REASSESSING IDEOLOGICAL BIAS IN CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION

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Until 1964, ideological conservatives tended to participate in presidential campaign activities at higher rates than liberals. Since then, Beck and Jennings (1980, 1984) have shown the variable nature of the participation-ideology relationship, arguing that ideologically extreme candidates have successfully mobilized their followers in particular elections. In this paper, we explain the "anomaly" of the 1980 election in which strong liberals participated at higher rates despite a very strong conservative on the Republican side. Using data collected over time in 1980 by the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies (CPS/NES), we broaden the Beck-Jennings model to include participation during the primary season and hypothesize that mobilization of ideological groups may result from ideological candidates *and* the competitiveness or closeness of a nomination contest. We find that the ideological candidate model explains general election participation to a significant degree, while competitiveness considerations are more important for mobilization during the primaries.

Until recently, the conventional wisdom concerning the relationship between ideology and campaign participation was fairly well established: Ideological conservatives were more likely to work for candidates, attend campaign rallies, and engage in other such activities than liberals (Milbrath and Goel, 1977). This pattern could be partially explained by the resource mobilization model proposed by Verba and Nie (1972). Conservatives were more likely to participate because of greater socioeconomic resources such as income and education, which correlated strongly with engaging in these forms of political action. However, even after controlling for socioeconomic status, the conservative "bias" in participation remained, at least until 1967, when the Verba and Nie study was conducted. Something in conservatism, whether the mix of policy stands or symbolic attachments, seemed to motivate individuals to participate, independent of their wealth or social status.

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The conventional wisdom was challenged by Paul A. Beck and M. Kent Jennings, (1979). They demonstrated that there was no immutable relationship between ideology and participation; instead, the relationship resulted from period forces in the environment that mobilize either the left or the right at any given time. Analyzing the University of Michigan's national election series for all presidential elections since 1956 (CPS/NES), they showed very clearly that participation rates of various ideological groups vary markedly over time. Until 1964, they noted the "regular" pattern of strong conservatives participating more than weak conservatives, followed in step-wise fashion by moderates, weak liberals, and strong liberals. In contrast, the 1964 election saw a high level of participation by strong conservatives with little difference between the other groups, and 1972 reversed the "normal" pattern by displaying the greatest participation rates among strong liberals, followed by weak liberals, and so on with strong conservatives participating the least. These patterns, and those evident in the other elections which we treat below, suggested to Beck and Jennings that the "period forces" which stimulated participation were actually the ideological positions of the major presidential candidates. Thus Goldwater, the extreme conservative candidate, mobilized the right in 1964, while arch liberal McGovern mobilized the left in 1972. These findings "show that political participation does not exist in a political vacuum" (Beck and Jennings, 1979, p. 748). Rather, it is structured by the "opportunity," or incentive to participate created by the ideological stances of the major party candidates. When a strong left-leaning candidate runs on the Democratic ticket, they argued, strong liberals are mobilized to participate, while the same holds true for the conservative-Republican side.

This explanation was not upheld in Beck and Jennings' subsequent analysis of the 1980 election (1984). Despite the presence of a clearly conservative candidate, Ronald Reagan, on the Republican side, and an often dispirited Democratic effort to reelect the less-ideological Jimmy Carter, strong liberals participated at much higher rates than strong conservatives. Although the analysis confirmed that participation rates still vary across elections, the "secondary contention that differential mobilization is based on the seeming discrepancies in ideological focus offered by the presidential candidates is not supported" (Beck and Jennings, 1984, pp. 200–201).

We attempt here to account for the 1980 pattern and ideological bias in other election periods by extending several facets of the Beck and Jennings analysis. First, it is possible that participation bias due to ideological mobilization may occur not only during the general election but also during the primary season. In 1980, liberal Edward Kennedy, while denied his party's nomination, may nevertheless have mobilized a substantial number

of strong liberal followers during the campaign. Such mobilization may have outweighed the strong conservative mobilization triggered by Ronald Reagan during the election season and produced an observed liberal bias in participation in the CPS/NES postelection survey. Thus, the "candidate ideology" model of Beck and Jennings may be rescued, even in 1980, by widening its scope and applicability to include primary *and* general election participation.

It is likely, however, that the degree of a candidate's ideological position is only one of many sources of mobilization during a campaign. Another equally important political opportunity may be the competitiveness of both the primaries and the general election. When primaries are exceptionally competitive or divisive, participation at a party's extreme wing of the political spectrum, regardless of candidate ideology, should be more pronounced as campaign action may count a good deal more than in noncompetitive races. In fact, this pattern should be especially pronounced among strong ideologues who have comprised most of either party's potential activists in recent years (Stone and Abramowitz, 1983). The liberal edge in 1980 could then be explained by the high degree of competitiveness in the Democratic primaries, not the Republican nomination, which was wrapped up very early in the campaign. Similarly, other work has shown that the perceived competitiveness of the general election stimulates electoral participation (see Conway, 1985, chap. 5), and these perceptions may motivate a particular ideological group to participate at a given time. Thus in 1980, strong liberals may have participated not because of any ideological affinity with Jimmy Carter (or John Anderson) but only because they perceived the presidential contest to be closer than their conservative counterparts.

These possibilities suggest that the participation of various ideological groups should be examined over the course of an entire campaign to test fully the Beck and Jennings model of mobilization and alternative hypotheses. Ideological "bias" in mobilization may change over the course of a campaign, and we can then link these changes to participatory incentives occasioned by either candidate ideology, competitiveness, or some combination of the two. In this study we make use of several surveys conducted at different points during the 1980 campaign to test these processes. We show first that the bias in participation rates for liberals and conservatives changed substantially over the entire course of the contest; and second, we show that these biases were mainly a response to competitiveness during the primary season and to candidate ideology during the general election period. Thus we demonstrate that the Beck and Jennings model does explain ideological mobilization, at least in the general election, to a substantial degree. Yet the peculiar nature of the 1980 primary

contests, the ideological configuration of the major party candidates, and the *timing* of participation by various ideological groups muddled their interpretation of participation rates, as gauged by the CPS/NES postelection survey. Through the analysis of participation over time, our study expands on the Beck and Jennings model and offers a more complete framework in which to examine mobilization in primary and general election campaigns.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY REEXAMINED

Before proceeding with the 1980 analysis, it will be helpful to look at the overall patterns of participation and ideology for all elections since 1956. Figure 1 displays the mean participation for five ideological groups—strong conservatives, weak conservatives, moderates, weak liberals, and strong liberals—in each of these elections. Data from the elections before 1984 are reported from Beck and Jennings (1979 1984), while the 1984 analysis is our own. Ideology is measured in all years by an index composed from

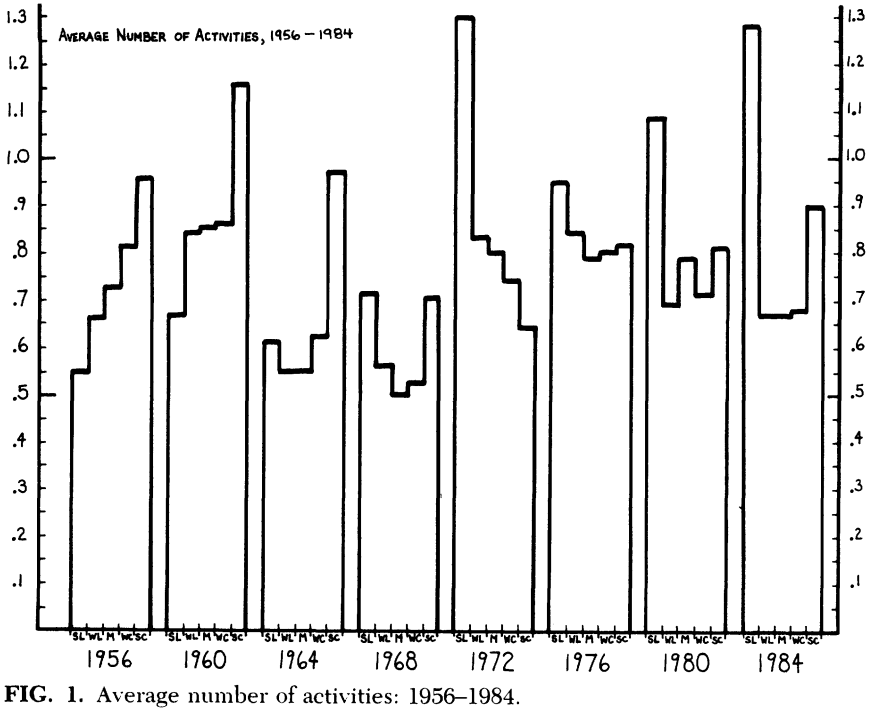

FIG. 1. Average number of activities: 1956–1984.

responses to several domestic policy positions, which vary over time (see Beck and Jennings, 1979, pp. 741–742, 745). In 1984, we included government spending on social services, aid to minorities, and government provision of jobs. We also added an individual's self-placement on a liberal conservative scale in the index because of the paucity of domestic issues tapped in the 1984 study. Participation is gauged from the following campaign actions: talking to others to convince them to vote a certain way, attending meetings or rallies, wearing campaign buttons, donating money, or engaging in other campaign work.

As can be seen in Figure 1, after the step-ladder function elections of 1956 and 1960, where steady conservative bias exists in participation, more recent elections fluctuate remarkably over time. The conservative surge in 1964 is followed by a polarized pattern of strong liberal and strong conservative participation in 1968, a liberal surge in 1972, a slight liberal edge in 1976, and a stronger liberal advantage in 1980. Our analysis of the 1984 election shows that this liberal tilt continued, with strong liberals showing very higher rates of participation, much greater than their strong conservative counterparts. Differences between the remaining low participation groups in 1984 are minimal, rendering that election an almost mirror opposite of the 1964 pattern.

In terms of the Beck-Jennings ideology hypothesis, both the 1980 and 1984 elections are curious. As Table 1 shows, and as other research has demonstrated (Markus, 1982; Finkel and Norpoth, 1984), the most clearly perceived ideological candidate in both contests was Ronald Reagan. Using "4" as the moderate baseline, Reagan is perceived to be 1.2 units more conservative in the 1980 campaign (somewhere between strongly conservative and conservative), while Carter is perceived as only very marginally left

TABLE 1. Ideological Perceptions of Major Candidates and Participation Rates in 1980 and 1984[a]

	1980			1984	
	Ideology	Participation		Ideology	Participation
Reagan	5.21	.53 $N=302$	Reagan	5.31	.72 $N=782$
Carter	3.79	.57 $N=214$	Mondale	3.20	.96 $N=560$
Anderson	3.57	.53 $N=36$			

[a] Ideology is measured on a seven point scale from "1," extremely liberal, to "7," extremely conservative. Participation is the average number of activities among supporters of the candidate.

of center. John Anderson is actually the most liberally perceived candidate, yet even he is only .5 units away from the moderate center. Similarly, in 1984, Reagan is perceived as more conservative than Walter Mondale is liberal. Yet the participation advantage is enjoyed in both elections by strong liberals. Further analysis of Table 1 shows that in both elections supporters of the Democratic candidates had higher overall participation rates than supporters of Regan, again a contradiction of the ideological opportunity hypothesis. Reagan, it appears, did not mobilize either strong conservatives or even his own supporters to the extent that the more weakly ideological candidates Carter and Mondale did.

An expanded model, which takes primary elections as well as campaign competitiveness into account, makes more sense out of the patterns of Figure 1. In 1980, Ronald Reagan endured a very early scare from George Bush following the Iowa caucuses, then coasted to the Republican nomination (Bartels, 1985). On the Democratic side, after a sluggish start, Edward Kennedy mounted a strong challenge to incumbent Carter and fought for the nomination all the way to the summer convention. Both Kennedy's ideology and the competitiveness of the race would suggest higher liberal participation in 1980 then conservative. In 1984, the primary contests again were extremely competitive for the Democrats, with Mondale and Gary Hart running virtually neck and neck until the later stages of the campaign. There was essentially no challenge to President Reagan on the Republican side. Again, competitiveness during the primaries, and possibly the ideological stances of candidates Hart and Jackson, could explain the disproportionate participation by liberals in that election year.

Previous elections can also be explained by this model. The 1968 election, where ideological bias existed on both the left and right, featured divisive primaries in both parties, in addition to the strong rightist challenge from George Wallace. The 1972 election, with strong liberal participation bias, was bitterly contested by George McGovern, Edmund Muskie, and others in the Democratic primaries, while President Nixon was renominated with no difficulty among Republicans. Beck and Jennings at least partially invoke a primary-based explanation for these two elections when they argue that "a Democratic primary, such as that in 1968 and 1972, with many candidates on the left, offers more inducements for leftists to participate than does a campaign in which there are no candidates from the left" (Beck and Jennings, 1979, p. 748). This explanation, however, is still primarily ideology-based. We hope to show below that both ideology and electoral competitiveness are mobilizing factors.

PRIMARY COMPETITIVENESS, IDEOLOGY, AND MOBILIZATION IN 1980

The 1980 election offers an ideal setting to test these competing explanations of citizen campaign activity. Whereas in several elections primary divisiveness resulted in an ideological major party candidate (1964 and 1972), in 1980 we find an ideological candidate without primary competitiveness (Reagan) and the more divisive camp producing the *less* ideological candidate (Carter). In addition, in earlier years divisiveness, ideologically extreme candidates, and mobilization bias were all concentrated in the out-party, raising the possibility that mobilization by one ideological wing was simply an effort to unseat an incumbent from another ideological camp. In 1980, though, these factors were separated, as the in-party experienced more competitiveness and mobilization, while the out-party fielded the more ideologically extreme candidate. Thus we may be able to isolate the effects of ideology and competitiveness in this election by looking at the mobilizing influence of primary candidates such as Edward Kennedy, the competitiveness of the Democratic and Republican primaries, and perceptions of competitiveness during the general election among Carter and Reagan supporters.

The 1980 election is also the only one in the CPS/NES series to provide data on participation and ideology collected over time during the entire campaign. This information allows us to track more clearly some of the relevant processes. If ideology is indeed the key to mobilization, we would expect both strong liberal and strong conservative mobilization during the primaries, owing to the Reagan and Kennedy candidacies, followed by strong conservative mobilization during the general election because of Carter's nonideological stance. If, on the other hand, competitiveness plays a role, we may expect some conservative edge early in the campaign (reflecting the Reagan-Bush contest), followed by a strong liberal advantage later as the Carter-Kennedy fight reaches its peak. During the general election campaign, those who believe the race will be close should be more likely to participate than those who feel the race will not be close, regardless of the extent of their ideological affinity with the major party candidates.

In January 1980, over 1,000 respondents were interviewed for the first wave of a major CPS/NES year-long panel study, with reinterviews conducted in June with 843 of the original respondents and in September with a sample of 769. The fourth wave, conducted after the election, contains interviews with 764 of these respondents. In addition to these three time periods, another cross-section ($N = 965$) was conducted in April as part of a minor panel culminating in November. We thus have four time points within the campaign to analyze, each corresponding to a critical time in the election process: January, after the Iowa caucuses but before the New

Hampshire primary; April, in the midst of the early primaries; June, after the final set of primaries but before the conventions; and September, at the beginning of the general election campaign. The November data will be useful only to construct, as did Beck and Jennings, a summary measure of participation for the entire campaign.

These data contain very little information on participation, as the bulk of the questions concerning campaign activities are asked in the postelection wave. Two items—talking to others to convince them to vote a certain way and attending campaign meetings and rallies—were tapped in all data sets, and the resulting scale forms our participation measure over time. We measure ideology from responses to the domestic issues of aid to minorities, nuclear power, and environmental regulation as well as from self-placement on a liberal-conservative scale.

PRIMARY PARTICIPATION IN 1980

Figure 2 displays the mean participation rates for all five ideological groups during the three surveys conducted during the primary season and

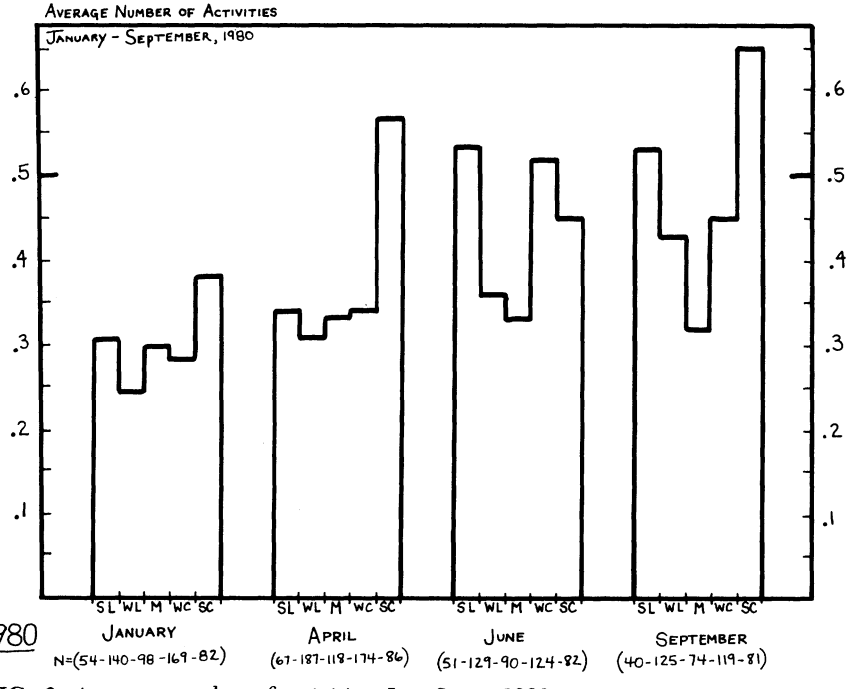

FIG. 2. Average number of activities: Jan.-Sept., 1980.

the September general election period. Looking first at the primary season, it is immediately apparent that ideological "bias" exists throughout the campaign and that this bias changes substantially over time. In January, strong conservatives enjoy a slight edge over other ideological groups, and this edge increases sharply in April. By June, the situation is reversed, with strong liberals leading (if only modestly) in participation rates over weak and strong conservatives. Clearly, participation is changing during the primary campaigns—but in response to which, if any, environmental stimulus?

According to the ideological hypothesis, we expected to find strong liberal participation at these times because of the Kennedy campaign and consistently strong conservative rates because of Reagan. Neither ideological group demonstrates such consistency, as strong liberal participation remains depressed in the early surveys, failing to rise above the rates of moderates, weak liberals, or weak conservatives until June. Strong conservative participation, on the other hand, rises in April, then drops by June, again demonstrating inconsistencies in the ideological thesis.

A further weakening of the ideological mobilization model is provided in Table 2, which shows the perceived ideological stances of the primary candidates as well as the average participation rates for supporters of these candidates over time.

On neither side do the most ideological candidates consistently receive the most active support. For the Democrats, Kennedy is perceived as the most strongly liberal, yet in two of the three waves his supporters' average participation rate is almost equal to the rate of the supporters of the less ideological Carter. Only in April is the Kennedy rate substantially higher than that for Carter. On the Republican side, the pattern is very much the same. While Reagan is clearly the most ideologically perceived candidate in all three waves, at no time is the rate of participation for his supporters

TABLE 2. Ideological Perceptions and Participation Rates over Time in 1980[a]

	January		April		June		September	
	Ideol.	Part.	Ideol.	Part.	Ideol.	Part.	Ideol.	Part.
Carter	4.35	.24	4.12	.34	3.93	.32	3.78	.30
Kennedy	2.82	.24	2.70	.52	2.66	.36	—	—
Brown	2.91	.38	2.83	.25	2.86	.71	—	—
Reagan	5.08	.33	5.10	.28	5.22	.47	5.21	.47
Bush	4.51	.26	4.36	.48	4.42	.49	—	—
Ford	4.65	.20	4.67	.30	4.64	.30	—	—
Anderson	—	—	3.74	.45	3.68	.32	3.54	.29

[a] Description of entries is identical to Table 1.

substantially larger than that of the supporters of his main challenger, George Bush. In fact, in April, the less ideological candidate's supporters have a much higher rate than Reagan's, and it remains slightly higher through June.

A model of mobilization based on competitiveness, not ideology, more fully explains the patterns of Figure 2. As previously noted, the focus of competition during the early campaign stages was in the Republican Party, as Reagan stemmed off the challenge from Bush after the latter's momentum-generating victory in the Iowa caucuases. Survey data from the January wave confirms that a higher percentage of respondents felt that the Republican nomination would be closer (89%) than the Democratic race (61%). Activity on the Democratic side was quiet, as President Carter was preoccupied with the Iranian hostage crisis and Kennedy stumbled badly on the campaign trail. The competition on the Republican side was, however, relatively short-lived, and by the April survey, "Bush (was) so far out of the race . . . that Reagan had clearly become the sole focus of the Republican campaign" (Bartels, 1985, p. 811).

The April to June period, though, saw the most intense Democratic competitiveness as Kennedy victories in the New York (late March) and Pennsylvania (late April) primaries provided the impetus for his convention challenge to Jimmy Carter. Although most respondents throughout this period thought Carter would be the eventual nominee, almost half believed that he faced "strong competition." By contrast, a high level of competitiveness was perceived in the Republican campaign by only 21% of all respondents.

The changes in participation bias over the course of the campaign closely parallel changes in the competitiveness of the environment. In January, opportunity to participate is not great across the board, but there is a slight conservative advantage. In April, where the measure reflects participation from the beginning of the primaries, the strong conservative trend is dominant, as the conservative rate of participation is .23 units greater than the strong liberal rate. In June, strong liberals respond to the April to June competition in their party and record an average participation rate of .53, a sharp rise over their April figure. During the same time period, strong conservative participation fell from its previous level.

Further demonstration of the liberal surge from April to June can be seen by examining participation in those states that had primaries during this period. If we limit the analysis to respondents in the 23 states which had primaries from April 22 to June 3, these results are even stronger. In April, strong liberal participation shows a low rate of .26, while strong conservatives register a much higher rate of .44. By June, though, strong liberals register a .32 increase in participation, the highest surge among the

five groups. Strong conservatives in these primary states show only a .06 increase over their April levels, supporting the claim that participation responded to the competitive nature of the Democratic primaries. The one group whose participation is not explicable by the competitiveness hypothesis, either in the earlier phase or in the late primary period, is weak conservatives. This group shows high rates of participation in June (.52), a substantial increase from their April level of .34. There is no ready answer for this pattern based on either the ideology or competitiveness model. It may be that a combination of factors, including the appeal of Carter to this constituency and the beginnings of the general election campaign efforts by the Republican nominee, contributed to this surge. Because both candidates enjoyed substantial support from this ideological group (as we show later in Table 3), it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from this occurrence. Whatever the explanation, the surge of weak conservative participation is present only in June and tails off again in the general election.

GENERAL ELECTION PARTICIPATION IN 1980

While the Beck and Jennings hypothesis did not receive much support during the primaries, the general election patterns are much more supportive of the original ideological mobilization thesis. The September participation rates shown in Figure 2 indicate that strong conservatives again assert an advantage at that time. From a mean of .45 in June, this group jumps to .65 during the general election, while strong liberals remain exactly the same in their mean participation rate. Table 2 shows that Reagan supporters, in addition, show the strongest average participation rate of all three major party candidates: .47 compared to Carter's rate of .30 and Anderson's .29 figure.

Competitiveness does not appear to have had an impact on participation during the post-primary, preelection period. There is no difference in the participation rate in September between those who feel the election will be close (.36) and those who feel one candidate will win easily (.37). The September survey also shows absolutely no differences between Carter and Reagan supporters on perceptions of the competitiveness of the election (85% and 87%, respectively, think it "will be close"). Nor is there any significant difference between strong liberals and strong conservatives in competitiveness perceptions; strong liberals are slightly more likely to think the election will be close in their state, while strong conservatives are slightly more likely to think the election will be close in the country as a whole. The Beck and Jennings hypothesis holds during this period, where

TABLE 3. Candidate Support among Ideological Groups (Percentages)

		Jan.	April	June	Sept.
Strong liberals	Carter	36	27	19	62
	Kennedy	21	16	23	—
	Other Dems.	14	06	06	—
	Anderson	—	24	24	21
	Reagan	11	03	10	17
	Bush	07	08	06	—
	Other Reps.	11	16	11	—
Weak liberals	Carter	57	35	25	60
	Kennedy	16	20	21	—
	Other Dems.	03	05	07	—
	Anderson	—	07	17	15
	Reagan	08	14	15	24
	Bush	06	02	05	—
	Other Reps.	08	16	10	—
Moderates	Carter	46	27	21	36
	Kennedy	15	07	13	—
	Other Dems.	00	11	06	—
	Anderson	—	14	14	17
	Reagan	17	18	27	46
	Bush	06	04	06	—
	Other Reps.	15	20	13	—
Weak Conserv.	Carter	38	35	21	26
	Kennedy	11	12	05	—
	Other Dems.	03	01	03	—
	Anderson	—	04	08	13
	Reagan	10	12	28	61
	Bush	13	07	10	—
	Other Reps.	25	29	24	—
Strong Conserv.	Carter	24	14	08	15
	Kennedy	04	03	04	—
	Other Dems.	04	03	01	—
	Anderson	—	03	04	03
	Reagan	24	39	42	81
	Bush	20	17	18	—
	Other Reps.	24	21	24	—

the most ideological candidate mobilized both his natural ideological constituency and his general following more effectively than his opponents.

Why, though, should ideology matter in September yet not earlier to any

appreciable degree? Obviously, for ideological mobilization to take place, there cannot be high levels of support by a particular ideological group for a candidate of an opposing ideological stripe. If, for example, strong conservatives were to participate at a high rate yet were to divide their support between Ronald Reagan and Edward Kennedy, it would be difficult to claim that their participation was the result of ideological affiliation with the conservative candidate. In fact, the actual data on candidate support by ideological groups are not quite as extreme, but they do indicate a widespread lack of consensus on candidates until late in the election season. Since there was no agreement on candidate support overall, and since several groups supported candidates on conflicting ideological poles, it is impossible to attribute mobilization to strong ties between candidates and their "natural" ideological constituencies. Table 3 shows the percentage of each ideological group which supports each candidate in the four election surveys.

As can be seen, in all of the primary waves, there is substantial disagreement within each ideological group over which candidate to support. Even the seemingly obvious ideological candidates do not obtain majorities of their ideological constituencies until the fall campaign. In January, Ronald Reagan has the support of only 24% of strong conservatives, the exact percentage that Jimmy Carter receives from that group. The remaining strong conservative support is split between Bush and other Republican hopefuls. On the strong liberal side, Carter has the plurality of support, with Kennedy trailing at 21%. Carter also enjoys a plurality of weak conservative and moderate support and a clear majority of weak liberal support, all of whom may have been his "natural" constituency. Clearly, support at this point in the campaign is not focused ideologically, explaining to some degree why participation did not follow ideological lines in the January survey.

In April, there is more focus among the ideological groups, yet still much disagreement in terms of candidate support. Reagan receives the support of almost 40% of the strong conservatives, but Carter, Bush, and other Republicans also receive significant amounts of this group's support. Strong liberals divide their support among Carter, Kennedy, and John Anderson, while the other groups register pluralities for Carter. This pattern of incomplete focus continues in June, where all groups except strong conservatives show unfocused support. The implications of this table is clear: Ideological mobilization in the primary season was thwarted by the lack of agreement within ideological groups over which candidates to support. Even strong ideologues, those respondents most predisposed to choose ideologically compatible candidates, appear to have taken other factors into account in determining their candidate preferences at this stage.

Recent research suggests that opinions on candidate viability (i.e., whether the candidate can win the nomination, or whether he can win the general election) play a large role in determining mass and elite preferences during primary campaigns (Bartels, 1985; Shanks and Palmquist, 1982; Stone and Abramowitz, 1983), and these opinions are all associated with notions of competitiveness, not ideology. Thus it is not surprising that participation did not conform to the ideological model in January, April, or June but was more in line with perceptions of competitiveness.

In September, though, there is considerable focus on ideological support for each candidate: 81% of all strong conservatives support Ronald Reagan, while 62% of strong liberals support Carter and over 20% of them support John Anderson. Reagan was able to mobilize his natural constituency since support was no longer divided among two or three other candidates. The candidacies of Carter and Anderson split the strong liberal camp, yet neither was perceived in strong enough ideological terms to mobilize this wing effectively. The important point is that mobilization on ideological grounds was not possible until the general election period because even convinced ideologues divided their early support among different candidates, only some of whom were strongly ideological themselves.

Our longitudinal findings from January, April, June, and September do not perfectly add up to the Beck and Jennings finding for participation in the 1980 election, as gauged by the CPS/NES postelection study. They report a strong liberal bias overall in that cross-sectional sample which does not perfectly mesh with the findings reported here. Based on our analysis, we would predict an overall balance for the ideological groups, or a moderate conservative advantage, in a summary measurement of campaign participation. Some of the discrepancy is most probably due to sampling error, to be sure (although we found no evidence of bias due to sampling mortality in the panel over time). Some could also be attributed to overreporting by strong liberals of their behavior during the campaign. We cannot rule out the possibility, though, that liberals generated a late-campaign surge in participation between the September and November waves of the panel, which would account for the Beck and Jennings (and our own November) findings. We can be sure, though, that such a surge would *not* have been due to ideology, since neither Carter's, Anderson's, nor Reagan's ideological ratings changed during that period. More likely is the notion that liberals realized late in the campaign that the election was slipping away and that even an unpopular incumbent was preferable to an ideologically strong conservative in the White House. This combination of perceptions of competitiveness and ideological *counter* mobilization may explain the last minute surge of the strong liberal camp.

CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis yields two related conclusions, one primarily methodological and one primarily substantive. First, characterization of participation rates for a given election from a single survey conducted after the election yields an inaccurate description of the tendencies of various groups to mobilize during the campaign. The traditional postelection questions on participation in the national election studies suffer from this problem, as it is unclear to what time frame respondents are referring when reporting on their activities during the campaign. Failure to take this into account led Beck and Jennings prematurely to question their "ideological opportunity" model for 1980, as their data were at least partially "contaminated" by participation at various points during the campaign. The postelection survey of participation thus obscured changes in the rates and the sources of these changes over time. Full investigation of campaign participation requires longitudinal data and explicitly posed questions that limit the time frame under consideration.

More substantively, ideological bias varies *within* as well as across campaigns, with different incentives stimulating participation at different points in time. During the primary season, the ideological configuration of the candidates per se appears to play a minor role in stimulating participation. Despite the presence of a strongly liberal candidate in the Democratic contest, in only one of the 1980 survey periods did strong liberals register substantial rates of participation. Similarly the strong conservative candidacy of Ronald Reagan did not evoke consistent activism among strong conservatives. At various points during the campaign, Bush supporters outparticipated Reagan followers, and Carter supporters outparticipated Kennedy backers.

Rather than reflecting ideology of the candidates, participation rates in the primaries corresponded to the opportunity afforded by the competitiveness of a particular party contest. When the Republican race was competitive from January to March, strong conservative participation emerges. When the Carter-Kennedy battle peaked from April to June, strong liberal participation resulted. Activists during the primary season seem to respond to a situation in which participation might make some difference or have electoral consequences, with ideology playing a more minor role. For candidates, this analysis indictes that the primary season may be more of a forum for generating momentum and perceptions of electability than for appealing to extreme ideological constituencies.

During the general election, though, the original Beck-Jennings model need not be so drastically revised. Ideology does play a major factor in mobilization at this time, as the high participation rates for strong

conservatives and among Reagan supporters in September clearly shows. Liberals, dispirited by the nomination of the unpopular incumbent president, split their support between Carter and John Anderson, and participated only lethargically, at least until very late in the campaign.

Our analysis finally explains a seeming paradox from the entire time series of ideology and participation: Since 1960, the side with the highest participation rates *loses* all election contests except 1976. Surely there is no true, nonspurious correlation between these variables. A candidate ideology model would suggest that the candidate's ideological extremity stimulates activist ideological participation but causes the candidate to lose the votes of an essentially centrist electorate. And again, the 1980 and 1984 data prove anamolous, for ideology led neither to (consistent) mobilization nor to electoral defeat. The competitiveness model suggests that primary divisiveness stimulates participation and leaves a broken party to face most likely a united opposition. This has long been suggested as a cause of electoral defeat (Wattenberg, 1985; Bernstein, 1977; Johnson and Gibson, 1974). In 1964 and 1972, these explanations could not be separated as divisive primaries also resulted in extreme ideological candidates winning their party's nomination. In 1980 and in 1984, though, the Republicans settled the nomination of the conservative Reagan very early in the campaign and then watched two bitter, fractious battles result on the Democratic side. These battles served to mobilize strong liberal activists, to be sure. Yet in 1980 they also led to less activist mobilization after the convention (Stone, 1986), and in both years to the abandonment of substantial portions of the party faithful from supporting the party nominee. Such a pattern indicates that, over the course of the campaign, high levels of participation may seem to be too much of a good thing.

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