

## **“The Attributes and Engagement of Persuadable Voters”**

**Kyle Leon Endres  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Government  
The University of Texas at Austin**

A disparity exists between the number of people that the political science literature considers to be persuadable and number of people that the presidential campaigns consider to be persuadable. By refining the manner in which individuals are classified as persuadable, I aim to reduce this segment of the population to a percentage that more closely resembles reality. After presenting the classification system, I examine the characteristics, the political involvement and engagement, and how these aspects may change as the campaign interacts with the persuadable voters. I make comparisons between the traditional measure for cross-pressured, used in political science, and more a more narrow subset that I identified by focusing on the issues that the 2012 presidential campaigns used in their voter targeting.

Do not cite or Distribute without the Author’s written Permission

## **Introduction**

In the 2012 Presidential election, both the Romney and Obama campaigns used the latest techniques in data analysis to both identify their supporters and swing voters that should be targeted for persuasion. The campaigns focused their attention on the eight battleground states that would ultimately tip the Electoral College in Obama's favor. Within these eight states<sup>1</sup>, the Republican National Committee identified roughly twenty-one percent of the electorate as targets for their campaign to persuade. This contrasts with the political science literature that labels more than three times as many people as persuadable voters (Hillygus and Shields 2008). The large disparity between political science and political operatives demands a reexamination of who should be considered a persuadable voter.

When looking for campaign effects, political scientists focus their analysis on the individuals that campaigns are likely targeting – individuals living in battleground states and more recently 'persuadable individuals' living in battleground states (See Shaw 2006). By overestimating how many people should be receptive to persuasive campaign communications, we may be underestimating the effects of campaign outreach by diluting the pool of persuadable individuals with people neither campaign is actively seeking to persuade. In this paper, I take the first steps towards developing a more narrow measure of persuadable voters. I use the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study to make comparisons between the larger group of persuadable and cross-pressured voters and the smaller segment of the population that I identify as persuadable using a refined definition. These comparisons first take account of differences in classification based on age,

---

<sup>1</sup> See appendix for a list of battleground states.

education, gender, and race; then examines the differences in political engagement and participation between persuadable voters as classified by my definition and the larger group of cross-pressured voters. The analysis looks at persuadable voters as a whole and explores differences between these individuals that reside in battleground and non-battleground states.

### **Literature Review**

Political operatives, pundits, and political scientists have conflicting assessments of the number of individuals that may be persuaded, how to determine if someone should be considered persuadable, and how these individuals react to campaign outreach. In the most recent three presidential elections, both Republicans and Democrats invested heavily in the necessary mechanisms to identify and ultimately persuade and turn out individuals that may be receptive to one of their messages. This investment coincides with the seeming decline in the number of 'swing' or undecided voters based on the respective measures used by both the gallop (Jones 2008) and the Pew (Dimock et al. 2008) polling agencies. The media has interpreted this trend as indicative of the small segment of the population that is susceptible to persuasion by the presidential campaigns. Yet, this trend is antithetical to the reality of increased efforts by campaigns to identify and persuade. The conflicting interpretations are not exclusive to the media and campaign professionals.

Political scientists also differ in their assessment of the number of voters that are 'up for grabs'. Two related strands of literature, the 'swing voter' literature and the 'cross-pressure' literature, attempt to quantify and describe these voters. On one end of the spectrum, Sunshine Hillygus and Todd Shields argue that 60% of partisans disagree with their party on at least one issue that they consider personally important. These cross-

pressured partisans combined with the approximate 10% of the electorate that self-identifies as a true independent suggests that roughly 64% of the electorate is fair game for persuasion depending on the policy issues that arise over the course of the campaign. Though, Hillygus and Shields make the case that campaigns use microtargeting to communicate areas of agreement with individuals on all political issues, both major and minor<sup>2</sup> (2008). At the other end of the spectrum, the 'swing' voter literature places slightly less than 25% of voters in the persuadable column. Based on the differential in feeling-thermometers between the major party presidential candidates, Mayer identifies approximately 23% of voters as persuadable (2008). While Shaw finds that, between 1996 and 2004, 24% of voters were 'swing' voters based on their vote choice in the three consecutive presidential elections while 44% of the electorate was a swing voter based on their votes in the 1968 to 1976 presidential elections (2008). Similarly, V.O. Key estimated that between 1/8 and 1/5 of the electorate were 'party switchers' in the 1950's (1966). If the number of voters that are actually switching between the major parties in three consecutive elections hovers over twenty percent than the number that is truly open to persuasion is perhaps double that number.

The approach offered by Hillygus and Shields is advantageous in the sense that the measurement of persuadable voters is not dependent on election specific characteristics or past voting behavior, which is often difficult for researchers to obtain/verify. But their characterization overestimates the number of people that campaigns can reasonably expect to move into their column. If almost two-thirds of the electorate could be persuaded,

---

<sup>2</sup> Specifically, Hillygus and Shields identify more than 75 different policy issues that the 2004 presidential candidates took positions on and were used in appeals sent via direct mail. The source of the direct mail is not presented – national parties, state parties, local parties, outside groups or individuals, etc.. (See page 6).

U.S. elections would be both more interesting and more volatile. The swing voter scholars have a more realistic estimate of the number of persuadable voters, but are plagued by their reliance on election specific variables and evaluations.

Moving beyond identification, some of the classic studies of political behavior hypothesized that persuadable or cross-pressured individuals are both less informed and less likely to participate in politics (see Berelson et al 1954 and Campbell et al. 1960). The social network cross-pressure hypothesis of demobilization originated with the Columbia School (see Lazarsfeld et al. 1944, Berelson et al. 1954). The authors of the American Voter built on the work of the Columbia school and found that individuals with higher attitude or psychological conflict are less likely to vote, take longer to reach a decision, support their preferred candidate less enthusiastically, and are more prone to ticket splitting (Campbell et al. 1960, also see Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). These hypotheses have found mixed support, as today's voters have many more modes to seek out information and participate in politics. Many measures of cross-pressures have been used with varying levels of support for the demobilization hypotheses. Others have found that social network cross pressures either has no effect or a slight positive effect on turnout (Jang 2009, Leighley 1990, and Nir 2005). Concerning political knowledge, Hillygus and Shields found no difference between persuadable and non-persuadable voters (2008).

### **Theory and Expectations**

To develop a more accurate measure of which individuals should be considered persuadable, I begin with the broad definition of a persuadable voter, presented by Hillygus and Shields. I add a single criterion and re-conceptualize how issue importance is measured. Furthermore, an individual must both be receptive to persuasion and receive

some type of communication to sway them to vote for a candidate that they are not predisposed to support. For this reason I will narrow the number of persuadable voters by excluding all issues except for the major issues that the president candidates made part of their campaign. These changes will result in a more accurate assessment of which voters are persuadable and more accurately reflect a number of voters that would warrant an individualized approach to campaign outreach.

The criterion that should be added is that respondents must be able to correctly identify the position of each party on the issue in which they disagree with their party. This accomplishes two things. First, if an issue is important enough to influence vote choice, it is reasonable to expect that an individual would know where the parties stand on that issue. Second, this insures that individuals are being persuaded and not simply learning where they and the parties/candidates (that share their partisan leanings) stand on a particular issue throughout the campaign.

Hillygus and Shields measure importance based on responses to a closed ended question evaluating how personally important the issue is to the respondent. Issues are considered important if the respondent selected 'extremely' or 'very important' on a five-point scale with 'not at all important' at the opposing end of the scale. Since individuals are prone to misreport their level of political engagement and participation, I think it is more appropriate to evaluate importance comparing their responses on all the issue areas instead of looking at them individually. By examining whether an individual issue is above, below, or an average level of importance to the individual should help divide the cross-pressured voters into two groups.

The result will be two groups of cross-pressured individuals. The first group would be considered cross-pressured but not persuadable. They may feel strongly about a single issue, or set of issues, and these issues will align with both their partisanship and vote choice. Issues in which they disagree with their party will be issues that the individual deems less important and/or are minor issues in the campaign. These voters are not persuadable in the short-term, but may be persuaded to support the opposing party in future elections if their issue of importance is neutralized over time. Some of these individuals could be described as single-issue voters. As a whole, these individuals would more closely resemble V.O. Key's rational issue driven voter (Key 1966).

The second group of cross-pressured voters is persuadable and can be characterized by their lack of any intense preferences for the issues. These individuals will agree with each party on at least one of the major issues of the campaign. This group consists of individuals that confess a similar level of issue importance for most if not all issues without feeling more strongly about a subset of issues. The partisan identification of this second group is likely to be more of a feature of their socialization than a careful evaluation of which party is more in their self-interest. I expect this group to more closely resemble the ignorant, disinterested electorate characterized by Converse (1964).

The approach that a campaign should take towards these separate groups of persuadable voters should vary. In regards to the cross-pressured, but not persuadable group; their party's candidate should prime their main issue and highlight the distinction to motivate the individual to turnout. The opposing party should neutralize the issue (if possible), perhaps by taking the same position, while emphasizing issues in which the individual and the candidate do agree.

The second group, the persuadable individuals, lacking a stronger connection to any of the individual issues should be more responsive to the major themes and issues of the campaign such as candidate characteristics and not necessarily individual issue appeals. These voters will rely on the campaigns to inform them on both the issues that are important and the candidates' stances on these issues. Compared to the first group, these voters will demonstrate more learning over the course of the campaign, largely due to the first group already being aware of where the parties/candidates stand on the issues that they care about. People that do not fall in either of these groups are either partisans that agree with their party on all issues that they care about or individuals that do not profess a leaning towards either party.

**\*\*Insert Table 1 About Here\*\***

I expect each of the three groups of individuals that offer some type of partisan predisposition to roughly divide equally. I believe that the persuadable individuals will: turnout at lower rates than the cross-pressured individuals, demonstrate lower levels of political knowledge, be less involved in the political process, have less interest, be more likely to split their ticket, and to be more likely to fluctuate their support between the candidate throughout the election cycle.

### **Data and Methods**

The first step of this project was to identify the major issues that the presidential campaigns used when targeting individuals for persuasion. Based on the voter files provided by Republican National Committee (RNC), microtargeting was used to project each individual's partisanship, vote on a generic ballot, propensity to turnout, disapproval



of President Obama, level of frustration about the economy/jobs, opinion on Obamacare, and level of social conservatism. Each individual was assigned one of five options for partisanship, generic ballot, and Obama disapproval. All other projections were based on a three point scale.

After identifying the issues, I selected the 2012 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) as the best available survey because of its pre and post election design and large number of respondents from battleground states. The CCES is a 54,535 person national survey (including 12,868 individuals from battleground states). I used the survey data to categorize the U.S. population as belonging to one of the four groups discussed in the previous section. To mimic campaign outreach as closely as possible, independents were folded in with persuadable voters for much of the analysis. Citizens of battleground states, and citizens of non-battleground states that would be considered persuadable / not persuadable and/or cross-pressured / not cross-pressured were analyzed for group characteristics and various aspects concerning political engagement.

The CCES lacked measures of issue importance, which should inflate the percentage for group one, in particular, due to my inability to distinguish between individuals who view their disagreement with their party on one of the minor campaign issues as personally important and those who consider the issue unimportant.

To classify individuals as cross-pressured, I relied on the respondents reported positions on abortion, affirmative action, gay marriage, global warming, gun control, the environment, Obamacare, and their position on two separate questions concerning the Bush tax cuts and the middle class tax cuts. The exact question wording and coding for each question is included in the appendix. For the persuadable voters, an economic evaluation

question was used as a proxy for jobs, the Obamacare evaluation was created using two separate questions on the affordable care act,<sup>3</sup> the respondents' positions on gay marriage and abortion were combined to a single social conservatism scale, and the evaluation of President Obama was used for Obama disapproval. All variables were coded to resemble the coding scheme used in the voter files.

The five aspects of political behavior in which each individual was evaluated include turnout, participation, contact, vote choice, and political knowledge. Turnout and whether individuals were contacted by a campaign<sup>4</sup> were self reported. Participation was a zero to four point cumulative scale created by totaling the number of listed activities that the respondent reported engaging in during the past year. Activities included: attending local political meetings (such as school board or city council), putting up a political sign (such as lawn signs or bumper stickers), working for a candidate or campaign, and donating money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization.

The political knowledge scale ranged from zero to six, with an average of 4.09 (Standard error = .008). Summing correct responses to six questions created the scale. The questions include: identifying which party controlled the U.S. House of Representatives, which party controlled the Senate, and correctly identifying where Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, The Democratic Party, and The Republican Party would be placed on a 7-point liberal conservative scale. Correct answers for Barack Obama and The Democratic Party were the three liberal responses, and the correct answers for Mitt Romney and The Republican Party were the three conservative responses. The Middle response option was coded as incorrect for both individuals and parties.

---

<sup>3</sup> This is true for both cross-pressured and persuadable voters. See appendix.

<sup>4</sup> Any campaign, not necessarily a presidential.

## Results

In this section, I will first look at the size of each group of individuals. Next, I will examine the demographic compositions of persuadable and cross-pressured voters. Third, I will analyze the differences in political engagement and participation among each group.

First, based on the standard definition of cross-pressured individuals, approximately 73% of the electorate would be considered cross-pressured partisans<sup>5</sup> in the 2012 CCES. 31% of the sample is a cross-pressured Republican, 41% are cross-pressured Democrats, 6% are non cross-pressured Republicans, 6% are non cross-pressured Democrats, and 11% are true independent. According to these numbers, approximately 84% of the electorate was considered 'up for grabs' in the 2012 election based on the widely used definition of a persuadable voter.

\*\*Insert Table 2 About Here\*\*

Restricting the analysis to the major issues of the campaign, the percentage of the sample that is fair game reduces to 38%. Specifically, 14% of individuals in the sample are considered persuadable Democrats, 13% are persuadable Republicans, and 11% are true independents. As table 2 makes clear, the number of cross-pressured partisans that are not persuadable exceeds my expectations. The ability to distinguish between issues that individuals consider important and not important should help to balance out this disparity and increase the percentage of people that are not cross-pressured partisans.

Distinguishing between issue importance may also help reduce the percentage of persuadable voters (38%) closer to the number of voters that the RNC deemed persuadable

---

<sup>5</sup> Hillygus and Shield found this to be about 64% (60% of partisans + Independents), my number is likely inflated do to the missing issue importance.

and decided to contact, approximately 21%. Using a very basic likely voter screen (is the respondent registered to vote and did the respondent indicate in the pre-election portion of the survey that there is any chance that he/she may vote) further reduces the sample to about 33% of those surveyed. This difference between the RNC number and persuadable voters that are likely to vote is still large, but it is much smaller than the difference found by relying on the more basic definition of cross-pressured individuals.

Now that the size of each group has been established, I will turn my attention to the types of people that are more or less likely to be cross-pressured and/or persuadable. For the purpose of this analysis, Independents were folded in with cross-pressured and persuadable voters since campaigns try to target them for persuasion in a similar manner. Women were more likely to be cross-pressured than men, individuals between 30 and 66 were more likely to be cross-pressured than the young and old<sup>6</sup>, Blacks and Latinos were more likely to be cross-pressured (Whites less likely), and individuals with a high school degree or less and individuals with post-graduate degrees were more likely to be cross-pressured than the population as a whole. All of these differences reached traditional levels of significance.

**\*\*Insert Table 3 About Here\*\***

The results were similar for persuadable voters. Notable differences include the gender difference is no longer significant. Young people were significantly less likely than the population average to be cross-pressured, yet are significantly more likely to be persuadable than middle age and older individuals.

---

<sup>6</sup> Age breakdowns were taken from the GOP voter files.

The demographic composition of cross-pressured and persuadable voters is fairly consistent when the population is divided based on residence in a battleground state. Only three significant differences emerge. The mean number of cross-pressured voters is lower than the U.S. mean, which may be a reflection of the more intense political outreach. Individuals between the ages of 30 and 66 that live in battleground states are less likely to be cross-pressured than the same age bracket residing in non battleground states. Last, individuals with just a high school degree are less likely to be considered persuadable than their counterparts in non-battleground states.

**\*\*Insert Table 4 About Here\*\***

Lastly, I will direct my attention to differences in political participation and engagement. Looking at the United States as a whole, cross-pressured individuals and individuals that are conflicted on the more narrow set of issues, in which the 2012 Republican Presidential campaigns<sup>7</sup> used while messaging persuadable voters, are less likely to vote, less likely to participate in political and civic activities (such as attending local political meetings, putting up a political sign, working for a candidate or campaign, donating money to a candidate, campaign, or political organization), have lower levels of political knowledge, and are less likely to be contacted by a political campaign<sup>8</sup>. While these differences are statistically significant between both sets, the differences between persuadable and non-persuadable voters is greater for each activity/area than the differences between cross-pressured voters and others.

---

<sup>7</sup> There is likely tremendous overlap between the Republican and Democratic campaigns. However, I have not gained access to the Democratic National Committee's 2012 Voter files to verify which issues were used when trying to persuade swing voters.

<sup>8</sup> I do not distinguish between contact from a presidential campaign and contact from state and local parties/candidates.

**\*\*Insert Table 5 about Here\*\***

Assuming that campaign outreach has positive effects on the individuals in regards to their levels of engagement, individuals living in battleground states should be different than their counterparts in non battleground states in regards to the four areas of interest. This is true for both sets of individuals. Both cross-pressured and persuadable voters that live in a battleground state report higher levels of voting, score higher on the political knowledge scale, report higher levels of participation and political involvement, and report higher rates of contact from political parties and candidates than the mean for comparable individuals in the United States; all differences are statistically significant. The differences between persuadable and non persuadable individuals are again greater than the differences between cross-pressured and non cross-pressured individuals.

### **Conclusion**

This refined classification of individuals as persuadable or simply cross-pressured is positive step towards a definition that is more in synch with both whom campaigns are contacting and who is actually giving reasonable consideration to voting against their partisan predispositions. While actual persuasion was not addressed in this paper, accurately testing for campaign effects in future research should be more evident when focusing on the appropriate group that campaigns are trying to persuade. The differences in political engagement between persuadable and non persuadable individuals did emerge in this analysis. This difference was greater than difference between cross-pressured and non cross-pressured individuals. The data also demonstrated that exposure to the political campaigns helps to lessen the gap between individuals classified as persuadable and individuals classified as non-persuadable

## Figures and Tables

Table 1:

<p>Cross Pressured Partisans, Not Persuadable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~30% of the public</li> <li>• Issue driven</li> <li>• Agree w/ their party on the major issues of the campaign</li> <li>• Agree w/ the party on the issue(s) that they feel most intensely about</li> <li>• Higher Turnout &amp; Participation</li> <li>• Higher Political Knowledge</li> <li>• Less fluctuation in vote-choice</li> <li>• Little learning during the campaign</li> </ul>	<p>Persuadable, Cross Pressured Partisans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~30% of the public</li> <li>• Lack of intensity for any issue or set of issues</li> <li>• Relies on the campaign for information and issue importance</li> <li>• Lower Turnout &amp; Participation</li> <li>• Lower Political Knowledge</li> <li>• More fluctuation (floating) in the vote-choice</li> <li>• More likely to Split Ticket</li> </ul>
<p>Partisans, Not Cross-Pressured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~30% of the public</li> <li>• Disagreements with their party would be based on issues that they deem unimportant</li> </ul>	<p>True Independents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~10% of the public</li> </ul>

Table 2:

Cross Pressured Partisans, Not Persuadable CCES: 46% Expected: ~30%	Persuadable, Cross Pressured Partisans CCES: 27% Expected: ~30%
Partisans, Not Cross Pressured CCES: 12% Expected: ~30%	True Independents CCES: 11% Expected: ~10%
Unwilling or Unable to identify as a Republican, Democrat, or Independent CCES: 4.5%	



Table 3:

	All		Battleground		Non-Battleground	
	Cross-Pressured	Persuadable	Cross-Pressured	Persuadable	Cross-Pressured	Persuadable
All	.8797 (.0014)	.4030 (.0021)	.8732+ (.0030)	.4012 (.0044)	.8817 (.0016)	.4036 (.0025)
Women	0.8867* (.0019)	.4055 (.0030)	.8811 (.0040)	.3969 (.0061)	.8884 (.0022)	.4081 (.0034)
Men	0.8720* (.0021)	.4002 (.0031)	.8647 (.0045)	.4059 (.0064)	.8743 (.0024)	.3984 (.0036)
18-29	0.868* (.0040)	.4680* (.0059)	.8693 (.0084)	.4824 (.0124)	.8676 (.0045)	.4638 (.0067)
30-66	0.8869* (.0017)	.4146* (.0026)	.8778+ (.0036)	.4105 (.0054)	.8896 (.0019)	.4158 (.0030)
67+	0.8635* (.0034)	.3165* (.0046)	.8608 (.0069)	.3189 (.0093)	.8644 (.0039)	.3157 (.0053)
Black	.9087* (.0036)	.5209* (.0062)	.8942 (.0081)	.5261 (.0131)	.9130 (.0040)	.5193 (.0071)
Latino	.8914* (.0050)	.4536* (.0081)	.8798 (.0115)	.4634 (.0176)	.8946 (.0056)	.4509 (.0091)
White	0.8726* (.0017)	.3770* (.0025)	.8678 (.0035)	.3745 (.0050)	.8741 (.0019)	.3779 (.0028)
Multi-Racial	.8832 (.0102)	.4315 (.0158)	.8850 (.0226)	.4600 (.0353)	.8828 (.0115)	.4242 (.0177)
Less than H.S.	.9160* (.0075)	.5991* (.0133)	.9091 (.0156)	.5924 (.0266)	.9183 (.0086)	.6014 (.0154)
H.S. Degree	.8910* (.0028)	.4942* (.0044)	.8823 (.0057)	.4685+ (.0088)	.8939 (.0031)	.5028 (.0051)
Some College	.8678* (.0029)	.3988 (.0041)	.8625 (.0060)	.4105 (.0086)	.8694 (.0033)	.3952 (.0047)
2 year degree	.8705* (.0047)	.4042 (.0068)	.8650 (.0097)	.3856 (.0138)	.8722 (.0053)	.4100 (.0078)
4 year degree	.8767 (.0030)	.3432* (.0044)	.8755 (.0063)	.3458 (.0091)	.8771 (.0035)	.3424 (.0050)
Graduate degree	.8878* (.0038)	.3052* (.0055)	.8719 (.0085)	.3085 (.0118)	.8922 (.0042)	.3043 (.0062)

\* Items are significantly different from the overall mean. + Items are significantly different from the corresponding value for the entire country (value in All Column).

Table 4:

	All States				
	All	Cross-Pressured	Not Cross-Pressured	Persuadable	Not Persuadable
Turnout	.9376 (.0012)	.9347 (.0013)	.9584 (.0028)	.8951 (.0025)	.9631 (.0012)
Political Knowledge	4.1782 (.0083)	4.1195 (.0090)	4.6071 (.0214)	3.5268 (.0144)	4.6179 (.0092)
Participation	.8288 (.0054)	.8162 (.0057)	.9197 (.0155)	.5092 (.0070)	1.032 (.0073)
Contact	.7156 (.0022)	.7106 (.0023)	.7519 (.0060)	.6295 (.0037)	.7704 (.0026)
Romney	.4757 (.0025)	.4638 (.0027)	.5574 (.0071)	.5048 (.0042)	.4594 (.0031)
The difference in means between cross-pressured and not cross-pressured and persuadable and not-persuadable is significant for all five variables.					



### References

- Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. 1954. *Voting*. University of Chicago Press.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American voter*. University of Chicago Press.
- Converse, Philip. 1964. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." In David Apter (ed.) *Ideology and Discontent*. New York: Free Press.
- Dimock, Michael, April Clark, and Juliana M. Horowitz. 2008. "Campaign Dynamics and the Swing Vote in the 2004 Election." In William G. Mayer (Ed.) *The Swing Voter in American Politics*. Brookings Press.
- Hillygus, D. Sunshine and Todd G. Shields 2008 *The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- Jang, Seung-Jin. 2009. Are diverse political networks always bad for participatory democracy? Indifference, alienation, and political disagreements. *American Politics Research*, 37(5), 879–899.
- Jones, Jeffrey M. 2008. "Swing Voters in the Gallup Poll, 1944 to 2004." In William G. Mayer (Ed.) *The Swing Voter in American Politics*. Brookings Press.
- Key, V. O. 1966. *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting 1936-1960*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. "The people's choice: How the voter makes up his mind in a presidential election." *New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce* (1944).
- Leighley, Jan E. 1990. Social interaction and contextual influences on political participation. *American Politics Research*, 18, 459–475.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg. *The American voter revisited*. University of Michigan Press, 2009.
- Mayer, William G. 2008. "What Exactly Is a Swing Voter? Definition and Measurement." In William G. Mayer (Ed.) *The Swing Voter in American Politics*. Brookings Press.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2002. The consequences of cross-cutting networks for political participation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(4), 838–855.
- Nir, Lilach. 2005. Ambivalent social networks and their consequences for participation. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 17(4), 422–442.

Shaw, Daron R. 2006. *The Race to 270: The Electoral College and the Campaign Strategies of 2000 and 2004*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Shaw, Daron R. 2008. "Swing Voting and U.S. Presidential Elections." In William G. Mayer (Ed.) *The Swing Voter in American Politics*. Brookings Press.

## Appendix

### Battleground States

- Colorado
- Florida
- Iowa
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Wisconsin
- Virginia

### Political Knowledge Scale

6-point scale (House majority + Senate majority + Obama L/C + Romney L/C + GOP L/C + Dem L/C) – Middle option is scored as incorrect for all four ideology scales.

Which party has the majority of seats in..

CC309a House 1= GOP 2 = Dems

CC309b Senate 1= GOP 2 = Dems

CC334grid: How would you rate each of the following individuals and groups? 1=very liberal, 2=liberal, 3=somewhat liberal 4=middle of the road, 5= somewhat conservative, 6 = conservative, 7=very conservative

CC334c Barack Obama

CC334d Mitt Romney

CC334e The Democratic Party

CC334f The Republican Party

### Policy Issues

- Abortion - CC324 Abortion: Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view on abortion? 1 = By law, abortion should never be permitted, 2 = The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger, 3 = The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established, 4= By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice 5=.
- Affirmative Action – CC327 – Affirmative action programs give preferences to racial minorities in employment and college admissions in order to correct for past discrimination. Do you support or oppose affirmative action? 1 = strongly support, 2 = somewhat support, 3 = somewhat oppose, 4 = strongly oppose

- Gay marriage - CC326 Gay marriage: Do you favor/oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally? 1 = favor 2 = oppose
- Global Warming – From what you know about global climate change or global warming, which one of the following statements comes closest to your opinion? 1 = Global climate change has been established as a serious problem, and immediate action is necessary. 2 = There is enough evidence that climate change is taking place and some action should be taken. 3 = We don't know enough about global climate change, and more research is necessary before we take any actions. 4 = Concern about global climate change is exaggerated. No action is necessary. 5 = Global climate change is not occurring; this is not a real issue.
- Gun Control – CC320 – In general, do you feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are? 1 = More strict, 2 = less strict, 3 = kept as they are
- Environment – CC325 - Some people think it is important to protect the environment even if it costs some jobs or otherwise reduces our standard of living. Other people think that protecting the environment is not as important as maintaining jobs and our standard of living. Which is closer to the way you feel, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 = Much more important to protect environment even if lose jobs and lower standard of living, 2 = Environment somewhat more important 3 = about the same, 4 = Economy somewhat more important, 5 = Much more important to protect jobs, even if environment worse
- Obamacare – A question with the wording “Obamacare” was not asked on the 2012 CCES. This variable was created using the response to two related Support/Oppose questions. Both were included in the same battery that began with the following introduction, “Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle.”
  1. Would repeal the Affordable Care Act?
  2. Requires all Americans to obtain health insurance. Allows people to keep current provider. Sets up health insurance option for those without coverage. Increases taxes on those making more than \$280,000 a year.
    - Individuals were coded as pro healthcare if they oppose question 1 and support question 2.
    - Individuals were coded as mixed if they selected that they either support or oppose both.
    - Individuals were coded as supporting a repeal of healthcare if they responded that they support question 1 and oppose question 2.
- Middle Class Tax Cuts CC332C - Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle. The Middle Class Tax Cut Act</u></p>Would extend Bush era tax cuts for incomes below \$200,000. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated \$250 billion
- Bush Tax Cuts – CC332D - Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the

legislation in principle. The Tax Hike Prevention Act</u></p>Would extend Bush-era tax cuts for all individuals, regardless of income. Would increase the budget deficit by an estimated \$405 billion.<

### RNC Issues

- **Jobs** – Economic evaluation was used as a proxy for jobs. CC302: Would you say that over the past year the nation’s economy ...? 1= gotten much better, 2= gotten better, 3= stayed about the same, 4 = gotten worse, 5= gotten much worse 6 = not sure 8 = 9=. Use this as a proxy for Mt10\_jobs, which is measured as very angry, somewhat angry, not angry. \*\*1,2,3,6 = not angry 4 = somewhat angry, 5 = very angry, 8,9=.\*\*
- **Obamacare** – A question with the wording “Obamacare” was not asked on the 2012 CCES. This variable was created using the response to two related Support/Oppose questions. Both were included in the same battery that began with the following introduction, “Congress considered many important bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle.”
  1. Repeal the affordable Care Act. Would repeal the Affordable Care Act?
  2. Affordable Care Act of 2010 - Requires all Americans to obtain health insurance. Allows people to keep current provider. Sets up health insurance option for those without coverage. Increases taxes on those making more than \$280,000 a year.
    - Individuals were coded as pro healthcare if they oppose question 1 and support question 2.
    - Individuals were coded as mixed if they selected that they either support or oppose both.
    - Individuals were coded as supporting a repeal of healthcare if they responded that they support question 1 and oppose question 2.
- **Social Conservative** – Respondent were coded as social conservatives if they oppose gay marriage and/or believe the law should never permit abortion. Respondents were coded as “mixed” if they supported some restrictions on abortion and favor gay marriage. Respondents were coded as “not social conservative” if they favor gay marriage and believe a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice. See above for the question wording for the abortion and gay marriage question.
- **Obama (dis)approval** - CC308a Do you approve of the way each is doing there job? President Obama - 1= strongly approve, 2 = somewhat approve, 3 = somewhat disapprove, 4 = strongly disapprove, 5 = not sure, 8=., 9=.