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**“Post-Truth” Politics? Media Causes and Potential Effects of Perceptions of Candidate**

**Honesty**

A Dissertation Presented

by

**Matthew Harris**

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

**Political Science**

Stony Brook University

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**“Post-Truth” Politics? Media Causes and Potential Effects of Perceptions of Candidate**

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**Matthew Harris**

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Honesty has long been a trait voters seek in candidates for political office, yet the past few decades of American politics are strewn with examples of blatant dishonesty by political figures, sometimes with seemingly few electoral consequences. This dissertation examines how perceptions of candidate honesty are formed, as well as potential consequences of dishonest behavior for candidates as well as parties. The first empirical chapter uses ANES data to look at how media usage by citizens can shape perceived honesty. The second empirical chapter uses ARFIMA-MLM framework to look at usage while adding content in the form of news media and advertising data from the Wisconsin Ad Project. In the final empirical chapter, an experiment examines how news media corrections can influence perceived candidate honesty, as well as how source cues can interact with partisanship to further shape these perceptions. Overall, this dissertation paints a picture of a landscape where media is influential in shaping perceived candidate honesty, but partisanship of candidate and voter may interact with these media cues, such that citizens may reach different conclusions about the honesty of politicians based on their own beliefs and the programming to which they are exposed.

## **Dedication Page**

To W.W.

My Star, My Perfect Silence.

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Go Bills!

## Chapter 1: Theory and Hypotheses

At the start of Barack Obama's second term as president, he nominated Chuck Hagel for the position of Secretary of Defense. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) opposed this nomination by insinuating that Hagel may have received money from North Korea. Cruz presented no evidence for this assertion, and was widely criticized by members of both parties.<sup>i</sup> Similarly, during the summer of 2012, Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) accused Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney of having paid no taxes over a ten year period. Reid alleged this information came from an anonymous source whom he refused to identify.<sup>ii</sup> While, since the source remains unidentified and Romney himself has not released any more information, it could be possible Romney paid no taxes, neutral fact-checking organization Politifact gave the claim its most dishonest rating, "pants on fire."<sup>iii</sup>

Paul Krugman and others have categorized this type of blatant dishonesty as "post-truth politics," and the mechanisms of this phenomenon are the focus of this dissertation. To Krugman, "Mr. Romney portrays the president as the second coming of Fidel Castro and seems confident that he will pay no price for making stuff up."<sup>iv</sup> My concern is not with the confidence politicians have in making bold, factually inaccurate assertions, but rather in the mechanisms which take place in the minds' of individual voters to allow this behavior to occur, seemingly

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<sup>i</sup> Jonathan Weisman, "Texas Senator Goes on Attack and Raises Bipartisan Hackles," *The New York Times*, 15 February 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/16/us/politics/ted-cruz-runs-counter-to-courtly-ways-of-the-senate.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/16/us/politics/ted-cruz-runs-counter-to-courtly-ways-of-the-senate.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&) (accessed 11 May 2013).

<sup>ii</sup> Ed O'Keefe, "Harry Reid: Mitt Romney Didn't Pay Taxes for Ten Years," *2Chambers*, The Washington Post, 31 July 2012, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/2chambers/post/harry-reid-mitt-romney-didnt-pay-taxes-for-10-years/2012/07/31/gJQADXkSNX\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/2chambers/post/harry-reid-mitt-romney-didnt-pay-taxes-for-10-years/2012/07/31/gJQADXkSNX_blog.html) (accessed 11 May 2013).

<sup>iii</sup> "Harry Reid Says Anonymous Source Told Him Mitt Romney Didn't Pay Taxes for 10 Years," *Politifact*, The Tampa Bay Times, 6 August 2012, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2012/aug/06/harry-reid/harry-reid-says-anonymous-source-told-him-mitt-rom/> (accessed 12 May 2013).

<sup>iv</sup> Paul Krugman, "The Post-Truth Campaign," *The New York Times*, 22 December 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/23/opinion/krugman-the-post-truth-campaign.html> (accessed 11 May 2013)

without fear on the part of political actors of meaningful electoral consequence. Specifically, I am interested in the ways in which mass media produces perceptions of candidate honesty, as well as how these perceptions of honesty affect broader candidate favorability and party reputations. The story I wish to tell is one in which citizens' interactions with campaigns, citizens' party identifications, actions of candidates, and campaign media interact to create reputations of political actors as either honest or dishonest.

Perceptions of candidate honesty are important in democratic politics for a number of reasons, even beyond the known distaste voters have for dishonest political figures. If we know voters dislike candidate dishonesty (Peters and Welch 1980; Newman 2003; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008), and voting is a mechanism through which this displeasure may be expressed (Downs 1957), then the question of from where voters draw these perceptions is important for the study of elections.

The media plays an important role in this process. In order for officials to be held accountable at the polls, citizens must know when misdeeds or dishonesty occurs in order to punish such behavior. Media coverage provides an important link between politicians and the citizenry. Snyder and Stromberg (2010) found that voters living in areas with less coverage of their US House representatives were less likely to be able to describe them, rate them, or even recall their names. Further, in a connection that ties to representatives' perceptions of this coverage, House members in districts with less media coverage were found to be less reactive to the needs of their constituents. These members are also less likely to vote against their own party. Tavits (2007) found that punishment of corrupt behavior is dependent upon clarity of responsibility. While corruption is slightly different from dishonesty, we should expect clarity to

be necessary for punishment of dishonest behavior, as well. In order for this frowned-upon behavior to be punished, voters must understand that said behavior is occurring.

Thus, as with other political learning, I hypothesize that perceptions of candidate honesty are formed through mass media. To that end, I use an analysis which looks at media usage, an analysis which looks at the effects of district-level advertising and national media content, and an experiment which tests if media corrections have an effect on perceptions of candidate honesty.

Unlike prior research on candidate honesty and corrections, I also examine potential downstream effects on candidate favorability, party reputation, and vote intention. I attempt to demonstrate that perceptions of candidate honesty are not just important for individual candidates but also for party reputation. In terms of psychological downstream effects, I argue that while corrections on misinformation will work in updating limited, specific factual information, voters will still hold residual negative affect based upon the initial misinformation. This residual negative affect depresses candidate favorability and likelihood of voting for a candidate. Thus, overall, I argue that perceptions of candidate honesty and trustworthiness are largely generated by the media, and that these perceptions are important because of the effects of perceived dishonest acts on both affect towards political figures and beliefs about party brands.

To test these hypotheses, I use the ANES cumulative file, the National Annenberg Election Surveys paired with Wisconsin Ad Project and national newspaper data, and an experiment. Chapter 2 uses ANES data (1992-2012) to look at how media exposure shapes perceptions of candidate honesty. Chapter 3, using the National Annenberg Election Surveys and Wisconsin Ad Project data (2000 and 2008), demonstrates how campaign advertisements and national media coverage affect perceptions of candidate honesty. Chapter 4 uses an experiment to determine whether media sources affect the ways in which citizens update their

perceptions of candidate honesty as well as how information on candidate honesty affects candidate traits such as candidate favorability or the likelihood of voting for said candidate or other candidates from his party. Besides illuminating candidate perceptions, Chapters 2 and 4 also attempt to add to the party literature by showing that perceptions of candidate honesty, a personal trait, affect party reputation.

### **Conceptual Background**

#### *Honesty in Politics*

A good starting place for any discussion of honesty in politics is the litany of research suggesting that perceptions of candidate honesty are of vital importance for political figures. Honesty is a trait which has appeared throughout many decades as one which voters look for when casting a ballot. Dating back to the early 1960s, honesty was the quality viewed by voters as most essential for presidential candidates among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, and it has maintained its value in more recent studies (Sigel 1964; Funk 1999). Some research has demonstrated that over 90% of survey respondents identify honesty as a trait for their ideal president to possess (Kinder et al. 1980). In a 2007 Gallup poll, a plurality of respondents selected honesty as the most important quality for the next president to possess.<sup>v</sup> *The American Voter Revisited* cites the case of Al Gore, a man hurt greatly by the perception that he was dishonest, particularly given that this was an area of great strength for his opponent, George W. Bush (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Surprisingly, Bishin, Stevens, and Wilson find a larger effect for perceived Bush dishonesty on voting against Bush than for perceived Gore dishonesty on voting against Gore, a finding the authors attribute to trait ownership (2006). Johnston, Hagen, and

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<sup>v</sup> “Wanted in Next President: Honesty, Strong Leadership,” *Gallup*, 4 April 2007, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27085/wanted-next-president-honesty-strong-leadership.aspx> (accessed 11 May 2013).

Jamieson (2004) assert that Gore's honesty ratings were directly hurt by a storm of negative news media as opposed to advertisements, although to an extent news was a reflection of advertising.

Candidates accused of campaign corruption were seen to have a decrease in vote share by approximately 6 to 11 percent (Peters and Welch 1980). Furthermore, perceptions of honesty are important for candidates and presidents because of the link between perceived integrity and presidential approval. Newman (2003) found that, from 1980 to 2000, there was a non-trivial, significant effect for integrity on presidential approval. While the magnitude of the effect was found to be less than that of other, more politically relevant variables (such as economic indicators), the point holds that perceptions of integrity help shape job approval.

Research has also demonstrated that perceptions of honesty may be fluid, varying across voters as well as across time. *The American Voter Revisited* demonstrates such changes, as George W. Bush was viewed, in the aggregate, as both more honest and more dishonest in 2004 as compared to 2000 (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Norpoth (2009) also notes how Bush's honesty was both an asset and a liability in 2004. Evidently, perceptions of Bush's honesty changed over time, but also varied between voters. Carolyn Funk (1999) found that personal traits, including integrity (of which, in her conception, honesty is a part), had differing effects on thermometer ratings for different candidates, including differing effects for George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton between elections. Obviously, then, perceived honesty varies in importance, and some forces are at play that vary the creation of perceptions of candidate honesty between voters, between candidates, and between elections.

### *Party Brand/Reputation*

As shown by the aforementioned literature, perceptions of honesty are important for candidates, electorally speaking. Yet, if they are of concern to one party member, should other party members be concerned, as well? Does one member's dishonest reputation taint the party at large? To get a sense of an answer, or at the very least a hypothesis, we should examine the literature on party reputation.

Cox and McCubbins argue that party reputation is dependent upon legislative success. This party reputation influences prospects for reelection, and thus parties in Congress engage in agenda setting to minimize legislative defeats and maintain a positive legislative record (2005). Strategic party government theory also emphasizes party reputation as being achieved through legislative success, although this success is often paired with electorally-costly partisan influence on representatives (Lebo, McGlynn, and Koger 2007).

Other scholars have conceived of party reputation as being based less upon legislative success as upon perceived issue-area strength. Pope and Woon (2009) argue that the parties carry a collective, if shifting, reputation on a variety of issues, and that party reputations are becoming more important as citizens recognize a significant difference between the two parties.

While there is the aforementioned body of literature involving issue- or legislative success-based conceptualizations of party reputation or party brand, there is rather limited evidence as to whether or not personal traits such as integrity and honesty influence broader ideas of party. Obviously, it would seem on face value that legislative success and issue ownership should be more strongly tied to party brand than personal traits. Political parties are just that – political – and their stated purpose is political in nature. Given that American politics are more candidate-driven than in parliamentary systems, perhaps American voters are able to



leave issues of honesty with specific candidates and not apply any negative affect toward parties in general. Cox and McCubbins, in fact, make explicit the dichotomy between personal and party reputations, saying that “politicians need to evaluate the trade-off between the value of personal and party reputations” (1993, 419). We do, however, have some anecdotal evidence that personal integrity may rub off from candidate to candidate. For example, Al Gore’s problems with personal integrity were to some degree an extension of Bill Clinton’s issues in the same area. With Clinton’s name not on the ballot, those who viewed Clinton’s integrity as a problem had an outlet on the ballot in Al Gore (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Anecdotal evidence suggests that politicians themselves recognize an issue with keeping party members with a history of dishonest or scandalous behavior in the fold. With regard to Anthony Weiner’s run for New York City mayor, former New York State Democratic Party leader Judith Hope suggested Weiner’s remaining in the race following a series of scandals would be “bad for the party.”<sup>vi</sup>

Hayes (2005) developed a theory of trait ownership, suggesting that parties not only develop a reputation for being more adept in certain issue areas, but also take on the traits associated with those issues. Thus, parties become associated with personal traits such as morality. If political parties become associated with personal traits, it is a logical extension to ask in what way displayed personal traits, such as honesty, may affect party reputations in said areas. For example, if the parties are viewed a certain way on personal traits such as morality because of their stances on issues such as abortion, how do personal failings in the area of morality affect the overall party reputation?

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<sup>vi</sup> Glenn Blain and Kenneth Lovett, “Two former leaders of New York State Democratic Party suggest that Anthony Weiner and Eliot Spitzer to end their campaigns,” *New York Daily News*, 25 July 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/democratic-chairman-aim-spitzer-weiner-article-1.1408978> (accessed July 30, 2013).

Some prior work has linked personal and political appeal with respect to individual candidates. Jacobs and Shapiro (1994) found that John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign was built upon using public polling data on issues not for the sake of developing positions that matched the public's, but rather to use issue stances to burnish perceptions of Kennedy's personal traits as a caring man and a forward-thinker. Literature from the field of marketing has further fleshed out the link between individual and party reputations. Davies and Mian (2010) demonstrated that reputations of parties and party leadership in Great Britain are highly linked, with the leader's reputation seemingly influencing the party's reputation more so than vice-versa. This finding, however, says nothing of the personal qualities for which I seek to test. If, indeed, the personal is tied to the political, my dissertation will seek to determine how the personal is tied to conceptions of political parties.

Dishonesty, on its face, is a different trait than those envisioned in Hayes' theory of trait ownership (2005), in that it does not appear to be linked to particular policy but more a disconnect between words and actions. Given polling data and past research, it would be difficult to assume that either party "owns" the issue of honesty. On the one hand, Republicans are seen as more willing to campaign and attack their opponents on issues of character (Benoit 2004). However, Democrats are generally viewed as the party believed to govern "in a more honest and ethical way" according to 2014 polling data from Pew Research Center.<sup>vii</sup>

### *Media Effects*

A natural antecedent to the effects that perceptions of honesty have on political fortunes is the study of from where these perceptions stem. Much prior research in political science and

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<sup>vii</sup> "Deficit Reduction Declines as Policy Priority," *Pew Research Center*, 27 January 2014, <http://www.people-press.org/2014/01/27/deficit-reduction-declines-as-policy-priority/> (accessed 13 April 2015).

media studies would suggest that the media plays a large role in the formation of perceptions of candidates in any number of personality areas, including honesty.

Campaign media can be broken down into news media and media produced by candidates, campaigns, and interested parties themselves in the form of campaign advertisements. Extensive literature exists on the effects of advertisements on voting behavior. Campaign ads have been shown to substantively change voter preferences, albeit with a limited time window (Gerber et al. 2011). Certain types of advertisements have been shown to motivate in different ways, with ads cueing enthusiasm activating existing loyalties and participation while those that stimulate fear prompt vigilance and information seeking (Brader 2005).

There also exists a long line of research demonstrating that voters can actually learn from campaign advertisements. Campaign ads have been shown to inform the less-interested voter, providing him with useful and accurate issue information (Patterson and McClure 1976). Campaign ads in the 1992 election were demonstrated to contain a proportionally higher amount of actual policy information when compared to news sources such as newspapers and the network news (Just, Crigler, and Buhr 1999).

Moving from advertisements to news media, Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) demonstrated that television news media can inform the public as to which problems are important, and that this effect is particularly strong for the uninformed. News media has also been shown to influence political views. The so called “Fox News effect” was shown to increase Republican vote share in areas where the network was introduced (DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007). Such an effect was non-trivial, with Republican presidential candidates gaining between 0.4 and 0.7 points between 1996 and 2000. News media also influences perceptions of the perceived honesty of candidates. In 2000, the media painted Gore as the “lying panderer,”

making this matter salient for voters. For Bush, where media portrayals centered more on questions of intelligence, honesty was not as important (Norpoth 2009).

At least one study has examined both advertisements and news media as competing sources of information. Zhao and Chaffee (1995) found that effects of advertising on knowledge are usually less than effects of television news. In one highly competitive, ideologically-driven race, however, they found the effect of advertisements on knowledge to be stronger than that of television news.

These media effects are not simply dependent upon characteristics of the source; they are also dependent upon characteristics of the receiver of information. Past research has indicated that the effects of advertising are greater for those who have a moderate level of interest in politics (Huber and Arceneaux 2007, Zaller 1992). With regard to news media, people have been shown to vary greatly as far as which sources they are willing to accept as legitimate. Perceptions of media bias taint what viewers are willing to accept as news, with some research yielding moderate results suggesting individuals will be less likely to watch those sources they find untrustworthy (Tsfati and Cappella 2003). Voters have been shown to gravitate towards certain news sources based on political affiliation (Iyengar and Hahn 2009). Recent research has shown that new media (blogs, cable news, etc.) is increasingly of a partisan nature, relying on partisan filters more than traditional wire service outlets (Baum and Groeling 2008). Polling data, meanwhile, has indicated that liberals and conservatives can rarely agree on any sources that they trust or distrust (Pew Research Center 2014).

### *Motivated Reasoning*

Clearly, prior research has demonstrated that the media can influence not only what the public thinks, but what the public thinks is important. Yet, it would be incorrect to act as though these effects are uniform. Some of the aforementioned media research (Iyengar and Hahn 2009, Baum and Groeling 2008) has demonstrated that individuals vary in terms of how they are affected by media information. The literature on motivated reasoning provides us with some mechanisms behind these individual-level differences, while the literature on corrections provides us with some interesting examples of what happens when individuals try to update upon receiving new information.

Taber and Lodge find that attitudinally congruent arguments are rated as stronger than attitudinally incongruent arguments, suggesting that individuals are likely to discount arguments that disagree with their prior sentiment (2006). Further, Taber and Lodge find evidence of a disconfirmation bias, wherein respondents come up with critical thoughts arguing against information that contradicts their previous notions. If voters have previous notions on the credibility of certain news outlets, they should be biased against information which comes from these outlets. Essentially, much of my conception of “post-truth politics” stems from Lodge and Taber’s assessment that “citizens are often partisan in their political information processing” (2013).

Furthermore, prior work has demonstrated that motivated reasoning influences the news citizens are willing to view and accept as legitimate. Overall, Republican party identifiers, strong partisans, and those with high levels of political involvement all have been found to be more likely to believe the news media is biased against their views (Eveland and Shah 2003). Further, regardless of the actual bias of the media, even when partisans receive the same factual

information, they are likely to interpret it differently. Partisans view the world in a way which aligns with their political views. Jerit and Barabas (2012) find that partisans have higher levels of knowledge on factual information that aligns with their worldviews and lower levels of knowledge for information that conflicts with said views.

### *Corrections of Political Beliefs*

Motivated reasoning ties into another body of literature, dealing with how individuals are able to correct when they receive updated information. Nyhan and Reifler (2010) find that while, in some cases, corrections in the news may work to combat misperceptions, in other cases they actually strengthen misperceptions, such that people become more likely to believe misinformation than when given no correction at all. This backfiring effect was found for conservatives being given correct information that went against the word of a conservative political figure. For liberals, a more muted lack of correction was found when liberal talking points were corrected. At the very least, the authors demonstrate that the success of corrections may depend on the partisanship of the subject. Of additional interest in Nyhan and Reifler's work is the lack of an effect for the perceived ideology of the news source on the effectiveness of corrections.

Nyhan and Reifler examine how individuals are able to update factual beliefs on the veracity of specific information. Yet even if citizens are able to update on these very specific grounds, they may maintain affect towards parties and individuals based upon the prior incorrect information. Gilbert, Tafarodi, and Malone (1993) found that, while under load or time pressure, participants would make consequential decisions using information they knew to be false.

Literature in psychology on belief perseverance has demonstrated that individuals may use discredited information in decision making. Anderson, Lepper, and Ross (1980) found that participants would base their estimation of a statistical relationship largely on weak prior evidence, even after the evidence had been discredited.

More recently, Cobb, Nyhan, and Reifler (2013) found a “punishment” effect when positive information about a political figure is discredited. That is, feelings toward a figure were decreased following a correction of positive information even lower than they were at the point of the initial story. This is an important finding for my hypotheses, as I am interested in the effects of correction on feelings toward not just the target of the misinformation but the source, who in my experimental manipulation is another political actor.

Perceptions of candidate honesty are clearly important to voters. I hypothesize, and hope to demonstrate, that voters gain these perceptions from the media, and that these perceptions have important downstream consequences for politicians and parties.

### **Hypotheses**

At the heart of this proposal is a desire to determine 1) the effects the media has in shaping perceptions of candidate honesty and 2) the effects of these perceptions of candidate honesty on broader perceptions of the candidate as well as perceptions of party reputation and brand. In accordance with previous research on media effects and political engagement, I believe that media influences perceptions of candidate honesty, but that there exists an interaction between these effects and partisanship, such that voters are more likely to perceive of candidate dishonesty when the candidate is a member of the out-party and less likely when the candidate is a member of their own party. I believe this interaction applies also to sources, such

that if voters believe the source of the information regarding candidate dishonesty to be at odds with their own personal partisanship, they will be less likely to believe this information. Finally, I believe that these perceptions of candidate honesty have important downstream effects for party reputation and brand, as well as for overall favorability of candidates even after specific questions of dishonesty may have been discredited or answered. More specifically, I propose the following nine hypotheses:

*H1, explored in chapter 2: Individuals who are more engaged in the election and watch campaign programming are more likely to believe candidates are behaving dishonestly.*

Citizens acquire information on candidate dishonesty, and those who are engaged in the election and actively viewing campaign programs are more likely to receive this information and perceive of candidate dishonesty.

As to why we should expect a main effect of engagement with presidential campaigns regardless of content, I posit, based on prior research, that exposure to campaign media is, by its very definition, exposure to negative campaign media; that is to say, the campaign media environment is inherently negative. In major national sources such as Time and Newsweek, unfavorable references to major-party nominees overtook positive references by the 1988 election and this pattern continued into 1992. Journalists frequently describe presidential campaigns as races in which neither candidate is worthy of election, and candidates are described as merely being the lesser of two evils. Furthermore, coverage points toward perceptions of candidates as dishonest, even in areas in which candidates have historically been shown to be honest, such as keeping promises made as candidates (Patterson 1993). While Thomas E. Patterson found this trend toward negativity in political coverage in examining elections up to and including 1992, evidence from recent elections suggests that negative coverage remains a



cornerstone of American political media (Pew Research Center 2008; Pew Research Center 2012).

*H2, explored in chapter 2: The effects of citizen engagement and television viewing on perceptions of candidate dishonesty will be greater when the dishonest candidate does not share a political party with the citizen.*

Because citizens are partisan in their information processing (Taber and Lodge 2013), they will discount information on the dishonesty of a favored candidate. While an affective tipping point has been shown to exist after which motivated reasoners begin to accurately update their perceptions when changes in the information environment occur (Redlawsk, Civettini, and Emmerson 2010), this requires a critical mass of information. Because this critical mass must accrue, citizens engaging in motivated reasoning will need to be more engaged and receive more information than they would if the candidate is of the opposite political party.

*H3, explored in chapters 2 and 4: Individual candidate dishonesty will negatively affect party reputation, but less so for co-partisans.*

Given the ties between individual candidates and parties and the fact that parties are now seen as possessing personal traits (Hayes 2005), increases in candidate dishonesty will correspond to damage to party reputation. Given partisan motivation, however, candidate dishonesty should do less damage to party reputation when dishonest candidates and voters share the same party affiliation.

*H4, explored in chapter 3: When advertisements or national news stories focus on candidate dishonesty, perceptions of candidate dishonesty will increase.*

In order to believe candidates are dishonest, citizens must acquire this information. Citizens acquire this information from the media, and citizens exposed to campaign

advertisements or news sources trumpeting a candidate's dishonesty will be more likely to believe the candidate to be dishonest. Given prior research showing mixed results for the strength of campaign news relative to advertisements (Zhao and Chaffee 1995), I have no hypothesis as to which effect will be stronger.

*H5, explored in chapter 3: There is an interaction between engagement with a campaign and media content on perceptions of candidate honesty.*

Zaller's "Receive-Accept-Sample" model posits that information must be received in order to have an effect on the individual (1992). While tuning into the election should allow for some of the information to reach the voter, and while there is a declining portion of viewers that could be termed an "inadvertent audience" (Bennett and Iyengar 2008), those who are the most affected by media information on candidate honesty should be those who are both tuned in and receive greater amounts of information. Huber and Arceneaux (2007) find a similar interaction effect when looking at persuasive effects of campaign advertisements; those who are most persuadable are given messages about the campaign and are interested enough in the campaign to receive the messages (but not so engaged that motivated reasoning leads them to be immovable).

*H6, explored in chapter 4: News media updates on information regarding candidate honesty will affect perceptions of candidate honesty.*

This hypothesis is largely a precursor to H7, below. News media updates have an effect on perceptions of candidate honesty, and in H7 I hypothesize that this effect varies based on perceived alignment between citizens' partisanship and the partisanship of the news network.

*H7, explored in chapter 4: Citizens will be more likely to accurately update their perceptions of candidate honesty when the news source giving them information about candidate honesty is perceived to be in alignment with their political views.*

This hypothesis is similar in reasoning to H2. As citizens are partisan in their information processing (Taber and Lodge 2013), and individual news sources may be perceived as partisan (Eveland and Shah 2003), citizens will be less likely to believe information on candidate honesty when they believe it comes from a source that does not align with their political views.

Here, I hope my results diverge from those of Nyhan and Reifler (2010), who found no effect of source on correction. I believe there is reason to expect an effect here and not in their work, however; my interest is in a difficult to define trait of honesty, whereas their work was more reliant upon specific factual information. Honesty is an issue on which the responsibilities of news and commentary are blurred more than they are in a question of information. Just as I expect to find an effect for the relationship between subject and candidate partisanship, I expect to find a relationship between subject and news source “partisanship,” given what is known about the perceptions people have about the ideological bent of various news sources.

*H8, explored in chapter 4: When a candidate is made to look more honest through a media correction of prior information, or an opponent more dishonest, agreement between source partisanship and candidate partisanship will weaken the effect or the perceived veracity of the reporting.*

This hypothesis follows a similar logic to H7, and is based upon motivated reasoning. If a candidate is made to look more honest through a correction by a network that would seemingly share an ideological viewpoint with that candidate, or more dishonest by a network seemingly in ideological opposition to a candidate, citizens will see a potential partisan bias on the part of the network. This bias will affect perceived candidate honesty by weakening the effect of the correction and trust in the report.

*H9, explored in chapter 4: Regardless of citizens' ability to update on factual information on dishonest acts by political figures, negative affect will remain.*

Psychology research has demonstrated that citizens will use information, even after it has been discredited, in making important decisions (Anderson, Lepper, and Ross 1980; Gilbert, Tafarodi, and Malone 1993). Thus, even when citizens are informed that information they were given about a candidate's dishonesty is false, they should still use this false information in making decisions about the personal characteristics of the candidate.

To address the aforementioned hypotheses, I use several data sources. To examine the effects of media usage on perceptions of candidate honesty, I use the ANES cumulative file with data from each presidential election from 1992 to 2012 (Chapter 2). To look at the effect of media content on perceptions of candidate honesty, I combine advertising data from the Wisconsin Ad Project in 2000 and 2008 with national media data and daily repeated cross-sectional data taken from the National Annenberg Election Survey (Chapter 3). Finally, to examine the updating of perceptions of honesty as a result of media cues, I design an experiment which will be administered to a national online sample (Chapter 4). This dissertation contains three analysis chapters, as well as a concluding chapter with some overall implications and directions for future work.

## Chapter 2: Media Usage and Perceptions of Candidate Honesty

*Hypotheses explored in this chapter:*

*H1: Individuals who are more engaged in the election and watch campaign programming are more likely to believe candidates are behaving dishonestly.*

*H2: The effects of citizen engagement and television viewing on perceptions of candidate dishonesty will be greater when the dishonest candidate does not share a political party with the citizen.*

*H3 (also explored in chapter 4): Individual candidate dishonesty will negatively affect party reputation, but less so for co-partisans.*

*“It’s not what the political system needs, it is not what the party needs, it is not what anybody needs. It’s bad for democracy.”*

*-Judith Hope*

Judith Hope, former New York State Democratic Party Chairperson, gave the aforementioned quote in reference to the candidacies for New York State public office of Anthony Weiner and Elliot Spitzer. She was joined by another former chair, Herman “Denny” Farrell, in expressing the idea that two men with rather sleazy personal lives running for elected office on the Democratic party platform was damaging to the party brand.<sup>viii</sup> But is it? In this first quantitative chapter, I examine a trait at the heart of the Spitzer and Weiner scandals: dishonesty. I examine this trait from two perspectives. First, I look at the formation of perceptions of dishonesty and their potential roots in media usage by citizens. Secondly, I examine the fear expressed by Hope and Farrell: that candidate dishonesty may damage the party’s reputation.

### **Background and Conceptualization**

In this chapter, I examine how individual-level variables such as media consumption and campaign interest affect perceptions of candidate honesty. Additionally, I look at how these perceptions of candidate honesty relate to perceptions about political parties in general. At the heart of the idea that consumption and campaign interest play into perceptions of candidate honesty is the concept that, in order for elite discourse to affect individual political opinions, such discourse must be received (Zaller 1992). Zaller (1992) as well as Huber and Arceneaux

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<sup>viii</sup> Glenn Blain and Kenneth Lovett, “Two former leaders of New York State Democratic Party suggest that Anthony Weiner and Eliot Spitzer to end their campaigns,” New York Daily News, 25 July 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/democratic-chairman-aim-spitzer-weiner-article-1.1408978> (accessed July 30, 2013).

(2007) assert that it is those of moderate education who are most likely to be persuaded by campaigns, as they are tuned in but not so tuned in as to be locked to a particular candidate. The sentiments of Zaller, Huber, and Arceneaux build on Converse (1966), who writes of the least informed individuals who hold a critical mass in elections, because they hold more malleable political views.

Here, though, I am interested not in persuasion but mere perception, so I don't believe a cap exists on the relationship between campaign attention and perceived candidate dishonesty. Persuasion occurs around a tipping point, whereas perceptions of dishonesty can theoretically increase far past the point when a citizen has decided to vote against a candidate. I hypothesize that media exposure and campaign interest will increase negative perceptions of candidate honesty, although given work on motivated skepticism (Taber and Lodge 2006), I predict an interaction magnifying this effect for out-party members.

It should be noted here that I do not include a measure of media content (advertisements or news media); I don't believe it is necessary. As mentioned earlier, research has shown that campaigns as a whole have been increasingly negative since 1988 (Lau, Sigelman, and Rovner 2007), and thus I believe that exposure to campaigns is, by its very definition, exposure to negative campaigning and questions surrounding candidates' personal integrity. This is an assumption I must make when crafting similar models from 1992 through 2012, as there exists no reliable data on negative campaigning prior to 1996 (Lau and Rovner 2009). Negative campaigning in American politics has been called "pervasive" (Lau and Rovner 2009). Data from 2008 and 2012 further demonstrates a negative media environment for candidates across parties. 2008 coverage was described as not so much portraying Barack Obama in a positive light as in a less-negative light than his opponent, John McCain. According to a Pew Research Center

study, 57% of stories about John McCain were negative in tone over a six-week period after the conventions and through the final debate. For Obama, while the coverage was less clearly negative (29%), negative and mixed stories (64%) outnumbered positive stories (36%) (Project for Excellence in Journalism 2008). By 2012, both candidates received more negative coverage than positive coverage, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and blogs) provided coverage that was even harsher in tone than mainstream sources (Pew Research Center 2012). Numerous studies of media coverage of presidential campaigns dating back to 1980 have all shown that candidates receive high levels of criticism from the press, and bad press outweighs good press for many of these candidates (Patterson 1993).

Each election from 1992 through 2012 has brought with it questions about the honesty of one or more of the candidates: George H.W. Bush's "read my lips" tax pledge in 1992, Clinton's personal dalliances in 1992 and 1996, Gore's well-documented honesty issues in 2000, Kerry's flip-flopping and Bush's handling of the Iraq war in 2004, questions surrounding Obama's citizenship, religion, and past associates in 2008, and Benghazi and Romney's taxes in 2012. Negative advertisements have been increasingly popular in the past few decades, and the vast majority of media coverage of advertisements over the past two decades has focused upon negative advertisements, with the exception of 1992 (Geer 2012).

In any event, examining the effect of exposure to campaigns on perceptions of honesty will either yield a relationship which works unidirectionally regardless of candidate and content, or a picture in which sign and significance varies by partisanship of the candidate and the voter, suggesting that content and candidate concerns are indeed of some import. While I expect to see some relationship between media usage and perceived honesty regardless of content, in later



chapters I investigate the relationship between media usage, media content, and perceptions of candidate honesty.

Given theory, I hypothesize the following:

*H1: Individuals who are more engaged in the election and watch campaign programming are more likely to believe candidates are behaving dishonestly.*

Exposure to the campaign is, by its very nature, exposure to negative campaigning, and thus as people are more exposed to campaigning, they will gain a more negative view of the candidates, including a more negative view of their honesty.

*H2: The effects of citizen engagement and television viewing on perceptions of candidate dishonesty will be greater when the dishonest candidate does not share a political party with the citizen.*

Given motivated reasoning, citizens should be more affected by the campaign in increasing perceptions of candidate dishonesty when they do not share a party with a candidate, since they will be more resistant to portrayals of candidate dishonesty when they are motivated by their partisanship to trust in their preferred candidate. Theoretically, a significant interaction between media usage and party identification could also be a sign of media selection effects, as well.

*H3 (also explored in chapter 4): Individual candidate dishonesty will negatively affect party reputation, but less so for co-partisans.*

Dishonesty by a candidate should affect feelings towards his party, although co-partisans will be motivated to attribute such dishonesty to an individual rather than a trait of their party.

## Who Owns Honesty?

Before delving into a series of statistical analyses designed to parse out the various causes of perceptions of candidate honesty, I seek to demonstrate that honesty is, unlike other traits like compassion and morality, owned by neither party. While the theory of issue ownership (Petrocik 1996) emphasized that voters come to view certain issue areas as being the strengths of differing political parties, the theory of trait ownership (Hayes 2005) states that parties are perceived as “owning” personal traits as well. Republicans own leadership and morality; Democrats own compassion and empathy. To look at how honesty has been viewed over time, I examine mean differences in perceived honesty for Democratic and Republican presidential candidates across six versions of the ANES (1992 through 2012). I look at mean perceived honesty for each yearly sample in its entirety as well as, following the work of Hayes (2005), for independents only, with the idea that while partisans may follow their partisanship to a positive conclusion regarding a particular trait, independents will not have such an inclination and thus provide a better indication of perceived traits. Unlike later analyses in this chapter, honesty measures in Table 2.1 are unstandardized.

Table 2.1: Paired T-Tests, Perceived Candidate Honesty, 1992-2012 ANES, Dem. Vs. GOP Candidates						
	All			Independents Only		
	Mean Dem.	Mean GOP	Sig.	Mean Dem.	Mean GOP	Sig.
<b>1992 (4-Pt.)</b>	2.48	<b>2.64</b>	<b>.000</b>	2.42	<b>2.58</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>1996 (4-Pt.)</b>	2.26	<b>2.82</b>	<b>.000</b>	2.17	<b>2.72</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>2000 (4-Pt.)</b>	2.97	<b>3.09</b>	<b>.001</b>	2.88	<b>3.02</b>	<b>.007</b>
<b>2004 (4-Pt.)</b>	3.00	2.92	.060	<b>3.04</b>	2.84	<b>.002</b>
<b>2008 (4-Pt.)</b>	<b>2.83</b>	2.55	<b>.000</b>	<b>2.71</b>	2.51	<b>.002</b>
<b>2008 (5-Pt.)</b>	<b>3.39</b>	2.87	<b>.000</b>	<b>3.25</b>	2.93	<b>.000</b>
<b>2012 (5-Pt.)</b>	<b>3.09</b>	2.47	<b>.000</b>	<b>2.83</b>	2.49	<b>.000</b>
<b>2012 (5-Pt.), Face-to-Face, no oversample</b>	<b>3.16</b>	2.46	<b>.000</b>	<b>2.93</b>	2.51	<b>.000</b>

Unsurprisingly, Republican candidates George H.W. Bush and Bob Dole were perceived as more honest than Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush was perceived as more honest than Al Gore. 2004 can be seen as a tipping point. Among all voters, there is not a statistically significant difference in perceived honesty between Bush and John Kerry ( $p < .1$ ), but among independents, Kerry was perceived as more honest. In the past two US presidential elections, Barack Obama has held a statistically significant advantage in honesty over both John McCain and Mitt Romney, both among the electorate at-large and independents. While this advantage may be amplified due to oversamples in the 2008 and 2012 iterations of the ANES, removing the oversample for 2012 produces a similar edge for Obama in 2012, both among all respondents and independents (the oversample in 2008 is not separately identifiable and therefore couldn't be removed). Thus, honesty does not appear to be a trait "owned" by either party specifically, but rather a trait that both parties have held to their advantage at differing points over the past twenty years. While Republicans held an edge in perceived honesty throughout the era of Bill Clinton and the candidacy of his Vice President, Al Gore, Democrats began to take hold of perceived honesty in 2004, and have held it throughout both of Barack Obama's campaigns. Attempts to pool all years aren't particularly valuable due to the much higher number of cases in 2012. Combining all years (with honesty recoded to run from 0 to 1) yields a significant Democratic advantage in perceived honesty ( $p < .001$ ), but removing 2012 yields a significant Republican advantage ( $p < .001$ ). In any event, perceived honesty appears to be driven more by individual candidates than by any lasting affiliation with party. Thus, when I examine the relationship between perceived candidate honesty and feelings toward the parties, I am likely not talking about a phenomenon which affects a party for a period longer than a couple of elections.

If honesty is a trait which neither party holds a firm grasp on, and one on which party identification alone does not provide an explanation, from where do voters come to perceive candidate honesty? I turn next to the ANES to look at how campaigns and campaign programming may play a role in shaping perceptions of candidate honesty.

### **Campaign Attention and Programs Viewed**

#### *Variables*

The dependent variable in these first models in Chapter 2 comes from a measure of perceived candidate honesty asked in the ANES for many years, asking respondents how well the word “honest” or “dishonest” describes a candidate. Unfortunately, the ANES cumulative file does not include this measure of perceived candidate honesty, as the item has changed several times over the years. Thus, I add this question to the cumulative file. To allow for some comparability, measures of honesty are standardized by year for each candidate, and greater values represent greater perceived honesty.

I then estimate six total models. Because variables such as partisanship will have different effects on perceptions of candidate honesty depending upon the partisanship of the candidate, I run one model for Democratic presidential candidates from 1992 through 2012 and a separate model for Republicans. I also run separate models using campaign interest and viewing of campaign programs as independent variables, as well as a model that includes both interest and viewing of campaign programs.

Partisanship is included as a control variable, as it should have an effect on perceptions of candidate honesty, such that partisans view their co-partisans as more honest. I include dummy

variables for Democratic and Republican party identifiers, not including so-called “independent leaners,” due to the volatility of partisan identities within this group (Norpoth and Velez 2012).

As my measure of media consumption, I use a question asking if the respondent has watched any campaign programs on television and, if so, how many. This question has been asked over the past several iterations of the ANES, worded slightly differently over the years, and I add it to the cumulative file. This variable is coded from 0 to 3, including “no” programs, “just one or two,” “several,” or “a good many,” and higher values indicate a greater number of programs viewed. A measure of campaign interest is also included, using a question asking respondents to select if they were “not much,” “somewhat,” or “very much” interested in the campaign. While a question about campaign interest is not specifically a question about media consumption, interest often manifests itself in higher levels of knowledge from exposure to television programs (Chew and Palmer 1994). Thus, because those who are more interested in the campaign are more likely to receive televised messages, this measure of campaign interest is related to my media usage hypothesis. This variable is coded from 0 to 2, and higher values indicate greater interest.

One of my other research questions in this chapter involves a potential interaction between these campaign interest and media consumption variables and party identification. That is, as one’s party identification is less strongly attached to the party of the candidate, the more likely they are to pick up on candidate dishonesty when invested in the campaign. This would occur because they are less motivated to ignore negative campaign information, or because Democrats and Republicans receive differing messages from the campaign. Thus, the model includes an interaction between the measures of Democratic and Republican partisanship and both the media consumption and campaign interest variables. As with all models in this chapter,

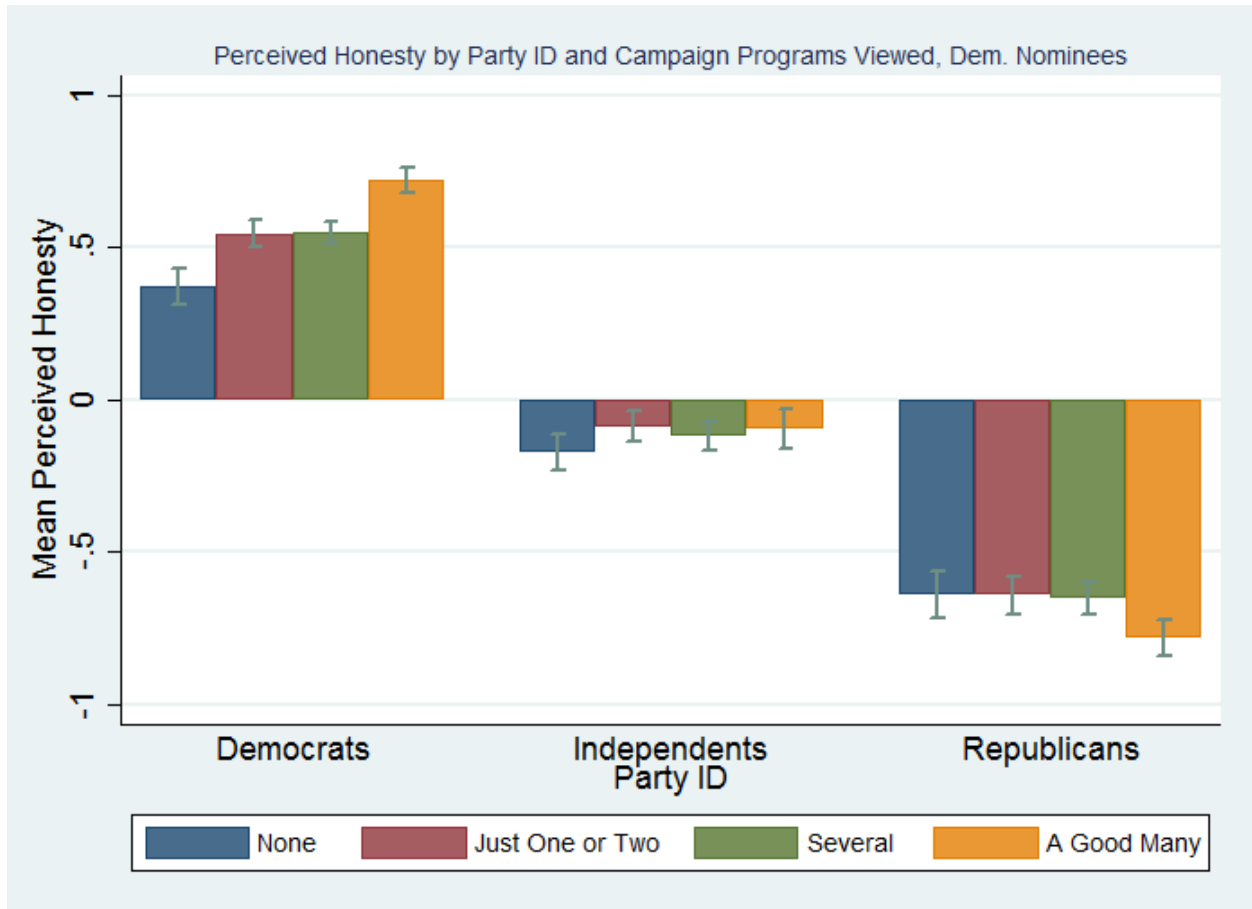
cases with missing data were removed, and the models are weighted for unequal probability of selection.

## Results

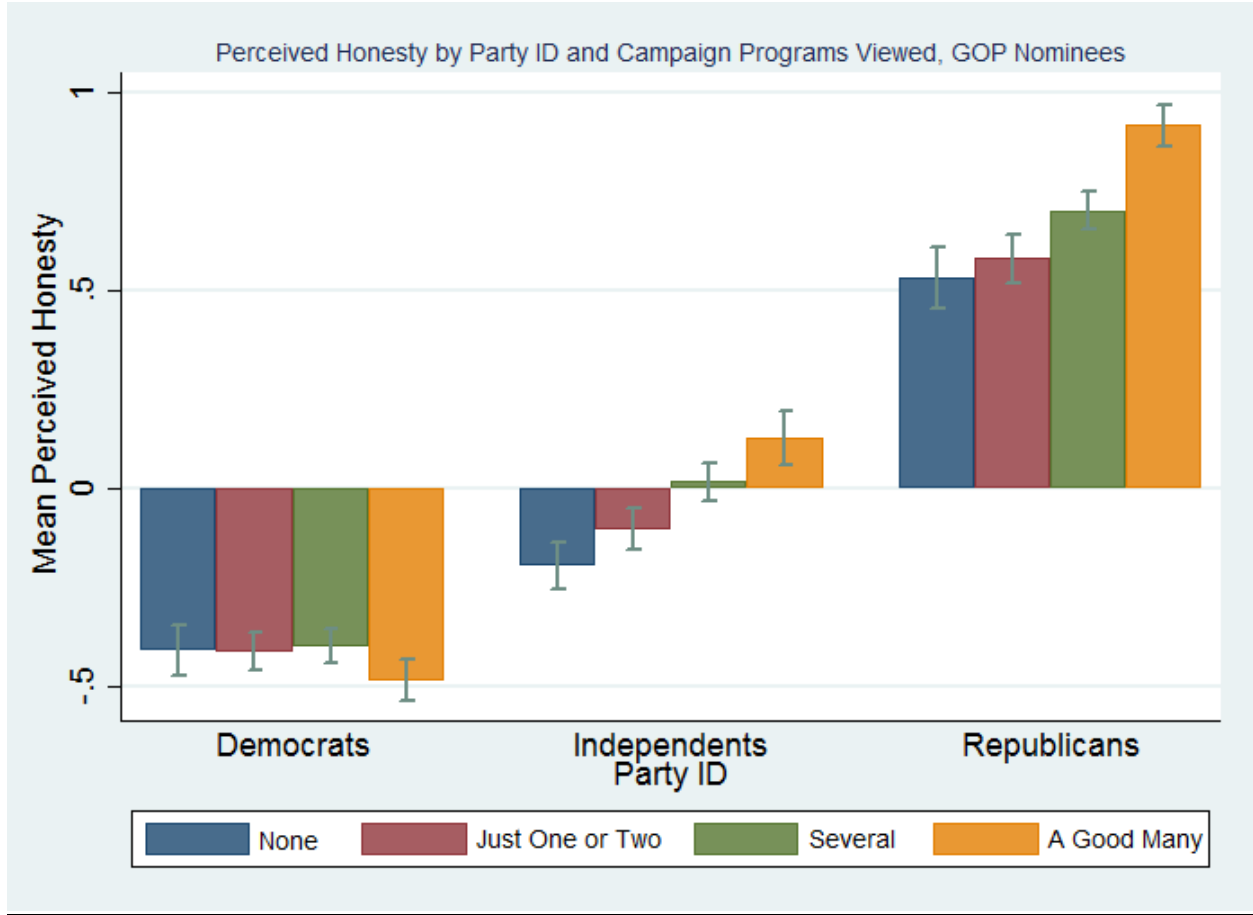
### *Graphic Representation*

First, I examine the relationship between these campaign interaction variables (interest and viewing of campaign programs) graphically, looking at means of perceived honesty across various levels of interest and viewership as well as party identification (see Figures 2.1-2.4).

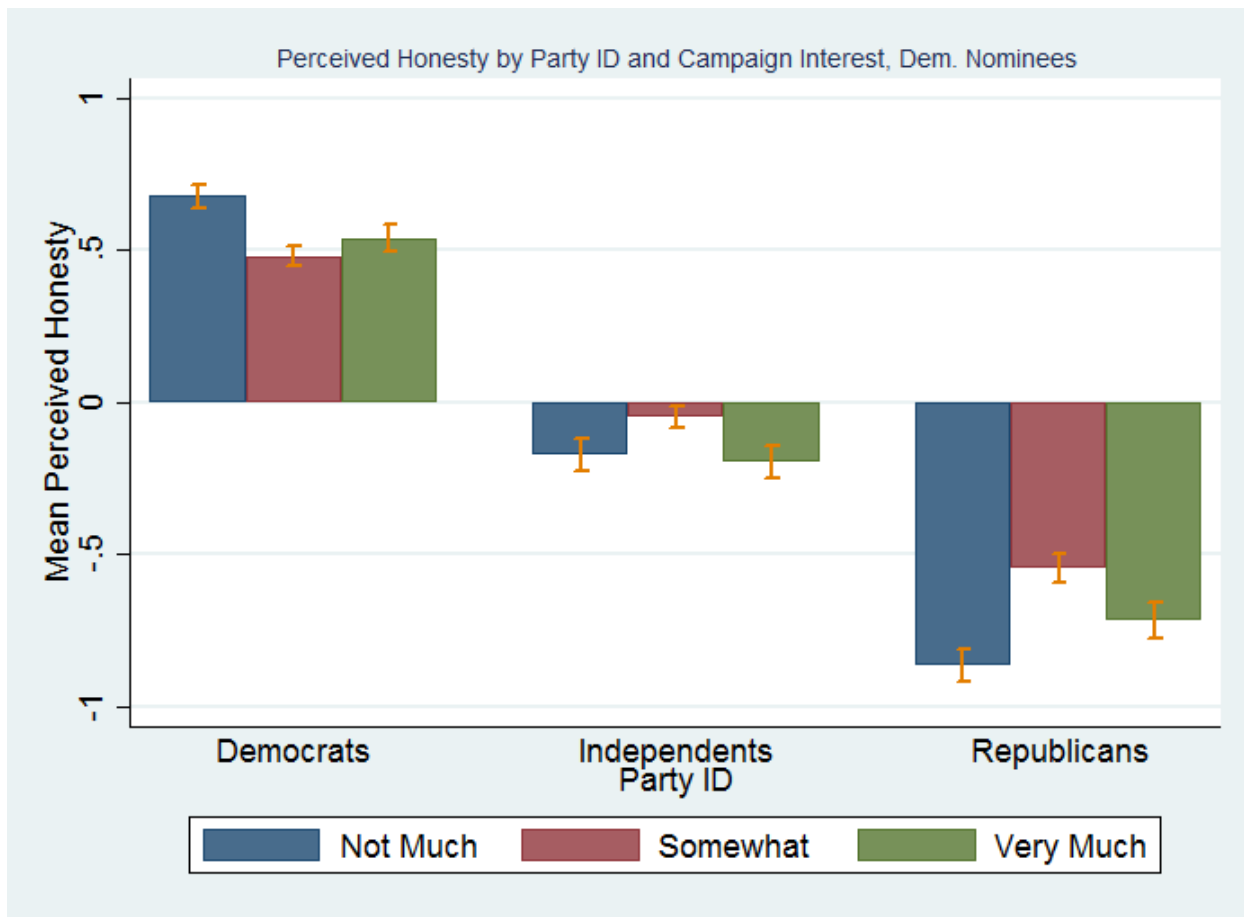
**Figure 2.1**



**Figure 2.2**

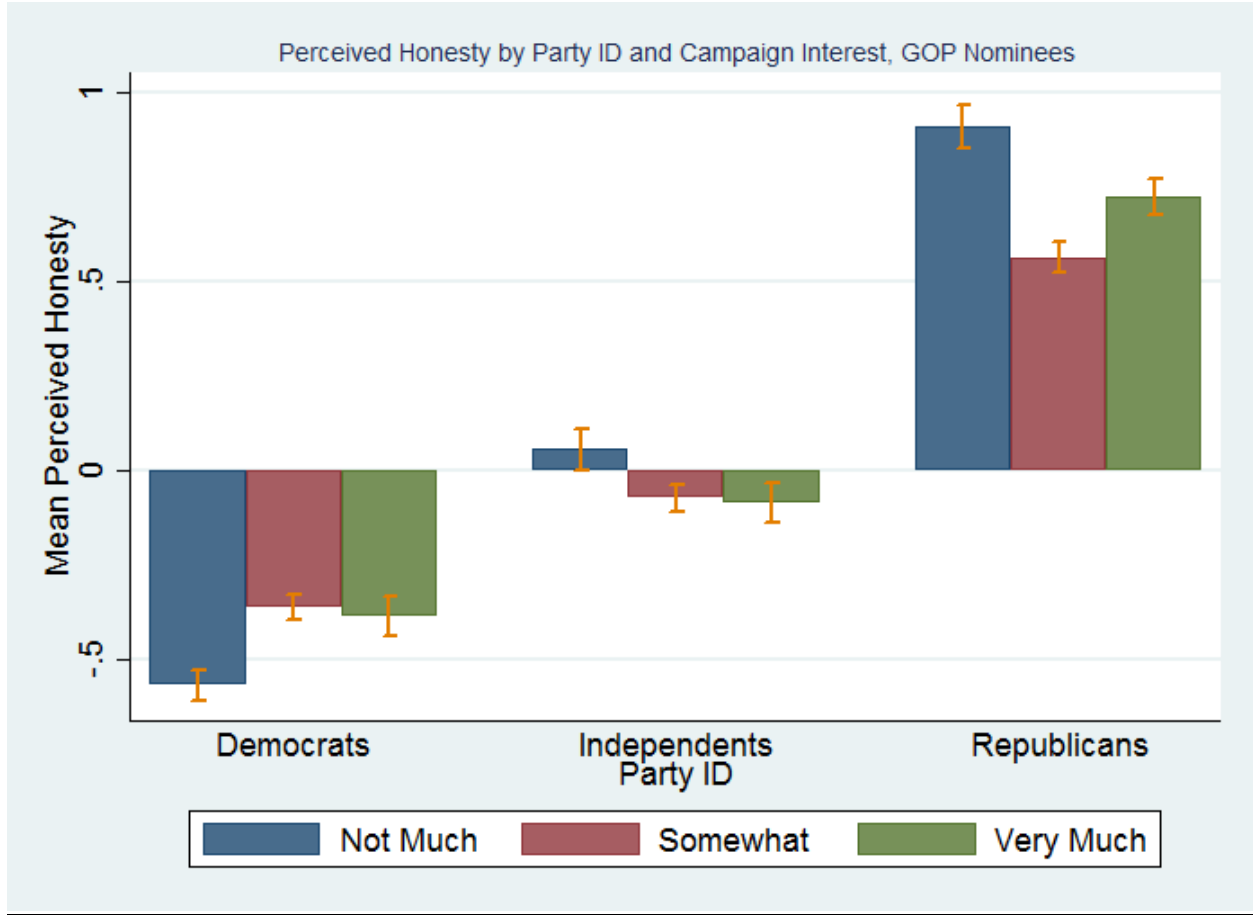


**Figure 2.3**





**Figure 2.4**



As demonstrated in Figure 2.1, some patterns begin to emerge among partisan identifiers but less so for independents and leaners. The more campaign programs Democrats watch, the more they believe their party’s candidates for president to be honest. For Republican identifiers and Democratic candidates, the relationship is less strong, although it appears that for those Republicans who watched the most campaign programs, Democrats were perceived as most dishonest. In Figure 2.2, we see a similar pattern for high-usage Republicans when evaluating Republican candidates as we saw for high-usage Democrats evaluating Democratic candidates. That is, they view their party’s candidates as most honest as they view the most programs. Among Democrats evaluating GOP candidates, there is relatively little difference between those who watched many or few campaign programs, although those who watched the most programs

appear to view Republicans as the most dishonest. Independents appear to view Republican candidates as more honest as they view more programs. Of note among those who did not identify as Democrats or Republicans is that these Independents tend to be more conservative than liberal, with about 16.81% identifying as liberal and 24.81% identifying as conservative.

The relationship between campaign interest and perceived honesty is perhaps a more interesting and convoluted tale. The pattern here does not appear to be linear; rather, for both Democrats and Republicans, those who were “not much” or “very much” interested in the campaign appear more extreme (in the expected partisan direction) in their judgments of candidate honesty for Democratic candidates (Figure 2.3). Similarly, for Republican candidates, Republican party identifiers who are “not much” or “very much” interested in the campaign appear to view their co-partisan candidates as more honest than those who take moderate interest in the campaign (Figure 2.4). Democrats who express the least interest in campaigns, meanwhile, appear to view Republican candidates as less honest than those with greater levels of interest. Notably, Independents (coded here as those who did not identify as Democrats or Republicans) are not as extreme in their candidate evaluations. For Democratic candidates, Independents who are “not much” or “very much” interested view Democrats as less honest than those who are “somewhat” interested. The “U” shaped patterns on interest could correspond to the “Receive-Accept-Sample” model (Zaller 1992), with those of moderate interest levels interested enough and malleable enough to be influenced by campaign effects, which appear to moderate views on candidate honesty. As these graphs provide a nice jumping-off point, I next turn to some regression models to further assess the relationship between campaign program viewership, campaign interest, and perceptions of candidate honesty.

### *Predictors of Candidate Honesty*

Not surprisingly, the most consistent predictor of perceptions of candidate honesty, across models, is sharing a party with the candidate. From 1992 through 2012, self-identified Democrats perceive the Democratic nominee as more honest (see Table 2.2). Similarly, for Republican candidates over those years, citizens who identified as Republicans perceived the Republican candidate as more honest. Not surprisingly, Republican identifiers also are more likely to find Democratic candidates less honest, while self-professed Democrats view Republican candidates as less honest, although this effect is only marginally significant in the interest and programs model ( $p < .1$ ). With the exception of the aforementioned marginal result, coefficients for the effect of party identification on perceived candidate honesty are significant for both parties across all six models estimated in Table 2.2

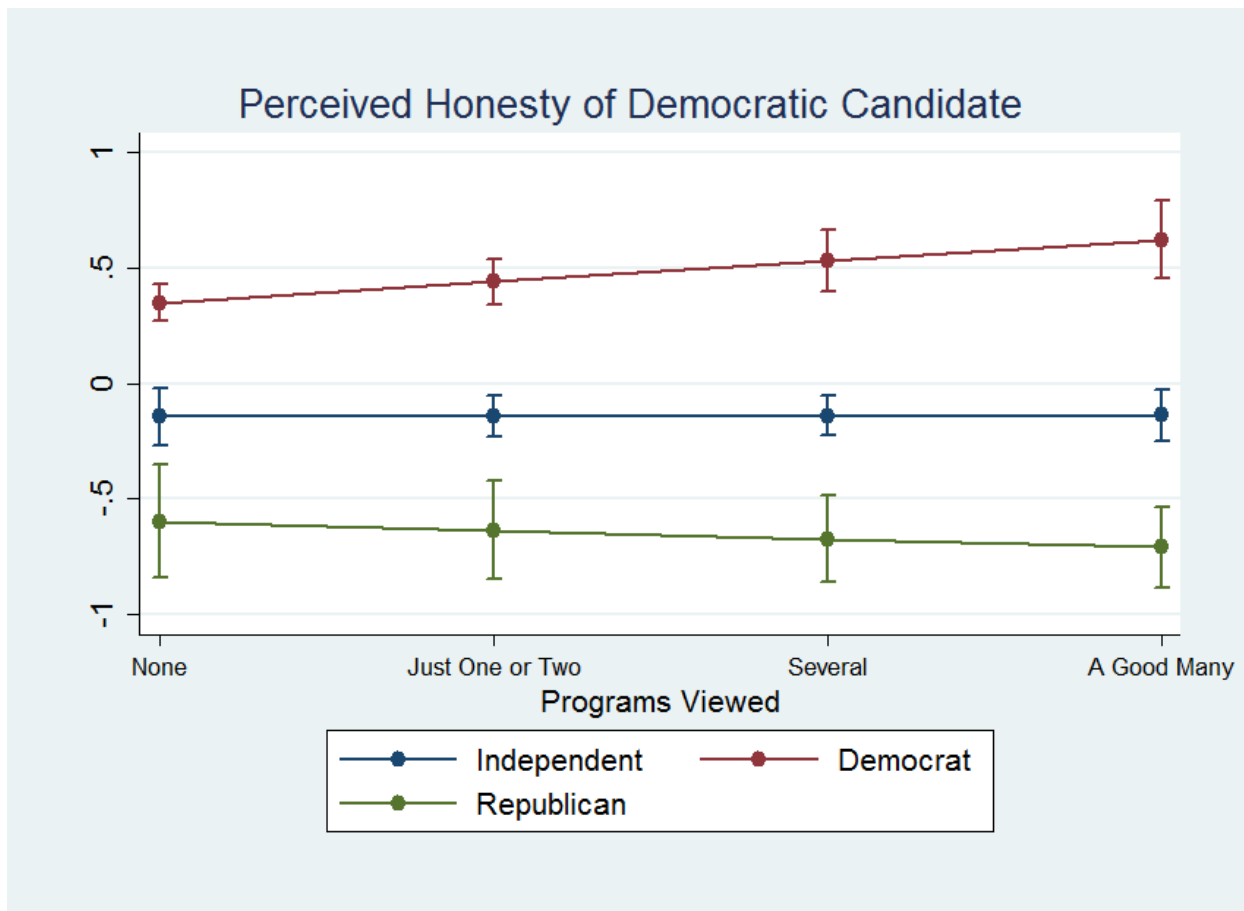
<b>Table 2.2: Interest and Programs Viewed on Perceived Honesty, 1992-2012</b>						
	<b>Democratic Candidates</b>			<b>Republican Candidates</b>		
	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Interest &amp; Programs</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Interest &amp; Programs</b>
<b>Dem. PID</b>	.620 (.217)**	.484 (.101)***	.519 (.181)**	-.465 (.186)*	-.189 (.096)*	-.307 (.166)#
<b>Rep. PID</b>	-.568 (.138)***	-.460 (.065)***	-.514 (.131)***	.700 (.172)***	.624 (.067)***	.635 (.159)***
<b>Interest</b>	-.034 (.022)	-	-.046 (.022)*	-.033 (.086)	-	-.066 (.045)
<b>Programs</b>	-	-.002 (.035)	.003 (.027)	-	.108 (.022)***	.114 (.016)***
<b>Int.*Dem.</b>	.006 (.130)	-	-.024 (.099)	.098 (.120)	-	.148 (.063)*
<b>Int.*Rep.</b>	.037 (.091)	-	.059 (.081)	.011 (.109)	-	.002 (.107)
<b>Prog.*Dem.</b>	-	.090 (.025)***	.088 (.021)***	-	-.120 (.021)***	-.139 (.030)***
<b>Prog.*Rep.</b>	-	-.038 (.017)*	-.040 (.016)**	-	.028 (.011)**	.025 (.011)*
<b>Constant</b>	-.104 (.054)#	-.136 (.074)#	-.097 (.079)	-.017 (.111)	-.195 (.027)***	-.145 (.064)*
<b>Random Effects (Est. &amp; St. Error)</b>						
<b>Year</b>	.070 (.023)	.069 (.025)	.064 (.023)	.043 (.013)	.044 (.016)	.032 (.011)
<b>Residual</b>	.886 (.035)	.884 (.035)	.881 (.037)	.899 (.028)	.892 (.028)	.890 (.032)
<b>N</b>	13578	12324	11829	13637	12372	11882
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>						

The measure of campaign interest is significant and negative as a predictor of perceived candidate honesty for Democrats in the interest and programs model, although approaching marginal significance for Republican candidates in the interest and programs model in the same direction. The measure of campaign programs viewed is significant only for Republican candidates. Campaign programs viewed are associated with a statistically significant increase in perceived Republican candidate honesty, even when controlling for interest in the campaign ( $p < .001$ ). As to why this would be the case, the answer might lie in the theory of trait ownership. While neither party owns the issue of honesty per se, the Republican Party is generally seen as the party of “morality.” Standardized perceived morality is correlated with standardized

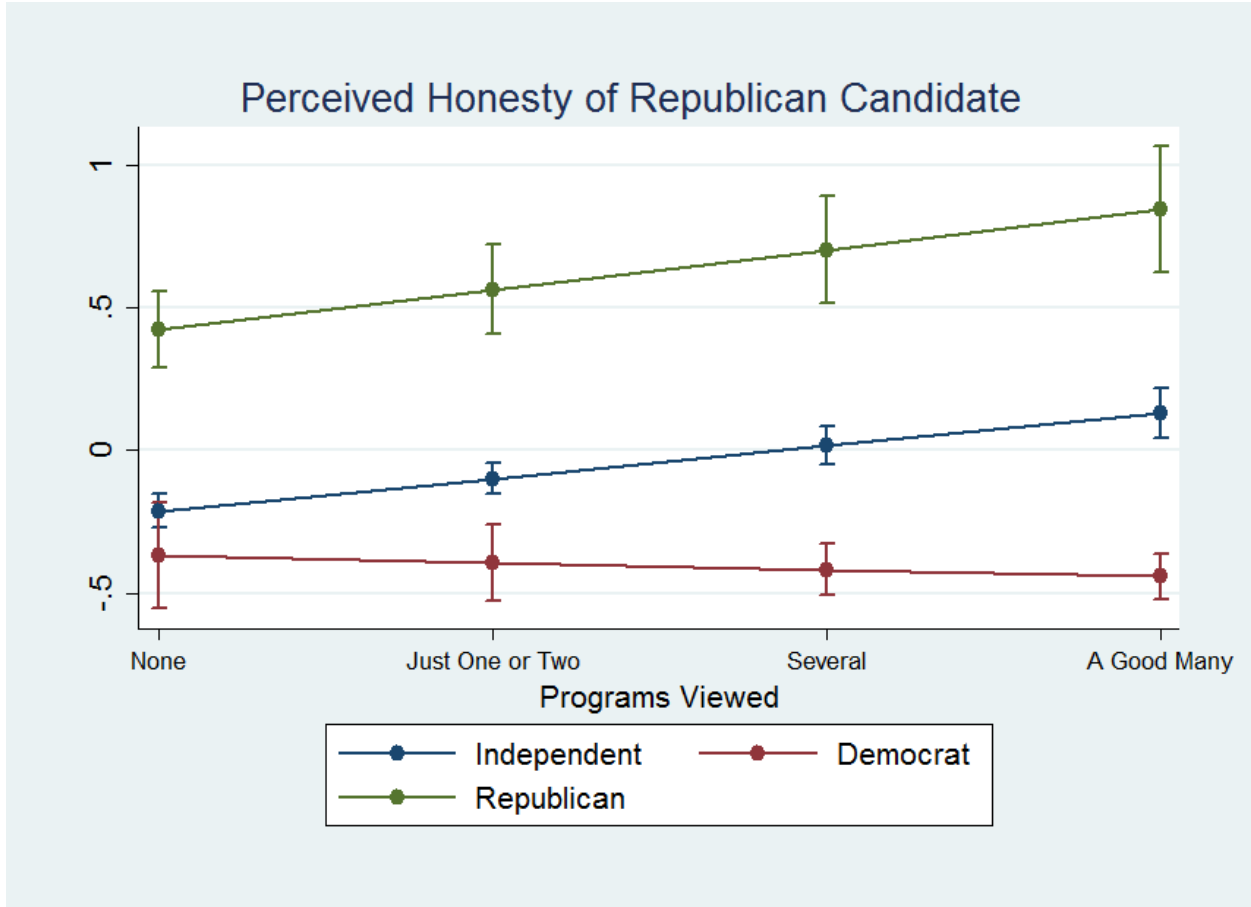
perceived honesty (.57 for Republican presidential candidates and .56 for Democratic candidates, 1992-2012), and this perceived morality predicts perceived honesty, even accounting for party identification of respondents and among only self-identified independents. Thus, one possible explanation for this finding would be that Republicans “own” morality and to a degree the related concept of honesty, and thus as voters watch more campaign programs and become more familiar with the candidates, their preexisting stereotypes of trait ownership are reinforced. This would follow a similar logic to Bishin, Stevens, and Wilson (2006), who assert that the effect of honesty on vote choice was greater for Bush than Gore in 2000 because Bush owned the trait of morality. So, while I would assert that neither party owns honesty, owning the related trait of morality could lead to campaign effects that influence perceived honesty. An explanation for the negative sign and statistical significance on campaign interest for Democratic candidates would follow a similar logic. Democrats don’t own morality, and honesty and morality are related, so interest in the campaign shifts voters away from perceiving Democrats as honest.

The results of the models using number of campaign programs watched as an independent variable suggest some interaction between party identification and programs, with significant interaction coefficients on the interaction of both party dummies and programs viewed from both Democratic and Republican candidates. As demonstrated in Figure 2.5, Democrats view Democratic candidates as more honest as they view more programs, while for Independents there is little movement and for Republicans a slight, although non-significant, downward slope. Republicans and Independents, meanwhile, view GOP candidates as more honest as they view more campaign programs, while for Democrats there is virtually no movement in perceived honesty across categories of campaign programs viewed (Figure 2.6).

**Figure 2.5**



**Figure 2.6**



Ultimately, however, this strong interaction between party identification and viewing campaign programs on television could be a sign of a couple different factors at work. As mentioned in H2, partisans may punish candidates from the opposite party when receiving information on dishonesty while ignoring this news for their own candidates, and behave similarly with regard to positive information. Another possibility mentioned in H2 is that Democrats watch liberal programs while Republicans watch conservative programs, and thus they come to perceive candidate honesty differently based upon content. Finally, there is the possibility that the variable for viewing campaign programs captures some variance in strength of party identification, and thus those who view more programs hold more extreme views not because of the programs but because of their extreme partisanship. The chapters that follow

further explore questions of media content and source cues. What is clear from these models is that perceptions of candidate honesty are in large part based on factors other than objectively honest or dishonest behavior. Even if we are to believe that media portrayals of candidates as being honest or dishonest are in fact true reflections of some inherent honesty or dishonesty, large portions of the variance are explained by party identification and the way that party identification interacts with media usage.

To further investigate the significant effect of campaign programming for Republican but not Democratic candidates, I separate Democratic candidates by year to see if this effect perhaps exists in some elections for Democrats but not in others.

<b>Table 2.3: Programs Viewed on Perceived Honesty, Democratic Candidates, 1992-2012</b>						
	<b>1992 (Clinton)</b>	<b>1996 (Clinton)</b>	<b>2000 (Gore)</b>	<b>2004 (Kerry)</b>	<b>2008 (Obama)</b>	<b>2012 (Obama)</b>
<b>Dem. PID</b>	.194 (.130)	.429 (.106)***	.021 (.136)	.197 (.171)	.231 (.250)	.926 (.099)***
<b>Rep. PID</b>	-.211 (.138)	-.364 (.125)**	.007 (.149)	-.418 (.204)*	-.266 (.265)	-.660 (.107)***
<b>Interest</b>	-.067 (.058)	.009 (.077)	-.120 (.071)#	-.047 (.099)	.018 (.101)	.020 (.045)
<b>Programs</b>	-.039 (.041)	-.038 (.054)	-.064 (.049)	.131 (.070)#	-.097 (.081)	.064 (.032)*
<b>Int.*Dem.</b>	.148 (.080)#	.047 (.099)	.325 (.110)**	.278 (.138)*	.049 (.166)	-.220 (.056)***
<b>Int.*Rep.</b>	-.129 (.092)	-.258 (.102)*	-.044 (.126)	-.009 (.147)	-.322 (.195)	.130 (.065)*
<b>Prog.*Dem.</b>	.073 (.059)	.153 (.068)*	.087 (.075)	-.108 (.094)	.218 (.125)#	.023 (.040)
<b>Prog.*Rep.</b>	.006 (.064)	.039 (.071)	-.093 (.090)	-.077 (.103)	.151 (.142)	-.049 (.042)
<b>Constant</b>	.077 (.087)	-.054 (.079)	.070 (.089)	-.144 (.109)	-.196 (.129)	-.318 (.082)***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.14	.30	.12	.15	.23	.36
<b>N</b>	1990	1507	1404	972	507	5449
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>						



When breaking the previous regression down by year, it becomes evident that the relationship between programs viewed and perceived honesty seen across years for Republican candidates has been seen for Democratic candidates, as well, in some recent elections, marginally significant for John Kerry in 2004 and significant for Obama in 2012. As to what demarcates the year 2000 as the dividing line after which an effect is found, that could be the presence of Bill Clinton as a candidate in 1992 and 1996 and the specter of Clinton as his Vice President sought the presidency in 2000. Also, while the negative effect of interest on Democratic candidate honesty is significant in the pooled model, it is insignificant in most elections here, although unsurprisingly was marginally significant for Al Gore in 2000.

Also interesting when breaking perceived candidate honesty down by elections is that, for these Democratic candidates, the significance of party ID comes and goes by election. Party ID is only significant for both Democratic and Republican party identifiers for Clinton in 1996 and Obama in 2012, while Republicans viewed Kerry as significantly less honest in 2004. The coefficient estimates for Obama in 2012 are particularly noteworthy, with Democrats viewing Obama as almost one standard deviation more honest, while Republicans viewed him as approximately two-thirds of a standard deviation less honest as compared to Independents.

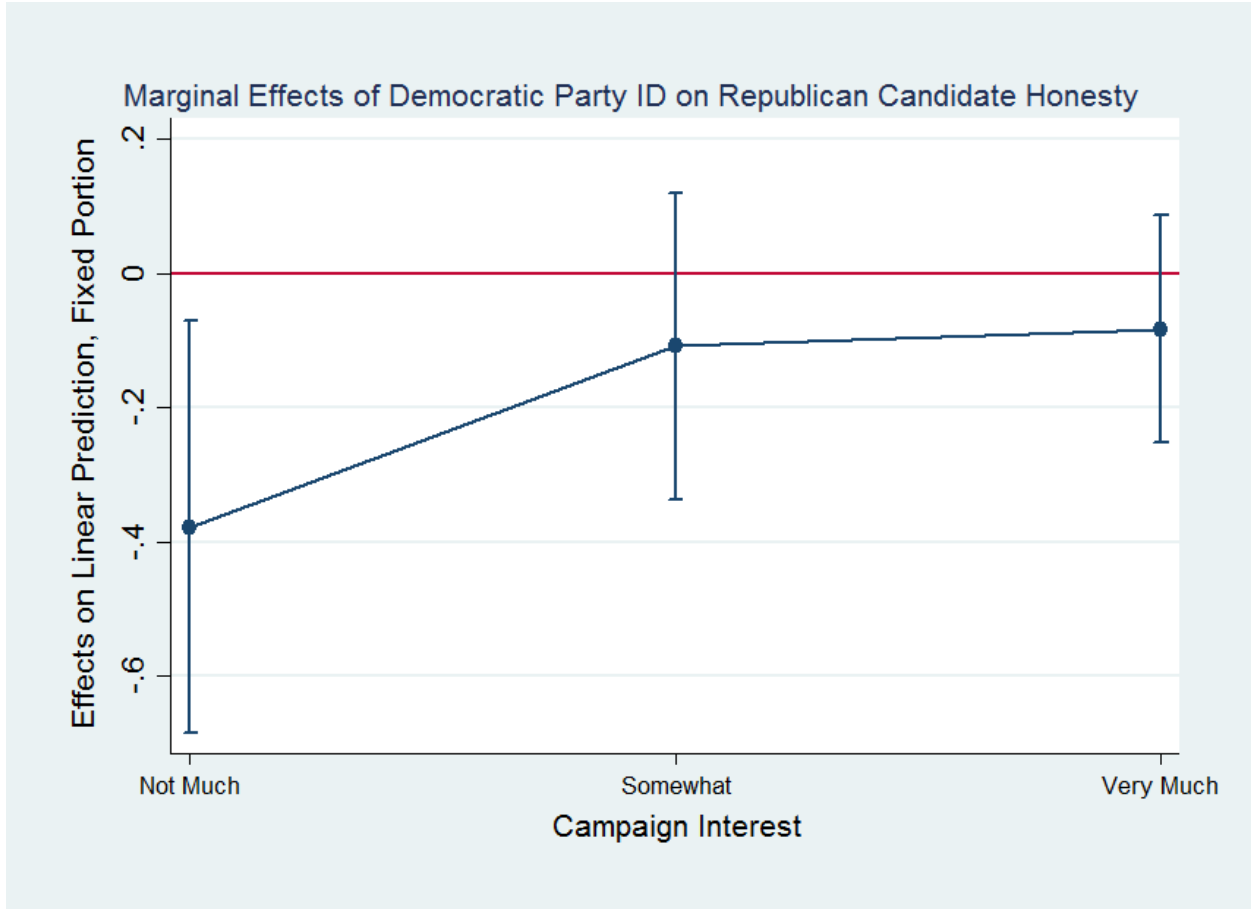
Finally, there remains the question of the relationship between campaign interest and candidate honesty. While regression coefficients were insignificant for the effect of interest on Republican candidate honesty in a model treating the relationship as linear, graphic representation indicated that the relationship may be more complex than that, or that differences may be found between some levels of interest and not between others. Thus, I run models with levels of campaign interest included as dummy variables (Table 2.4).

<b>Table 2.4: Programs and Interest on Perceived Honesty, 1992-2012</b>		
	<b>Democratic Candidates</b>	<b>Republican Candidates</b>
<b>Dem. PID</b>	.620 (.196)**	-.378 (.156)*
<b>Rep. PID</b>	-.602 (.101)***	.704 (.157)***
<b>Somewhat Interested</b>	.077 (.033)*	-.095 (.062)
<b>Very Much Interested</b>	-.096 (.044)*	-.132 (.088)
<b>Programs</b>	.007 (.029)	.113 (.015)***
<b>Somewhat Int.*Dem.</b>	-.213 (.134)	.269 (.064)***
<b>Very Much Int.*Dem.</b>	-.042 (.181)	.295 (.104)**
<b>Somewhat Int.*Rep</b>	.184 (.072)*	-.108 (.115)
<b>Very Much Int.*Rep.</b>	.145 (.117)	-.007 (.187)
<b>Prog.*Dem.</b>	.079 (.024)**	-.129 (.030)***
<b>Prog.*Rep.</b>	-.023 (.013)#	.014 (.011)
<b>Constant</b>	-.161 (.083)#	-.130 (.071)#
<b>Random Effects (Est. &amp; St. Error)</b>		
<b>Year</b>	.060 (.025)	.030 (.011)
<b>Residual</b>	.878 (.038)	.889 (.032)
<b>N</b>	11829	11882
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		

When interest is broken down by levels, more nuanced results begin to emerge. For Republican candidates, higher levels of interest yield negative, statistically insignificant coefficients, similar to the results for the model that treated interest as linear. For Democratic candidates, however, those who are “somewhat” interested view candidates as significantly more honest than those in the baseline group, “not much” interested, while those who are “very much” interested view candidates as less honest when compared to the baseline “not much” interested group. A “U” shaped pattern emerges, with those who are “somewhat” interested viewing candidates as significantly more honest, while there is a negative and statistically significant coefficient on the “very much” dummy. This is a different pattern than suggested in a model that treats interest as linear, in which the effect of interest is significant and negative across levels.

Turning to the interaction between party identification and interest, coefficients are positive and significant for both dummied levels of interest when looking at the interaction of these dummies with Democratic party identification on Republican candidate honesty. For Republicans, the interaction with party identification is only significant for the “somewhat” interested dummy in increasing perceptions of Democratic candidate honesty, and this interaction does not wipe out the overall negative effect of Republican identification (see Appendix 2.4). For Democrats viewing Republican candidates, however, the negative effect of Democratic party identification is only significant for those who are “not much” interested in the campaign. As to why this effect of party ID washes out at higher levels of interest, perhaps those at higher levels of interest are more in tune to the campaign and use other relevant information to evaluate candidate honesty, while those who are less interested have less information and rely more strongly on party identification.

**Figure 2.7**



**Predictors of Party Feeling Thermometers**

Perhaps a more interesting and substantively important portion of this chapter involves not how media usage forms perceptions of candidate honesty, but how these perceptions help form feelings towards parties. Hayes (2005) asserted that candidates come to embody certain traits associated with the perceived issue strengths of their parties. Republicans are perceived as strong and moral, Democrats as compassionate and empathetic. While these perceptions are strong, they are not utterly inflexible. Personal traits have been shown to tie closely with political positions (Hayes 2005, Jacobs and Shapiro 1994). It is logical, then, to ask how a personal trait such as honesty might reflect back upon the party. The design here is fairly

straightforward: include candidate honesty perceptions as an independent variable alongside other predictors of party feeling thermometers, with feeling thermometers serving as dependent variables. Granted, there is no causality which can be taken from this setup, but causality will be fleshed out in greater detail in Chapter 4. Here, I am merely interested in a possible connection between candidate honesty, largely a personal characteristic, and feelings towards the parties, which are political institutions.

Once again, my data spans ANES surveys from 1992 to 2012. I run separate models for the Democratic and Republican parties. Further, I include interactions between respondent party identification and perceptions of candidate honesty, believing that there will be a significant negative effect for voters viewing members of their own party here due to motivated reasoning. As respondent identity with a particular party increases, the relationship between perceptions of individual candidate honesty and affect towards the candidate's party should decrease, due to motivated reasoning. For example, much in the same way many Republicans who saw issues with Mitt Romney remarked he was not a true Republican, those Republicans who saw problems with Romney's honesty would be less likely to tie these issues to the party as a whole.

As an important caveat, I look at the effect of perceptions of candidate honesty on feelings toward each candidate's party as well as feelings toward the party across the aisle. While I am hypothesizing that candidate honesty has an effect on party reputation, this would mean that the honesty of a Democrat should not affect feelings towards the Republican Party to as great a magnitude as the honesty of a Republican and vice versa. If, indeed, perceived dishonesty of a single candidate affects feelings towards both parties, this would be evidence, perhaps, of something other than personal traits affecting party reputation. Clarke and Suzuki (1994) find a more general effect of scandal on party dealignment, and finding results for a

single party's candidate on both parties could be pointing towards something similar. Rather than voters linking a dishonest candidate to said candidate's party, they instead link this dishonesty to a distrust of party politics in general. Further, if there is an effect of both parties' honesty affecting feelings toward a single party but with opposite signs on the coefficients, this could be indicative of general feelings toward the parties influencing both honesty measures and thermometers. Thus, for effects of honesty perceptions on party reputation, I will have four models, anticipating significant effects of Republican candidate honesty on the feeling thermometer for Republicans and for the Democrat candidate on the Democratic thermometer, but non-significant or weaker effects when the parties are crossed. The models are random intercept by year. Models are weighted using the same weight adjustment method used in previous models (Table 2.5).

**Table 2.5: Effect of Perceived Honesty on Feeling Thermometers Towards Parties, 1992-2012**

	Dem. Therm.	Dem. Therm.	Rep. Therm.	Rep. Therm.
<b>Dem. Cand. Honesty</b>	9.67 (1.73)***	-	-	-3.04 (1.47)*
<b>Rep. Cand. Honesty</b>	-	-3.90 (1.28)**	8.99 (1.34)***	-
<b>Democrat PID</b>	18.59 (1.16)***	22.58 (1.71)***	-12.19 (1.49)***	-11.92 (1.10)***
<b>Republican PID</b>	-12.31 (1.30)***	-12.86 (.729)***	18.11 (1.43)***	21.38 (1.36)***
<b>Dem. Cand. Honesty* Dem. PID</b>	-2.41 (.687)***	-	-	-2.09 (.407)***
<b>Dem. Cand. Honesty*Rep. PID</b>	-.064 (.860)	-	-	-.175 (.778)
<b>Rep. Cand. Honesty*Dem. PID</b>	-	1.71 (.753)*	-1.66 (.733)*	-
<b>Rep. Cand. Honesty*Rep. PID</b>	-	-2.74 (.277)***	-1.93 (1.02)#	-
<b>Constant</b>	54.79 (1.13)***	53.31 (1.62)***	50.20 (1.64)***	49.30 (1.65)***
<b>Random Effects (Est. &amp; St. Error)</b>				
<b>Year</b>	2.19 (.861)	2.31 (.878)	4.03 (.847)	3.77 (.816)
<b>Residual</b>	17.94 (.277)	19.20 (.474)	19.17 (.137)	20.24 (.240)
<b>N</b>	14482	14508	14497	14459
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>				

Turning to my models predicting feelings towards the parties, across models there appears a significant relationship between perceived honesty of the presidential candidate and feelings towards the political parties. The relationship between perceived Democratic presidential candidate honesty and Democratic Party feeling thermometer scores is positive and significant ( $p < .001$ ), indicating that a standard deviation increase in perceived honesty yields a swing of almost 10 points on the standard 101-point thermometer. The relationship between GOP candidate honesty and feelings towards the Republican Party is significant and positive, with a similar coefficient (8.99) as the Democratic Party model.

I use two separate models to look at how the honesty of candidates from across the aisle may influence party perceptions; that is, the relationship between perceived Republican candidate honesty and feelings towards the Democratic Party as well as the relationship between perceived Democratic candidate honesty and feelings towards the Republican Party. Cross-aisle perceived honesty is, in fact, significant for both Democratic and Republican party candidates, although coefficients are much smaller, with an effect of less than four points in the Democratic thermometer model and slightly over three points in the Republican thermometer model.

As predicted, there is a negative coefficient for the interaction of Democratic party identification and Democratic candidate honesty on the Democratic thermometer and for Republican party identification and Republican candidate honesty on the Republican thermometer, significant for Democrats and approaching significance for Republicans ( $p < .1$ ). There is also a significant negative interaction between Democratic party identification and Republican candidate honesty on the Republican thermometer. These interactions can all be viewed similarly; those with strong party identifications may have strong feelings about their own party or the opposing party independent of perceived candidate honesty; they may already find themselves at the endpoints of the thermometer.

#### *Two-Stage Least Squares*

While the relationship between perceptions of candidate honesty and feelings toward the parties is obviously strong and positive, the direction of the relationship remains an open question. I attempt to use two-stage least squares to break the endogeneity and potential reciprocal causality in the model.



To do so, I look for variables that may predict perceived candidate honesty while not predicting feelings towards the parties. Theoretically, I search for variables that are related to perceptions of honesty and trust in government and society more generally, as these should predict perceptions of honesty while not affecting feelings towards specific parties. I settle upon two measures. The first asks the respondent if they trust the federal government to do what is right, while the second asks if the respondent believes the federal government represents a few interests or the benefit of all. Joint F-statistics in the first-stage estimation for the instrumental variables are greater than 10, indicating that these instruments are not weak in either proposed model (Staiger and Stock 1997).

Hausman tests were run to determine the endogeneity of the suspected endogenous variables and the necessity of two-stage least squares over OLS regression. Hausman tests yielded significant p-values for both equations ( $p < .000$  for both Democratic and Republican candidate models), indicating that the null of no difference between OLS and two-stage least squares can be rejected and two-stage least squares are indeed appropriate.

Because both equations were over-identified, it was possible to run Sargan tests to tell whether exclusions in each model were proper. On a Sargan test, the null is that the specified exclusions are correct, therefore, for correct model specification, we wish not to reject the null. In neither model is the null rejected, with values of  $p = .28$  and  $p = .29$  for the Democratic and Republican candidate models, respectively. Therefore, it can be said that excluded exogenous variables in these models were properly excluded.

The results of the two-stage least squares models (Table 2.6) once again demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between candidate honesty and party feeling thermometers ( $p < .001$  for both Democratic and Republican candidates). The coefficients in this model are

substantially larger than those in the weighted random-intercept model (Table 2.5), although weighting and random intercepts are not used for the 2SLS model.

<b>Table 2.6: 2SLS Regression, Party Feeling Thermometers on Candidate Honesty, 1992-2012</b>		
<b>First Stage</b>		
	<b>Dem. Cand. Honesty</b>	<b>Rep. Cand. Honesty</b>
<b>Democrat PID</b>	.633 (.021)***	-.363 (.022)***
<b>Republican PID</b>	-.548 (.023)***	.700 (.024)***
<b>Few Int. or Benefit of All</b>	.124 (.022)***	.097 (.023)***
<b>Trust Fed. Gov't Do Right</b>	.190 (.017)***	.105 (.018)***
<b>Constant</b>	-.583 (.040)***	-.313 (.042)***
<b>Second Stage</b>		
	<b>Dem. Therm.</b>	<b>Rep. Therm.</b>
<b>Perceived Cand. Honesty</b>	25.21 (1.70)***	41.26 (4.36)***
<b>Democrat PID</b>	7.23 (1.25)***	-.680 (1.74)
<b>Republican PID</b>	-4.03 (1.09)***	-5.99 (3.25)#
<b>Constant</b>	55.98 (.441)***	50.59 (.655)***
<b>N</b>	9411	9452
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		

The preceding analyses leave the question of the relationship between perceived candidate honesty and feelings toward political parties as somewhat open. Future analyses should focus upon determining if a causal relationship exists through which the honesty or dishonesty of a candidate may affect the party's brand or reputation. Time series analysis could be a fruitful avenue here, to examine if a downturn in the perceived honesty of one candidate may precede a downturn in positive affect toward the candidate's party. While the NAES, which I use for the ARFIMA-MLM models in Chapter 3, does not contain a measure of feeling toward the political parties, it does contain perceived honesty for candidates of the same party over several weeks during the 2000 primary season. I aggregated and averaged the daily-level measures, averaging across gaps of two and three days around Christmas of 1999. These

preliminary analyses point at a future avenue in perceptions of candidate honesty, not only in terms of seeing how the honesty of one candidate can affect fellow party members but also because looking at members of the same party may eliminate some of the strong partisan effects when comparing Democrats and Republicans.

I take daily means of perceived honesty for Al Gore, George W. Bush, Bill Bradley, and John McCain. The series for Democrats covers 86 time points from December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1999 through March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000, while for Republicans it covers 112 time points starting on the same date in December and lasting through April 3<sup>rd</sup>. I fractionally difference these series and run some Granger causality tests with lags of 1 through 14 days to see if series on the honesty of a fellow party member may predict candidate honesty above and beyond past values of candidate honesty itself.

Perceived honesty of Al Gore is marginally significant in Granger-causing perceived Bradley honesty. Interestingly, however, almost all the coefficients for effect of Gore honesty on Bradley honesty are negative, indicating that as Gore honesty increases, Bradley honesty decreases. This is not surprising given the two candidates were opposing one another, but Bradley honesty does not Granger-cause Gore honesty.

<b>Table 2.7: Granger Causality Tests</b>		
<b>DV: Gore Honesty</b>		
	F-Statistic	Significance
<b>Bradley Honesty</b>	.341	.984
<b>DV: Bradley Honesty</b>		
	F-Statistic	Significance
<b>Gore Honesty</b>	1.71	.090#
<b>DV: McCain Honesty</b>		
	F-Statistic	Significance
<b>Bush Honesty</b>	1.14	.343
<b>DV: Bush Honesty</b>		
	F-Statistic	Significance
<b>McCain Honesty</b>	1.29	.238
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		

Bradley honesty predicting Gore honesty but Gore honesty not predicting Bradley honesty would make sense given that Gore was the favorite in the election and well-known after spending eight years as vice president. Suggested here, then, is that perceived honesty may be set as compared to another, more well-known candidate. Bradley's honesty here may be set relative to Gore's, in this case in contrast as Gore was his opponent. Examining the interplay of perceived honesty, particularly between members of the same party, is a future direction that will allow for an examination of both campaign dynamics and within-party dynamics.

### *Discussion*

I came into this chapter looking to test three hypotheses. I find some evidence of direct, main effects of media usage on increased perceptions of candidate dishonesty, although not in the direction hypothesized in H1 for both parties. Viewing campaign programs has a significant main effect in increasing perceptions of candidate honesty for Republican candidates, and while the effect of interest is significant and negative for Democratic candidates, a look at potentially non-linearity demonstrates a negative effect only for those who are most interested in the campaign relative to those who are least interested and a positive effect for those in the middle.

Potentially, the measures in the ANES regarding media usage are simply too blunt, and there are too few categories with regard to media consumption and interest to gain variance between respondents. Further, increased partisan selectivity and fractionalization in news selection (Bennett and Iyengar 2008) could indicate that a mere measure of general usage may not be suitable. If sources give conflicting messages regarding candidate honesty or slanted information (Groseclose and Milyo 2005) then what is important is not merely that individuals are watching but the content of what they are watching. In Chapter 3, I take a closer look at

media content, in terms of both news and advertisements, which may provide a better avenue into how perceptions of candidate honesty are formed.

As to the lack of support for H1, I have made the case that exposure to campaigns is, by its very nature, exposure to negative information about the candidates. But is exposure to a campaign by its very nature exposure to negative information that paints the candidate as dishonest? Some evidence from the 2000 Wisconsin Ad Project, data from which is used in Chapter 3, suggests otherwise.

<b>Table 2.8: Opponent Adjectives, 2000 US Presidential Election</b>	
<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Percent Total Ads</b>
<b>Dishonest/Corrupt</b>	5.18%
<b>Friend of Special Interests</b>	4.78%
<b>Hypocrite</b>	3.24%
<b>Negative</b>	1.98%
<b>Taxing/Likes Taxes</b>	1.22%

While advertisements focusing on dishonesty (or the closely related concept of corruption) made up the largest single category of advertisements describing opponents in 2000, nearly twice as many ads focused on attacking opponents in the next four most popular categories (see Table 2.8). Further, ads focusing on dishonesty as a primary concept made up just 5.18% of total advertisements in the top 75 media markets in 2000, so while dishonesty is a popular concept relative to other opponent attacks, roughly 95% of ads focus on some other concept. So, while some scholars have noted the effect of negative media on perceived dishonesty (Patterson 1993), at least from a campaign advertising perspective, there are numerous other attack angles that candidates may use on their opponents, many of which (taxation, friend to special interests) are not necessarily explicitly personal.

I do find some evidence in support of the second hypothesis tested in this chapter, that the effect of media usage will be greater (in increasing perceptions of dishonesty) when citizen and

candidate do not share a party. Democrats and Republicans who view campaign programs view the other party's candidates as more dishonest. What I do find appear to be strong effects through which Democrats and Republicans reach more positive conclusions about the honesty of their own candidates and more negative conclusions about opposing candidates as their viewing of campaign programs increases.

With regard to the third hypothesis, I find a strong relationship between perceived candidate honesty and feelings of warmth toward the parties. An important open question deals with the direction of the relationship between perceptions of candidate honesty and warmth towards the parties. While I assert that honest or dishonest candidates may affect the overall view of the party, it seems plausible that the view of the party may affect honesty perceptions of candidates within that party. While I attempt to break this potential endogeneity using two-stage least squares, the question of causal direction remains, and is thus fleshed out in the experiment in Chapter 4.

### Chapter 3: Media Content and Perceptions of Candidate Honesty

Hypotheses explored in this chapter:

*H4: When advertisements or national news stories focus on candidate dishonesty, perceptions of candidate dishonesty will increase.*

*H5: There is an interaction between engagement with a campaign and media content on perceptions of candidate honesty.*

*“Al Gore, claiming credit for things he didn’t even do!”*

*-Republican National Committee Attack Ad, 2000<sup>ix</sup>*

In Chapter 2, I examined media from the perspective of media usage. Yet, I hypothesize that it is not just the media people choose to use, but the media they are exposed to, sometimes involuntarily, which should affect evaluations of candidate honesty. In fact, the results from Chapter 2 demonstrated that increased viewing of campaign programs leads voters from differing parties to very different conclusions regarding perceptions of candidate honesty, even when controlling for interest. This could be the result of either selective exposure or motivated reasoning with regard to content, and the analyses that follow attempt to flesh out the effect of content on evaluations of honesty.

In Chapter 3, I look at how media environment affects perceptions of candidate honesty, examining both local-level campaign advertisements and national-level news media. In so doing, I test what is above listed as H4, that national media and campaign advertisements should influence perceptions of candidate honesty. As stated in the hypotheses, I have no prior expectation as to whether the effect of advertisements or news media on perceptions of honesty will be greater, although I should note that I feel individual-level exposure is more likely for the specific advertising measure I have chosen than for the national media measure. I investigate these hypotheses using a naïve pooling model as used by Jerit and Barabas (2012) as well as two ARFIMA-MLM models (Lebo and Weber 2015) designed to allow for correct standard errors for rolling cross-sectional data structured over time. I use an ARFIMA-MLM model with both within-day and between-day variation in the effect of campaign advertisements as well as

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<sup>ix</sup> “Really MD,” The Living Room Candidate, Museum of the Moving Image, 2012, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/2000> (accessed 13 July 2015).



variation by state and day, and attempt additional models which allow the slope of within-day effects to vary by day, as well.

### **Background & Conceptualization**

I choose two elections on which to test this hypothesis. Firstly, I use the 2000 US presidential election. This election, while perhaps not as relevant today as more recent elections, has been the subject of research on the effects of media on perceptions of candidate honesty in the past, albeit at an aggregate level (Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson 2004). Secondly, I use the 2008 US presidential election.

Campaign issues involving trust and honesty were of a different nature in 2008 than in 2000. Gore's honesty issues in 2000, as characterized by scholars such as Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson (2004), centered around his own words and outlandish claims he made which turned out to be untrue. Looking at the open-ended responses from the ANES in 2008, there were issues of honesty which citizens brought up when talking about the candidates, but these issues, particularly with regard to President Obama, focused on questions about past history and background. Using AutoMap software which cleans up suffixes and allows for counting of words and phrases, there were 50 mentions in the Obama dislikes category with respondents saying they didn't "know" enough about him, and another 30 references to "trust." Furthermore, these open-ended responses indicate that voters were concerned with Obama's truthfulness about issues in his past, with 28 references to his being a "Muslim." Given these concerns, I feel comfortable in stating that honesty was a concern among voters in the 2008 election. As to why 2000 and 2008 are selected but not 2004, as the authors of *The American Voter Revisited* assert, discussion around the 2004 election featured an intermingling of personal and professional

critiques. Bush's "decisiveness," for which he was praised by some voters, cannot be viewed outside of the light of the Iraq war, much in the same way that Kerry's reputation as a "flip-flopper" is also tied to the lead-up to the war (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Policy considerations masquerading as personal critiques and vice-versa makes for a less than ideal case study and, furthermore, questions about candidate honesty were asked over a limited number of days in the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey, making ARFIMA-MLM analysis impossible.

### **Data**

Daily sample size is not vastly different between the 2000 and 2008 NAES Rolling Cross Sectional surveys, with around 300 daily interviews conducted between July 18th and November 6th in 2000 and an average of 247 daily interviews during the months of August through November in 2008. As I look at July 18th through November 6th for the 2000 campaign, for 2008 I will look at July 15th through November 3rd. Both periods of time include an identical number of days ending the day before Election Day.

To test my campaign advertising hypothesis, I combine this rolling cross-sectional data with Wisconsin Ad Project data from 2000 and 2008.<sup>x</sup> For 2000, the Wisconsin Ad Project contains coded information for advertisements in 75 media markets (accounting for 80% of the population). In the 2008 sample, all 210 US media markets are included. It should be noted that this sample is a non-random segment of the population. Although media markets are typically centered around cities, the samples are not entirely urban; suburban areas are often included at the outskirts of media markets. However, it should be noted that "rural" voters are not included

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<sup>x</sup> The data were obtained from a project of the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project includes media tracking data from TNSMI/Campaign Media Analysis Group in Washington, D.C. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Wisconsin Advertising Project.

in these samples; because they don't reside in a Designated Market Area, I cannot match them to advertising and, furthermore, it is possible that their interaction with campaigns is fundamentally different. These ads are also tagged with the dates on which they aired, meaning I can tie ad information to respondents' geographic locations and the dates on which they were contacted. Further, given the dates of the ads, I can construct a variable for the number of ads in the respondent's area within a period of time prior to completing the survey. Information available upon request from Annenberg provides geographic locators for respondents, including zip codes, area codes, and, most importantly, media markets. Annenberg data from 2000 provides DMA data to be linked directly to Wisconsin Ad data, while for 2008 I link metropolitan statistical areas which subdivide DMAs to the DMAs in order to provide an advertising context for individual survey respondents.

Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson hypothesize that advertisements have an effective window of approximately one week for influencing perceptions; I will, then, run models which take into account the number of ads airing in the respondent's media market during the day of their interview and the previous six days (smoothed to indicate average number of ads per day). While I had initially planned to run competing models with one- and two-week rolling ad periods, the high degree of correlation between these groups made for little differentiation.

As my hypotheses for this chapter involve not just advertising but news media data, I will use an aggregate-level measure of the national media climate, taken from a LexisNexis search for news articles containing key words related to candidate honesty. Averaged by day over one-week rolling periods (the day of the interview and the preceding six days), I look at the effect of the national media's representation of candidate honesty on perceptions. Here, I code for mentions of the candidates' names along with the terms related to campaign dishonesty. For

each candidate, Bush, Gore, McCain, and Obama, I use the general terms “honest,” “dishonest,” “honesty,” “dishonesty,” “truth,” “truthful,” “untruthful,” “lie(s),” “lying,” and “lied,” as well as some candidate-specific words.

To compile a list of candidate-specific words for which to code as referring to candidate dishonesty, I use two prior academic works on campaign communication, one for each the 2000 and 2008 elections. Firstly, I use the aforementioned *The 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics* by Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson, while for 2008 I use *The Obama Victory: How Media, Money, and Message Shaped the 2008 Election* by Kenski, Hardy, and Jamieson. For each candidate in both 2000 and 2008, I search for the candidate’s name alongside these key words and aggregate the total number of honesty-related articles for the one-week rolling periods. In the 2000 election, Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson make clear (as has other research) that Al Gore was the candidate dealing with perceived dishonesty, and less so George W. Bush. Thus, I include a few extra words designed to capture what the authors archive as his issues with anecdotes and stories that were less than truthful. Thus, I also code stories for Gore that mention “exaggerating,” “exaggerated” and “exaggerate,” as well as “embellishment(s)” and “fabrication(s).” For Obama, I code for stories related to perceived dishonesty about his heritage, namely those that mention “Muslim,” “birth certificate,” or “background.” While honesty was not as large an issue for McCain, I do code for stories mentioning his “seven houses,” as Democrats asserted that he may be lying about the number of homes he owned (Kenski, Hardy, and Jamieson 2010). I do not code for specific references to Bill Ayers due to the relatively limited number of ANES respondents who referenced him in the open-ended responses (just two references), focusing much more on Obama’s background. I also

do not code for references to Jeremiah Wright, since Obama did not deny a relationship between the two and thus I do not consider it an issue of honesty.

As a measure of national media content, I search for stories related to candidate honesty in two nationally-recognized newspapers: *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. These story counts include stories that appeared in print as well as some web content. As to why these papers are used and why I am comfortable using only a pair of national newspapers, prior academic work on media content has followed a similar technique, and scholars have argued that because of the top-down nature of American newspapers, simply using *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* will capture much of what smaller newspapers would display, anyways (Nisbet, Brossard, and Kroepsch 2003).

As far as the type of ads which are classified as related to “honesty,” the procedure is slightly different for 2000 and 2008. For 2000, advertisements are coded by the Wisconsin Ad Project for referring negatively to an opposing candidate as “dishonest” or “corrupt.” Thus, advertisements questioning a candidate’s honesty in 2000 are those put out by his opponent or groups in support of his opponent that are contrast or attack ads mentioning said opponent’s honesty. In 2008, the data is slightly different, as Wisconsin Ad data only refers to ads which deal with “personal” characteristics, so advertisements questioning a candidate’s honesty in 2008 are attack or contrast ads put out in support of the opposing party mentioning personal characteristics. I use attack ads as opposed to promotional ads because attack ads related to dishonesty dwarfed ads promoting candidate honesty in 2000. Ads focusing on dishonesty throughout the entire campaign season accounted for the primary theme of 4.98% of ads, as compared with just 1.11% of ads promoting honesty.

The NAES data is slightly different between 2000 and 2008, as well. In 2000, the NAES asks respondents how well the word “honest” describes the two major party presidential candidates. Meanwhile the NAES doesn’t ask in 2008 if “honest” describes the candidates, but rather how well the word “trustworthy” applies to John McCain and Barack Obama. I’m comfortable using these slightly different concepts because they are broader rather than narrower or vastly different than the concept of honesty. The advertisements I code for in 2008 are broader, as well. I can establish a more specific dynamic in the 2000 data and establish that a similar, if broader, concept was at work in 2008.

There is the potential for an important interaction effect here between media content and media usage variables (H5). Thus, I include a measure of individual-level television consumption and a measure of individual-level campaign interest in each model. For 2000, the interest measure is taken from a question asking if respondents were “very interested,” “somewhat interested,” or “not much interested” in the presidential campaign, coded 1 to 3 with higher values indicating greater interest. For 2008, the question asks if respondents have been following the campaign “very closely,” “somewhat closely,” “not too closely,” or “not closely at all,” coded 1 to 4 with higher values indicating more closely following the campaign. For the television consumption measure, in 2000 the model takes its measure from a question asking if respondents have paid attention to network TV or cable news about the presidential campaign in the past week (with choices of “a great deal” of attention, “some,” “not too much,” or “none,” coded 1 to 4 with greater values representing more attention). I choose this measure as opposed to a local television measure because it should pick up exposure to both over-the-air advertisements (network TV) and national news (cable news). For 2008, the question asks how many days in the past week the respondent has watched television information about the

campaign. Building on the results from Chapter 1, I include the campaign interest measure as a control and interact the television consumption variable with the campaign media variables.

Because this dataset is rolling cross-sectional, I use Lebo and Weber's (2015) solution to the repeated cross-sectional issue. As Lebo and Weber assert, treating cases from multiple years as simply individual cases in a singular regression is inappropriate, and does not account for correlation of errors between time points. Further, simply pooling individual-level cases ignores possible similarities between cases at identical time points, and also ignores the possibility of time-varying effects. Using this double-filtering method allows for a look at both between-day and within-day variation over time. Using the Lebo and Weber method also allows for correct standard errors. This strategy uses what amounts to a double-filter: an ARFIMA model to get rid of serial correlation at an aggregate level and a second filter to ensure that individual-level observations are free of between-day deterministic effects. Following this filtering, a multilevel model is used.

For each election, I run three models. Firstly, I use a naïve model which simply pools cases across time points. Next, I use an ARFIMA-MLM model that correctly controls for non-stationary between-day effects and day-level deterministic components and uses random intercepts by both day and state. Finally, I attempt a variation of the ARFIMA-MLM which allows for within-day varying slopes. While the data contains subjects' thoughts on the honesty/trustworthiness of both parties' candidates, I combine into a single measure for each election in order to better fit within the continuous dependent variable framework required in ARFIMA-MLM models. Thus, the dependent variable is perceived Democratic candidate honesty/trustworthiness minus perceived Republican candidate honesty/trustworthiness. For 2000 this variable runs from -3 to 3, while for 2008 this variable runs from -10 to 10. I include

individual-level control variables for partisanship (dummy variables for Democrats and Republicans), gender (male vs. female), race (white vs. nonwhite), age (in years), and income (coded 0 to 1 from minimum to maximum).

One specific issue with the 2008 NAES data is that due to an equipment malfunction, zero interviews were conducted on October 7<sup>th</sup>. To deal with the issue this presents in an ARFIMA structure, I simply populate October 7<sup>th</sup> with a number of cases equal to the average of interviews conducted on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, with each observation consisting of average values of the variable between October 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. In the naïve pooling model, a dummy is included to account for this simulated data. To reiterate, I hypothesize the following:

*H4: When advertisements or national news stories focus on candidate dishonesty, perceptions of candidate dishonesty will increase.*

Given the preponderance of literature on the effects of advertisements and news in influencing public opinion (Gerber et al. 2011; Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder 1982), perceived candidate honesty should be similarly affected by the media.

*H5: There is an interaction between engagement with a campaign and media content on perceptions of candidate honesty.*

Viewed through the frame of Zaller’s “Receive-Accept-Sample” model (1992), citizens will be more likely to “receive” media messages about candidate honesty, and in turn potentially accept them, if they are engaged with campaign media content.

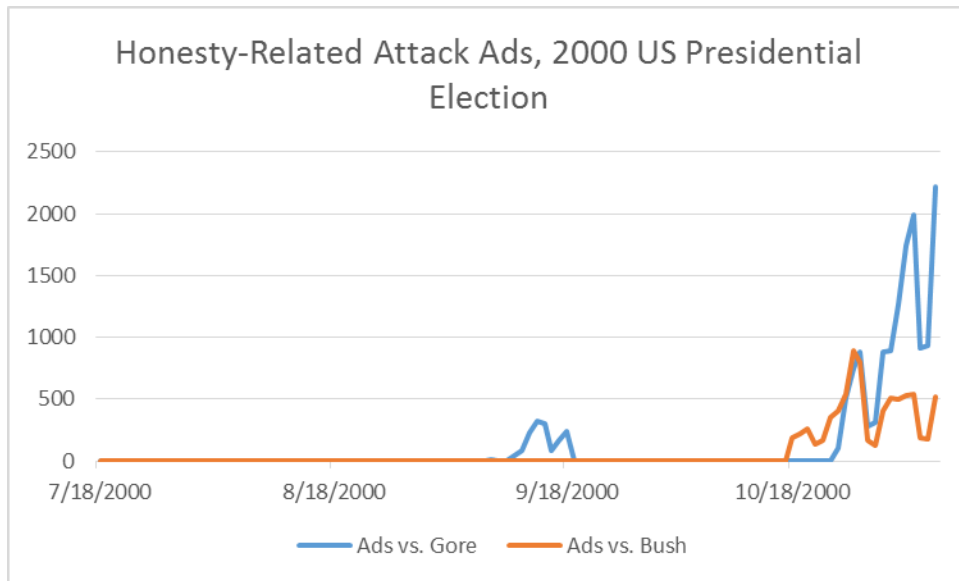
## **Results**

Tracking honesty advertisements in 2000 (Figure 3.1), one can see that neither candidate hit the other on honesty for the first sixty days of the time period, until a brief spate of ads



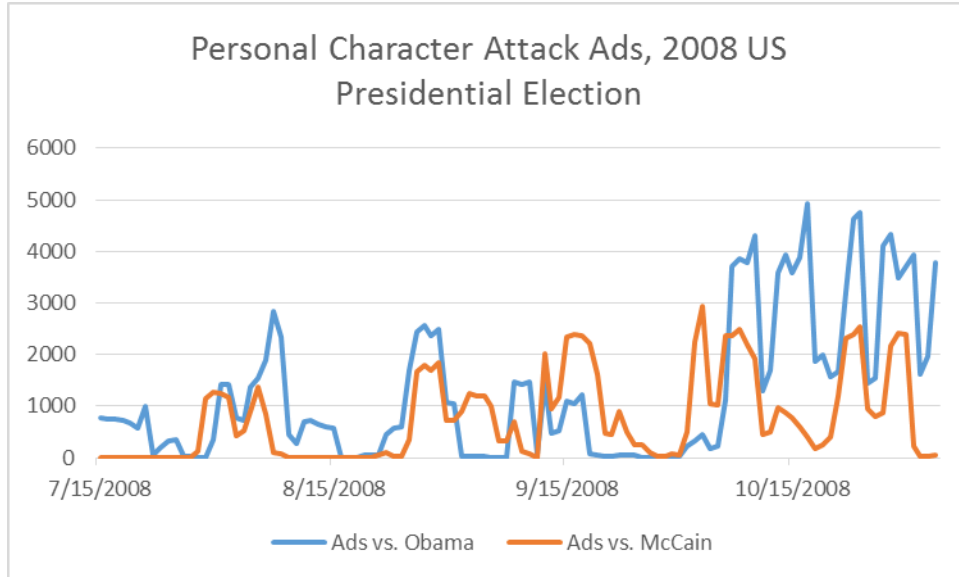
questioning Gore’s honesty in mid-September. From there, we see little activity until a barrage from both sides in the closing weeks of the campaign.

**Figure 3.1**



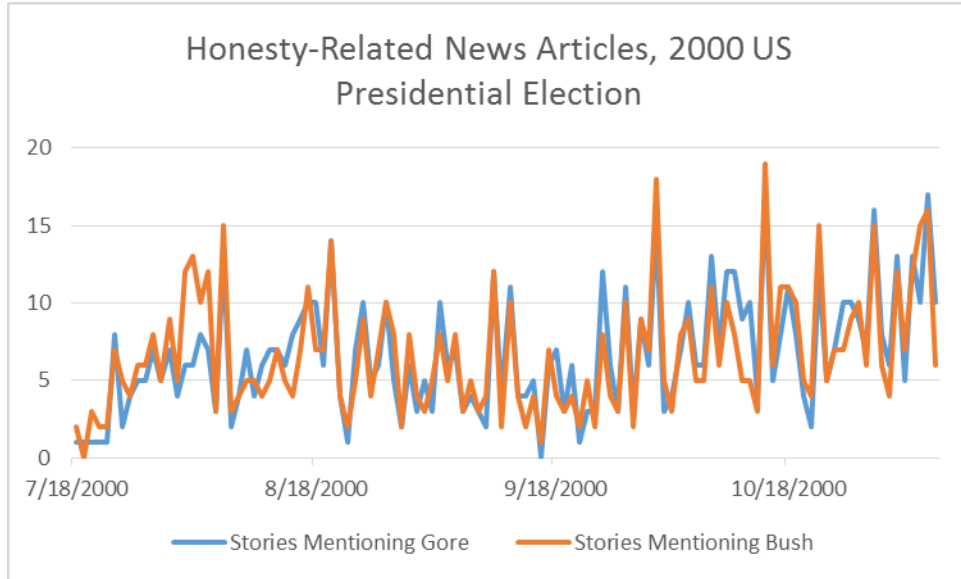
Turning to 2008, looking at personal character attack ads, we once again see a distinct ramping-up in the days prior to the election for personal attack ads (no doubt part of a larger trend of increasing ads prior to Election Day). Also noticeable is that Obama was hit harder on personal issues than McCain, with approximately double the amount of personal character attack ads. Distinct weekly patterns are evident, as well, necessitating the seven-day smoothing used in my analyses.

**Figure 3.2**

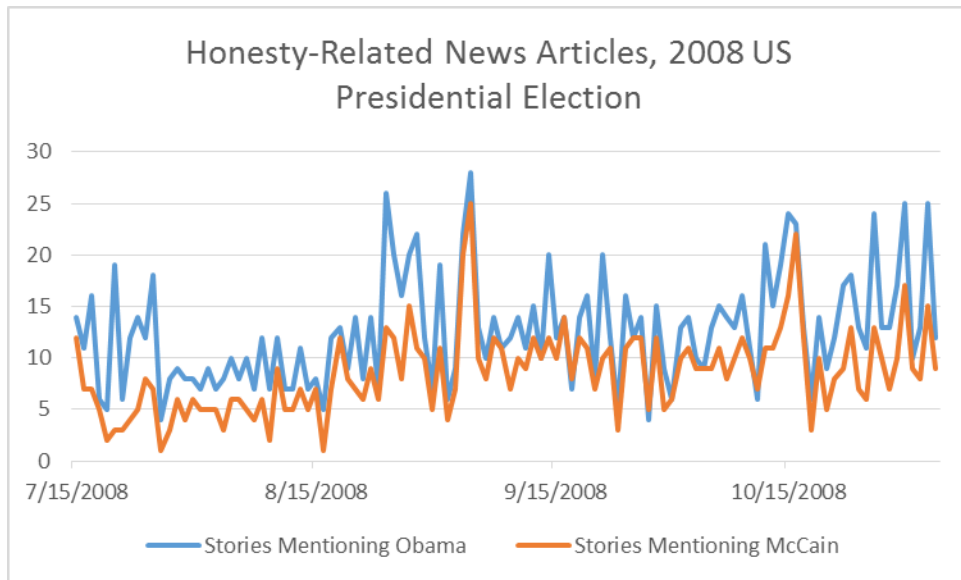


One issue with detecting news media focusing on perceptions of candidate honesty using candidate names is that most campaign news mention both candidates. Thus, despite the presence of some words designed to differentiate candidates, trends still exhibit high degrees of correlation. To deal with the multicollinearity presented by using both candidates' news variables in a model, I take the average of both candidates' news variables and combine them into a singular measure of campaign-related honesty news.

**Figure 3.3**



**Figure 3.4**



*Naïve Pooling Model*

In the naïve pooling model, control variables are significant in both 2000 and 2008 in directions consistent with previous research on party identification and party constituencies.

Democrats view Democratic candidates as more honest, Republicans give the edge to Republicans. Women and non-white citizens view Democratic candidates as more honest/trustworthy, while wealth is related to viewing Republican candidates in a better light. Age, while insignificant in 2000, is a significant predictor of a shift toward viewing John McCain as more trustworthy in 2008.

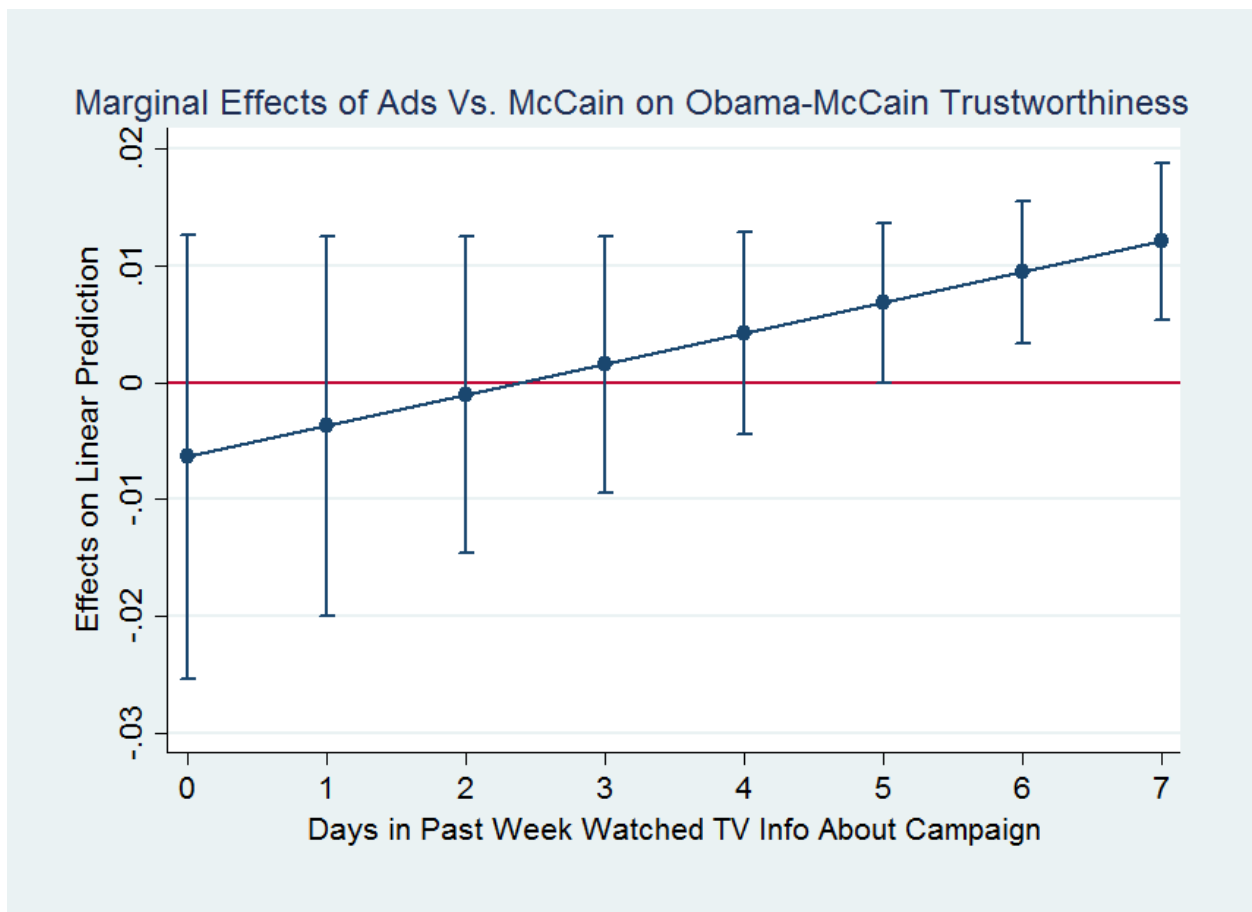
Also significant, and in directions that may be expected given the findings with ANES data in Chapter 2, is the relationship between the campaign engagement variables and perceived honesty and trustworthiness. In 2000, interest in the campaign is a significant predictor of a negative value on the honesty variable, indicating greater perceived Bush honesty relative to Gore honesty. In 2008 this relationship (or, more specifically, a similar relationship between following the campaign and perceived trustworthiness) is flipped, with those more closely following the campaign giving the edge to the Democrat, Obama, on trustworthiness relative to McCain. While this relationship is on variables related to campaign engagement rather than viewing campaign media, it follows a similar trend to that seen in the ANES with regard to campaign programming; there is a shift in the relationship between the Clinton/Gore and post-Clinton/Gore eras, in which Democrats are viewed in a more positive light. However, the shift here is on a variable related to being interested or following the campaign. The interest variable in the ANES analyses in Chapter 2 remained insignificant for Democratic candidates across elections, and rather it was the effect of programs that became favorable in later elections.

<b>Table 3.1: Effect of Media on Perceived Candidate Honesty, 2000 and 2008, Naïve Pooling Model</b>			
<b>2000, DV, Gore Honesty Minus Bush Honesty</b>		<b>2008, DV, Obama Minus McCain Trustworthiness</b>	
<b>Democrat</b>	.738 (.047)***	<b>Democrat</b>	3.29 (.077)***
<b>Republican</b>	-.868 (.048)***	<b>Republican</b>	-3.58 (.083)***
<b>Female</b>	.157 (.048)***	<b>Female</b>	.420 (.066)***
<b>Non-White</b>	.267 (.054)***	<b>Non-White</b>	1.94 (.092)***
<b>Household Income</b>	-.282 (.080)***	<b>Household Income</b>	-.519 (.130)***
<b>Age</b>	-.001 (.001)	<b>Age</b>	-.027 (.002)***
<b>Interest in Campaign</b>	-.168 (.031)***	<b>Following Campaign</b>	.199 (.047)***
<b>TV</b>	-.047 (.078)	<b>TV</b>	-.025 (.062)
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	.051 (.033)	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	-.006 (.010)
<b>TV*Ads Vs. Bush</b>	-.020 (.011)#	<b>TV*Ads Vs. McCain</b>	.003 (.002)#
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	-.018 (.030)	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.011 (.006)#
<b>TV*Ads Vs. Gore</b>	.009 (.010)	<b>TV*Ads Vs. Obama</b>	-.002 (.001)#
<b>Honesty News</b>	-.053 (.034)	<b>Honesty News</b>	.009 (.035)
<b>TV*Honesty News</b>	.012 (.012)	<b>TV*Honesty News</b>	-.000 (.006)
<b>Constant</b>	.507 (.233)*	<b>Dummy, Day 85</b>	.157 (.291)
--	--	<b>Constant</b>	.222 (.413)
<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.25, N=3840</b>		<b>R<sup>2</sup>=.36, N=15702</b>	
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>			

The media usage variable in 2008, “TV” in Table 3.1, asking respondents the number of days in the past week they watched televised info about the campaign, shows marginal significance when interacted with the variables for campaign advertisements aired as attacks against both Obama and McCain. To get a sense of the significance of the interaction, I plot the marginal effects of advertisements on trustworthiness by days of programming viewed. While, graphically, the interaction using attack ads against Obama does not bear out as significant, possibly because the effect works in the opposite direction of a marginally significant main effect (see Appendix 3.1), we do see that the effect of anti-McCain ads on decreasing McCain trustworthiness relative to Obama is only significantly different from zero among those who watched six to seven days of programming per week. There is also a marginally significant

interaction of television viewing and ads vs. Bush in 2000, but it would appear to be a backlash effect, with these ads actually working to strengthen Bush’s perceived honesty. A display of this interaction graphically, however, yields only a result that approaches significance for one category, those who watch “a great deal” of television news about the campaign (see Appendix 3.2).

**Figure 3.5**



*ARFIMA-MLM, Random Intercept by State and Day Model*

While the naïve-pooling model has been used relatively recently in political science (e.g., Jerit and Barabas 2012), it is not the correct model to use here, both in terms of structural

accuracy or substantive implications. Next, I use a model which uses an ARFIMA-MLM framework, with a random intercept by state and by day. While I test several models in this chapter, this model may be the most useful in terms of correct functional form and useful results. The dependent variables are freed of temporal autocorrelation, and the random intercept by state controls for campaign effects that may exist on a state level. Additionally, the ARFIMA-MLM framework allows me to look at campaign dynamics on two levels: both between-day and within-day variation. I look at some variables strictly on an aggregate level (national news media, which has no within-day variation), some variables strictly on an individual level (individual-level controls), and some at both between- and within-day levels (advertising, interest, and television consumption variables). Variables at the aggregate (between-day) level are fractionally-differenced (or first-differenced when  $d=1$ ), while variables at the within-day level are filtered through the day-level means as to remove between-day variance. For variables with both between- and within-day variation, these two components are orthogonal, with the non-temporally autocorrelated between-day variance separated from the within-day variance. Obviously, the seven-day smoothed advertising data contains a high amount of autocorrelation, such that it has a perfect memory ( $d=1$ ). Individual-level measures of media consumption are also series that contain some degree of memory at the aggregate level. This makes sense; campaign events, gaffes, and memorable moments are structured temporally and likely affect individuals' beliefs as to how interested in the campaign they are and how much campaign programming they view.

The random intercepts by day seen in the model that follows, while potentially interesting, do not provide much value due to the high variance from day-to-day in the NAES. Such noise makes it difficult to get significant day-level intercepts. The standard errors on the

intercepts are massive. Despite this, the random intercepts by day do yield some interesting and potentially meaningful results. For example, perceived Gore honesty reaches its peak on August 18<sup>th</sup>, the day after his speech at the Democratic National Convention. While this singular intercept is not statistically significant, it would be hard to imagine that Gore’s perceived honesty rising on this particular day occurred by chance (see Figure 3.8).

<b>Table 3.2: Hurst Fractional Differencing Parameters</b>			
<b>2000</b>		<b>2008</b>	
<b>Gore-Bush Honesty</b>	.15	<b>Obama-McCain Trustworthiness</b>	.11
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	1.00	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	1.00
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	1.00	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	1.00
<b>Honesty News</b>	1.00	<b>Honesty News</b>	1.00
<b>TV Consumption</b>	.66	<b>TV Consumption</b>	.48
<b>Interest in Campaign</b>	.16	<b>Following Campaign</b>	.25

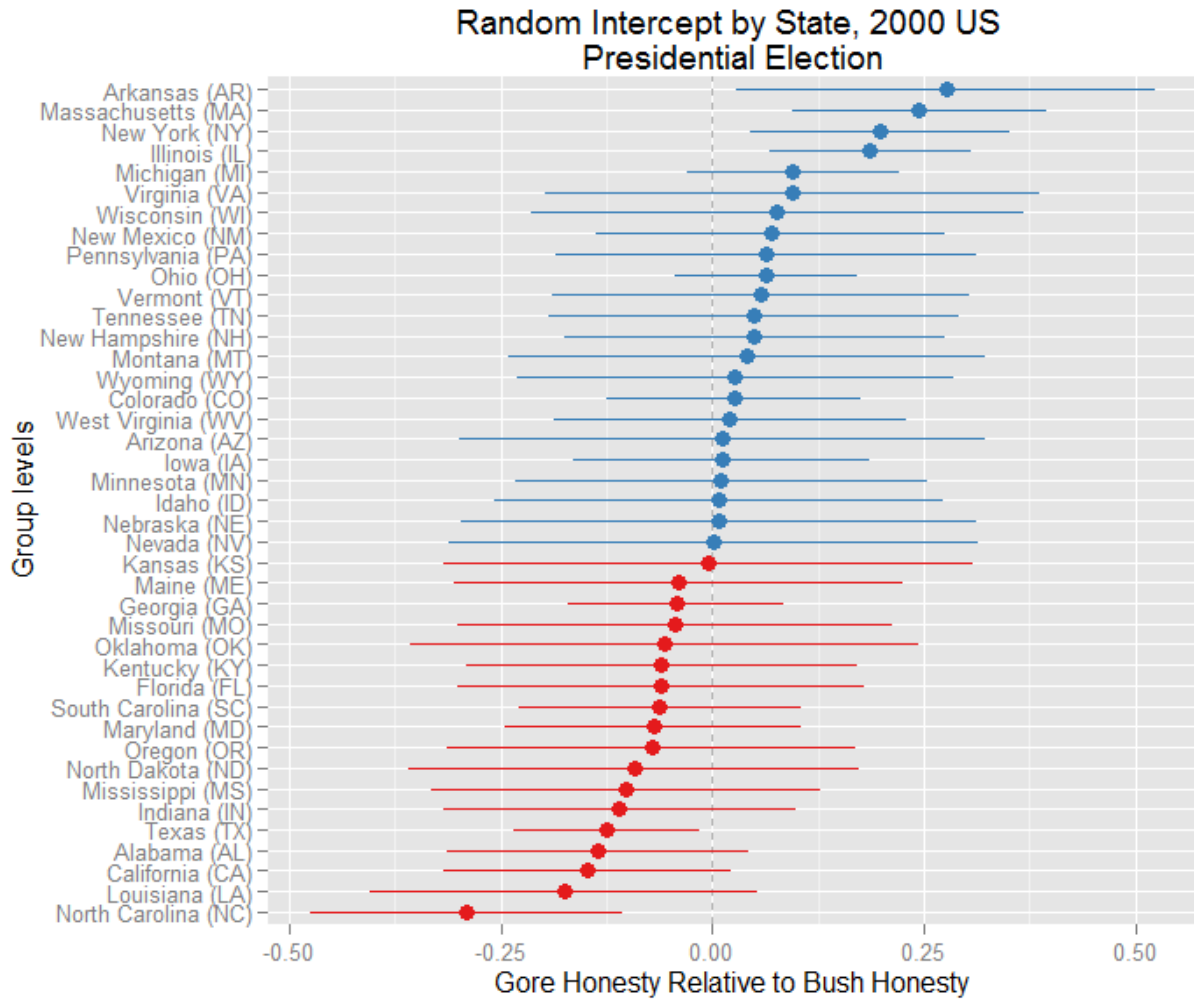


**Table 3.3: Effect of Media on Perceived Candidate Honesty, 2000 and 2008, ARFIMA-MLM by State and Day**

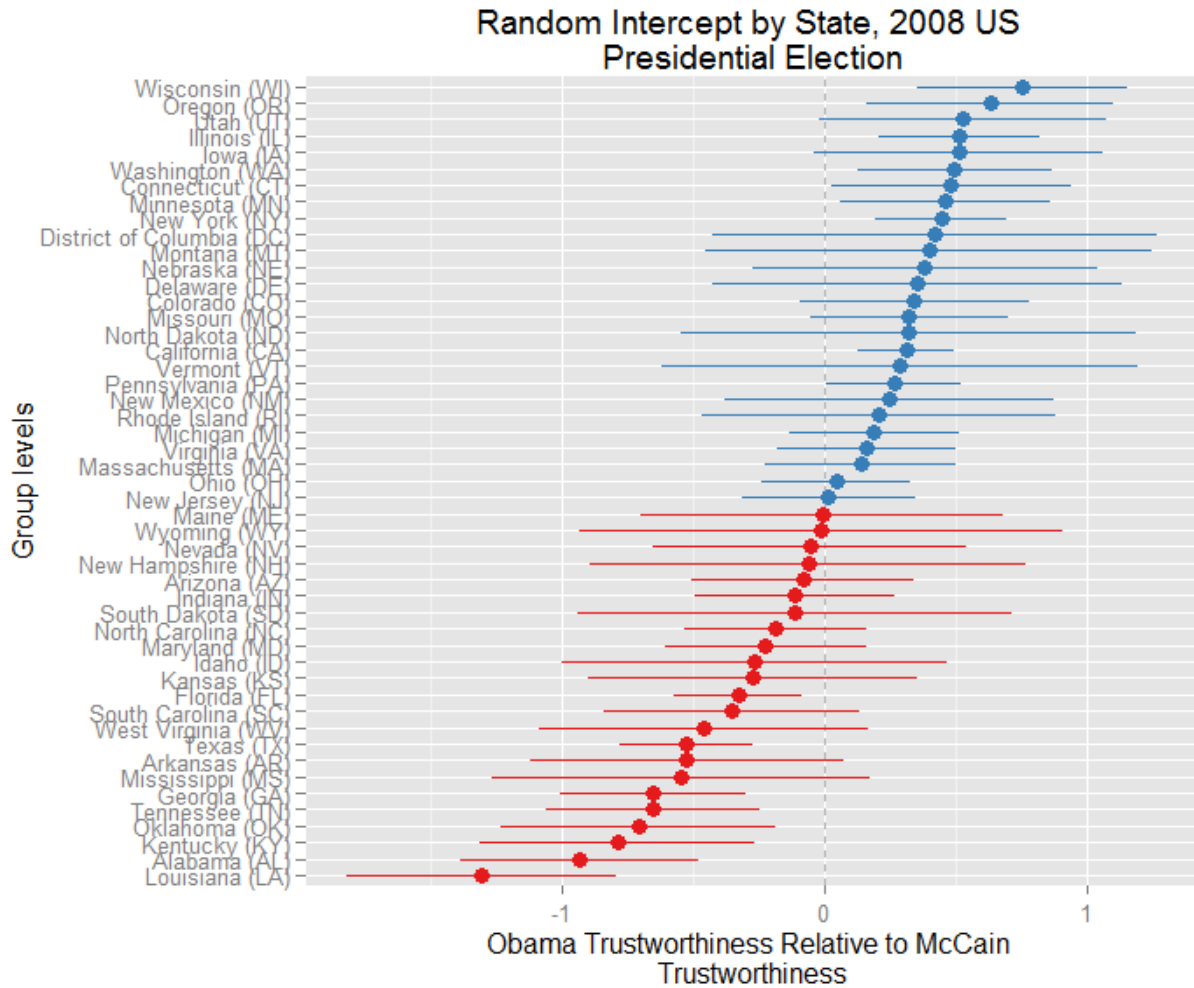
2000, Gore Honesty Minus Bush Honesty			2008, Obama Minus McCain Trustworthiness		
<b>Individual-Level Controls</b>					
	<b>Est. (SE)</b>	<b>T-Stat.</b>		<b>Est. (SE)</b>	<b>T-Stat.</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	.734 (.047)	15.70	<b>Democrat</b>	3.25 (.077)	42.08
<b>Republican</b>	-.841 (.048)	-17.52	<b>Republican</b>	-3.53 (.083)	-42.53
<b>Female</b>	.161 (.039)	4.12	<b>Female</b>	.437 (.066)	6.64
<b>Non-White</b>	.299 (.054)	5.53	<b>Non-White</b>	2.01 (.092)	21.86
<b>Household Income</b>	-.309 (.081)	-3.83	<b>Household Income</b>	-.593 (.131)	-4.54
<b>Age</b>	-.000 (.001)	-.258	<b>Age</b>	-.027 (.002)	-12.12
<b>Within-Day Effects</b>					
<b>Interest in Campaign</b>	-.166 (.031)	-5.35	<b>Following Campaign</b>	.212 (.047)	4.50
<b>TV</b>	.030 (.024)	1.26	<b>TV</b>	-.020 (.015)	-1.35
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	-.001 (.010)	-.091	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	.007 (.004)	1.83
<b>TV*Ads Vs. Bush</b>	-.019 (.012)	-1.64	<b>TV*Ads Vs. McCain</b>	.001 (.002)	.81
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	-.004 (.010)	-.390	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.002 (.002)	.89
<b>TV*Ads Vs. Gore</b>	.011 (.011)	.987	<b>TV*Ads Vs. Obama</b>	-.001 (.001)	-.92
<b>Between-Day Effects</b>					
<b>Interest in Campaign</b>	-.219 (.169)	-1.30	<b>Following Campaign</b>	-.160 (.548)	-.29
<b>TV</b>	.159 (.190)	.839	<b>TV</b>	.252 (.190)	1.32
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	-.084 (.091)	-.930	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	-.021 (.029)	-.75
<b>TV*Ads Vs. Bush</b>	.726 (.824)	.882	<b>TV*Ads Vs. McCain</b>	-.131 (.137)	-.95
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	.011 (.064)	.178	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.021 (.018)	1.14
<b>TV*Ads Vs. Gore</b>	-.202 (.586)	-.345	<b>TV*Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.005 (.112)	.04
<b>Honesty News</b>	.029 (.042)	.684	<b>Honesty News</b>	.012 (.062)	.19
<b>TV*Honesty News</b>	-.123 (.181)	-.677	<b>TV*Honesty News</b>	.325 (.293)	1.11
<b>Constant</b>	.074 (.089)	.836	<b>Constant</b>	1.02 (.191)	5.34
<b>Random Effects</b>					
	<b>Variance</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>		<b>Variance</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
<b>State</b>	.026	.161	<b>State</b>	.292	.540
<b>Day</b>	.005	.074	<b>Day</b>	.047	.218
<b>Residual</b>	1.39	1.18	<b>Residual</b>	15.92	3.99
<b>N=3840, States=41, Days=112</b>			<b>N=15702, States=49, Days=112</b>		

Random effects by state provide us some visual stimulating, if unsurprising, results. Traditionally “red” states generally give a boost to Republican candidate honesty, while “blue” states lean Democratic. There are a few differences between 2000 and 2008, most notably the state of Arkansas, which actually has the highest random-intercept in Gore-minus-Bush honesty, but ranks with other southern states in 2008 leaning Republican in trustworthiness between McCain and Obama. One would imagine this has something to do with the relationship between Bill Clinton and Al Gore; Tennessee, Gore’s home state, was similarly favorable to Democrats in 2000 as opposed to 2008, although Gore failed to win either state. Arkansas is one of four states with a statistically-significant intercept favoring Gore honesty relative to Bush; the other three are Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois. Gore’s honesty seemingly took a hit in California, the site of the 1996 Hsi Lai Temple fundraising controversy, an event which was mentioned frequently in attacks against Gore (Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson 2004). The random-intercept for California is not, however, statistically distinguishable from zero. The only two states with statistically-significant intercepts favoring Bush honesty relative to Gore are Bush’s home state, Texas, and North Carolina.

**Figure 3.6**



**Figure 3.7**

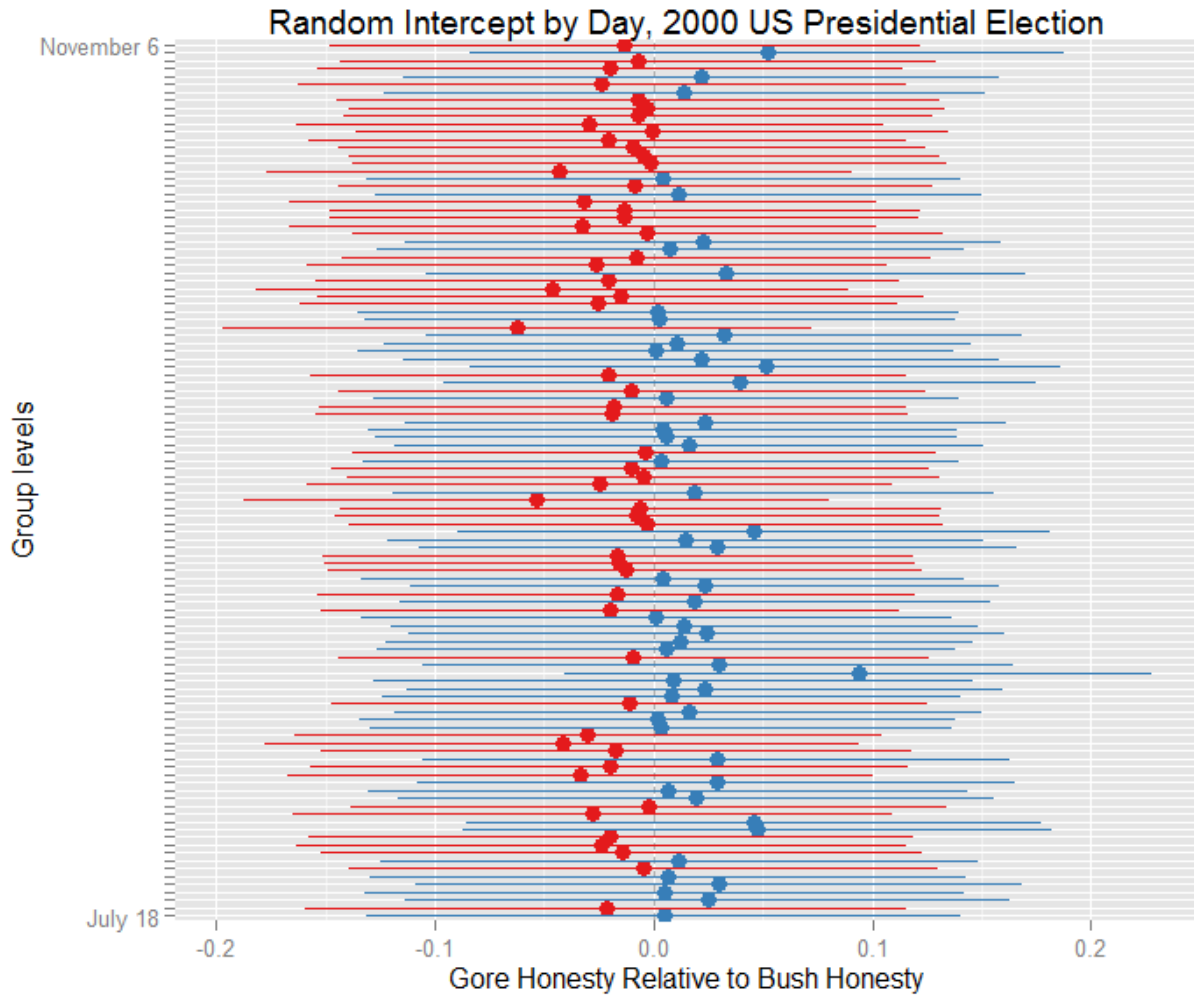


2008 presents a more unified South perceiving McCain as more trustworthy than Obama, as the twelve states with the lowest intercepts (indicating perceiving McCain as more trustworthy than Obama) are Southern states or states bordering the South. Obama is perceived as significantly more honest in Wisconsin, Oregon, Illinois, Washington, Connecticut, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, and California, while McCain holds an advantage in Louisiana, Alabama, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Georgia, Texas, and Florida. There does appear to be a correlation between random intercepts favoring a candidate's honesty and states that went in

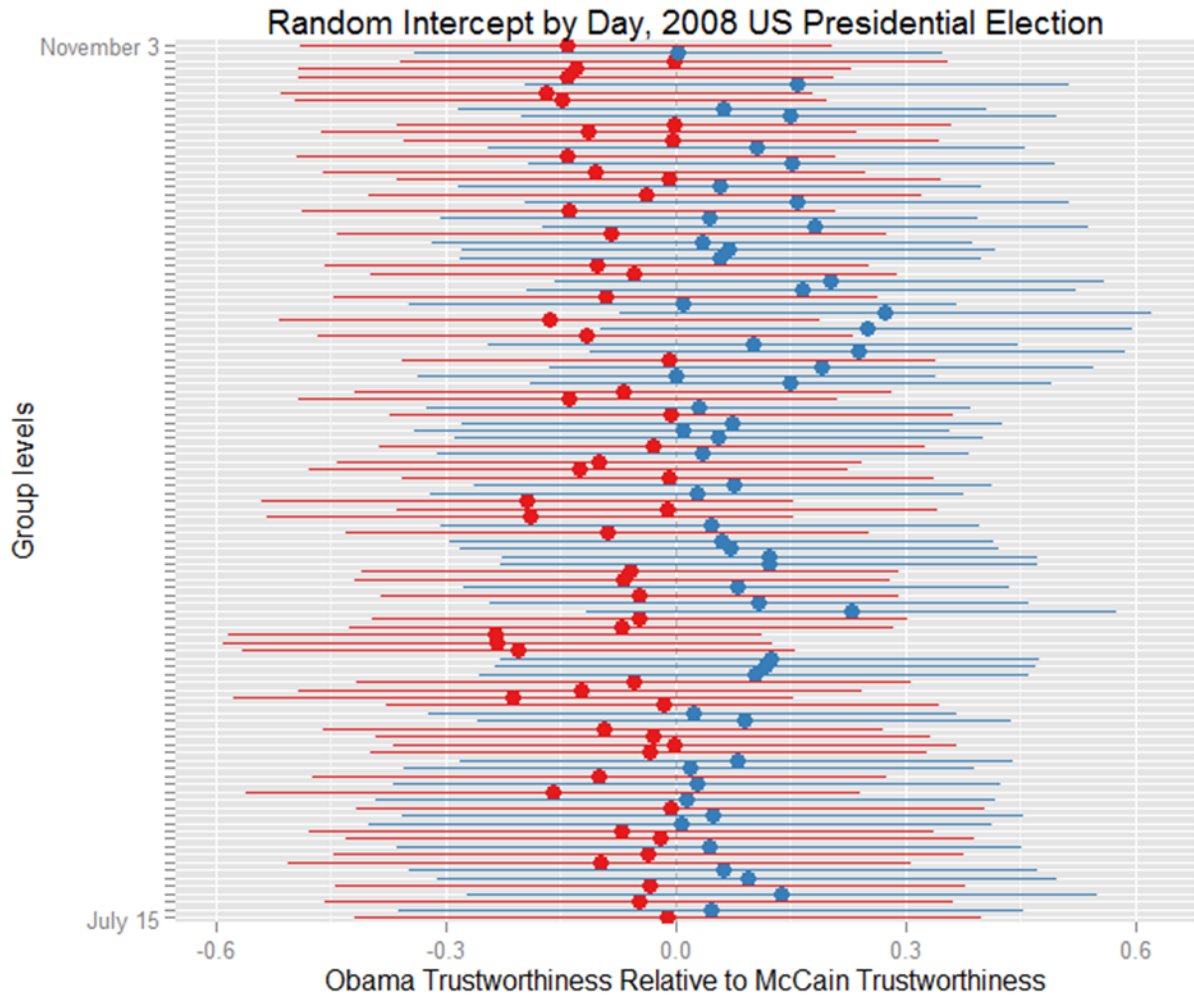
favor of that candidate in the Electoral College; this could be the result of liberal-conservative variance that was not captured in party identification.

We do see some significant changes between the naïve-pooling model and the ARFIMA-MLM model, most noticeably in the significance of campaign advertising in 2008 with all effects for ads vs. Obama having disappeared. Between-day effects are not significant or even approaching significance. However, similar to the naïve-pooling model, personal attack advertisements against John McCain yield significant results, although in the ARFIMA-MLM model the effect is significant in a one-tailed test, while approaching significance in a two-tailed test ( $T=1.83$ ). The effect occurs at the within-day level, indicating that personal attack ads against McCain pushed perceived trustworthiness in the favor of Barack Obama. This is a main effect, regardless of any interaction with media. Main effects of interest in the campaign in 2000 and following the campaign in 2008 are significant in the same direction as they were in the naïve-pooling model, although here we see that these occur at the within-day level; those individuals on any given day who said they were more interested or following the campaign more closely were more likely to view Bush as more honest relative to Gore and Obama as more trustworthy relative to McCain, respectively. In Chapter 5, I discuss more possible reasons for this result. The marginally significant backlash interaction wherein ads against Bush seemingly worked in his favor as voters viewed more campaign television, remains marginally significant in the ARFIMA-MLM model, as a within-day effect only.

**Figure 3.8**



**Figure 3.9**

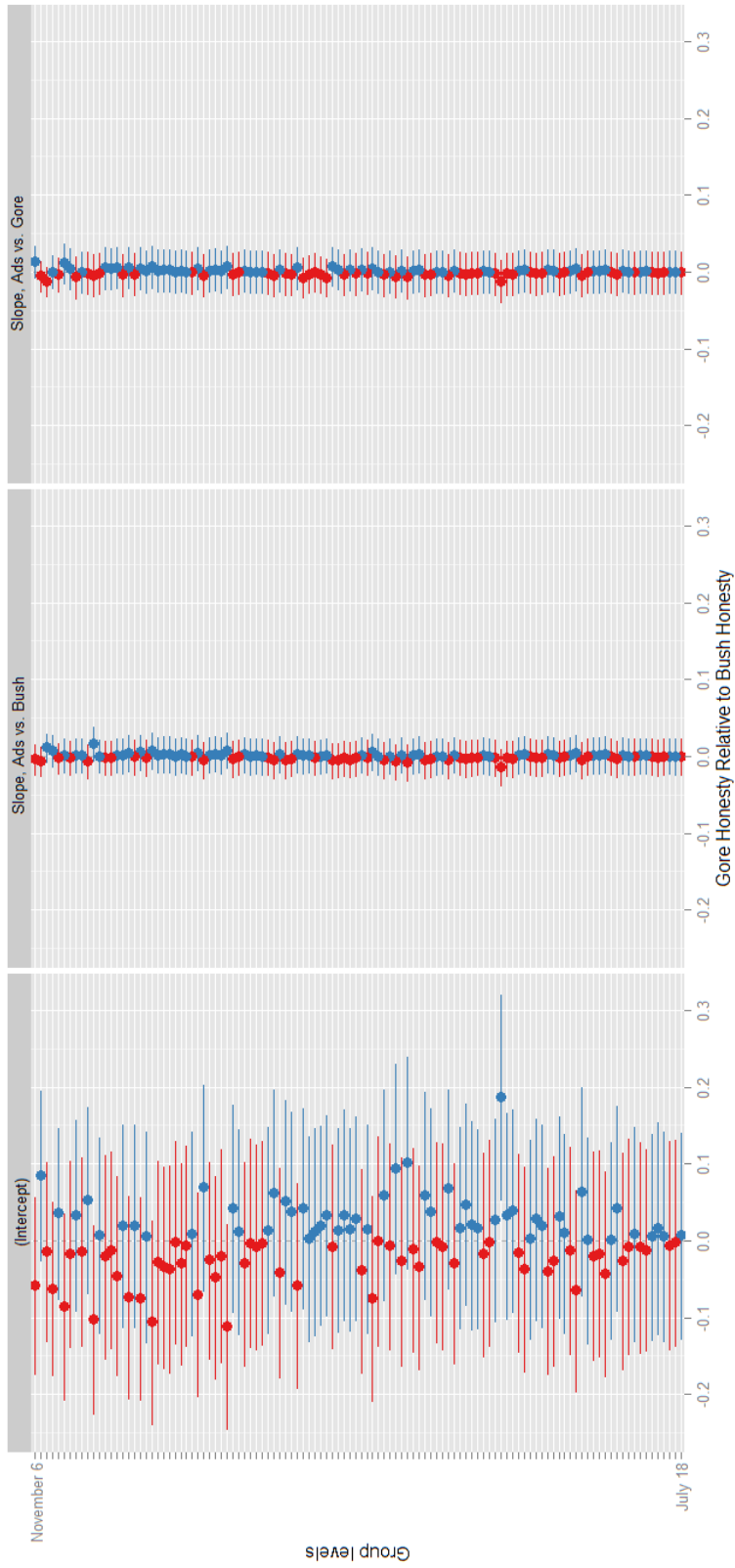


ARFIMA-MLM, Random Slope Model

<b>Table 3.4: Effect of Media on Perceived Candidate Honesty, 2000 and 2008, ARFIMA-MLM by State and Day with Random Slope</b>					
<b>2000, DV, Gore Honesty Minus Bush Honesty</b>			<b>2008, DV, Obama Minus McCain Trustworthiness</b>		
	<b>Est. (SE)</b>	<b>T-Stat.</b>		<b>Est. (SE)</b>	<b>T-Stat.</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	.747 (.029)	25.93	<b>Democrat</b>	3.62 (.073)	49.63
<b>Republican</b>	-.973 (.029)	-33.20	<b>Republican</b>	-3.77 (.078)	-48.14
<b>Within-Day Effects</b>					
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	-.002 (.007)	-.34	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	.009 (.004)	2.20
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	.002 (.007)	.29	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.000 (.002)	.11
<b>Between-Day Effects</b>					
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	-.057 (.056)	-1.01	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	-.019 (.024)	-.82
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	-.007 (.041)	-.18	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.019 (.016)	1.23
<b>Honesty News</b>	.009 (.024)	.35	<b>Honesty News</b>	.040 (.053)	.76
<b>Constant</b>	.033 (.030)	1.10	<b>Constant</b>	-.312 (.094)	-3.34
<b>Random Effects</b>					
	<b>Variance</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>		<b>Variance</b>	<b>St. Dev.</b>
<b>State</b>	.014	.118	<b>State</b>	.231	.480
<b>Ads Vs. Bush</b>	.000	.013	<b>Ads Vs. McCain</b>	.000	.013
<b>Ads Vs. Gore</b>	.000	.015	<b>Ads Vs. Obama</b>	.000	.006
<b>Day</b>	.007	.081	<b>Day</b>	.003	.180
<b>Residual</b>	1.44	1.20	<b>Residual</b>	17.11	4.14
<b>N=10072, States=41, Days=112</b>			<b>N=18207, States=49, Days=112</b>		



**Figure 3.10**



Turning to models which allow the slope of within-day advertising effects to vary by day, in 2008, we once again note significance related to ads aired in criticism of John McCain, although this time a significant, main, within-day effect. These findings should be met with at least some skepticism, however, given issues with convergence with such a complex model in which there is relatively little within-day variance on many days, making it difficult to compute random slopes.

In summary, with regard to H4, I do find some support for direct, main effects of campaign media as I have quantified it, in influencing perceptions of candidate honesty. Ads questioning John McCain's personal traits are marginally significant in affecting his trustworthiness relative to Obama. With regard to H5, there are some significant interactive effects in the naïve-pooling model, although this model should be questioned to an improper functional form. The strongest effects, significant across models, are those of interest or following the campaigns, although these effects flip signs between 2000 and 2008

## Chapter 4: Partisan Media Cues and Updating of Perceptions of Candidate Honesty: an Experiment

Hypotheses explored in this chapter:

*H3 (also explored in Chapter2): Individual candidate dishonesty will negatively affect party reputation, but less so for co-partisans.*

*H6: News media updates on information regarding candidate honesty will affect perceptions of candidate honesty.*

*H7: Citizens will be more likely to accurately update their perceptions of candidate honesty when the news source giving them information about candidate honesty is perceived to be in alignment with their political views.*

*H8: When a candidate is made to look more honest through a media correction of prior information, or an opponent more dishonest, agreement between source partisanship and candidate partisanship will weaken the effect or the perceived veracity of the reporting.*

*H9: Regardless of citizens' ability to update on factual information on dishonest acts by political figures, negative affect will remain.*

*“The Mexican government forces many bad people into our country.”*

*-Donald Trump*

Donald Trump’s recent comments on Mexican immigrants are the latest in a long line of comments by political figures which seemingly have no basis in actual fact, according to fact-checking organizations.<sup>xi</sup> In previous chapters, I used secondary data sources to examine the relationship between media sources and perceptions of candidate honesty and the relationship between these perceptions and feelings toward political parties. In Chapter 4, I use an experiment to further tease out the effects of media on perceptions of candidate honesty. Here, I am interested in the ability of participants to update perceptions of honesty based upon media information, as well as how the news source giving the update might affect the ability or desire to update correctly. I also attempt to extend the research on the relationship between perceptions of individual candidate honesty and feelings towards parties by establishing causality.

### **Background and Conceptualization**

While prior research on perceptions of candidate honesty has examined datasets such as the ANES and NAES (as has this dissertation), asking voters to make character assessments on political figures can be problematic because character and policy concerns may be intermingled and expressed as the other. Voiced concerns over character may in fact be motivated reasoning to explain decisions reached through other cues, most notably party identification (Doherty and Gimpel 1997). Evaluations of personal traits of political figures are in large part a reflection of policy decisions and job performance (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). While subjects in an experiment

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<sup>xi</sup> Louis Jacobson, “Donald Trump says Mexican government ‘forces many bad people into our country’,” *Politifact*, The Tampa Bay Times, 9 July 2015, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2012/aug/06/harry-reid/harry-reid-says-anonymous-source-told-him-mitt-rom/> (accessed 13 July 2015).

will still carry their partisanship with them (and, in fact, the interplay of media and party identification is a subject of this experiment), using an experiment allows for the removal of many outside factors such as policy concerns and job performance.

In prior chapters, I have examined the perceived honesty of politicians such as Al Gore, yet any reading of the honesty of Al Gore will be heavily influenced not just by Gore's own actions but also the policies of the Clinton administration and Clinton's own noted issues with the truth (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Thus, in this fourth chapter, I use an experiment to remove some of this noise and look at the effect of one single dishonest action on perceptions of parties and candidates.

### **Procedure**

The experiment consists of a 2 (political party) x 3 (news source) x 2 ("lie" vs. "no lie") design. Participants read a brief vignette describing a fictional race for a US House seat representing Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional district (surrounding Erie, PA). After answering one block of questions, participants were given another piece of information, a correction about a false statement made by one candidate, in the form of a news article. Participants then answered another block of questions and filled in some demographic information. By manipulating the news source giving a correction, I seek to determine how source cues affect updating on new information regarding candidate honesty. By manipulating candidate honesty, I look to see if the relationship between perceived candidate honesty and feelings towards the parties established in chapter 2 replicates in this experiment. The experimental results will seek to extend prior findings by establishing causality. By manipulating the partisanship of candidates, I seek to

determine potential interactions between candidate partisanship and source and subject partisanship.

### **Honesty Manipulation**

Within the opening vignette, participants were given information on an accusation made by one candidate, Steve Davis, against his opponent, Thomas Anderson. Davis accuses Anderson of having lobbied on behalf of Canadian business interests with regard to the building of an oil pipeline. In the news article that follows, this accusation is corrected. For participants in a control condition, no accusation (nor a later correction) is made. The opening news story participants read is not explicitly credited to a source, although in the online news article format, the URL credits pennnews.com, a fictional Pennsylvania news outlet. To simulate stories about an actual House race, the first story is dated October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014, while a follow-up is dated October 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Media Source Manipulation**

Following the opening vignette and a series of questions, participants read a second piece of campaign information, this time credited to one of three news sources. This media source corrects the earlier accusation made by Davis against Anderson, stating that there is absolutely no evidence to support Davis's claim. To get a measure of liberal and conservative news sources, I use Pew Research Center's October 2014 study on "Political Polarization and Media Habits." MSNBC is used as a liberal source, as it is more distrusted than trusted amongst those who are consistently or mostly conservative, while more trusted than distrusted amongst those who are consistently or mostly liberal or ideologically mixed. Fox News is used as a

conservative source, as its profile in terms of trust is the mirror opposite of MSNBC's profile (more trusted among consistent or mostly conservative and those mixed in their ideology; more distrusted among consistent or mostly liberal respondents). As for a neutral source, I select the Wall Street Journal, which is perhaps a surprising choice given its perceived conservative leanings (Segal et. al 1995). However, in the Pew study, the Wall Street Journal was the only source out of more than thirty sampled that is more trusted than distrusted at a statistically significant level at every point along the ideological scale from consistently liberal to consistently conservative (Pew Research Center 2014). Because I am interested in perceptions of sources, the Wall Street Journal works here as a source that is not particularly biased in that it is generally trusted by liberals and conservatives. I understand that I use terms of ideology here, while later referring to the "partisanship" of the news sources. Given that the relationship between partisanship and ideology is stronger than it has been in 30 years (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009), a measure of source ideology should be very close to, if not identical to, a measure of source partisanship. To be clear, however, while I refer to source "partisanship," this measure was pretested using the measure above, which speaks to liberal versus conservative sources.

### **Partisanship Manipulation**

The main topic of interest in this experiment is the importance of news network source cues on updating of perceptions of candidate honesty. If, however, news sources are believed to be biased, credibility of their reports of candidate malfeasance may depend to some extent upon which party is committing the malfeasance. That is, if a conservative source is reporting the dishonesty of liberal candidates, it may be because the source is biased. If a conservative source is reporting the dishonesty of conservative candidates, however, the case for bias is less clear.

Thus, one manipulation will be the party of the candidates. For half the participants, Steve Davis (the accuser in the treatment condition) will be Republican, while for the other half he will be a Democrat. In conditions where Davis is a Republican, his opponent, Thomas Anderson, will be a Democrat. In conditions where Davis is a Democrat, Anderson will be a Republican.

The candidate partisanship manipulation is also in place to attempt to replicate the findings regarding candidate honesty and feelings towards the parties in chapter 1 by establishing causality. Obviously, tying ratings of honesty to feelings towards the parties in the ANES doesn't get at much in the way of causality, since reverse causality (rating candidates lower on personal traits because of their party affiliations) is a distinct possibility. Additionally, the simultaneous nature of the questions in the ANES is not the ideal setup for the most likely causal story. We might expect that candidate dishonesty is followed temporally by a drop in rating for the party rather than occurring concurrently. Further, the analysis of feelings towards parties in the ANES data uses feeling thermometers, which can be unreliable due to individual level differences in terms of range used on the scale and a tendency among some to assign higher ratings overall across groups (Wilcox, Sigelman, and Cook 1989). While some scholars favor feeling thermometers over seven-point scales (Alwin 1997), the ANES thermometers are further weakened by the fact that outside of the extremes and the midpoint, the points are not labeled with descriptions. Thus, I manipulate the parties and examine the effect dishonest behavior by a candidate has upon feelings towards both the candidate's party and the opposing party as measured by both feeling thermometers as well as four-point measures asking respondents to rate how "honest" and "trustworthy" they find the Democratic and Republican parties. I measure these party effects as they relate to the initial accusation by Davis against Anderson (prior to correction), although I also look at vote choice in other races after the correction.



## Cover Story

As stated earlier, both the brief vignette and the later correction attributed to a news source will describe a fictional campaign for a Congressional seat in Pennsylvania's 3rd district. To make the honesty manipulation less obvious, the pieces of information about candidate dishonesty important to the manipulation will be contained within a longer piece about the day-to-day campaigning of the candidates (see Appendix). To avoid any additional extraneous effects, both hypothetical candidates will be challengers running for an open seat, family information about the candidates is kept similar, and the race is described as being hotly contested and too close to call.

## Dependent Variables

As stated at the start of the chapter, I seek to test the following hypotheses, one of which was previously explored in Chapter 2:

*H3 (also explored in Chapter 2): Individual candidate dishonesty will negatively affect party reputation, but less so for co-partisans.*

*H6: News media updates on information regarding candidate honesty will affect perceptions of candidate honesty.*

*H7: Citizens will be more likely to accurately update their perceptions of candidate honesty when the news source giving them information about candidate honesty is perceived to be in alignment with their political views.*

*H8: When a candidate is made to look more honest through a media correction of prior information, or an opponent more dishonest, agreement between source partisanship and candidate partisanship will weaken the effect or the perceived veracity of the reporting.*

*H9: Regardless of citizens' ability to update on factual information on dishonest acts by political figures, negative affect will remain.*

As one of my hypotheses deals with the effects of candidate dishonesty upon party reputation, after reading the initial accusation made by Davis against Thomas, participants will be asked a series of questions about how accurately they feel certain words describe the political parties. To disguise the true intent of the experiment, words such as “intelligent” and “compassionate” are included with words of interest such as “honest” and “trustworthy.” The reason I put this block of questions before the corrections is because I am interested in seeing how candidate dishonesty affects party reputation, not in how corrections affect party reputation. If I were to put this block of questions after the correction and the correction were to have worked completely with regard to the candidate, then it would be harder to test the effect of candidate dishonesty on party reputation. I could use the measure of dishonesty for Steve Davis, but then it would be necessary for participants to perceive of his dishonesty, which is also not a guarantee. Thus, I ask participants questions about characteristics of the parties after the initial vignette, in which one candidate accuses the other of hiding information about his past and/or his true intentions.

For the dependent variables in analyses of the effect of updates, questions following the correction were asked, similar in wording to those about parties. Participants were asked how well certain words describe the candidates. Filler words such as “intelligent” and “compassionate” were included with words of interest such as “honest” and “trustworthy.” Measures of candidate favorability and vote choice were included, as well, to examine the effect of corrections on measures more directly related to electoral consequences.

Also included in the questionnaire are a couple measures on the trustworthiness of the news source. These are added to get a sense of what is, in fact, driving a lack of updating if, in fact, updating is found to be lacking. Finally, participants were asked to fill in some basic demographic information, including information on their party identification and ideology.

### **Participants**

495 subjects were recruited through a local advertisement placed on the Long Island Craigslist page as well as through advertisements placed in cities across the nation on Backpage.com. Advertisements were placed in cities throughout all 50 US states. Because the candidates in the experiment are said to be from Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional district, ads were not placed in local Backpage pages for cities located in PA's 3<sup>rd</sup> as well as Pittsburgh, as the northern suburbs of Pittsburgh are included in this district. Upon replying to the advertisement, participants were directed to an online survey using Qualtrics. Participants were incentivized with the opportunity to enter a raffle for a \$50 American Express gift card. Participants were able to enter the raffle by voluntarily emailing the primary investigator (myself) upon completion of the study. Thus, identifying information from participants was kept separately from their responses. All participants were over 18 years of age. Overall, the sample leaned heavily Democratic, with 45 percent identifying as such as opposed to just under 14 percent of the sample identifying as Republican. Further, even among self-identified independents, the sample was more liberal than conservative, with a mean score among independents of 3.36 on a 1-to-7 scale from strong liberal to strong conservative. The sample was also more female (60 percent) and African-American (25 percent) than the general population.

## Analysis

### *Dishonesty and Feelings Toward Political Parties*

The allegation of shady business dealings by Davis towards his opponent does not appear to have moved feelings towards the parties at all, as the “lie” condition is not significant for perceived honesty, trustworthiness, or thermometer ratings for either party, both when Davis is presented as a Democrat or a Republican (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Interactions between the “lie” condition and subject partisanship are insignificant, as well. Rather, perceived party honesty, trustworthiness, and feeling thermometer ratings appear to be almost exclusively the function of direct effects of subject party ID.

Just as Davis’ accusation doesn’t appear to have dampened feelings towards Anderson’s party, the correction of Davis’ accusation does not appear to have affected vote share for either party in other races on the ballot (Table 4.7). There is a significant interaction wherein Republican subjects who are told a Democrat is lying are more likely to vote for Democrats than those in the “no lie” condition. I have no theoretical expectation as to this result and believe it may be an anomaly.

The lack of an effect here could be the result of a few possibilities. It is possible that subjects did not believe the allegation against Anderson, although this would theoretically be reflected in lower ratings for Davis for lying. It’s also possible that the allegation was not serious enough to move the needle one way or the other for either candidate. And, of course, it’s possible that dishonest activity by individual party members does not affect feelings toward political parties. In any event, while we saw some evidence of the link between perceived honesty and feelings towards the parties, no such link exists here. The link in Chapter 2, then, could have simply been due to the fact that general feelings towards the parties are expressed through both

expressed perceived honesty and feeling thermometers, with no causal arrow between the two measures.

<b>Table 4.1: Republican Candidate Accuses Democratic Candidate of Dishonesty, Feelings Towards Parties</b>						
	<b>Dem. Honesty</b>	<b>Dem. Trustworthy</b>	<b>Dem. Therm.</b>	<b>Rep. Honesty</b>	<b>Rep. Trustworthy</b>	<b>Rep. Therm.</b>
<b>Lie</b>	.158 (.167)	.021 (.163)	.428 (4.63)	.143 (.181)	.209 (.182)	.994 (5.27)
<b>Democrat</b>	.899 (.158)***	.671 (.154)***	27.96 (4.38)***	.243 (.171)	.336 (.172)#	-3.56 (4.98)
<b>Republican</b>	-.137 (.204)	-.361 (.199)#	-26.68 (5.66)***	.707 (.221)**	.857 (.222)***	32.30 (6.44)***
<b>Democrat*Lie</b>	-.295 (.237)	.084 (.232)	-5.73 (6.58)	-.189 (.257)	-.427 (.259)	.919 (7.49)
<b>Republican*Lie</b>	-.249 (.341)	.157 (.333)	1.50 (9.47)	-.389 (.370)	-.675 (.372)#	-12.24 (10.77)
<b>Constant</b>	2.14 (.114)***	2.27 (.111)***	53.12 (3.15)***	1.90 (.123)***	1.88 (.124)***	36.39 (3.59)***
<b>N=224</b>	R <sup>2</sup> =.22	R <sup>2</sup> =.21	R <sup>2</sup> =.41	R <sup>2</sup> =.05	R <sup>2</sup> =.07	R <sup>2</sup> =.16
#=p<.1, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001, two-tailed significance test						

<b>Table 4.2: Democratic Candidate Accuses Republican Candidate of Dishonesty, Feelings Towards Parties</b>						
	<b>Dem. Honesty</b>	<b>Dem. Trustworthy</b>	<b>Dem. Therm.</b>	<b>Rep. Honesty</b>	<b>Rep. Trustworthy</b>	<b>Rep. Therm.</b>
<b>Lie</b>	-.184 (.161)	-.191 (.160)	-.635 (4.92)	-.223 (.161)	-.239 (.165)	-4.26 (5.21)
<b>Democrat</b>	.594 (.159)***	.534 (.158)**	22.80 (4.86)***	-.148 (.159)	-.094 (.163)	-3.22 (5.14)
<b>Republican</b>	-.044 (.233)	-.28 (.231)	-20.20 (7.09)**	.861 (.233)***	.764 (.238)**	27.34 (7.51)***
<b>Democrat*Lie</b>	.258 (.218)	.349 (.216)	1.84 (6.63)	.333 (.218)	.413 (.223)#	4.32 (7.02)
<b>Republican*Lie</b>	.230 (.323)	.524 (.321)	12.37 (9.86)	-.052 (.323)	.193 (.331)	4.05 (10.44)
<b>Constant</b>	2.22 (.117)***	2.28 (.116)***	54.96 (3.57)***	2.08 (.117)***	2.06 (.120)***	37.42 (3.78)***
<b>N=271</b>	R <sup>2</sup> =.16	R <sup>2</sup> =.17	R <sup>2</sup> =.25	R <sup>2</sup> =.11	R <sup>2</sup> =.11	R <sup>2</sup> =.13
#=p<.1, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001, two-tailed significance test						

### *Media Corrections and Perceived Honesty*

If media corrections are indeed valuable in affecting perceived candidate honesty, then subjects should view Steve Davis more negatively in the media correction condition as opposed to the control condition. Furthermore, if updating is taking place, there should be no difference between Thomas Anderson's trait ratings in the control vs. experimental conditions. Ideally,

because Anderson is accused of wrongdoing that is later corrected, this correction should wipe the accusation and leave him no worse (or better) than he was initially. With regard to updating when given a media correction, the results of the experiment demonstrate that citizens are indeed capable of updating. After correction, views on Thomas Anderson’s honesty, trustworthiness, and straightforwardness, as well as his overall likeability and less-related traits such as responsibility, competence, and intelligence are no different between the “lie” and “no lie” conditions. That is, subjects who were told that Davis accused Anderson of lobbying and were later told this was a false accusation viewed Anderson no differently than those who were given no lie and correction. It appears that no residual negative affect remains after the correction.

Table 4.3: DVs: Perceived Anderson Personal Traits							
	Likeable	Trustworthy	Responsible	Straightforward	Intelligent	Honest	Compassionate
<b>Lie</b>	-.073 (.066)	-.047 (.072)	-.097 (.069)	-.066 (.073)	.007 (.072)	-.044 (.071)	-.071 (.073)
<b>Democrat</b>	.220 (.106)*	.200 (.116)#	.201 (.111)#	.228 (.116)#	-.001 (.115)	.403 (.113)***	.228 (.118)#
<b>Republican</b>	.186 (.145)	.190 (.159)	.172 (.152)	.159 (.160)	-.109 (.158)	.347 (.156)*	.239 (.162)
<b>Davis Democrat</b>	-.131 (.103)	-.003 (.113)	-.051 (.108)	-.128 (.114)	-.128 (.112)	-.052 (.111)	-.120 (.115)
<b>MSNBC</b>	-.099 (.078)	-.151 (.086)#	-.115 (.082)	-.056 (.086)	.002 (.085)	-.085 (.084)	.029 (.087)
<b>Fox</b>	-.003 (.082)	-.139 (.089)	-.037 (.085)	-.080 (.090)	.025 (.089)	-.139 (.087)	-.094 (.091)
<b>Dem.*Davis Democrat</b>	-.060 (.143)	-.116 (.156)	-.214 (.149)	.032 (.157)	.032 (.155)	-.186 (.153)	-.107 (.159)
<b>Rep.*Davis Democrat</b>	.265 (.203)	.440 (.222)*	.281 (.212)	.046 (.223)	.561 (.221)*	.259 (.218)	.240 (.226)
<b>Constant</b>	2.64 (.089)***	2.52 (.097)***	2.64 (.093)***	2.58 (.098)***	2.78 (.097)***	2.40 (.095)***	2.50 (.099)***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.04	.05	.04	.03	.02	.07	.04
<b>N</b>	495	495	495	495	495	495	495
#=p<.1, *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001, two-tailed significance test							

Table 4.4: DVs: Perceived Davis Personal Traits							
	Likeable	Trustworthy	Responsible	Straightforward	Intelligent	Honest	Compassionate
<b>Lie</b>	-.270 (.072)***	-.299 (.073)***	-.314 (.075)***	-.298 (.077)***	-.233 (.075)**	-.322 (.077)***	-.371 (.078)***
<b>Democrat</b>	.106 (.115)	.154 (.118)	.175 (.120)	.134 (.123)	.063 (.120)	.274 (.124)*	.311 (.125)*
<b>Republican</b>	.158 (.158)	.253 (.162)	.051 (.165)	.202 (.169)	.104 (.165)	.334 (.170)#	.273 (.172)
<b>Davis Democrat</b>	-.148 (.112)	-.123 (.115)	-.082 (.117)	-.191 (.120)	-.084 (.118)	-.061 (.121)	-.022 (.122)
<b>MSNBC</b>	-.164 (.085)#	-.138 (.087)	-.149 (.089)	-.069 (.091)	-.096 (.089)	-.169 (.092)#	-.157 (.093)#
<b>Fox</b>	-.066 (.089)	-.042 (.091)	-.042 (.093)	-.041 (.095)	.085 (.093)	-.095 (.095)	-.056 (.097)
<b>Dem.*Davis Democrat</b>	.343 (.155)*	.400 (.159)*	.301 (.162)#	.430 (.166)*	.287 (.163)#	.204 (.167)	.101 (.169)
<b>Rep.*Davis Democrat</b>	-.072 (.220)	-.150 (.226)	-.300 (.230)	-.082 (.236)	.034 (.231)	-.343 (.237)	-.208 (.241)
<b>Constant</b>	2.77 (.097)***	2.61 (.099)***	2.70 (.101)***	2.66 (.103)***	2.84 (.101)***	2.53 (.104)***	2.65 (.105)***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.08	.10	.10	.09	.05	.09	.09
<b>N</b>	495	495	495	495	495	495	495

#= $p < .1$ , \*= $p < .05$ , \*\*= $p < .01$ , \*\*\*= $p < .001$ , two-tailed significance test

Of course, with these results, it remains possible that nobody was paying attention to the news articles. The results for perceptions of Steve Davis, however, paint a portrait of strong updating. Amongst those who were told via a media correction that Steve Davis was in all likelihood fabricating his accusation against Anderson, Davis is viewed as significantly less likeable, trustworthy, straightforward, responsible, intelligent, honest, and compassionate when compared to the views of Davis among those subjects in the control condition. Coefficient sizes range from two-tenths to over one-third of a point on a four-point scale. While, because of the experimental manipulation, it is possible that these lower ratings for Davis are because voters didn't believe his initial accusation against Anderson, the effects of source cues seem to indicate that the correction was playing a large role (see below).

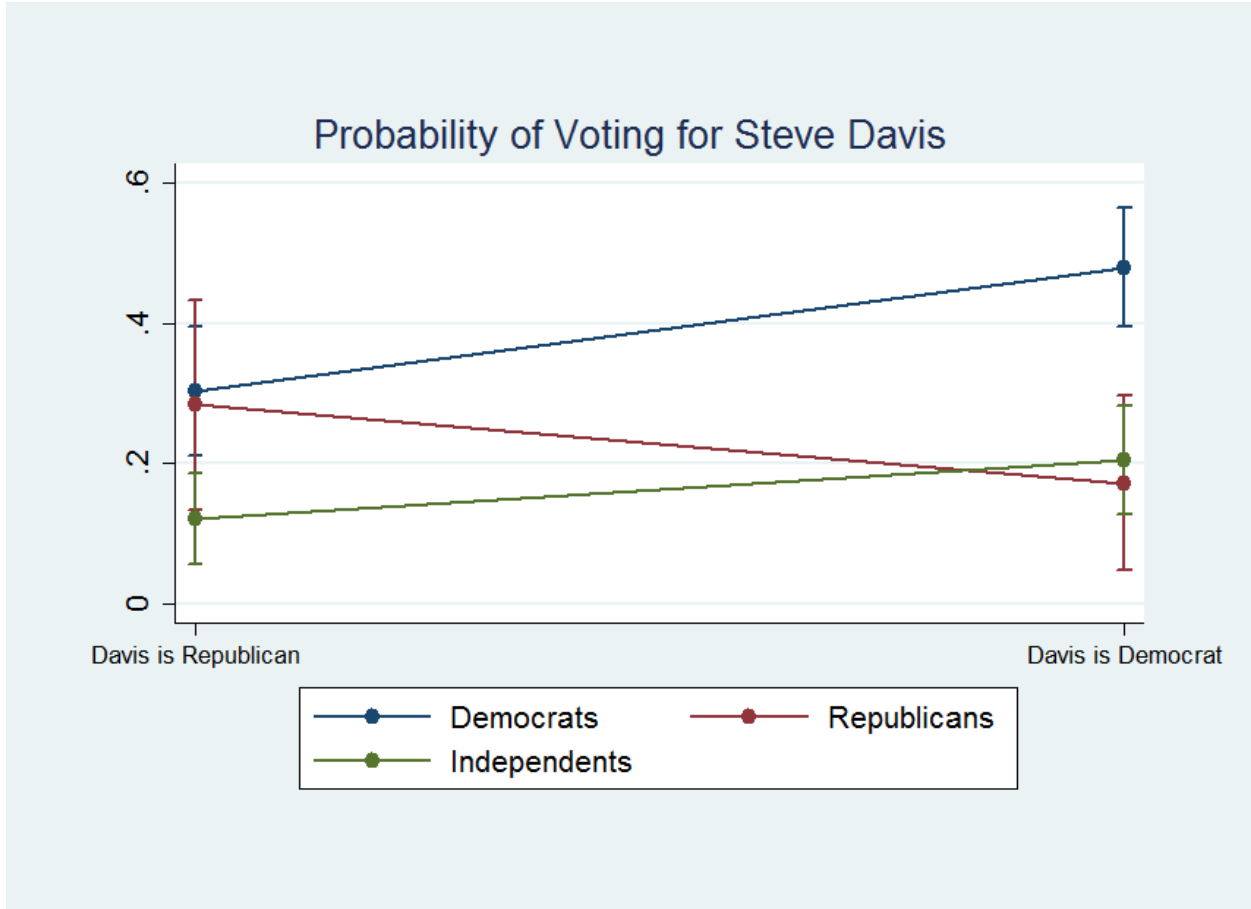
That said, the results for vote choice following the news retraction paint a less-bleak picture for Steve Davis. While he was viewed significantly worse across character traits, in a multinomial logit model, subjects were only marginally more likely to vote for Thomas Anderson as opposed to Steve Davis, and whatever repercussions Davis faces for lying are

largely washed out by party identification. Turning to a simple chart showing percentage of the vote for each candidate (Table 4.6), Steve Davis did receive a smaller vote share when it was reported he was lying; however, his vote share only decreased by fewer than four percentage points, and that is in an experiment wherein subjects were asked to give their vote choice in close proximity to being informed of his untruthful behavior and having no other information aside from party identification on which to base their vote. Looking at the predictive margins in Figure 4.1, when Davis was presented as a Republican, significant differences do not emerge between Democrats, Republicans, and Independents on vote choice, while when Davis is presented as a Democrat, he is their clear choice.

<b>Table 4.5: Multinomial Logit: Base Outcome: Vote for Davis</b>		
	<b>Vote For Anderson</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
<b>Lie</b>	.480 (.267)#	.196 (.229)
<b>MSNBC</b>	.175 (.312)	.467 (.272)#
<b>FOX</b>	-.226 (.328)	.209 (.279)
<b>Davis is Democrat</b>	-1.09 (.369)**	-.566 (.318)#
<b>Republican PID</b>	.053 (.525)	.125 (.486)
<b>Independent PID</b>	.253 (.474)	1.53 (.402)***
<b>Davis Dem.*Rep. PID</b>	2.29 (.748)**	.459 (.755)
<b>Davis Dem.*Ind. PID</b>	.738 (.622)	-.127 (.515)
<b>Constant</b>	-.223 (.345)	-.055 (.314)
	N=495	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> =.08
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		



**Figure 4.1**



**Table 4.6: Vote Distribution by “Lie” vs. “No Lie” and Party ID**

	“No Lie”	“Lie”	Davis is Democrat			Davis is Republican		
			Democrat	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Republican	Independent
<b>Vote Davis</b>	30.2%	26.3%	47.7%	17.1%	19.8%	30.5%	29.4%	12.6%
<b>Vote Anderson</b>	21.2%	25.8%	16.9%	60.0%	18.9%	29.5%	29.4%	15.8%
<b>Undecided</b>	48.6%	47.9%	35.4%	22.9%	61.3%	40.0%	41.2%	71.6%
	N=255	N=240	N=130	N=35	N=106	N=95	N=34	N=95

<b>Table 4.7: Vote In Other Races on Ballot, 1=All Democrats, 5=All Republicans</b>		
	<b>Davis (Lying Candidate) is Democrat</b>	<b>Davis (Lying Candidate) is Republican</b>
<b>Lie</b>	.119 (.166)	.132 (.165)
<b>Subject Democrat</b>	-.940 (.164)***	-.795 (.155)***
<b>Subject Republican</b>	1.34 (.240)***	1.14 (.201)***
<b>Subject Democrat*Lie</b>	-.096 (.225)	-.323 (.234)
<b>Subject Republican*Lie</b>	-.844 (.334)*	-.049 (.336)
<b>Constant</b>	2.72 (.121)***	2.69 (.112)***
	N=271; R <sup>2</sup> =.39	N=224; R <sup>2</sup> =.45
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		

*Residual Negative Affect*

If people are updating correctly, they should be no less likely to vote for Thomas Anderson than those in the control group; in fact, they should be more likely to vote for him if they believe Steve Davis to have been lying and choose to punish him.

As stated previously, subjects were quite perceptive in terms of updating. In looking at the “lie” vs. “no lie” conditions, subjects who were exposed to the lie and correction did not feel any differently toward Thomas Anderson than did those in the control condition, across several traits.

*Media Updates; Source Partisanship*

When a correction makes a candidate appear more honest or his opponent less honest, does perceived partisan agreement between candidate and source network lessen the effect of the update?

For those subjects who were given an accusation by Davis and a correction, they were asked to rate the trustworthiness of the update they received, on a scale from one to four ranging from “very trustworthy” to “not at all trustworthy.” Unlike measures of candidate honesty, this

question was only asked of those subjects who were given misinformation and a correction. I code this so that higher values indicate greater perceived trustworthiness.

<b>Table 4.8: Media Effects</b>		
	<b>Find Report Trustworthy</b>	<b>Honesty, Steve Davis</b>
<b>Davis Democrat*Fox</b>	-.447 (.266)#	.004 (.190)
<b>Davis Democrat*MSNBC</b>	-.532 (.276)#	-.023 (.184)
<b>Democrat</b>	.039 (.194)	.385 (.134)**
<b>Republican</b>	.337 (.295)	.411 (.179)*
<b>Davis Democrat</b>	.272 (.229)	-.082 (.157)
<b>Democrat Subject*Davis Democrat</b>	-.071 (.239)	.233 (.166)
<b>Republican Subject*Davis Democrat</b>	-.003 (.361)	-.256 (.238)
<b>Democrat Reading MSNBC</b>	.594 (.239)*	-.370 (.164)*
<b>Republican Reading Fox</b>	.650 (.352)#	-.454 (.251)#
<b>MSNBC</b>	-.036 (.233)	.014 (.156)
<b>Fox</b>	-.330 (.205)	-.040 (.141)
<b>Lie</b>	-	-.338 (.077)***
<b>Constant</b>	2.77 (.165)***	2.47 (.116)***
	N=240; R <sup>2</sup> =.16	N=495; R <sup>2</sup> =.11
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		

Here, I am interested in how trust in a source giving a correction may be influenced by partisan agreement, both between candidate and network and between subject and network. I hypothesize that, given motivated reasoning and the desire for cognitive balance, subjects will be more likely to trust a source that matches their partisanship. Thus, I include an interaction of Democratic subjects and being in the MSNBC condition and Republican subjects in the Fox condition. Further, given the possibility of perceived ideological bias on MSNBC and Fox, it is possible that subjects will be less trustworthy of a source that may be exercising a partisan bias. As the correction in this experiment involves Steve Davis being accused of making up a story about his opponent, ideological bias would suggest Fox going after Davis the Democrat and MSNBC going after Davis the Republican, and thus I interact Davis' partisanship with Fox and MSNBC conditions.

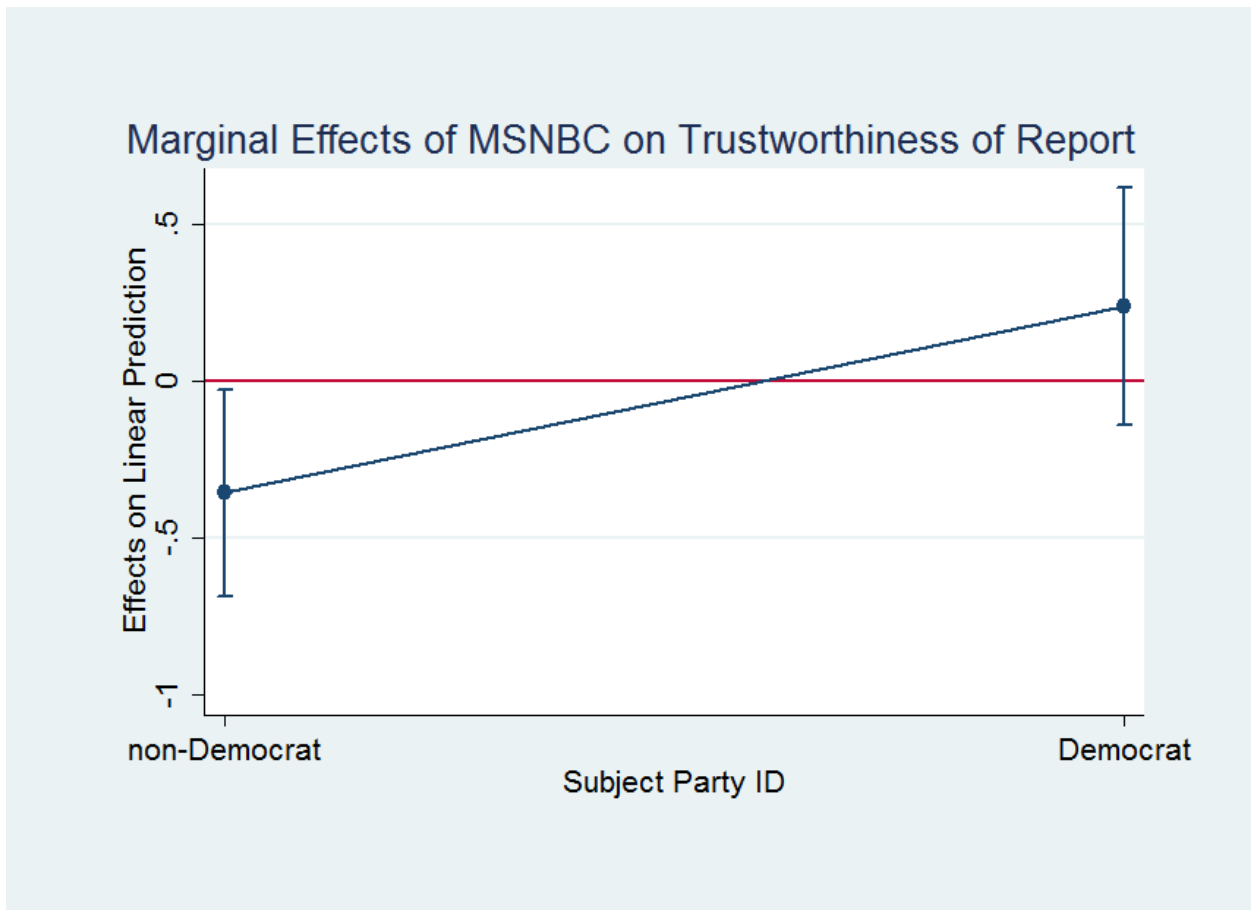
Not surprisingly, there is a significant interaction between Democratic party ID among subjects and receiving the MSNBC treatment on trust of source. As can be seen from the plot in Figure 4.2, there is a significant, negative effect of MSNBC for non-Democrats in terms of trustworthiness of report, but no effect for Democrats. We can see that a similar interaction between Republican subject partisanship and the Fox condition is approaching significance ( $p < .1$ ). Turning to a graphic representation of this interaction (Figure 4.3), we see that while non-Republicans find the Fox News report to be less trustworthy than reports from other sources, Republicans draw no such distinction. We can square these results with some findings from Chapter 1; even putting aside selection effects, liberals and conservatives may come away with different conclusions about candidate honesty even from the same information, just by virtue of source cues. In Figures 4.4 and 4.5, we see a similar effect on perceptions of Steve Davis' honesty, with Republicans reading Fox News and Democrats reading MSNBC viewing Davis as less honest than non-Republicans and non-Democrats, respectively, for whom there no significant source effect. Interestingly, these effects are for questions asked of the entire sample regardless of assignment to the "lie" or "no lie" condition. In fact, in breaking this analysis into "lie" and "no lie" conditions, the effect appears to be driven by those in the "no lie" condition, indicating that Republicans reading Fox and Democrats reading MSNBC view a candidate as more dishonest, even when reading an innocuous story (see Appendix 4.2).

Also, in Figure 4.6, we see the significance of the relationship between candidate partisanship and perceived network partisanship. When Davis, the candidate whose accusation is being refuted by the news correction, is a Republican, there is no difference in trustworthiness between Fox News and other networks. However, when the candidate being corrected is a Democrat, there exists a significant difference in trustworthiness. Fox News is less trusted than

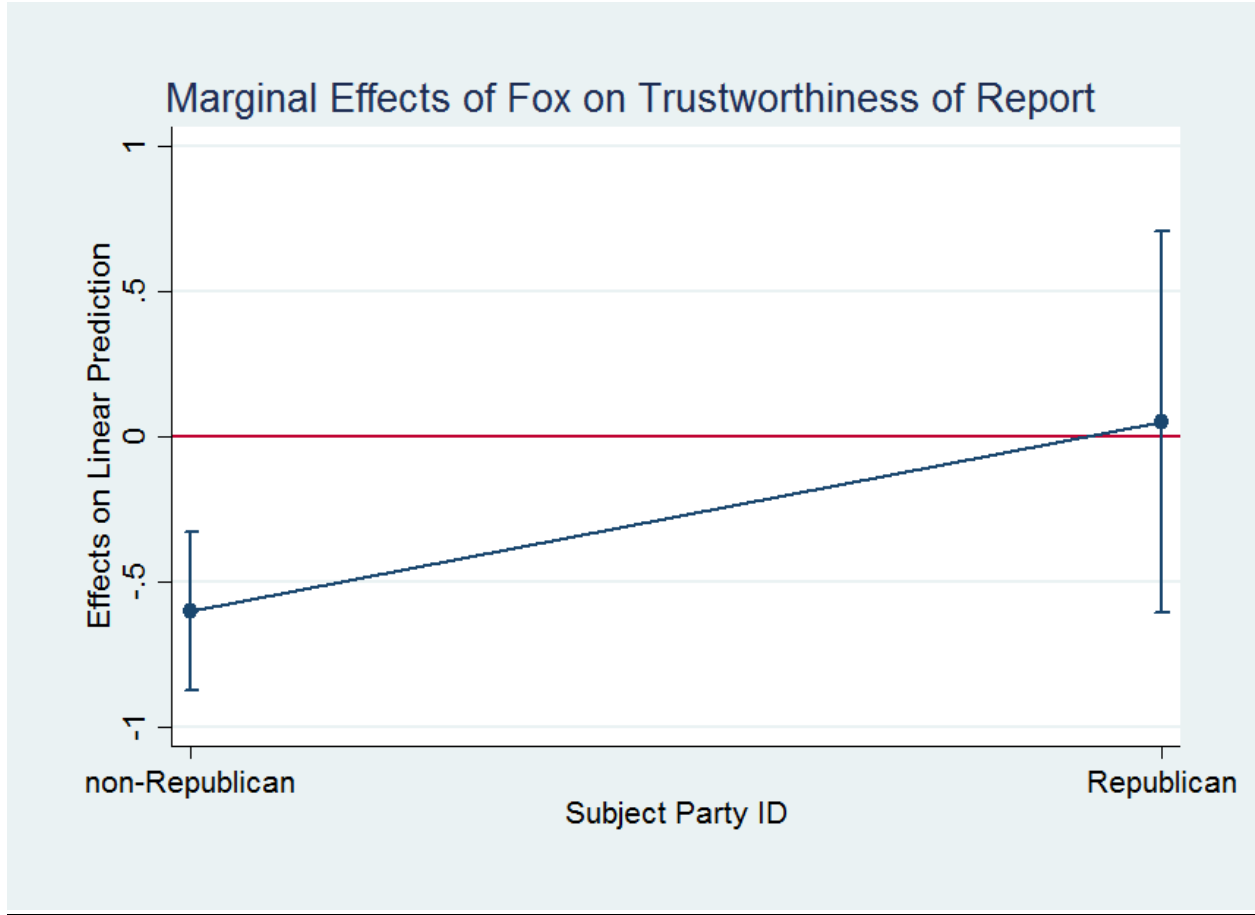
other sources when it is issuing a correction to a Democrat, indicating that a belief in the biased nature of Fox News may lead individuals to discount information even though it may be true.

The relationship between Davis' party and MSNBC is not significant (Appendix 4.1), although interestingly it moves in the same direction as the Fox margins, indicating less trust when MSNBC is correcting a Democrat, which would seemingly not fit with theory.

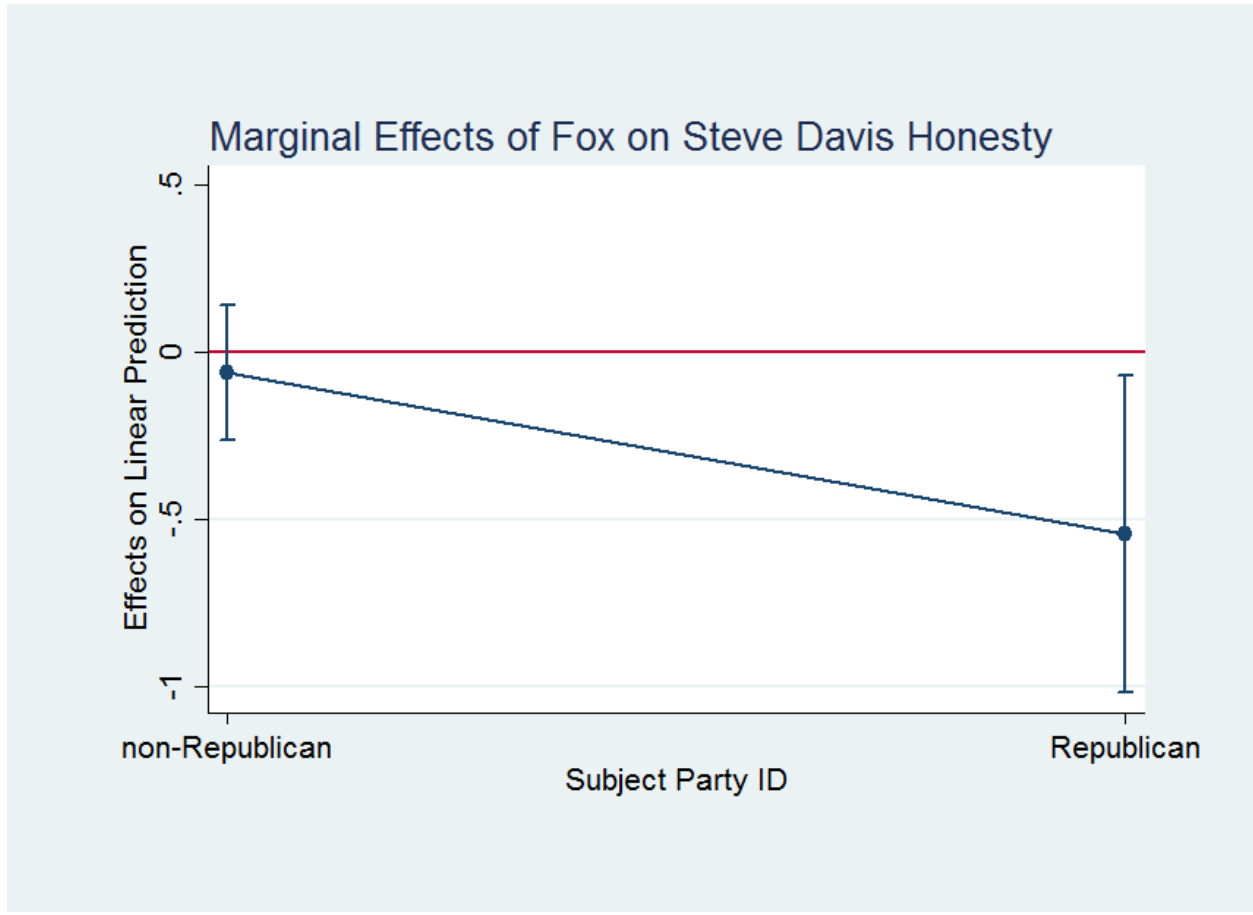
**Figure 4.2**



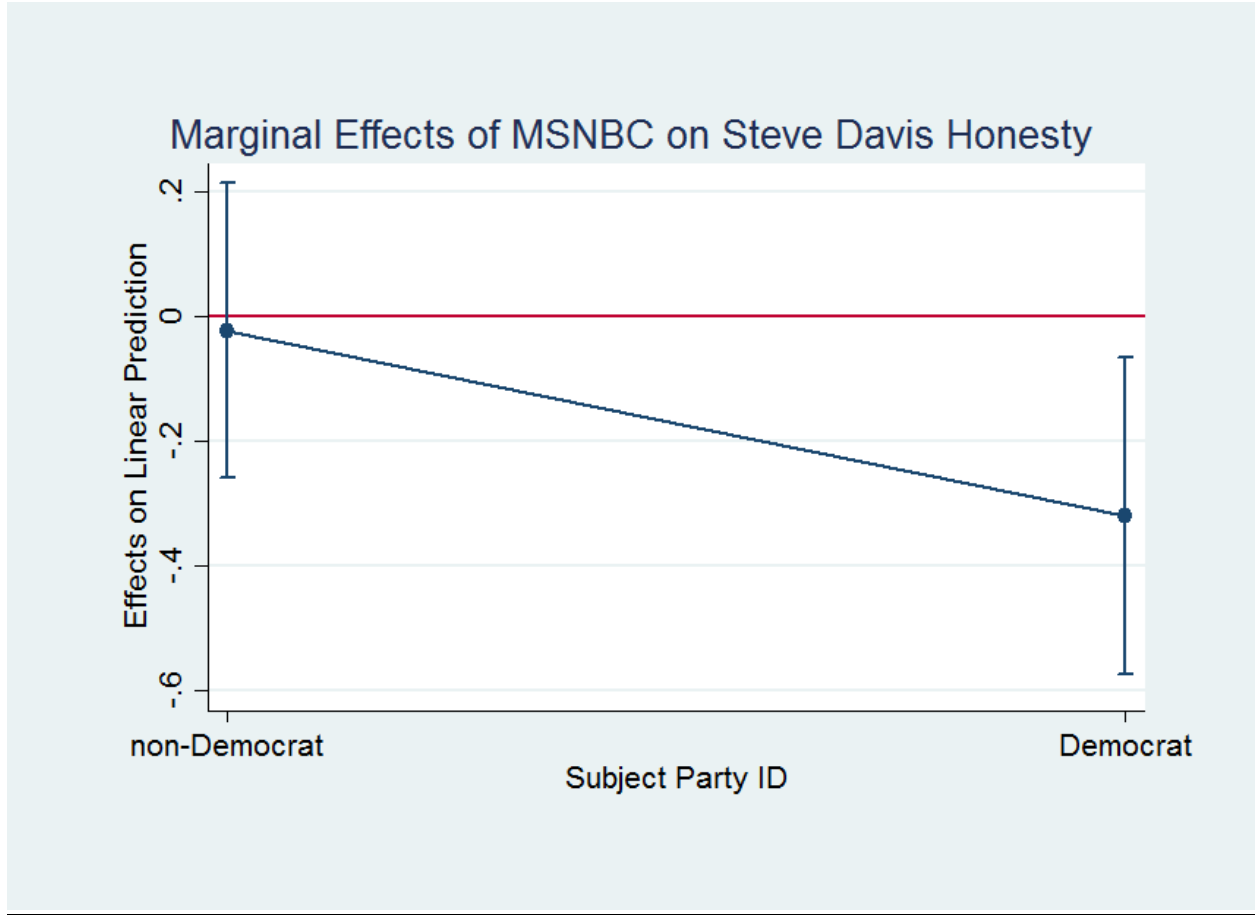
**Figure 4.3**



**Figure 4.4**

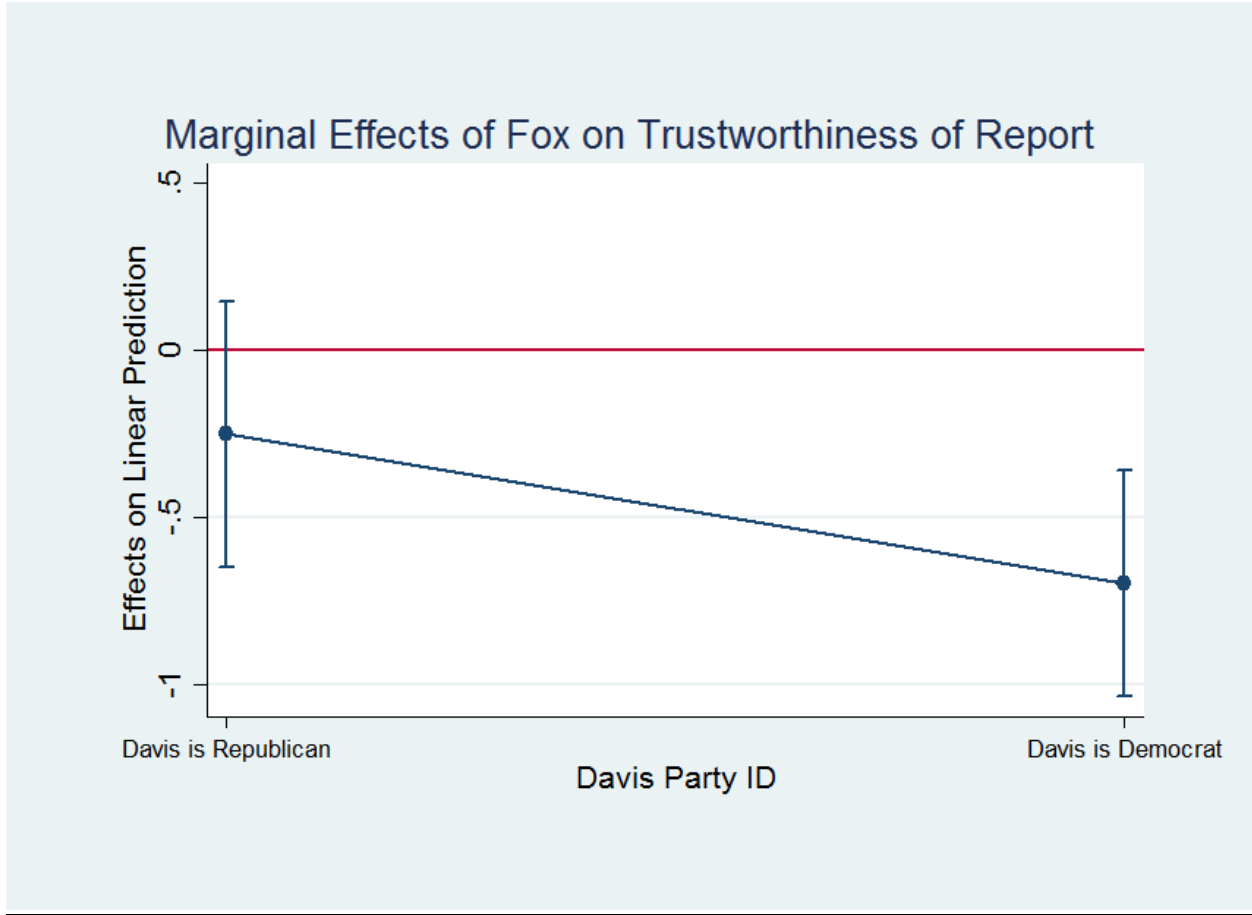


**Figure 4.5**





**Figure 4.6**



Overall, this chapter demonstrates preliminary evidence of what allows a “post-truth” political climate to exist. It’s not that candidates do not pay a price with regard to perceptions as a result of dishonesty; they do, as demonstrated by the fact that subjects who were informed of Steve Davis’ false accusations viewed him more negatively in trait areas both related and unrelated to honesty. However, the evidence that such a price exists electorally is less clear. While the effect of dishonesty on vote choice was marginally significant in moving votes away from a dishonest candidate and toward his opponent, the effect is largely dwarfed by that of party identification.

Also demonstrated here is the effect of source cues on how reports on candidate honesty are received. Non-Democrats are shown to be less trusting of MSNBC and non-Republicans less

trusting of Fox when compared to other sources, even when media outlets were reporting the same information. While subjects across conditions appear to update their perceptions of Steve Davis correctly and rate him more negatively than his opponent across a variety of character traits, Democrats in the MSNBC condition and Republicans in the Fox News condition downgraded Davis' honesty to a greater degree across treatment and control conditions.

## Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks and Future Directions

I entered this dissertation seeking to determine the effects of the media in shaping perceptions of candidate honesty and the effects that these perceptions have on feelings towards candidates and parties. From a broader perspective, I sought to describe the mechanics of a “post-truth” political environment. The confirmation of some hypotheses and disconfirmation of others paints a picture in which a “post-truth” environment becomes clearer. In this final chapter, I will lay out and summarize results across nine hypotheses, and discuss some directions for future research.

*H1, explored in Chapter 2: Individuals who are more engaged in the election and watch campaign programming are more likely to believe candidates are behaving dishonestly.*

Results from Chapter 2 seem to indicate the opposite, with a significant main effect of programs viewed increasing perceived honesty for both Republican candidates from 1992-2012 and Barack Obama in 2012.

*H2, explored in Chapter 2: The effects of citizen engagement and television viewing on perceptions of candidate dishonesty will be greater when the dishonest candidate does not share a political party with the citizen.*

The interaction between citizen party ID and television viewing on honesty is significant and creates a split between Democrats and Republicans, as program viewing causes them to move in opposite directions, believing fellow party member candidates to be more honest and those in the opposite party to be more dishonest.

*H3, explored in Chapters 2 and 4: Individual candidate dishonesty will negatively affect party reputation, but less so for co-partisans.*

Individual candidate dishonesty and party reputation are clearly linked, but I find no evidence of a causal relationship.

*H4, explored in Chapter 3: When advertisements or national news stories focus on candidate dishonesty, perceptions of candidate dishonesty will increase.*

I find some evidence of a link between advertisements on candidate honesty and perceived dishonesty for John McCain in 2008. I find null effects for national news stories.

*H5, explored in Chapter 3: There is an interaction between engagement with a campaign and media content on perceptions of candidate honesty.*

I do find some evidence of this interaction, specifically for attacks on McCain's personal character on Obama trustworthiness relative to McCain, although only in a naïve-pooling model, the results of which should be treated with skepticism because of improper functional form

*H6, explored in Chapter 4: News media updates on information regarding candidate honesty will affect perceptions of candidate honesty.*

Indeed, news media updates do appear to work in affecting candidate honesty. When Steve Davis' smear on his opponent is corrected, his opponent is looked at no differently than in a control condition with regard to honesty and other personal traits, while Davis' ratings suffer.

*H7, explored in Chapter 4: Citizens will be more likely to accurately update their perceptions of candidate honesty when the news source giving them information about candidate honesty is perceived to be in alignment with their political views.*

I do find evidence of H7 with regard to source trustworthiness and perceived honesty. Non-Democrats were less likely to find a media correction to be "trustworthy" when it came from liberal MSNBC as opposed to other outlets, and the same for non-Republicans and Fox News. Democrats reading MSNBC and Republicans reading Fox, however, adjusted their

honesty ratings of Steve Davis downward to a greater degree than non-Democrats and non-Republicans in those conditions.

*H8: When a candidate is made to look more honest through a media correction of prior information, or an opponent more dishonest, agreement between source partisanship and candidate partisanship will weaken the effect or the perceived veracity of the reporting.*

I do find evidence of an interaction between source partisanship and candidate partisanship. When a correction would seemingly benefit a Republican and harm a Democrat, subjects found reports from Fox News less trustworthy than those from other sources.

*H9, explored in Chapter 4: Regardless of citizens' ability to update on factual information on dishonest acts by political figures, negative affect will remain.*

At least with regard to my experimental manipulation, negative affect does not appear to remain when misinformation about the honesty of a candidate is corrected. Subjects in the “lie” and “no lie” conditions felt the same about Thomas Anderson across a wide variety of traits, while punishing Steve Davis on the same traits for his dishonesty.

Normatively speaking, Chapter 4 provides the clearest evidence that perceived candidate honesty is still, to some degree, based upon candidate behavior, and that simply fabricating dirt on an opponent is not always successful. In the experiment, Steve Davis' smear on Thomas Anderson does not affect Anderson at all, once corrected. Meanwhile, upon being called out on his spreading of misinformation, Davis is viewed more negatively across a variety of character traits when compared to a control condition.

While I did not have any hypotheses related to this concept, the preceding analyses speak the relationship between candidate honesty and other personal traits. This relationship is apparent or hinted at throughout various chapters. For example, in Chapter 4, Steve Davis' dishonest

behavior affects views on not just his honesty but also his perceived compassion and intelligence. Further, we see the effect of personal attack ads and television viewing on perceived McCain honesty, while we do not see a similar relationship in 2000. While these were obviously different elections, it's worth noting that the broader category of "personal" ads is significant in 2008 while "honesty" ads were insignificant in 2000. Thus, it seems possible that ads that strike on personal traits other than honesty may drive down honesty ratings.

While the preceding pages demonstrate strong evidence of media effects on perceived candidate honesty, the case for the effect of candidate dishonesty on party reputation is relatively weak. While the two are clearly related, as seen in Chapter 2, causality was not demonstrated in Chapter 4.

Taken as a whole, the preceding analyses point to the environment in which "post-truth" politics may emerge. Liberals and conservatives may view the same news in different ways based on source cues and their own partisanship. And even when they can agree on dishonest behavior, the effect of such behavior is drowned out by the effects of party ID when it comes to vote choice.

### *Honesty in Politics*

Taken broadly, the preceding chapters demonstrate that, although honesty in itself is a fairly straightforward concept, in politics, perceived honesty is not as simple as determining who has not been truthful. As demonstrated in all three empirical chapters, party identification plays a role in perceptions of honesty. So, too, do past affiliations, as we can safely assume that Al Gore's perceived honesty in Bill Clinton's home state, Arkansas, benefits not from anything he did, but from his relationship with Clinton. Similarly, we can safely assume that Barack Obama's

lower honesty ratings in the deep South have more to do with some characteristic of the people of those states than his own lack of truth-telling.

Further, perceived candidate honesty does not appear to be separable from a number of other personal traits; judgements in one area may affect judgements in another area or, perhaps, voters evaluate candidates holistically on a personal level and adjust this measure somewhat for each individual trait. Thus, we see that when Steve Davis is labeled a liar by the media, he is not just viewed as more dishonest, but also as less compassionate and intelligent, among other traits. In Chapter 3, we do see some evidence of an effect of personal attack ads on McCain tilting the balance of trustworthiness in favor of Obama, but see little evidence of a similar dynamic in 2000. The variables in 2008, however, spoke to a broader dynamic, while the 2000 models used very specific candidate honesty ads. Given that prior research has demonstrated the relationship between attack ads and the valence of news on perceptions of Al Gore's honesty (Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson 2004), perhaps it is broader personal attacks and the valence of news that affect perceived honesty rather than specific attacks on the trait. The lack of a result on specific, honesty-related attack ads would also seemingly correspond to Johnston, Hagen, and Jamieson's assertion that attacks on Gore's honesty that hurt perceptions of his honesty were largely implicit.

#### *Party Brands/Reputation*

There is an obvious an undeniable link between the perceived honesty of candidates and feelings towards their respective political parties. However, it remains unclear as to the directionality.

### *Media Effects*

The media effects found in Chapter 4 extend prior work about bias in cable network news. While prior work has demonstrated an effect of viewing such networks on voting behavior (Martin and Yurukoglu 2014; DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007) or attitudes (Morris 2007), or focused upon the bias of the content itself (Groeling 2008), I find that merely branding news with the label of a perceived partisan source may affect trustworthiness and attitudes toward candidates who are covered by these sources. That is to say, it is an effect of perceived bias regardless of actual content. Chapter 4 demonstrates source effects, differing from some past work on corrections (Nyhan and Reifler 2010).

### *Motivated Reasoning*

The findings in Chapter 2 speak to potential motivated reasoning, as Democrats and Republicans come to different conclusions about the honesty of presidential candidates as they watch more campaign programming. This effect is seemingly in line with the work of Taber and Lodge (2006), in which strong party identifiers accept information in accord with prior viewpoints uncritically while arguing against information that contradicts prior attitudes. This could also be the result of selection effects, which Taber and Lodge refer to as a “confirmation bias” in which citizens seek out information with which they are inclined to agree. As Stroud (2007) asserts, political beliefs lead to exposure which in turn leads to division. Taken as a whole, Democrats and Republicans could be seen as viewing candidate honesty through the lens posited by Levendusky (2013), in which slanted programming and motivated reasoning leads to polarization. Chapter 4 provides the strongest evidence of motivated reasoning with regard to candidate honesty. In Table 4.4, a significant interaction between Democratic party identification



of subjects and Steve Davis' identification as a Democrat across several character traits indicates that Democrats are rating Davis higher based on his party, regardless of actual behavior. Non-Democrats reading MSNBC and non-Republicans reading Fox News find these sources less trustworthy than do Democrats and Republicans, respectively. Party identifiers also may take different findings from reports based upon these source cues, such as decreasing their perceptions of Steve Davis' honesty when the source cue agrees with their own partisanship. While reaching different conclusions based upon source cues and party identification may point towards what might be referred to as motivated reasoning, given past research about media bias (Groeling 2008), it may be fairer to suggest that those who do not find Fox News (nor MSNBC, although the prior research is less developed here) to be trustworthy may in fact be engaging in "reasoning." Chapter 4 also extends the aforementioned work by Levendusky (2013) by suggesting that actual slanted programming may not be necessary to achieve polarization but merely perceived slanted programming. Democrats and Republicans may adjust how trustworthy they find a report based purely on a source cue, to say nothing of content.

### *Corrections*

The findings in Chapter 4 also fit within the broader literature about political corrections. It appears that the correction with regard to the false accusation made by Steve Davis against Thomas Anderson worked, as Davis was viewed less favorably across numerous personal traits as compared with a control condition. It should be said, though, that it is also possible that those in the treatment condition simply did not buy Davis' story from the beginning, regardless of correction. However, source effects would lead me to believe that the correction itself played a role in their evaluations of Davis. Unlike the work of Nyhan and Reifler (2010), I do find some

source effects on the effectiveness of corrections, both in terms of the trustworthiness of the report and the perceived honesty of the candidate. This is similar to the source effects found by Nyhan and Reifler (2013), although I find that Democratic party identifiers are moved by source effects, as well, while Nyhan and Reifler found no source effects for liberals. Further, there is evidence of a punishment effect at work when dishonest behavior is discovered, not unlike the punishment effect when positive information is discredited found by Cobb, Nyhan, and Reifler (2013).

### **Future Directions**

One structural weakness of the aforementioned analyses is that they all focus on two-party relationships between candidates. While the dynamics of party ID as it relates to perceived honesty are important and party ID is perhaps the most important single factor in predicting perceived honesty, I realized as I was performing the preceding analyses that an environment devoid of party ID, such as a primary where all candidates share a party, might be more valuable for looking at other factors as they relate to candidate honesty. Vote choice, as well, might be more influenced by perceived dishonest actions in elections where party ID does not serve as a guide.

A finer measure of honesty-related campaign news might draw out effects not seen in Chapter 3. While I do not doubt that the measure I use captures news stories related to candidate honesty, it doesn't do a good enough job of differentiating between candidates. Because almost every campaign news story mentions both candidates, this may be a job more suited to manual coders as opposed to relying on text searches. Further, the relative sparsity of honesty and personal trait advertisements when spread temporally across individuals makes for a difficult

computation in multilevel modeling. Perhaps a weekly aggregation across the space of a few years, or a looser definition of what constitutes honesty or personal trait advertisements, would make for easier computation.

Furthermore, the relative paucity of honesty-related campaign advertisements in 2000 made for difficulty in computing ARFIMA-MLM models. For both Bush and Gore, Over 90% of subjects in the NAES saw zero honesty related advertisements in the week leading up to their interview. While this percentage shrinks to around 66% for personal attack ads in 2008, there remains difficulty in calculating complex models with such a skew. Further, the results for 2008 indicating an effect of personal attack ads on McCain trustworthiness indicates that perhaps honesty ads alone are not what drives perceived honesty or trustworthiness, but rather that broader attack ads on general personal characteristics may drive ratings on a more specific trait. Additionally, correct functional form in an ARFIMA-MLM leaves something to be desired with regard to theory. Differencing a variable that is smoothed leaves only a difference indicative of the change between the last and first days of the smoothing period.

Further analyses should also examine trends in candidate honesty. Several of the preceding analyses suggest that there was a shift in perceived honesty in favor of the Democratic Party. Democrats began to gain an edge in mean perceived honesty starting with John Kerry in 2004. Viewing campaign programs predicts an increase in perceived Democratic candidate honesty, beginning with a marginally significant effect for John Kerry in 2004 and at a statistically significant level for Barack Obama in 2012. While interest in the campaign in the NAES predicts a shift in perceived honesty towards George W. Bush relative to Al Gore, in 2008 following the campaign predicts giving Barack Obama the edge in trustworthiness over John McCain. Because my analyses here stop at 2012, what I am left with is three elections in which

Republicans have an edge in perceived honesty, followed by three elections in which Democrats have an edge. Whether this pattern is cyclical or representative of a more permanent shift will be more apparent with the addition of data from future elections.

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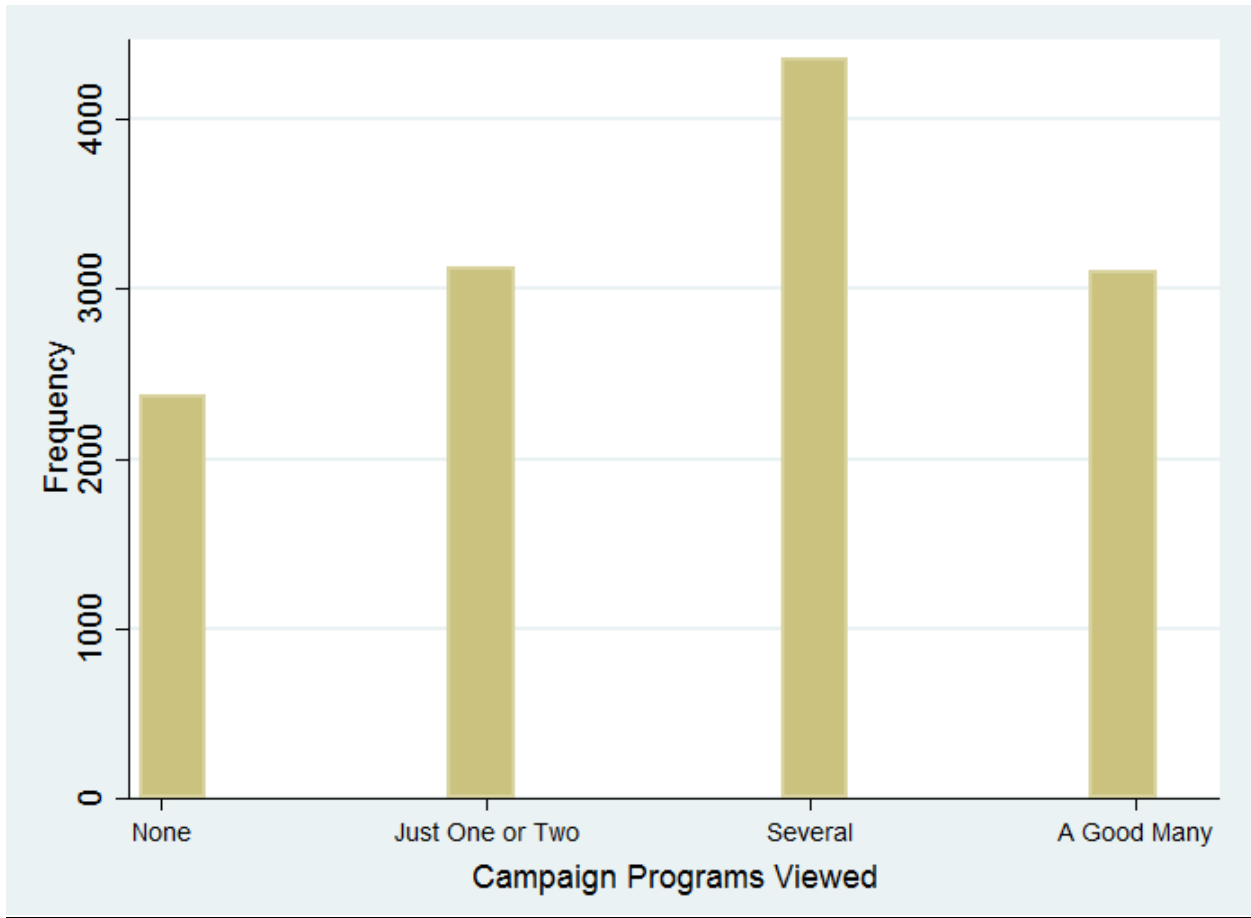
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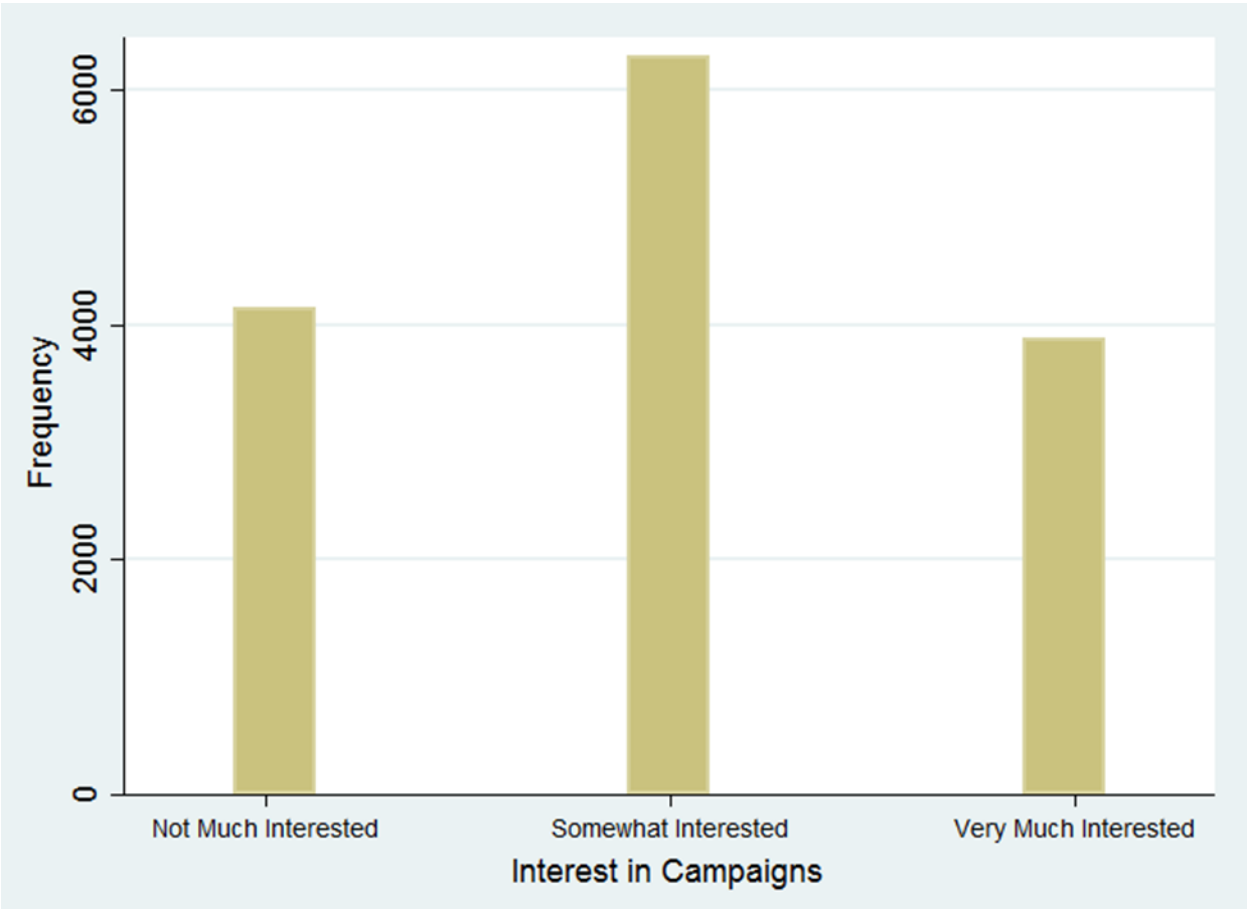
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Appendix

Appendix 2.1: Distribution of Campaign Programs Viewed, 1992-2012 ANES



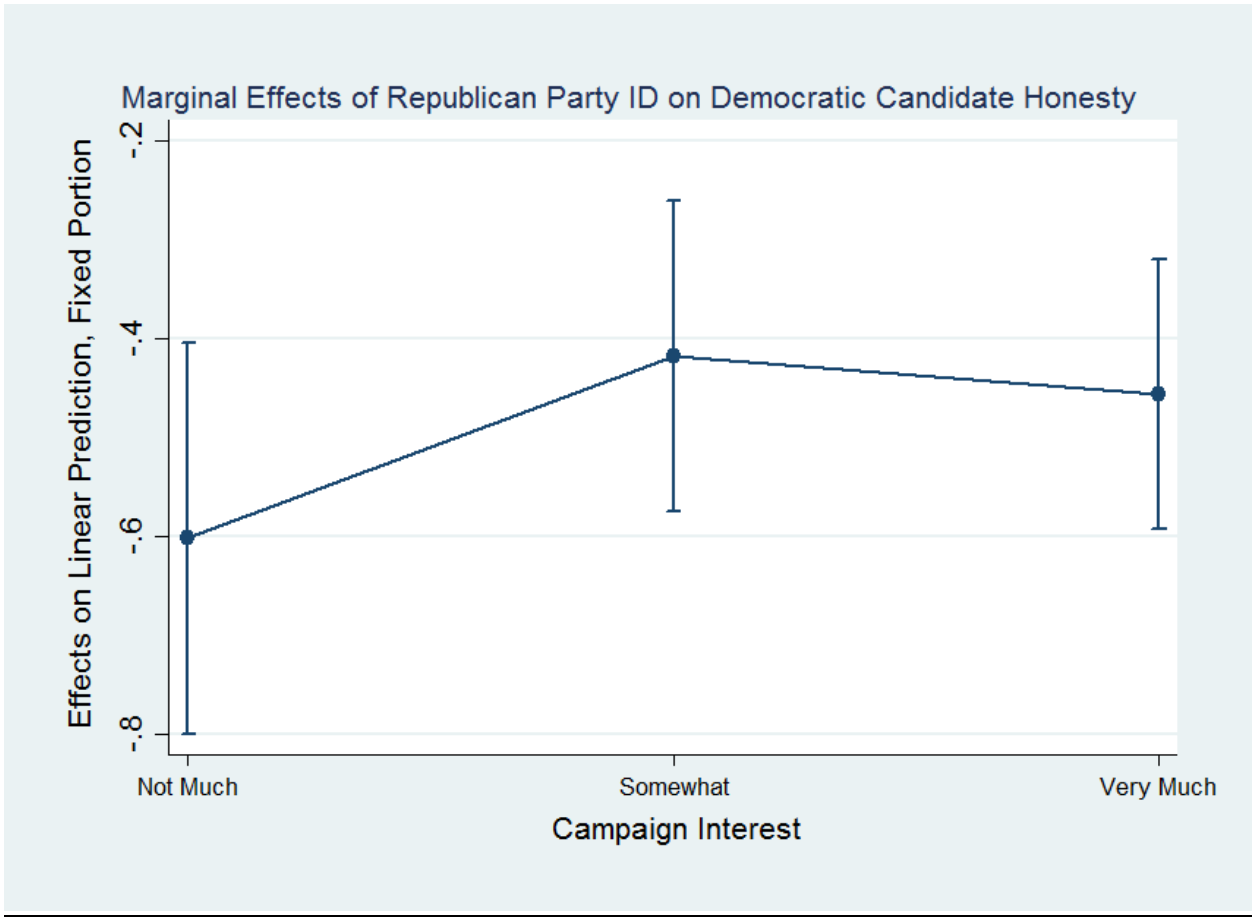
**Appendix 2.2: Distribution of Interest in Campaigns, 1992-2012 ANES**



**Appendix 2.3: Programs Viewed on Perceived Honesty, Republican Candidates, 1992-2012**

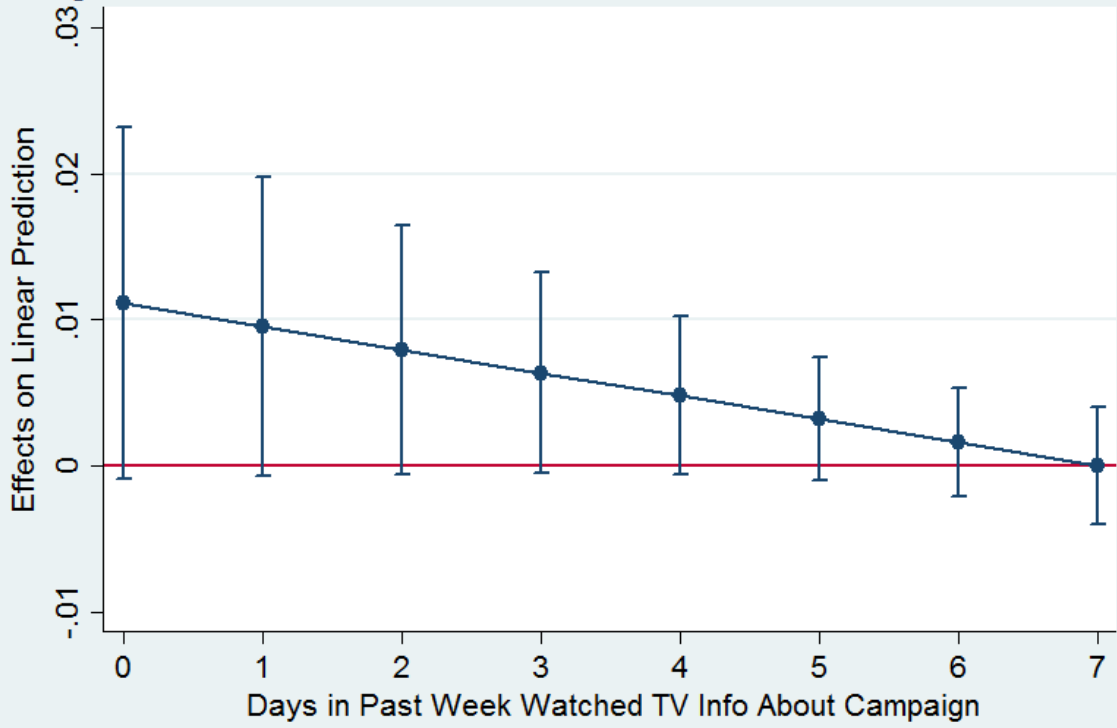
	<b>1992 (G.H.W. Bush)</b>	<b>1996 (Dole)</b>	<b>2000 (G.W. Bush)</b>	<b>2004 (G.W. Bush)</b>	<b>2008 (McCain)</b>	<b>2012 (Romney)</b>
<b>Dem. PID</b>	.013 (.124)	-.075 (.120)	-.188 (.156)	-.216 (.178)	-.041 (.230)	-.637 (.103)***
<b>Rep. PID</b>	.378 (.118)**	.327 (.141)*	.385 (.143)**	.137 (.159)	.403 (.311)	.936 (.106)***
<b>Interest</b>	-.028 (.051)	.033 (.086)	.111 (.074)	-.156 (.082)#	.038 (.118)	-.151 (.044)**
<b>Programs</b>	.120 (.038)**	.088 (.071)	.019 (.051)	.047 (.061)	.162 (.084)#	.103 (.032)**
<b>Int.*Dem.</b>	.007 (.076)	.173 (.111)	-.130 (.112)	.085 (.125)	.276 (.164)#	.238 (.061)***
<b>Int.*Rep.</b>	.248 (.074)**	.246 (.114)*	.179 (.098)#	.399 (.111)***	.278 (.172)	-.185 (.063)**
<b>Prog.*Dem.</b>	-.165 (.057)**	-.191 (.085)*	.042 (.078)	-.174 (.098)#	-.384 (.118)**	-.084 (.042)*
<b>Prog.*Rep.</b>	-.048 (.054)	.005 (.088)	-.060 (.069)	-.013 (.075)	-.093 (.131)	-.022 (.043)
<b>Constant</b>	-.241 (.077)**	-.292 (.086)**	-.177 (.095)#	.054 (.102)	-.239 (.131)#	.014 (.077)
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.14	.15	.11	.20	.21	.35
<b>N</b>	2172	1444	1366	1039	497	5364
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>						

**Appendix 2.4**

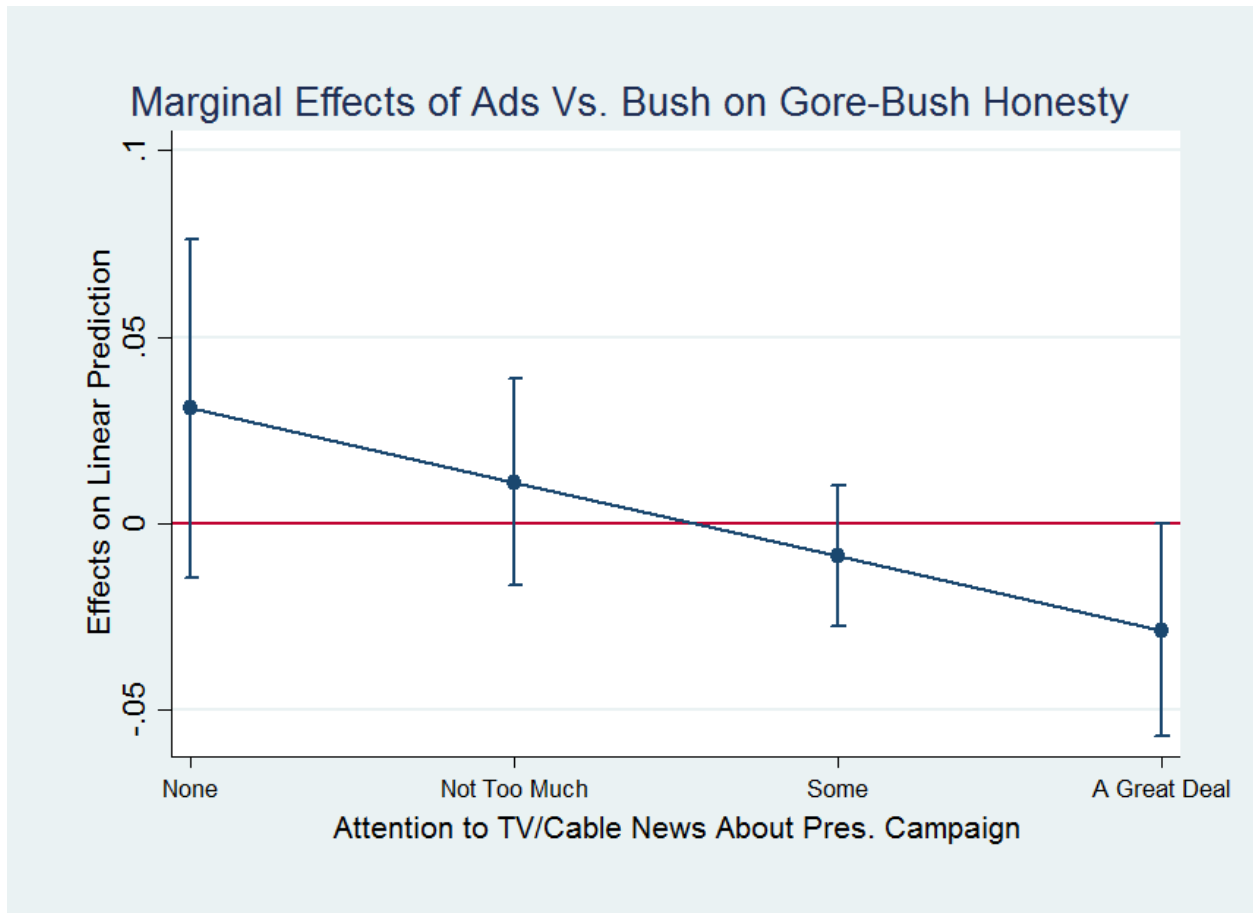


### Appendix 3.1

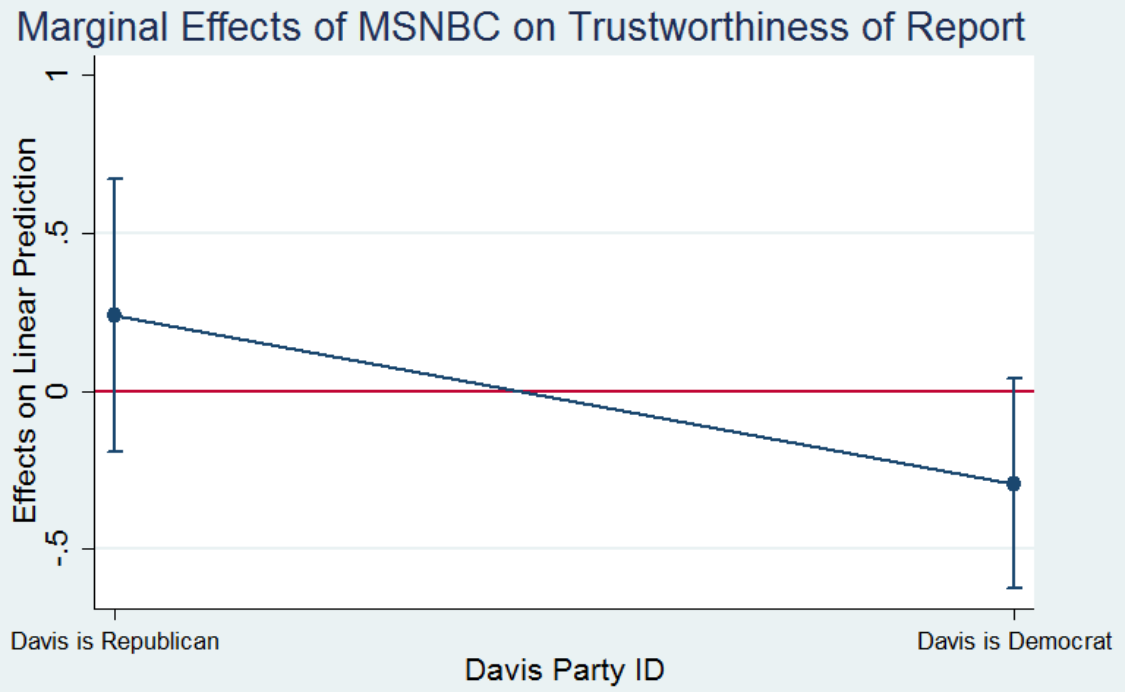
Marginal Effects of Ads Vs. Obama on Obama-McCain Trustworthiness



**Appendix 3.2**



**Appendix 4.1**





**Appendix 4.2**



<b>Davis Honesty By “Lie” vs “No Lie”</b>		
	<b>“Lie”</b>	<b>“No Lie”</b>
<b>Davis Democrat*Fox</b>	-.279 (.292)	.235 (.247)
<b>Davis Democrat*MSNBC</b>	-.179 (.304)	.110 (.226)
<b>Democrat</b>	.238 (.214)	.500 (.168)**
<b>Republican</b>	-.238 (.325)	.691 (.206)**
<b>Davis Democrat</b>	-.045 (.252)	-.094 (.194)
<b>Democrat Subject*Davis Democrat</b>	.361 (.263)	.069 (.213)
<b>Republican Subject*Davis Democrat</b>	.189 (.397)	-.447 (.291)
<b>Democrat Reading MSNBC</b>	-.005 (.263)	-.626 (.206)**
<b>Republican Reading Fox</b>	-.205 (.387)	-.540 (.321)#
<b>MSNBC</b>	-.076 (.256)	.086 (.192)
<b>Fox</b>	.156 (.226)	-.208 (.174)
<b>Constant</b>	2.18 (.181)***	2.45 (.134)***
	N=240; R <sup>2</sup> =.10	N=255; R <sup>2</sup> =.12
<b>#=p&lt;.1, *=p&lt;.05, **=p&lt;.01, ***=p&lt;.001, two-tailed significance test</b>		

## Appendix: Survey Materials

Thank you for participating. This study focuses on the ways in which people react to political figures and events. Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. If you wish to be included in the \$50 American Express gift card raffle, you may voluntarily email Project Coordinator Matt Harris. The email address to contact will be provided upon successful completion of the survey. Your email address will not be attached to your survey answers in any way, and email information will be destroyed after a raffle winner is selected. Please read the information on the following page about the race for Congress in Pennsylvania's 3rd district.

[Subjects Assigned to 1 of 4 Conditions: Davis is Democrat: Lying, Davis is Republican: Lying, Davis is Democrat, No Lie, or Davis is Republican, No Lie]

10/3/2014 Davis, Anderson Battle in PA's 3<sup>rd</sup> District | Local News

### Davis, Anderson Battle in PA's 3<sup>rd</sup> District

Published October 03, 2014 | Local News

ERIE, PA – Former Pennsylvania State Senator Steve Davis (R) is running for an open US House of Representatives seat in Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> district against former Pennsylvania State Senator Thomas Anderson (D). Republican Davis has been consistently rated as a moderate-to-strong conservative, and has enjoyed moderate popularity in recent polls. Mr. Davis has a wife and two children. Democrat Thomas Anderson has been consistently rated as a moderate-to-strong liberal. He enjoyed moderate popularity during his time in the State Senate. He has a wife and three children.

Mr. Davis recently addressed supporters at a rally outside a local strip mall. To a crowd of several hundred cheering well-wishers, Davis spoke of his accomplishments in the State Senate, as well as he and his party's plans for strengthening the district should he be elected.

Mr. Anderson, meanwhile, spent the day campaigning in downtown Erie.

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How well does the word "responsible" describe the Democratic Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "responsible" describe the Republican Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "compassionate" describe the Democratic Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "compassionate" describe the Republican Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "trustworthy" describe the Democratic Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "trustworthy" describe the Republican Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "honest" describe the Democratic Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

How well does the word "honest" describe the Republican Party?

- Very Well
- Quite Well
- Not Too Well
- Not Well At All

On a scale from 0 to 100, how would you rate your feelings toward the Democratic Party, with 0 representing minimum warmth or favorability and 100 representing maximum warmth or favorability?

\_\_\_\_\_ Warmth/Favorability


On a scale from 0 to 100, how would you rate your feelings toward the Republican Party, with 0 representing minimum warmth or favorability and 100 representing maximum warmth or favorability?

\_\_\_\_\_ Warmth/Favorability

Please read the information on the following page about the race for Congress in Pennsylvania's 3rd district.

[Subjects are still assigned to same groups with respect to partisanship of Steve Davis and lie vs. no lie conditions, now given an article attributed to Fox News, MSNBC, or the Wall Street Journal].

10/5/2014 Race in Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> Picks Up Steam | Fox News

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## Race in Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> Picks Up Steam

Published October 05, 2014 | FoxNews.com

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



## Race in Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> Picks Up Steam

Published October 05, 2014 | The Wall Street Journal

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Davis, the former Republican state senator, spent the morning speaking before a group of teachers and students at Cranbrook Middle School before heading to a lunch with local business leaders in Erie. Anderson, the former Democratic state senator, enjoyed a breakfast with the local Chamber of Commerce before speaking at Jefferson High School in the afternoon. Both candidates voiced optimism as polls continue to show a statistical dead heat.

URL

<http://www.msnbc.com/politics/2014/10/05/race-in-pa-heats-956641799/>

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**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.****Race in Pennsylvania's 3<sup>rd</sup> Picks Up Steam**

Published October 05, 2014 | The Wall Street Journal

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How well does the word "likeable" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "likeable" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "trustworthy" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "trustworthy" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "responsible" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "responsible" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "straightforward" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "straightforward" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "intelligent" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "intelligent" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "honest" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "honest" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "compassionate" describe Steve Davis?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

How well does the word "compassionate" describe Thomas Anderson?

- Very well
- Quite well
- Not too well
- Not well at all

Were this election held today, for whom would you cast your ballot?

- Steve Davis
- Thomas Anderson
- Undecided

Were this election held today, for which party would you vote in the other races on the ballot?

- All Democrats
- Mostly Democrats
- A Mix of Democrats and Republicans
- Mostly Republicans
- All Republicans

[Only displayed in conditions where Davis is lying.]

How likely is it that Thomas Anderson lobbied on behalf of Canadian oil companies?

- Very Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Not Very Likely
- Not At All Likely

[Only displayed in conditions where Davis is lying]

How trustworthy do you find the Fox News [MSNBC] [Wall Street Journal] report that suggested Thomas Anderson did NOT lobby on behalf of Canadian oil companies?

- Very Trustworthy
- Somewhat Trustworthy
- Not Very Trustworthy
- Not at All Trustworthy

Did you find the Fox News [MSNBC] [Wall Street Journal] report, "Race in Pennsylvania's 3rd Picks up Steam," to be biased in any way?

- Yes, Biased Liberally
- Yes, Biased Conservatively
- No

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female



What is your race or ethnic background?

- Black/African-American
- White/Caucasian
- Asian-American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American
- Other

Some people think of themselves as Democrats, Republicans, or Independents. Which of these three best describes you?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent

Do you think of yourself as a strong or weak Democrat? [if identified as Democrat]

- Strong
- Weak

Do you think of yourself as a strong or weak Republican? [if identified as Republican]

- Strong
- Weak

Do you tend to lean towards one party in elections, or do you consider yourself "middle of the road"? [if identified as Independent]

- Lean towards Democrats
- Lean towards Republicans
- Middle of the Road

Where would you identify yourself as falling on the liberal-conservative spectrum?

- Extremely Liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly Liberal
- Moderate/Middle of the Road
- Slightly Conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely Conservative

In what year were you born?

- 1900
- .....
- 1999

Thank you for participating. In the interest of full disclosure, Steve Davis and Thomas Anderson are fictional persons. If you wish to be included in the \$50 American Express gift card raffle, you may voluntarily email Project Coordinator Matt Harris at [matthewharris84@gmail.com](mailto:matthewharris84@gmail.com). Your email address will not be attached to your survey answers in any way, and email information will be destroyed after a raffle winner is selected.