Elections: The Politics of the Permanent Campaign: Presidential Travel and the Electoral College, 1977-2004

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This article undertakes an empirical assessment of a key element of the permanent campaign for the presidency by systematically examining presidential travel from 1977 through 2004. I find that presidential travel does target large, competitive states, and that such strategic targeting has increased over time, supporting the notion that the permanent campaign is on the rise. However, substantial differences between reelection and other years, as well as measures of the breadth of presidential travel and proportional attention to the states, indicate that electoral concerns do not thoroughly permeate patterns of presidential activity throughout a president's years in office, as the logic of the permanent campaign would suggest.

Bill Clinton made headlines on December 8, 2000, when, with a mere six weeks remaining in his second presidential term, he set foot on Nebraskan soil for the first time in his presidency. With this trip, he had at long last visited all of the fifty states that he had led for the previous eight years. Contemporaneous accounts attributed his apparent neglect of Nebraska to raw political calculations; as a state with few electoral votes that Clinton failed to carry in both 1992 and 1996, it offered little rationale for presidential attention (Eggen 2000; Lacey 2000).

The trip was notable for the destination's status as a long-neglected state, but it was otherwise a fairly typical presidential journey. Clinton held three events that day, beginning with a morning speech on foreign policy at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, in the center of the state. He then flew to eastern Nebraska, where in the early afternoon he spoke to the community at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue before attending a fundraiser for the Nebraska Democratic party in nearby Omaha (*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States 2000*).

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Clinton's eleventh-hour visit to Nebraska raises an important question: how do electoral incentives relate to presidential attention? In recent years, a good amount of scholarly and journalistic attention has focused on what has been dubbed a permanent campaign for the presidency. According to this view of presidential governance, "the line between campaigning and governing has all but disappeared, with campaigning increasingly dominant" (Ornstein and Mann 2000, vii), and the techniques and strategies of presidential campaigning are applied throughout the course of a president's term.

Viewing presidential actions through the lens of the permanent campaign leads one to ascribe cynical, election-related motivations to much of what presidents do. From this point of view, Clinton's neglect of Nebraska was no accident, but rather the result of strategic political choices. It is certainly no surprise to say that presidents take actions that are political in nature. But to what extent can we say a permanent campaign for the presidency does or does not exist? How do we empirically and systematically assess the permanent campaign? What patterns of presidential actions would we expect to see if a permanent campaign did exist? If, following the logic that David Mayhew (1974) applies to members of Congress, we assume that presidents are single-minded seekers of reelection, strategic presidents, as rational actors, would be expected to favor key states in ways that reflect the institutional incentives of the Electoral College in order to maximize their chances of reelection.[1] In this article, I undertake an empirical assessment of a key element of the permanent campaign by examining the dynamics of presidential travel from 1977 through 2004 to evaluate systematically presidential attention to key electoral states.

Central Questions

I seek to address three central questions. First, to what extent is there a permanent campaign for the presidency? Ornstein and Mann (2000) argue that little remains of the line between campaigning and governing. Yet much political science work operates under an opposing assumption that presidential governance is substantively different from campaigning. One typical example is Samuel Kernell, who, in his study of presidents "going public," justifies studying speeches over a president's first three years but not the fourth by asserting, "To eliminate public activities inspired by concerns of reelection rather than governing, only the first three years have been tabulated" (1997, 113). Can we legitimately assume that presidential activities in the first three years of a president's term are inspired by governing but not reelection? The logic of the permanent campaign would say that the answer is no.

1. As Mayhew explains, assuming that politicians are single-minded seekers of reelection "necessarily does some violence to the facts" (1974, 13). A number of motivations explain certain elements of presidential resource allocation. Presidents travel to certain states to advance their own reelection interests, to raise funds, to support their fellow party members, to exert pressure on recalcitrant legislators, to promote their policy agenda or achievements in a setting outside the nation's capital, to attend ceremonial events, to respond to natural disasters or other crises, to influence public opinion, or simply to get out of Washington. Although presidents engage in many more activities than the pursuit of reelection, the question remains whether this simplistic assumption explains well a substantial portion of presidential actions.

Second, which states benefit in practice from the Electoral College? Do Electoral College incentives lead to disproportionate attention to any certain class of states throughout a president's term in office? Are small states, which have Electoral College votes in numbers disproportionate to their population, advantaged?[2] Or does the system benefit the large states,[3] which have fewer Electoral College votes per person, but which arguably play a much greater role in presidential elections due to the large number of Electoral College votes they offer? Much of this work has focused on questions of democratic theory, unequal weighting of voting strength, partisan bias, and implications for candidate attention in presidential elections (Edwards 2004; Goux and Hopkins 2006; Polsby 1964, 2002; Polsby and Wildavsky 2004; Rakove 2004; Yunker and Longley 1972). Although the Electoral College is often indicted for being unfair in terms of democratic theory, what are its practical consequences? Which states do presidents consistently and disproportionately favor and neglect? Scholars have examined the practical effects of equal representation in the Senate (Lee and Oppenheimer 1999). Are there consequences of the unequal weighting of states in the Electoral College that are in evidence throughout a president's term?

Third, how do trends in presidential travel shed light on the evolving nature of the presidency? Have presidents increased their strategic political targeting over time? A great deal of ink has been spilled about the political nature of the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Are they really that different from presidents who have preceded them? If this systematic assessment of presidential actions does reveal changes in recent presidencies, can these developments be seen as enduring trends that represent an evolution of the presidency?

The Permanent Campaign

Pat Caddell, a top aide and pollster to then President-elect Jimmy Carter, is credited with first articulating the concept of the permanent campaign in a 1976 transition memo, in which he declared that "[i]t is my thesis that governing with public approval requires a continuing political campaign" (Klein 2005). The term was popularized by Sidney Blumenthal's 1980 book, *The Permanent Campaign: Inside the World of Elite Political Operatives*, and has taken on a broader meaning which encompasses a range of activities for electoral ends that includes employing the techniques and strategies of campaigning throughout a president's term.

Empirically assessing the permanent campaign raises questions about presidential leadership and representation. Assuming that presidents behave as though they were single-minded seekers of reelection implies that, in some respects, at least during a

2. As each state is allocated two Electoral College votes regardless of population, plus an additional number of Electoral College votes equal to the state's number of seats in the House of Representatives, the ratio of the number of Electoral College votes to population is larger for the less populous states than for the more populous states, giving the smaller states more power in the Electoral College than their population alone would merit.

3. In this study, describing states as large or small always refers to the states' population, not geographic size.

president's first term, one would not expect to observe presidents governing as though they represent the people of the nation at large. Rather, key electoral states would receive disproportionate favor as presidents respond to the institutional incentives of the Electoral College in order to maximize their chances of reelection. This assumption stands in sharp contrast with assertions made by presidents dating back to Andrew Jackson, who have publicly laid claim to the mantle of national leadership, declaring that they, in stark contrast with the Congress, represent the national interest, instead of particularistic local and regional concerns (Dahl 2003).

Many scholars, particularly in studies of pork barrel politics, have echoed Jackson's claim, arguing that the president has a universal constituency, in contrast with members of Congress, who favor their respective regions (Carter and Schap 1987; Dearden and Husted 1990; Fitts and Inman 1992; Inman 1993; Lohmann and O'Halloran 1994). According to their logic, the president makes decisions with the national interest in mind. Nolan McCarty (2000) offers a lonely counterpoint to these arguments, contending that presidents do indeed use policy decisions to favor certain parts of the country over others in pursuit of political goals.

In spite of the conventional wisdom that presidents are quite concerned with their own electoral fortunes, research on the presidency rarely addresses campaigns, and the literature on campaigns rarely looks at what presidents do throughout their terms to advance their own reelection. Although some of the few efforts that do so focus on elements such as White House staffing (Tenpas 2000), polling (Bowman 2000), shaping policy messages (Loomis 2000), and disaster declarations (Reeves 2005), there has been no comprehensive study of the geographic distribution of presidential travel. Roderick Hart (1987), in his study of presidential communication from 1945 through 1985, conducted a brief analysis of the geography of presidential travel. Kathryn Dunn Tenpas (1997, 2003) has examined many aspects of how sitting presidents gear up for their reelection bid, and both Kernell (1997) and Lyn Ragsdale (1998) have analyzed general trends in presidential travel, but none of these scholars studied how patterns of presidential resource allocation map to the Electoral College. Scholars who have investigated how the incentives of the Electoral College structure the allocation of campaign resources (Althaus, Nardulli, and Shaw 2002; Bartels 1985; Brams and Davis 1974; Colantoni, Levesque, and Ordeshook 1975) provide models and points of comparison as I apply many of the same questions that have been asked about presidential campaigns to presidential governance.

Few studies have attempted to examine empirically the extent to which electoral incentives relate to the ways sitting presidents govern. One notable exception is Scott James's historical study of Democratic regulatory policy and Electoral College incentives (2000), in which he argued that geographic electoral incentives were tightly tied to the regulatory policies of Democratic presidents from 1884 through 1936. Another is Richard Powell's analysis of the impact of individual, institutional, and contextual factors on trends in presidential speechmaking and travel from 1961 through 1994, with a focus on the relationship between presidential activity and the bargaining setting in Congress (1997). In this article, I build upon these works in an attempt to elucidate further the relationship between electoral incentives and presidential actions.

Expectations about Strategic Presidential Travel

If presidents behave as though they are single-minded seekers of reelection, their patterns of travel should favor populous, electorally competitive states. Additionally, presidents should devote disproportionate attention to the largest states that offer the greatest electoral payoffs, due to the unit rule under which the winner of a state garners all of the state's Electoral College votes.[4]

I expect substantial temporal, as well as geographic, variation. The logic of the permanent campaign suggests both change and continuity within presidential terms. Although reelection years involve more presidential attention to the states than do other years of a president's term, if electoral concerns permeate a president's term, one would expect to see targeting of key electoral states throughout a president's term in office. Presidents should behave differently during their first term than in their second, when reelection is no longer a priority.

Additionally, I hypothesize that, over time, as the powers of the presidency have expanded and campaigning has become more professionalized, presidents and their staffs have become more efficient in targeting their efforts and resources at electorally key states. Last, I anticipate that we will see substantial variation by presidency, according to each individual's degree of pursuit of reelection.

Data

In order to measure presidential travel, I constructed a data set of presidential events outside of Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia from 1977 through 2004 by examining the *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*. This study covers a twenty-eight-year period that encompasses five presidencies—those of Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and the first term of George W. Bush. Maryland and Virginia are excluded because presidents hold many events in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC that are only a few miles from the White House and are not comparable to other types of presidential travel.[5]

The resulting data set, in which the unit of analysis is a state-year, has 1,344 cases. The average number of events held in a state in a given year over the twenty-eight-year period is 2.6, with a standard deviation of 4.6. The greatest number of presidential events any state hosted in a year was the 47 events that Bill Clinton held in his and his wife's new home state of New York in 2000. Over the twenty-eight-year period, presidents collectively held 3,545 public events in the states.

In the analysis that follows, I first examine patterns of presidential public events, and then address the question of the proportionality of presidential attention. I next focus

4. Nebraska and Maine are the only states that do not employ the unit rule; both allocate two Electoral College votes to the statewide winner and one Electoral College vote to the winner of each congressional district.

5. Events at presidential homes that served as a second White House were not coded. As presidents often met with foreign leaders there or conducted other affairs of state, events there seem best categorized as an extension of their Washington activity.

TABLE 1
Non-DC Area Presidential Public Events by President and Year of Term, 1977-2004

	Year of Term				
President	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*Total*
Carter	39	91	72	182	384
Reagan (first term)	30	96	72	147	345
Reagan (second term)	41	76	51	69	237
G. H. W. Bush	84	127	95	293	599
Clinton (first term)	105	143	118	264	630
Clinton (second term)	119	140	146	219	624
G. W. Bush	108	204	122	292	726
Total	526	877	676	1466	3545

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*.

on presidential first terms to analyze whether election year strategies are a continuation of or a departure from strategic behavior earlier in a president's term. I then turn to multivariate regression analysis to assess further the relationships between electoral dynamics and presidential travel.

The Contours of Presidential Travel

A president's time is perhaps his scarcest resource. When a president chooses to allocate that resource by leaving Washington, DC to travel around the country he, and someday she, leads in order to meet the people he represents, his decision to go to a specific place and not others can reveal a great deal about his strategic priorities. The logic of the permanent campaign implies that the strategic targeting of key electoral states should play a substantial role in decisions about where and how often a president travels throughout his term in office.

Presidents have increased their levels of public events outside of Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia[6] in the twenty-eight years from Jimmy Carter's inauguration in 1977 through the end of George W. Bush's first term in 2004, as Table 1 illustrates. The rise in events is relatively steady over time, with the important exception of Ronald Reagan, who registered the lowest levels of public events outside of the nation's capital of the five presidents studied, most likely due, at least in part, to his relatively advanced age when he assumed the presidency and his lengthy recovery from the attempt on his life in 1981. The overall trend is one of increasing presidential travel, with George W. Bush's total number of events almost double that of Jimmy Carter a quarter-century earlier.

The patterns of events within a president's first term are consistent for each of the five presidents in this study. The greatest numbers of presidential events in the states take place in the reelection year, followed by the second year, in which presidents frequently

6. As this study focuses exclusively on events outside of Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia, the term "public presidential events" will be used for such events.

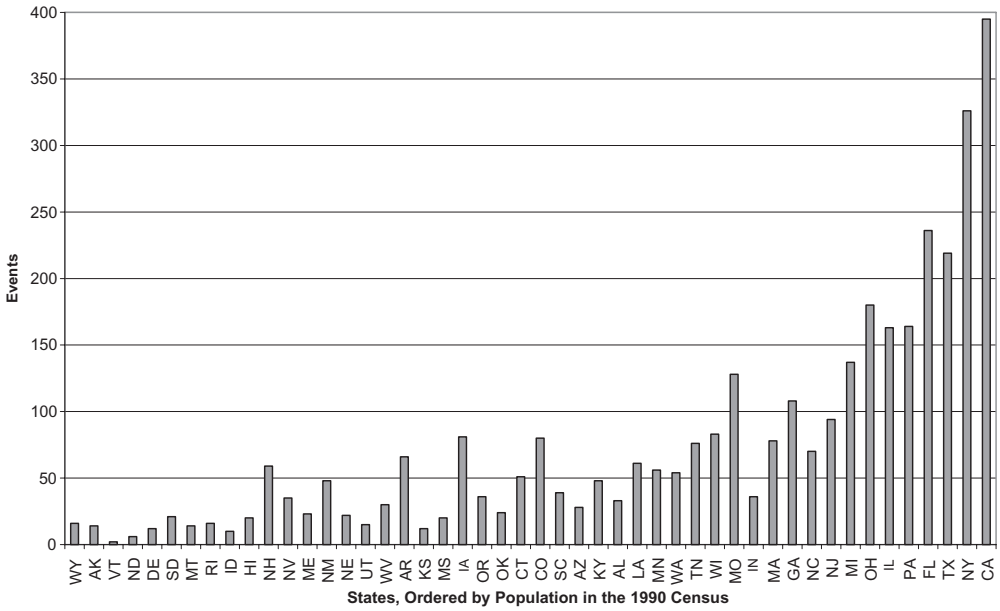

FIGURE 1. Presidential Public Events by State, Totals 1977-2004.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; United States Census (1990).

campaign and raise money for their copartisans in the midterm elections, then the third year, and finally the first year. The second terms of the two presidents in the study who served two terms contrast dramatically. Whereas Clinton maintained his high levels of events outside of the Washington area throughout his second term, Reagan's already lower levels declined.

We turn to the geographic distribution of presidential travel. Which states do presidents visit most and least? Figure 1 depicts the total number of presidential public events in each of the forty-eight states in this study from 1977 through 2004. The states are listed from left to right in order of their population in the 1990 Census, which fell at the midpoint of this study.

The clear trend is a relationship between the number of events in a state and its population, and thus its electoral size. Simply put, large states tend to get more attention from the president. Vermont, the third least-populated state, is the least-visited state, with just 2 presidential public events over twenty-eight years, while California, the most populous state in the union, is the most visited, with 395 events. Presidents travel more often to states where greater numbers of people live, which is a perfectly reasonable tendency. But is the presidential attention that large states receive disproportionate?

The Most Disproportionately Favored and Neglected States

To address the question of whether presidential attention to the states is disproportionate, I examine the number of presidential public events each state hosts per

1,000,000 residents. This per capita measure allows us to see which states receive more and less attention than their population alone would predict and address the questions of which states truly benefit from the Electoral College in terms of presidential attention and whether presidential activity in election years resembles or differs sharply from the rest of a president's term.

Figure 2 depicts the total number of events per 1,000,000 people in each state from 1977 through 2004. The states are listed in order of their population in the 1990 Census. The horizontal line indicates that each state would have received a total of 17.1 events per 1,000,000 people if presidential events had been distributed in a manner proportional to population. States that fall above the line received disproportionately much attention, and those falling below the line received disproportionately little attention, assuming that presidential attention should be distributed in proportion to a state's population.

The most visually striking finding is that very few populous states are disproportionately favored. Indeed, of the twenty-three largest states, only four of them fall above the line of equal distribution: Missouri, Georgia, Florida, and New York. Of those four, Georgia and New York are only marginally above the 17.1 events per capita they were expected to receive. Most of the large states receive fewer presidential events per capita than they would if presidential attention were distributed in proportion to population.

The ten most disproportionately neglected states are, in order from the least visited states upward, Vermont, Kansas, Indiana, Arizona, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Utah, North Dakota, and North Carolina. These ten states tend to be small, averaging

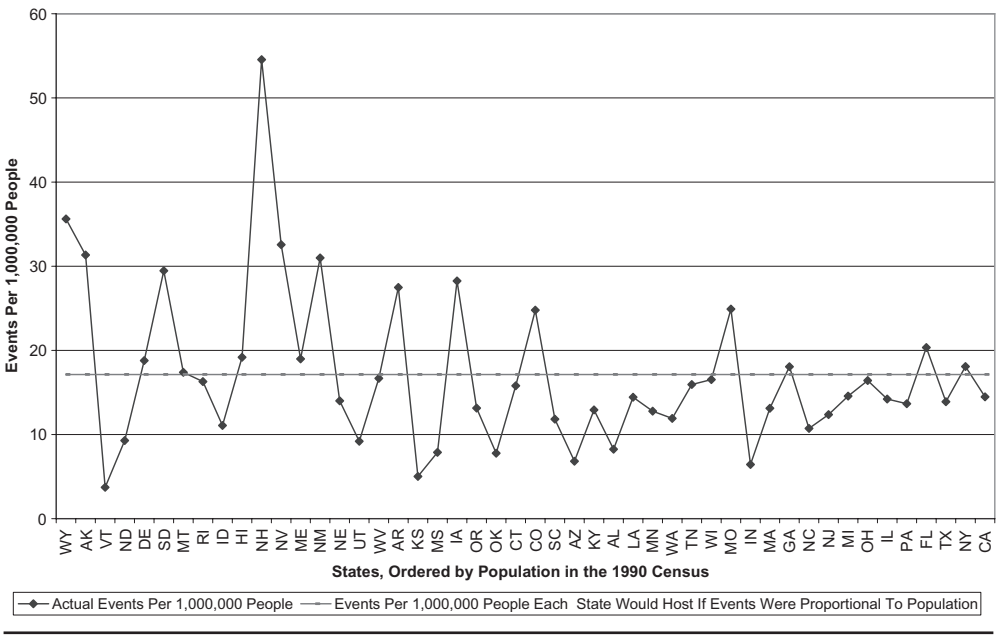

FIGURE 2. Presidential Public Events per 1,000,000 People by State, 1977-2004.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; United States Census (1970, 1980, 1990, 2000).

7.4 Electoral College votes. The ten most disproportionately favored states, in order from the most visited downward, are New Hampshire, Wyoming, Nevada, Alaska, New Mexico, South Dakota, Iowa, Arkansas, Missouri, and Colorado. These states also tend to be small, with an average of 5.5 Electoral College votes. New Hampshire towers above the rest, likely a result of its prominent role in the presidential nominating process and its status as a competitive state in recent general elections. One need do no more than contrast it with the least proportionally favored state, Vermont, its slightly less populous neighbor and inverted geographic twin, to suggest that electoral dynamics have propelled New Hampshire to the forefront of presidents' political consciousness. Similarly, Iowa would likely not be near the top of this list without its quadrennial presidential nominating caucus, as well as its status as an oft-contested state in presidential elections.

Many of the other states on this list of the most disproportionately favored did not receive much absolute presidential attention, but their small population catapulted them to the top of the ranks of states in terms of per capita attention. Wyoming, for example, hosted only sixteen presidential public events throughout the twenty-eight years of this study. But due to its smallest-in-the-nation population, it ranks second in terms of disproportionate attention per capita. Alaska often hosts presidents on stopovers as they travel to and from Asia, but rarely sees other presidential attention. Alaska, South Dakota, and Nevada are also small states that do not receive much absolute attention but do benefit on a per capita basis. Arkansas likely saw disproportionate attention due to its status as Bill Clinton's home state. Colorado is home to Denver, the largest city in the mountain West, and New Mexico and Missouri have likely been the subject of recent presidential attention due to their status as battleground states, having been won or lost by, on average, 7.5 percent and 6.2 percent in the five presidential elections preceding the first terms in this study.

Patterns of disproportionate presidential attention to the states vary in important ways within presidential terms. Figures 3 and 4 depict the average numbers of presidential events per 1,000,000 people in each state in years in which the incumbent president is not and is running for reelection. Figure 4 displays per capita events in 1980, 1984, 1992, 1996, and 2004, while Figure 3 represents patterns of travel in all other years from 1977 through 2004.

Although in the aggregate, as shown in Figure 2, small states are disproportionately visited whereas large states are not, Figures 3 and 4, taken together, illustrate that another key difference can be summed up as a tale of two types of years—reelection years and all other years. In non-reelection years, when less travel takes places, small states are disproportionately visited, though the deviations from proportional visitation are relatively small. Of the twenty-three most populous states, only four receive disproportionate attention.

In presidential reelection years, however, the story is quite different, with greater disproportionate attention to key electoral states, small and large. With the exceptions of Wyoming and Alaska, which have high values mostly due to their very small populations, the other states that receive substantial disproportionate attention all are familiar players in recent presidential elections: New Hampshire, New Mexico, Iowa, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio, and Florida.

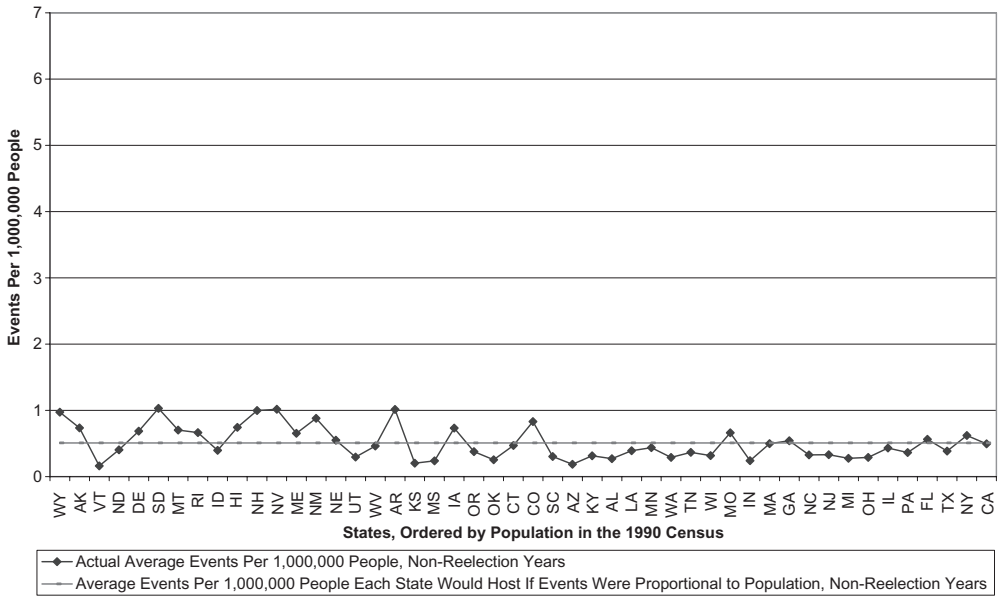

FIGURE 3. Non-Reelection Years: Average Presidential Public Events per 1,000,000 People by State, 1977-2004.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; United States Census (1970, 1980, 1990, 2000).

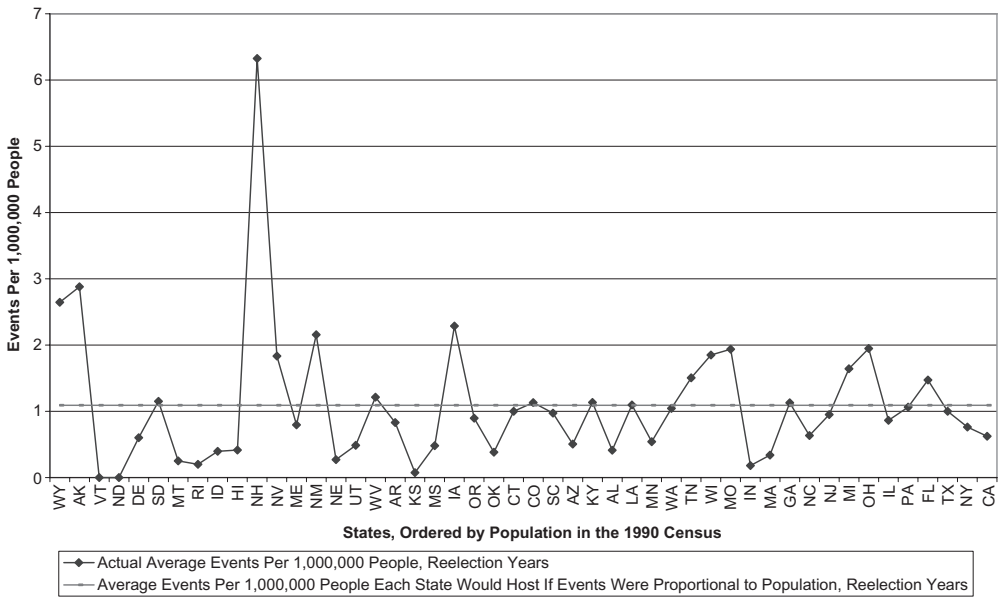

FIGURE 4. Reelection Years: Average Presidential Public Events per 1,000,000 People by State, 1977-2004.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; United States Census (1970, 1980, 1990, 2000).

We have seen that in the aggregate, the smallest states host disproportionate numbers of presidential events per capita. But we have also observed that presidential reelection years differ from non-reelection years not only in their volume of travel but in their disproportionate emphasis on certain states. In reelection years, disproportionate attention is given to certain states, both small and large.

To better understand questions of disproportionate presidential attention, we turn from measures of presidential events per capita in the aggregate to events in specific states in specific years. Table 2 lists the most disproportionately favored states in specific years from 1977 through 2004. These data were calculated by determining how many events each state would have received each year if events were proportional to its population, and then subtracting this number from the actual amount of events in a state to yield the difference between actual and expected events. This table lists the states that hosted presidential events more than two standard deviations above the predicted number of events.[7]

The list of disproportionately favored states consists almost entirely of sizeable states—the average number of Electoral College votes of the states on this list is 21.1—and key primary states in presidential election years. Of the forty-six states on this list, thirty-seven are in years of presidential elections, four are in midterm election years, and only five are in the first or third years of a term. Later presidents dominate this list; whereas only 10.9 percent of the states fall during Jimmy Carter's one term, and only 2.2 percent of the states are from Ronald Reagan's eight years in office, the percentages for George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush are 28.3 percent, 34.8 percent, and 23.9 percent, respectively, suggesting that later presidents disproportionately targeted key states to a greater degree than did their predecessors.

This examination of proportional presidential attention has revealed three important findings. First, in the aggregate, small states receive disproportionate attention per capita while large states do not. Second, patterns of emphasis are distinct in presidential reelection years, when presidents disproportionately favor certain large and small states that appear on the map of perennially competitive states in the general election, as well as key states in the nominating process. Third, whereas large states in the aggregate are not disproportionately favored, in specific years, large states in presidential election years stand out as receiving the most presidential attention above what their population alone would predict if attention were proportional.

Taken together, this analysis indicates that while large states may have a privileged place in presidential election strategies, it is the small states that receive disproportional attention in the aggregate. And in spite of the logic of the permanent campaign that suggests targeting of key electoral states throughout a president's term, patterns of strategic emphasis on the states in reelection years stand apart from the dynamics of presidential attention in other years.

7. As the standard deviation was 3.56, states more than 7.12 events above the expected level are included.

TABLE 2
The Most Disproportionately Favored States: States that Received Presidential Public Events More Than Two Standard Deviations Above the Predicted Number of Events, 1977-2004

State	*Year*	*President*	*Actual Events in the State*	*Expected Events in the State, Proportional to Population*	*Difference between Actual and Expected Events*	*Electoral College Votes*
New York	2000	Clinton	47	9.99	37.01	33
Ohio	2004	G. W. Bush	38	6.30	31.70	20
California	2000	Clinton	46	16.52	29.48	54
Florida	2004	G. W. Bush	32	8.87	23.13	27
Michigan	1992	G. H. W. Bush	28	5.16	22.84	18
Wisconsin	2004	G. W. Bush	25	2.98	22.02	10
Pennsylvania	2004	G. W. Bush	27	6.82	20.18	21
Ohio	1992	G. H. W. Bush	25	6.02	18.98	21
Texas	1992	G. H. W. Bush	27	9.43	17.57	32
Florida	1980	Carter	20	3.77	16.23	17
New York	1998	Clinton	26	9.99	16.01	33
Iowa	2004	G. W. Bush	17	1.62	15.38	7
New York	1980	Carter	25	10.13	14.87	41
New Hampshire	1992	G. H. W. Bush	15	0.62	14.38	4
Missouri	1992	G. H. W. Bush	15	2.84	12.16	11
New York	1999	Clinton	22	9.99	12.01	33
California	1990	G. H. W. Bush	25	13.14	11.86	47
Michigan	2004	G. W. Bush	17	5.52	11.48	17
Georgia	1992	G. H. W. Bush	15	3.60	11.40	13
New Hampshire	1996	Clinton	12	0.62	11.38	4
Missouri	2004	G. W. Bush	14	3.11	10.89	11
Texas	1980	Carter	17	6.22	10.78	26
Arkansas	1999	Clinton	12	1.31	10.69	6
California	1996	Clinton	27	16.52	10.48	54
New York	1997	Clinton	20	9.99	10.01	33
Ohio	1996	Clinton	16	6.02	9.98	21
California	1998	Clinton	26	16.52	9.48	54
Tennessee	1996	Clinton	12	2.71	9.29	11
Wisconsin	1992	G. H. W. Bush	12	2.72	9.28	11
Ohio	1980	Carter	15	5.92	9.08	25
New Mexico	2004	G. W. Bush	10	1.01	8.99	5
Arkansas	1995	Clinton	10	1.31	8.69	6
Iowa	2002	G. W. Bush	10	1.62	8.38	7
New Hampshire	2004	G. W. Bush	9	0.69	8.31	4
Washington	1996	Clinton	11	2.70	8.30	11
Tennessee	1992	G. H. W. Bush	11	2.71	8.29	11
Minnesota	2004	G. W. Bush	11	2.73	8.27	10
Michigan	1996	Clinton	13	5.16	7.84	18
Florida	1992	G. H. W. Bush	15	7.18	7.82	25
Florida	1996	Clinton	15	7.18	7.82	25
New Jersey	1992	G. H. W. Bush	12	4.29	7.71	15
Louisiana	1996	Clinton	10	2.34	7.66	9
Illinois	1984	Reagan	14	6.35	7.65	24
California	1992	G. H. W. Bush	24	16.52	7.48	54
Iowa	1979	Carter	9	1.57	7.43	8
Pennsylvania	1992	G. H. W. Bush	14	6.60	7.40	23

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; United States Census (1970, 1980, 1990, 2000); *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*.

Ramping up to Reelection: Presidential First-Term Travel

We have established that the smallest states receive disproportional attention in the aggregate, but that there are marked differences between non-reelection years and reelection years, in which certain large states are favored. We now turn to a more in-depth analysis of presidential first-term travel to examine the breadth of presidential travel, the role of electoral competitiveness, and the extent to which election year strategies reflect a continuation of or a break from patterns of emphasis throughout the rest of a president's term.

From 1977 through 2004, the breadth of presidential travel has expanded substantially. Table 3 details the number of states visited by each president in each year of his first term, and shows that later presidents traveled much more broadly than earlier presidents. With increased total travel has come increased breadth of travel. Jimmy Carter, after a limited scope of travel in his first year, visited a close-to-equal number of states in each of the next three years. Ronald Reagan had a low total of states visited in the first year of his term, much of which he spent recovering from a March 1981 assassination attempt, then visited twenty-five states in both his second and third years, before traveling to thirty-one states in his reelection year. George H. W. Bush's scope of travel was relatively consistent over his four years in office, with slight increases in his second and fourth years. Bill Clinton visited thirty states in each of his first two years, dropped down to twenty-five states in his third year, and had the broadest range of travel of any of these presidents in his reelection year, when he visited forty states. George W. Bush, like his father, traveled to a relatively consistent number of states throughout each year of his first term.

Over time, breadth of travel has grown, both in each corresponding year of a president's first term and on average, rising from 25.25 states for Jimmy Carter to 34.25 for George W. Bush. President Clinton and both Presidents Bush held public events in over 31 states per year, on average, with the current office holder leading the way. In spite of much talk about the targeting of key states, with expanding presidential travel has come expanded breadth of presidential travel as well.

We now turn to the extent to which presidents focus on states marginally won or lost in the prior presidential election. Table 4 displays the percentage of first-term presidential

TABLE 3
Breadth of Presidential Travel: Number of States Visited, by President and Year of First Term, 1977-2004

	Year of First Term				
President	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*Average Per Year*
Carter	18	29	26	28	25.25
Reagan	12	25	25	31	23.25
G. H. W. Bush	30	33	31	36	32.5
Clinton	30	30	25	40	31.25
G. W. Bush	34	36	33	34	34.25

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*.

TABLE 4
Emphasis on Key States: Percentage of First-Term Presidential Public Events in States Won or Lost by 10% or Less in the Prior Presidential Election, by President and Year of Term, Compared to the Percentage of the U.S. Population in Those States, 1977-2004

	Year of First Term (%)				
President	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*U.S. Population* in These States (%)*
Carter	69.2	53.8	72.2	84.6	77.9
Reagan	43.3	39.6	47.2	49.0	48.5
G. H. W. Bush	51.2	48.8	52.6	42.3	51.9
Clinton	34.3	45.5	44.9	58.0	52.3
G. W. Bush	55.6	55.9	49.2	84.9	40.3

* Note: This refers to the population of the forty-eight states in this study.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; United States Census (1970, 1980, 1990, 2000); *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*.

events held in states won or lost by 10 percent or less in the previous election, and juxtaposes those values with the percentage of the U.S. population living in those states. George W. Bush is the president who stands out in this analysis. Though 40.3 percent of the population lived in states that he won or lost by 10 percent or less in the 2000 presidential election, he held 55.6 percent of his public events outside the DC area in those states in 2001, 55.9 percent of his events there in 2002, 29.2 percent of his events there in 2003, and 84.9 percent of his events there in 2004. In contrast, the other four presidents, in twelve of sixteen years, actually held a lower percentage of their public events in these states than the states' populations would have justified. George W. Bush stands out for his targeting of states he narrowly won or lost in the 2000 presidential election throughout his term in office, in sharp contrast to the patterns of his predecessors.

To examine further the differences between election years and other years, Table 5 expands the analysis in the previous table to examine the distribution of travel in presidential reelection years by the electoral size and competitiveness of the states for each president. Unsurprisingly, each president spent the most time in the most populated states, though this tendency was more pronounced for the earlier presidents in the study.

Focusing on competitiveness, Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush stand out for holding more than 60 percent of their events in states they marginally won or lost in the prior election. Bush emphasized competitive states across the range of electoral size, whereas Carter more heavily favored the largest, most competitive states, holding 51.1 percent of his events in states with twenty or more Electoral College votes that he had won or lost by 5 percent or less in 1976. All five presidents spent relatively little time in the smallest states—which include the key primary state of New Hampshire—during their reelection year, with Jimmy Carter's 1.6 percent of events the lowest. Later presidents spent more time in these small states than did their predecessors, and the two most recent presidents focused on the most competitive of these small states.

Does presidential targeting of certain types of states in their reelection year reflect a change in or continuity of their strategic emphasis on the states in the first three years of their terms? Table 6 presents the difference between reelection years and the first three

TABLE 5
Percentage of Election Year Presidential Public Events by State's Electoral Size and Competitiveness and by President, First Terms, 1977-2004

President	*Electoral Size*	*Under 5% (%)*	*5.01%-10% (%)*	*10.01%-15% (%)*	*15.01% or More (%)*	*Total (%)*
Carter	3-5 Electoral College votes	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.6
	6-10 Electoral College votes	5.5	3.3	6.6	1.1	16.5
	11-19 Electoral College votes	8.8	11.5	1.1	4.9	26.4
	20+ Electoral College votes	51.1	4.4	0.0	0.0	55.5
Carter totals		65.4	19.2	7.7	7.7	100.0
Reagan	3-5 Electoral College votes	1.4	0.0	0.0	4.1	5.4
	6-10 Electoral College votes	9.5	0.0	10.9	1.4	21.8
	11-19 Electoral College votes	3.4	6.8	3.4	2.7	16.3
	20+ Electoral College votes	8.2	19.7	18.4	10.2	56.5
Reagan totals		22.4	26.5	32.7	18.4	100.0
G. H. W. Bush	3-5 Electoral College votes	0.0	1.7	0.3	7.5	9.6
	6-10 Electoral College votes	0.3	2.0	4.8	5.1	12.3
	11-19 Electoral College votes	9.6	9.6	4.1	13.0	36.2
	20+ Electoral College votes	19.1	0.0	17.7	5.1	42.0
G. H. W. Bush totals		29.0	13.3	27.0	30.7	100.0
Clinton	3-5 Electoral College votes	6.4	1.5	4.2	1.5	13.6
	6-10 Electoral College votes	4.2	12.1	2.3	1.5	20.1
	11-19 Electoral College votes	7.2	11.4	3.4	5.7	27.7
	20+ Electoral College votes	15.2	0.0	2.7	20.8	38.6
Clinton totals		33.0	25.0	12.5	29.5	100.0
G. W. Bush	3-5 Electoral College votes	8.2	3.8	0.0	0.0	12.0
	6-10 Electoral College votes	19.2	7.2	0.0	2.4	28.8
	11-19 Electoral College votes	6.5	6.8	3.4	1.0	17.8
	20+ Electoral College votes	33.2	0.0	2.7	5.5	41.4
G. W. Bush totals		67.1	17.8	6.2	8.9	100.0

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections.*

TABLE 6
Difference between Election Years and Non-Election Years in Percentage of Presidential Public Events by State's Electoral Size and Competitiveness and by President, First Terms, 1977-2004

President	*Electoral Size*	*Under 5% (%)*	*5.01%-10% (%)*	*10.01%-15% (%)*	*15.01% or More (%)*	*Total (%)*
Carter	3-5 Electoral College votes	−3.5	−1.0	−3.5	−1.3	−9.2
	6-10 Electoral College votes	−4.4	−1.2	−6.3	−0.9	−12.7
	11-19 Electoral College votes	−2.1	5.6	−1.9	−7.4	−5.8
	20+ Electoral College votes	24.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	27.8
Carter totals		14.9	6.4	−11.6	9.6	0.0
Reagan	3-5 Electoral College votes	1.4	0.0	0.0	−7.5	−6.2
	6-10 Electoral College votes	3.0	−3.0	6.8	−3.2	3.6
	11-19 Electoral College votes	−3.2	3.8	0.9	−0.8	0.7
	20+ Electoral College votes	−2.4	6.6	8.3	−10.5	1.9
Reagan totals		−1.3	7.3	16.0	−22.0	0.0
G. H. W. Bush	3-5 Electoral College votes	−0.7	−2.9	−2.6	1.6	−4.5
	6-10 Electoral College votes	−1.9	−2.9	1.2	−1.1	−4.7
	11-19 Electoral College votes	5.6	5.6	2.1	7.7	21.1
	20+ Electoral College votes	−10.0	−1.3	0.4	−1.1	−11.9
G. H. W. Bush totals		−6.9	−1.4	1.1	7.2	0.0
Clinton	3-5 Electoral College votes	4.0	0.7	−1.0	−0.4	3.3
	6-10 Electoral College votes	3.6	2.3	0.9	−4.5	2.3
	11-19 Electoral College votes	0.6	4.5	0.4	−1.4	4.2
	20+ Electoral College votes	0.1	0.0	−1.7	−8.1	−9.7
Clinton totals		8.4	7.5	−1.4	−14.4	0.0
G. W. Bush	3-5 Electoral College votes	4.3	−0.6	−0.2	−4.1	−0.7
	6-10 Electoral College votes	9.3	−0.2	0.0	−6.4	2.7
	11-19 Electoral College votes	−0.6	2.7	−3.5	−2.9	−4.3
	20+ Electoral College votes	16.2	0.0	−6.9	−7.0	2.3
G. W. Bush totals		29.1	1.9	−10.7	−20.4	0.0

Note: Positive values indicate a higher percentage of events in an election year; negative values indicate a higher percentage of events in a non-election year; positive values are shaded.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections.*

years of a president's term in the percentage of events held in states by electoral size and competitiveness. Positive values, which are shaded, indicate that a higher percentage of events took place in the election year, while negative values indicate a higher percentage of events in first-term non-reelection years. This table depicts the change in geographic focus from the first three years of a president's term to the fourth.

The logic of the permanent campaign would suggest that this table would reveal continuity and not change. Even though the number of presidential events is greater in the reelection year than in the first three years of an administration, if presidents are engaged in a permanent campaign for reelection, one would expect strategic targeting throughout their term. By focusing on the percentage of travel in reelection and other first-term years, we can examine whether patterns of presidents' relative emphasis on certain types of states shift or are stable.

The table reveals both change and continuity. Presidents Carter, Clinton, and George W. Bush all placed greater relative emphasis on the most competitive states in their reelection year than they did in their first three years. For Carter and George W. Bush, this change is driven mostly by greater emphasis on the largest, most competitive states. For President George H. W. Bush, the consistent election year shift is an increased emphasis on states ranging from eleven to nineteen Electoral College votes across all ranges of competitiveness. Every president except George H. W. Bush spent substantially less time in the least competitive states in the reelection year, suggesting a shift toward more targeted electoral activity.

Aside from these important strategic shifts, the other story that emerges is one of continuity. In sixty-one of the eighty categories across the five presidencies, the change in emphasis was under 5 percent, and in seventy-seven of the eighty categories across the five presidencies, the change in emphasis was under 10 percent. So whereas certain presidents did change their geographic emphasis in their reelection year, especially Carter, Clinton, and George W. Bush, in the aggregate the level of change across the presidencies was not great.

A focus on breadth of travel, the role of competitiveness, and change and continuity from non-election years to election years shows both support for and doubts about the notion of a permanent campaign. With increased presidential travel over time has come increased breadth of travel. Later presidents have traveled more broadly than their predecessors. While the logic of the permanent campaign suggests relatively narrow targeting of key states, the evidence shows that the map of presidential attention has expanded, and not contracted. Most presidents devoted attention that was proportional or less than proportional to population to the states they marginally won or lost in the prior election, with the exception of George W. Bush, who dramatically favored these key states. Although Bush's sharp strategic focus may indicate an increase in the targeting of key states, the tendencies of one president do not constitute a trend, and Bush is a relative outlier here. Contrasting presidents' relative emphasis on certain types of states in election years reveals both change and continuity. The magnitude of changes in attention to the states grouped by electoral size and competitiveness was for the most part relatively small, indicating that most strategic shifts from the first three years in office to the reelection year were not that dramatic. But the few dramatic shifts do reflect increased

strategic targeting, as Carter, Clinton, and George W. Bush all stand out for their increased targeting of competitive states in their reelection year.

Assessing the Relationship between Electoral Dynamics and Presidential Travel

To assess further the relationships between presidential attention and electoral factors, I turn to regression analysis. Because the dependent variable, the number of presidential public events held in each state in each year, is a count of an event, which only takes on positive, integer values and is not normally distributed, regression analysis using ordinary least squares would yield inefficient, inconsistent, and biased estimates. Instead, I use maximum likelihood techniques to estimate a negative binomial regression model, a type of regression analysis for overdispersed[8] count data (Cameron and Trivedi 1998; Long 1997).

Because the data are longitudinal, with repeated observations of states over time, I use a fixed effects negative binomial model.[9] This model takes into account that there likely is unobserved heterogeneity among the states in the study—that is, that they vary in ways that are not measured by the variables in the model. The fixed effects estimator calculates coefficients by looking at variation within each state but not across states, so unobserved heterogeneity among states does not affect the model's estimates. Table 7 presents the results of three negative binomial models.

Model 1 indicates that greater numbers of Electoral College votes, closer margins of victory or defeat in the prior presidential election,[10] and the interaction of the two are all statistically significant predictors of greater numbers of presidential events in a state, as my hypothesis predicted. These findings are statistically significant controlling for whether the observation is during the president's first term, in which year of the term the observation falls, the number of miles between Washington, DC and the state in which the event takes place,[11] and whether the event takes place in the president's home state.[12] Each of these control variables is statistically significant as well, with directions of effects that are logical. Presidents are predicted to hold more events in their first term, in a later year of their term, closer to Washington, DC, and in their own home state.

The analysis in Model 2 builds on Model 1, adding dummy variables for each presidency, with President Carter as the excluded category. The coefficients for Electoral

8. That is, the variance is greater than the mean.

9. This model was run using STATA's xtnbreg function, which estimates negative binomial models for longitudinal data.

10. As lower values indicate more competitive elections, the coefficient's negative sign indicates that closer elections predict greater numbers of presidential public events in a state.

11. This distance is the number of air miles between Andrews Air Force Base, just outside of Washington, DC, which is the president's usual point of departure for air travel, and each state capital. Data were gathered from a company named Frequent Flyer Services. Retrieved February 14, 2006, from http://www.webflyer.com/travel/milemarker/.

12. Presidential home states were coded as follows: Georgia for Carter, California for Reagan, Texas and Maine for George H. W. Bush, Arkansas for all eight years and New York in 2000 for Clinton, and Texas for George W. Bush.

TABLE 7
Fixed Effects Negative Binomial Models of Presidential Public Events, 1977-2004

Variable	*Model 1*	*Model 2*	*Model 3*
Electoral College votes	.031***	.041***	.048***
Margin of victory or defeat in a state in the prior election	−1.357*	−.449	
Electoral College votes × margin	.091**	.041	
President's share of the two-party vote in a state in the prior election			2.836***
First term	.318***	.202**	.245**
Year of term	.236***	.240***	.242**
Miles from Washington, DC	−.0002**	−.0003***	−.0003***
President's home state	.350*	.553***	.421**
Reagan		−.199	−.315**
G. H. W. Bush		.414***	.361***
Clinton		.513***	.502***
G. W. Bush		.540***	.606***
Constant	−.877	−1.041	−2.608

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*; Frequent Flyer Services, available online at http://www.webflyer.com/travel/milemarker.

College votes and each of the control variables retain their statistical significance and the direction of effects from Model 1. But the finding that closer elections and the interaction between electoral margin and electoral size predict more events is not statistically significant with the addition of the dummy variables for each presidency. Three of these four dummy variables are statistically significant, suggesting a great deal of variation by president. The coefficients for all the presidencies but Reagan's are positive, predicting greater numbers of events in these presidencies compared to the excluded base category, the presidency of Jimmy Carter. Models 1 and 2, taken together, show that while closer electoral margins predict more events in the aggregate, there are substantial differences in this regard by presidency that need to be evaluated.

Before doing so, we turn to Model 3, which is identical to Model 2 with the exception that it employs a different measure of electoral dynamics. It uses the president's share of the two-party vote in a state in the prior presidential election as a measure of presidential popularity. The coefficients for the other variables in Model 3 retain their statistical significance and direction of effects, with the exception of events in the presidency of Ronald Reagan, which in this model are statistically distinguishable from those in the presidency of Jimmy Carter. But the new variable is statistically significant with a positive coefficient, indicating that presidents are predicted to hold more events in states in which they were more popular in the previous presidential election. This finding is statistically significant with and without the inclusion of dummy variables that take into account unobserved differences across presidencies, though only the model with dummy variables is presented in Table 7.

These three models indicate that larger electoral size consistently predicts more presidential public events in a state, as I would expect. Although more electorally

TABLE 8
Election Years Compared to Other First-Term Years: Fixed Effects Negative Binomial Models of Presidential Public Events, First Terms, 1977-2004

	Reelection Years		*Non-Reelection Years*	
Variable	*Model 1*	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*
Electoral College votes	.039*	.053***	.044***	.050***
Margin of victory or defeat in a state in the prior election	−2.674*		−.688	
Electoral College votes × margin	.046		.068	
President's share of the two-party vote in a state in the prior election		1.478		1.580*
Miles from Washington, DC	−.0002	−.0003	−.0004**	−.0004**
President's home state	.174	−.119	.459*	.483**
Constant	.487	−.655	.127	−.813

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*; Frequent Flyer Services, available online at http://www.webflyer.com/travel/milemarker.

competitive states are predicted to receive more presidential events in Model 1, this finding is not statistically significant once control variables for each presidency are introduced. The key finding from Model 3 is that even controlling for variation by presidency, presidents tend to hold more events in states in which they were more popular in the prior presidential election.[13]

How can both states that were more competitive in the last election and states in which the president was more popular be predicted to host more presidential events? To sort out this relationship, we turn to Table 8, which focuses on presidents' first terms and separates our analysis into reelection years and the first three years of that term. In both reelection years and non-reelection years, greater numbers of Electoral College votes predict more presidential events. But the key difference between the models for these two types of years is with the other measures of electoral dynamics. Model 1 shows that in reelection years, a closer electoral margin in the prior election is a statistically significant predictor of more presidential events, but in Model 2, the president's share of the two-party vote in a state in the prior election is not a statistically significant predictor of presidential events in reelection years.

This dynamic is reversed in Models 3 and 4, which examine non-reelection years in the first term. In Model 4, greater presidential popularity in a state in the prior election is a statistically significant predictor of more presidential events, but in Model 3, a closer margin in the prior election is not a statistically significant predictor of presidential events. In both Models 2 and 3, electoral margin and percentage of the two-party vote,

13. Because the coefficients in fixed effects negative binomial regression models cannot be interpreted directly, I calculated predicted effects on presidential events in a state of changes in a state's electoral size and competitiveness based on various models. Although these results are omitted for the sake of brevity, varying electoral size has the greatest impact on the predicted number of presidential events in a state, whereas varying competitiveness alone has a much smaller predicted effect.

TABLE 9
Fixed Effects Negative Binomial Models of Presidential Public Events by President, All Years, 1977-2004

Variable	*Carter*	*Reagan*	*G. H. W. Bush*	*Clinton*	*G. W. Bush*
Electoral College votes	⇑	⇑**	⇑	⇑	⇓
Margin of victory or defeat in the prior election	⇑	⇑	⇓	⇓	⇓*
Electoral College votes × margin	⇑	⇓	⇑	⇓*	⇑*
First term		⇑**		⇓	
Year of term	⇑***	⇑***	⇑***	⇑***	⇑*
Miles from Washington, DC	⇓	⇓	⇓	⇓	⇓
President's home state	⇑	⇓	⇑	⇑*	⇑

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.
Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*; *Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections*; Frequent Flyer Services, available online at http://www.webflyer.com/travel/milemarker.

respectively, both maintain the direction of their coefficient, but the finding is no longer statistically significant.

These results suggest that presidents are more likely to hold more presidential events in states in which they were popular in the first three years of their term, and that during their reelection year, they are more likely to focus on states that were closer in the last presidential election. This indicates that reelection years look substantially different from other first-term years in terms of the electoral dynamics of targeted states, which provides evidence against the notion of consistent strategic targeting throughout a president's term.

Focusing on the question of whether states that were more electorally competitive in the previous election tend to hold more presidential events, we turn to an analysis by presidency. Table 9 presents Model 1 from Table 7 above the run for each of the five presidents in this study. To facilitate comparisons across presidencies, instead of presenting coefficients from the negative binomial models, the direction of effects for each coefficient is displayed. While dividing the analysis by president leaves us with a smaller number of cases per president, making it less likely that we will obtain statistically significant results, comparing the direction of effects reveals interesting trends by president and over time.

The only statistically significant predictor of more presidential events for all five presidents is the variable for being in a later year of the president's term. As reelection approaches, presidential travel increases. All five presidents also tend to hold fewer events in states farther from Washington, DC, though this finding is not statistically significant. Two findings are of particular interest. First, greater electoral size predicts more presidential events for four of the five presidencies, but not for George W. Bush. Whereas Bush held a great deal of events in the large states of Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, he held relatively few public events in the three largest states, California, New York, and Texas,[14] which likely accounts for the direction of this coefficient.

14. Although Bush spent a great deal of time at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, as explained above, events at the ranch or in Crawford are not coded as presidential public events.

Second, focusing on the measure of electoral competitiveness, for the first two presidents, states with less competitive prior elections are associated with more presidential events, while for both Bushes and Clinton, closer prior elections predicted greater numbers of presidential events, and for George W. Bush the finding is statistically significant. While I want to be careful not to place too much stock in findings based on relatively smaller-n data, these models indicate a shift over time in presidential activity, with the latter three presidents more likely to focus their events on electorally competitive states.

Multivariate regression analysis reveals both support for and doubts about the permanent campaign. Whereas greater electoral size consistently predicts more presidential attention, the findings for measures of competitiveness and presidential popularity tell different stories. Presidents are more likely to hold more events in states in which they were popular in the first three years of their term, while during their reelection year, they are more likely to focus on states that were more competitive in the last presidential election. This indicates a marked shift in strategy during the reelection year, which is not consistent with the notion of targeting of key electoral states throughout a president's term in office. Analysis by president, however, suggests that these dynamics have changed over time. The three more recent presidents are predicted to hold more events in states that were more competitive in the previous election, as compared with the first two presidents in this study who are not. This provides evidence that presidents now target key electoral states more than they used to, suggesting a rise in strategic presidential travel.

Presidents and the Permanent Campaign

In this article, I set out to assess empirically to what extent there is a permanent campaign for the presidency by asking three central questions. First, to what extent can one say there is a permanent campaign for the presidency? Second, which states are favored in terms of presidential attention? And third, what can these indicators of presidential attention tell us about the evolving nature of the presidency over the past quarter-century?

This study offers evidence that supports the notion of a permanent campaign for the presidency, as well as cautionary notes not to overstate the case for it. Presidential travel does target large, competitive states. Such strategic targeting has increased over time, with the presidencies of the two most recent officeholders, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, offering the strongest evidence for the rise of the permanent campaign.

The findings presented here also indicate that electoral concerns do not permeate a president's term as much as the logic of the permanent campaign would suggest. Along with the increased targeting of key electoral states over time, recent presidents travel more often and visit a broader range of states than their predecessors, spreading their attention more widely. Presidential reelection years display patterns of travel that are sharply distinct from the first three years of a term, not only in terms of the volume of travel but in its strategic focus as well. During their first three years in office,

presidents are more likely to hold events in states in which they were more popular in the prior election, while in their reelection year, they are more likely to visit states that were more electorally competitive. Patterns of per capita attention are different in reelection years as well, as presidents disproportionately visit only the smaller states during their first three years in office, but in election years, they hold disproportionate numbers of events per capita in certain larger states that are regularly competitive in presidential elections. Thus, whereas certain indicators of the permanent campaign are on the rise, the focus on key electoral states does not pervade a president's term as much as one might expect.

Which states are favored in terms of presidential attention? In absolute numbers, large states by far receive the most presidential attention. This is true throughout a president's term, and it is particularly the case that large states enjoy a privileged position during presidential election years. But in spite of this, the attention that large states receive in the aggregate is not disproportionate to their population. While in specific years—mostly presidential reelection years—certain large states do receive much more presidential attention than their population alone would predict, it is the smaller states, many of which host relatively few presidential events in the absolute, that receive more attention than their population would predict in the aggregate. Although large states receive the lion's share of presidential attention, if presidential travel were proportional to population, in the aggregate they would host even more presidential events.

What do these patterns of presidential attention tell us about the evolving nature of the presidency over the past quarter-century? The evidence shows that presidential activities have become more politically focused during the presidencies of both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Their greater levels of public activity have been accompanied by a sharp focus on key electoral states, especially for Bush. Whether the increased politicization observed over the last twelve years of this study represents a trend that will endure or is merely the result of having two individuals in the presidency who are quite political and arrived in office without the majority support of the electorate remains to be seen.

This study has examined some of the key elements of the permanent campaign, but other components merit study as well. Examining the hiring of pollsters such as Dick Morris to help formulate and package policy decisions, the placement of political advisors such as Karl Rove in the West Wing of the White House with a role in policy decisions, the promotion of policy positions by holding events that resemble campaign rallies, and presidential use of poll-tested phrasing to communicate their ideas will help to assess more completely the extent to which the lines between campaigning and governing have become blurred.

Although presidential travel is only one indicator of the permanent campaign, this allocation of the president's time, which is perhaps his scarcest resource, reveals a great deal about his priorities. This study provides evidence that both supports the hypothesis that the permanent campaign is on the rise as well as offers evidence that provides reason to believe that electoral concerns do not thoroughly permeate patterns of presidential activity throughout a president's years in office.

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