

Issue Ownership, Party Reputations, and Policy Positions

WHERE ISSUE OWNERSHIP COMES FROM, AND WHY THE ANSWER MATTERS

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ABSTRACT: Issue ownership theory has played a dominant role in campaign strategy research over the past two decades. Though many studies have criticized it as being an incomplete explanation for candidates' issue emphasis strategies, there has been little debate over the original concept of issue ownership itself, in which parties hold issue advantages based on their reputations for competence. Using evidence from a question-wording experiment included in the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study, I show instead that positions are a more important factor in determining issue ownership. This finding suggests the need for a more nuanced theory of issue advantages, one which allows for differences between individual candidates as well as the targeting of specific groups of voters. Such a theory could account for variance in issue emphasis that is not explained by issue ownership theory, and would provide strategic reasons for why competing candidates often discuss the same issues.

1 Introduction

As American political campaigns have become more sophisticated over the past half-century, the study of campaign strategy by political scientists has taken on an increased level of importance. While early research focused mainly on candidate positioning, there has been a growing trend in recent years to look at other aspects of campaigns as well, in order to gain a fuller understanding of how the actions of candidates can influence voter behavior and affect the outcome of elections. Of these other aspects, issue emphasis—the choice by candidates of which issues to discuss in campaigns—has been among the most studied, and the dominant paradigm for understanding issue emphasis has been Petrocik's (1996) theory of issue ownership.

In simple terms, issue ownership theory stipulates that parties have advantages on certain “owned” issues based on voters' opinions of parties' relative competence at handling issues. Voters are found to prefer parties who own their most salient issues, so the function of issue emphasis by candidates is to draw voters' attentions to their parties' owned issues. By doing so, candidates can raise the salience of these issues in the minds of voters, and thus increase their odds of winning.

In the wake of Petrocik's article and its follow-up (Petrocik, Benoit & Hansen 2003),

a number of studies have pointed out issue ownership’s weaknesses. The main focus of these studies is on the question of issue convergence or trespassing (Damore 2004, Sigelman & Buell 2004, Kaplan, Park & Ridout 2006, Sides 2006), the phenomenon of candidates routinely discussing issues owned by their opponents’ parties. Among these critiques, the common theme is that, while issue ownership is an important determinant of issue emphasis, it is insufficient to completely explain the issue emphasis strategies we observe in real campaigns. Many of these authors (along with others who address the broader topic but not issue ownership specifically) then go on to suggest additional factors which may help to explain issue emphasis, including the preexisting salience of issues (Damore 2004, Sigelman & Buell 2004, Kaplan, Park & Ridout 2006, Sides 2006), candidate records (Sellers 1998, Holian 2004, Sides 2006), election-year maneuvering (Brasher 2003), and electoral competitiveness (Sellers 1998, Kahn & Kenney 1999, Damore 2005, Kaplan, Park & Ridout 2006, Sides 2006). These studies have not, however, directly challenged the idea of issue ownership as being *a* principal determinant of issue emphasis—even if it is not the only one.

But what if our understanding of issue ownership itself is part of the problem? The question of where issue ownership comes from has been largely ignored in previous studies, but whether Petrocik’s assumption is correct—that issue ownership comes from parties’ reputations for competence—is of real significance, because of the theoretical and empirical implications of that assumption. Using evidence from a question-wording experiment included in the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (Ansolabehere 2009, Egan 2009), I show instead that issue positions are often a more important factor than party reputations in determining issue ownership, and that there may also be other factors which are significant as well. This finding suggests the need for a revised theory of issue advantages, one which allows for differences not only between parties but between individual candidates within parties, and even with regard to specific groups of voters within district electorates. Such a theory would offer the opportunity to account for variance in issue emphasis (such as between candidates from the same party) that is not explained in the original theory of

issue ownership, and would also offer a straightforward explanation for why two competing candidates might ultimately choose to discuss the same issues.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next section, I delve deeper into the theory of issue ownership and how it has been applied empirically, by Petrocik and others. I then present the results of a survey experiment which tests different wordings of the typical party evaluation question. This is followed by a comparison of the effectiveness of these alternate wordings in predicting vote choice and partisanship in the 2008 election cycle. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications these findings have for issue ownership theory and the study of issue emphasis more broadly.

2 The Roots of Issue Ownership

Issue ownership theory is a direct product of several important findings from the literature on vote choice and campaigns. First, in response to Downs's (1957) one-dimensional spatial model, Stokes (1963) points out that there are multiple dimensions (issues) over which parties compete and voters make their decisions. Repass (1971) then finds that the salience of particular issues is a moderating factor in determining vote choice. Meanwhile, Budge & Farlie (1983) show that parties' campaign strategies revolve primarily around attempts to prime voters' issue agendas, rather than persuading voters to favor the parties' positions or modifying their own positions to better fit the voters'. Riker (1993) later incorporates this finding into his "dominance principle", in which candidates focus voters' attentions on issues which are favorable to those candidates and away from those which are less so. Petrocik (1996) adds to these findings by asserting that the value of each issue to a candidate is based on his party's reputation for "handling" that issue; the party with the better reputation is said to own the issue.

There is no firm consensus about the exact sources of these reputations, however. Petrocik (1996) argues that these reputations have both long- and short-term components, reflected in the "constituencies of the parties" and "the record of the incumbent", respec-

tively. The former of these is a product of parties' relationships to "the religious, economic, ethnic, linguistic, and regional conflicts endemic to all societies", while the latter provides short-term ownership of certain issues to challengers when the incumbent's term has produced "wars, failed international or domestic policies, unemployment and inflation, or official corruption" (p. 827). But subsequent studies take a more agnostic view. A typical example describes parties' ownership of issues as simply a product of "reputations for their ability to handle certain issues" which "provide candidates with credibility" (Damore 2004). In practice, however, there seems to be a greater level of agreement on how to measure issue ownership, by using a simple survey question which asks respondents to judge which party would do a better job at handling each of a range of issues.

Studies of issue ownership which measure it directly—including Petrocik (1996), Petrocik, Benoit & Hansen (2003), Sides (2006), and Egan (2008)—rely on the aggregate results of this question to assign ownership, while the rest—including Ansolabehere & Iyengar (1994), Sellers (1998), Damore (2004), Holian (2006), and Kaplan, Park & Ridout (2006)—assign issues in a more deterministic fashion, based largely upon Petrocik's original categorizations.¹ This question does *not*, notably, specify how respondents should make their evaluations of parties—whether they should focus on parties' reputations, the backgrounds of the parties' candidates, or something else. To a large degree, this vagueness has obviated any pressing need for a precise definition of issue ownership. As Justice Potter Stewart opined (about a very different subject), while it may be impossible to define, we know it when we see it—and seeing it, in this case, is done by using the results of this survey question.² Though we may not be able to specify exactly what *leads* to issue ownership, the thinking goes, we can measure issue ownership *itself*, as a manifest aspect of public opinion.

One distinction that Petrocik does make clear, however, and that subsequent studies

¹Though Ansolabehere & Iyengar's (1994) paper was published before Petrocik's, their study was inspired by an earlier, unpublished version of Petrocik's paper.

²In his concurring opinion in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184 (1964), regarding pornography, Justice Stewart wrote: "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it..."

do not dispute directly,³ is that issue ownership is *not* a product of the parties' positions on these issues.⁴ Regarding the typical voter, Petrocik asserts that she:

“lacks a clear preference about social and policy issues, is normally disinclined to impose thematic or ideological consistency on issues, and inclined to view elections as choices about collective goods and resolving problems, and not about the specifics of the resolution. The key facts for this voter is not what *policies* candidates promise to pursue, but what *problems* (medical care needs, high taxes) will be resolved.” (p. 829–830; emphasis in original)

In other words, voters do not choose candidates in order to advance their preferred policies. Instead, they see candidates mainly as potential administrators who, because of party affiliation, offer differing levels of expected performance (in an objective or valence sense) across a range of issues.

This view, unsurprisingly, raises eyebrows among both democratic theorists and proponents of spatial models. And indeed, subsequent researchers have avoided taking such a strict view of the sources of issue ownership, preferring instead to focus on the empirical manifestation of issue ownership that is reflected in survey respondents' party evaluations. But where issue ownership comes from—whether from parties' competence reputations, their issue positions, or something else—has both theoretical and empirical implications. On a theoretical level, a finding that issue ownership is based largely on positions would argue against the idea of a binary issue ownership framework and in favor of a more nuanced theory of issue advantages (similar to that called for by Sides 2007) which may vary with respect to individual candidates (within and across parties), districts, groups of voters within districts, and election years. And in terms of empirical tests, because data on issue positions is more widely available than data on issue ownership, a finding that issue

³Sellers (1998), Holian (2004) Sigelman & Buell (2004), and even Petrocik himself (1996) all suggest a role for issue positions in determining issue emphasis, but none of these conceive of positions as contributing to or complementing issue ownership itself. The only notable exception is Simon (2002), who develops a model using positions which closely resembles issue ownership. Simon does not, however, challenge Petrocik's concept of issue ownership specifically.

⁴This of course seems to conflict with the above assertions about parties' relationships to major societal conflicts, which presumably have at least some policy component. My interpretation of Petrocik's argument is that the overall reputations do have some connection with these policy disagreements in a historical sense, but for the *individual* voter, the specific policies debated currently are of little importance compared with these long-term reputations.

ownership stems from positions would allow us to use position data to calculate candidates' advantages with much greater precision than has been possible in previous research. This combination of a more comprehensive theory and an increased store of data would provide a clear way forward for future studies of issue emphasis.

3 Restating the (Issue Ownership) Question

To find out what the typical survey question on issue ownership is really measuring, I conducted a survey experiment as part of the New York University / UC Berkeley module of the 2008 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES).⁵ This survey experiment tested whether a change in the wording of issue ownership's "traditional" party evaluation question, cueing respondents to base their responses on either the parties' issue positions or the parties' reputations for competence, would change the resulting responses.⁶

Each respondent was randomly assigned to one of three treatment groups and asked to evaluate the parties on nine issues. A different wording of the party evaluation question was presented to each group:

1. *Traditional wording*: Which party do you think would do a better job handling each of the following issues?
2. *Position cue wording*: Which party do you think has better ideas for handling each of the following issues?⁷
3. *Reputation cue wording*: Which party do you think is better qualified to handle each

⁵The CCES is an internet-based panel survey administered by Polimetrix, a survey company founded by Douglas Rivers of Stanford University, which includes a main section of common content and additional modules designed by participating researchers and administered to subsets of the respondent panel. Each module is administered to 1,000 respondents in the pre-election wave; in our module, more than 80% of those respondents returned to participate in the post-election wave. This survey experiment was part of the post-election wave.

⁶In the following sections, "reputation" and "competence" are used to refer to the same party characteristic, with the choice of each dependent upon context—competence is the characteristic that individual respondents evaluate, and the sum of these evaluations constitutes the party's reputation.

⁷I intentionally use "ideas" instead of "positions" in this wording so as to encourage respondents to consider each issue independently; the word "positions" often connotes a liberal-conservative ideological mapping which spans all issues, and could thus reduce individuals' between-issue variance.

of the following issues?⁸

By comparing the responses to the traditional question to the responses from the alternate wordings, we get an indirect look at how respondents generate their answers to the original question. Though in the ideal case we would have responses to all three questions from every respondent—so that we could see whether responses to the position or reputation cues are more correlated with the traditional wording’s responses when the former conflict—the likelihood of consistency bias (the inclination of respondents to give consistent responses across question wordings) would call these results into question. With random sampling, however, the aggregate results from one treatment group are (in expectation) equivalent to the results that would have been produced if a different treatment group’s members had been given the same treatment as the first group. As such we can reasonably compare these aggregate results to determine the effect of the alternate question wordings.

Before proceeding to the results, it is worth stating explicitly the four alternative hypotheses being tested; the purpose of this study is to determine which of these is best supported:

1. *Reputational hypothesis*: The traditional wording of the issue ownership question measures respondents’ views of the parties’ relative competence in handling issues, but not the parties’ issue positions, as asserted in Petrocik’s (1996) issue ownership theory.
2. *Positional hypothesis*: The traditional wording measures respondents’ views of the parties’ positions on issues, but not the parties’ relative competence, contrary to issue ownership theory.

⁸While a more direct phrasing of this question would be to ask which party respondents think is “more competent” on each issue, this would presume that every respondent define competence as a characteristic which is independent of issue positions. This seems tenuous, however, particularly in a survey which includes many respondents with less than a high school education. More likely, a substantial number of respondents would take positional factors into account when making their evaluations—the same problem we run into with the traditional wording. I choose to use the “better qualified” phrasing because it more straightforwardly prompts respondents to evaluate the parties on their respective abilities. Because the question asks about parties and not about specific candidates, the results are a fitting measure of Petrocik’s party reputations, distinct from candidates’ records and qualifications (which are suggested as alternative determinants of issue emphasis by Sellers (1998) and Sides (2006), among others.)

3. *Combination hypothesis*: The traditional wording measures respondents' overall party evaluations on issues by combining respondents' views of both the parties' competence *and* their positions, which may differ. The relative weighting of each of these characteristics may vary by individual and/or by issue, and there may be additional unobserved characteristics which inform responses as well.
4. *Latent hypothesis*: All three wordings measure a latent party evaluation which is the product of some other unobserved party characteristic.

If the traditional wording and the reputation cue wording produce equivalent results but the position cue wording produces different results, this would support the first hypothesis. Equivalent results from the traditional and position wordings but not the reputation wording would support the second. If all wordings produce different results, this would support the third hypothesis, while equivalent results from all wordings would support the fourth. Since these four cases are mutually exclusive (save for the unlikely case where reputation and position cues produce equivalent results which are different from the traditional wording's results), they provide very specific conditions with which to test our four hypotheses.

To offset minor sampling variation between treatment conditions (which is no more than would be expected in any dataset of this size), I weight individuals' responses by the inverse of their propensity for inclusion in the treatment group, based on their demographics. This adjustment makes the three treatment groups very well-balanced in their demographics, and also in their aggregate vote choice and partisanship; these latter findings reinforce the assumption that aggregate results can be compared across treatment groups.⁹

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Table 1 presents summary measures of respondents' party preferences across a range of issues for each of the three treatment groups. The table entries show the percentage of

⁹An unweighted version of Table 1 is included in the Appendix as Table A1; unweighted versions of the subsequent tables are available from the author. In all cases, the unweighted results are very similar to the weighted results, but with more noise which can be attributed to sampling variation.

respondents preferring the Republicans over the Democrats on each issue, among those expressing a preference.¹⁰ I also calculate the differences between treatment groups on each issue, along with their statistical significance levels.

The first thing to note is that there is significant variation between issues; using the traditional wording, preference for Republicans essentially doubles between the education issue and the terrorism issue, from 20.8% to 41.1%. Similar results are seen from the alternate wordings. It is also worth pointing out that the Democrats were preferred on *every* issue for all three question wordings (though a few of these estimates are not statistically different from an equal 50/50 split). This is not terribly surprising, given the widespread success of Democrats in 2008 (winning the White House and increasing their seats in both the House and Senate), but such results would imply (by Petrocik’s standards) that the Republicans did not own *any* issues—an obvious wrench in the original theory of issue ownership, since parties are predicted to primarily emphasize owned issues, and this would be quite difficult if one party did not own any issues.

More important to our investigations, however, are the differences in results between question wordings. The results here are stark. Comparing the position cue wording’s responses to the traditional wording’s, the results are very similar; for seven of nine issues, the difference is less than 1.4%, and for only one of nine (immigration, which was an especially muddled issue in 2008) is the difference significant at even the 0.1 level. Comparing the reputation cue’s responses to the traditional wordings, however, we see very different results; the *smallest* difference is 1.5%, and five of nine issues show differences which are statistically significant at the 0.1 level.¹¹ (Interestingly, the reputation cue’s differences are all in the pro-Republican direction; why exactly this is the case could be an interesting topic for future study.)

These results show that we can reject the first and fourth hypotheses (reputational and latent, respectively) listed above, because the traditional wording produces results

¹⁰Including the omitted “Not sure” and “No difference” options produces very similar results; the additional options make the table more difficult to interpret, however, particularly in terms of the significance of differences between treatments.

¹¹The unweighted results, shown in Table A1, are just as unambiguous.

which are clearly not equivalent to those of the reputation cue wording.¹² This leaves us with two possibilities: the positional and combination hypotheses. To distinguish between them, we need to determine whether the smaller differences between the traditional wording and position cue results are simply stochastic or sampling variation (which would support the position hypothesis) or whether they show the influence of factors other than positions (which would support the combination hypothesis), and particularly competence reputations. I do this by looking at the effectiveness of each type of evaluation in predicting voter behavior.

4 Using Party Evaluations to Predict Voter Behavior

The previous section demonstrated that the traditional issue ownership question is quite likely measuring a different aspect of public opinion than originally thought. It is not yet clear, however, exactly what this different aspect is—if it is solely respondents' views on party positions, or if there are other factors involved as well. Moreover, whether this finding is substantively important is in large part dependent upon whether these differences are also reflected in observed behavior. Otherwise, the result is theoretically intriguing but of little empirical consequence.

Because these alternate wordings are not available for other years or in samples large enough to reasonably derive state- or district-level estimates, using their results to predict candidate behavior is unfeasible. What we do have, though, is information about individual-level vote choice and partisanship for the respondents in the survey. And since the ultimate aim of any campaign strategy is to affect the voters' behavior, whether these alternate wordings affect the predictive value of party evaluations for voter behavior has significant implications for the study of issue emphasis.

To analyze the effect of party evaluations on behavior, I create binomial logit models of vote choice (Presidential and House) and party identification.¹³ I first create a model

¹²We can also safely reject the unnamed fifth hypothesis, as the position and reputation cues' results are obviously different as well.

¹³I also created a model of Senate vote choice, but given the smaller sample sizes (since only about two-

which predicts vote choice or partisanship based only upon respondents' demographics and a few appropriate control variables (such as incumbency in the House model), and calculate the model's predictive accuracy using Herron's (1999) ePCP method. The model is then run once more, this time controlling for each respondent's party evaluation on the issue she identified as her "most important problem" (MIP). (Controlling for respondents' evaluations on all nine issues would result in overfitting of the model, given the sample sizes.) These models are run first for all respondents, and then separately for respondents in each of the three question-wording treatment groups. To account for sampling variation between the treatment groups, the logit regression is weighted so that each treatment group is balanced (in terms of demographics) with the overall sample population.

There are two important quantities to look for in these results. The first is the magnitude and significance of the coefficients on the party evaluation variables, while the second is the improvement in overall prediction accuracy when the party evaluation variable is added to the initial model. Together these variables tell us how closely linked these party evaluations are to voter behavior, using a given wording of the party evaluation question. Comparing these quantities across question wordings, the two things to look for are whether a pair of wordings differ significantly in their effectiveness, and if so, which performs better. If two wordings differ in their effectiveness, then it is unlikely that they are capturing the same underlying factor (such as issue positions or party competence). And if one wording performs better than another, this suggests that the underlying factor the wording is intended to measure is better connected to voter behavior than the factor behind the other wording.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Table 2 presents the results of the presidential vote choice regressions. Here we see that all wordings of the issue ownership question give significant coefficients on the

thirds of respondents had a Senate race to vote in) the model had to be greatly reduced in its controls to prevent overfitting, and is thus of limited value. Nevertheless, its results are similar, and are presented as Table A5.

party evaluation variable, but among these, the traditional wording has by far the greatest magnitude; the position cue wording has the second greatest magnitude. In terms of prediction accuracy, however, the position cue wording performs best, with a 22.0% improvement from the inclusion of party evaluations, compared to 16.7% from the traditional wording and 14.8% from the reputation cue wording. These results present a mixed picture, with the traditional wording showing the largest individual effect but the position cue wording showing the greatest aggregate improvement.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

Regressing House vote choice and party identification give similar results. The results from the House vote choice regressions are shown in Table 3. In this table, the position cue wording outperforms the other wordings in terms of both magnitude and prediction accuracy. Table 4 shows the results from the party identification regressions.¹⁴ The results in this table mirror those in Table 2. This time, the position cue wording shows the greatest magnitude of effect, while the traditional wording shows the greatest improvement in prediction accuracy.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

Unfortunately, there is no standard significance test for comparing improvements in prediction accuracy across samples. While the weighting of the regressions greatly helps to level the starting positions of each treatment group (expressed as the “expected Percent in Modal Category” (ePMC), which shows the distribution of dependent variables in the sample), the initial model which employs both demographics and controls varies in its predictive accuracy between treatment groups. As such, there are small but significant differences between groups in how much variance there is for party evaluations to explain. This may be introducing ambiguity into the results; for all three sets of regressions, the

¹⁴The dependent variable here is a binary PID choice among Democratic and Republican partisans. For robustness, I also ran multinomial and ordered logit models using 3- and 7-point PID scales. The additional categories, however, make the results much more difficult to interpret, particular in terms of prediction accuracy, and as such I choose to present the binary model instead.

wording for which demographics and controls gave the smallest reduction in error also showed the greatest improvement from the inclusion of party evaluations.

Similarly, comparing coefficients across treatment groups is a challenge, given both the different samples of voters and the small sample sizes. Even if we assume that the random sampling and weighting ensure comparability across groups, the sample sizes leave us with standard errors for our coefficient estimates which are too large for the differences in coefficients between groups to be statistically significant.¹⁵ Because of all these factors, our ability to draw inferences from these results alone is quite limited, and thus we are still left with the two alternative hypotheses from above—that issue ownership stems either from positions exclusively, or from a combination of positions and other factors as well.

To further probe the results, I also ran models (not shown) which omit demographics and controls and simply check the effectiveness of using the party evaluation variables to predict behavior, relative to the null model. The first set of tests used the variable as coded above (evaluation on the issue identified as the respondent’s MIP), while the second included evaluations on all nine issues for each respondent. The results of these tests echo those shown above—the traditional and position cue wordings take turns as the best predictors, with the reputation cue wording consistently in third place. But again, the differences between groups were not so large as to enable firm conclusions to be drawn.

While these results are inconclusive as to whether the position cue wording or the traditional wording is a better predictor of voter behavior, it is notable that the reputation cue performs worst in all of these models, across a variety of specifications. Though the significance of this result cannot be claimed in a statistical sense, absent any competing evidence to the contrary, it is enough to justify continued research. And when combined with the results from the previous section, it does serve to reinforce the notion that party reputations are less important than they are claimed to be in traditional issue ownership theory. We cannot say for certain whether the traditional wording of the issue ownership

¹⁵The one exception is the difference between the coefficients from the traditional and reputation cue wordings in the Presidential vote choice regressions; while this finding reinforces the previous section’s contention that the traditional wording is not solely measuring reputations, it has no bearing on the outstanding question of whether issue positions are the principal determinant of issue ownership.

question is simply measuring voters' reactions to parties' issue positions or whether there are other factors contributing to these evaluations as well, but the poor results from the reputation cue wording suggest that at a minimum, issue ownership stems from more than just party reputations, and that issue positions are at least as important as reputations, and probably more so.

A final note on causality. It would be imprudent to assume that vote choice and partisanship are a product of respondents' party evaluations, while those evaluations are themselves exogenous. More likely, these party evaluations (particularly with regard to issue positions) are a product both of rational consideration of objective factors (such as positions and performance, in the Downs (1957) and Fiorina (1981) molds), and also of respondents' political predispositions (Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes 1960, Zaller 1992). As such, I am hesitant to make more of these results than is appropriate. But given that the evidence offered by Petrocik and others is subject to the same caveat, these results are as strong as any previously presented to support the theory of issue ownership.

5 Conclusion

While issue ownership theory has dominated the study of the issue emphasis over the past two decades, its main premise—that parties come to own issues as a result of their reputations for competence—has not been seriously challenged. This paper has presented evidence which supports an alternative explanation for how parties gain ownership of issues, by demonstrating the importance of issue positions to voters' evaluations of parties. While it is not possible to determine the precise composition of issue ownership with the data presently available—whether positions are the principal component, or if they are combined with other factors such as reputations—the argument for including positions is an important contribution in itself. This finding brings with it a host of implications for how candidates gain advantages on issues, and suggests the need to consider these advantages in a much more precise fashion.

In light of this, the binary notion of issue ownership appears overly simplistic. The party reputations Petrocik conceived of are almost certainly important, particularly in terms of party performance, in determining candidates' advantages on issues. But if positions are just as important to voters, then it is critical that we consider individual candidates' positions (along with those of their voters) before assigning ownership of issues to one candidate or another. Likewise, if other candidate-specific factors, such as demographic characteristics (Herrnson, Lay & Stokes 2003, Sides 2006) or records in office, contribute to issue advantages, these should be accounted for as well. And since candidates have been shown to target certain groups of voters over others (Herrnson, Lay & Stokes 2003, Hillygus & Shields 2008), it may be necessary to calculate advantages separately with regard to different groups of voters, in order to understand issue emphasis in the context of ever more-precise voter targeting strategies.

A revised theory of the issue advantages such as this would offer explanations for the kind of observed candidate behavior that is not accounted for in issue ownership theory. But on a less ambitious scale, there are still things to be learned from the current data as well. The results in Table 1, for example, show distinctions between issues in how much of a difference question wording made; why these distinctions exist—what makes certain issues more multifaceted in the public's eye—is an intriguing topic of its own. It would also be interesting to see whether certain types of individuals—less sophisticated voters, for example, or independents—are more sensitive to changes in question wording. The results of such an inquiry could provide insight about the degree to which voters' evaluations are colored by their predispositions.

And finally, it would be immensely useful to repeat this experiment on a larger number of respondents across multiple elections, and perhaps include a handful of additional question wordings which would cue respondents to think of the parties in terms of other factors as well. We could also take the opportunity to have voters evaluate candidates directly, as many surveys do for presidential candidates. These results would allow us both to look at candidate strategy directly with regard to these evaluations, and also to develop

more precise estimates of the relationships between voters' evaluations and the behaviors which are the ultimate result.

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Table 1: Alternate Question Wordings and Party Evaluations
Percent of respondents preferring Republicans on each issue

	<i>Issue</i>									<i>n</i>
	Healthcare	Social Security	Iraq	Terrorism	Economy	Taxes	Education	Energy	Immigration	
Traditional Wording	26.7	25.5	37.3	41.1	27.1	36.0	20.8	29.5	28.6	292
Position Cue Wording	26.0	24.7	37.7	41.1	24.2	34.6	19.9	30.1	22.8	245
Reputation Cue Wording	28.8	27.6	45.6	49.1	29.7	41.9	26.5	35.4	33.3	283
Difference (Position – Traditional)	-0.7	-0.8	0.4	0.0	-2.9	-1.4	-0.9	0.6	-5.8*	537
Difference (Reputation – Traditional)	1.5	2.1	8.3**	8.0**	2.6	5.9*	5.7*	5.9*	4.7	575

** = significantly different from zero at < 0.05 level, * = at < 0.1 level. Table entries are percentages of respondents preferring the Republican party on each issue, out of those respondents who had a preference for either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. Individual responses use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings; unweighted responses are presented in Table A1.

Table 2: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on 2008 Presidential Vote Choice

Dependent variable is binary vote choice (0 = Obama, 1 = McCain)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	3.869*** (0.535)		9.667*** (2.873)		5.622*** (1.451)		3.481*** (0.844)	
<i>Demographic controls included but not shown for brevity. See Table A2 for full results.</i>								
PID: Democrat	-2.528*** (0.294)	-2.085*** (0.469)	-3.652*** (0.663)	-2.869** (1.491)	-2.418*** (0.620)	-1.687* (1.088)	-3.088*** (0.632)	-2.781*** (0.918)
PID: Republican	3.361*** (0.450)	3.029*** (0.497)	3.647*** (0.848)	10.06*** (3.130)	3.409*** (0.641)	4.057*** (1.623)	3.535*** (0.938)	2.804*** (0.906)
Constant	-0.373 (0.485)	0.324 (0.678)	-0.785 (0.905)	-2.880** (1.450)	-1.767* (1.102)	0.772 (1.316)	0.329 (0.798)	0.377 (1.054)
ePCP	82.3%	90.7%	87.4%	95.6%	81.4%	92.3%	83.3%	90.7%
ePMC	50.1%	50.1%	50.6%	50.6%	50.7%	50.7%	50.5%	50.5%
ePRE	64.5%	81.5%	74.4%	91.1%	62.3%	84.3%	66.5%	81.3%
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	17.0%		16.7%		22.0%		14.8%	
Observations	681	681	238	238	210	210	233	233
Log Likelihood	-598.6	-324.1	-143.1	-45.53	-204.9	-90.81	-184.4	-111.4

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP.

Table 3: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on 2008 House Vote Choice

Dependent variable is binary vote choice (0 = Democratic, 1 = Republican)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	1.670*** (0.227)		1.789*** (0.563)		2.021*** (0.487)		1.663*** (0.453)	
<i>Demographic controls included but not shown for brevity. See Table A3 for full results.</i>								
PID: Democrat	-2.132*** (0.295)	-1.625*** (0.339)	-2.340*** (0.570)	-1.353** (0.631)	-2.099*** (0.610)	-1.653** (0.732)	-2.867*** (0.721)	-2.581*** (0.764)
PID: Republican	2.115*** (0.324)	1.464*** (0.337)	3.225*** (0.877)	2.664*** (0.961)	2.480*** (0.609)	1.727*** (0.592)	1.760*** (0.563)	0.933* (0.579)
Democratic incumbent	-1.132*** (0.415)	-0.996** (0.508)	-0.656 (1.048)	-0.205 (1.253)	-1.819*** (0.781)	-2.194** (1.017)	-0.100 (0.744)	0.290 (0.772)
Republican incumbent	0.117 (0.426)	0.433 (0.516)	1.860** (1.102)	2.185** (1.241)	-0.957 (0.903)	-1.123 (1.055)	0.604 (0.737)	1.107* (0.747)
Constant	0.00898 (0.597)	0.265 (0.668)	-0.820 (1.268)	-0.438 (1.410)	-0.193 (1.342)	1.018 (1.693)	0.521 (0.980)	0.0914 (1.087)
ePCP	74.4%	79.1%	80.0%	82.9%	74.4%	79.3%	76.7%	80.1%
ePMC	50.3%	50.3%	50.3%	50.3%	51.5%	51.5%	50.0%	50.0%
ePRE	48.6%	57.9%	59.7%	65.5%	47.3%	57.4%	53.3%	62.0%
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	9.3%		5.8%		10.1%		8.7%	
Observations	580	580	205	205	181	181	194	194
Log Likelihood	-706.6	-602.5	-192.7	-168.3	-239.6	-200.5	-206.8	-177.4

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP.

Table 4: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on Party Identification

Dependent variable is binary partisanship (0 = Democratic, 1 = Republican)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	2.818*** (0.250)		3.146*** (0.524)		3.542*** (0.607)		3.087*** (0.463)	
<i>Demographic controls included but not shown for brevity. See Table A4 for full results.</i>								
Constant	-0.0802 (0.362)	0.424 (0.458)	-0.623 (0.642)	0.0600 (0.794)	-0.182 (0.683)	1.226 (0.959)	0.301 (0.652)	0.289 (0.929)
ePCP	63.1%	80.5%	62.0%	82.5%	67.1%	81.9%	67.8%	82.9%
ePMC	50.8%	50.8%	52.7%	52.7%	51.3%	51.3%	50.0%	50.0%
ePRE	25.1%	60.4%	19.8%	63.0%	32.4%	62.9%	35.6%	65.7%
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	35.3%		43.2%		30.5%		30.1%	
Observations	533	533	198	198	153	153	182	182
Log Likelihood	-875.7	-511.2	-311.3	-162.9	-252.8	-146.7	-257.3	-143.5

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP.

Table A1: Effect of Question Wording on Party Evaluations
Percent of respondents preferring Republicans on each issue (*unweighted*)

	<i>Issue</i>									<i>n</i>
	Healthcare	Social Security	Iraq	Terrorism	Economy	Taxes	Education	Energy	Immigration	
Traditional Wording	26.4	25.2	37.0	40.7	26.8	35.2	20.6	28.9	28.4	292
Position Cue Wording	26.9	25.7	38.6	42.7	25.2	35.4	20.7	31.3	23.3	245
Reputation Cue Wording	27.9	27.5	45.4	48.8	29.8	41.5	26.9	34.8	33.2	283
Difference (Position – Traditional)	0.5	0.5	1.6	2.0	-1.6	0.2	0.1	2.4	-5.1*	537
Difference (Reputation – Traditional)	1.5	2.3	8.4**	8.1**	3.0	6.3*	6.3**	5.9*	4.8	575

** = significant at < 0.05 level, * = significant at < 0.1 level (difference-of-means tests). Table entries are percentages of respondents preferring the Republican party on each issue, out of those respondents who had a preference for either the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. Individual responses are unweighted; weighted responses are presented in Table 1.

Table A2: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on 2008 Presidential Vote Choice

Dependent variable is binary vote choice (0 = Obama, 1 = McCain)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	3.869*** (0.535)		9.667*** (2.873)		5.622*** (1.451)		3.481*** (0.844)	
Age: 18-34	-1.513*** (0.396)	-1.669*** (0.583)	-0.750 (0.780)	-1.949* (1.366)	-2.727*** (0.890)	-4.154** (1.941)	-1.561*** (0.624)	-0.760 (0.895)
Age: Over 55	0.0415 (0.314)	-0.158 (0.499)	0.160 (0.706)	-1.798* (1.213)	-0.386 (0.553)	-0.622 (0.831)	0.481 (0.568)	0.841 (0.798)
Female	-0.407* (0.281)	-0.0796 (0.402)	-0.549 (0.533)	-1.252 (1.311)	-0.621 (0.544)	0.387 (0.894)	0.164 (0.490)	0.796 (0.638)
African-American	-2.345*** (0.567)	-3.157*** (0.652)	-3.090*** (0.977)	-13.22*** (4.302)	-3.284*** (0.932)	-4.018*** (1.299)	-2.094*** (0.882)	-1.887** (0.963)
Some college	-0.0700 (0.344)	-0.125 (0.490)	0.953* (0.646)	3.569** (1.964)	0.556 (0.869)	0.104 (1.260)	-0.775 (0.618)	-0.939 (0.897)
4-year degree	-0.721** (0.349)	-0.0813 (0.487)	-0.681 (0.769)	1.207 (1.147)	0.633 (0.782)	0.804 (1.587)	-2.137*** (0.729)	-1.510** (0.822)
Union household	0.646** (0.284)	0.910*** (0.373)	0.822 (0.664)	2.545** (1.162)	0.482 (0.559)	1.088** (0.647)	1.133** (0.614)	1.469** (0.671)
Very religious	0.327 (0.313)	-0.0200 (0.412)	1.343*** (0.574)	4.011*** (1.660)	0.261 (0.565)	-0.335 (0.652)	-0.100 (0.614)	-1.094* (0.757)
Evangelical	1.034*** (0.374)	0.999** (0.471)	2.385*** (0.647)	6.964*** (1.528)	0.581 (0.659)	0.0998 (1.013)	1.129* (0.751)	0.565 (0.777)
Atheist / Agnostic	-0.156 (0.327)	-1.367*** (0.520)	-0.502 (0.659)	-3.321*** (1.335)	-0.125 (0.521)	-1.540* (1.170)	-0.229 (0.637)	-2.172*** (0.894)
Low income	0.292 (0.393)	0.768* (0.599)	0.137 (0.713)	3.748** (1.706)	0.331 (0.930)	-0.560 (1.057)	0.528 (0.775)	0.620 (0.982)
High income	-0.0697 (0.360)	-0.457 (0.445)	-0.0674 (0.725)	-1.882 (1.612)	0.0367 (0.597)	-0.347 (0.961)	0.243 (0.819)	0.363 (0.913)
Region: Northeast	0.146 (0.400)	0.231 (0.529)	-0.217 (0.916)	-2.527* (1.950)	0.542 (0.861)	-0.217 (1.704)	0.701 (0.679)	1.618** (0.896)
Region: South	0.851** (0.386)	1.523*** (0.540)	0.517 (0.818)	0.122 (1.698)	2.082*** (0.870)	1.650** (0.884)	0.272 (0.660)	1.997** (0.951)
Region: Mountains	0.352 (0.506)	-0.0319 (0.768)	-0.552 (1.050)	-4.738*** (2.033)	1.761** (0.946)	-0.0200 (1.693)	0.168 (0.800)	1.722* (1.075)
Region: West	0.203 (0.458)	0.435 (0.588)	-0.163 (1.259)	0.135 (1.772)	0.630 (0.791)	0.561 (1.046)	-0.00999 (0.685)	0.705 (0.996)
PID: Democrat	-2.528*** (0.294)	-2.085*** (0.469)	-3.652*** (0.663)	-2.869** (1.491)	-2.418*** (0.620)	-1.687* (1.088)	-3.088*** (0.632)	-2.781*** (0.918)
PID: Republican	3.361*** (0.450)	3.029*** (0.497)	3.647*** (0.848)	10.06*** (3.130)	3.409*** (0.641)	4.057*** (1.623)	3.535*** (0.938)	2.804*** (0.906)
Constant	-0.373 (0.485)	0.324 (0.678)	-0.785 (0.905)	-2.880** (1.450)	-1.767* (1.102)	0.772 (1.316)	0.329 (0.798)	0.377 (1.054)
ePCP	82.3% 90.7%		87.4% 95.6%		81.4% 92.3%		83.3% 90.7%	
ePMC	50.1% 50.1%		50.6% 50.6%		50.7% 50.7%		50.5% 50.5%	
ePRE	64.5% 81.5%		74.4% 91.1%		62.3% 84.3%		66.5% 81.3%	
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	17.0%		16.7%		22.0%		14.8%	
Observations	681	681	238	238	210	210	233	233
Log Likelihood	-598.6	-324.1	-143.1	-45.53	-204.9	-90.81	-184.4	-111.4

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP.

Table A3: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on 2008 House Vote Choice

Dependent variable is binary vote choice (0 = Democratic, 1 = Republican)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	1.670*** (0.227)		1.789*** (0.563)		2.021*** (0.487)		1.663*** (0.453)	
Age: 18–34	-0.247 (0.374)	-0.369 (0.403)	0.707 (0.632)	0.593 (0.734)	-1.202** (0.680)	-2.141** (0.985)	-1.311* (0.842)	-1.166 (0.958)
Age: Over 55	-0.127 (0.278)	-0.199 (0.304)	0.182 (0.511)	0.0988 (0.590)	0.0853 (0.531)	-0.0885 (0.522)	-1.053** (0.539)	-0.930* (0.570)
Female	-0.0793 (0.257)	0.152 (0.284)	-1.235** (0.572)	-0.997* (0.607)	0.465 (0.463)	0.935** (0.563)	0.000359 (0.475)	0.107 (0.501)
African-American	-0.943* (0.589)	-0.582 (0.622)	-0.531 (0.705)	-0.433 (0.730)	-2.289* (1.527)	-1.257 (1.609)	-0.207 (0.926)	0.248 (1.078)
Some college	-0.270 (0.319)	-0.489* (0.356)	-0.132 (0.606)	-0.819 (0.687)	-0.496 (0.636)	-0.700 (0.725)	-0.601 (0.569)	-0.733 (0.610)
4-year degree	-0.660** (0.313)	-0.357 (0.339)	-0.540 (0.563)	-0.188 (0.600)	-0.703 (0.584)	-0.910* (0.665)	-1.127** (0.601)	-0.439 (0.619)
Union household	0.0712 (0.265)	-0.115 (0.298)	0.270 (0.534)	-0.195 (0.630)	-0.111 (0.513)	-0.232 (0.550)	-0.152 (0.476)	-0.345 (0.466)
Very religious	0.203 (0.277)	0.120 (0.287)	-0.329 (0.479)	-0.354 (0.520)	-0.172 (0.571)	-0.112 (0.587)	1.135*** (0.456)	0.749** (0.443)
Evangelical	0.567** (0.320)	0.449* (0.341)	0.952** (0.502)	0.633 (0.603)	0.320 (0.694)	0.0128 (0.622)	0.330 (0.480)	0.461 (0.533)
Atheist / Agnostic	0.0831 (0.331)	0.0133 (0.373)	-0.318 (0.666)	0.0831 (0.732)	0.356 (0.534)	0.492 (0.742)	-0.367 (0.759)	-0.841 (0.796)
Low income	0.155 (0.345)	0.0805 (0.378)	0.0146 (0.601)	-0.127 (0.684)	0.873* (0.662)	0.464 (0.690)	0.270 (0.697)	0.281 (0.705)
High income	0.323 (0.319)	0.207 (0.354)	0.428 (0.610)	-0.0120 (0.697)	0.606 (0.576)	0.602 (0.641)	0.474 (0.604)	0.422 (0.604)
Region: Northeast	0.561* (0.400)	0.531 (0.421)	1.259* (0.828)	0.755 (0.881)	0.997 (0.836)	1.022 (0.799)	-0.617 (0.670)	-0.184 (0.762)
Region: South	0.519* (0.337)	0.515* (0.371)	0.470 (0.607)	0.391 (0.658)	1.302** (0.653)	0.844 (0.729)	-0.0567 (0.669)	0.633 (0.875)
Region: Mountains	0.204 (0.452)	0.257 (0.552)	0.0941 (0.714)	0.155 (0.731)	1.490* (0.920)	1.175 (1.152)	-0.787 (0.758)	-0.140 (0.822)
Region: West	0.244 (0.429)	0.156 (0.398)	-0.730 (0.823)	-1.037* (0.788)	1.171* (0.726)	1.183* (0.733)	-0.540 (0.823)	-0.209 (0.817)
PID: Democrat	-2.132*** (0.295)	-1.625*** (0.339)	-2.340*** (0.570)	-1.353** (0.631)	-2.099*** (0.610)	-1.653** (0.732)	-2.867*** (0.721)	-2.581*** (0.764)
PID: Republican	2.115*** (0.324)	1.464*** (0.337)	3.225*** (0.877)	2.664*** (0.961)	2.480*** (0.609)	1.727*** (0.592)	1.760*** (0.563)	0.933* (0.579)
Democratic incumbent	-1.132*** (0.415)	-0.996** (0.508)	-0.656 (1.048)	-0.205 (1.253)	-1.819*** (0.781)	-2.194** (1.017)	-0.100 (0.744)	0.290 (0.772)
Republican incumbent	0.117 (0.426)	0.433 (0.516)	1.860** (1.102)	2.185** (1.241)	-0.957 (0.903)	-1.123 (1.055)	0.604 (0.737)	1.107* (0.747)
Constant	0.00898 (0.597)	0.265 (0.668)	-0.820 (1.268)	-0.438 (1.410)	-0.193 (1.342)	1.018 (1.693)	0.521 (0.980)	0.0914 (1.087)
ePCP	74.4%	79.1%	80.0%	82.9%	74.4%	79.3%	76.7%	80.1%
ePMC	50.3%	50.3%	50.3%	50.3%	51.5%	51.5%	50.0%	50.0%
ePRE	48.6%	57.9%	59.7%	65.5%	47.3%	57.4%	53.3%	62.0%
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	9.3%		5.8%		10.1%		8.7%	
Observations	580	580	205	205	181	181	194	194
Log Likelihood	-706.6	-602.5	-192.7	-168.3	-239.6	-200.5	-206.8	-177.4

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP.

Table A4: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on Party Identification

Dependent variable is binary partisanship (0 = Democratic, 1 = Republican)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	2.818*** (0.250)		3.146*** (0.524)		3.542*** (0.607)		3.087*** (0.463)	
Age: 18-34	-0.466* (0.308)	-0.584* (0.431)	0.0890 (0.537)	0.0106 (0.663)	-1.463** (0.637)	-2.857*** (0.851)	-0.166 (0.569)	0.149 (1.031)
Age: Over 55	0.115 (0.234)	0.167 (0.330)	-0.178 (0.377)	-0.320 (0.567)	0.196 (0.453)	0.281 (0.722)	0.291 (0.461)	0.0521 (0.538)
Female	-0.283* (0.211)	-0.308 (0.278)	-0.0466 (0.383)	0.0456 (0.492)	-1.156*** (0.477)	-0.589 (0.635)	-0.0123 (0.424)	-0.147 (0.552)
African-American	-3.079*** (0.642)	-2.551*** (0.705)	-3.210*** (1.104)	-3.125*** (0.900)	-2.750*** (1.169)	-1.050 (0.988)	-3.632*** (1.254)	-4.129*** (1.293)
Some college	0.234 (0.257)	0.306 (0.338)	0.000446 (0.410)	-0.00977 (0.516)	0.571 (0.526)	0.530 (0.764)	0.584 (0.501)	1.405** (0.839)
4-year degree	-0.219 (0.272)	0.252 (0.404)	-0.347 (0.454)	0.882 (0.808)	0.388 (0.557)	0.257 (0.808)	-0.491 (0.478)	0.0513 (0.766)
Union household	-0.661*** (0.258)	-0.726** (0.342)	-0.0473 (0.405)	0.0346 (0.614)	-0.861** (0.487)	-0.477 (0.637)	-1.677*** (0.512)	-2.793*** (0.792)
Very religious	0.821*** (0.242)	0.827*** (0.329)	0.657** (0.397)	0.734* (0.533)	1.524*** (0.470)	1.142* (0.719)	0.944** (0.511)	1.203** (0.620)
Evangelical	0.887*** (0.258)	1.004*** (0.410)	0.801** (0.426)	0.584 (0.638)	0.752* (0.517)	0.904 (0.905)	1.370*** (0.550)	1.949** (0.977)
Atheist / Agnostic	-0.967*** (0.303)	-0.952*** (0.365)	-0.982** (0.560)	-1.227** (0.674)	-0.417 (0.612)	0.119 (0.590)	-1.308*** (0.519)	-2.077*** (0.835)
Low income	-0.608** (0.283)	-0.456 (0.384)	-0.484 (0.460)	0.0449 (0.567)	-0.586 (0.568)	-0.833 (0.888)	-0.551 (0.533)	-0.261 (0.719)
High income	0.197 (0.244)	-0.0460 (0.381)	0.515 (0.417)	0.333 (0.645)	0.246 (0.519)	0.375 (0.761)	0.239 (0.462)	-0.181 (0.679)
Region: Northeast	-0.345 (0.317)	-0.296 (0.437)	-0.00578 (0.514)	-0.731 (0.704)	-1.120* (0.682)	-1.630** (0.933)	-0.435 (0.579)	0.211 (0.870)
Region: South	-0.0193 (0.280)	-0.235 (0.380)	0.287 (0.449)	-0.0871 (0.562)	-0.479 (0.556)	-1.402** (0.851)	-0.266 (0.550)	-0.430 (0.828)
Region: Mountains	0.692* (0.428)	0.648* (0.480)	0.869 (0.855)	0.695 (0.819)	1.213 (1.025)	-0.656 (1.205)	-0.0708 (0.699)	0.554 (0.814)
Region: West	0.163 (0.356)	0.821** (0.495)	-0.0166 (0.580)	-0.0310 (0.936)	0.389 (0.688)	0.412 (1.185)	0.540 (0.715)	2.800*** (1.048)
Constant	-0.0802 (0.362)	0.424 (0.458)	-0.623 (0.642)	0.0600 (0.794)	-0.182 (0.683)	1.226 (0.959)	0.301 (0.652)	0.289 (0.929)
ePCP	63.1%	80.5%	62.0%	82.5%	67.1%	81.9%	67.8%	82.9%
ePMC	50.8%	50.8%	52.7%	52.7%	51.3%	51.3%	50.0%	50.0%
ePRE	25.1%	60.4%	19.8%	63.0%	32.4%	62.9%	35.6%	65.7%
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	35.3%		43.2%		30.5%		30.1%	
Observations	533	533	198	198	153	153	182	182
Log Likelihood	-875.7	-511.2	-311.3	-162.9	-252.8	-146.7	-257.3	-143.5

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP.

Table A5: Effect of Individuals' Party Evaluations on 2008 Senate Vote Choice

Dependent variable is binary vote choice (0 = Democratic, 1 = Republican)

	<i>Party Evaluation Question Wording</i>							
	All Wordings		Traditional		Position Cue		Reputation Cue	
Party evaluation on MIP	2.293*** (0.380)		2.345*** (0.981)		3.117*** (1.032)		2.421*** (0.535)	
Age: 18-34	-0.347 (0.504)	-0.585 (0.649)	-0.978 (1.512)	-0.784 (1.851)	-2.771*** (1.034)	-4.347*** (1.194)	0.0613 (0.905)	-0.412 (1.242)
Age: Over 55	0.508 (0.412)	0.179 (0.440)	-0.0193 (1.220)	-0.610 (1.145)	1.761** (0.974)	1.970** (1.037)	-0.683 (0.584)	-1.277** (0.663)
Some college	0.405 (0.414)	0.176 (0.446)	1.013 (1.257)	0.00770 (1.572)	2.636** (1.383)	1.914* (1.360)	-0.190 (0.663)	-0.107 (0.839)
4-year degree	-0.104 (0.441)	0.233 (0.436)	-2.506** (1.143)	-2.103*** (0.841)	1.959* (1.287)	1.231 (1.331)	-0.137 (0.656)	0.375 (0.560)
Evangelical	0.983*** (0.346)	1.019*** (0.356)	2.135** (0.941)	1.830** (0.803)	0.303 (0.812)	0.488 (0.669)	1.784*** (0.602)	2.111*** (0.590)
Low income	0.191 (0.465)	0.00965 (0.508)	-0.0248 (1.319)	-0.729 (1.478)	0.390 (1.287)	-0.672 (1.182)	0.507 (0.751)	0.484 (0.841)
High income	0.353 (0.457)	0.0515 (0.505)	1.259 (1.137)	0.979 (0.979)	0.861 (0.938)	0.655 (1.206)	-0.329 (0.662)	-0.970 (0.844)
PID: Democrat	-2.374*** (0.423)	-1.848*** (0.459)	-5.861*** (1.445)	-4.831*** (1.540)	-1.583** (0.758)	-0.0551 (1.103)	-2.292*** (0.804)	-2.242** (0.988)
PID: Republican	2.934*** (0.434)	2.136*** (0.485)	3.582*** (1.142)	3.123*** (1.170)	6.377*** (1.604)	5.739*** (1.442)	1.886*** (0.579)	0.362 (0.705)
Democratic incumbent	-0.0396 (0.572)	-0.140 (0.560)	-0.404 (1.184)	-0.907 (0.958)	-0.0592 (1.194)	0.0328 (2.029)	0.143 (0.990)	0.946* (0.728)
Republican incumbent	0.238 (0.537)	0.498 (0.561)	-0.769 (0.875)	-1.252* (0.975)	1.727** (0.980)	1.787 (2.290)	0.426 (0.956)	1.892*** (0.798)
Constant	-1.258** (0.723)	-0.566 (0.650)	0.301 (1.190)	1.838* (1.385)	-5.177*** (1.578)	-3.757* (2.826)	-0.471 (1.055)	-0.851 (0.839)
ePCP	78.7%	85.1%	90.1%	93.7%	85.6%	89.2%	74.0%	81.8%
ePMC	50.1%	50.1%	50.2%	50.2%	51.0%	51.0%	50.0%	50.0%
ePRE	57.2%	70.1%	67.3%	80.1%	70.5%	78.0%	48.1%	63.6%
<i>Improvement in ePRE from party evaluation</i>	12.9%		12.8%		7.5%		15.5%	
Observations	359	359	121	121	105	105	133	133
Log Likelihood	-376.7	-278.4	-56.07	-41.05	-83.68	-59.20	-159.2	-115.5

*** = $p < 0.01$, ** = $p < 0.05$, * = $p < 0.1$ (one-tailed). Cell entries are logit coefficients, with robust standard errors in parentheses. Regressions use demographics-based weights to offset sampling variation between question wordings. Party evaluations are individual respondents' answers to the party evaluation (issue ownership) question on the issue they identify as the "most important problem" (MIP). Only evaluations on MIPs are included because including all issue evaluations results in overfitting, given the sample sizes. Responses are coded -1 = Democratic preference, 1 = Republican preference, 0 = no preference. All responses coded 0 for respondents whose MIP was not asked about in the issue ownership question series. ePCP = Expected percentage correctly predicted. ePMC = Expected percent in modal category. ePRE = Expected proportional reduction in error. See Herron (1999) for explanation of ePCP and comparison with standard PCP. Model contains fewer control variables than Presidential or House vote choice models because sample sizes are smaller.