Campaigns, the Economy, and the Election of 'Minority Party' Governors[*]

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Abstract

In two previous studies (Pelika & Goble 2006, Pelika & Goble 2008), we found a relationship between a state's economy and the probability of a 'minority party' gubernatorial candidate winning election over the past decade. Specifically, we found that such candidates are more likely to win when economic conditions – as measured by the unemployment rate – are strong than when they are weak. Here, we take a closer look at the relationship between states' economies and the outcomes of gubernatorial elections through a series of models that extends the time series over three decades and includes candidate- and state-level variables. We then look at whether candidate advertising about economic issues has an effect on election outcomes. Our results show that the effect for the unemployment rate is tied to party rather than minority party status, with Republicans much less likely to win when the unemployment rate is high. However, it appears that advertisements about the economy work much more to the benefit of minority party candidates than their majority party counterparts.

1   Introduction

In the 2006 midterm elections, Democratic governor Dave Freudenthal was reelected with seventy percent of the vote in Wyoming, a state that, two years previously, had supported George W. Bush's bid for reelection with 69 percent of the vote. Also in that year, Vermont, in which John Kerry won a clear majority of votes in the 2004 presidential election, sent Republican Governor Jim Douglas back to Montpelier with an easy victory and – on the same day – elected self-described 'democratic socialist' Bernie Sanders to the U.S. Senate. These election results represent a puzzle for political scientists – why do states that vote reliably for one party in national elections support the opposing party in gubernatorial elections? More generally, what state and national variables explain the outcomes of such elections?

In this paper, we examine both of these questions for gubernatorial elections between 1976 and 2007. We begin by looking at which general factors contribute to a successful campaign and how state economic conditions election results. We then turn our attention to how candidates run for office via advertising strategy, and how these factors together can explain the victories of candidates like Freudenthal and Douglas – candidates we dub 'minority party candidates.' Our findings point to two intriguing relationships: poor economic times consistently make it more likely Democrats will win, and advertising about the economy helps minority party candidates, but not majority party contenders, in their bids for the statehouse.

2   Prior Research

Existing research on gubernatorial elections points to three broad categories of explanatory factors: candidate characteristics and quality, political and economic context, and campaign strategy.[1] In our models, we use variables from each of these categories but are particularly interested in the latter two.

A substantial body of work explores the role of retrospective economic evaluations in presidential (e.g., Key Jr. 1966, Fiorina 1978, Fiorina 1981, Alvarez & Nagler 1995)

and congressional (e.g., Kramer 1971, Bloom & Price 1975, Tufte 1975) elections. However, the role of such evaluations in gubernatorial elections is less clear. Aggregate-level research from the 1980s downplayed the role of state economies in favor of the national context (Chubb 1988, Holbrook-Provow 1987, Kenney 1983, Peltzman 1987).[2] In contrast, more recent works find that state-level economic conditions affect election outcomes under varying circumstances, including when there is unified government in the state (Leyden & Borrelli 1995) (see also: Adams & Kenny 1989, Lowry, Alt & Ferree 1998). Finally, studies that employ individual-level survey data have found that state-level economic situations impact gubernatorial vote choice, either with the national economy having no significant influence (Carsey & Wright 1998, Squire & Fastnow 1994) or with evaluations of both economies present under varying conditions (Niemi, Stanley & Vogel 1995, Svoboda 1995).

Here, one of our goals is to discern how voters assess a state's economy and how those assessments factor into their gubernatorial vote decisions. In terms of how citizens assess economic conditions in general, many scholars have argued that it makes sense to focus on the most accurate measures of economic change, such as real income, which takes into account changes in prices, wages, hours worked, and unemployment (Kramer 1971, Bloom & Price 1975). By using these measures, one would hope to gauge how much voters react to actual economic shifts. Although in an economic sense it may be true that real income provides the most accurate portrayal of individual-level economic *circumstances*, economic *perceptions* may play an equal, if not greater, role. Some economic measures (e.g. unemployment rate) receive more media attention and are more easily understood than others and thus may be more salient in forming perceptions of the economy. Indeed, given the general agreement that most citizens engage in 'low-information rationality' rather than systematic evaluations of information (Simon 1985, Popkin 1991), the use of prominent, comprehensible economic measures should be more likely to occur than deeper assessments of the economy, even if the former are less accurate than the latter. Researchers who demonstrate the viability of such indicators include Niemi et al. (1997), who argue that unemployment has a

greater impact on voter perceptions than a variety of other potential indicators and Hansen (1999), who finds that high unemployment drives down gubernatorial approval ratings.

In addition to comparing various state-level economic measures, this study also looks at the role of candidate advertising about the economy. Relatively little has been written about the role of advertising strategy in shaping political campaigns. This dearth of research represents in part the methodological difficulty of tracing the give and take of candidate advertising in a campaign and hence building a comprehensive model of candidate strategy. However, previous research suggests that issues are more likely to be a focus in close races; in contrast, noncompetitive races tend to be focused on personal characteristics of candidates (Kahn & Kenney 1999, Simon 2002). Further, in close races, issues may make the difference between winning and losing. Although long-standing scholarly wisdom suggests that few voters engage in issue voting (e.g. Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes 1960, Margolis 1977), the relatively small portion that does can be crucial in a tight competition (Budge & Farlie 1983). With often severely limited campaign resources, candidates must make choices that they believe will give them the best chance of winning the election. As the conventional wisdom goes, half of campaign money is wasted, but which half is thrown away is unclear (Fenno 1978, Jacobson 2001).

Our study also contributes a growing line of general research about gubernatorial elections. A number of scholars have pointed to the growing "presidentialization" of such races, with the candidate-centered electoral politics observed at national levels making their way into state elections (Sabato 1983, Salmore & Salmore 1996). Gubernatorial incumbent advantage has increased (Patterson 1982, Piereson 1977, Tompkins 1984), while presidential coattails and the national context generally have become less influential, suggesting a more fully autonomous governor's office (Tompkins 1988). Finally, gubernatorial elections have become distinct from senatorial elections, at least in terms of incumbent vulnerability. Squire & Fastnow (1994) argue that, as a result of greater press coverage of governors, voters are more aware of and more likely to have

an opinion about both the incumbent and the challenger, making voter defection from the incumbent more likely.

Focusing specifically on winning 'minority party' candidates is not a new approach, with Fiorina taking on this puzzle as part of his broader study of divided government (Fiorina 1996). Fiorina argues that moderate voters split their tickets between polarized parties and asserts that minority party governors will be elected when the executive is seen as less influential on public policy than the legislature (p. 79-80). He also offers the argument that minority party governors may be elected in response to perceived policy failures on the part of the majority party, but rejects this claim due to its inability to explain the persistence of divided government at the state level. If this explanation was true, we would expect minority party governors to be elected when the economy is weak, such as when Republican William Weld was elected after a dramatic economic downturn in Massachusetts in 1990 (Fiorina 1996). However, in a previous paper (Pelika & Goble 2006), we find just the opposite to be true – that minority party candidates are more likely to win when a state's economy (as measured by the unemployment rate) is healthy. Our goal in this paper is to expand on that research by including a broader range of economic factors and taking a closer look at candidate advertising about the economy.

For advertising, there is relatively little that has been written about candidate strategy in shaping the campaign's message. This relative dearth represents in part the methodological difficulty of tracing the give and take of candidate advertising in a campaign and hence building a comprehensive model of candidate strategy. However, we are able to pull from the existing literature some circumstances and hypotheses about when and how candidates use issues in their advertising.

Previous research suggests that issues are more likely to be a focus of the race and that candidates will engage in a dialogue about issues when the outcome is expected to be competitive or close; in contrast, noncompetitive races tend to be focused on personal characteristics of candidates (Kahn & Kenney 1999, Simon 2002). Further, in these close races, issues may make the difference between winning and losing. Although

long-standing scholarly wisdom suggests that few voters engage in issue voting (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960, Margolis 1977), the relatively small portion that does can be crucial in a tight competition (Budge & Farlie 1983). With often severely limited campaign resources, candidates must make choices that they believe will give them the best chance of winning the election. As the conventional wisdom goes, half of campaign money is wasted, but which half is thrown away is unclear (Fenno 1978, Jacobson 2001).

Taken together, this literature on advertising indicates that we should expect candidates in noncompetitive races to stress their personal backgrounds and characteristics, while their counterparts in heated, close races focus on issues more in their ads. For minority candidates, this hypothesis suggests that those are successful and win their elections are likely addressing issues more than personal background, first, because their races are more likely to be competitive, and, second, because engaging in issue advertising is more likely to be a strategy undertaken by winners. That is to say, because minority candidates presumably start with a fairly significant disadvantage, if they are going to meaningfully compete and win, they are more likely to engage in issue advertising.

3 Data, Method, and Empirical Expectations

In this paper we focus on gubernatorial elections from 1976 to 2007. However, because of data availability issues, not all variables are included for the entire series. Most notably, the time period is constrained due to the availability of information about candidate personal characteristics and state legislative composition. In addition, our models using advertising data are further limited as the data are only available for the 2002 and 2004 elections. For our first set of models, which do not include the advertising data, our unit of analysis is the race, and the included independent variables capture both state context and candidate characteristics; the dependent variable for these models is a dichotomous indicator of whether or not the Republican candidate won the election. The final model, which include advertising data, is estimated using

the candidate as the unit of analysis, with a dichotomous dependent variable indicating whether or not the candidate won. Although we focus specifically on the role of the economy in this paper, we also incorporate key variables from our previous investigation into what influences the election of minority party governors. In this section, we describe our independent variables and our modeling techniques.[3]

3.1   Minority Party Membership

To calculate whether or not a candidate belonged to a minority party, we borrow the definition used by Jacobson (2006): candidates are coded '1' for *Minority Party* if they belonged to a party that received less than 48 percent of state's popular vote in the most recent presidential election. If gubernatorial and presidential elections occurred in the same year, the presidential vote outcome for that year was used. Under this definition, 33 percent of candidates between 1976 and 2007 were classified as minority party candidates. The remaining candidates are referred to as 'majority party' candidates, although it is important to note that in presidential swing states, both candidates may, for our purposes, be considered majority party candidates.[4]

3.2   State Economic Conditions

As discussed above, scholars interested in economic voting have disagreed about whether to use more accurate gauges of how the economy affects individuals, such as real income, or measures that that are prominent in media coverage and easily comprehended by the general public, such as the unemployment rate. Here, we use the latter, which, in a previous paper (Pelika & Goble 2008), had the strongest explanatory power when compared to three alternative measures (per capita personal income, gross state product, and housing starts). For the state-level unemployment rate, we use the seasonally adjusted figure for the month prior to the election, when citizens are most likely to decide their votes.[5] In other words, for a candidate running in 2004, the October 2004 rate is used. We use the straight unemployment rate rather than a percent change

because this economic measure is on a stable metric, and citizens are likely to have some understanding of what 'high' and 'low' unemployment rates are.

Giving the findings of our previous research, we expect that minority party candidates will find it easier to win when the unemployment rate is low than when it is high.

3.3 Campaign Advertising

To measure campaign strategy, we use data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project (WiscAds), which tracked campaign advertising in the nation's top 100 media markets in 2002 and 2004 (Goldstein & Rivlin 2005, Goldstein & Rivlin 2007).[6] Only ads that aired after a state's gubernatorial primary are included in our analyses. In addition, only candidate-sponsored ads are included even though all ads run by candidates, political parties, and interest groups are included in the WiscAds data.[7] As a result, we are confident that our results are a product of the campaign strategies employed by candidates rather than tactics employed by other groups.

In the WiscAds data, each case reflects the airing of a specific ad (or 'creative'). For each candidate, we calculated the total number of ad airings. We then divided that figure into the total number of airings of ads about the economy to determine the proportion of all ad airings that dealt with the economy.

3.4 Additional Factors

We also include a number of other individual-, race-, and state-level factors that may influence whether or not a minority party candidate wins election.[8] At the individual level, these variables include:

- **Incumbent**: Coded '1' if the candidate is the incumbent governor, '0' if not.

- **Local**: Coded '2' if a candidate was born in and went to college in a state, '1' if they were either born in or went to college in a state, and '0' if they did not meet either criterion.

- **Experienced**: Coded '1' if the candidate has previously been elected to statewide office, '0' if not.

In line with previous research, we expect that incumbents will be more likely to win, as will experienced (i.e. 'quality') candidates. For localness, we do not have a clear expectation. It could be that local candidates have knowledge of a state that is useful in winning; on the other hand, non-local candidates may have prestigious pedigrees or experiences that eliminate any disadvantage they may have from not growing up or going to school in a state.

At the state level, we use two measures of the partisan context:

- **Party of Congressional Delegation**: For the race-based model, coded '1' if both senators and a majority of a state's members of Congress are Republicans, '-1' if both are affiliated with the Democrats, and '0' otherwise. For the candidate-based model, coded in line with the candidate's party: '1' if affiliated with the same party, '-1' if the opposition party, and '0' otherwise.

- **Party of State Legislature**: For the race-based model, coded '1' if both the state's upper and lower legislative chambers have a majority of Republicans, '-1' if the Democrats control both houses, and '0' otherwise.[9] For the candidate-based model, coded in line with the candidate's party: '1' if affiliated with the same party, '-1' if the opposition party, and '0' otherwise.

We expect minority party candidates to have a greater chance of winning in those states that display some propensity to vote for other candidates from the same party. In particular, these measures allow us to account for instances in which the state-level political parties diverge substantially from the national-level parties, leading to such phenomena as 'New England Republicans' and 'Texas Democrats.'

Finally, we include two race-level variables:

- **Candidate's Primary Vote Share**: The proportion of the primary vote received by the candidate.

- **Significant Third Party Candidate**: Coded '1' if a third party candidate received at least five percent of the general-election vote and '0' otherwise.

Each of these variables captures an important aspect of the electoral context. The first gauges the extent to which the party faithful are behind a candidate and his/her opponent. Our expectation is that winning will be positively associated with a candidate's primary percent and negatively associated with his/her opponent's primary percent, as it should be more difficult to win against opponents who are highly appealing, have unified party support, or both. As for the variable for third-party candidates, we expect that in some states a strong third-party candidate will draw from the majority party, while in other states it will draw from the minority party, rather than systematically advantaging majority or minority party candidates.

Using these variables, we estimate four models. The first set of three models in Table 1 uses data for all available years – 1976 to 2007 – and includes all variables, as available, except for the measure of advertising about the economy. To control for state effects, the models are estimated with robust standard errors clustered by state. The final model only includes candidates in 2002 and 2004 in order to allow the use of advertising data; results are clustered by race.

4   Results

Table 1 presents the results of the model that covers the full 1976-2007 time period. Looking at the individual-, race-, and state-level variables, one sees that, as expected, incumbents of both parties have a much greater chance of success than those running as challengers or for open seats, a finding that is statistically significant across the time period. In addition, candidates who do well in their primaries are more likely to win. Curiously, the signs on the local and experienced variables for both Democrats and Republicans point in directions opposite of what might be expected, with positive or higher values of those variables associated with a victory for the candidate of the opposing party. As we propose above, non-local candidates, or those with significant

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out-of-state experience are likely to enter politics due to their prominence in business or other realms, and thus have an air of novelty and prestige attached to them that cannot be achieved by a candidate who worked their way up the ranks from state legislature to the state cabinet to gubernatorial candidacy; these local candidates may, hence, simply be of lower 'quality.' Furthermore, the importance of state legislative composition is clear in these results; having a Republican-controlled legislature strongly predicts a Republican gubernatorial victory.

In line with our prior results, the unemployment rate has a statistically significant (p<0.10) coefficient for our longest time series and is negative through all models. We thus see that a state's level of unemployment matters to gubernatorial elections, with a higher unemployment rate making it more likely a Democratic candidate would win. Figure 1, which plots the predicted probability of winning for Republican candidates, further illustrates this finding.[10] As the graph shows, the probability of a Republican victory rapidly drops, falling below .5 well before the mean unemployment rate (5.8). We further note that this finding comports with what issue ownership literature would predict on the assumption that voters trust Democrats to handle unemployment (Ansolabehere & Iyengar 1994, Petrocik 1996)

However, the interaction of the unemployment rate with minority party status contradicts our earlier findings that minority party candidates benefit from strong economies, as it is not statistically significant. Yet the interaction between minority party and the presence of a strong third-party contender is statistically significant in the model covering the most years and indicates that Democrats in the minority will have an easier time winning if a third-party candidate is present, presumably because the other candidate will take votes away from the Republican. It is important to note, though, that this model covers a time period that involved considerable partisan shifts at the state level, making it more difficult to draw out definitive results.

Turning to our second model, Table 2 displays the results of the model using 2002 and 2004 candidates and including advertising data. Recall that here, the unit of analysis is the candidate rather than the race. Interestingly, the variable for minority

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party candidate is statistically significant and positive, indicating that these candidates had an easier time winning overall in these two years. Here one sees the hypothesized result for unemployment, with strong economies benefitting minority party candidates.

As with the unemployment rate, only the interaction term for the proportion of economic ads is statistically significant ($p<0.05$). In other words, the extent to which a candidate aired ads about the economy did not matter for majority party candidates, but was significantly related to a minority party candidate's chance of success. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 2, which displays the probability of winning for majority and minority party candidates across the entire range of ad strategies. It is important to note, however, that the mean proportion of economic ads was 0.25, with a standard deviation of 0.23 – as one would expect, most candidates used economic ads alongside ads focused on other issues and candidate characteristics.

Finally, the results for the additional independent variables are largely consistent with the previous model, with the exception of the loss of statistical significance for the candidate's primary vote share, and, more curiously, incumbency. Along with the result for the minority party indicator, this last finding suggests that voters in 2002 and 2004 were much more likely to explore their options than is typical in the American context.

5   Conclusion

In many ways, the results of this study support a simple conclusion: gubernatorial candidates are more likely to win if they are incumbents, if they are strong primary candidates, and if their party also does well in other state elections. These results, although not new for the most part, provide additional support to research on campaigns and elections, and gubernatorial elections in particular.

Where we expand on or diverge from existing research, however, is bringing in the role of the economy, both in terms of the economic conditions in a state and in how candidates use this issue in their campaign advertisements. It appears that, in

line with previous research on the perceived strengths of the parties, citizens turn to Democratic candidates when the economy, as measured by the unemployment rate, is struggling. Although an interaction between the unemployment rate and the minority party candidate indicator existed in 2002 and 2004, this relationship did not hold up in a longer time series, indicating that further research is needed to determine if the unemployment rate effect is mediated only through party affiliation or also through minority party status.

In addition to the recent effect of the unemployment rate on minority party success, the economy appears to have another avenue of influence: through campaign advertising. The economy is a winning advertising issue for minority party candidates, but a losing one for majority party candidates. Only a careful content analysis of ads embedded in the context of particular races can fully uncover why this is the case. However, it may be that, given the finding that minority party candidates in this time period are more successful when state economies are strong, that these candidates are capitalizing on a state's prior economic successes by pressing for balanced budgets and other reforms that are not associated with reinvigorating an economy.

In addition to bridging the partisan divide in their own states, minority party governors are also viewed as attractive presidential candidates due to their proven bipartisan appeal. Yet this study demonstrates that, to a great extent, the success of minority party candidates in gubernatorial contests has little to do with the candidates themselves. Instead, these candidates typically win in states with low unemployment rates and vital third parties, factors which are outside of the control of most minority party candidates. This suggests that automatically viewing minority party governors as higher-quality presidential candidates may be an unwarranted strategy, although what happens after minority party winners enter the statehouse may be as important as what comes before in terms of the course of their political careers.

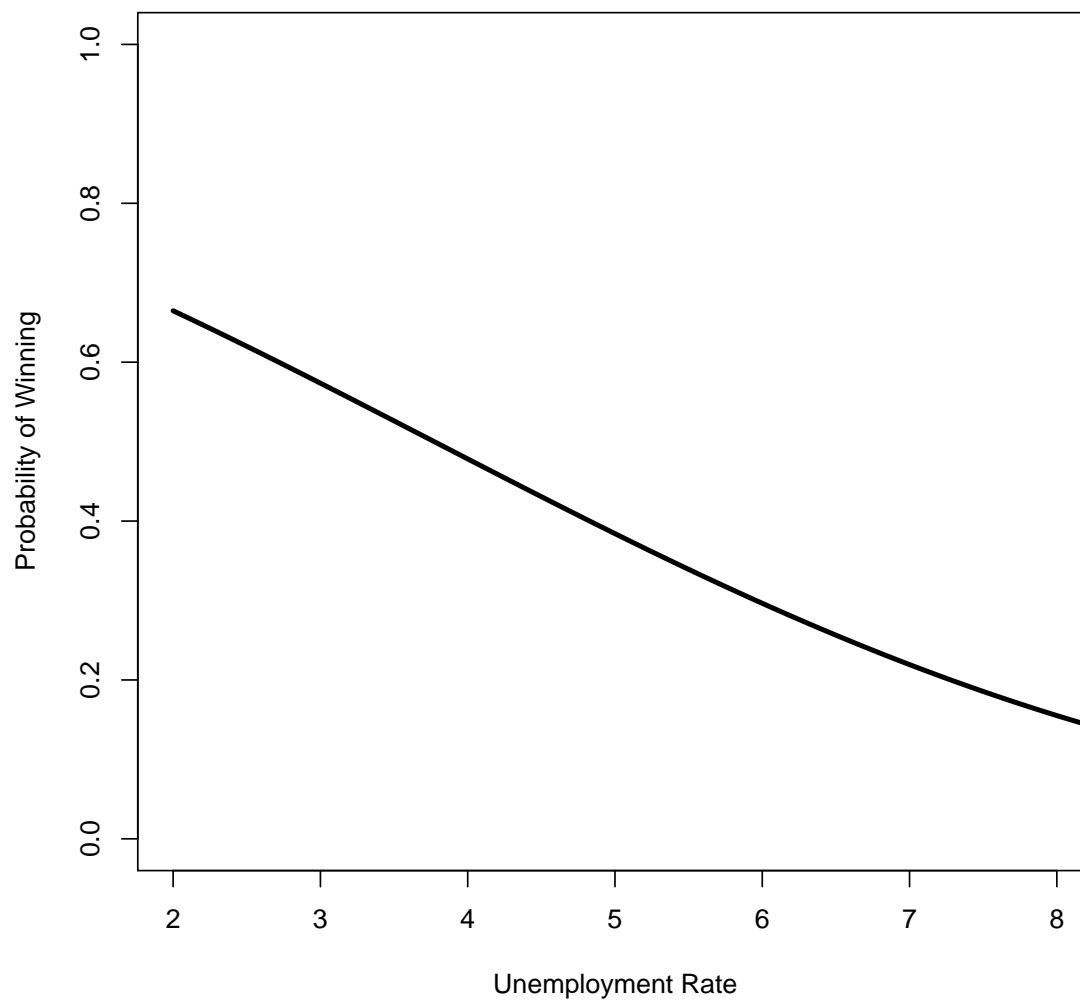Figure 1: Effect of State Unemployment Rate on Republican Candidates

Table 1: Factors Influencing Republican Gubernatorial Wins (Logit Estimates)

Variable	1997-2007 Coefficient (Robust SE)	1984-2007 Coefficient (Robust SE)	1976-2007 Coefficient (Robust SE)
Dem. Minority Party	-0.519	0.511	-0.404
	(2.583)	(1.478)	(0.768)
Dem. Candidate Incumbent	-1.719*	-1.224**	-1.171**
	(0.742)	(0.451)	(0.355)
Dem. Local	0.640*		
	(0.265)		
Dem. Experienced	0.066		
	(0.570)		
Dem. Primary Vote Share	-1.217	-1.299†	-0.761
	(1.232)	(0.753)	(0.609)
Dem. Minority Party*Third Party	-3.286†	0.237	0.726
	(1.808)	(1.010)	(0.919)
Dem. Minority Party*Unemployment Rate	0.483	0.027	0.160
	(0.571)	(0.271)	(0.116)
Rep. Minority Party	-0.211	0.303	-0.617
	(2.672)	(1.495)	(1.177)
Rep. Candidate Incumbent	1.660**	1.477**	1.590**
	(0.630)	(0.423)	(0.366)
Rep. Local	-0.644*		
	(0.319)		
Rep. Experienced	-0.123		
	(0.606)		
Rep. Primary Vote Share	2.513*	1.215*	0.777†
	(1.176)	(0.624)	(0.467)
Rep. Minority Party*Third Party	-1.504	-0.105	0.807
	(1.468)	(1.226)	(0.897)
Rep. Minority Party*Unemployment Rate	0.286	0.101	0.134
	(0.543)	(0.296)	(0.214)
Party of Congressional Delegation	-0.073	0.016	0.136
	(0.353)	(0.223)	(0.159)
Party of State Legislature	0.546*	0.523**	
	(0.266)	(0.161)	
Unemployment Rate	-0.233	-0.056	-0.240*
	(0.375)	(0.250)	(0.115)
Third Party	0.894	-0.279	-0.572
	(1.070)	(0.826)	(0.671)
Intercept	-0.567	0.017	0.871
	(2.322)	(1.625)	(0.948)
N	149	309	417
Log-likelihood	-65.31	-165.267	-230.669
	$\chi^2_{(18)}$=56.12	$\chi^2_{(14)}$=112.77	$\chi^2_{(13)}$=99.06

Significance levels : $\dagger$: 10% $*$: 5% $**$: 1%

Table 2: Factors Influencing Gubernatorial Wins, 2002 & 2004 (Probit Estimates)

Variable	Coefficient	(Std. Err.)
Minority Party	5.542*	(2.753)
Unemployment Rate	0.051	(0.123)
Unemployment*Minority Party	-1.563**	(0.546)
Proportion of Ads about Economy	-0.901	(0.824)
Proportion Econ Ads*Minority Party	8.088**	(2.050)
Incumbent	0.446	(0.422)
Local	-0.464*	(0.209)
Experienced	0.090	(0.432)
Party of Congressional. Delegation	-0.264	(0.353)
Party of State Legislature	0.091	(0.260)
Candidate Primary Vote Share	0.957	(0.817)
Opponent Primary Vote Share	-1.202†	(0.686)
Sig. Third Party Candidate	-0.211	(0.247)
Third Party*Minority Party	2.881**	(1.068)
Intercept	0.671	(1.094)

N	82
Log-likelihood	-43.837
$\chi^2_{(14)}$	55.038

Significance levels : $\dagger : 10\%$ $* : 5\%$ $** : 1\%$

Figure 2: Effect of Ads about the Economy on Majority and Minority Party Candidates
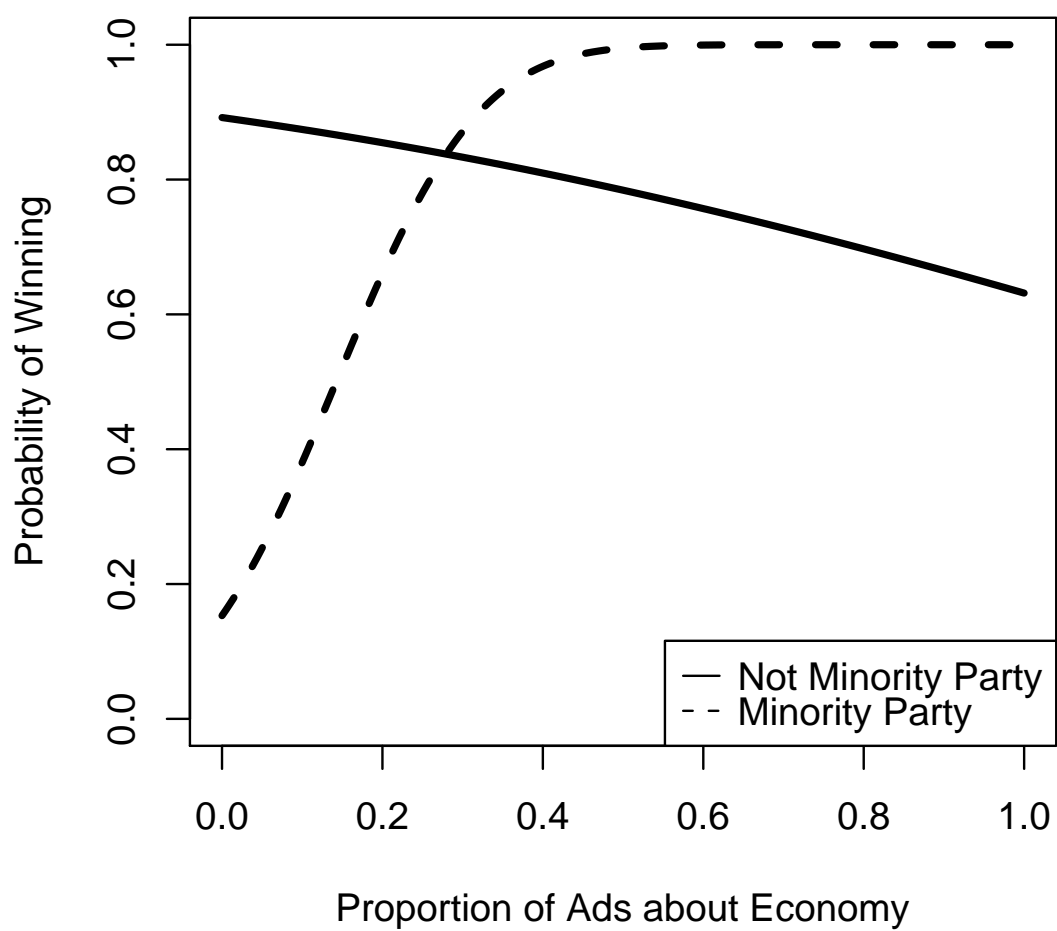
Appendix: Summary Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Rep. Win	0.474	0.500	0	1	418
Dem. Minority Party	0.457	0.499	0	1	422
Dem. Candidate Incumbent	0.280	0.449	0	1	422
Dem. Local	1.123	0.827	0	2	154
Dem. Experienced	0.654	0.477	0	1	156
Dem. Primary Vote Share	0.694	0.234	0.215	1	422
Rep. Minority Party	0.206	0.405	0	1	423
Rep. Candidate Incumbent	0.267	0.443	0	1	423
Rep. Local	1.190	0.801	0	2	153
Rep. Experienced	0.654	0.477	0	1	156
Rep Primary Vote Share	0.724	0.230	0.183	1	423
Party of Congressional Delegation	-0.028	0.611	-1	1	423
Party of State Legislature	-0.178	0.845	-1	1	315
Unemployment Rate	5.842	2.123	2	16.6	423
Significant Third Party Candidate	0.132	0.339	0	1	423
Proportion of Ads about Economy	0.251	0.229	0	1	82

Notes

[1] For example, Chubb (1988) identifies judgments about presidential handling of the economy, state economic conditions, the previous governor's partisanship, and presidential and senatorial coattails as factors in gubernatorial elections.

[2] However, Stein (1990) finds that voters are more likely to hold congressional and presidential incumbents responsible for subnational economic conditions.

[3] A table of summary statistics is included in the Appendix.

[4] In a previous paper (Pelika & Goble 2006), we also estimated all models using an alternative, less conservative, formulation in which a candidate was coded as belonging to the minority party if the opposing party won a plurality of the state's votes in both of the two previous presidential elections. The results under that definition did not differ significantly from those using the definition employed here.

[5] Economic data were collected from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis's FRED online database: http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2.

[6] All states contain at least one of the top 100 media markets except for Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont (in 2002 only), and Wyoming. As a result, candidates from these states were dropped from models that include advertising data.

[7] Over 80 percent of all ad airings were candidate-sponsored, and less than five percent were funded by interest groups.

[8] Data for these variables were collected from a variety of sources, including Congressional Quarterly's *Politics in America* series, *National Journal*'s online version of *The Almanac of American Politics* (http://www.nationaljournal.com), state election websites, and web searches for information about individual candidates.

[9] Candidates from Nebraska, which has a unicameral, nonpartisan state legislature, received a 0 for this variable.

[10] This figure was produced using results from the 1976-2007 model and estimated for candidates with average primary vote shares and 0 on all other variables.

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