhat better	30	28	11
Same	38	31	26
Somewhat worse	14	24	33
Much worse	7	9	30

Table 4.2: Perceptions of personal finances throughout the study.

Looking at objective statistics regarding the state of the economy, there is evidence to support respondents' perceptions. In 1991, the economy was in a recession. It was not until mid-1992 that it became clear the recession was ending and economic growth returning. In 1988, unemployment was approximately 5.5%. In 1990 it was approximately 5.25%. By 1992 unemployment had increased to over 7%. Level of unemployment is just one statistic however, it is often looked to as an important benchmark of how well the economy is doing (BLS, 2002).

4.3 Data Analyses

There are three different economic variables to be used in the analyses. The first variable is based on a question that asked respondents if they believed that the national economy was better or worse than it was a year before. For this question, it is important to note that the survey was conducted in the Fall of the election year. This question was worded to include a five-point, Likert answer option scale, allowing respondents to give at least some indication of their relative pleasure or displeasure with the state of the economy. The scale was: 1, much better; 2, somewhat better; 3, same; 4, somewhat worse; 5, much worse. In the analyses, the variable was left with all five options coded, none collapsed, with missing cases dropped from the analyses. The neutral position of "the same" was offered as a choice to respondents in the survey, not volunteered.

The second variable used, asked respondents how they felt about their own personal financial circumstances relative to the prior year. This variable uses the identical Likert scale used for the economic perception question.

The final variable was included as an objective measurement of the state of the economy in order to see if objective indicators could be used as a predicting variable in the context of the simultaneous choice model. The variable is a measurement of the level of unemployment in the respondent's state as measured in the Fall (September) of the election year. The variable is based on contextual data that was read into the SNES by researchers at the University of Michigan. In addition to seeing the predictive value of the objective measure, it acts as a control for economic idiosyncrasies in a state, which may influence citizen's opinions of the national economy.

It is also important to consider the coding of the dependent variable. In this chapter, the dependent variable is coded 0 for voting for the challenging party, 1 for voting for the incumbent party, and 2 for voting for abstention. The assumption is that citizens will hold the incumbent party responsible not necessarily just an incumbent candidate. The coding also gives the analyses the added benefit of including not just a consideration for incumbency, but also one for the party that citizens are voting for. This happens because party identification in this chapter is coded with respect to the incumbent party, having the PID of the respondent match the PID of the challenger or the incumbent.

Finally, it is important to note how the predicted probabilities were computed. Predicted probabilities were only computed for the finance and economic perception variables. Comparisons were made using three different assumptions: the mean level of satisfaction, and then one standard deviation above and below the mean. Though these three different values were not offered on the scale directly, they can be interpolated from the data because a sufficient range of options was available to respondents.

4.3.1 1988

In the traditional voting model, none of the economic or personal financial variables show an impact on behavior. Only income and party identification show a statistically significant relationship to candidate choice. If one were to believe the traditional model of electoral behavior, then one would expect economics to have little or no impact on electoral behavior in Senate elections in 1988. The likely impact of the economy and finances, in 1988 is best seen in the transition from abstention to voting, a decision that cannot be reflected in the traditional model.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	-0.079	0.049	.11
Economy	0.041	0.084	.62
Personal Finances	-0.121	0.087	.16
Race	-0.088	0.214	.68
Income	-0.138	0.060	.02
Education	0.002	0.003	.50
Age	0.004	0.005	.49
Party ID	0.519	0.039	.00
Constant	1.659	0.564	.00
Pseudo R²=0.19			N=959

Table 4.3: The traditional voting model for 1988 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

The traditional turnout model does show statistically significant effects of economic assessments. Individuals' overall evaluations of the state of the economy showed a statistically significant relationship with the turnout decision; lower levels of satisfaction with the economy led to a decision to turnout. Similarly, lower levels of satisfaction with one's own personal finances resulted in a higher likelihood of turning

out. These relationships hold true when controlling for numerous demographic factors that were also found to be statistically significant. From the traditional model, it appears that negative perceptions result in a protest, encouraging citizens to vote. The finding of personal finances exerting an influence would be contrary to previous research which suggests that citizens do not vote with their pocketbooks.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	0.000	0.042	1.00
Economy	-0.255	0.072	.00
Personal Finances	0.148	0.071	.04
Race	-0.141	0.165	.39
Income	0.200	0.053	.00
Education	0.022	0.003	.00
Age	0.042	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.038	0.032	.24
Constant	-1.739	0.473	.00
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.13	<i>N</i>=1302		

Table 4.4: The traditional turnout model for 1988 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

The table below shows that perceptions of the state of the economy and individuals' own finances exerted a statistically significant impact on electoral behavior in the context of the simultaneous choice model. It is interesting to note that perceptions of personal finances only exert a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of voting for the incumbent party versus abstaining, not the challenging party. No evidence is found to support the contention that objective measurements of the state of the economy impact electoral behavior. It may be that citizens were not sufficiently exposed

to the objective measurements to have them be an effective influence on their behavior⁶.

It is important to note that these results hold here, even when controlling for demographic factors like SES that are thought to mitigate the effects of substantive variables like economics and finances. Unlike previous research, which has focused on the impact of personal finances and the economy on two-party vote choice, the table below shows that there are meaningful impacts with respect to turnout as well. This suggests that previous researchers may not have fully captured how the pocketbook and the nation's economy can impact electoral behavior.

⁶ The nature of this study does not allow us to ascertain if they actually were or were not exposed to figures regarding the level of unemployment either nationally, or within their own state.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Challenging Party			
State Unemployment	0.042	0.052	.41
Economics	-0.284	0.090	.00
Personal Finances	0.235	0.089	.01
Race	-0.119	0.215	.58
Income	0.286	0.065	.00
Education	0.021	0.003	.00
Age	0.039	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.314	0.043	.00
Constant	-3.536	0.608	.00
Incumbent Party			
State Unemployment	-0.033	0.045	.47
Economics	-0.236	0.078	.00
Personal Finances	0.101	0.077	.19
Race	-0.134	0.180	.46
Income	0.152	0.057	.01
Education	0.023	0.003	.00
Age	0.042	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.218	0.036	.00
Constant	-1.918	0.503	.00
Pseudo R²=0.16			N=1302

Table 4.5: The simultaneous choice model for 1988 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

As is evidenced from the tables below, the most pronounced effects of these perceptions are seen with regard to the state of the economy. Those who are more negative about the state of the economy are more likely to vote out of a sense that change would hopefully breed a better economy. Not only are they more likely to vote, they are more likely to vote for the challenging party than are those who have positive feelings about the economy. Conversely, those who are more positive about the economy are more likely to abstain. Their contentment with the economy likely alleviates the need for them to vote. The difference in turnout is nine percent between these two groups.

Clearly, however, the incumbent is still at a great advantage and garners most of the vote. The incumbency advantage is not overcome by economic perceptions, however, in closer races, perceptions of the economy may have been able to enough of an effect to make a difference. Still, it is important to note that there is clear evidence that the angry citizen (one hypothesized about earlier) is one who is more likely to vote.

	<i>More negative about the economy</i>	<i>Mean of economic perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about the economy</i>
Vote for challenger	.28	.26	.24
Vote for incumbent	.50	.48	.46
Abstain	.22	.26	.31

Table 4.6: The impact of perceptions of the economy on the simultaneous choice model for 1988.

Though personal financial circumstances were found to have a statistically significant relationship with regard to electoral behavior, the substantive manifestation of this is not significant. There is a counter intuitive finding that those who feel positively about their personal finances are slightly more likely (4 percent) to vote for the challenger. The differences in the actions between those with more positive vice more negative evaluations of their financial circumstances is very slight and unlikely to create a substantive difference in the outcome of an election.

	<i>More negative about personal finances</i>	<i>Mean of personal finances perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about personal finances</i>
Vote for challenger	.24	.26	.28
Vote for incumbent	.49	.48	.47
Abstain	.27	.26	.25

Table 4.7: The impact of perceptions of personal finances on the simultaneous choice model for 1988.

4.3.1.1 1988 Summary

The results for 1988 all point to the importance of how one conceptualizes the voting decision. In the context of simultaneous choice, it is clear that economic evaluations affect electoral behavior.

At least based on the data so far, MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1992) were correct when they asserted that citizens are bankers not peasants. They asserted that electoral behavior in Presidential elections is more likely to be influenced by perceptions of the economy than perceptions of finances. The present research is providing some evidence to extend their notion to Senate elections. They suggested that mobilization would be bread by national economic factors not personal financial factors. Evaluations of the economy play a bigger role in influencing electoral behavior than do evaluations of individual financial circumstances. In the context of Senate elections, this manifests itself in the likelihood of citizens turning out to vote. Negative perceptions of the economy clearly create dissatisfaction that ultimately results in increased levels of voting for a two-party candidate. Anger is a more powerful motivator than contentment. A statistically significant relationship was found between financial perceptions and voting.

This would be contrary to the findings of MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, except however, this relationship does not manifest itself in a substantively significant manner.

One would expect negative perceptions of the economy to increase voting for the challenger. While this happens, it does so only to a slight degree. This fact points to the continued importance and advantage of incumbency in Senate elections. The economy affects behavior and can impact outcomes in tight elections, but in general, it appears that incumbency is king.

In the traditional voting model no effect for the economy is seen, while in the traditional turnout model one is seen. The simultaneous choice model shows that in fact candidate choice is impacted by economic perceptions, whereas the traditional voting model would not suggest this. Additionally, changes in turnout could impact which candidate wins. If the economy had been in worse shape than it was, it is possible that challengers, instead of incumbents would have won more elections. For 1988, the literature is right, votes are influenced by the economy, with the caveat that one must look at turnout not just the two-party vote. The present research shows that Senate voting is influenced by the economy and that this relationship extends to the overall choice citizens make of turning out and choosing a candidate, a choice that is made theoretically explicit in the simultaneous choice context.

4.3.2 1990

In 1990, no relationship is evidenced between economics and finances and vote choice in the traditional voting model. These results are identical to those from 1988.

The economy in 1990 was holding steady, not doing very well, but not poor either, perhaps preventing any impact of economic perceptions from being seen.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	0.066	0.054	.23
Economy	-0.137	0.097	.16
Personal Finances	0.013	0.077	.87
Race	0.088	0.371	.81
Income	0.060	0.058	.30
Education	-0.001	0.003	.69
Age	-0.004	0.005	.93
Party ID	0.575	0.041	.00
Constant	0.952	0.706	.18
Pseudo R²=0.20	N=1082		

Table 4.8: The traditional voting model for 1990 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

Similar to the traditional voting model, there is no evidence found of any impact of economics and personal finances in the traditional turnout model. These findings are contrary to those from 1988 in which a statistically significant relationship was found.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	-0.043	0.034	.27
Economy	-0.004	0.069	.95
Personal Finances	-0.023	0.055	.67
Race	0.039	0.243	.87
Income	0.192	0.043	.00
Education	0.019	0.002	.00
Age	0.041	0.004	.00
Party ID	0.033	0.029	.26
Constant	-2.33	0.487	.00
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.11	<i>N</i>=1604		

Table 4.9: The traditional turnout model for 1990 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

As the table below shows, there is no evidence that the economy in 1990 exerted a statistically significant impact on Senate elections in the context of the simultaneous choice model. Neither perceptions of the economy nor personal finances impacted electoral behavior. The only variables that appear to show a relationship to electoral behavior are the demographic control variables.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Challenging Party			
State Unemployment	-0.081	0.053	.12
Economics	0.085	0.096	.37
Personal Finances	-0.024	0.074	.75
Race	-0.112	0.350	.75
Income	0.130	0.058	.02
Education	0.020	0.003	.00
Age	0.038	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.398	0.044	.00
Constant	-3.495	0.686	.00
Incumbent Party			
State Unemployment	-0.023	0.041	.58
Economics	-0.038	0.074	.61
Personal Finances	-0.019	0.059	.74
Race	0.025	0.263	.92
Income	0.219	0.047	.00
Education	0.019	0.003	.00
Age	0.041	0.004	.00
Party ID	0.208	0.032	.00
Constant	-2.838	0.523	.00
Pseudo R²=0.15			N=1604

Table 4.10: The simultaneous choice model for 1990 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

4.3.2.1 1990 Summary

The analyses above establish that under any conception of electoral behavior, economic and financial perceptions did not impact Senate elections in 1990.

There are two reasons why this relationship is likely found. The first reason is that U.S. troops were on the move in support of Operation Desert Shield making that issue primary in the minds of voters. Citizens consider other issues but may view economic and financial considerations as being secondary given the context and an economy that was not struggling. The second reason no impact is evidenced may be that

because the election was off-year, the lack of a presidential stimulus inhibited economics and finances from playing an important role. This is not to say that the economy does not impact electoral behavior in Senate elections, rather it means that perhaps it takes the existence of a presidential election to allow it to impact Senate elections. Unfortunately, the data to which this research is limited does not allow for a definitive determination to be made regarding the full impact of the difference between on-year and off-year elections.

The findings in this section point to the need for continued research on this topic, particularly in off-year elections. Future research must compare on and off-year elections looking for patterns in how perceptions of the economy and individual finances affect electoral behavior in Senate elections. With more data points, a definitive relationship that takes into account this important difference, can be established.

4.3.3 1992

The economy in 1992 was struggling. The country was slowly coming out of a recession and the stock market was not showing signs of growth. Additionally, the unique presidential race featuring three legitimate candidates was focusing on economic matters (Weisberg and Kimball 1995). Though perceptions of the economy continued to be negative throughout the general election campaign, there were signs of improvement and the economy was no longer in a recession. For the incumbent party, it was simply a matter of waiting for perceptions to catch-up with economic reality.

Analyses of the traditional two-party vote (Table 4.12) show that personal financial circumstances, not the state of the overall economy, impacted voting in Senate

elections. The results are contrary to those from previous research (see MacKuen et al. 1992) and may provide a good indication of just how bad personal finances may have been in 1992. Dissatisfaction with one's personal finances increased the likelihood that one would vote for the challenging party in the given race. Though perceptions of the national economy may not have impacted voting, the results of the bad economy, people with struggling finances, did exert a direct impact on electoral behavior.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	0.009	0.056	.87
Economy	0.121	0.086	.16
Personal Finances	-0.279	0.085	.00
Race	0.174	0.374	.64
Income	0.007	0.056	.90
Education	-0.008	0.003	.01
Age	0.001	0.005	.88
Party ID	0.566	0.042	.00
Constant	1.24	0.706	.08
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.21	<i>N</i>=922		

Table 4.11: The traditional voting model for 1992 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

Personal financial circumstances show a statistically significant relationship to the turnout decision in the traditional model. Perceptions of the national economy also show a statistically significant relationship to turnout in the traditional model, albeit at a marginal level. Dissatisfaction with personal finances leads citizens to vote whereas dissatisfaction with the economy leads to slightly higher levels of abstention.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	-0.087	0.055	.12
Economy	-0.149	0.080	.06
Personal Finances	0.216	0.073	.00
Race	-0.026	0.268	.92
Income	0.332	0.054	.00
Education	0.024	0.003	.00
Age	0.043	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.017	0.036	.64
Constant	-2.412	0.591	.00
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.16	<i>N</i>=1240		

Table 4.12: The traditional turnout model for 1992 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

Analyses using the simultaneous choice model in 1992 show that perceptions of the economy and one's own financial circumstances had a statistically significant effect even when controlling for important demographics which could act as mitigating factors. With regard to economics, perceptions of the economy only influenced voting for the challenger versus abstaining. Rather than having a direct negative impact on the office holder, it impacts them indirectly by increasing the likelihood of voting for the challenging candidate. Dissatisfaction with one's own personal finances exerted an effect for both options versus abstaining. Higher levels of dissatisfaction led to increased levels of overall voting. Contrary to previous research, personal financial circumstances did impact electoral behavior (MacKuen et. al. 1992). As was evidenced in the earlier analyses however, dissatisfaction with the economy shows a more pronounced effect on voting for the challenger, a relationship that is not surprising. All of the relationships

hold when controlling for citizens' party identification, which of course continues to play an important role in influencing citizens' electoral behavior in Senate elections.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Challenging party			
State Unemployment	-0.095	0.066	.15
Economics	-0.216	0.098	.03
Personal Finances	0.401	0.092	.00
Race	-0.081	0.379	.83
Income	0.331	0.065	.00
Education	0.028	0.004	.00
Age	0.041	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.399	0.049	.00
Constant	-4.041	0.769	.00
Incumbent party			
State Unemployment	-0.095	0.059	.10
Economics	-0.130	0.086	.13
Personal Finances	0.147	0.079	.06
Race	-0.053	0.284	.85
Income	0.340	0.057	.00
Education	0.021	0.003	.00
Age	0.043	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.209	0.41	.00
Constant	-2.657	0.626	.00
Pseudo R²=0.19	N=1215		

Table 4.13: The simultaneous choice model for 1992 based on economic and personal financial considerations.

The table below shows the predicted probabilities for the economic perception variable. The difference in turnout levels between those who were positive and those who were negative is small, only a five percentage likelihood difference with the more positive being more likely to abstain. This provides at least some evidence that the angry voter is motivated to vote while the content voter is willing to sit back and let others make electoral decisions. There is also a small impact seen on the two-party vote

component, with those who were more negative being slightly more likely (four percent) to vote for the challenging party instead of the incumbent party. This result is similar to 1988 and makes intuitive sense. Dissatisfaction should lead one to vote to make changes in the system. It is important to note that in the traditional voting model for 1992, no statistically significant relationship was found between the economy and electoral behavior. This is not the case in the simultaneous choice model where there are important subtle differences in electoral behavior based on perceptions of the economy. By not taking into account all of the options available to citizens, the traditional model cannot accurately capture the effect of economics. While these differences may not be enough to influence every election, it will certainly influence hard-fought races where the margin of victory is going to be small.

	<i>More negative about the economy</i>	<i>Mean of economic perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about the economy</i>
Vote for challenger	.30	.28	.26
Vote for incumbent	.49	.48	.48
Abstain	.21	.24	.26

Table 4.14: The impact of perceptions of the economy on the simultaneous choice model for 1992.

The table below shows the results for the personal finances question. The results are very different from those dealing with perception of the economy but are similar to the findings for the variable in 1988. Those who were more negative were six percent more likely to abstain than were those who were more positive. This is likely a reflection of a sense that there is not much that government can do to improve their individual lives.

People look to the government to maintain the economy not their individual finances. The results for candidate choice are even more interesting. Those who were more positive were ten percent more likely to vote for the challenger than were those who were more negative with virtually no difference exhibited in the likelihood of voting for the incumbent (it is difficult to draw conclusions about the likelihood of voting for the incumbent given that the findings with respect to the incumbent were not found to be statistically significant). One would expect those who were happy to vote for the incumbent in the hopes that their good fortunes would continue. A vote for the challenger in most cases would have meant a vote for the Republican given the Democratic advantage in the Senate, this may be a reflection of those who are better off seeking to consolidate their good fortunes by voting for a Republican whose policies would be more likely to benefit them. This once again contradicts previous findings in the literature that suggest that personal finances do not impact electoral behavior in a statistically significant manner.

	<i>More negative about personal finances</i>	<i>Mean of personal finances perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about personal finances</i>
Vote for challenger	.23	.28	.33
Vote for incumbent	.49	.48	.46
Abstain	.27	.24	.21

Table 4.15: The impact of perceptions of personal finances on the simultaneous choice model for 1992.

4.3.3.1 1992 Summary

Like 1988, and unlike the off-year election of 1990, in 1992 the evidence shows that perceptions of the economy and personal finances impacts voting in Senate elections. It is clear that citizens who are frustrated with the economy are more likely to vote, meaning they are looking to the government to help correct the ills of the economy. These citizens are also slightly more likely to vote for the challenging party in the hopes that change will bring about a better economy.

With regard to personal finances, it appears that those who have negative feelings about their status are not likely to hold the government responsible for their fortunes. These citizens vote less, as one might expect, out of a sense that there is nothing that government can do for them. Citizens likely feel a sense of self-blame for their fortunes rather than blaming society or the government.

In 1992 it appears that MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, are incorrect in asserting that people are bankers not peasants, at least when their theory is applied to Senate elections. They asserted that citizens looked to the government to fix the economy and themselves to fix their own pocketbooks. The evidence of the simultaneous choice model shows that perceptions of personal finances affects levels of turnout thereby affecting overall electoral behavior. Citizens who are unhappy are more likely to abstain. Citizens have a sense of what the candidates, incumbent or challenger, will do for them. If they are not satisfied they will choose not to vote. Only the simultaneous choice model allows one to clearly see the true impacts of perceptions of personal finances.

4.3.4 Aggregated Study Analysis

In this section, the analysis of the aggregated study data will be presented for the economic model. Though the state of the economy is different from year to year, and there are unique factors in each year influencing it, one would expect to see it exert a meaningful influence, in some form, from election to election. The overall tendency of economics to influence electoral behavior should be seen in an analysis such as that presented below which only exerts minimal but sufficient controls on the model for inter-year differences.

The table below shows the results for the traditional voting model. Contrary to some of the individual year findings it appears that only personal finances not national economics affect voting in the traditional voting model. These results are also contrary to those from previous research (MacKuen et. al. 1992). However, previous research has not looked at this effect with regard to Senate elections. It may be that Senate elections, being a step down from Presidential elections and being held only at the state level allows citizens to attribute their personal circumstances to Senators. This is not to say that citizens will not also hold Senators accountable for the national economy, it is simply that in the basic voting model, evidence is not found at a statistically significant level. These assumptions are solely based on the traditional voting model perspective.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	-0.012	0.028	.67
Economy	0.072	0.046	.12
Personal Finances	-0.133	0.047	.01
Race	-0.047	0.166	.78
Income	-0.019	0.032	.56
Education	-0.002	0.002	.20
Age	0.001	0.003	.63
Party ID	0.550	0.023	.00
Constant	1.200	0.347	.00
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.20	<i>N</i>=2963		

Table 4.16: The traditional voting model for the aggregated data based on economic and personal financial considerations.

The table below shows the results for the traditional turnout model. Perceptions of both the economy and personal finances impact turnout. Citizens who viewed their financial status as being poor were more likely to turnout to vote. The angry voter goes to the voting booth trying to change the leadership of the government in the hopes of changing the fortunes of the economy or their own financial status.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
State Unemployment	-0.019	0.024	.43
Economy	-0.186	0.039	.00
Personal Finances	0.100	0.037	.01
Race	-0.030	0.120	.80
Income	0.227	0.028	.00
Education	0.021	0.002	.00
Age	0.040	0.003	.00
Party ID	0.026	0.018	.15
Constant	-1.964	0.273	.00
<i>Pseudo R²</i>=0.12	<i>N</i>=4146		

Table 4.17: The traditional turnout model for the aggregate data based on economic and personal financial considerations.

The table below shows the results of the simultaneous choice model. It is clear that perceptions of the state of the economy influence electoral behavior. Because they influence turnout they must necessarily affect electoral choice, as is captured exclusively in the simultaneous choice model. These perceptions exert a statistically significant influence on the likelihood of voting for both the challenger and the incumbent. There is also evidence that perceptions of one's own financial circumstances influence electoral behavior. By looking at economics in the simultaneous choice context, a better understanding of the impact of personal finances on electoral behavior in Senate elections can be developed.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Challenging Party			
State Unemployment	-0.012	0.030	.70
Economics	-0.229	0.049	.00
Personal Finances	0.190	0.048	.00
Race	-0.033	0.163	.84
Income	0.235	0.035	.00
Education	0.022	0.002	.00
Age	0.038	0.003	.00
Party ID	-0.371	0.025	.00
Constant	-3.445	0.361	.00
Incumbent Party			
State Unemployment	-0.029	0.025	.26
Economics	-0.165	0.042	.00
Personal Finances	0.061	0.040	.13
Race	-0.049	0.129	.70
Income	0.225	0.030	.00
Education	0.020	0.002	.00
Age	0.040	0.003	.00
Party ID	0.210	0.020	.00
Constant	-2.328	0.292	.00
Pseudo R²=0.16			N=4121

Table 4.18: The simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data based on economic and personal financial considerations.

The table below shows the predicted probabilities with regard to perceptions of the economy. As one can see, though the results were found to be statistically significant, the findings have only marginal to moderate substantive significance. The differences are found only with regard to the likelihood of turning out. Those who had positive perceptions of the economy were five percent more likely to vote than were those who had negative perceptions, providing continuing support that the angry citizens votes. There is no difference in the likelihoods of voting for either of the candidates based on

perceptions of the economy. However, as the state of the economy worsens, the effect on the candidate choice component would likely become much more pronounced.

	<i>More negative about the economy</i>	<i>Mean of economic perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about the economy</i>
Vote for challenger	.25	.24	.23
Vote for incumbent	.49	.48	.47
Abstain	.25	.28	.30

Table 4.19: The impact of perceptions of the economy on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The table below shows the results with regard to perceptions of personal finances. As one will recall from above, perceptions of personal finances were shown to only have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of voting for the challenging party. It is interesting to note that those who were more positive were actually more likely to vote for the challenger than were those who were more negative. This effect may be seen because citizens do not blame lawmakers for their own financial circumstances, they blame themselves.

	<i>More negative about personal finances</i>	<i>Mean of personal finances perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about personal finances</i>
Vote for challenger	.22	.24	.26
Vote for incumbent	.49	.48	.47
Abstain	.29	.28	.27

Table 4.20: The impact of perceptions of personal finances on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The aggregated data analysis provides further evidence that perception of the economy and personal finances impacts Senate elections. The effect is durable though it may be more pronounced in some years than others. To be sure, the impact of the economy is not as consistent or predictable as the effects of socio-demographics but they are an important factor that influences electoral behavior in Senate elections.

4.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, evidence has been provided that perceptions of the economy can affect electoral behavior in Senate elections. The findings were more limited than was expected but still significant both statistically and substantively. In many elections, these perceptions may be enough to sway the outcome. Their greatest impact is on the turnout component, with those who are dissatisfied being more likely to vote, a result of their anger with how elected officials are managing the economy. This anger is expressed toward the incumbent party in Senate races, not just the incumbent party of the President, as previous research would suggest. The impact of the economy is seen more clearly in the simultaneous choice model than either of the traditional models. In the traditional models it only affects turnout. However, in the simultaneous choice model the impact on candidate choice becomes evident.

Given the results presented in this chapter, the conclusion to be drawn is that the economy can play a limited but important role in Senate elections in which the economy is made salient by increasing the turnout of voters for the challenging party. This is counter to the literature that suggests the impact of the economy is focused on Presidential elections.

Evidence has also been provided that citizens will make their electoral decisions based on their pocketbooks. A somewhat counter-intuitive pattern can be discerned from the data. The pattern is that those who seem to be happier about their economic circumstances are actually more likely to vote and more likely to vote for the challenger. This finding is counter to the angry voter-hypothesis that citizens should vote more when they are unhappy but is in stronger concurrence with previous research that shows that citizens do not vote based on their pocketbooks (meaning in the simultaneous choice model, that they do not choose abstention). One would also not expect citizens to be more likely to vote for the challenging party when they are doing well financially. It may be that citizens have even higher expectations than those that are being fulfilled. In general, it would appear that in accordance previous research, citizens hold themselves accountable for their financial fortunes, not the government, unlike the economy for which they hold the government responsible.

The tables presented for each of the years also point to the importance of how one conceptualizes the vote in determining if economic factors play a role in electoral behavior. Perceptions of the economy and personal finances are not evidenced to play an important role in the traditional voting model of Senate elections. In not one of the years is there evidence from the traditional model that perceptions of the state of the economy impacted voting in Senate elections in a statistically significant manner. Naturally then, there was no finding that economics impacted the traditional voting model that used the aggregated data. With regard to the traditional turnout model, there is evidence that personal finances impact electoral behavior in a statistically significant manner. As an individual's personal financial situation gets worse, they are less likely to vote.

There was no finding that an objective measurement of the state of the economy, unemployment, impacts electoral behavior. It would appear that subjective perceptions, not objective fact impacts electoral behavior.

Citizens have three choices to make in any given election. These choices allow them to express both preferences and dissatisfaction. There is little doubt, that with regard to the economy, they are very willing to express dissatisfaction. The findings of this chapter suggest that angry voters will turnout to vote more often than will satisfied voters. They turnout and have at least a slightly higher probability of voting for the challenging party rather than the incumbent party, a result of their desire to change the government in the hopes of improving the economy. Even with all of the advantages of incumbency the economy can act as a critical tiebreaking factor in an election in which the campaigns make the economy salient.

This chapter has provided substantial evidence that the economy and personal finances exerts an impact on Senate elections. Our paradigm of only the president being held accountable for the economy may be inaccurate. Certainly the president is held accountable, but Senators, as a function of their prominence both nationally and within their states can also be held accountable by the polity.

CHAPTER 5

POLICY PREFERENCES AND THE SIMULTANEOUS CHOICE MODEL

In the study of electoral behavior, particularly in the study of two-party vote choice, researchers of American politics have focused on the importance of party identification as a factor influencing electoral behavior. Citizens use party identification to summarize issue positions of candidates so they do not directly have to evaluate each candidate. The notion is that most citizens will not expend the time and effort necessary to make a decision based on substantive evaluations of individual candidates' policy positions. When policy preferences have been shown to matter, it has tended to be in Presidential not Congressional elections. This finding will be shown to be inaccurate in this chapter.

Some research has already suggested that policy voting can occur in Senate elections. This contention is best summarized by Carmines and Champagne (1990):

“The old notion that the Congressional voter is a party voter has now given way to a more varied picture of the Congressional voter. Incumbency seems to be the clearly dominant factor in House elections, with policy considerations rarely being important, much less decisive. In contrast, under specified conditions, policy-oriented voting can play a prominent role in Senate elections, perhaps outweighing the influence of incumbency.”

The focus in the study of Congressional elections has been on the House, resulting in a focus on party voting in these low-profile elections. Westlye (1983) found that policy voting is possible in Senate elections because they have two required conditions: they are hard-fought and high-profile. As Kahn and Kenney (1997) found, the intensity of a Senate campaign can allow voters to make more sophisticated electoral decisions based on policy and performance. It is this researcher's belief that all of the prerequisites for issue voting described above are met in most Senate elections.

While we expect policy preferences to play a more reliable role in influencing Senate elections than House elections, they may not do so in every election. Abramowitz (1981) found that only elections which have a high degree of policy differences between the candidates have policy voting, suggesting that the context of individual elections is the important factor that explains electoral behavior. Wright and Berkman (1986) similarly found that elections require ideological candidates in order to produce ideological voters who use issues when determining for which candidate to vote.

In this chapter, evidence will be presented confirming the existence of policy voting in Senate elections in the context of the simultaneous choice model. The difficulty that citizens have in articulating the changes they would like to see, may make it difficult for them to translate policy preferences into voting behavior. Because of this, electoral behavior is sometimes expressed as abstention, since citizens have insufficient policy preferences to make a candidate-choice decision. Research on the presidential election in 1992 showed that abstention should be modeled as a "viable individual level choice" in the context of the simultaneous choice model (Herron 1998). Herron's

research also found that, “abstention rates are associated with political preferences,” providing evidence for the junction between turnout decisions and policy preferences. My research will not disprove the centrality of PID, however, it will show similarly to Wright and Berkman (1996) that policy preferences play a secondary role in influencing electoral behavior.

Because of the expansive nature of American government, there are numerous issues upon which citizens can base their electoral behavior. When citizens have information, whether on one or many issues, it decreases the probability of indifference, thereby increasing turnout (Sanders 1996). Some citizens may be single-issue voters whose electoral decision is based on the interaction between their position and the candidates’ position on their single most important issue. For other citizens, it may be the interaction of a multitude of issues that influences their voting behavior. When citizens utilize their ability to vote based on issues, it is more likely than not to be an issue for which there is an active short-term force (Petrocik 1996). A short-term force is an external factor (poor economy, war, etc.) that allows certain issues to become more salient than others for electoral decision-making.

The questions used for the analyses were framed in the context of preferences for government expenditures. Citizens were queried about their preferences for increases or decreases in spending with regard to a variety of programs that the federal government funds. These questions lend themselves to the analyses because they regard issues where there are long-term stereotypes of which party favors a particular spending approach. This allows for the correlation between citizens’ spending preference and party preference on the given issue.

5.1 The issues used in the analyses

The first variable pertains to spending on environmental matters. Because of the politics surrounding this issue, the assumption is that advocates of increased spending were more liberal and therefore had a tendency to vote Democratic. Those who advocated decreases would be more likely to vote Republican.

The second variable pertains to public schools spending. One would expect those who advocated higher spending on public schools to be motivated to vote for Democrats while those who advocate decreased spending should be more likely to vote Republican. Those who were neutral on public school spending were expected to show no marginal increase in their likelihood to cast a ballot; in fact, they should exhibit a lower probability of voting because of their indifference to the issue.

The third issue evaluated is social security. With regard to the 1992 presidential election, Herron (1998) found that social security spending preferences exerted a statistically significant effect on vote choice. Because this is a sensitive political issue, few legislators or candidates advocate decreases in social security spending; rather, they advocate “reforms” in the program. Still, higher levels of social security spending would be linked to Democratic policies while lower levels of spending would be more likely linked with Republican policies.

The fourth variable included in the analyses is food stamps. Spending on food stamps is likely evaluated by respondents in a manner similar to spending on welfare programs in general. It has been well established that Democrats advocate higher spending on food stamps and other social welfare programs than Republicans.

Child care was the fifth variable included in the analyses. Levels of spending on this issue would be included in the scheme of spending on social welfare programs. Increases in spending are more likely to be advocated by Democrats, while decreases are more likely to be advocated by Republicans.

The sixth variable analyzed was spending on the drug war. In the late-1980's and into the early-1990's, spending on the drug war was a particularly important issue. It came to be synonymous with fighting crime in general. Republicans were perceived as being stronger on crime and therefore would also have been perceived as advocating greater spending on the drug war. While Democrats were certainly not pro-crime, citizens tended to feel that Republicans could better handle this issue (Petrocik 1996).

The seventh issue was defense spending. By the late 1980's the country was wrapping up record levels of spending on national defense. The country had been running a significant deficit since the early 1980's to pay for the defense budget. These increases in spending were advocated more by Republicans than Democrats. Throughout the time-period of the study, defense spending continued to be an important issue, as the Cold War was coming to a close and citizens contemplated a peace dividend.

The final issue to be included in the analyses is spending on Medicare. There is little doubt among the citizenry that Democrats are perceived as being the advocates for greater levels of spending. Republicans are unlikely to directly advocate decreases in spending; rather they couch it in terms of reform. Democrats are more likely to be seen as owning this issue than Republicans by the general population.

For all of the variables, respondents were able to state whether they wanted spending increased, decreased, or if they wanted it to remain the same. The variable was coded 1 for increase, 2 for stay the same, and 3 for decrease.

5.2 Data analyses

It is important to note how the predicted probabilities were computed. The reader will note that for the economic section, the values used for computation were based on the mean and standard deviation of the answer options. The independent variables used in this chapter's analyses are not scaled to allow for the expression of degree of support for a policy preference and therefore the mean value and standard deviation do not have an inferable meaning. As a result, the predicted probabilities are computed based on setting the independent variable to each of the three values it can take, with no change being the "middle ground" option.

5.2.1 1988

In the traditional model of voting behavior presented below, preferences for spending on schools, food stamps, children's programs and defense exhibit a statistically significant relationship with respect to the two-party vote. All of the relationships are in the expected direction, based on the notions of issue ownership and what we know about the interaction between policy preferences and likely candidate preference. Those who favored decreases in spending on children's programs were more likely to vote Republican. Those who favored decreases in defense spending were more likely to vote Democratic. Clearly, substantive issue positions were related to voting behavior.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	-0.118	0.142	.40
Public Schools	0.220	0.143	.12
Social Security	-0.087	0.155	.58
Food Stamps	0.184	0.115	.11
Child Programs	0.297	0.130	.02
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.100	0.136	.46
National Defense	-0.354	0.113	.00
Medicare	0.234	0.157	.14
Race	0.056	0.210	.79
Income	-0.137	0.060	.02
Education	0.005	0.003	.08
Age	0.002	0.005	.66
Party ID	0.411	0.041	.00
Constant	-1.415	0.634	.03
Pseudo R²=0.19			N=883

Table 5.1: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional voting model in 1988.

In the traditional turnout model presented below, there is no evidence to suggest that substantive issue positions impact turnout levels. The only variables in this model that exert an impact are the demographic variables included as control variables.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.106	0.131	.42
Public Schools	0.142	0.136	.30
Social Security	0.054	0.140	.70
Food Stamps	-0.041	0.101	.69
Child Programs	0.169	0.125	.18
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.010	0.121	.94
National Defense	0.124	0.099	.21
Medicare	0.107	0.150	.47
Race	-0.076	0.173	.66
Income	0.180	0.054	.00
Education	0.021	0.003	.00
Age	0.045	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.053	0.037	.15
Constant	-3.026	0.565	.00
Pseudo R²=0.13			N=1209

Table 5.2: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional turnout model in 1988.

The table below shows the results for the simultaneous choice model of electoral behavior. The factor which motivated citizens to vote Democratic vice abstain was levels of spending on defense. For motivating Republicans to vote instead of abstain the influencing factor was spending on child programs, a traditional social welfare program that most Republicans would favor decreases in.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Environment	0.177	0.148	.23
Public Schools	0.033	0.155	.83
Social Security	0.103	0.160	.52
Food Stamps	-0.113	0.115	.32
Child Programs	-0.022	0.144	.88
Anti-Drug Programs	0.028	0.136	.84
National Defense	0.340	0.114	.00
Medicare	0.008	0.173	.97
Race	-0.095	0.195	.63
Income	0.237	0.061	.00
Education	0.019	0.003	.00
Age	0.044	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.259	0.043	.00
Constant	-3.237	0.640	.00
Voted Rep			
Environment	0.046	0.148	.76
Public Schools	0.256	0.151	.09
Social Security	0.005	0.158	.98
Food Stamps	0.043	0.117	.71
Child Programs	0.303	0.137	.03
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.072	0.141	.61
National Defense	-0.067	0.112	.55
Medicare	0.175	0.164	.28
Race	-0.059	0.208	.78
Income	0.119	0.062	.05
Education	0.023	0.003	.00
Age	0.045	0.006	.00
Party ID	0.160	0.043	.00
Constant	-4.369	0.648	.00
Pseudo R²=0.16			N=1209

Table 5.3: The impact of policy preferences on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The pattern of behavior regarding preferences on defense spending is congruent with expectations. Those who advocated increases in spending were markedly more likely to vote Republican. Conversely, those who favored decreases in spending were markedly more likely to vote Democratic than abstain. Having a preference for decreasing spending on defense produced a slight mobilization effect.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.29	.35	.41
Vote for Rep.	.41	.37	.32
Abstain	.30	.29	.27

Table 5.4: The impact of preferences on defense spending on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The table below shows the results for preferences on spending for children's programs. Those who favored decreases were eight percent more likely to vote than those who favored increases. Also, those who favored decreases were fourteen percent more likely to vote Republican. Again, a Republican candidate would have benefited from a campaign focused on this issue. It is clear that the mobilization effect of a focus on spending for children's programs benefits Republicans. Those who favor decreases are markedly more likely to turnout to vote than those who favor increases.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.38	.35	.32
Vote for Rep.	.32	.39	.46
Abstain	.30	.26	.22

Table 5.5: The impact of preferences on spending for children's programs on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

5.2.1.1 1988 Summary

Citizens' positions on substantive policy matters as measured by preferences on government spending did exert a statistically and substantively significant impact on electoral behavior in Senate elections. Citizens' positions on spending for defense and children's programs all exerted a measurable influence on the likelihood that they would vote for a candidate.

In the context of the simultaneous choice model, evidence is found to show that policy preferences affect levels of turnout. In the traditional turnout model, no evidence is found to support this contention. The focus in the literature has been on how issue voting impacts the two-party vote decision. This research points to the need for the field to expand its view of what impacts turnout in elections. Campaigns can use the mobilization effect that comes with a focus on a particular issue to help them win an election. Levels of turnout impact Senate election outcomes. Outside of the simultaneous choice framework, this effect would not be seen nor impact measurable as was seen in the traditional model displayed above.

The overall pattern exhibited above is somewhat surprising. One would expect that those in favor of the status quo, holding spending constant, would be somewhat less

likely to vote for a candidate than would those who advocated higher or lower levels of spending. The notion here is that those who have a gripe about a policy would have a greater impetus to vote than those who favor the status quo. It is however, not surprising to see that issue preferences affected overall levels of turnout because citizens considered abstaining a legitimate choice when evaluating their electoral options.

Overall, there is continued support for the simultaneous choice model. When taking into account candidates and abstention, issues mattered in the 1988 U.S. Senate elections.

5.2.2 1990

The table below shows the results of the traditional vote choice model for Senate elections in 1990. Only spending on children's programs was found to exert an impact on voting behavior within the scope of the traditional voting model. Of course, party identification was shown to have a relationship to voting behavior. Given the buildup of forces in Iraq, one would have expected a very pronounced relationship between defense spending and voting behavior, a relationship not found.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.004	0.127	.98
Public Schools	-0.002	0.132	.99
Social Security	0.048	0.144	.74
Food Stamps	0.023	0.114	.84
Child Programs	0.253	0.123	.04
Anti-Drug Programs	0.089	0.119	.46
National Defense	-0.109	0.106	.31
Medicare	0.050	0.135	.71
Race	0.008	0.370	.98
Income	0.042	0.054	.44
Education	-0.002	0.003	.59
Age	0.002	0.005	.64
Party ID	0.485	0.039	.00
Constant	-2.298	0.711	.00
Pseudo R²=0.18			N=1035

Table 5.6: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional voting model in 1990.

The table below shows the traditional turnout model for Senate elections.

Spending on public schools is the only variable that showed a statistically significant relationship to turnout, with those favoring increases having been more likely to turnout. Within the context of the two traditional models of voting behavior, one would expect that issues would be more likely to play a greater role during the candidate choice phase, not the turnout phase. Recall, that no evidence was found that issue positions affected voting in the traditional turnout model for 1988.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.123	0.105	.24
Public Schools	0.238	0.117	.04
Social Security	0.219	0.121	.07
Food Stamps	0.078	0.088	.37
Child Programs	-0.023	0.102	.82
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.016	0.096	.87
National Defense	0.011	0.084	.90
Medicare	0.019	0.117	.87
Race	0.204	0.264	.44
Income	0.167	0.044	.00
Education	0.017	0.002	.00
Age	0.043	0.004	.00
Party ID	-0.008	0.032	.80
Constant	-3.745	0.546	.00
Pseudo R²=0.12			N=1557

Table 5.7: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional turnout model in 1990.

The table below shows the results of the simultaneous choice model in the context of the 1990 Senate elections. Marginally statistically significant effects were found with regard to social security and school spending. Contrasted to 1988, this shows a more limited impact of issues on electoral behavior. It is possible that the impending war overshadowed the impact that other issues may have been able to have.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Environment	0.111	0.120	.35
Public Schools	0.225	0.135	.10
Social Security	0.176	0.138	.20
Food Stamps	0.070	0.100	.49
Child Programs	-0.143	0.118	.23
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.036	0.109	.74
National Defense	0.078	0.097	.42
Medicare	0.012	0.134	.93
Race	0.180	0.282	.52
Income	0.132	0.050	.01
Education	0.019	0.003	.00
Age	0.041	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.246	0.038	.00
Constant	-3.385	0.612	.00
Voted Rep			
Environment	0.117	0.122	.34
Public Schools	0.241	0.133	.07
Social Security	0.240	0.141	.09
Food Stamps	0.084	0.107	.43
Child Programs	0.123	0.118	.30
Anti-Drug Programs	0.006	0.115	.96
National Defense	-0.054	0.099	.59
Medicare	0.008	0.133	.95
Race	0.064	0.378	.87
Income	0.205	0.052	.00
Education	0.015	0.003	.00
Age	0.045	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.270	0.040	.00
Constant	-5.631	0.692	.00
Pseudo R²=0.15			N=1557

Table 5.8: The impact of policy preferences on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

5.2.2.1 1990 Summary

Because the general election in 1990 was being held in the face of an impending war, one would have expected that spending on defense would have exerted a statistically and substantively significant impact on electoral behavior. Surprisingly, this hypothesis was not supported in the analyses. One explanation for this is that it is possible that issues positions matter in Senate elections but may require an impetus from the Presidential race in order to have an effect, a pseudo-coattail effect (Campbell and Sumners 1990).

In short, there is no significant evidence provided by the 1990 Senate elections that issues influenced electoral behavior. The unique factors of the 1990 election, combined with the inclusion of only one off-year election cycle in the SNES, limits us to speculating about why issue preferences did not seem to have a substantively significant and interesting impact on Senate elections in 1990.

5.2.3 1992

The table below shows the relationship for the traditional voting model. Surprisingly, only preferences on environmental spending influenced turnout in the traditional model. The relationship evidenced is the one expected, with more conservative opinions being linked with higher Republican voting. Given that this model only considers the two-party vote, one would think that higher profile issues such as social security or defense spending would have exerted a much greater impact on

electoral behavior than would preferences for spending on the environment; an issue one would expect to be somewhat more peripheral in the minds of U.S. voters.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.565	0.140	.00
Public Schools	0.236	0.155	.13
Social Security	0.000	0.156	1.00
Food Stamps	0.207	0.129	.11
Child Programs	0.065	0.151	.67
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.093	0.132	.48
National Defense	-0.138	0.129	.28
Medicare	0.083	0.149	.58
Race	-1.278	0.508	.01
Income	0.022	0.055	.69
Education	-0.003	0.003	.30
Age	0.000	0.005	.97
Party ID	0.426	0.042	.00
Constant	-1.434	0.833	.09
Pseudo R²=0.22			N=870

Table 5.9: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional voting model in 1992.

The traditional turnout model is exhibited below. In this model, spending on the environment and spending on social security both showed a statistically significant relationship to turnout. As in previous years, those who favor increases in spending for both of these programs were far more likely to decide to abstain than were those who favored decreases. Social security is generally an issue that is important in many elections. The environment may have been made salient as the result of landmark clean air legislation having been passed in 1991.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.274	0.138	.05
Public Schools	0.135	0.178	.45
Social Security	0.436	0.155	.01
Food Stamps	-0.128	0.121	.29
Child Programs	-0.138	0.151	.36
Anti-Drug Programs	0.002	0.134	.99
National Defense	0.181	0.119	.13
Medicare	-0.060	0.166	.72
Race	-0.131	0.295	.66
Income	0.312	0.056	.00
Education	0.024	0.004	.00
Age	0.043	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.053	0.042	.21
Constant8	-3.52	0.693	.00
Pseudo R²=0.12			N=1136

Table 5.10: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional turnout model in 1992.

The table below shows the results of the simultaneous choice model for policy preferences in the 1992 Senate elections. As with previous years, issues that are traditionally thought to be owned by Democrats, spending on the environment and social security show a statistically significant relationship to electoral behavior. This confirms previous research on the 1992 presidential election which in the context of the simultaneous choice model showed that preferences on social security spending exerted a statistically impact on voting behavior (Herron 1998). Additionally, spending on defense, an issue owned by Republicans also showed a relationship to electoral behavior one that is not evidenced in either of the two traditional models.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Environment	0.031	0.153	.84
Public Schools	0.003	0.198	.99
Social Security	0.422	0.170	.01
Food Stamps	-0.213	0.132	.11
Child Programs	-0.174	0.167	.30
Anti-Drug Programs	0.044	0.147	.76
National Defense	0.301	0.134	.03
Medicare	-0.107	0.182	.56
Race	-0.032	0.305	.92
Income	0.300	0.062	.00
Education	0.025	0.004	.00
Age	0.042	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.271	0.048	.00
Constant	-3.190	0.752	.00
Voted Rep			
Environment	0.542	0.155	.00
Public Schools	0.226	0.192	.24
Social Security	0.398	0.176	.02
Food Stamps	0.020	0.141	.89
Child Programs	-0.080	0.171	.64
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.053	0.153	.73
National Defense	0.054	0.136	.69
Medicare	-0.055	0.182	.76
Race	-1.203	0.528	.02
Income	0.326	0.063	.00
Education	0.022	0.004	.00
Age	0.042	0.006	.00
Party ID	0.191	0.049	.00
Constant	-4.573	0.905	.00
Pseudo R²=0.21			N=1136

Table 5.11: The impact of policy preferences on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

In 1992, preferences for spending on the environment clearly had a substantively significant impact on electoral behavior in a manner that one would expect. Those who favored increases were much more likely to vote for the Democrat than they were for the Republican. Conversely, those who favored decreases were much more likely (fourteen percent) to vote for the Republican than the Democrat. It is also clear from the table below that favoring decreases was much more likely to motivate turnout than was favoring increases.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.43	.40	.35
Vote for Rep.	.29	.38	.49
Abstain	.29	.22	.16

Table 5.12: The impact of preferences on environmental spending on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

With regard to social security it is clear that favoring decreases in spending resulted in a greater likelihood of voting. Expressing a preference for a decrease in spending on social security resulted in a ten percentage point greater likelihood of voting Democratic than it does voting Republican, an expected relationship. Expressing a preference for an increase results in a six percent greater likelihood of voting for the Democrat instead of the Republican. These results are clearly unexpected. It may be that citizens have very little faith in Republicans to make measured changes to social security such that even those who favor decreases would rather vote Democratic in order to

protect the integrity of the program. Unfortunately, the data incorporated into the SNES do not allow for this kind of differentiation and the testing of this hypothesis.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.39	.44	.48
Vote for Rep.	.33	.36	.38
Abstain	.28	.20	.15

Table 5.13: The impact of preferences on social security spending on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

The pattern of electoral behavior based on preferences for spending on defense is more in accordance with expectations than is the pattern for Social Security. Favoring decreases in spending resulted in a five percent greater likelihood of casting a vote. It may have been that people viewed defense spending as overblown in the first post-Cold War election when the economy was faltering. With regard to the two party component of the vote, those who favored decreases were ten percent more likely to vote for the Democrat than they were the Republican, the result that one would expect. It is interesting to note that there is no difference in the two-party component of the vote among those who favor increases in spending. Having favored increases in spending should have resulted in a markedly greater likelihood of voting for the Republican. Though defense spending was important it is likely that the balance of short-term forces in the 1992 elections favored Democrats.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.35	.39	.43
Vote for Rep.	.37	.35	.33
Abstain	.28	.25	.23

Table 5.14: The impact of preferences on defense spending on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

5.2.3.1 1992 Summary

In 1992, there was clear evidence of a link between issue preferences and voting in Senate elections. The importance of issues was not accurately reflected by either of the two traditional models. In the simultaneous choice model, it becomes clear that policy preferences affected both turnout and the two-party vote, not just one of the two. Spending on the environment, defense, and Social Security all exerted an impact on electoral behavior in the context of the simultaneous choice model. Moreover, spending on defense showed no impact in either of the traditional models though it is clear in the simultaneous choice model that it exerted a substantively significant effect on behavior impacting which candidate would be favored to win. This adds to the body of limited research which shows that unlike House elections, and much like Presidential elections, substantive policy preferences do matter and that sophisticated voting can be found in Senate elections.

5.2.4 Aggregated Data Analysis

The table below presents the results of the traditional voting model for the aggregated data. As one would expect, evidence is found of a statistically significant

relationship between the two-party voting decision and preferences on substantive policy matters. Spending on defense and children's programs impacts voting behavior in the traditional voting model. It is noteworthy that at least one issue which is "owned" by each party is deemed to be statistically significant.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.145	0.077	.06
Public Schools	0.138	0.081	.09
Social Security	-0.030	0.086	.73
Food Stamps	0.128	0.068	.06
Child Programs	0.214	0.076	.01
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.023	0.073	.75
National Defense	-0.188	0.066	.00
Medicare	0.134	0.083	.11
1988	0.205	0.108	.06
1992	0.068	0.107	.53
Race	-0.163	0.166	.33
Income	-0.018	0.032	.57
Education	0.001	0.002	.75
Age	0.002	0.003	.42
Party ID	0.443	0.023	.00
Constant	-2.106	0.389	.00
Pseudo R²=0.18			N=2788

Table 5.15: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional voting model for the aggregated study data in 1990.

The table below shows the results for the traditional turnout model. Unlike the voting model just presented, preferences for spending on the environment Social Security, and public schools all impact turnout. The more that one favors decreases in these programs, the more likely it is that one will turnout. Generically, preferences for spending can affect turnout levels via the interaction between candidate and voter preferences. If there is insufficient congruence, citizens may not be motivated to vote.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Environment	0.161	0.070	.02
Public Schools	0.180	0.079	.02
Social Security	0.217	0.078	.01
Food Stamps	-0.010	0.058	.87
Child Programs	0.009	0.069	.89
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.005	0.065	.94
National Defense	0.083	0.056	.14
Medicare	0.029	0.080	.72
1988	0.589	0.094	.00
1992	0.580	0.098	.00
Race	-0.025	0.129	.85
Income	0.206	0.029	.00
Education	0.020	0.002	.00
Age	0.044	0.003	.00
Party ID	-0.035	0.021	.09
Constant	-3.715	0.332	.00
Pseudo R²=0.14			N=3902

Table 5.16: The impact of policy preferences on the traditional turnout model for the aggregated study data.

The table below shows the results for the simultaneous choice model. In the independent analyses above, preferences on defense showed a statistically significant relationship with electoral behavior in two of the three years. In the aggregated data analyses, preferences on defense, environment, Social Security, and public schools all impact electoral behavior. This is particularly noteworthy because these are all variables (except perhaps the environment) that one would expect to see impact electoral behavior year after year because of their importance to numerous sectors of society.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Environment	0.099	0.079	.21
Public Schools	0.108	0.090	.23
Social Security	0.224	0.088	.02
Food Stamps	-0.060	0.065	.36
Child Programs	-0.114	0.079	.15
Anti-Drug Programs	0.005	0.072	.95
National Defense	0.206	0.064	.00
Medicare	-0.021	0.091	.81
1988	0.485	0.107	.00
1992	0.539	0.109	.00
Race	0.011	0.139	.94
Income	0.207	0.032	.00
Education	0.019	0.002	.00
Age	0.042	0.003	.00
Party ID	-0.256	0.024	.00
Constant	-3.497	0.371	.00
Voted Rep			
Environment	0.225	0.079	.00
Public Schools	0.249	0.087	.00
Social Security	0.188	0.089	.03
Food Stamps	0.062	0.068	.36
Child Programs	0.127	0.078	.10
Anti-Drug Programs	-0.027	0.076	.72
National Defense	-0.033	0.065	.61
Medicare	0.059	0.089	.50
1988	0.663	0.110	.00
1992	0.592	0.114	.00
Race	-0.179	0.171	.30
Income	0.206	0.033	.00
Education	0.019	0.002	.00
Age	0.045	0.003	.00
Party ID	0.212	0.025	.00
Constant	-5.460	0.398	.00
Pseudo R²=0.16			N=3902

Table 5.17: The impact of policy preferences on the simultaneous choice for the aggregated study data.

As is evident from the predicted probabilities below, preferences for spending on various programs that the federal government funds exerted an impact on the likelihood of a citizen turning out to vote. Those who favored decreases in spending were markedly less likely to abstain (eleven percent) than were those who favored increases. It is reasonable to assume that Republican candidates are far more likely than Democratic candidates to favor decreases in levels of spending on the environment. If preferences for decreases motivates turning out, then one would expect higher levels of voting Republican among those who favor decreases. Those who favored decreases were more likely to vote Republican than were those who favored increases by eight percentage points. However, it appears that favoring increases in spending was less of a motivating factor to vote than was favoring decreases.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.36	.38	.38
Vote for Rep.	.32	.36	.40
Abstain	.32	.26	.21

Table 5.18: The impact of preferences on environmental spending on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated study data.

The table below shows the results for preferences for spending on public schools. Favoring increases in spending was not as great of a motivating factor to vote as was favoring decreases in spending. The results show that those who favored decreases were five percent more likely to vote Republican instead of Democratic. Additionally, there was a substantial difference in voting behavior between those who favored increases and

decreases with those favoring increases being eleven percent less likely to vote Republican. Clearly, a citizen's preference for spending on schools impacts voting behavior. Though preferences for spending on schools shows an impact on behavior in both traditional models, the net impact can only be measured effectively through the simultaneous choice model.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.37	.38	.38
Vote for Rep.	.32	.37	.43
Abstain	.31	.25	.19

Table 5.19: The impact of preferences on public school spending on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated study data.

The table below shows the predicted probabilities for preferences for spending on social security. The results here are counterintuitive. As with the issues presented above, favoring decreases in spending was associated with a greater likelihood of turning out. However, we would expect a substantial portion of those who favor decreases, to be more likely to vote Republican than Democratic. The opposite result is found with them being more likely to vote Democratic than Republican. The contention made earlier, likely stands here as well, that in general, citizens would rather have Democrats reform Social Security rather than Republicans.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.36	.39	.42
Vote for Rep.	.34	.35	.36
Abstain	.31	.26	.22

Table 5.20: The impact of preferences on social security spending on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated study data.

The table below shows the relationship we would expect given the concept of issue ownership with regard to preferences on defense spending. Those who favored decreases in spending were seven percent more likely to vote Democratic than they were Republican. Those who favored increases were five percent more likely to vote Republican than they were Democratic. Unlike the issues discussed with regard to other variables, the impact of preferences on turnout is relatively minimal with a three percentage point greater likelihood of voting among those who favor decreases. Defense spending may not be an issue that can be focused on in order to motivate turnout, unlike some of the issues discussed above, however, it is one that can impact aggregate electorate outcomes.

	<i>Increases spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.32	.36	.39
Vote for Rep.	.37	.35	.32
Abstain	.31	.29	.28

Table 5.21: The impact of preferences on defense spending on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

5.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, support was found for the theory that policy voting takes place in Senate elections when one conceptualizes electoral behavior in the context of the simultaneous choice model. In all three election years, at least some evidence was found that citizens use policy preferences to help them make their electoral decisions, particularly preferences on issues that are thought to be “owned” by Democrats. When looking at the aggregated data there is continued evidence that policy preferences matter and that they impact the simultaneous decision that citizens make. The individual year results and aggregated data results provide two levels of proof of the nature of the relationship.

Though the traditional models are impacted by policy preferences, the extent of the impact is not accurately represented by the individual models. For instance, in 1988 policy preferences show no impact in the traditional model on levels of turnout. However, in the simultaneous choice model, it is clear that policy preferences did impact turnout levels. This is important because the impact on turnout can be manipulated by political consultants to mobilize voters in support of their candidate. Another example was in 1992 when no impact was seen in either of the traditional models based on preferences on defense spending. Nevertheless, in the simultaneous choice model a clear relationship was seen with an impact on levels of turnout and two-party candidate choice. When clear, statistically and substantively significant impacts are found on an important issue like defense spending, it raises the question of the appropriateness of the traditional models in explaining electoral behavior. It is obvious that more policy preferences

impact electoral behavior than are reflected in either of the traditional models. These preferences can simultaneously impact candidate choice and turnout.

Previous research suggests that the effect of policy preferences on Senate elections is the function of a presidential coattail effect making policy preferences relevant (Campbell and Sumners 1992). This coattail effect does not necessarily diminish the importance of issues rather it suggests that a pseudo-priming effect from the Presidential election may be a contributing factor. The finding that issues matter is a testament to the fact that electoral outcomes in Senate elections are not simply an artifact of incumbency. The present research does not provide evidence to contradict the premise that a presidential election is required, but the findings are based on only one off-year election. Further research would be required to make a more definitive conclusion about the impact of policy preferences in off-year elections, but it would appear that at least for now, the impact is rather limited. Presidential elections may help to make the issue agenda clear to citizens but, Senate candidates will be judged by where they stand on those particular issues.

The results found here are consistent with the limited research that has been previously conducted on policy voting in Senate elections, but encourage the use of a different perspective that better captures citizens' electoral options. Carmines and Champagne (1990) provide a good summary of the previous research, a summary that is supported by this research:

That policy voting is greater in Senate races than in House contests should come as no surprise. The Senate has become a national institution, with a membership comprised of individuals who seek national recognition and who often advocate the cause of national policy constituencies. In addition, a growing number of senate contests are no longer simply low-key state affairs. Because of the prominence of the media the greater activity of national political party

organizations, and the involvement of national issue groups and their PACs, Senate elections are increasingly becoming national political events. In such a context, it would surely be counterintuitive not to find increased levels of policy voting.

To be sure, more research on the effects of policy preferences on electoral behavior in Senate elections is necessary. However, the research presented here shows that preferences affect turnout and candidate choice. The full picture of which issues matter, however, is only seen in the simultaneous choice model. Additionally, the full impact that these issues may have on aggregate electoral outcomes can only be accurately extrapolated from the simultaneous choice model.

CHAPTER 6

EXPOSURE TO THE MEDIA AND THE SIMULTANEOUS CHOICE MODEL

In the latter half of the 20th century, the media came to play a central role in influencing American electoral behavior. The news media came to play a more important role as television brought news events right into the homes of American citizens and as information flow became virtually instantaneous. At the same time, political candidates became more adept at manipulating the media to their advantage. As examples of this, candidates now time press releases to coincide with evening news cutoff times, stage events in areas that are most advantageous to television coverage, and tailor speeches to account for the “10-second sound bite.”

In this chapter, the research will explore how exposure to the media as well as exposure to campaigns/candidates can influence electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice model. The important messages that citizens glean from campaigns and the news media should significantly impact their electoral behavior. The expectation is that exposure to a candidate should breed familiarity and make it more likely that the citizen will vote for that candidate. Those who have had greater levels of exposure to “neutral” sources of information such as newspapers and television news, should be more likely to participate because they have obtained the information to make an informed electoral

decision. Additionally, those who express a greater interest in politics and the campaign should be more likely to vote than those who express less interest. Lack of exposure to the candidates should result in a vote for abstention due to lack of information required for making an informed candidate choice decision.

6.1 The influences of exposure to the media

Two different effects, priming and framing, best describe the influences of the media. The issues that the media chooses to cover in their reporting produce a priming effect. By covering specific issues, to the exclusion of others, the media encourages citizens to think about those issues when making electoral behavior choices. This priming effect can be produced by the news media through their coverage of elections as well as by the campaigns through advertising. Campaigns, in accordance with the principles of issue ownership, will run advertisements on issues which are thought to be advantageous to the candidate or conversely, disadvantageous to the opposing candidate (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). By getting citizens to think about issues that the candidate is perceived as being “good” on, they should be able to encourage more citizens to cast votes in their favor.

Not only does the media help citizens to decide which issues should be relevant to their electoral decisions, it may frame the way that citizens look at those issues. The framing effect like the priming effect has been well established in the media research literature (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). For instance, the news media can prime people to think about taxes by repeatedly discussing candidate proposals but then frame the story in two different ways. In frame one, the focus on a proposed decrease in taxes may be on

how much money each citizen can expect to save in taxes during any given year. In frame two, the media may focus on how a decrease in taxes will force significant reductions in social welfare and health programs. The first frame would be more likely to be advantageous to the Republican candidate while frame two would be more advantageous to the Democratic candidate.

Political campaigns also have the ability to frame issues in a manner that would allow them to influence the opinions and electoral behavior of citizens. As an example, political campaigns can easily frame the relatively broad issue of international relations to their advantage. A Democratic frame on international relations would be a focus on how too much money is being spent on foreign aid programs to the detriment of spending on domestic social programs. A typical Republican frame on the same subject might be on how we need to increase spending on defense in order to counteract the unknown threat in a multi-polar world.

The notion of framing by political campaigns has been made even more interesting by research put forth over the past several years regarding negative campaigning. Political campaigns have two options when deciding on their advertising strategy. One option is a positive campaign in which candidates focus on the positives they bring to bear on elected office such as experience and policy initiatives. The second alternative is negative campaigning. In a negative campaign frame, candidates will use advertising to point out weaknesses in the opposition's positions, experience, or character in order to make their own candidate look better. Recent research, however, has shown that negative campaigns may have produced the unwitting result of decreasing overall levels of turnout, an effect proven in the context of Senate campaigns (Ansolabehere and

Iyengar 1995).⁷ The reason this happens is that citizens may become disenchanted with politics and decide the system is not deserving of their participation. Negative campaigning by one campaign will likely spur negative campaigning by the other, resulting in negative impressions of both candidates and perhaps a downward spiral in turnout. This leaves the candidate none of the above, better known as abstention, as the best candidate. The negative campaigning described above is often covered by the news media, television and print, when they present the events of the campaign, such that even if citizens do not see the negative ads they are likely to know about them.

The focus of research in recent years on the media and elections has been on the effect of television news and political advertising on television. However, there are other mediums to which citizens are exposed. For instance, citizens are still exposed to politics and elections through the radio. Many radio programs focus exclusively on news and civic affairs, many of these providing highly opinionated commentary and analysis on elections and public affairs. The opinion expressed may ultimately impact listeners perceptions of the political world.

Citizens also continue to read newspapers on a regular basis. Similar to television, the issues that newspapers choose to cover, as well as the way they frame the issues, will impact the perceptions that citizens have of candidates and public affairs.

Clearly, the internet has come to be an important factor which influences electoral behavior. Most traditional news sources such as CNN and the *New York Times* have expanded and can be found on the Internet. While the Internet undoubtedly has an effect

⁷ Though this may have been an unwitting outcome in earlier elections, it may be that at present, campaigns are taking advantage of the ability to demobilize segments of the electorate.

on political behavior today, it would not have had any effect during the timeframe of this study. The Internet was non-existent throughout the entire time-frame this study encompasses, providing an additional avenue for future research.

Another aspect of media reporting on elections has been a focus on attempting to predict the outcomes of elections. This focus on public opinion polls has become prevalent, which has had the result of producing a horse-race frame on election coverage, who is winning and who is trailing. The leading candidate gains an additional boost from coverage of the poll (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1994).

Given the myriad media influences described above it should be evident why analyses of electoral behavior should consider levels of media exposure. Throughout the rest of this chapter, evidence will be presented to show the extent to which individuals' self-reporting of media exposure influences electoral behavior. Additionally, a variable will be included in the analyses to show how pre-election predictions may influence electoral behavior.

6.2 The variables included in the analyses

The first question asked respondents how much attention they paid to political campaigns. This question provides a measuring stick by which we can determine how important citizens feel the campaigns are.

The next two questions asked citizens which specific types of media they were exposed to. Citizens were asked how often in the last week they watched the news on television and how often they read the newspaper. The expectation is that those who read

the paper more often and watched the news more often were more likely to participate in the electoral process as a result of having obtained higher levels of information.

The next series of questions asked citizens about their exposure to the Republican and Democratic candidates via various media sources. The media sources were magazines, radio, and television. One would expect that most citizens would have been exposed to the candidates through at least one of these mediums.

The final variable included in the analysis is an election prediction from *Congressional Quarterly*. The variable was coded as safe Democrat, Democrat favored, lean Democrat, no favorite, lean Republican, Republican favored, safe Republican. The closer an election was classified, the more likely it was that this race was hard fought. Elections that are wide-open would be more likely to not be competitive in nature and hence be classified as safe for the appropriate party. The motivation to include this variable is that close races should have greater levels of media coverage. With greater media coverage, citizens are more likely to have information upon which they can base their electoral choices and therefore be less likely to choose the abstention candidate.

6.3 Data analyses

The expectation in this chapter, unlike previous chapters, is that the findings should be similar across years. The effect of the media should be constant as there were no major changes in the media or its coverage of elections over the time frame the SNES encompasses.

A note on the calculation of the predicted probabilities is required here. For the questions which ask if citizens had been exposed to a candidate via a media source, the

comparison was made between those who said yes and those who said no. For the questions which ask how often citizens read the paper or watched the news, comparisons were made holding the variable to its mean value, and then one standard deviation above and below the mean. For the variable that asks how much attention citizens paid to politics, the comparisons were made between the three answer options that respondents had. Finally, for the CQ prediction variable, the comparison was made between seats that were safely Democratic or Republican and those which were too close to call.

6.3.1 1988

The table below shows the results of the traditional two-party vote model. The results show that having been exposed to a Democratic candidate via a magazine or radio has a marginally statistically significant impact on voting behavior. The results are surprising because they do not show any statistically significant impact for exposure to the candidate through television, which is likely the medium that most citizens are exposed to on a daily basis. There is support for the notion that pre-election predictions exert an impact on voting behavior, with the effect being in the expected direction of those from safe Republican states having a higher propensity to vote Republican and those from Democratic states having a higher propensity to vote Democratic.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	-0.056	0.066	.40
Watching TV News	-0.057	0.041	.16
Newspaper Reading	-0.005	0.034	.88
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	0.143	0.077	.07
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.032	0.075	.57
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.169	0.053	.00
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.091	0.072	.20
Did not See Rep on TV	0.014	0.069	.84
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.087	0.054	.11
CQ Prediction	0.374	0.043	.00
Race	0.099	0.224	.66
Gender	0.004	0.167	.98
Income	-0.010	0.062	.87
Education	0.004	0.003	.17
Age	0.009	0.006	.12
Party ID	0.550	0.043	.00
Constant	-3.127	0.685	.00
Pseudo R²=0.28	N=932		

Table 6.1: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional voting model in 1988.

The table below shows the results of the traditional turnout model. It is not surprising to find that those who paid more attention to political affairs were more likely to turnout to vote than were those who paid less attention. Interest in political affairs is likely to breed interest in voting. The more that citizens read the newspaper, the greater the likelihood of them deciding to vote. Surprisingly, there is no evidence of pre-election predictions affecting turnout. One would expect that safe states would have lower levels of turnout since the outcome may have been viewed as preordained. The results also show that having been exposed to the Democratic and Republican candidates resulted in higher levels of turnout, though surprisingly exposure via television did not impact turnout.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	-0.458	0.059	.00
Watching TV News	-0.008	0.033	.80
Newspaper Reading	0.070	0.029	.02
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.120	0.055	.03
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.095	0.059	.10
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.003	0.047	.94
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.129	0.054	.02
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.029	0.058	.62
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.025	0.047	.59
CQ Prediction	-0.046	0.037	.21
Race	-0.110	0.190	.57
Gender	-0.079	0.155	.61
Income	0.166	0.058	.00
Education	0.015	0.003	.00
Age	0.032	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.053	0.038	.16
Constant	0.971	0.591	.10
Pseudo R²=0.21			N=1244

Table 6.2: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional turnout model in 1988.

The results for the simultaneous choice model in 1988 shows that exposure to the media and campaign messages affects electoral behavior in a statistically significant manner. Expectedly, individuals who reported that they did not pay much attention to political campaigns in the media were more likely to abstain. Additionally, a statistically significant effect is shown for citizens who read the newspaper and magazines, with those who read, being more likely to vote. However, only television exposure to the Democrat exerted a statistically significant effect. It is important to note that for many of these variables the results are only statistically significant with respect to voting for one of the candidates vice abstention. Therefore, the substantive significance may only be seen with respect to voting for one of the candidates voice voting for abstention.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Attention paid to Election	-0.436	0.066	.00
Watching TV News	0.009	0.038	.82
Newspaper Reading	0.083	0.033	.01
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.187	0.069	.01
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.082	0.071	.25
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.080	0.053	.13
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.104	0.062	.10
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.016	0.066	.81
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	0.011	0.055	.84
CQ Prediction	-0.224	0.043	.00
Race	-0.101	0.211	.63
Gender	-0.099	0.175	.57
Income	0.164	0.065	.01
Education	0.013	0.004	.00
Age	0.028	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.308	0.044	.00
Constant	1.563	0.668	.02
Voted Rep			
Attention paid to Election	-0.458	0.068	.00
Watching TV News	-0.025	0.038	.52
Newspaper Reading	0.058	0.033	.08
Read about Dem in mag	-0.071	0.064	.27
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.137	0.068	.04
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.072	0.053	.18
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.171	0.065	.01
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.014	0.068	.84
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.060	0.054	.27
CQ Prediction	0.132	0.043	.00
Race	-0.095	0.229	.68
Gender	-0.071	0.175	.69
Income	0.156	0.066	.02
Education	0.017	0.004	.00
Age	0.037	0.006	.00
Party ID	0.211	0.044	.00
Constant	-1.476	0.699	.04
Pseudo R²=0.24			N=1244

Table 6.3: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The expectation for the predicted probabilities was that there would be a noticeable difference in levels of turnout between those who read the paper every day (high frequency) and those who read it just once or twice a week (low frequency). The results show that the substantive difference in the likelihood is just six percent for these individuals with those reading the paper more often being less likely to abstain by six percent, a function of having better information with which to make an electoral decision. For those who abstain, it may be that they read paper regularly but do not necessarily pay close attention to the political coverage. The nature of this study does not allow for making assessments as to what citizens read in the paper, something that may help to explain the outcomes presented below.

	<i>Low frequency</i>	<i>Average frequency</i>	<i>High frequency</i>
Vote for Dem.	.36	.38	.41
Vote for Rep.	.36	.36	.37
Abstain	.28	.25	.22

Table 6.4: The impact of the number of days a citizen reports reading the newspaper on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The following two tables exhibit the results based on responses to questions that asked citizens if they had read about the Democratic and Republican candidates in a magazine. These two tables are best understood in the context of one another. The results with regard to abstention are identical for both questions. Respondents who had not read about the Democratic or Republican candidates were equally like to not participate, at thirty-two percent. Having information resulted in a higher likelihood of

casting a vote. Reading about the candidate likely resulted in the obtaining of information that provided a motivation to cast a vote for that individual. It is important to note that regardless of which candidate was read about, the Democrat was still more likely to obtain the vote. Those who had not heard about the candidate were eight percent more likely to vote for the candidate from the opposing party.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.40	.30
Vote for Rep.	.36	.38
Abstain	.24	.32

Table 6.5: The impact of having read about the Democratic candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.39	.38
Vote for Rep.	.38	.30
Abstain	.24	.32

Table 6.6: The impact of having read about the Republican candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The table below shows the results for exposure to the Democrat on television. Exposure to the Democrat resulted in a six percent greater likelihood of turning out. It is interesting to note the mobilization effect. Exposure to the Democratic candidate actually increased the likelihood that a citizen would vote and specifically, vote Republican. It would appear that seeing the candidate on TV provided negative impressions resulting in

a greater likelihood of voting for the Republican, this might have been a result of negative impressions of the Democrat as a result of negative campaigning.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.38	.38
Vote for Rep.	.37	.31
Abstain	.25	.31

Table 6.7: The impact of having seen the Democratic candidate on television on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The table below shows the results for the question that asks respondents how much attention they paid to the political campaigns. It is not surprising to find that the predicted level of abstention increases as interest in the political campaign decreases. There is virtually no difference in predicted probabilities of voting for either of the two major-party candidates based on the level of attention paid to the campaigns. The overall outcome then, is that this variable is best used for predicting why citizens vote for abstention instead of a two-party candidate and does not hold predictive power for explaining candidate choice.

	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Somewhat interested</i>	<i>Not much</i>
Vote for Dem.	.44	.38	.31
Vote for Rep.	.42	.36	.27
Abstain	.14	.26	.42

Table 6.8: The impact of level of attention paid to the campaigns on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

The table below shows the predicted probabilities with regard to Congressional Quarterly's pre-election prediction. The expectation is that one would see lower levels of turnout when it is predicted that a state is safe because citizens should feel as though their vote will make no difference in the outcome. This expectation is not evidenced in the substantive findings presented below. It is clear however, that in states that are considered safe Republican and safe Democrat, the likelihood of voting for the safe party is dramatically higher than for the opposition party. This finding may very well speak more to the accuracy of the pre-election prediction than to anything else.

	<i>Safe Democrat</i>	<i>No clear favorite</i>	<i>Safe Republican</i>
Vote for Dem.	.52	.35	.21
Vote for Rep.	.24	.38	.52
Abstain	.24	.27	.27

Table 6.9: The impact of CQ's pre-election prediction on the simultaneous choice model in 1988.

6.3.1.1 1988 Summary

In 1988, there is support for the notion that media exposure affected electoral behavior in the context of the simultaneous choice model. The results are not all as expected nor are they all as substantively significant as expected but still, the media exerted a measurable impact on electoral behavior. In particular, interest in the campaigns and exposure to candidates through magazines had the biggest impact. The findings show that one can use measurements of levels of exposure to predict individual voting decisions and aggregate electoral outcomes.

Exposure to the candidates had an impact on both turnout and the two candidate vote choice. This dual impact cannot be seen in the context of either of the traditional models, individually, only jointly in the simultaneous choice context. This has important strategic implications for campaigns because there is a clear and significant benefit to ensuring that a candidate is seen by citizens in the media. When citizens have information, they can be mobilized to vote for a candidate. Exposure to the candidates also speaks more to the choice that citizens make when they have eliminated abstention as a voting option. These findings are contrary to recent research on the effects of campaign television advertising (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995).⁸ It appears that candidates can produce a mobilization effect through exposure in written forms of media which could counteract the reduction in turnout that is a function of advertising on television.

6.3.2 1990

The results below are for the traditional two-party vote model. In this model, virtually no support is found for the notion that the media has an impact on election outcomes. The only media variable which exerts a statistically significant impact is having heard a Democrat on the radio. Those who heard a Democrat on the radio were more likely to vote for the Democrat than those who had not, but only marginally so. Pre-election predictions of the outcome also exerted a statistically significant impact on electoral behavior with an expected relationship.

⁸ Though Ansolabehere's and Iyengar's research shows reduction in turnout based on exposure to television advertising no evidence is found in the context of the survey. It is important to remember that the survey

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	0.017	0.066	.80
Watching TV News	0.002	0.039	.96
Newspaper Reading	-0.040	0.034	.23
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	0.121	0.074	.11
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.010	0.076	.89
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.137	0.051	.01
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.124	0.080	.12
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.056	0.076	.46
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.071	0.052	.17
CQ Prediction	0.363	0.046	.00
Race	-0.089	0.440	.84
Gender	-0.144	0.162	.37
Income	0.093	0.061	.13
Education	-0.002	0.003	.52
Age	0.005	0.006	.41
Party ID	0.597	0.044	.00
Constant	-3.215	0.777	.00
Pseudo R²=0.30			N=1020

Table 6.10: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional voting model in 1990.

The data below show the results for the traditional turnout model. The results show that those who paid less attention to political affairs were less likely to turnout, a result that is not surprising. The evidence also shows that having been exposed to either of the candidates, via magazines resulted in increased levels of turnout. Exposure likely is breeding familiarity not disgust which results in a greater propensity to vote. Congressional Quarterly predictions also exerted an impact on turnout.

just asked respondents if they had seen the candidate on TV, not if they had seen an advertisement for them. The research does not lend itself to a content analysis of what respondents saw.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	-0.540	0.052	.00
Watching TV News	-0.003	0.029	.91
Newspaper Reading	0.027	0.026	.30
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.112	0.051	.03
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.005	0.056	.093
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.043	0.041	.30
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.105	0.052	.04
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.030	0.054	.58
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.009	0.042	.83
CQ Prediction	0.073	0.037	.05
Race	0.410	0.316	.19
Gender	-0.093	0.132	.48
Income	0.118	0.049	.02
Education	0.012	0.003	.00
Age	0.034	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.033	0.035	.34
Constant	-0.206	0.604	.73
Pseudo R²=0.21	N=1484		

Table 6.11: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional turnout model in 1990.

For 1990, there are some differences in the variables that are deemed to be statistically and substantively important when compared to the simultaneous choice model for 1988. The variables that are similar pertain to level of attention paid to the campaign, exposure to the Democrat via magazines, and the *CQ* prediction. Unlike 1988, however, an effect is not seen for the number of days citizens read the newspaper nor for exposure to candidates via television.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Attention paid to Election	-0.526	0.059	.00
Watching TV News	-0.006	0.034	.87
Newspaper Reading	0.034	0.030	.25
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.206	0.064	.00
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.041	0.069	.56
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.091	0.047	.05
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.058	0.060	.34
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.026	0.062	.68
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	0.024	0.048	.63
CQ Prediction	-0.080	0.043	.06
Race	0.345	0.335	.30
Gender	-0.087	0.150	.56
Income	0.067	0.056	.24
Education	0.013	0.003	.00
Age	0.030	0.005	.00
Party ID	-0.245	0.041	.00
Constant	0.736	0.672	.27
Voted Rep			
Attention paid to Election	-0.519	0.062	.00
Watching TV News	0.002	0.035	.96
Newspaper Reading	0.014	0.031	.65
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.044	0.062	.48
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.020	0.065	.76
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.026	0.050	.61
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.186	0.070	.01
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.063	0.070	.36
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.047	0.049	.34
CQ Prediction	0.254	0.045	.00
Race	0.156	0.464	.74
Gender	-0.106	0.156	.50
Income	0.178	0.058	.00
Education	0.011	0.003	.00
Age	0.038	0.005	.00
Party ID	0.344	0.043	.00
Constant	-2.855	0.798	.00
Pseudo R²=0.26			N=1484

Table 6.12: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

Similar to the findings for 1988, the results show that those who have not read about the candidates for either party in a magazine are more likely to vote for abstention. Similarly to 1988, those who read about the Democratic candidate were twelve percent more likely to vote for the Democrat than were those who did not read about the Democrat. There is clear evidence that that the mobilization which was a result of exposure benefited the Democrat more than the Republican.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.37	.25
Vote for Rep.	.34	.37
Abstain	.30	.38

Table 6.13: The impact of having read about the Democratic candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.35	.37
Vote for Rep.	.35	.36
Abstain	.30	.37

Table 6.14: The impact of having read about the Republican candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

The table below shows that having heard the Democratic candidate on the radio had only a marginal impact on increasing turnout. However, there was a clear benefit to the Democratic candidate when citizens heard that candidate on the radio. Citizens who heard the Democrat on the radio were six percent more likely for the candidate than those who did not hear about the candidate.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.38	.31
Vote for Rep.	.32	.37
Abstain	.30	.33

Table 6.15: The impact of having heard about the Democratic candidate on the radio on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

The table below shows the dramatic results for the campaign attention variable. There is a greater than fifty percent likelihood of casting a vote for abstention among those who say that they do not pay much attention to the political campaigns. Among these same people, the distribution of those who say they would vote Democratic and those who say they would vote Republican is roughly equal. Level of attention then, is related to casting a vote for abstention vice casting a vote for a candidate. By not paying attention to political campaigns, citizens are leaving themselves void of information that could be used to help them determine which of the two-party candidates they might prefer, therefore forcing a vote for abstention.

	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Somewhat interested</i>	<i>Not much</i>
Vote for Dem.	.44	.35	.23
Vote for Rep.	.41	.34	.24
Abstain	.15	.32	.53

Table 6.16: The impact of level of attention paid to the campaigns on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

The table below shows the substantive impact of changes in the *Congressional Quarterly's* pre-election prediction. As in 1988, the results seem to support the pre-

election prediction. In states where there is no clear favorite, the votes cast are fairly equally distributed among the Democrat, Republican, and abstention. In states that are considered safe for one of the two major-party candidates a decisive plurality shows a likelihood of voting for the particular candidate who is favored. Unlike 1988, however, the results show at least a small but substantively important difference in the likelihood of abstaining between safe Democratic and safe Republican states. Citizens from states that are considered safe Democrat have a seven percent less likelihood of voting than those from safe Republican states. It is interesting to note that states with no clear favorite fall somewhere in between. This is unexpected because one would think that competition in these states would produce mobilization above what is seen in a “safe” state.

	<i>Safe Democrat</i>	<i>No clear favorite</i>	<i>Safe Republican</i>
Vote for Dem.	.47	.36	.25
Vote for Rep.	.19	.32	.47
Abstain	.35	.33	.28

Table 6.17: The impact of CQ’s pre-election prediction on the simultaneous choice model in 1990.

6.3.2.1 1990 Summary

The findings for 1990 show more similarities than differences to the findings from 1988. This finding of similarities is particularly important because in 1990 there was no Presidential race which could have exerted an undue influence. As has been emphasized throughout this research, Senate elections are of sufficient stature that one can measure electoral effects of various factors even in off-year elections.

Exposure to candidates through magazines or the radio increased, at least marginally, overall levels of turnout. Exposure to the Republican resulted in increased turnout but did not increase the likelihood of voting for the Republican, unlike exposure to the Democrat which increased turnout and voting for the Democrat. Increased political interest resulted in higher levels of turnout but had no impact on which candidate a citizen was more likely to vote for. Pre-election predictions impacted turnout but not as expected, turnout was higher in states that are classified as safe Republican.

The findings thus far suggest that electoral behavior in Senate elections may be explained by similar media exposure variables across different years. Even when effects are not seen in traditional models evidence is found in the simultaneous choice model suggesting that exposure to the media affects electoral behavior.

6.3.3 1992

The table below shows the results of the analyses for the traditional voting model in 1992. This is the first year in which the level of attention paid to politics exerted an impact on voting behavior in the traditional model. The results suggest that those who paid less attention to politics were more likely to vote for the Republican than the Democrat. It is surprising however, to see that this relationship is only marginally statistically significant. One would think that interest would have an obvious and predictable impact on voting behavior. This may have been an artifact of the presidential election in which the Republican candidate received considerable negative press, to the point that it would have benefited Republican candidates to not have citizens exposed to campaigns. The analyses also show that having been exposed to the candidates via

magazines or radio exerted a statistically significant impact on voting behavior. No evidence was found for an effect of exposure to the candidate via television, though research using 1992 Senate elections shows television played an important role (Ansolabhere and Iyengar 1995).

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	0.135	0.078	.08
Watching TV News	0.050	0.043	.24
Newspaper Reading	-0.024	0.035	.50
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	0.224	0.079	.01
Did not See Dem on TV	0.059	0.091	.52
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.112	0.055	.04
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.218	0.076	.00
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.073	0.084	.39
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.111	0.054	.04
CQ Prediction	0.338	0.050	.00
Race	-0.957	0.517	.06
Gender	0.020	0.171	.91
Income	0.083	0.060	.17
Education	-0.001	0.003	.88
Age	0.006	0.006	.27
Party ID	0.559	0.045	.00
Constant	-2.676	0.860	.00
Pseudo R²=0.28	N=888		

Table 6.18: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional voting model in 1992.

The table below shows the results of the analyses for the traditional turnout model. Those who said that they paid less attention to politics were less likely to cast a vote in the election. Another expected result was that the more individuals read the newspaper the more likely they were to cast a vote. Exposure to the Republican via television or magazines also increased levels of turnout.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	-0.593	0.068	.00
Watching TV News	0.029	0.039	.46
Newspaper Reading	0.066	0.033	.04
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.003	0.062	.96
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.047	0.081	.56
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.009	0.055	.87
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.174	0.059	.00
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.147	0.069	.03
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.017	0.055	.76
CQ Prediction	-0.007	0.049	.88
Race	0.102	0.336	.76
Gender	0.302	0.175	.08
Income	0.279	0.063	.00
Education	0.018	0.004	.00
Age	0.031	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.006	0.045	.90
Constant	-0.753	0.721	.30
Pseudo R²=0.28			N=1145

Table 6.19: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional turnout model in 1992.

The table below shows the results of the analyses with respect to the simultaneous choice model in 1992. Similar to previous years, the level of attention that one paid to politics as well as how often one read the newspaper exerted a statistically significant impact on electoral behavior. The results also show an effect of pre-election predictions on electoral behavior. However, unlike previous years, no impact is evidenced for any of the variables pertaining to exposure to the Democratic candidate via the various media sources. Only exposure to the Republican via magazines or television exerted a statistically significant effect.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Attention paid to Election	-0.631	0.075	.00
Watching TV News	0.009	0.043	.83
Newspaper Reading	0.071	0.036	.05
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.107	0.072	.14
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.080	0.093	.39
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.044	0.059	.46
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.087	0.065	.19
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.123	0.075	.10
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	0.026	0.059	.67
CQ Prediction	-0.151	0.055	.01
Race	0.149	0.346	.67
Gender	0.282	0.190	.14
Income	0.252	0.068	.00
Education	0.018	0.004	.00
Age	0.030	0.006	.00
Party ID	-0.260	0.051	.00
Constant	-0.179	0.775	.82
Voted Rep			
Attention paid to Election	-0.513	0.080	.00
Watching TV News	0.050	0.046	.28
Newspaper Reading	0.069	0.038	.07
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	0.109	0.075	.15
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.022	0.093	.81
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.064	0.063	.31
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.287	0.076	.00
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.188	0.086	.03
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.070	0.062	.26
CQ Prediction	0.157	0.056	.01
Race	-0.717	0.556	.20
Gender	0.344	0.198	.08
Income	0.317	0.070	.00
Education	0.017	0.004	.00
Age	0.033	0.007	.00
Party ID	0.291	0.052	.00
Constant	-2.734	0.949	.00
Pseudo R²=0.28			N=1145

Table 6.20: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

The findings show that those who were not exposed to the Republican candidate through a magazine or television had a lower likelihood of voting, by at least eight percent. It is possible that citizens felt they had a deficiency of information to make a candidate decision; so instead, they cast a vote for abstention. Seeing a Republican on TV or reading about him or her, resulted in a higher likelihood of voting for that candidate. Once again, exposure breed familiarity but the benefit to Republicans was greater when exposure was via a magazine.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.42	.41
Vote for Rep.	.36	.29
Abstain	.22	.30

Table 6.21: The impact of having seen the Republican candidate on TV on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.42	.47
Vote for Rep.	.38	.24
Abstain	.20	.30

Table 6.22: The impact of having read about the Republican candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

The table below shows the impact that citizens' interest in politics has on their electoral behavior. The difference in the likelihood of abstaining between those who paid a lot of attention to the political campaigns and those who did not pay much attention is greater than thirty percent. This result is comparable to previous years. One important

difference that does manifest itself in this year is in the two-party vote decision among those who opined that they were very interested in the campaigns. In the previous years, there was virtually no difference in the proportion who said they would vote Democratic vice Republican. In 1992, however, there is a difference of eleven percent, with citizens being more likely to vote Democratic. Those who said they did not pay much attention to the campaign were five percent more likely to vote for the Republican than the Democrat. Taken together, showing an interest in the campaign not only expanded the difference in the likelihoods, it changed which candidate would be more likely to win the votes of citizens. This may have been a significant contributing factor to the victories that Democrats had in 1992. The context of the election in 1992 may explain these interesting results. As was shown in Chapter Four, the short-term forces in 1992 clearly leaned toward the Democrats as the economy was struggling. Moreover, the presidential race may have exerted an unusual influence on the election because of the inclusion of a viable third party candidate, who negatively impacted the incumbent Republican through rhetoric and the taking away of votes. This pounding of the presidential candidate and the party for handling of the economy may have trickled down to the Senatorial level.

	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Somewhat interested</i>	<i>Not much</i>
Vote for Dem.	.49	.37	.23
Vote for Rep.	.38	.35	.28
Abstain	.13	.28	.49

Table 6.23: The impact of level of attention paid to the campaigns on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

The table below shows the findings for the question which asked respondents how many times they read the paper. The difference in levels of abstention between those who read the paper daily and those who read it infrequently was only five percent. This continues to be a surprising finding because one would expect that those who read it infrequently would be considerably more likely to abstain. Regardless of how often citizens read the paper, they were more likely to vote Democratic than Republican providing further evidence that exposure in 1992 meant exposure to messages which distinctly favored Democrats.

	<i>Low frequency</i>	<i>Average frequency</i>	<i>High frequency</i>
Vote for Dem.	.40	.42	.43
Vote for Rep.	.35	.36	.37
Abstain	.25	.22	.20

Table 6.24: The impact of the number of days a citizen reports reading the newspaper on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

The table for the *CQ* prediction variable mimics those from previous years. The *CQ* prediction does not seem to be related to levels of abstention in any discernible manner, rather it is related to the two-party option with a clear correlation between the classification of the state and the predicted voting behavior.

	<i>Safe Democrat</i>	<i>No clear favorite</i>	<i>Safe Republican</i>
Vote for Dem.	.53	.39	.27
Vote for Rep.	.25	.37	.50
Abstain	.23	.24	.23

Table 6.25: The impact of CQ's pre-election prediction on the simultaneous choice model in 1992.

6.3.3.1 1992 Summary

Exposure to Republicans noticeably influenced Senate elections. Even though exposure to the Republican increased the likelihood of voting for that candidate, it was not enough to bring Republicans over the top. The short-term forces in the election year clearly were advantageous to the Democrat and could not be overcome by Republican campaign efforts. Clearly, Republicans running for the Senate were at a disadvantage in 1992.

As is expected, interest in politics and the campaign exerted a statistically and substantively significant impact on electoral behavior. One can hardly expect citizens to vote if they are not interested nor if they do not hear about elections via various media outlets. Though exposure to Republican candidates helped them, it could not overcome the advantage that Democrats gained when citizens were exposed to public affairs more generally.

The other variables which showed a statistically significant relationship all had their impacts focused on levels of turnout rather than the two-party vote. When turnout increased with each of those variables, the margins in the likelihood of voting for each of the two-party candidates did not change.

6.3.4 Aggregated Data Analysis

The table below shows the results for the traditional two-party vote model applied to the aggregated data. The results show that measures of overall interest and overall media exposure do not appear to impact voter behavior in the context of the traditional two-party vote model. This indicates that the finding of statistical significance in 1992 regarding the relationship between overall exposure and vote choice may have been an aberration (it is difficult to make this conclusion in the context of only three elections). In accordance with the earlier findings, the results suggest that it is only exposure to specific candidates that impacts voting behavior. The traditional model only shows that exposure to specific candidates resulted in a higher likelihood of voting for the candidate.

The fact that measures of interest and level of attention paid to the political campaigns do not show a significant relationship to voting may lend further credence to the simultaneous choice model. In the context of the simultaneous choice model those two variables provide a measuring stick as to how much information citizens bring with them to the electoral decision. Those with higher levels of information and desire to obtain that information would have a greater ability to evaluate the candidates and determine their utility of voting for a candidate vice voting for abstention. This effect is most likely to be seen in the context of the simultaneous choice model because of the specification of how the voting decision was made.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	0.016	0.040	.68
Watching TV News	-0.003	0.023	.90
Newspaper Reading	-0.022	0.019	.26
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	0.155	0.043	.00
Did not See Dem on TV	0.004	0.045	.93
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.139	0.030	.00
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.138	0.043	.00
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.029	0.043	.50
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.085	0.030	.01
CQ Prediction	0.359	0.026	.00
1988	0.415	0.116	.00
1992	0.290	0.118	.01
Race	-0.098	0.182	.59
Gender	-0.047	0.095	.62
Income	0.056	0.035	.11
Education	0.001	0.002	.69
Age	0.006	0.003	.05
Party ID	0.568	0.025	.00
Constant	-3.449	0.423	.00
Pseudo R²=0.28			N=2840

Table 6.26: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional voting model for the aggregated data.

The table below is for the traditional turnout model. The variables which describe citizens' interest and overall exposure to the campaign showed a statistically significant relationship to the turnout decision. Those who paid attention to the political campaigns were more likely to turnout to vote as were those who read the newspaper more frequently. Exposure to the candidates also showed a statistically significant relationship to turnout with exposure resulting in a greater likelihood of voting. Exposure to the candidates may have served as another barometer of level of interest in the political campaign and as such, likely explains why this variable shows an effect on turnout outside of candidate evaluations.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Attention paid to Election	-0.517	0.033	.00
Watching TV News	0.001	0.019	.98
Newspaper Reading	0.052	0.016	.00
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.090	0.032	.00
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.043	0.036	.23
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.016	0.026	.55
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.126	0.031	.00
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.069	0.034	.04
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.017	0.027	.53
CQ Prediction	0.004	0.023	.85
1988	0.532	0.103	.00
1992	0.232	0.109	.03
Race	0.054	0.146	.71
Gender	0.036	0.086	.68
Income	0.178	0.032	.00
Education	0.014	0.002	.00
Age	0.033	0.003	.00
Party ID	-0.008	0.022	.72
Constant	-0.079	0.358	.83
Pseudo R²=0.23			N=3873

Table 6.27: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the traditional turnout model for the aggregated data.

The table below shows the results of the analyses for the aggregated data in the context of the simultaneous choice model. The findings from the individual years are roughly replicated in the aggregate data. No additional variables show a statistically significant relationship with electoral behavior. These relationships hold even when controlling for socio-demographic characteristics which in earlier chapters were shown to have an important impact on electoral behavior.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Attention paid to Election	-0.513	0.037	.00
Watching TV News	-0.001	0.022	.95
Newspaper Reading	0.061	0.019	.00
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.177	0.039	.00
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.064	0.043	.14
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	-0.074	0.030	.01
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.073	0.035	.04
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.059	0.038	.12
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	0.019	0.030	.53
CQ Prediction	-0.153	0.026	.00
1988	0.395	0.116	.00
1992	0.151	0.121	.21
Race	0.052	0.156	.74
Gender	0.027	0.096	.78
Income	0.151	0.035	.00
Education	0.014	0.002	.00
Age	0.030	0.003	.00
Party ID	-0.270	0.026	.00
Constant	0.704	0.397	.08
Voted Rep			
Attention paid to Election	-0.491	0.039	.00
Watching TV News	0.002	0.022	.93
Newspaper Reading	0.043	0.019	.02
Did not Read about Dem in Mag	-0.018	0.038	.63
Did not See Dem on TV	-0.058	0.041	.16
Did not Hear Dem on Radio	0.052	0.031	.10
Did not Read about Rep in Mag	-0.202	0.040	.00
Did not See Rep on TV	-0.083	0.042	.05
Did not Hear Rep on Radio	-0.057	0.031	.07
CQ Prediction	0.180	0.027	.00
1988	0.699	0.119	.00
1992	0.402	0.125	.00
Race	-0.081	0.191	.67
Gender	0.044	0.099	.66
Income	0.210	0.036	.00
Education	0.014	0.002	.00
Age	0.036	0.003	.00
Party ID	0.284	0.026	.00
Constant	-2.765	0.440	.00
Pseudo R²=0.25			N=3873

Table 6.28: The impact of self-reported media exposure on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The following two tables show the predicted probabilities based on exposure to the candidates via a magazine. The pattern for the aggregated data is similar to the pattern for the individual years; exposure to at least one of the candidates through a magazine increased the likelihood of a two-party candidate choice by at least six percent. Among those who were likely to vote, having not been exposed to a candidate in a magazine increased the likelihood of voting for that candidate.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.40	.28
Vote for Rep.	.35	.40
Abstain	.26	.32

Table 6.29: The impact of having read about the Democratic candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.38	.40
Vote for Rep.	.37	.26
Abstain	.25	.33

Table 6.30: The impact of having read about the Republican candidate in a magazine on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

With regard to exposure to candidates on television, only exposure to Republican candidates showed a statistically significant relationship to electoral choice. Similar to the findings for magazines, the findings show that the primary effect is on abstention. Citizens who were not exposed to the Republican candidate on television were four

percent more likely to choose abstention vice a candidate, a modest difference. Exposure to the Republican on TV did not significantly increase the likelihood of the vote cast.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.38	.37
Vote for Rep.	.35	.32
Abstain	.26	.30

Table 6.31: The impact of having seen the Republican candidate on television on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The table below shows the findings for the amount of attention paid to the political campaigns by the respondents. The findings mimic those for the individual years. Of those who said they did not pay much attention, forty-eight percent were likely to vote for abstention. As levels of interest increased, the abstention rate decreased. As level of attention increased, the difference between voting for a Republican and a Democrat also showed a modest increase with Democrats benefiting by five percent.

	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Somewhat interested</i>	<i>Not much</i>
Vote for Dem.	.45	.37	.26
Vote for Rep.	.40	.34	.26
Abstain	.15	.29	.48

Table 6.32: The impact of level of attention paid to the campaigns on the simultaneous choice for the aggregated data.

The table below shows the findings for the question which asked how many days citizens read the newspaper. Even though the variable was shown to have a statistically

significant relationship to electoral behavior, the substantive relationship is modest. The most significant finding was that those who read the paper more frequently were slightly less likely to vote for abstention. In the individual year analyses, this variable was only significant for 1992. However, it is important to note that the relationship holds if one looks at the whole study.

	<i>Low frequency</i>	<i>Average frequency</i>	<i>High frequency</i>
Vote for Dem.	.36	.38	.40
Vote for Rep.	.35	.35	.36
Abstain	.29	.27	.25

Table 6.33: The impact of the number of days a citizen reports reading the newspaper on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The findings below show the results for the pre-election prediction. The findings are similar to those for the individual years. Predictions have little impact on the likelihood of choosing abstention, but they do impact electoral behavior. Races with no clear favorites produce likelihoods of voting for two-party candidates that are virtually indistinguishable.

	<i>Safe Democrat</i>	<i>No clear favorite</i>	<i>Safe Republican</i>
Vote for Dem.	.51	.37	.24
Vote for Rep.	.23	.36	.50
Abstain	.27	.28	.26

Table 6.34: The impact of CQ's pre-election prediction on the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

Though not identical, the findings presented in this aggregated data section support the findings of the individual year studies. Exposure to a candidate increases the likelihood that a citizen will vote for that candidate, but the benefit is greater for Democrats. Pre-election predictions exert the same role they did in the individual year analyses with no impact on turnout and the expected impact on voting. Exposure to newspapers exerts a modest effect on turnout and produces a very small increase in Democratic voting for those who read frequently. Attention to politics also results in increased voting and has the net result of a modest five percent increase in Democratic voting.

The results of the aggregated data analyses suggest that analyses of media exposure have promise of producing measurable results when expanded beyond the three years of the study. The findings closely resemble those of the individual years. Though there are some variances in which variables exert an impact in any given year, the aggregated analysis suggests that media exposure will always exert an impact.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter, clear evidence has been presented that exposure to the media, in general, and exposure to candidates, specifically, impacts electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice context. Senate races are sufficiently prevalent in the media, whether it is radio, magazines, or television that citizens' electoral behavior can be influenced by it. Certainly there are some election years and some specific elections where the media will play a greater role than others; however, there is support for the finding that the media impacts individuals' electoral behavior.

Level of interest in politics, which is directly related to following elections in the media, exerts a greater impact on electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice model than it does in the traditional voting model. In only one year (and not in the aggregate data) is an impact found on the traditional voting model. The variable does exert a consistent impact in the traditional turnout model. In all years, there is a noticeable difference in turnout levels and a modest impact on the two-party component. In 1992, the impact produced dramatic changes in the likelihood of voting, which when taken into account with the other data presented in this dissertation, can provide a better understanding of what happened in the 1992 election.

In two of the three years, as well as in the aggregated data, newspaper reading is shown to exert a modest impact on electoral behavior. The focus of this impact was on turnout levels with little or no difference in two-party vote proportions. However, if newspaper reading breeds turnout, it could help magnify the impact of other variables such as the economy which would thereby affect aggregate outcomes. This notion applies to any other variable that deals with general exposure to the media.

The major finding is that exposure to a candidate via some form of media, decreases the likelihood of a vote for abstention. Exposure, it appears, breeds familiarity and motivates electoral behavior. Moreover exposure to a candidate results in a higher likelihood of voting for that candidate vice voting for the opponent. These findings hold, even while controlling for party identification which one could easily expect to act as a confounding factor. An additional reason why this effect may be evidenced is that exposure to the candidates in the media serves to reinforce the messages that are being put out by campaigns in advertisements (Roberts and McCombs 1993).

All of the findings discussed above exert a substantive impact on electoral behavior which could in turn affect the aggregate outcome of elections. Some of the results presented above show relatively modest effects. However, previous research would suggest that the actual magnitude of the effects is greater because they are underestimated by the use of recall measurements (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). The overall results support the growing chorus of studies which show that the media exerts a very real impact on American politics and elections. The use of recall measurements do not devalue the study, they enhance it by showing how survey research can be used to evaluate the media's effect on electoral behavior. The main advantage of survey research is that it can reach a large number and variety of people that experimental research cannot reach. Survey research also has the advantage of being more timely.

The main critique of studies that use recall measurements is that the findings are not as definitive as those which come from experimental research. While certainly there are some disadvantages to using survey recall measurements, I would argue that this method is appropriate and makes its own important contributions that experimental research cannot. Though the research does not allow for assessment of the impact of specific media strategies used by campaigns, it does provide a general level of analysis that can be used to understand how exposure affects citizens' behaviors. The data that can be captured from this means of analysis are much easier to come by and can be used in the time-critical environment of a campaign. The data are also gathered from a cross-section of society, whereas most experimental research is conducted among non-representative environments such as college students.

The research showed that in the context of media effects analysis using survey research, that the simultaneous choice model best captures the impacts on citizens' electoral decisions. The traditional models simply do not capture the full impact of media exposure as reported by citizens. Electoral behavior when considering the media is more complicated than one would think based on either of the traditional models. Increased exposure to the media can magnify the impacts of the other variables that have been shown in this research to be important.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Throughout this research, I have shown that the simultaneous choice model of voting is a viable framework for explaining electoral behavior in Senate elections. Furthermore, I have shown why I believe it has the potential to be used for predicting aggregate election outcomes. Four unique subject areas were evaluated for their effects on the simultaneous choice model: socio-demographics, perceptions of the economy and personal finances, policy preferences, and self-reported exposure to the media and candidates. Variables across all four of these areas were shown to have an impact on electoral behavior in Senate elections. This has been shown to be true across three Senate election cycles, illustrating largely consistent effects. Moreover, one of these years did not include a presidential election, showing that Senate elections can be analyzed for effects that are independent of Presidential elections.

This research set out to prove two different theories in the scope of the presentation. First, it set out to show that the influences on electoral behavior in Senate elections are diverse, complex, and separate from Presidential elections. Electoral

behavior was defined as the consideration of the two-party vote and turnout decision, simultaneously.⁹ Variables beyond party identification were shown to have important impacts on electoral behavior. Numerous influences across all subject areas evaluated were found, some modest, but all of them in the presence of a hard-fought electoral contest are enough to influence aggregate electoral outcomes.

The second theory is that the simultaneous choice model is a viable explanation of voting behavior in Senate elections that provides an accurate representation of how citizens view their options when it comes to electoral decisions. The simultaneous choice model provides a good representation of electoral behavior because it allows for the inclusion of abstention as a legitimate third option for citizens. It provides a means for citizens to say “none of the above.” Throughout the research, the results from the traditional models have been compared to the results from the simultaneous choice model. In many cases, the variables that influenced the traditional models were the same as those that influenced the simultaneous choice model. However, in many cases the variables were different. The research showed important differences in the substantive impacts based on which perspective behavior was being analyzed from.

What follows from above, is that the simultaneous choice model is a viable means to explain what mobilizes citizens to vote and whom they vote for in one coherent model. This explanation of mobilization is important in the context of political campaigns because it can be used to develop the strategy that candidates use in order to impact electoral margins. Candidates are interested in producing higher levels of turnout for

⁹ This distinction is important because voting behavior was defined as the traditional two-party vote decision. The turnout decision was defined by the traditional turnout model which assumed that this decision was made prior to the two-party vote decision.

those who are likely to vote for them. The simultaneous choice model makes the connection between the turnout and two-party vote choices, explicit.

In Chapter 3, the research showed that socio-demographic characteristics can be used to predict the likelihood of citizens casting a vote for a candidate or abstention. In the aggregated model, the research showed that while no effect is evidenced for income in the traditional two-party model there is a clear effect in the simultaneous choice model. Those who had lower levels of income were less likely to abstain. When they voted, they were more likely to vote for the Democrat by ten percent whereas there was no difference in the two-party vote among those who had higher incomes, they were equally likely to vote Democratic or Republican. The obvious implication of this is that a focus on lower income citizens benefits Democrats whereas Republicans gain no competitive advantage from a focus on citizens from a specific income group. Age and education showed similar effects except that there was a difference among the older and the more educated in how they cast a two-party vote, albeit a modest impact. The mobilization effect of being older and having a greater level of education is to the benefit of Democrats who see increases in the likelihood of a vote being cast for their candidate. This relationship is seen even though age and education show no effect in the traditional voting model.

In Chapter 4, the research showed how perceptions of the economy and personal finances impacted electoral behavior. It showed that the angry voter, the voter who is dissatisfied with the economy, is more likely to vote. They were slightly more likely to vote for the challenger, most likely in the hopes that change would bring improvements. The impact of personal finances varied from year to year with there being some evidence suggesting that citizens do vote with their pocketbook contrary to previous findings.

In Chapter 5, the research showed how preferences on substantive matters of policy impact electoral behavior. While many of the other issue variables exert an impact on each of the traditional models and the simultaneous choice model, the strategic implications of citizens' preferences are not realized without the simultaneous choice model. For instance a focus by a campaign on national defense may mobilize citizens to vote and result in their being disproportionately likely to vote for one candidate over another. This has clear strategic implications for campaigns and can provide a better understanding for political scientists as to why campaigns focus on particular issues. Citizens know candidate issue positions (in large part because of their stereotypes of party positions on the issues) and weigh those positions against the implication of not turning out and make their decision to cast a vote or abstain. These issue positions can be tied into the effects of the media that were presented in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 6, the research showed how information in general, and exposure to campaigns via the media directly, impacts electoral behavior. It was clear that turnout increased when citizens were exposed to the candidates. In particular it was shown how citizens were influenced by exposure to the candidates via magazines. Exposure via magazines not only increased turnout, it bred familiarity that resulted in a higher likelihood of voting for the candidate that was read about. In some years, similar effects were found with regard to exposure to candidates via radio and television. This finding was particularly important for Republicans because it helped close the gap with the Democrat when citizens were exposed to the Republican. The research also clearly showed that level of interest in the election influenced levels of turnout. The greater the level of interest a citizen had, the more likely they were to participate.

Evidence was presented throughout this research showing how the simultaneous choice model provides powerful tools for understanding electoral behavior and perhaps manipulating future electoral behavior (at least when used by a political campaign). Additionally, the research also presented a model that can be effectively used by campaigns to understand electoral behavior to assist them in winning elections.

7.1 Comprehensive model analysis

In this section, the findings of a comprehensive analysis will be presented in order to tie the findings from previous chapters together. The analysis is comprehensive because it includes variables from each of the earlier chapters that were found to have a statistically relationship to electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice context.

The criterion for inclusion of independent variables in the analysis displayed in this chapter is that the variable was statistically significant ($p < .05$) in the previous chapters for at least two of the three years analyzed. This criterion prevents the inclusion of variables that only had only a one-time effect, possibly due to the unique circumstances of the election year. Part of the goal of this research was to determine what variables from the four contexts studied, exert a consistently meaningful impact on electoral behavior in Senate elections, this is best done when all of the variables are included in a single comprehensive model.

When reading the analyses in this section, it is important to take into account the dependent variable being used. As the reader will recall, two different dependent variables were used at different points in the earlier analyses. For Chapters Three, Five, and Six, the dependent variable was coded to reflect voting for the Democratic candidate,

Republican candidate or voting for abstention. In Chapter Four, the economics/personal finances chapter, the dependent variables were coded with respect to which party was incumbent to the seat. The options were vote for the incumbent party, vote for the challenging party, or vote for abstention. For the present chapter, in order to analyze all of the variables that were found to be statistically significant in one cohesive model, a choice had to be made regarding which dependent variable should be used. This researcher decided to use the variable coded with respect to party choice and add a dummy variable to control for which party held the seat.

The decision on which dependent variable to use was a difficult one because of the unique circumstance that comes about from the analyses of economic effects, that being a focus on retrospective evaluations. Because of the need for consistency, a control variable was included in the analysis for this chapter, which indicated which party held the given seat prior to the election (coded 1 for Republican, 0 for Democrat). This variable should be sufficient to control for the role that incumbency plays when dealing with analyses of economics. It is the belief of this researcher that this has no detrimental effect on the balance of the analyses.

To show the impact of the comprehensive model, I have chosen to use the aggregated dataset that includes the data from all three studies. It was made clear in the earlier presentation that the simultaneous choice model is applicable when analyzing individual years and multiple years together. For the purposes of showing the impact that all of the variables have when they are included in one model, it is not necessary to show the results across individual years, the aggregated model is sufficient to present the evidence to the reader.

The table below provides evidence that at least one variable from each of the previously analyzed substantive areas affects electoral behavior in the simultaneous choice model. Though not all variables affect voting for both the Republican and the Democrat with respect to abstention, they affect at least one side of the aspect of voting. The findings clearly show that a complex mix of different factors influences citizens' electoral behavior. This is a particularly important finding because it is possible that variables from one particular substantive area may have exerted an influence to the exclusion of a variable from another substantive area.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Err.	Signif.
Voted Dem			
Attention paid to Elections	-.527	.035	.00
Newspaper Reading	.052	.018	.00
Did not Read about in Dem mag	-.210	.036	.00
Did not Read about in Rep mag	-.079	.031	.01
CQ Prediction	-.185	.041	.00
National Defense	.190	.066	.00
Economics	-.125	.053	.02
Personal Finances	.094	.045	.04
Control for Rep incumbent	.070	.166	.68
Income	.169	.034	.00
Education	.014	.002	.00
Age	.033	.003	.00
Party ID	-.276	.025	.00
1988	.325	.122	.01
1992	.036	.118	.76
Constant	..205	.390	.60
Voted Rep			
Attention paid to Elections	-.495	.037	.00
Newspaper Reading	.033	.018	.06
Did not Read about in Dem mag	-.020	.034	.55
Did not Read about in Rep mag	-.225	.036	.00
CQ Prediction	.157	.043	.00
National Defense	-.098	.067	.14
Economics	-.279	.055	.00
Personal Finances	.054	.047	.25
Control for Rep incumbent	.231	.172	.18
Income	.220	.035	.00
Education	.015	.002	.00
Age	.042	.003	.00
Party ID	.231	.026	.00
1988	.392	.126	.00
1992	.304	.122	.01
Constant	-1.890	.408	.00
Pseudo R²=0.26			N=4177

Table 7.1: The comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

7.1.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

The table below shows the impact of age on the simultaneous choice model. The difference in the likelihood of choosing abstention is pronounced, with a seventeen percentage point differential between the youngest and oldest citizens. As most previous research has shown, younger citizens are far less likely to vote than are older citizens who have more experience with the political system and generally have more at stake in the outcome of the election. With regard to the two-party vote, regardless of age, citizens were more likely to vote Democratic than Republican, a finding that is not surprising given Democratic majorities throughout the timeframe being studied.

	<i>Younger citizens</i>	<i>Mean citizen age</i>	<i>Older citizens</i>
Vote for Dem.	.35	.39	.41
Vote for Rep.	.29	.36	.42
Abstain	.36	.26	.17

Table 7.2: The impact of age on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

There is a substantively significant difference of thirteen percent in the likelihood of abstaining based on level of income, with higher income citizens showing a greater propensity to vote. This is not a surprising finding because those with higher incomes likely have more discretionary time that they can devote to electoral activities. Additionally, these individuals stand to lose more based on policies such as taxation. Those with lower incomes may feel disenfranchised because the government has not provided them with an adequate means to maintain a livelihood. It is not surprising that

those with higher incomes were more likely to vote Republican than those with lower incomes. Republicans benefited from the mobilization effect that income produces. It helps to close the gap, but, at least based on the data used in this study, it does not close the gap enough. This is a noticeable difference from the effect shown with age where both parties gained equally from mobilization.

	<i>Less income</i>	<i>Mean level of income</i>	<i>Higher income</i>
Vote for Dem.	.35	.38	.41
Vote for Rep.	.31	.35	.38
Abstain	.34	.27	.21

Table 7.3: The impact of income on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

With regard to education, it is evident that educated citizens are more likely to vote. Education breeds a sense of social responsibility and a connection to the electoral system. Moreover, it provides one with the analytical skills that are necessary for making an informed electoral decision. Education does not necessarily breed liberalism or conservatism, so it is not likely to create substantial differences in the two-party vote choice. Both candidates gained equally from the mobilization effect of education.

	<i>Less educated</i>	<i>Mean level of educ.</i>	<i>More educated</i>
Vote for Dem.	.35	.38	.41
Vote for Rep.	.31	.35	.38
Abstain	.34	.27	.21

Table 7.4: The impact of education on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregate data.

As one would expect with party identification, there is little substantive difference in the likelihood of abstaining between those who are strong Republicans and those who are strong Democrats. These individuals would be the most likely to participate in an election because of their strong desire to see the candidate from their party win. Independents were slightly more likely to abstain than strong identifiers. Because surveys tend to over-estimate turnout, it is likely that the actual difference is greater. Independents should be more likely to abstain because they lack the strong tie to a party that can provide a motivation to vote. There are differences in the likelihoods with respect to the two-party vote, but this is clearly to be expected.

	<i>Strong Repub.</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Strong Dem</i>
Vote for Dem.	.16	.36	.60
Vote for Rep.	.56	.34	.15
Abstain	.29	.30	.26

Table 7.5: The impact of party identification on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

Throughout this research, evidence has been presented that shows that socio-demographic characteristics, particularly SES impact electoral behavior either when evaluated on their own, or in the context of other variables which are more substantively related to electoral behavior. Similar to previous research on American electoral behavior, including socio-demographic characteristics in the present model provides a valuable way to account for those variables which were not included in the analyses.

Socio-demographic characteristics are often related to many other characteristics or attitudes that might impact electoral behavior but cannot be included in every study.

7.1.2 The economy and personal finances

The table below shows the results with respect to perceptions of the state of the economy. It would appear that good economic circumstances were to the disadvantage of the Republican candidates. These findings are not surprising from one perspective, given that Democrats had a strong incumbency advantage in the Senate throughout the time frame of the study. Democrats should have benefited from the reward of a good economy while Republicans should benefit from the punishing that is a result of negative perceptions of the economy. From another perspective however, they are surprising because Republicans held the White House throughout the time-period of this study and previous research suggests the effect of the economy is focused on the presidential level. This provides substantial evidence that citizens may hold U.S. Senators accountable for the state of the nation's economy.

Negative perceptions of the economy result in higher levels of turnout, a function of anger motivating turnout. This anger benefits Republicans, as we would expect, because they were the out-party in the Senate throughout the time period of the study. The benefit was not enough to give them an advantage over Democrats in terms of the vote but enough to significantly close the difference.

	<i>More negative about the economy</i>	<i>Mean of economic perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about the economy</i>
Vote for Dem.	.37	.38	.39
Vote for Rep.	.38	.34	.31
Abstain	.25	.27	.31

Table 7.6: The impact of perceptions of the economy on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The table below shows the results with respect to perceptions of personal finances. Unlike the results presented earlier in the research, no evidence is found that one's personal finances affects electoral behavior in a substantively significant way when taking into account numerous other variables that could exert an impact. Previous research suggests that voters are not influenced by their personal finances when making their electoral decisions; this research confirms that in the presence of other influences, personal finances generally do not matter. Given the earlier findings however, it would appear that given the right circumstances or the lack of other salient issues, personal finances may exert an influence.

	<i>More negative about personal finances</i>	<i>Mean of personal finances perceptions</i>	<i>More positive about personal finances</i>
Vote for Dem.	.37	.38	.39
Vote for Rep.	.35	.35	.35
Abstain	.28	.27	.26

Table 7.7: The impact of perceptions of personal finances on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

Even with the change in a dependent variable, a clear impact is seen of the economy on electoral behavior even when other important factors are considered. Republicans were clearly disadvantaged in Senate elections, but a focus on a negative economy benefited them because citizens held the incumbent office holder accountable. If citizens would have held the incumbent presidential party accountable, the likelihood of voting for the Republican should have decreased not increased. This provides strong evidence that Senators, like presidents, are held accountable for the economy, something that previous research has not shown.

7.1.3 Policy preferences

The results below support previous research that has shown that the public can differentiate between the political parties on major issues (Petrocik 1994; Popkin 1993).

The table below shows how preferences on defense spending influence the model. In the context of the comprehensive model, preferences on defense spending do not seem to produce a mobilization effect. Instead, the effect is seen with regard to candidate choice. However, clear differences are seen in the two-party vote. Those who favor increases are more likely to vote Republican and those who favor decreases are more likely to vote Democratic. Defense spending may not be an issue that can mobilize voters but it is one that will influence their vote. The results support previous research that has shown that the public can differentiate between the political parties on major issues such as defense spending. (Petrocik 1994; Popkin 1993).

	<i>Increase spending</i>	<i>Spending the same</i>	<i>Decrease spending</i>
Vote for Dem.	.32	.37	.41
Vote for Rep.	.39	.36	.32
Abstain	.29	.28	.27

Table 7.8: The impact of preferences for spending on defense on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

7.1.4 Media effects

It is very clear from the table below that the level of interest citizens have in a campaign exerts a significant impact on the likelihood that they will participate in the electoral process. Those who express a high level of interest in the political campaigns have only a fifteen percent likelihood of choosing abstention over a two-party candidate. Those who do not express much interest in a political campaign have a fifty percent likelihood of abstaining. Those who were interested were overall, more likely to vote for a Democrat than a Republican, by six percent. This difference is probably best explained by the advantage that Democrats had in Senate elections throughout the time period of the study due to incumbency.

	<i>Very interested</i>	<i>Somewhat interested</i>	<i>Not much</i>
Vote for Dem.	.45	.37	.26
Vote for Rep.	.40	.34	.26
Abstain	.15	.29	.49

Table 7.9: The impact of level of attention paid to the campaign on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The multivariate model shows a statistically significant relationship exists between the number of days citizens read the paper and their electoral behavior. However, when the predicted likelihoods are evaluated in order to ascertain the substantive effect of the variable there is little substantive difference. Regardless of how often one claims to read the paper, there is an approximately twenty-eight percent likelihood that one will vote for abstention. Those who read papers were only marginally more likely to vote for the Democrat than the Republican

	<i>Low frequency</i>	<i>Average frequency</i>	<i>High frequency</i>
Vote for Dem.	.36	.38	.40
Vote for Rep.	.35	.35	.35
Abstain	.29	.27	.26

Table 7.10: The impact of the number of days citizens report reading the newspaper on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model.

The following two tables pertaining to exposure to the candidates via magazines are best evaluated together. If one is exposed to either of the candidates in a magazine there is at least a seven percent greater likelihood that one will choose to vote for a two-party candidate vice abstention. Some of the recent findings on media exposure suggest that exposure to a candidate—at least thru negative television advertising—can decrease overall levels of turnout. In the case of this research, the finding is that exposure increases levels of turnout. It is particularly interesting to note that exposure to the Democrat through a magazine has a pronounced effect on voter behavior. Those who were not exposed to the Democrat were overwhelmingly more likely to vote for the

Republican than the Democrat. Conversely, those who were exposed to the Democrat were modestly more likely to vote for the Democrat than the Republican. The mobilization effect of reading about a Democrat has a clear benefit to Democratic candidates. Republicans benefited when citizens read about them in magazines but the benefit was not enough to make it more likely that a vote would be cast for them instead of the Democrat.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.39	.26
Vote for Rep.	.35	.41
Abstain	.26	.33

Table 7.11: The impact of having read about the Democratic candidate in a magazine on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Vote for Dem.	.38	.41
Vote for Rep.	.36	.25
Abstain	.26	.35

Table 7.12: The impact of having read about the Republican candidate in a magazine on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

The effect of pre-election predictions does not manifest itself with respect to the likelihood of turning out. The effect is limited to exerting an influence on the likelihood of casting a two-party vote. The results show a clear relationship between the classification of the state and the likelihood that an individual citizen will cast a vote for the particular party that is favored.

	<i>Safe Democrat</i>	<i>No clear favorite</i>	<i>Safe Republican</i>
Vote for Dem.	.51	.36	.23
Vote for Rep.	.22	.35	.49
Abstain	.26	.29	.28

Table 7.13: The impact of the CQ pre-election prediction on the comprehensive version of the simultaneous choice model for the aggregated data.

7.2 Comprehensive analysis summary and implications

The results above show that the simultaneous choice model is viable for explaining and predicting electoral behavior. As one would expect, the impact of the variables is not equally distributed. In some cases, there is no evidence that the variables impact levels of turnout. In other cases, there is no clear impact on which candidate is chosen. However, the model does show what impacts elections in general and provides a framework for future applications. The predictive value of the simultaneous choice model has been demonstrated.

If one were to take the tables presented in the previous section as a whole, it would be possible to see which variables exert the greatest impact on electoral outcomes. This research continues to show what we have known since *The American Voter*, that party identification is the greatest influence on how a citizen will vote. Following party identification, in order of relative importance, interest in the campaign, pre-election predictions, age, socio-economic status, exposure to the media, preferences on defense spending, and perceptions of the economy impact electoral behavior. While the data suggest an ordering of importance it is important to consider which factors can be most

easily manipulated or used by campaigns when trying to understand mobilization and net electoral effects. Campaigns have the greatest ability to influence citizens' overall exposure and directing which specific messages they will hear. Increased advertising budgets should produce results with respect to citizen familiarity with candidates and thereby a greater propensity to vote for the candidate. Campaigns however, also have the ability to influence the message so that a focus on economics or defense spending may produce higher levels of voting for their candidates. It is important to recall that part of what this research is showing is that the simultaneous choice model is a viable means to understand how campaigns may mobilize citizens, so we must take into account what they have the ability to influence in order to affect aggregate electoral outcomes since they obviously cannot influence something like party identification.

Elections are decided by turnout and candidate choices. The evidence presented above shows that it is not enough to simply look at one aspect of electoral behavior in isolation. There are too many instances where there are clear differences in electoral behavior based on both turnout and two-party choice. When citizens choose abstention more than thirty percent of the time, it has an effect on electoral outcomes that cannot be ignored. By putting turnout in the same equations as the two-party vote decision the implication of varying levels of turnout becomes apparent.

Campaigns make a concerted effort to mobilize citizens to vote. It is important to understand how they can tailor their mobilization efforts to influence the thirty percent of the population that wants to abstain in order to benefit the candidate. The analyses presented above show where the focus needs to be for any particular campaign to benefit from mobilization. Further research may indicate other variables that would be

influential for candidates to use as well. This cannot be directly done with the traditional models. When citizens view abstention as a legitimate third choice, researchers must understand what will motivate them to choose a candidate vice the third choice of abstention.

7.3 The role of turnout

This research provided continued evidence that turnout in Senate elections is likely to be lower in off-year elections than it is in on-year elections. Evidence presented throughout the research shows that citizens had lower likelihoods of turning out in 1990 than they did in the other two election years. Even though Senate elections are high profile, turnout will likely be higher when there is a Presidential election in the same year. Even with that consideration, the research has shown that Senate elections are impacted by the mobilization of voters.

Throughout the research, it was also shown that abstention would earn a strong plurality of the vote were it a candidate. The tables presented show that abstention was regularly being selected by thirty percent of those surveyed. In reality, these numbers are considerably higher, because abstention is regularly under-estimated by surveys. When candidates are only winning thirty-five percent of the vote, and abstention is winning close to thirty percent it becomes readily apparent that increased levels of turnout can have drastic impacts on electoral outcomes.

Political campaigns understand the role that turnout can play in influencing an election. That is why this research is so important. It is very easy in the context of the simultaneous choice model to determine which candidate stands to benefit from higher

levels of turnout. Additionally, it can be determined what factors should be focused on in order to obtain that higher level of turnout for the desired candidate. If campaigns exploit these factors, aggregate electoral outcomes will be affected. The concept is so easy that campaigns cannot ignore it. Campaigns know citizens can choose to abstain and know that citizens view this as a legitimate option when they are determining their electoral decision. The use of the simultaneous choice model will allow a campaign to easily determine factors they should focus on to achieve the benefit of increased levels of turnout.

7.4 Avenues for future research

Though the research put forth here presents important findings, it poses more questions which must be answered through future research. The first thing future research must do is provide more data points for analysis. The data on which this research is based is taken from three consecutive Senate elections between 1988 and 1992. All of these elections took place while Democrats were in control of both houses of Congress and a Republican was President, a situation that is different from today. It is possible that the strategies Democrats use when they are the minority are quite different than the ones Republicans use when they are the minority. The focus on different issues and the motivation to maintain office vice gain office could produce differences that are manifested in electoral behavior. More importantly however, is that there was insufficient data available to accurately capture the difference in behavior between on-year and off-year elections. We have long presumed that Senate races are impacted by the Presidential race. While the research showed effects during Presidential and non-

Presidential election years, more data points are required to be confident that these impacts can truly be attributable to Senate races and are not an artifact of Presidential races.

Future research would also benefit from different question wordings, particularly with regard to policy preferences. It would have been preferred to use question wording that allowed for answers on a Likert scale on which citizens could express which party's policies they prefer. Asking about preferences for a given party's policies would have given a more direct connection between citizens' preferences and the two-party vote.

For the media section, it is certainly a necessity to include variables that deal with exposure to candidates via the Internet. The Internet has become a central source for information about everything that goes on in the world, including Senate elections. The more often citizens access news sites on the Internet, the more likely they are to be exposed to information about campaigns. The impact of the Internet should be bigger than the impact of magazines and newspapers that was presented in the present research.

For the media section, it would have also been useful to find out if citizens were exposed to campaign advertising on television. The prevalence of campaign advertising and the importance of the effects of exposure to it that have been shown in the media research would make the inclusion of an exposure variable very important for future research.

7.5 Parting thoughts

The outcomes of races for the U.S. Senate have important implications for public policy in the United States. Given this, it is surprising that they have been studied so

little, particularly if one considers the vast research on House and Presidential elections. The present research has shown that Senate elections are ripe for analysis and can show important aspects of what motivates American electoral behavior. The field's research program must include more studies of Senate elections in the future.

The evidence put forth here shows why this researcher believes the simultaneous choice model is viable for explaining electoral behavior in Senate elections. It is the hope of this author that future researchers will revisit this model with new data and produce further evidence in support of this theory of voting. The simultaneous choice model has already been shown in previous research to be a good way of conceptualizing voting in Presidential elections, now in this first effort, it has been shown that it is a viable model for Senate elections.

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