A Model of Primary Voter Behavior

BRUCE I. NEWMAN
JAGDISH N. SHETH*

This article develops and tests a model of voter behavior in a primary election. The model integrates several schools of thought that have tried to explain voter behavior; it is tested by predicting the behavior of respondents based on the model, and then validating the results with the actual behavior of the respondents. Results obtained here provide a prediction rate of 90 percent correctly classified. The article then compares the explanatory and predictive power of the model to models that use demographic and political involvement data.

A significant part of political marketing is candidates' spending of money and time to promote themselves during an election. Thus it has become increasingly important to understand why voters behave the way they do, rather than merely conduct polls that indicate who is going to vote for whom and by what margin one candidate will win or lose an election; only by understanding voter behavior will candidates be able to spend their time and money most wisely. The purpose of this article is to develop and test a predictive model of voter behavior in a primary election.

Sociologists have stressed that an individual's affiliation with groups of people in his/her social environment serves as the key determinant of his/her voting behavior (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). Political scientists have focused on the influence of party affiliation and past voting behavior (Campbell et al. 1960). In addition, Newman (1981) has suggested a number of consumer approaches for predicting and explaining voter behavior. In formulating our model we developed a number of cognitive beliefs that may come from a number of sources, including the voter, word-of-mouth communication, and the mass media. We were interested in using the cognitive beliefs to predict and explain behavior, adding to the contributions of the sociologists and political scientists by using marketing-related domains to study primary voter behavior, and then comparing our model results to results generated from demographic and political involvement data.

*Bruce I. Newman is Assistant Professor of Marketing, School of Business Administration, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 742, Milwaukee, WI 53201. Jagdish N. Sheth is Brooker Professor of Research, School of Business, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-1421. The authors would like to thank three anonymous reviewers for their comments on an earlier draft.

MODEL DESCRIPTION

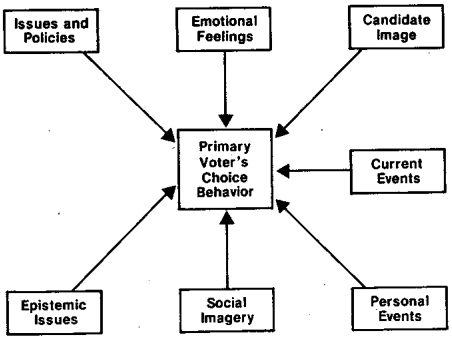
Our voter behavior model is based on a generic model of individual choice behavior proposed by Sheth (1975). The fundamental axiom of the primary voter behavior model is that there are seven distinct and separate cognitive domains that drive the voter's behavior. The model is depicted in the Figure. It includes the following seven components:

1. *Issues and Policies.* Refers to a list of salient issues and policies along four dimensions: economic policy, foreign policy, social policy, and leadership characteristics; represents the perceived value a candidate possesses in these salient criteria that represent the rational or functional purposes of the candidate's platform.
2. *Social Imagery.* Refers to all relevant primary and secondary reference groups likely to be supportive of the candidates being studied. Candidates acquire positive or negative stereotypes based on their association with varied demographic (age, sex, religion), socioeconomic (income, occupation), cultural/ethnic (race, lifestyle), or political/ideological (Democratic, Republican) segments of society.
3. *Emotional Feelings.* Represents the emotional dimension of voting; refers to affective feelings such as hope, responsibility, patriotism, etc. aroused by the candidate. The voter's feelings may be independent of the personality of the candidate, having been established on the basis of the issues the candidate advocates, or a voter may be aware of a candidate's personality but may not have any feelings toward it.
4. *Candidate Image.* Refers to the image of the candidate based on salient personality traits that are thought to be characteristic of the candidate.
5. *Current Events.* Refers to the set of issues and policies that develop during the course of a campaign; includes the domestic and international situations that would cause the voter to switch his/her vote to

© JOURNAL OF CONSUMER RESEARCH • Vol. 12 • September 1985

FIGURE

MODEL OF PRIMARY VOTER BEHAVIOR



another candidate. The candidate acquires utility or value because of certain issue and policy stands s/he makes that affect different situations.

6. *Personal Events.* Refers to situations in the personal life of the candidate that would cause the voter to switch his/her vote to another candidate. The candidate acquires utility or value because of certain personal or family events that precede the voter's decision.

7. *Epistemic Issues.* Refers to reasons that would justify the perceived satisfaction of curiosity, knowledge, and exploratory needs offered by the candidate as a change of pace (something new, different).

Issues and Policies. This component is measured on a profile of benefits. Benefits are defined in terms of the issues and policies that the candidate proposes in his/her platform. This implies that each citizen votes for the candidate who is expected to provide a higher level of utility. For example, during the course of the 1980 Presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan talked about reducing inflation by imposing a gasoline tax, while John Anderson talked about reducing inflation by balancing the budget. Ted Kennedy promised to institute a national health program, while Jimmy Carter continued to speak out about protecting human rights.

Considerable prior research is available to suggest that issues and policies is an important component. Downs (1957) has suggested that voters will choose the candidate whose platform maximizes their stream of utility as a citizen. For example, Campbell et al. (1960) identified issue partisanship as one of the three forces behind a voter's choice. Pool and Abelson (1961) carried out the Simulmatics Project, which used old polling results to set up an issues matrix according to socioeconomic data. Stokes, Campbell, and Wilson (1958) set up a theoretical framework that looked at voter attitudes toward issues. DeVries and Terrance (1972) wrote about a more complex voter, who has a grasp of campaign issues. Pomper (1972) stated that voters started to relate policy preferences to their partisan affiliations after 1956. Using the expectancy-value approach, Fishbein and Coombs (1974) focused on the attribute change a voter makes toward a candidate. They found that the candidate's stand on the issues was one of three factors that caused a candidate to be liked or disliked. In a major work in this area, Nie et al. confirmed that the role of party affiliation is declining and that issue voting is increasing in importance (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976).

Social Imagery. This component is measured on a profile of imageries representing one or more types of groups. An imagery is defined as a candidate's image in a voter's mind; it is the reason demographic, socioeconomic, cultural/ethnic, or political/ideological groups are likely to vote for a candidate. For example, in 1980, Reagan was more closely associated with the wealthy, upper-class, conservative voter, while Carter was more closely associated with the liberal, middle-class voter.

In what is considered to be one of the basic texts in American politics, Odegard and Helms (1938) defined the political process as the translation of social pressures into policy, and emphasized the role of social group pressures on candidates. Carlson and Blake (1946) discussed the importance of establishing certain "pipe lines" to various associations and groups in order to organize from the grass roots up. In 1948, Berelson et al. used the panel technique of repeated interviews and found demographic characteristics to be related to voting decisions (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954). Kessel (1972) believed that the greatest single vote determinant was party identification. Shaffer (1972) studied voting as a process rather than as an act, integrating the sociological, social-psychological, and individual levels of analysis into his theoretical model. Fishbein et al. (1980) added a normative component to their model and studied the voting behavior of respondents in the 1979 general parliamentary election in Great Britain. Of the 299 respondents who reported their vote, 89 percent were correctly predicted.

Emotional Feelings. This component is measured on a profile of personal feelings that represents one or more dimensions of emotional arousal generated by the candidate. For example, during the 1980 presidential race, some voters referred to Reagan as a "monster." Their feelings were aroused as a result of their familiarity with the candidate and his platform. In a national study carried out during the 1980 presidential race, Abelson et al. (1982) found that summary scores

of affect were better predictors of political preference than candidate personality judgments.

Candidate Image. This component is measured on a profile of personality traits that represents one or more dimensions of the candidate's image. For example, in 1980 Reagan had an image as a "strong leader," while in 1984 John Glenn tried to capture the Democratic nomination by capitalizing on his image as a "hero."

In his review of political behavior, Sears (1969) asserts that candidates represent simple stimuli easily cognized and retained, since most stimuli are too complex to be handled. In this case, voters form opinions on the basis of "candidate images" without reference to a campaign's issues. Johnson (1971) studied the 1968 presidential election by plotting voter perceptions of candidates on selected personality dimensions. Sherrod (1971) carried out a study that examined voters' selective perceptions of candidates' positions as a means of maintaining cognitive consistency between the voters' own positions on issues and their candidates' preferences. Nimmo (1975) used image to bridge the gap between what political scientists know about electoral behavior and the notion of the voter as a consumer. He defined political image as the voter's subjective appraisal of the candidate. Shama (1975) also compared voter behavior approaches to consumer behavior. determining that voter response was based on the candidate's image. Kelby and Miner (1974) were able to predict with 87.7 percent accuracy how a voter would behave by evaluating a voter's likes and dislikes of a candidate's personality. Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) predicted behavior with 91.2 percent accuracy by measuring intention and using variables that included, among others, the candidate's personal characteristics. Abelson et al. (1982) measured semantic judgments by asking respondents to attach personality traits to national politicians, offering in the process a good discussion of the difference between emotional feelings and candidate image.

Current Events. This component is measured on a profile of choice contingencies representing one or more dimensions of the conditional utility of a candidate. For instance, on the international scene, the taking of the hostages from the embassy in Iran just prior to the 1980 presidential election led many voters to switch to Reagan, while the gradual strengthening of the U.S. economy in 1983 led analysts to predict that more voters would switch to Reagan when he ran in 1984.

There have been only a few studies that assess the impact of current events on voting behavior. In a pioneering voting behavior study, Campbell et al. (1960) found that the immediate determinants of a voter's behavior were more likely to be his/her attitudes and perception of "objective" situational factors in the environment. And Nygren and Jones (1977) concluded that candidates' positions on issues would fluctuate with the national and international situation.

Personal Events. This component is measured on a profile of choice contingencies that represents one or more dimensions of the candidate's conditional utility. In this case, the conditional utility would be specific to events in the candidate's personal life. For example, the affair that Illinois Congressman Dan Crane had with a page may have caused some voters to switch to another candidate.

Epistemic Issues. This component is measured on a profile of epistemic issues. It is presumed to be unidimensional. In the 1976 presidential election Carter was very successful at tapping the curiosity of voters who saw him as a "fresh face" on the political scene. And some voters in the Chicago mayoral primary election voted for Harold Washington as the Democratic nominee because they were fed up with the Jane Byrne administration and wanted something new.

TESTING THE MODEL

The 1980 Illinois primary for the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations in the Champaign-Urbana area was used as the experimental setting.[1]

Instrument

A mail-survey questionnaire was broken into three major parts. The first part covered the political background of the respondents. These questions were developed in part from the standard questions used to gather background information in Campbell et al.'s (1960) classic political science study. The questionnaire's second part covered the seven belief components in the model.[2] Several sources were used to generate the statements for each component. First, we surveyed major news magazines, major and local newspapers, campaign literature, and television news and analysis programs for five months beginning in November 1979. Next, on the basis of the respondent's intention to vote for a candidate, ten respondents were identified for each of the four candidates. Six weeks before the election, each respondent was asked in a telephone interview to identify his/her salient beliefs for each component in the model. The final

[1]Because of space limitations, only data from the Republican party will be given.

[2]The number of questions and the wording of questions in this section of the survey were derived by restricting the literature survey and qualitative research to information related to Republicans only. Thus these questions can in no way be generalizable to the Democratic party.

list of statements was generated by rewording and screening out the salient beliefs identified by the literature survey and the telephone interview. A sample of the statements for each of the seven components follows:

1. **Issues and Policies** (24 statements). Included a series of statements covering four areas—economy, foreign policy, social issues, and leadership—measured on a binary scale (agree:disagree). For example, I believe that my candidate will:
   a. Economy: Reduce inflation by balancing the budget.
   b. Foreign Policy: Increase defense spending.
   c. Social Issues: Provide federal aid for abortions.
   d. Leadership: Strengthen the nation morally and ethically.
2. **Social Imagery** (14 statements). Listed groups—conservatives, independents, veterans, students, and environmentalists, among others—that were likely to be supportive of the candidates. A binary scale (most likely: least likely) was used to measure whether respondents thought that a group was likely to vote for their candidates.
3. **Emotional Feelings** (9 statements). Listed a series of feelings toward the candidate—patriotic, hopeful, excited, responsible, etc.—that were measured on a binary scale (yes:no).
4. **Candidate Image** (15 statements). Included several personality traits—articulate, compassionate, charismatic, stable, etc.—that were measured on a binary scale (yes: no).
5. **Current Events** (8 statements). Measured domestic and international events on a binary scale (yes:no). For example, I would switch my vote to another candidate if:
   a. Domestic:
      1. The inflation rate rises above 20 percent.
      2. Economists predict that a deep recession is coming.
   b. International:
      1. The Soviets invade another country.
      2. The hostages in Iran are released.
6. **Personal Events** (9 statements). Measured on a binary scale (yes:no) statements of hypothetical situations that might influence the voter to switch to another candidate. For example, I would switch my vote to another candidate if I knew that my candidate:
   a. Had to oppose Ronald Reagan in the November election.
   b. Had lied to the press.
7. **Epistemic Issues** (9 statements). Measured on a binary scale (yes:no) statements about specific election issues that might trigger the curiosity of the voter. For example, I am voting for my candidate because:
   a. I want a change in the present administration.
   b. Of his media coverage.

The third and final part of the questionnaire covered standard demographics about the voters. Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) began doing systematic research on voting behavior using survey techniques in the 1940s. Coming as they did from a sociological background, Lazarsfeld et al. emphasized the influence of demographic variables. In 1948, Berelson et al. (1954) used the panel technique of repeated interviews and found demographic characteristics to be related to voting decisions.

Data Collection

Each questionnaire was pretested to detect either conceptual or operational flaws. The final data collection took place in six stages. The first stage involved the identification of phone numbers for a random sample of 2,000 voters among the total number of individuals who had voted in the March 1978 Illinois Congressional primary in Champaign-Urbana. Approximately 66 percent of the names and numbers were identified in the phone directory. The second stage involved a telephone screening conducted three weeks prior to the election during which an interviewer classified the randomly chosen voters according to their intentions to vote in the primary under study. Only those respondents who indicated an intention to vote in the primary were asked to participate in the study.

In the third stage of data collection, we mailed a postcard nine days before the primary to alert the respondents to the fact that they would be receiving their questionnaires in the next few days. In the fourth stage we mailed the questionnaires themselves six days before the primary. In the fifth stage, we mailed a second postcard four days before the election reminding the respondents to return their questionnaires before they voted. Only those returned questionnaires that were postmarked before the primary were used as data for the model; this ensured that the responses to the survey were measured before the voters actually cast their ballots. The response rate was as follows (n = 839):

Returns	*Responses*
Good returns	655 (78%)
Nonreturns	158 (19%)
Not usable	26 (3%)
Total responses	839 (100%)

In the final stage of data collection, we determined the respondents' actual voting behavior. In order to not contaminate the data, a different interviewer from the one who conducted the initial telephone screening in the second stage telephoned those respondents who returned their questionnaire(s). The interviewer said that she was studying the phenomenon of "crossover voting" for one of her classes at the university and was interested in knowing how the respondent had voted.

TABLE 1

PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS ON 88 INDIVIDUAL ITEMS WITH VARIMAX ROTATION OF 7 FACTORS[a]

Components[b] and variables	Factors 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Give us a strong, decisive government	.67						
1 Give us a clear, consistent set of long-run policies	.66						
1 Bring respect to the nation	.63						
1 Develop a long-term global policy	.63						
1 Bring fresh, new ideas into office	.59						
1 Be able to say no to a big-spending Congress	.48						
1 Build up our military in every category		.66					
1 Reject Salt II		.50					
1 Reinstate the Draft		.50					
1 Increase our energy supply by building more nuclear plants		.47					
1 Reduce inflation by imposing a gasoline tax		−.64					
1 Fight for ERA		−.64					
2 Conservatives		.75					
2 Businessmen		.68					
2 Rich people		.49					
2 Independents		−.48					
2 Environmentalists		−.61					
2 Liberal Republicans		−.71					
2 Students		−.76					
3 Excited			.57				
3 Relieved			.54				
3 Patriotic			.54				
3 Responsible			.53				
3 Confident			.53				
3 Optimistic			.50				
3 Satisfied			.49				
3 Hopeful			.47				
3 Involved			.46				
4 Trustworthy				.76			
4 Strong-minded				.73			
4 A man of high integrity				.68			
4 A man with a sense of purpose				.62			
4 Energetic				.61			
4 Stable				.61			
4 Compassionate				.53			
4 Articulate				.52			
5 Another U.S. Embassy is overtaken					.71		
5 All of the hostages in Iran are released					.67		
5 The Soviets invade another country					.63		
5 Economists predict a deep recession					.59		
5 The Afghanistan situation is rectified					.58		
5 We get to a point where we are on the brink of war					.58		
5 The inflation rate drops to an annual rate of 8%					.55		
5 Gasoline prices rise above $2.00 a gallon					.51		
6 Was engaged in a political scandal						.61	
6 Evaded his taxes						.58	
6 He lied to the press						.52	
6 Was having romantic affairs with other women						.51	
6 Got caught drinking while driving						.49	
7 Of his media coverage							.52
7 Of his standing in the polls							.47
7 Of a bandwagon effect							.45

[a] Factor loadings of 0.45 and greater are presented.

[b] Component 1: Issues and policies
2: Social imagery
3: Emotional feelings
4: Candidate image
5: Current events
6: Personal events
7: Epistemic issues

Analysis

In order to test the predictive and explanatory power of the model, a discriminant analysis was carried out for the Republican party. The criterion variable in the discriminant analysis was based on a respondent's stated intention to vote for either Anderson or Reagan.

The seven predictor variables were derived by taking the 88 scores in each of the seven cognitive domains, summing across the scores, and dividing those scores by the number of statements in that domain, thereby creating seven indices. In effect, an average score was created for each respondent for each of the seven domains. All of the statements in each of the domains were used to create the average scores, in part to minimize the increased prediction rates that result from increasing the number of predictor variables in the discriminant analysis (Darlington 1968).

Although each of the seven components covers a separate domain of a voter's cognitive makeup, it is quite possible that there could be an overlap between two component areas. For instance, within the issues and policies component there is an area labeled "leadership." It is possible that issues related to the leadership of the candidate could overlap with the candidate image component. In order to test for the discriminant validity (i.e., the degree to which a concept differs from other concepts) between the seven indices created for each cognitive domain, the correlation matrix of the seven indices was examined. Most of the intercorrelations between the seven cognitive domains are between zero and 0.16, with one as high as 0.26.

In order to test for the reliability of each of the components, a principal component analysis was carried out on all 88 statements, and seven factors were subjected to a varimax rotation; the results are presented in Table 1. The principal component analysis accounted for 32.1 percent of variance.[3] Factor 1 represents a leadership dimension comprised of statements from the issues and policies component. The statements refer to leadership issues rather than to policies advanced by a candidate. Factor 2 represents a political ideology dimension comprised of statements from both the issues and policies component and the social imagery component. The statements from the issues and policies component represent policies advanced by a candidate rather than leadership issues.

Although we were somewhat surprised to find that both components loaded on the factor, it represents a clear-cut dimension that loads highly on those statements oriented towards the more conservative candidate—Reagan. This implies that the issues and policies component is multidimensional in nature, with issues loading on Factor 1 and policies on Factor 2. Factor 1 should therefore be referred to as a leadership issue component. The more substantive change in interpretation involves the dimension coming out in Factor 2. It is clear from the interpretation of Factor 2 that the statements loading high on this factor all relate to a conservative/liberal dimension. It may be more meaningful to refer to Factor 2 as a political ideology component.

Each of the other factors represents one of the five remaining components of the model. Factor 3 captures the emotional feelings component with high loadings on statements reflecting feelings of excitement, patriotism, and so on. Factor 4 captures the candidate image component with high loadings on statements that refer to the candidate as trustworthy, strong-minded, and so on. Factor 5 captures the current events component with high loadings on statements that refer to voters' sensitivity about events such as the taking of hostages, rising gasoline prices, and so on. Factor 6 captures the personal events component with high loadings on statements that reflect voters' concerns about political scandals, tax evasion, and so on. Finally, Factor 7 captures the epistemic issues component with high loadings on statements that refer to the candidate's standing in the polls, media coverage, and so on. This analysis suggests that although there was an overlap between two components, the model does account for several dimensions, each of which offers a unique and meaningful contribution to our understanding of the voter.

TABLE 2

TWO-GROUP DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS USING AVERAGE SCORES FROM EACH OF THE 7 COMPONENTS IN THE MODEL[a]

	Coefficients	Means[b]	
Component	Anderson/Reagan	Anderson	Reagan
Issues and Policies	.46	.41	.62
Social imagery	.77	.35	.73
Emotional feelings	.04	.69	.68
Candidate image	−.14	.86	.86
Current events	−.07	.05	.05
Personal events	.11	.61	.68
Epistemic issues	−.09	.32	.29

[a] Eigenvalue = 2.16.
Wilks Lambda = 0.31.
Chi-Squared = 264.59.
DF = 7.
Significance = $p > 0.001$.
[b] Group means: Anderson = −1.26.
Reagan = 1.70.

[3] There were more than seven factors with an eigenvalue greater than one. However, we had a model with seven domains and therefore restricted the rotation to seven factors to determine whether each domain was loading on a separate factor. This was done in an effort to reveal a meaningful interpretation.

TABLE 3

CLASSIFICATION RESULTS BASED ON AVERAGE SCORES FROM EACH OF THE 7 COMPONENTS IN THE MODEL

Candidate	Total votes used in study	Number correctly classified	Percentage	Number misclassified	Percentage
Anderson	102	91	89.2	11	10.8
Reagan	77	71	92.2	6	7.8

NOTE: 90.5 percent correctly classified.

RESULTS

Reviewing Table 2 leads one to the conclusion that the issues and policies and social imagery components were the most significant discriminating variables and dominated the model. Reagan voters had higher means than Anderson voters on both of these components. This implies that Reagan voters placed more importance on issues and social imageries associated with the candidate. This in turn fits in with Reagan's campaign, which appealed to many voter segments. Voters also would have been much more familiar with Reagan's platform, since he had run in a previous national election.

We tested our model by predicting the respondents' voting behavior based on the discriminant analysis, and then validating our prediction with the actual voting behavior of the respondents.[4] In other words, we did not use a computerized classification technique, but classified the respondents by comparing their reported vote to our prediction. A review of Table 3 reveals a prediction rate of 90.5 percent.

COMPARATIVE RESULTS

Evidence of the model's predictive and explanatory power is exhibited when models using demographic variables, political involvement variables, or a combination of both types of variables are tested on the same sample of respondents. To test a model using demographic variables, a second discriminant analysis was carried out. In this case, the dependent (or criterion) variable was the respondent's stated intention. The independent (or predictor) variables covered a series of demographic questions that included degree of education (grade school, high school or trade school, some college, college, and masters or doctorate degree), occupation (retired, homemaker, student, laborer, service worker, craftsman or foreman or machine operator, sales or clerical person, executive or manager, and professional or technical worker), age, and socioeconomic status (lower class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class). The discriminant analysis and classification procedure was carried out in the same way as for the voter behavior model. When the model using demographic variables is validated, it predicts 70.4 percent of the respondents correctly (Table 4). This prediction rate can be explained in part by the general hypothesis that demographic characteristics do not account for the intervening forces that can affect a voter's behavior.

TABLE 4

CLASSIFICATION RESULTS BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES (EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, AGE, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS)

		Predicted votes			
Candidate	Total votes used in study	Number correctly classified	Percentage	Number misclassified	Percentage
Anderson	102	70	68.6	32	31.4
Reagan	77	56	72.7	21	27.3

NOTE: 70.4 percent correctly classified.

Another widely used set of explanatory variables in the political science literature have included party affiliation and general political involvement. In a more realistic approach to voting behavior, political scientists theorized that political characteristics would mediate between the effects of social characteristics and a voter's actual behavior. In order to test for the influence of political involvement on voting behavior, a third discriminant analysis was carried out. Again, the criterion variable was the respondent's stated intention. The predictor variables included a series of questions that tapped various aspects of party affiliation and political involvement that included party affiliation (1 = very unlikely—7 = very likely), interest in the election (1 = very uninterested—7 = very interested), concern over the outcome of the election (1 = very unconcerned—7 = very concerned), and effectiveness of the vote (1 = very ineffective—7 = very effective). When the model based on political involvement variables is validated, the prediction rate drops to 65.4 percent (Table 5). These results do not support the theory that party affiliation and political characteristics in general are more realistic than are social characteristics in explaining and predicting primary voting behavior.

A more interesting test would combine the demographic and political involvement variables into one discriminant analysis. This combination was made for

[4]The actual behavior of the respondent was based on the reported measure obtained through the post-election telephone interview. Although there might have been some response bias, it is not likely that the respondents would misstate the truth, since there was no obvious reason for doing so.

TABLE 5

CLASSIFICATION RESULTS BASED ON POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT VARIABLES (PARTY AFFILIATION, INTEREST, CONCERN OVER OUTCOME, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VOTE)

		Predicted votes			
Candidate	Total votes used in study	Number correctly classified	Percentage	Number misclassified	Percentage
Anderson	102	53	52.0	49	48.0
Reagan	77	64	83.1	13	16.9

NOTE: 65.4 percent correctly classified.

each party, using the same procedure employed in the prior discriminant runs. A review of Table 6 indicates that party affiliation and education are the most discriminating variables. They yield a prediction rate of 73.7 percent (Table 7), again only slightly higher than the 70.4 percent prediction rate found in the analysis using only the demographic variables (Table 4).

Although our model is more effective than a model using demographic or political involvement variables, it must be pointed out that comparisons between models are problematic. Our study was conducted in a single location; as a result variability in economic factors was suppressed and socioeconomic status effects were reduced in relation to other effects. It should also be pointed out that the model that uses political involvement variables could be related to the primary a respondent votes in as well as to the likelihood of voting in that primary, and could account for its lower predictive ability.

DISCUSSION

The point of political marketing is to get a candidate elected. If a candidate could explain and then predict how a voter will act, the candidate would be able to allocate election resources in the manner that would most efficiently guarantee election. The model that best explains voter behavior—in this case, the primary voter model—would be an extremely efficient marketing tool for a candidate.

The purpose of this study was to develop and test a model of primary voter behavior by predicting the behavior of respondents based on the model, and validating the results with the actual behavior of the respondents. It also proposed to test traditional voting behavior models using (1) demographic variables, (2) political involvement variables, and (3) a combination of both sets of variables to determine the comparative predictive and explanatory power of all three models.

Using only demographic variables to predict voter

TABLE 6

TWO-GROUP DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS USING DEMOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT VARIABLES[a]

		Means[b]	
Variable description	Coefficients	Anderson	Reagan
Party affiliation	.56	4.27	5.87
Interest	−.34	6.21	5.66
Concern	−.02	5.94	5.38
Effectiveness	−.02	4.45	4.53
Age	.44	46.78	54.33
Education	−.53	4.05	3.32
Occupation	.04	6.37	5.76
Socioeconomic status	.07	3.38	3.44

[a] Eigenvalue = 0.30.
Wilks Lambda = 0.76.
Chi-Squared = 60.43.
DF = 8.
Significance = $p < 0.001$.
[b] Group means: Anderson = −0.47.
Reagan = 0.63.

behavior is a traditional approach that allows a candidate to target a specific audience without knowing what s/he should communicate. Using only political variables also affords the candidate the ability to target specific segments, but again does not indicate what s/he should communicate to his/her audience. Though these more traditional approaches go beyond a simple prediction (as one would find from time-series or forecasting data), and though they offer voting explanations, they do not deal with the motivating forces behind the voter. The model of primary voter behavior provides a richer communication opportunity for the candidate, since the model measures the seven cognitive domains and notes the impact that changes in these domains have on voter behavior. The results derived from this model allow the candidate to know what to communicate in his/her messages.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the primary voter behavior model can be used to measure actual voting behavior. But there are problems associated with the use of the model. It should be pointed out, for example, that although seven domains were found in this election, it is quite possible that only four or five domains may be found in a future election as a result of overlap. In addition, there is the difficulty of assessing beliefs: the large number of sources makes it nearly impossible to arrive at an exhaustive list of items for several components of the model. Also, the qualitative research necessary to generate the belief statements must be carried out several weeks prior to the development of the questionnaire. This time lag

TABLE 7

CLASSIFICATION RESULTS BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT VARIABLES

		Predicted votes			
Candidate	Total votes used in study	Number correctly classified	Percentage	Number misclassified	Percentage
Anderson	102	72	70.6	30	29.4
Reagan	77	60	77.9	17	22.1

NOTE: 73.7 percent correctly classified.

affects the quality and relevance of the items once the questionnaire is distributed: issues as well as voters' minds may change during the last crucial weeks of an election compaign. Perhaps this model would be best used to develop an information baseline for the course of a campaign. Next, our definition of the issues and policies component and the social imagery component presents a problem. It appears that these two components have to be more clearly defined. Further research using the results reported here will be necessary to refine the model.

What further limits the generalizability of this study is our use of a single community's primary election results rather than general election results. The choice situation in a primary should not be confused with the situation in a general election, where the choice criteria are likely to be different. Finally, in the last stage of data collection, it was impossible to verify the respondents' honesty in reporting how they actually voted. Nevertheless, at this time the primary voter behavior model appears to be useful for explaining voter behavior in primary elections. It would be very interesting to test this model during a regular election at the local, state, and national levels. Clearly, there is a need to apply what is known in the commercial marketplace to the political marketplace.

[*Received November 1983. Revised March 1985.*]

REFERENCES

Abelson, Robert P., Donald R. Kinder, Mark D. Peters, and Susan T. Fiske (1982), "Affective and Semantic Components in Political Person Perception," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 4 (April), 619–630.

Belk, Russell W. (1975), "Situational Variables and Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 2 (December), 157–164.

Berelson, Bernard, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee (1954), *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign,* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (1960), *The American Voter,* New York: John Wiley.

Carlson, Oliver and Aldrich Blake (1946), *How to Get into Politics: The Art of Winning Elections,* New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce.

Darlington, Richard B. (1968), "Multiple Regression in Psychological Research and Practice," *Psychological Bulletin,* 69 (March), 161–182.

DeVries, Walter and Terrance Lance, Jr. (1972), *The Ticket-Splitter: A New Force in American Politics,* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.

Downs, Anthony (1957), *An Economic Theory of Democracy,* New York: Harper and Row.

Fishbein, Martin (1967), "A Behavior Theory Approach to the Relations Between Beliefs About an Object and the Attitude Toward the Object," in *Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement,* ed. Martin Fishbein, New York: John Wiley.

——— and Fred S. Coombs (1974), "Basis for Decision: An Analysis of Voting Behavior," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology,* 4 (April–June), 95–124.

——— and Icek Ajzen (1980), "Predicting and Understanding Voting in American Elections: Effects of External Variables," in *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior,* eds. Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 174–195.

———, Carl H. Bowman, Kerry Thomas, James C. Jacaard, and Icek Ajzen (1980), "Predicting and Understanding British Elections and American Referenda," in *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior,* eds. Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 196–216.

Johnson, Richard M. (1971), "Market Segmentation: A Strategic Management Tool," *Journal of Marketing Research,* 8 (February), 13–18.

Kelby, Stanley and Thad W. Miner (1974), "The Simple Act of Voting," *American Political Science Review,* 68 (June), 572–591.

Kessel, John H. (1972), "Comment: The Issues in Issue Voting," *American Political Science Review,* 66 (June), 459–470.

Lazarsfeld, Paul, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet (1944), *The Peoples Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Newman, Bruce I. (1981), "The Explanation and Prediction of Voting Intentions and Actual Voting Behavior in a Presidential Primary Race," unpublished dissertation, Business Administration Department, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL 61820.

Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik (1976), *The Changing American Voter,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nimmo, Dan (1975), "Images and Voters' Decision-Making Processes," in Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 2, ed. Mary Jane Schlinger, Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research, 771–781.

Nygren, Thomas E. and Lawrence E. Jones (1977), "Individual Differences in Perceptions and Preferences for

Political Candidates," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* 13 (March), 182–197.

Odegard, Peter H. and E. Allen Helms (1938), *American Politics: A Study in Political Dynamics,* New York: Harper & Row.

Pomper, Gerald M. (1972), "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956–1968," *American Political Science Review,* 45 (June), 415–428.

Pool, Ithiel De Sola and Robert Abelson (1961), "The Simulmatics Project," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 25 (Spring), 167–183.

Sears, David O. (1969), "Political Behavior," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology,* eds. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, Vol. 5, No. 41, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 315–458.

Shaffer, William E. (1972), *Computer Simulation of Voting Behavior,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shama, Abraham (1975), "Applications of Marketing Concepts to Candidate Marketing," in *Advances in Consumer Research,* ed. Mary Jane Schlinger, Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research, 793–801.

Sherrod, Drury R. (1971), "Selective Perceptions of Political Candidates," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 35 (Winter), 554–562.

Sheth, Jagdish N. (1975), "Toward a Model of Individual Choice Behavior," paper presented at the ESOMAR Seminar on Market Modeling, France, June 11.

Stokes, Donald E., Angus Campbell, and Warren E. Miller (1958), "Components of Electoral Decision," *American Political Science Review,* 52 (June), 367–387.