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## GUBERNATORIAL ELECTORAL COALITIONS IN THE GREAT PLAINS

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**Abstract.** *This paper examines the nature of the electoral coalitions that develop surrounding gubernatorial candidates in the states of the Great Plains. It focuses on the contribution various groups make toward the electoral success or failure of gubernatorial candidates, highlighting the underlying political divisions within a state's population. This paper marks a first step into the study of these coalitions by offering a basic description of them. Some discussion of how electoral coalitions respond to candidate and campaign-related factors is presented. The implications of these findings are discussed, along with several considerations for further research. The data used for this analysis come from election day exit polls and a content analysis of the newspaper coverage of each campaign.*

It is often said of politicians that if you want to know what they stand for, simply look at the people who support them. Such a statement carries with it a slightly negative connotation in contemporary politics as it suggests somehow that politicians are controlled like puppets by special interests. However, the notion of responsiveness to a constituency and of politicians acting as delegates as opposed to trustees is equally consistent with our initial assertion. In this sense, if you want to know what a politician stands for, you should look at the people who elected him or her. Thus, one justification for considering the composition of a candidate's electoral coalition is that there are clear implications for policy representation. In that sense, we examine electoral coalitions because we believe that there will be some connection between the shape of that coalition and the behavior of elected officials following the election (Brown 1995; Wright 1993b; Wright and Berkman 1986).

There are certainly long-term components to the nature of group support for political parties (Brown 1995; Erikson et al. 1993) and candidates (Axelrod 1970, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986). Yet, there remains the question of how electoral coalitions respond to short-term forces. If politicians respond

to the interests of those who elected them, can they influence the composition of their electoral coalition prior to election day? The first concern addresses how elites respond to coalitions of voters, while the second concern lies with groups of voters reacting to political elites. This paper focuses on this second concern.

Given that this analysis is of gubernatorial electoral coalitions, a brief consideration of gubernatorial electoral politics is necessary. There is little agreement among scholars regarding the nature of voting in gubernatorial elections. Disagreement exists among those claiming that incumbent governors are held accountable for the economic well-being of their states (Howell and Vanderleeuw 1990; Chubb 1988) and those who feel governors escape much of the blame for state economic troubles (Stein 1990; Peltzman 1987). While many look to the role played by national-level politics in determining voting behavior in gubernatorial elections (Chubb 1988; Stein 1990; Holbrook-Provow 1987; Simon, 1989), many argue that gubernatorial elections are becoming increasingly independent of presidential politics (Tompkins 1988; Jewell and Olson 1988; Cohen 1983). In particular, several scholars have concluded that gubernatorial elections often turn on state-specific factors (Jewell and Olson 1988; Tompkins 1988; Erikson et al. 1993).

Evidence exists suggesting that the specific campaign-related activities of gubernatorial candidates influences voting behavior in these elections (Carsey 1995; Cook et al. 1992; Sigelman 1989). Thus, gubernatorial elections provide a unique opportunity for studying electoral coalitions because of their semi-independence from presidential politics, the importance of election-specific factors in determining outcomes, and the likelihood that the actions of candidates produce a response among voters.

Finally, the Great Plains provides an excellent setting for this initial foray into the analysis of gubernatorial electoral coalitions. A regional approach makes the task of examining multiple electoral coalitions more manageable, and the Great Plains is a superb region to consider. It consists of states with a wide range of political cultures and sociodemographic compositions, and it's Populist heritage fosters a dynamic political environment.

### **Coalitions**

Beginning with Axelrod (1970), most research on political coalitions has focused on describing presidential electoral coalitions (see Axelrod

1974, 1978, 1982, 1986; Stanley et al. 1986, Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1986). This work illustrates the group components of particular coalitions, attempting to identify those groups that make a significant contribution to a party's or candidate's coalition of support. More recent research has begun to explore how the nature of a state's coalitional basis of partisan identification leads to particular policy outcomes (Brown 1995) and the nature of the relationship between the behavior of elected officials and the coalitions that mobilize to support them (Wright 1993b). This paper adds to both traditions by expanding the descriptive work to gubernatorial electoral coalitions and by providing some initial analysis of the reaction of electoral coalitions to the choices among candidates with which voters are presented.

In studying state-level electoral coalitions, comparisons can be made both within states and across states. Variation in a variety of factors including demographic composition, political culture, and political ideology may produce different electoral coalitions across states. The coalition supporting a Democratic candidate in one state may differ from the coalition supporting Democrats in other states.

Additionally, the coalition that mobilizes around a candidate from the Democratic party likely differs from the coalition supporting the Republican counterpart within each state. This may seem like a point so obvious it is not worth stating. However, if candidates running for Governor from the two major parties behaved in a simplified Downsian way (Downs 1957), their behavior both before and after the campaign would lead them to converge to the interests of the median voter in the state. In that sense, it would not matter which candidate won or who supported them because their behavior would be virtually identical. While little work exists on the coalitional support for gubernatorial candidates, several scholars have shown that candidates for Congress do not represent the median voter in their constituency, focusing instead on what is often called their re-election constituency.

Fenno's (1978) classic work on the behavior of House members demonstrated that elected officials seek to represent the interests of those who supported their candidacy. In fact, little consideration is given to the concerns of those whom the representative felt were not likely to be supporters. This echoes the findings of Kingdon (1966) who noted that candidates from the two major parties have very different conceptions of the groups that support them. Legislators representing the same districts but who are not members of the same political party have very different voting records (Fiorina 1974; Erikson & Wright 1993; Wright 1993b). Finally, members of political parties and party activists specifically do in fact have divergent

policy preferences (Erikson et al. 1993; Miller and Jennings 1986). Clearly, differing composition of party membership and the role played by party activists, particularly in the nomination process (Aldrich and McGinnis 1989), prevents candidates from converging completely. Thus, in describing gubernatorial electoral coalitions, this paper will make comparisons across the ten states that are part of the Great Plains as well as comparisons between parties within these states.

### **Campaigns and Coalitions**

Current research remains unclear regarding the response of voters, and thus electoral coalitions, to the messages they receive from candidates during their campaigns. Johnston et al. (1992:4) assert that campaigns provide voters with the incentive to vote by “‘priming’ [them] to consider deep seated values which motivate their choice.” In that way, campaigns serve to focus the attention of voters on a few key issues. In contrast, Gelman and King (1993) suggest that while campaigns do provide information to voters, their actual impact is negligible because each campaign is largely balanced by that of the opponent’s. Both views suggest that campaigns serve an informational role. However, Gelman and King’s (1993) view clearly does not allow for the content of a campaign to matter, and even Johnston et al.’s (1992) argument about priming suggests that campaigns simply tap the long standing divisions between voters, activating them for election day.

However, other research presents a stronger case for the short-term influence of the content of campaigns on the shape of electoral coalitions. Stonecash (1989) shows that a more polarized choice between gubernatorial candidates produces a more polarized electorate. This also is the case for Congressional (Wright 1978) and Senatorial elections (Wright and Berkman 1986).

Bartels (1993) has shown that voters respond at least in part to the information on presidential campaigns that they receive via the news. In addition, Franklin (1991) has shown that the perceptions voters have of U.S. Senate candidates responds to the nature of the messages sent out by the candidates. Finally, Carsey (1995) presents evidence that the salience of specific cleavages among voters responds directly to the issues stressed by gubernatorial candidates during their campaigns.

Thus, while some disagreement remains, ample evidence suggests that voters do in fact respond to the messages they receive from candidates.

Where this analysis differs from that cited above is in its focus on the behavior of groups of voters rather than on individuals.

### **The Great Plains**

The analysis presented in this paper is of gubernatorial electoral coalitions in those states parts of which comprise the region known as the Great Plains. They are: Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. While sharing a number of characteristics in common that distinguish states in this region from other regions in the U.S., there remains a substantial degree of diversity within the Great Plains.

For example, in states like Kansas, Nebraska, and North Dakota, the proportion of the population that identifies with the Republican party is larger than the proportion identifying with the Democratic party by 9 percentage points. In contrast, Democrats enjoy an even larger advantage over Republican identifiers in Texas (13 percentage points) New Mexico (16 percentage points) and Oklahoma (21 percentage points) (see Erikson, et al. 1993).

In addition, all three of Elazar's (1984) political culture topologies are represented in this region: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota are Moralistic; Nebraska and Wyoming are Individualistic; and New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas are Traditionalistic.

Finally, Erikson et al. (1993) show that even after accounting for the demographic composition of each state, there remains a unique state-specific component to the partisan and ideological make-up of each state's citizenry. As will be shown, some patterns persist across many of the states in this region. However, other factors remind us that each state maintains some uniqueness.

### **Data and Methods**

The analysis in this paper focuses on 24 gubernatorial elections held between 1982 and 1994 in the ten U.S. states that comprise the Great Plains region. Table 1 reports the specific elections under consideration. For these elections, I present information regarding the composition of electoral coalitions based on gender, race/ethnicity, income, party identification, and in most cases religious affiliation and political ideology.

TABLE 1  
GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS AND  
THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS IN EACH ELECTION INDICAT-  
ING THAT THEY VOTED IN THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

STATE	YEAR					
	1982	1986	1990	1992	1994	Total
Colorado		1,216	1,538		1,002	3,756
Kansas			1,635		712	2,347
Montana				492		492
Nebraska	1,252		1,354		1,184	3,790
New Mexico	1,161		980		1,200	3,341
North Dakota				747		747
Oklahoma			1,329		1,138	2,467
South Dakota		933	781			1,714
Texas	2,044	1,478	2,832		1,607	7,961
Wyoming	893		868		1,240	3,001
Total	5,350	3,627	11,317	1,239	8,083	29,616

The data used to measure electoral coalitions comes from exit polls conducted in each state on election day. Table 1 also presents the number of respondents in each state indicating a choice in that particular gubernatorial election. The elections included in this analysis were selected based upon the availability of an exit poll. In that sense, this cannot be considered a random sample. More specifically, Wright (1993b) has noted a tendency toward the inclusion of more tightly contested races as a result of using exit polls. However, every state in the region is included at least once, and 8 out of the 10 are included at least twice. Thus, I view this as a reasonable sample.

The divisions among voters examined in this study are based on race/ethnicity, gender, income, party identification, ideological identification, and religious affiliation. Race/ethnicity is divided into three categories: blacks, Hispanics, and whites. Income is reported as annual family income, and is measured in 5 categories: Under \$15,000; \$15,000 to \$29,999; \$30,000

to \$49,999; \$50,000 to \$99,999; and those making \$100,000 or more. Party identification is measured with a simple classification as Democrat, Republican, or Independent, while self-identified political ideology is categorized as Liberal, Conservative, or Moderate. Finally, three religious affiliations are identified: Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. Unfortunately, the exit polls do not allow for the distinction between fundamentalist and/or evangelical Christians and those who are not. As a result, there is likely much interesting behavior taking place among those voters calling themselves Protestants that cannot be examined.

Exit polls provide the only reasonable source of data for the study of gubernatorial electoral coalitions. The analysis of political coalitions requires that adequate samples of voters be employed so that reasonable estimates of the behavior of sub-populations can be obtained. The exit polls used in these studies average 1,234 voters in each gubernatorial election, ranging from 492 in the 1992 Montana gubernatorial election to 2,832 in the 1990 Texas race. In addition, exit poll data is gathered with the intention of producing samples that are representative of the state. First, a set of voting precincts are randomly selected within each state. Then, voters are randomly selected within each precinct, giving every voter an equal probability of being included in the study.

The only other source of data on voting behavior in gubernatorial elections is the American National Election Study (ANES) series. This source of data is not appropriate for the present analysis because of the small and non-representative samples that are gathered within each state. In addition, Wright (1993a) has demonstrated that the ANES contains a serious mis-report of voting behavior in gubernatorial elections that cannot be corrected. This mis-report is believed to be due to the response of those interviewed for the survey to the actual results of the election. Because exit polls are administered before the outcome of the election is known, the potential for such bias is mitigated.

This paper also begins to explore how electoral coalitions respond to the nature of the choices presented to voters. Variables that could be considered include the ethnic and gender characteristics of the candidates and whether or not an incumbent is running. In addition, however, some attention will be paid to the themes stressed by candidates during their campaigns. To measure the content of campaigns, I undertook a content analysis of the newspaper coverage of each gubernatorial campaign included in the study held between 1982 and 1994. For each election, I read every article dealing with the gubernatorial election in a single major newspaper from



each state from October 1st through election day. Instead of using a mechanical coding process of counting words or paragraphs devoted to particular subjects, I coded the content of campaigns more subjectively. In this regard, I used the information in the newspapers as an informant rather than as raw data. This allowed me to take seriously the analysis presented in the newspaper coverage, make judgments regarding the content of campaign advertising, and most importantly, prevent the measures of campaign content from being biased by variation in the style of newspaper reporting (Carsey 1995)

As will become clear, the study of electoral coalitions for several elections in several states can quickly produce a complexity of comparisons that cannot be reasonably presented in a single paper. Thus, much of the discussion of how coalitions respond to changes in candidate and campaign characteristics is based on the selective comparison of a few of the races under consideration.

Finally, some debate exists regarding whether to study political coalitions using bivariate or multivariate techniques. This analysis adopts a bivariate approach. In other words, I examine the contribution of each group under consideration to the candidates running for governor one at a time. Thus, unlike a multivariate approach, I will not be able to discuss the importance of the differing contribution of men and women to particular electoral coalitions while having controlled in a statistical sense for the influence of other factors like race, income, party identification and the like.

The drawback to a bivariate approach stems precisely from this lack of statistical control. Because individual membership across gender, racial/ethnic, religious affiliation, income, and political groups overlaps, I will not be able to argue that the composition of a political coalition is as it is due primarily to ethnicity versus religious affiliation, for example. A multivariate approach would provide for that level of control.

However, a bivariate approach has several distinct advantages. First, the focus of this study is on the contribution various groups make to electoral coalitions. A multivariate analysis, for example a logit model regressing support for the Democratic or Republican candidate on the individual voter characteristics of gender, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, income, party identification, and political ideology would be able to distinguish which characteristics are the strongest predictors of individual voting behavior. However, such an approach would not provide any information regarding how many of such voters exist in an electorate, thereby failing to provide some measure of that group's importance to the electoral coalition of a candidate. Some efforts have been made to weight the size of a group's popula-

tion by the probability a member of that group will support a particular candidate based on exactly the kind of multivariate logit model just described (Erikson et al. 1989; Stanley et al. 1986), but Brown (1995) argues that the techniques applied so far still fail to capture the contribution made by groups to political coalitions.

To avoid such complications, another approach would be to produce distinct categories of individuals based on each variable included in the model. Thus, instead of comparing the contribution of men and women to a Democratic candidate's electoral coalition, we could compare the contribution of low-income, Catholic, conservative, Hispanic women who are Democrats to the contribution of low-income, Catholic, conservative, Hispanic men who are Democrats. Given that the analysis that follows includes two categories for gender, three categories each for race/ethnicity, party identification, religious affiliation, and political ideology, and 5 categories for income, the resulting analysis would consist of comparing the contribution of 810 different groups ( $2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 5 = 810$ ). As Wright (1993b) suggests, such an analysis would prove too cumbersome. Thus, this analysis opts for the more manageable and arguably more appropriate analysis of bivariate relationships between these various characteristics and voting behavior.

### **Group Loyalty and Contribution**

The preceding discussion touches on the original presentation of electoral coalitions in presidential elections made by Axelrod (1970) in which he discusses group loyalty and group contribution. Axelrod measures group loyalty as the percentage of the members of a group that support a particular party or candidate. In that sense, if 100 voters in a particular election were conservatives, and 70 of them voted for the Republican candidate, then the loyalty of conservatives to the Republican candidate would simply be 70%.

In contrast, the contribution made by a group to an electoral coalition Axelrod measures as the percentage of the votes received by a particular candidate or party that come from a particular group. Again, suppose that the Republican candidate in our example received a total of 140 votes. Since 70 of those votes came from conservatives, we know that conservatives contributed 50% of the votes received by this particular candidate.

Multivariate analysis is better able to tap the loyalty dimension by showing how holding a particular individual-level characteristic influences the probability that members of that group will support a particular candidate. That is exactly what regression and logit coefficients are designed to do. However, as Brown (1995) points out, such coefficients do

not consider the size of that population. For example, a logit model predicting the probability of voting for the Democratic candidate for governor as a function of the variables discussed thus far produces a positive and statistically significant coefficient for whether or not a person is Hispanic in the 1982 races in both Nebraska and New Mexico. Thus, in both instances, being Hispanic increased the probability of supporting the Democrat. In fact, the simple bivariate loyalty scores of Hispanics in the two races are also similar: 82% of Hispanics surveyed in Nebraska reported having voted for the Democratic candidate for governor in 1982, while 86% of Hispanics made the same claim in New Mexico that year. Of course, the obvious problem with using this information alone to discuss the role played by Hispanics in electoral politics in these two races is that the size of the Hispanic population differs dramatically between these two states. In the 1982 exit poll for Nebraska, only 11 people surveyed were Hispanic. In contrast, 362 Hispanics were included in the New Mexico exit poll, representing nearly one-third of all those surveyed.

This difference is captured in the contribution score calculated for Hispanics in each race. In 1982, the Hispanics that voted for the Democratic candidate for governor in Nebraska constituted only 1% of the votes received by that candidate. In contrast, fully 50% of the votes received by the Democratic candidate in New Mexico that year came from Hispanics. From the perspective of policy representation and the electoral considerations of candidates, it seems that the score that matters most is the contribution score. Despite the same level of loyalty in the 1982 elections, one could scarcely expect the Democratic candidate in Nebraska to make issues of specific concern to Hispanics a central campaign or policy item while his counterpart in New Mexico could expect to benefit from doing so. Clearly this is an extreme example, but it does serve to highlight the distinction between loyalty and contribution as well as point again to the potential pitfalls of using multivariate approaches to studying electoral coalitions when group influence rather than individual behavior is the main focus. Loyalty scores will be presented as part of this analysis, but most of the attention is devoted to a discussion of the contribution various groups make to gubernatorial coalitions.

### **Findings**

Table 2 presents the simple bivariate loyalty scores of voters to the Democratic candidate for governor at each election divided in terms of race/

ethnicity, gender, income, party identification, religious affiliation, and political ideology. The two-party loyalty score for the Republican candidate for each group would simply be 100 minus the cell entries in Table 2. The last row in Table 2 simply reports the mean loyalty of all the voters included in the exit polls for these 24 elections. It is worth noting that the overall percentage of the votes received by Democratic candidates across these elections was 55%. Thus, the last row in Table 2 reports that across these states, 86% of all African Americans voted for the Democratic candidate for governor. Similarly, 78% of Hispanics voted for the Democrat while only 50% of white voters did so. On average, Democrats enjoyed a slight advantage among women as compared to men. In addition, voters with lower incomes were more likely to vote for the Democratic candidate.

Not surprisingly, Democrats captured the votes of 83% of those saying they identify with the Democratic party. Fully one-fourth of Republican identifiers crossed over in these elections. When looking at the political ideology of voters, Democrats did well among self identified liberals, although not as well as they did among their own partisans. In addition, Democratic candidates captured 52% of the votes of those labeling themselves as conservatives. Interestingly, Democratic candidates did best among those labeling themselves as ideological moderates. Finally, the traditional division between Protestant and Catholic voters between Republican and Democratic candidates respectively appears clearly in Table 2 as well.

Thus, the mean proportions of loyalty among voters to gubernatorial candidates of each party across all these elections, as shown in the last row of Table 2, largely conforms to expectations. The one exception may be the near equal split among conservative voters between candidates from the two parties. This is due primarily to the significantly larger number of voters in this region identifying themselves as conservatives (27% identify as conservative; 12% identify as liberal).

What is striking about Table 2 is the variation between elections, even within some states. For example, Democratic candidates in 1994 won from 33% of the white vote in Oklahoma to 77% of the white vote in Nebraska. In five of the 24 elections, the Democratic loyalty of low income voters was more than 10 percentage points below the average for all income groups, while in 7 other elections, the Democrat won the majority of votes among those making \$100,000 a year or more.

Two Democrats, Ben Nelson in Nebraska in 1994 and Mike Sullivan in Wyoming in 1990, were able to win more than 50% of the votes cast by Republicans. In contrast, in half of the remaining elections, the Democratic

TABLE 2  
GROUP LOYALTY SCORES FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE  
FOR GOVERNOR MEASURED AS THE PERCENTAGE  
OF RESPONDENTS IN A GROUP THAT VOTED  
FOR THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE\*

State/Elec	Black	White	Hisp.	Female	Male	INCOME				
						Low	Middle	High		
CO86	92	58	78	62	59	61	61	60	64	56
CO90	72	67	81	71	65	60	70	68	67	72
CO94	97	59	80	68	58	77	61	58	62	61
KS90	81	54	75	55	55	60	57	54	50	37
KS94	100	38	40	47	32	61	44	35	32	26
MT92	0	46	NA	49	43	53	45	42	54	42
NE82	60	50	82	50	51	56	53	52	44	31
NE90	50	53	80	53	53	65	57	53	42	31
NE94	87	77	100	81	75	80	81	77	76	76
NM82	70	37	86	55	54	68	61	50	45	36
NM90	75	42	78	56	52	66	57	51	47	25
NM94	69	34	72	50	43	60	56	42	37	39
ND92	17	43	NA	43	40	48	45	42	33	24
OK90	88	66	90	70	65	83	71	64	52	55
OK94	71	33	45	37	31	52	42	33	31	20
SD86	38	49	33	47	52	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD90	67	39	75	37	43	41	42	37	32	55
TX82	84	44	78	56	48	72	61	55	44	27
TX86	85	42	83	54	48	59	57	51	50	40
TX90	93	45	77	64	51	77	64	54	49	45
TX94	95	41	73	58	48	74	59	50	49	38
WY82	73	64	84	68	63	75	71	68	62	38
WY90	55	66	52	63	70	60	62	69	67	67
WY94	38	38	60	42	35	44	37	41	41	18
Mean	86	50	78	57	52	64	58	54	50	41

TABLE 2 continued

State/Elect	Demo	Repub	Indep	Liberal	Conserv	Mod	Catholic	Prot	Jewish
CO86	90	40	65	82	40	65	67	54	88
CO90	91	48	65	84	49	72	73	64	86
CO94	90	39	59	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
KS90	78	36	61	DNA	DNA	DNA	70	52	8
KS94	81	11	42	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
MT92	76	17	43	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
NE82	79	24	58	71	32	57	63	52	83
NE90	79	29	56	66	40	59	55	51	100
NE94	95	65	81	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
NM82	78	23	48	74	32	61	75	24	67
NM90	79	24	46	DNA	DNA	DNA	69	43	40
NM94	79	10	42	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
ND92	76	13	39	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
OK90	89	29	69	DNA	DNA	DNA	61	65	100
OK94	72	6	30	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD86	78	22	47	58	39	54	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD90	62	20	44	DNA	DNA	DNA	45	35	0
TX82	83	12	34	78	30	63	59	60	53
TX86	84	14	39	76	29	64	64	43	63
TX90	88	19	54	84	35	68	64	51	66
TX94	92	14	48	88	26	67	61	43	85
WY82	92	41	72	74	50	73	70	59	78
WY90	79	54	70	DNA	DNA	DNA	68	68	0
WY94	78	15	45	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
Mean	83	26	52	64	52	69	78	35	61

\* Note that two-party Republican Loyalty scores would be 100 minus the Democratic Loyalty scores.

DNA = Did Not Ask this question on this exit poll.

NA = Not Available.

TABLE 3  
GROUP CONTRIBUTION SCORES FOR THE DEMOCRATIC  
CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR MEASURED AS THE PERCENTAGE  
OF THE VOTES RECEIVED BY THE DEMOCRAT THAT CAME  
FROM THAT GROUP

State/Elec	Black	White	Hisp.	Female	Male	INCOME				
						Low	Middle		High	
CO86	5	85	9	53	47	13	22	23	24	18
CO90	2	87	8	52	48	11	25	34	25	6
CO94	6	79	13	56	44	12	19	22	34	12
KS90	4	94	1	53	47	16	33	33	17	1
KS94	5	90	2	60	40	21	25	25	26	4
MT92	0	98	NA	60	40	22	36	25	13	4
NE82	2	96	1	50	50	20	34	25	16	4
NE90	1	95	2	50	50	20	34	31	13	2
NE94	4	94	1	51	49	10	26	36	25	3
NM82	3	43	50	52	48	26	28	21	20	5
NM90	5	49	41	57	43	26	31	28	14	1
NM94	2	49	35	55	45	19	27	26	20	7
ND92	0	98	NA	55	45	20	35	32	9	4
OK90	5	88	1	58	42	27	30	26	14	3
OK94	5	88	2	57	43	18	29	24	23	5
SD86	1	98	0	46	54	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD90	1	97	1	47	53	28	37	23	10	2
TX82	19	69	11	54	46	17	22	28	26	7
TX86	21	65	14	53	47	14	22	24	23	16
TX90	29	54	14	58	42	18	32	29	17	4
TX94	25	54	20	60	40	16	26	27	26	5
WY82	2	94	3	52	48	14	23	32	25	5
WY90	1	95	2	51	49	11	27	40	21	2
WY94	1	92	4	58	42	17	25	30	27	2
Mean	9	78	11	54	46	17	28	29	21	5

TABLE 3 continued

State/Elect	Demo	Repub	Indep	Liberal	Conserv	Mod	Catholic	Prot	Jewish
CO86	52	17	31	26	21	53	28	43	4
CO90	44	23	32	24	19	56	29	50	2
CO94	52	23	25	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
KS90	45	31	24	DNA	DNA	DNA	24	62	0
KS94	63	14	23	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
MT92	57	12	32	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
NE82	59	22	19	16	23	61	33	52	3
NE90	56	22	22	17	23	59	29	53	1
NE94	40	38	22	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
NM82	69	12	19	28	17	54	62	24	2
NM90	69	15	15	DNA	DNA	DNA	49	33	1
NM94	77	8	15	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
ND92	57	10	34	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
OK90	76	13	11	DNA	DNA	DNA	9	65	0
OK94	82	9	9	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD86	65	18	17	13	28	59	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD90	60	25	15	DNA	DNA	DNA	37	50	0
TX82	77	6	17	18	24	58	22	60	1
TX86	72	8	20	26	25	49	27	45	2
TX90	68	10	22	23	23	55	25	46	2
TX94	67	9	24	29	19	52	30	33	3
WY82	47	27	26	14	27	60	22	59	1
WY90	35	42	22	DNA	DNA	DNA	24	52	0
WY94	56	19	25	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
Mean	60	18	22	16	17	56	28	37	2

DNA = Did Not Ask This Question on this Exit Poll

NA = Not Available



TABLE 4  
GROUP CONTRIBUTION SCORES FOR THE REPUBLICAN  
CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR MEASURED AS THE PERCENTAGE  
OF THE VOTES RECEIVED BY THE REPUBLICAN THAT CAME  
FROM THAT GROUP

State/Elec	Black	White	Hisp.	Female	Male	INCOME				
						Low	Middle		High	
CO86	1	95	4	51	49	13	22	23	21	21
CO90	2	93	4	45	55	15	22	33	25	5
CO94	0	92	6	46	54	6	20	27	34	13
KS90	1	97	0	53	47	13	30	34	20	3
KS94	0	97	2	44	56	9	20	30	35	7
MT92	0	97	NA	54	46	17	39	29	10	4
NE82	2	98	0	51	49	16	30	24	21	9
NE90	1	97	1	50	50	13	30	32	22	4
NE94	2	98	0	43	57	9	22	39	28	3
NM82	2	87	10	50	50	15	22	25	29	10
NM90	2	80	14	53	47	16	29	33	20	3
NM94	1	80	11	48	52	11	18	31	30	10
ND92	1	98	NA	52	48	15	31	32	13	9
OK90	2	94	0	51	49	12	26	31	27	5
OK94	1	96	1	51	49	10	22	28	29	12
SD86	1	98	0	50	49	DNA	DNADNA	DNA	DNA	
SD90	0	98	0	54	46	26	34	25	14	1
TX82	4	93	3	46	54	7	15	24	35	19
TX86	4	92	3	47	53	10	17	24	24	25
TX90	3	90	6	44	56	8	26	34	26	7
TX94	2	89	8	49	51	7	21	32	31	10
WY82	1	98	1	46	54	9	18	28	29	16
WY90	2	92	3	55	45	14	31	34	19	1
WY94	1	96	2	50	50	14	28	28	25	4
Mean	2	93	4	49	50	12	24	29	25	9

TABLE 4 continued

State/Elect	Demo	Repub	Indep	Liberal	Conserv	Mod	Catholic	Prot	Jewish
CO86	9	65	26	9	48	43	21	57	1
CO90	10	53	37	10	43	47	23	60	1
CO94	10	61	29	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
KS90	15	66	18	DNA	DNA	DNA	13	70	2
KS94	9	70	21	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
MT92	15	49	36	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
NE82	15	71	14	7	48	46	20	71	1
NE90	17	63	20	10	41	49	27	60	0
NE94	7	75	19	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
NM82	24	51	25	12	45	43	26	59	1
NM90	22	57	22	DNA	DNA	DNA	26	52	1
NM94	18	64	18	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
ND92	13	48	40	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
OK90	20	69	10	DNA	DNA	DNA	12	72	0
OK94	17	72	11	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD86	18	63	19	9	42	49	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD90	24	63	12	DNA	DNA	DNA	29	60	0
TX82	17	47	36	5	58	36	17	73	1
TX86	15	52	32	9	63	28	16	61	1
TX90	13	61	26	6	59	35	19	62	2
TX94	7	64	29	5	65	30	23	53	1
WY82	8	74	19	9	50	41	18	68	1
WY90	17	66	22	DNA	DNA	DNA	21	45	1
WY94	10	70	20	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
Mean	15	62	24	6	40	41	20	63	1

DNA = Did Not Ask This Question on this Exit Poll

NA = Not Available

candidate polled fewer than 20% of the votes from Republicans. Thus, while the mean proportions over all elections presented in Table 2 provide a valuable summary of average group loyalty to gubernatorial candidates across the Great Plains, substantial variation exists from state to state, and from election to election within states. This volatility implies that election-specific factors, if not random error, influences voting behavior.

As mentioned above, knowing the loyalty of members of a particular group to candidates of a particular party does not necessarily shed light on the importance of that group to a candidate's electoral coalition. We also must consider the size of the contribution members of that group make to a coalition. Tables 3 and 4 present the contribution made by members of each group to the electoral coalitions of the Democratic and Republican candidates respectively. These values represent the percentage of a candidate's votes that came from members of that particular group. The last row of each table presents the mean contribution score for all 24 elections.

Looking first at race/ethnicity, it is clear that candidates from the Democratic party mobilize very different coalitions in Texas and New Mexico than they do in any of the other Plains states. Between 20 and 30% of the votes received by Democrats in the four Texas elections came from African Americans. No other Democratic gubernatorial coalition approaches these levels, due primarily to the small numbers of blacks living in other Plains states. Between 35 and 50% of the votes received by Democrats in New Mexico came from Hispanic voters. Hispanics made a sizeable contribution to Democratic candidates in Texas and to a lesser degree in Colorado as well. Again, Democrats running for Governor in other Plains states generally receive only 1 or 2% of their votes from Hispanics. In fact, Democrats running for Governor in a Plains state other than Colorado, New Mexico, or Texas receive fewer than 10% of their votes from blacks and Hispanics combined.

Republican candidates depend much less on the support of black and/or Hispanic voters in general, and there is much less variation across states for Republican candidates. Hispanics do contribute 10% or more of the votes received by GOP candidates in New Mexico. However, only in New Mexico in 1990 and 1994, and in Texas in 1994 did white voters comprise less than 90% of the coalition that supported the Republican candidate.

The gender division across these elections appears to be the result primarily of a split between male and female supporters of Democratic candidates. On average, 54% of the votes received by Democrats were from women, while only 46% of their votes came from men. For Republicans, the

respective figures were 49% and 50%. Again, substantial variation exists between elections. In several elections, fully 60% of the supporters of the Democratic candidate were women. In contrast, the Democratic candidate for governor in South Dakota in 1986 and 1990 received more votes from men than from women. While variation exists in the contribution made to GOP election coalitions by men and women, the difference between the percentage of votes coming from men and from women is generally smaller among Republican voters.

Tables 3 and 4 show that Democratic candidates received anywhere from 11 to 28% of their votes from individuals making less than \$15,000 a year. Similar variability is found in Republican coalition importance among voters making \$50,000 or more per year (the two highest categories). As will be discussed in more detail below, there is also substantial variation across elections regarding the contribution of low income voters to Democratic candidates relative to the contribution made by high income voters to Republican candidates.

From the standpoint of party identification, it is clear that candidates from both parties generally rely on substantial contributions from members of their own political parties. Indeed, in Texas, between 67 and 77% of the voters supporting the Democratic candidate for governor identified themselves as Democrats. Similarly large contributions were made by partisans of each party to their respective candidates in several additional elections. Again, however, for every rule, there are at least a few exceptions. By virtue of winning a majority of the votes from Republican identifiers (Table 2), the Democratic candidate in Nebraska in 1994 received almost as many votes from Republicans as he did from Democrats. Likewise, the Democratic candidate in Wyoming in 1990 actually received a greater number of votes from those identifying themselves as Republicans than he did from those calling themselves Democrats. While variation exists among the contribution of partisans to the coalitions of Republican candidates, they generally seem to rely less on cross-over support than do their Democratic counterparts.

A striking feature of Tables 3 and 4 is the role played by ideological liberals, conservatives, and moderates. On average, Democratic candidates for governor in the Great Plains receive slightly more of their votes from those calling themselves conservative than they do from self-identified liberals. Furthermore, in every case, Democratic candidates received at least 49% of their votes from ideological moderates. In contrast, Republican candidates generally received 40% of their votes from ideological conserva-

tives. Conservatives constituted a majority or plurality of the supporters for Republican candidates in 8 of the 12 elections in which ideology was measured. Thus, Democratic candidates for governor in the Great Plains tend to mobilize more ideologically diverse coalitions than do their Republican opponents.

Finally, Tables 3 and 4 present the religious division among supporters of gubernatorial candidates. Catholics generally make a larger contribution to Democratic candidate coalitions than they do to Republican coalitions, though this was not the case in Oklahoma in 1990. Furthermore, if you remove from consideration the contribution made by Catholics to Democratic candidates in Oklahoma, which is very low, and New Mexico, which is well above average, there is less volatility in the contribution made by Catholics to electoral coalitions than we have seen regarding other characteristics. With the exception of the same states on the Democratic side, the contribution made by Protestants also appears reasonably more stable, and consistently in the favor of Republican candidates. While Table 2 presented Jews as reasonably loyal to Democratic candidates, Tables 3 and 4 make clear the fact that Jews do not constitute a significant portion of the electoral coalition for any of the candidates of either party in these 24 elections in the Plains.

In summary, Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate that the composition of electoral coalitions vary widely between the states of the Great Plains, and also within states across different elections. Differences in the concentration of certain population groups, notably a larger contingent of blacks in Texas and of Hispanics in New Mexico, Texas, and to a lesser degree, Colorado, account for some of the differences in the composition of electoral cleavages. However, variation in population characteristics alone cannot explain the variation observed in the contribution scores presented in Tables 3 and 4. Certainly any small variation which may exist in the number of men and women living in each state cannot account for the variation in the contribution made by men and women to gubernatorial candidates election coalitions, particularly for Democrats. Finally, Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that the coalitions mobilized by Democratic candidates for governor are typically more diverse demographically, ideologically, and even in partisan terms than those mobilized for Republican candidates.

Table 5 presents the degree to which the electoral coalitions mobilized for each particular election were polarized along each socio-demographic category. The entries in the table are simply the contribution scores of each group for the Democratic candidate minus the contribution scores of each

group for the Republican candidate. Thus, positive scores indicate a difference that favors the Democratic candidate, while negative scores indicate a GOP advantage within that group in terms of the contribution of votes.

Because it is computed from Tables 3 and 4, Table 5 illustrates the same basic patterns that have already been described in terms of the volatility of the contribution made by voters in these various categories to gubernatorial candidates of one party or another. Table 5 shows that in some cases, a substantial gender gap exists among voters, typically showing a Democratic advantage among women, but not always. The impact of race and ethnicity in Texas and New Mexico is illustrated dramatically. The variation in the contribution made by low and high income groups to candidate coalitions suggests that the salience of social class varies across elections, often within states. Finally, Table 5 shows that the magnitude of the division between partisans as well as that between liberals and conservatives, also varies from election to election. In summary, Table 5 presents in a more simplified form the importance of various cleavages within the electorate for each election in terms of measuring the differential contribution made by each group to each candidate.

Having demonstrated substantial variation in the loyalty scores and election coalition contributions made by different groups to gubernatorial candidates, and also in Table 5 that the importance of each of these socio-demographic factors varies across elections, the final step is to begin to explain some of this variation. While noting the role played by regional variation in the distribution of some population characteristics above, what is of equal interest is why the salience of these characteristics varies even within the same state from election to election. As cited above, previous research has established that the salience to individual voters of socio-demographic factors and even issue positions held by voters, measured in terms of their probability of supporting a particular candidate, responds to candidate behavior and characteristics (Carsey 1995). This analysis begins to explore whether or not the importance of socio-demographic differences among voters in terms to group contributions to candidate coalitions also responds to campaign and candidate-specific factors. Rather than discuss every socio-demographic group for every election, I choose instead to present some illustrative examples.

One of the factors the gender cleavage may respond to is the gender of the candidates competing. In Wyoming in 1982, both the Democratic and Republican candidates running for governor were male. In that election, won handily by the Democrat (63% to 37%), the Democrat enjoyed a

TABLE 5  
POLARIZATION OF ELECTORAL COALITIONS. CELL ENTRIES  
ARE THE CONTRIBUTION SCORE OF EACH GROUP TO THE  
DEMOCRAT MINUS THE CONTRIBUTION SCORES  
TO THE REPUBLICAN\*

State/Elect	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Protestant	Catholic	INCOME	
							Low	High
CO86	2	-10	4	5	-14	7	0	0
CO90	7	-8	0	4	-10	6	-4	1
CO94	10	-13	6	7	DNA	DNA	6	-1
KS90	0	-3	3	1	-8	11	3	-5
KS94	16	-7	5	0	DNA	DNA	12	-12
MT92	6	1	0	0	DNA	DNA	5	3
NE82	-1	-2	0	1	-19	13	4	-10
NE90	0	-2	0	1	-7	2	7	-11
NE94	12	-4	2	1	DNA	DNA	1	-3
NM82	2	-44	1	40	-35	36	11	-14
NM90	4	-31	3	26	-29	23	10	-8
NM94	7	-31	1	24	DNA	DNA	8	-13
ND92	3	0	-1	0	DNA	DNA	5	-9
OK90	7	-6	3	1	-7	-3	15	-15
OK94	6	-8	4	1	DNA	DNA	8	-13
SD86	-4	0	0	0	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD90	-7	-1	1	1	-10	8	2	-3
TX82	8	-24	15	8	-13	5	10	-21
TX86	6	-27	17	11	-16	11	4	-10
TX90	14	-36	26	8	-16	6	10	-12
TX94	11	-35	23	12	-20	7	9	-10
WY82	6	-8	1	2	-9	4	5	-15
WY90	-4	3	-1	-1	7	3	-3	3
WY94	8	-4	0	2	DNA	DNA	3	0
Mean	4.9	-12.5	4.7	6.5	-13.7	9.3	5.7	-7.7

TABLE 5 continued

State/Elect	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
CO86	43	5	-48	17	10	-27
CO90	34	-5	-30	14	9	-24
CO94	42	-4	-38	DNA	DNA	DNA
KS90	30	6	-35	DNA	DNA	DNA
KS94	54	2	-56	DNA	DNA	DNA
MT92	42	-4	-37	DNA	DNA	DNA
NE82	44	5	-49	9	15	-25
NE90	39	2	-41	7	10	-18
NE94	33	3	-37	DNA	DNA	DNA
NM82	45	-6	-39	16	11	-31
NM90	47	-7	-42	DNA	DNA	DNA
NM94	59	-3	-56	DNA	DNA	DNA
ND92	44	-6	-38	DNA	DNA	DNA
OK90	56	1	-56	DNA	DNA	DNA
OK94	65	-2	-63	DNA	DNA	DNA
SD86	47	-2	-45	4	110	-14
SD90	36	3	-38	DNA	DNA	DNA
TX82	60	-19	-41	13	22	-34
TX86	57	-12	-44	17	21	-38
TX90	55	-4	-51	17	20	-36
TX94	60	-5	-55	24	22	-46
WY82	39	7	-47	5	19	-23
WY90	18	0	-24	DNA	DNA	DNA
WY94	46	5	-51	DNA	DNA	DNA
Mean	45.6	-1.7	-44.2	13	24.5	-28.7

\* Low income refers to those below \$15,000 per year while High income includes those at or above \$50,000 a year (the last two categories of income from Tables 2 through 4 combined).



contribution from women voters 6 percentage points higher than his GOP opponent. This advantage is only slightly above the 24 election mean and was due primarily to the weak showing among women by the GOP candidate. In 1990, however, the GOP candidate was female and the Democratic candidate was male. Table 5 shows that the gender gap reversed in Wyoming for this election, with the Republican candidate having a 4 percentage point advantage among women in terms of the proportion of votes contributed. Despite this shift, the Democrat still won with more than 60% of the vote. In 1994, the tables were turned: Democrats nominated a female candidate while Republicans nominated a male. This time, the Republican candidate won handily (57% to 43%), but the gender gap shifted back toward a strong Democratic advantage among women as compared to men. Thus, each time a woman ran for governor in Wyoming, a Republican in 1990 and a Democrat in 1994, the gender gap moved to reflect that fact.

A similar pattern appears in Texas. The magnitude of the difference in the contribution made by female voters to the two gubernatorial candidates running in Texas grows noticeably in the 1990 and 1994 elections as compared to 1982 and 1986. Of course, the two races in the 1990s involved Ann Richards as the Democratic candidate running against a male opponent. In the two earlier races, both candidates were male. Richards made a conscious effort to mobilize women during her two campaigns. In particular in 1990, she made abortion rights a critical part of her campaign. She also benefitted in 1990 from an opponent, Clayton Williams, who made several disparaging remarks about women. Thus, not only did the gender of the candidates play a potential role, but their actions did as well.

However, politics is never as simple as just knowing the gender of a candidate, and women do not blindly vote for other women. Kansas presents a nice illustration. In 1990, Democrat Joan Finney ran for Governor against incumbent Republican Mike Hayden. Finney ran as a populist political reformer. However, she ran opposed to any tax increases and she was pro-life on abortion. Hayden, who was vulnerable because of policy decisions regarding taxes, was pro-choice on abortion, and actively sought to use this issue to his advantage. In the end, both candidates received similar contributions of votes from men and from women, meaning that the gender gap was actually reduced from its mean of a 5 percentage point advantage among women voters for Democratic candidates. Finney won. In 1994, with an unpopular Finney retiring, both parties nominated men. Democrat Jim Slattery's coalition revived a strong gender split among Kansas voters, which became manifest in the form of women being less likely to abandon

his candidacy than were men. Commentary on the 1994 Kansas race suggests that Slattery was the victim of being the candidate of a minority party in terms of voter party identification saddled with an unpopular President, Congress, and governor from the same party.

This conclusion leads to another cleavage among voters that responds to the content of campaigns: partisanship. Sticking with the two Kansas elections, Table 5 clearly shows that the contribution of partisans to their candidates was much more sharply defined in the 1994 election than it was in 1990. The 1990 campaign was not particularly partisan in nature, and both candidates in 1990 held some policy positions that conflicted with traditional party labels. However, in 1994, as mentioned above, party affiliation played a more prominent role in the electoral process because campaign issues were more congruent with usual party platform positions.

The example of Kansas in 1994 is mirrored in the other states of the Great Plains. The influence of the coordinated national Republican campaign for control of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1994, symbolized by the Contract With America, spilled over into the state-level elections for governor as well. The average polarization scores for Democratic and Republican identifiers presented in Table 5 for elections held prior to 1994 are 43 for Democrats and -41 for Republicans. However, in 1994, those figures increased in absolute value to 51 for Democrats and -51 for Republicans. Clearly, candidate coalitions in 1994 were more clearly defined in partisan terms than were candidate coalitions prior to 1994. A number of GOP gubernatorial candidates in the Great Plains worked consciously to link their campaigns to the themes stressed by the Contract With America and the partisan focus of the national campaign, apparently with some success.

### Conclusions

The stories to tell about each campaign and the various components of the resulting coalitions could continue. As others have suggested, gubernatorial elections often turn on campaign-specific factors (Erikson et al. 1993; Jewell & Olson 1988). However, for this research to produce useful insights, ultimately, it must yield some generalizations.

First, this paper begins to demonstrate the utility of examining gubernatorial elections by focusing on the contribution made to candidate coalitions by various groups. This analysis demonstrates that it is not enough to know that a particular characteristic increases or decreases the probability that any one individual voter will support a candidate. While important for

understanding individual voting behavior, such a focus misses the mark if the goal is to explore an election outcome. A focus on group contribution as a way to study elections also fits more squarely with the language used by candidates to describe their constituencies (Fenno 1978; Carsey 1995). Candidates think in terms of groups of voters that provide them with large blocks of support.

Second, in demonstrating the volatility of electoral coalitions, this analysis further justifies the continued study of electoral politics in a comparative fashion. Analysis at a national or even regional level yields valuable insights into general patterns of behavior. However, such a focus masks a substantial amount of variation in electoral politics. No doubt the study of gubernatorial electoral coalitions does the same relative to state legislative electoral coalitions.

We would not be as concerned about the hidden variation in state political coalitions if that variation were random, since the information lost through focusing only on regional or national patterns would be of little interpretive value. However, what the final portion of this analysis begins to show is that the variation in the contribution made to electoral coalitions by members of various groups responds in apparently predictable ways. Specifically, the composition of electoral coalitions in the Plains states responds to the nature of the choice between candidates with which voters are presented. This finding is consistent with other research on electoral coalitions in a single state: New York (Stonecash 1989); and with the analysis of the salience of individual level characteristics to voters in gubernatorial elections across states (Carsey 1995). Electorates appear to respond to the information they receive about candidates in meaningful ways.

Finally, this analysis sheds some light on the nature of politics in a region of the U.S. that is understudied in political science. The geography and history of the Great Plains have produced much that these 10 states share in common. For example, this is a region in which twice as many people call themselves conservative as liberal. It is also a region in which most states do not face major state-level racial or ethnic political divisions because the populations in most of these states are overwhelmingly white. However, the region also presents great diversity. Racial and ethnic politics are particularly salient in Texas and New Mexico. As noted above, all three of Elazar's state political culture types are represented in the region. Finally, for every generalization put forth in this paper, at least one counter example exists within the region. Clearly the states of the Great Plains present scholars with ample opportunity to study and learn about politics.

There are three basic steps further research in this area should take. First, further development of a technique to incorporate both some sense of voter loyalty and group contribution into a single comparative analysis is needed. Both factors are critical for understanding electoral politics, and a method for discussing them both should be constructed. It is possible that further modifications of a multivariate approach would be fruitful.

Second, a more systematic comparison across elections of the influence of candidate and campaign factors should be pursued. This analysis only considered 24 elections held in 10 states, and the discussion of campaign influences on the composition of electoral coalitions was limited to just a few elections and a more limited set of divisions among coalitions. Yet, this analysis threatens to bury the reader (and the author) in data. The ability to present a more general analysis depends upon finding a way to simplify the presentation of the large amounts of data involved in studying electoral coalitions.

Finally, further research should begin to explore the impact of the nature of electoral coalitions on the shape of state policy. Do governors pursue different policy objectives when their own electoral coalitions differ? Does policy respond to the preferences of those supporting the winning candidate? If Governors do not represent the interests of major segments of their electoral coalitions, do those groups of voters hold the Governor and/or his or her party accountable at the next election? I opened this paper by arguing that one justification for studying electoral coalitions is that democratic theory suggests that such policy responsiveness should exist. Thus, once you have established the composition of electoral coalitions and are confident that they respond to the electoral choices which are presented, the next step is to explore how Governors respond after election day.

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