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THE EFFECTS OF THE 1980 AND 1984 CAMPAIGNS ON MASS IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS: TESTING THE SALIENCE HYPOTHESIS

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ONE of the most plausible and intuitively obvious hypotheses in public opinion research is that mass attitudes, perceptions and beliefs are shaped, to some extent, by the political environment. When parties, in the 1950s, were strong organizationally and in the electoral process, party identification was high in the electorate; when, in the ensuing decades, parties lost their importance in nominations, campaigns, and in providing information to voters, party identification declined (Wattenberg 1984). When government seemed to be "working" and the media not highly critical of the political process, political trust was high; when these aspects of the environment changed during the Vietnam period and Watergate, trust declined as well (Abramson 1982; Miller 1974). When party conflict on the issues was low in the 1950s, issue voting was also low; when parties and candidates took more distinct stands and conflict intensified during the 60s and early 70s, so too did the electorate's use of issue preferences to guide their vote (Pomper 1972; Miller and Miller 1976).

While the role the environment has played in structuring these political attitudes and behaviors seems relatively clear, its influence on the public's ideological orientations is much more controversial. After numerous studies found that the use of ideological terms to describe parties and candidates (the "levels of conceptualization" measure) increased during the 1960s, as had the ideological consistency (or "constraint") of their own issue orientations, scholars initially turned to an environmental explanation, or what Fleishman (1986) terms the "salience hypothesis." According to this view, the public's ideological views of politics, and the consistency of their own policy preferences

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reflected the increased salience of ideological conflict among parties, candidates, and political activists (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1979; Nie and Anderson 1974). Put briefly, as more ideological cues emanated from elites and the media, the public absorbed them and adjusted their views to bring them in line with prevailing political cleavages. While there has been some controversy over whether the public has grown in true ideological understanding, or merely parroted rhetoric in the political environment (Converse 1975; Pierce and Hagner 1980), most scholars initially agreed that the environment did exert influence on mass ideological thought during that time.

Yet the empirical evidence increasingly weighs against the validity of the salience hypothesis, not only as it applies to the 1960s period, but also in more recent years. Measurement problems have first cast considerable doubt on whether an increase in ideological thinking occurred during the 1960s at all. The now-celebrated dispute over the wording of the issue preferences questions in the Michigan surveys seems to have been resolved against the hypothesis; instead of changes in politics producing increased issue consistency, changes in the wording of questions accounts for most, if not all of the jump (Sullivan et al. 1978). And although the "levels of conceptualization" measure has withstood a severe attack on its validity and reliability (Smith 1980; Cassel 1984; Knight 1985), it does appear that the 1960s increase in the proportion of "ideologues" in the electorate was overestimated as well (Abramson 1982; Luskin 1987). Thus, a fragile consensus in the field now indicates that little change in ideological thinking actually did take place, leaving the salience, or any other, hypothesis empirically irrelevant.

More recently, Fleishman (1986) examined changes in *self-described* liberalism and conservatism during the 1970s and 80s and found little change in the proportion of ideological identifiers, despite the presumed increased salience of ideology during the Reagan years. In all years, ideological identification was dependent on political interest and education (much like the "levels of conceptualization"), but the rhetoric of Reagan and the highly-charged ideological conflicts over defense spending, taxes, and social welfare in the 1980s appears to have had little effect on the ideological identifications of the typical citizen. Thus, while the salience hypothesis remains intuitively plausible, it has received little, if any, empirical support.

Despite these pessimistic conclusions, it is premature to dismiss the role of elites, political campaigns, and the political environment as influences on mass ideological thought. First, very few studies have examined changes in the public's ideological orientations *during election campaigns,* when the processes predicted by the salience hypothesis should be strongly in evidence. Second, almost all studies have used

cross-sectional or trend data to focus on aggregate change in the American electorate over time. This approach ignores the possibility that aggregate stability could be masking substantial amounts of change at the individual level, a hypothesis more directly testable with panel data. Third, research has not tested the full range of beliefs and opinions potentially influenced by the environment. Most studies have focused on the "levels of conceptualization," based on responses to what the individual likes or dislikes about the parties or candidates, or on individual preferences on policy issues, or individual identification with liberal or conservative labels. These orientations may indeed be relatively stable, either because of the "cognitive limitations" of the electorate (Converse 1975) or because, in the case of self-identification, they are based on "affective reaction to political symbols" and on "long-standing predispositions acquired during childhood" (Fleishman 1986: 539). However, the environment may still influence simple *cognitions* or beliefs such as perceptions of the ideological label and intensity of candidates, parties and issues. These cognitions may then trigger new or more powerful general reactions to candidates with important consequences for electoral behavior. Individuals may learn *about* ideology through elites and elite conflict, while at the same time resist changing their own ideological dispositions or issue orientations.

In this paper, I use longitudinal data from the 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns to examine changes in a series of ideological orientations over time. The results suggest that, on the aggregate level, recognition and evaluation of the ideological labels and intensity of political objects increased somewhat during both campaigns, yet very little change took place in issue organization or ideological self-identification. At the same time, the 1980 panel data show that much change in all the orientations occurred at the individual level, and that some of these changes could be explained by the processes predicted by the salience hypothesis. The findings lead to the conclusion that the salience of ideology in the environment plays a discernible, though limited, role in structuring mass ideological orientations over time.

Testing the Salience Hypothesis During Election Campaigns

The 1980 and 1984 elections afford ample opportunity to test the effects of the political environment on mass opinion. In 1980, the incumbent Jimmy Carter was challenged in the primaries by Edward Kennedy, one of the more liberal Democratic senators, and then faced another strong ideologue on the conservative side in Ronald Reagan. In 1984, the Republican nominee was again Reagan, who had articulated a strong conservative philosophy, implemented conservative policies, and frequently used ideological rhetoric while in office over the

previous four years. The Democrats, for their part, nominated a strong liberal in Walter Mondale, and many described the campaign as representing a clear ideological choice for the voters (Plotkin 1985). If, as has been suggested (Converse 1975; Pierce and Hagner 1980), elites are the chief "carriers" of ideology to the mass public, then such effects should be seen during these campaigns. Preliminary support for this hypothesis comes from Markus (1982) and Keeter and Zukin (1983), who report increases in the proportion of respondents in 1980 who place Carter as a "liberal" and Reagan as "conservative" at the end of the campaign than at the beginning, and Lewis (1987), who shows similar polarization of ideological distance between the major candidates during the 1984 contest. None of these studies, however, analyzes directly the processes through which these changes came about.

There are in addition several advantages to testing the salience hypothesis during election campaigns, rather than relying solely on cross-campaign indicators. First, the impact of environmental forces may be transitory, reflecting short-term forces which largely die down between elections. Ideological orientations may appear to be stable (in the aggregate or for individuals) when gauged at one point during an election, yet this stability could be masking systematic changes within an election which may have important consequences for candidate and party evaluations, issue preferences, and the vote. Smith's (1980) analysis of the 1956-60 SRC panel showed that changes across elections in interest, activity, and media use did not correlate with changes in the levels of conceptualization measure among individuals, leading him to conclude that ideological evaluations may be products of shorter-term campaign forces.

Second, campaigns are structured in ways which facilitate tests of the salience hypothesis. In the beginning of the primary phase, candidates compete against others of their party, and the salience of ideology is minimal for most of the mass public (Finkel and Trevor 1986). As the number of candidates diminishes and public attention increases, clearer ideological conflicts emerge. Then, once the major party nominees are chosen, more direct ideological conflict between the parties occurs, leading to the hypothesis that ideological awareness and reasoning should increase as well. During the general campaign, candidates spend ample time "packaging" their policy proposals and, to the extent that the salience hypothesis holds, individuals should show greater constraint in their own preferences, indicating that they have "absorbed" the packages, by the end of the contest.

Finally, analysis of changes during campaigns necessarily eliminates several competing explanations from consideration. The wording of key questions is identical over time in both the NES 1980 panel and the 1984 "rolling cross-sectional" studies, and the demographic com-

position of the electorate also remains essentially equivalent during a campaign.[1] If change in ideological orientations does exist, then, the salience hypothesis will receive at least *prima facie* support.

Data and Methods

In this study, I analyze two longitudinal data sets, the 1980 National Election Study Major Panel File, and the 1984 Continuous Monitoring Survey File, in order to determine the extent and sources of change in ideological evaluations over time. The 1980 file consists of the 759 respondents who were interviewed during the first three waves of the panel, in January, June and September.[2] The 1984 file consists of the roughly 75 randomly selected individuals interviewed per week during the campaign, resulting in 3238 respondents who were interviewed at some point before the November 7 election. I have divided the 1984 campaign into three phases for ease of analysis and presentation: the primary phase, from the beginning of January to the middle of June (version numbers [variable 117] 1 through 4 in the study); the convention phase, from June until the end of August (versions 5 through 7); and the general election phase, from August until election day, November 7, 1984 (versions 8 through 11). These divisions afford rough comparability with the timing of the three 1980 waves, and result in a total of 1725 respondents for Time 1, 674 for Time 2, and 839 for Time 3.

Variables

The dependent variables in the analysis are all commonly analyzed ideological orientations discussed in the literature, except for the "levels of conceptualization," which was not measured in either election's longitudinal data set. The variables I do examine are:

1. *Ideological self-identification:* Measured in 1980 with the standard seven-point scale labeled extremely liberal at one end and extremely conservative at the other, and in 1984 by responses to the question, "In politics, do you usually think of yourself as a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or what?" and follow-up questions regarding strength of identification and leanings among the moderates. Both the responses

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[1] Unfortunately, the wording of certain questions across the 1980 panel and the 1984 "rolling cross-sectional" data sets is not equivalent, and so direct comparisons of the results for the two elections can not be easily made. Within each year, however, the wording remains identical over time.

[2] Because almost no ideological questions were asked in wave 4 in November, I did not include this wave in the present analysis.

to these questions were analyzed, as well as an ideological intensity measure created in both years by folding the scale so that moderates and non-ideologues score 0, with strong ideologues (either liberal or conservative) scoring 3.

2. *Attitude consistency:* Measured with the following issues in 1980, social services spending, defense spending, policy toward the Soviet Union, the inflation-unemployment tradeoff, and environmental regulation. These were the only five issues asked in all three waves of the 1980 study. The issues asked in the 1984 study were social spending, aid to minorities, women's rights, U.S. involvement in Central America, defense spending, and policy towards the Soviet Union. Two summary measures were constructed in each year; one, a simple absolute difference (or net issue balance) between the number of liberal and number of conservative policy positions the individual holds (from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 5 in 1980 and 6 in 1984); and two, the individual-level consistency scales developed by Barton and Parsons (1977) and extended by Wyckoff (1987). Here, each individual's responses to the questions above are standardized in relation to the sample's mean and standard deviation. Then, an average standardized score is constructed for the respondent. Finally, the average squared deviation of an individual's responses from his or her own average score is calculated, and the square root of this measure is the extent of attitude consistency. As this measure becomes smaller, there is more consistency; as it increases, there is less. Respondents who did not express opinions on at least three of the six items were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a loss of about 10 and 11 percent of the samples due to missing data in 1980 and 1984, respectively.

3. *Recognition of ideological labels for parties and candidates:* Measured in 1980 by how many "correct" ideological placements the respondent made for the following eight candidates—Gerald Ford, John Connally, Ronald Reagan and the Republican party as "conservative," and Carter, Jerry Brown, Edward Kennedy, and the Democratic party as "liberal." A summary measure of ideological placement was then constructed, ranging from 0 to 8. In 1984, no such extensive series of candidate questions were asked, and so the analysis was limited to the proportions who say Reagan is a conservative and the proportion who say Mondale, Gary Hart, and Jesse Jackson are liberal. A summary measure was then constructed from the number of "correct placements" of Reagan, Mondale and Jackson the respondent made. The questions on Hart were not asked following the Democratic convention, and are thus omitted from the summary score constructed for 1984.

4. *Perceived ideological distance between the major party candidates:* Measured by subtracting Reagan's perceived ideological posi-

tion on a seven-point scale from that of Carter or Mondale. As explained above, the ideological scales for 1980 and 1984 were constructed from different questions, and are thus not directly comparable. Within each election period, however, the question wording remained identical.

The primary independent variables in these analyses, in addition to time, are political interest, attentiveness, and education level. Interest was measured with three categories in both elections, representing "very much," "some," and "not very much" interest in the campaign. Attentiveness was measured with two variables, one corresponding to attention to television news about the campaign, and one to attention to news about politics in newspapers. Newspaper attention was not measured in wave 3 of the 1980 study. Education level was measured through the standard SRC summary scale, as were age, sex (0 = male, 1 = female), and income level, which are used as control variables in the multivariate analyses presented below.

Analyzing Ideological Change

The first stage of the analysis will present the aggregate distribution for each of the dependent variables over time. This will show the general contours of stability and change during each campaign for the entire sample. Then, I will focus primarily on the 1980 election, as the panel data there allow comprehensive testing of three alternative models of change, each with different implications for the salience hypothesis:

Model 1: Change in ideological orientations occurs uniformly across the sample. In this case, the environment would influence the ideological evaluations of the whole electorate, independent of individual motivation, interest, education, or attentiveness. This model would receive support if the mean of an item changed considerably from one wave to the next, *and* if this mean change represented a large proportion of the total individual change.

Model 2: Change occurs only in certain sub-groups, such as the highly interested or the highly educated, indicating that motivation or cognitive capacity must be at a certain level before individuals can absorb environmental cues. This would represent a narrower applicability of the salience hypothesis in explaining change, and would be confirmed if levels of political interest, attentiveness or education were positively associated with individual change.

Model 3: Change occurs simply because more people become interested in the campaign and follow it through the mass media. This would represent the weakest support of the salience hypothesis, since it would not be the "salience" of ideology per se that led to the change,

but rather that more people became attentive to the cues that exist in the environment. This model would be confirmed if *changes* in interest or attentiveness, as opposed to their absolute levels, were positively associated with individual ideological change.

All of these models will be tested in these analyses, to determine whether change is uniform or structured by cognitive or motivational differences in the population. The findings will delineate exactly the kinds of effects the political environment has for various kinds of individuals on a wide range of ideological orientations.

RESULTS

Aggregate Change During the 1980 and 1984 Elections

Table 1 shows the distributions over time of all the ideological evaluations discussed above: ideological self-identification and intensity,

TABLE 1A
IDEOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS DURING THE 1980 CAMPAIGN

	Time 1 (January)	*Time 2 (June)*	*Time 3 (September)*
Self-Placement			
Liberal	15%	18%	13%
Conservative	32	31	34
Moderate/NA	54	52	53
Mean Ideological Intensity (Self-Rating)	.68	.73	.74
Attitude Consistency			
Barton-Parsons	.76	.77	.74
Net Issue Balance	1.69	1.70	1.78
Ideological Recognition			
Carter (liberal)	16%	25%	27%
Reagan (conservative)	37%	47%	46%
Mean Correct (all candidates and parties—8-pint scale)	2.51	3.04	2.93
Ideological Distance			
Carter-Reagan	.48	.87	.88

Source: American National Election Study, 1980: Major Panel File (N = 759).

attitude consistency and net ideological issue balance, ideological recognition and perceived ideological intensities of the two major party candidates. As can be seen, the tables contain mixed support for the salience hypothesis. In terms of ideological self-placement and per-

TABLE 1B
IDEOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS DURING THE 1984 CAMPAIGN

	Time 1 (Primaries)	*Time 2 (Summer)*	*Time 3 (General)*
Self-Placement			
Liberal	23%	23%	19%
Conservative	36	34	34
Moderate/NA	42	43	47
Mean Ideological Intensity (Self-Rating)	1.73	1.70	1.65
Attitude Consistency			
Barton-Parsons	.86	.88	.84
Net Issue Balance	2.04	1.99	1.95
Ideological Recognition			
Mondale (liberal)	54%	57%	63%
Jackson (liberal)	71%	70%	72%
Reagan (conservativee)	69%	68%	72%
Hart (liberal)	33%	50%	—
Mean Correct (without Hart)	1.97	1.97	2.09
Ideological Distance			
Mondale-Reagan	1.79	1.81	2.29

Source: American National Election Study, 1984: Continuous Monitoring Survey File (N = 3238).

ceived intensity of ideological identifications, there is very little aggregate change during either campaign. While the 1980 distributions are almost identical in each wave, in 1984 there is a slight movement *away* from self-identification and ideological intensity by the end of the campaign, trends that runs counter to the expectations of the salience hypothesis. These differences, however, are very slight, and seem to support Fleishman's (1986) findings that aggregate levels of ideological groupings do not change as a response to the political environment.[3]

[3] There are differences across these two elections in the distributions of liberals and conservatives, and in mean intensity ratings. It is tempting to attribute the apparent rise in ideology and ideological intensity in 1984 to the salience of ideological conflict during the Reagan years, but closer scrutiny of the cross-sectional studies from the 1980 and 84 elections does not support such a claim. Fleishman (1986) documents the lack of change in ideological self-identification from 1972 to 1982, and my own analysis of the 1980 and 1984 elections shows a 4 percent rise in the proportion of liberals during that time, and a 1 percent drop in the proportion of conservatives. The discrepancies here between the 1980 and 1984 findings, then, are almost all attributable to differences in question wording, and in particular, to the fact that the 1984 study did not screen out from all further ideological questions those individuals who refused to originally label themselves of no responses to the ideology questions reaches 30-35 percent in 1980, a fact that colors all cross-election comparisons with *these* data sets.

The measures of attitude consistency show similar lack of support for the salience hypothesis. The Barton-Parsons measures of attitude consistency in 1984 shows somewhat more volatility than in 1980, but in both elections there was minimal movement toward more attitude constraint. The net issue balance measures show very little change in either election, increasing slightly in 1980 during the campaign and decreasing slightly in 1984. In the aggregate, then, there was little more consistency in policy preferences at the end of either campaign than at the beginning, indicating that individuals did not adjust their own policy preferences to bring them more in line with the liberal-conservative conflict.

The measures of ideological recognition and ideological distance, however, show larger changes over time. Table 1A indicates that the public did absorb ideological information about the presidential candidates, as the mean ideological recognition increases from 2.51 (out of 8) to over 3 in the summer, before falling off to 2.93 in September. In 1984, about 10 percent more of the sample placed Walter Mondale at the end of the campaign as a "liberal" than at the beginning, and fifteen percent more placed Gary Hart as "liberal" during the convention phase than before. The summary recognition measure shows a slightly smaller increase in 1984 than in 1980, and, interestingly, most of the change in 1984 took place after the conventions, the opposite pattern as seen in the previous election (cf. Lewis 1987). The other two major candidates in 1984, Reagan and Jesse Jackson, were already more highly recognized as "conservative" and "liberal," respectively, at time 1, and did not show any significant increases over time. For the two less well-known candidates, though, the campaign did activate increased ideological awareness.

In addition, the perceived ideological distance between the major candidates showed significant increases in both elections over time. At the beginning of the 1980 campaign, the average perceived distance between the Carter and Reagan was under half a point; by the end of the primaries this figure was close to one full point. In 1984, Mondale and Reagan were initially perceived as more ideologically distinct, and the differences between them grew larger during the summer and during the fall campaign period. Although question wording differences limit the interpretation of the inter-year differences, the amount of absolute change in the ideological distance measure in both elections was very similar, approximately one-half point on the seven-point scale.

These tables suggest that some ideological change did occur in the aggregate during the 1980 and 1984 campaigns, although only for the purely cognitive measures. More people were able to associate ideological labels with candidates by the end of the campaign, and the

average perceived ideological distance between the candidates became stronger as well. Yet individuals' own opinions on the issues did not become more "ideological," and no general adjustment of issue preferences appears to have taken place in response to campaign stimuli. The presence of ideological rhetoric and discourse in the environment appears to have some ability to influence overall mass perceptions, yet negligible ability to structure or organize mass attitudes.

Individual-Level Change: 1980

While there was some change over time in the cognitive ideological orientations on the aggregate level, the amount of stability and change becomes much clearer through analysis of the individual level data from 1980. Here, the analysis will show that substantial changes (both positive and negative) occurred in *all* the ideological orientations among individuals during the campaign. Further, the relationship of the changes to political interest and educational attainment indicates some modest support for Models 2 and 3 of the salience hypothesis.

While the usual starting point for the analysis of change is the examination of the Pearson correlation coefficient, this strategy is not followed here. Correlations are ambiguously related to change, and even more ambiguously related to the salience hypothesis. It is well known that the correlation between measures over time could be unity (1) when the entire sample remained exactly the same (perfect stability) or when the entire sample changed by a uniform amount (Model 1 above). Conversely, the correlation could be low, even if large changes were concentrated among certain theoretically relevant subgroups (Models 2 and 3 above). Hence, the correlation coefficient is not particularly useful in determining the amount of absolute change in a variable.[4] A more useful measure of total change is the Q^2 statistic developed by Kessler and Greenberg (1981: ch. 4) which represents the average squared change from X_1 to X_2 across the entire sample, or $\Sigma(X_2 - X_1)^2/N$. Q^2 provides basic descriptive information regarding change, as well as a test of model 1 of the salience hypothesis, the uniform effects model, as will be seen below.

Q^2 may be rewritten as

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[4] I do not mean to suggest that correlation coefficients have no place in panel analysis, or can serve no purpose in understanding change. They are most useful for determining whether a variable at time 1 can predict values at time 2, and are essential (as I will show below) in general regression models that attempt to account for change in an item from a series of independent variables. For the immediate purposes here, though, the correlation coefficient can tell us little about the amount or type of change present.

$$Q^2 = (\bar{X}_2 - \bar{X}_1)^2 + \Sigma[(X_2 - X_1) - (\bar{X}_2 - \bar{X}_1)^2/N$$

so that the average squared change is a function of the square of the changing mean (term 1) plus the variance of individual change (term 2). The larger Q^2 is, the larger the average squared change, relative to the units of X. Further, if the change in X is uniform for all individuals, then the portion of Q^2 taken up by the changing mean will be large; if there is substantial change at the individual level relative to the change in mean, then the portion of Q^2 taken up by term 2 will be correspondingly larger. In this way, Q^2 is a useful statistic to show the average amount of change, and to see whether change is uniform for the entire sample. Table 2 presents the relevant calculations for Q^2 for each of the six ideological orientations during the 1980 campaign.

TABLE 2
COMPONENTS OF IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE IN 1980

Orientation	Q^2	*Mean*^{2}	*Individual*^{2}
Recognition			
Time 1-Time 2	4.35	.29	4.06
Time 2-Time 3	3.58	.01	3.57
Candidate Ideological Distance			
Time 1-Time 2	3.15	.16	2.99
Time 2-Time 3	2.72	.01	2.71
Self-Identification			
Time 1-Time 2	1.43	.01	1.42
Time 2-Time 3	1.11	.01	1.10
Self-Intensity			
Time 1-Time 2	.73	.01	.72
Time 2-Time 3	.68	.003	.677
Attitude Constraint			
Time 1-Time 2	.13	.00	.13
Time 2-Time 3	.122	.002	.122
Issue Balance			
Time 1-Time 2	2.01	.01	2.01
Time 2-Time 3	2.20	.00	2.20

Explanation of Q^2

Q^2 = total change in X = $\Sigma(X_2 - X_1)^2/n$
= $(\bar{X}_2 - \bar{X}_1)^2$ + Variance (ΔX)
= Mean Change^2 + Individual Change^2

It can readily be seen from this table that substantial amounts of change occurred in these variables, and that almost none of the change can be accounted for by overall changes in the mean. For example, Q^2

for the ideological recognition measure (which runs from 0 to 8) is 4.35 for the changes from wave 1 to wave 2, indicating that, on average, individuals changed 2.09 (the square root of 4.35) units on this scale, or over 2 more or less "correct" identifications at wave 2 than wave 1. This represents a large amount of change, yet only .28 of the total, or 7 percent, is attributable to the change in mean (.524) over time. The rest of the change is purely individual, with many in the sample increasing on this measure and many decreasing. The result is much individual-level change, but almost no uniform change across the sample.

The other ideological measures show very similar effects, and indeed the 7 percent change accounted for by the mean for the recognition measure is the largest among all twelve items in table 2. Candidate ideological distance changed, on average, about 1.77 units from wave 1 to wave 2, and slightly less from wave 2 to wave 3, but again, only 5 percent of the first change was uniform, and less than 1 percent of the second change. The issue measures and self-identification measures show somewhat lesser amounts of average change, and negligible proportions that can be accounted for by uniform change. In general, then, Table 2 shows that substantial amounts of individual-level change did take place in all these orientations, even though the averages for the entire samples changed very little. The implication of this section for the salience hypothesis is clear: while much change in ideological perceptions and attitudes occurred during the course of the campaign, the changes were not similar across the entire sample. The impact of the environment was not such that all respondents were equally affected, and thus Model 1 of the salience hypothesis does not receive support. The next section investigates Models 2 and 3 by assessing the extent to which individual change was concentrated among highly educated and highly attentive sub-groups in the population.

Explaining Individual-level Change

The following model to explain individual change was estimated for the items, once for change from wave 1 to wave 2, and once for change from waves 2 to 3:

$$\Delta Y = a + b_1{*}Y_0 + b_2{*}INT_0 + b_3{*}\Delta INT + b_4{*}TV_0 + b_5{*}\Delta TV$$
$$+ b_6{*}NEWS_0 + b_7{*}\Delta NEWS + b_8{*}EDUC + b_9{*}AGE + b_{10}{*}INC$$
$$+ b_{11}{*}SEX + U$$

where a is the constant, ΔY is the individual's change in the ideological item from one wave to the next, INT_0, TV_0 and $NEWS_0$ are the in-

dividual's initial levels of political interest, and attentiveness to campaign news on television and in the newspaper, ΔINT, ΔTV, and ΔNEWS are individual changes in interest, television and newspaper attentiveness, EDUC is the SRC summary measure of educational attainment, INC the respondent's income, AGE is in years, SEX is coded as 1 = male, 2 = female, and Y_0 is the initial level of the item. This model is composed of the following components: (1) political interest and extent of media attentiveness, so that positive effects would indicate that change is concentrated among those who are already highly interested or attentive to the campaign; (2) *changes* in interest and attentiveness, so that individuals may be more ideologically aware if they become more interested or attentive to campaign stimuli; (3) education, income, age and sex, so that change may take place only among those with certain cognitive abilities or sociodemographic characteristics; and (4) initial levels of the item itself, with the probable negative effects representing the "regression to the mean" effects often seen in panel data (Markus 1980). These regression or "re-equilibrium" effects (MacKuen and Brown 1987) represent a combination of factors: unmeasured variables causing instability in the item over time, measurement error, as well as "boundary effects," in that those highest on the items are limited in the amount of potential positive change, and those lowest on the items limited in the amount of potential negative change. Including initial levels of a variable is essential in avoiding biased estimates of the impact of other variables of interest in panel models.

The model was estimated for four of the six items in Tables 1 and 2. The ideological self-identification measure is not as relevant as the folded self-intensity scale, as the salience hypothesis makes no predictions regarding *direction* of ideology, only intensity. Also, the results from the Barton-Parsons measure of attitude constraint are essentially redundant to the net issue balance scale, but the interpretation of the scale and of the effects is not as straightforward. The results from the change-score regression models are shown in Table 3.[5]

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[5] These models are mathematically equivalent to ones which use raw, not change scores, from successive waves, as Kessler and Greenberg show (1981: ch. 6). If $Y_2 = b_1{*}Y_1 + b_2{*}X_2 + b_1{*}X_1 + b_n{*}Z_n$, where X represents, e.g., interest and Z's all other exogenous variables, then, given $\Delta Y = Y_2 - Y_1$, and $\Delta X = X_2 - X_1$, then the equation can be re-written as

$$\Delta Y = (b_1 - 1){*}Y_1 + b_2{*}(\Delta X + X_1) + b_1{*}X_1 + b_n{*}Z_n \text{ and}$$

$$\Delta Y = (b_1 - 1){*}Y_1 + b_2{*}\Delta X + (b_2 + b_1){*}X_1 + b_n{*}Z_n$$

Thus, change score regressions can easily be expressed in terms of the static scores, and vice-versa. Since change is the real focus of the analysis, I present the results in this form for ease of interpretation.

TABLE 3A
MULTIPLE REGRESSION PREDICTING CHANGE IN IDEOLOGICAL RECOGNITION

	Wave 1-2		*Wave 2-3*	
Variable	*b*	*Beta*	*b*	*Beta*
$Interest_0$	.38*	.14	.47*	.18
Δ Interest	.26*	.09	.13	.04
TV_0	.01	.01	-.03	-.02
Δ TV	.00	.00	-.001	.00
$News_0$	.01	.01	.09	.06
Δ News[a]	.13*	.06	—	—
Education	.17*	.21	.10*	.13
Sex	.23*	.06	.07	.02
Age	.004	.03	-.004	-.04
Income	.02*	.07	.001	.03
$Recognition_0$	-.38*	-.49	-.31*	-.44
Constant	-.91		-.79	
Adj. R-squared	.17		.13	
N	679		664	

*Significant at .05 level.

[a] Newspaper attentiveness not measured in Wave 3.

TABLE 3B
MULTIPLE REGRESSION PREDICTING CHANGE IN CANDIDATE IDEOLOGICAL DISTANCE

	Wave 1-2		*Wave 2-3*	
Variable	*b*	*Beta*	*b*	*Beta*
$Interest_0$	.38*	.16	.38*	.17
Δ Interest	.42*	.17	.14	.06
TV_0	-.02	-.01	-.14	-.08
Δ TV	-.08	-.04	-.07	-.03
$News_0$	.02	.01	-.02	-.02
Δ News	.04	.02	—	—
Education	.08*	.12	.05*	.08
Sex	.05	.02	.23*	.08
Age	.01*	.07	-.00	-.01
Income	.01	.04	.004	.02
$Distance_0$	-.53*	-.53	-.40*	-.44
Constant	-1.08		-.53	
Adj. R-squared	.25		.17	
N	679		664	

*Significant at .05 level.

[a] Newspaper attentiveness not measured in Wave 3.

TABLE 3C
MULTIPLE REGRESSION PREDICTING CHANGE IN
NET ISSUE BALANCE

	Wave 1-2		*Wave 2-3*	
Variable	*b*	*Beta*	*b*	*Beta*
$Interest_0$	.17*	.08	.26*	.13
Δ Interest	.05	.06	.22*	.10
TV_0	-.17*	-.09	.02	.01
Δ TV	.01	.00	-.06	-.03
$News_0$	-.04	-.04	-.01	-.01
Δ News	.03	.02	—	—
Education	.06*	.10	.02	.04
Sex	.13	.04	.36*	.12
Age	.005*	.06	.003	.04
Income	.03*	.14	.02*	.08
$Balance_0$	-.66*	-.61	-.65*	-.57
Constant	.17		.15	
Adj. R-squared	.36		.31	
N	679		664	

*Significant at .05 level.

[a] Newspaper attentiveness not measured in Wave 3.

TABLE 3D
MULTIPLE REGRESSION PREDICTING CHANGE IN
IDEOLOGICAL INTENSITY, SELF-RATING

	Wave 1-2		*Wave 2-3*	
Variable	*b*	*Beta*	*b*	*Beta*
$Interest_0$	.14*	.12	.23*	.20
Δ Interest	.08*	.07	.13*	.09
TV_0	.01	.01	-.04	-.04
Δ TV	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.01
$News_0$	.00	.00	.03	.05
Δ News	.04	.04	—	—
Education	.02*	.07	.01	.04
Sex	.07	.04	.00	.00
Age	.001	.02	-.01	-.04
Income	-.001	-.01	.00	.00
$Intensity_0$	-.55*	-.54	-.50*	-.51
Constant	-.08		-.09	
Adj. R-squared	.25		.23	
N	679		664	

*Significant at .05 level.

The table contains several interesting results with implications for the salience hypothesis. First, in every model, initial levels of interest are significant predictors of change, meaning that more positive change is seen among those individuals who are most interested in the campaign. This is precisely what the second version of the salience hypothesis predicts, in that those who are most interested will absorb the increasing number of ideological cues in the environment, and adjust their own ideological orientations accordingly. The effects are not large in substantive terms, but they are consistent across the affective and cognitive measures, and across change in waves 1-2 and 2-3. In addition, *change* in political interest exerts a small, separate influence on ideological change in many of the models. For the ideological recognition and ideological distance models, the effects of change in interest are significant from wave 1 to wave 2, for the net issue balance model it is significant from wave 2 to wave 3, and it is significant in both waves for the self-intensity model. Thus not only does an individual's initial level of interest determine change, but also the extent of change in interest, so that individuals who become more interested become exposed to campaign rhetoric and change their own ideological perceptions. This finding supports version three of the salience hypothesis discussed above.

The effects of education and the demographic variables also show that change was concentrated systematically among certain sub-groups in the population. Education is positively related to change in all models from wave 1, indicating that those with higher levels of education changed the most on these indicators. This supports the notion that some degree of cognitive ability allows the absorption of ideological terminology, independent of interest or other motivational factors. In several of the models, age, sex, and income also show significant effects, meaning that men, older and wealthier individuals showed the most amount of ideological "leaning" or change for that item. These effects, though statistically significant, were generally very weak in substantive magnitude.

The set of variables that do not support the salience hypothesis are the media attentiveness measures. Newspaper attentiveness exerts significant impact on change in none of the models, while television does so sporadically, but in the opposite direction as might be expected. For example, in the issue balance model, individuals who followed campaign news on television declined significantly from wave 1 to wave 2 in their net consistency in policy preferences, controlling for all other variables in the model. Similarly, those who were attentive to television became less likely to perceive ideological distance between Carter and Reagan from wave 2 to wave 3, although this effect was not statistically significant. What this indicates is, when there is an impact, television

produces *less* intense ideological perceptions and attitudes, a finding which corroborates Wagner's (1982) notion that television produced less polarized perceptions of candidate issue positions during the 1976 campaign.

The effects of all of these variables on change, however, are small in comparison to the strong regression to the mean, or re-equilibrium, effects seen in these models. For every ideological orientation in Table 3, there is a large negative relationship between the initial values on the variable and subsequent change. This indicates that most of the observed changes are due to forces which push individuals who are at the extremes on these scales closer to the mean over time. These negative forces counter the positive impact of interest, education and the demographic variables on change; on balance, the effects cancel out, explaining statistically why the electorate as a whole shows little change over time.[6]

Regression to the mean can result from many factors, but in the present instance one highly probable cause is random measurement error and response unreliability. It is well-known that survey items contain some error due to ambiguities in question wording, vagaries of the interview situation and the like; with questions concerning such non-central attitudes as ideology, these errors may be compounded by respondent uncertainty, ignorance, and "non-attitudes" which lead individuals to give random responses (Achen 1975; Luskin 1987; Smith 1980). To the extent that random error produces an initially extreme response, there is a strong probability that subsequent error will produce a more moderate response; hence, extreme values tend to regress to the overall mean over time (Markus 1980). A measurement error explanation would be entirely consistent with the results from Table 3, where large negative regression effects are coupled with small effects of other variables in explaining change.

Estimation of the amount of measurement error in these items with the standard procedures for analyzing three-wave panel data confirms

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[6] This can be seen by computing the "level importance" of all independent variables (Achen 1982). The "level importance statistic" is b_{yx} * Mean X (the unstandardized regression coefficient multiplied by the variable's mean) and shows how much an independent variable contributes overall to the mean of a dependent variable, i.e., how much x contributes to the "level" of y. For example, in ideological recognition model, the level importance of initial recognition on change from wave 1 to wave 2 is $-.38 * 2.51$, or $-.95$, while the impact of political interest on change is $.38 * 2.1$, or .80. These values show that the net contribution of political interest is not great enough to overcome the negative regression effects. These calculations show similar results for all the models in Table 3; the positive effects of interest and education are all negated by the large regression effects, with the result being very little aggregate change in the ideological orientations.

these suspicions (cf. Markus 1980: 56-59; Sullivan and Feldman 1979: 56-66). The reliability, or the ratio of "true score" to total variance, of the orientations ranges from a high of .80 for the Ideological Recognition scale item to a low of .45 for the Net Issue Balance scale. Given these values, the estimated reliabilities of the *change* scores of the orientations are quite low, reaching a *high* of .30 for the changes in ideological recognition (cf. Kessler and Greenberg 1981: 141-45). This indicates that a large portion of the observed changes in the ideological items is measurement error, not "true" change.

The effects of political interest and education, then, must be interpreted in the context of these more powerful effects. The results indicate that environmental cues did structure to some extent individuals' ideological awareness during the 1980 campaign, but that these effects were not large compared to the impact of measurement error and other random factors which influenced observed change in the ideology questions.[7] As a result, the salience of ideology in the environment during these campaigns led to only minor changes in the perceptions and attitudes of the electorate as a whole.

Discussion

The results from this study provide only limited support for the salience hypothesis as an explanation of change in ideological perceptions and orientations during the 1980 and 1984 election campaigns. On the aggregate level, some increases in ideological awareness did take place during the two campaigns, as individuals were more likely to place the presidential candidates in the appropriate ideological camp and to perceive greater ideological distance between them by the end of the campaign than at the beginning. But these increases in the electorate's ability to recognize terminology and labels were generally small, and were not combined with stronger self-identifications or more ideologically consistent issue preferences. The findings complement previous research which shows almost imperceptible change in ideological orientations across elections; here little aggregate change is registered even in the short term (Sullivan et al. 1979; Fleishman 1986; Converse 1975).

While the salience hypothesis cannot explain the absence of change

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[7] The multiple regression models of Table 3 can be re-estimated through a structural equation program such as LISREL which takes estimated measurement error in the items into account. These analyses show that the effects of interest and education on "true score" change are typically smaller but still statistically significant. These procedures are not definitive, since they depend on some very restrictive assumptions regarding the form and extent of the measurement errors over time, but nonetheless the results fully support the argument of this paragraph.

in the electorate over time, it performs somewhat better in explaining change among individuals. The 1980 panel data show that there was considerable change during campaigns on the individual level in how candidates and parties are perceived in ideological terms, how people view themselves in ideological terms, as well as in how they organize their own issue preferences. These changes were not uniform, but rather were seen among those with the highest levels of interest and with the highest amount of cognitive capability as measured by educational attainment. Ideological rhetoric and ideological conflict in the environment were picked up and absorbed to some extent by the attentive, if not the entire, mass public.

This conclusion, however, is tempered by the fact that the strongest effects on changes in the orientations were from measurement error and other random factors which influenced individual responses to the survey items. This undoubtedly reflects the low centrality of ideology for most individuals, and once again parallels the findings of previous research of ideological change across elections (Smith 1980; Luskin 1987). The relatively small effects for political interest and education, coupled with these large amounts of random change, resulted in an electorate little different at the end of the 1980 campaign than at the beginning.

The results should not be taken to indicate that individuals are generally unaffected by political campaigns. Individuals certainly learn basic information about candidates, personality traits, and party labels, and Patterson (1980), Markus (1982), and others have shown that some learning about policy positions takes place during campaigns as well. But the verdict on ideological change in these two elections seems clear: the public had relatively low levels of awareness at the beginning of the campaigns, and the increased salience of ideology during the contests had only limited effects on changes in individual orientations over time. The attentive public did absorb some ideological rhetoric, but in general the electorate changed little in response to short-term forces. This study suggests that researchers should look beyond ideology to find larger influences of political campaigns and the political environment on the stricture and content of mass political thought.

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