Political Campaign Advertising: Is the South Really Different?

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ABSTRACT

A continuing issue in American politics is whether the political culture of the South is significantly different from the rest of the Nation or whether the Southernization thesis is a better explanation for contemporary political trends. That is, has the South significantly affected the character and content of national politics? Campaign rhetoric associated with television commercials offers evidence in support of both claims. Is regional variation in ads a driver in understanding national politics? Elazar (1966), Egerton (1974), Joselyn (1980), Nardulli (1990), and others offer analytic constructs which define regional political cultures. Analyzing gubernatorial and Senate general election contests (2000 – 2010), variation in campaign ads by region is used to test for political subcultural differences. If there are differences, are they significant? I focus on negative ads vs positive ads and candidate characteristics vs. policy positions. Data are drawn from the Wisconsin Advertising and Wesleyan Media projects.

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If you ask any undergraduate Southern politics class whether the South is unique,

distinct, or "really different," nearly all the students will answer, "Of course." Ask them what

makes the South so different, and the answers are predictable. They start with the Civil War or

the "war of Northern aggression" or the "recent unpleasantness;" others will mention race,

NASCAR, the food, barbeque, family, manners, the Confederate Flag, country music, guns, the

blues, moon pies, resistance to change, and tradition. Whether from the North or the South,

students will cite poverty, low levels of education, and the Bible.   One or two will typically

pushback rhetorically. "Doesn't the North have distinctive food?" "Didn't the South need an

opponent to fight the Civil War—as in the North?" "Isn't there poverty in the North?" "The

North has its racists, too." "Northerners are not *all* godless." The majority typically rolls its

eyes; a few will say something like "seriously?"

When it comes to politics, students point to: one-partyism, whether in Democratic or

Republican times; conservatism especially on social issues; aversion to taxes; hostility to big

government; the importance of race as a driver; and the fact that the South is really solidly

"red."

Surveying scholarly research on the South and the question of whether it is "really different," responses are mixed. Some argue in favor of "Americanization," suggesting that the South has assimilated many, if not most, of the cultural and political values of the rest of the country. Others make the case for "Southernization," which posits that the culture and politics of the South have migrated North. Unfortunately, this research does not resolve the debate; instead, it offers empirical evidence to support both claims. If Southern politics is really different, then it ought to manifest itself in the way campaigns and elections are waged. If campaigns in the South are different from campaigns outside the South, then candidate television ads should reflect those differences.

AMERICANIZATION VERSUS SOUTHERNIZATION

The genesis of the Americanization versus Southernization debate begins with John Egerton:

> The South and the nation are not exchanging strengths as much as they are exchanging sins; more often than not, they are sharing and spreading the worst in each other, while the best languishes and withers ... But the dominant trends are unmistakable: deep divisions along race and class lines, an obsession with growth and acquisition and consumption, headlong rush to the cities and the suburbs, diminution and waste of natural resources, institutional malfunctioning, abuse of political and economic power, increasing depersonalization, and a steady erosion of the sense of place, of community, of belonging (1974, *xx*).

Egerton does not take come down on one side or the other. Throughout the book, he argues that both theses are "homogenizing processes". Much has been written on the subject of Southern identity. W.J. Cash's *The Mind of the South* is, perhaps, the most cited early work (1941). He paints a less than flattering picture of the South and the Southerner. His vantage point is primarily rural; Southerners are of the soil. He describes the average white Southerner

as independent, romantic, individualistic, hedonistic, classless, violent, conformist, guilt-ridden, and having a fondness for rhetoric (Chapter 1). Classlessness has a racial component. Poor whites do not see inequality between themselves and those of higher social status. Blacks serve the purpose of creating a class below, allowing poor whites to feel equal to the planter class (39-41). Almost 20 years later, C. Vann Woodward (1958), offers a contrary view, seeing the old South as being replaced by the new South. He contrasts the "American way of life" with the "Southern way of life" and speaks of the "bulldozer revolution." The new Southern identity replaces poverty with "plenty;" it is more urban and suburban, liberal, less connected to the past, and industrial. Woodward does not ask the Southerner to reject the past or forget it, because having a sense of place can be a good thing, maybe even leading to a progressive future.

Any number of factors are used to argue in favor of Southernization or Americanization. Not surprisingly, race permeates the literature. Woodward's thinking was consistent with many who make the case for a "new South." The new South meant not only modernization and industrialization, but a change in the way Southerners think about the world. A more heterogeneous environment would lead to openness about race, about culture, about education, about the role of government, and about the world in which we live. Cooper and Knotts (2010) investigate whether modernization has brought a reduction in the use of the words "Dixie" and or "Southern." Using a word search of titles of businesses in 100 cities, they update previous work done by John Shelton Reed forty years before, finding that use of the word "Dixie" has declined, while adoption of the word "Southern" has grown.

Using unobtrusive measures and an experimental design, Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens (1997) concluded that racial prejudice was more evident in the South than in the non-South. They use this research to debunk the idea of a new South. On issues related to affirmative action or "government doing too much," or the possibility of a "black moving in next door," they find racial prejudice to be more pronounced in the South than in the non-South.

Lee, Bankston, Hayes, and Thomas (2007) make a case for Southernization, focusing on the culture of violence, long associated with the South. In studying rates of violence in counties across the country, they confirm their hypothesis that the higher the proportion of individuals born in the South, the higher the rate of argument-based homicide. This was especially true in rural counties among whites and not characteristic of blacks.

The Americanization versus Southernization argument has become something of an industry. The 1960's brought with it the pronouncement that the old South was becoming the new South, giving rise to conference after conference on this phenomenon. Historian James Cobb (1991; 2000) points out that a group of itinerant academics and journalists moving from one campus to another, in panel after panel, engaged in "self-obituarizing" the old South. Overall, he comes down on the side of the Egerton . He argues that the racism associated with the South was equally present in the North and just easier to blame on the South. Moreover, the idea of a progressive North is nothing but a myth. In Cobb's view, this "myth" gave the South something to strive for, even if a more enlightened North never existed. For Cobb, the negatives of the North and South reinforce each other.

If one is in search of a more bipartisan South, one must look to the outer South—North Carolina, Florida, and Virginia—in particular, the victories of Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential contest. Lassiter and Kruse contend that because the suburbs have become increasingly diverse, the Republican one-party South will give way to a more bipartisan South (Lassiter and Kruse 2009). This is consistent with the work of Judis and Texeira (2002). who argue that the future of American politics is tied to the creative class, which will continue to grow and migrate to urban and suburban places. Those who migrate are mainly professionals, both men and women, support staff, and others who provide services to them. As a group, they tend to be Democratic, giving rise to the authors' thesis of an "Emerging Democratic Majority."

STATES AS REGIONAL SUBCULTURES

Also beginning in the late 1960s, political scientists began to study how states might be categorized in terms of their political cultures. They drew on the works of Almond, Verba, and Powell on the importance of understanding political culture as key to understanding politics. Daniel Elazar defined state political cultures in terms of three groupings: moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic (1966; 1970; Elazar and Zikmund 1975).

The "individualistic" political culture is one which suggests that individuals operate in a political and economic marketplace. Private concerns are uppermost in their eyes. The role of government is to be restricted to areas which do not infringe upon the rights of individuals to have access to the marketplace. The individualistic subculture is ambivalent towards

government—politics should be used mainly to improve an individual's economic well–

being. To the extent government can enhance the economic initiative and potential of

individuals, then government should be encouraged to do so. To the extent that government

activity can retard that potential, then government should be held back (1966, 86-89).

The "moralistic" subculture sees government as playing a significant role in enhancing

the democratic community. Those living in moralistic states want government to play a positive

role. Elazar writes that politics is "a struggle for power, to be sure, but also an effort to exercise

power for the betterment of the Commonwealth" (1966, 89-92).

The "traditionalistic" subculture shares some of the ambivalent characteristics of the

individualistic. For Elazar, this categorization is associated with "paternalistic and elitist"

conceptions of government, writing that these states have a "pre-commercial attitude that

accepts a substantially hierarchical society as part of the ordered nature of things" (1966, 92-

93). Government can have a positive role as long as it supports the existing social, political, and

economic order; innovative public policy is largely rejected. The traditionalistic subculture is

key to this study. In identifying states which fit this categorization, Elazar names Alabama,

Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South

Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia (1966, 108.).

According to Joel Lieske, there have been over 100 tests of the Elazar schema (1993,

889). Most have generally confirmed his subculture designations. Samuel Patterson (1996)

found that the South (traditionalistic states) was lowest in political efficacy. Ira Sharkansky

(1969) created a 9-point scale moving from "moralistic" to "traditionalistic;" Southern states

scored lowest in political participation, confidence in bureaucracy, and appreciation for innovative government programs, such as social welfare programs; traditionalistic states also scored highest on support for voting restrictions. Norman Luttbeg (1971) compared Census regional divisions with Elazar's breakdowns and found that on measures of economic development, political processes, and policy opinions, Elazar's groupings were much more predictive of opinions. Overall, Luttbeg concludes that culture had more explanatory power than Census categories.

Charles Johnson (1976) tests Elazar by using religious denomination as a proxy for subculture. The denominations he identifies as traditionalistic line up well with Elazar, with the exceptions of Louisiana, which Johnson attributes to Roman Catholicism and West Virginia, for which he has no explanation. Substantively, his attitudinal findings track with those Elazar connects to the traditionalistic subculture. His dependent variables include everything from participation in elections to bureaucratic functions to government programs.

Elazar has his detractors; Peter Nardulli described his analysis of states as "impressionistic" (1990, 303). The most typical criticisms rest on Elazar's assumption that states within a particular subculture are largely homogenous. Lieske (1993), Erickson, McIver and Wright (1987), and Nardulli all take exception to broad regional groupings, arguing that there is more variation within states than between states (see also Schultz and Rainey 1978). Their thesis is that states differ from each other only at the margins. Lieske uses Elazar's divisions, but prefers to apply them to individual counties. So, within a particular state, counties can be classified as moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic. Erickson, McIver and

Wright, and Nardulli would abandon region as a unit of analysis completely, contending that more robust findings can be provided on a state-by-state basis. Erickson, *et al.* actually create dummy variables for 48 states. Critics also argue that Elazar's impressionistic definitions of regions need empirical verification, best accomplished through the collection of hard survey data. Their line of reasoning is straightforward: states have significant attitudinal variation which is lost if they are collapsed into three political cultures instead of 50. Important nuances get buried in pursuit of parsimony. Schultz and Rainey (1978) take issue with all of Elazar's contentions, mainly, because they have not been subjected to empirical verification. Using data from the Comparative State Elections Project (CSEP) data, They found no evidence to support Elazar's claims. Weakheim and Biggert (1999) do not accept the idea of only three regional subcultures. Using GSS data, they substitute nine regions for Elazar's three. They create a liberalism scale, based on 29 attitudinal items; aggregate state scores are used to assign states to each of the nine regions. The three most conservative regions are located in the South.

REGIONAL VARIATION IN POLITICAL ADVERTISING

Surprisingly enough, scant research can be found on the relationship between region and campaign advertising content. In a 1980 study, Richard Joslyn (1980) applies the Elazar categories to 1974 election data. He focuses mainly on moralistic and individualistic states. He really only mentions traditionalistic states in passing. Traditionalist states are the most distant from moralistic states, confirming Sharkansky's findings (47). A second part of the study randomly selected 105 campaign ads from 18 states for the period 1964 through 1976. Unfortunately, ads aired in traditionalistic states were not included. Key findings were that

moralistic states were more likely to emphasize policy over candidate qualities; in contrast, individualistic states emphasize candidate qualities over policy (51-53). Joslyn opines, "Citizens in moralistic states tended to be more efficacious, more participatory, more trusting, and more prone toward government intervention than citizens in individualistic or traditionalistic subcultures" (47). Generally speaking, he confirms Elazar's regional divisions.

A second study, conducted by Payne and Baukus (1985), examined 100 ads from 1984 Senate races. They conclude that Southern states were more likely to be candidate-centered than policy-centered. On issues which could be compared across regions, Southern states were likely to support school prayer, lower taxes, and reducing crime. A more recent work by Jaeho Cho (2011) compared two media markets, both in New Jersey; one a high-volume market; the other, a low-volume market. The dependent variable was political discourse. The high-volume market generated more political discourse than the low-volume, giving rise to the conclusion that campaign advertising enhances citizen interest, discourse, and participation in politics. Cho drew two conclusions: media markets can be drivers in politic, and campaign advertising can have a direct influence on democratic decision-making.

DATA AND METHODS

One explanation for the lack of attention given to the impact of region on campaign advertising is that until recently no systematic data have been collected. Thanks to the Wisconsin Advertising Project, the Wesleyan Media Project, the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG), as well as their funding organizations, very rich datasets have been made

available to scholars interested in exploring any number of research questions[1] (See acknowledgements at the end of this paper for a full listing of key scholars and grantors). This study makes use of the 2000, 2002, 2004, 2008, and 2010 election datasets.[2] Each cycle contains over one million ads, a function of duplication. That is, if an ad was aired 500 times, there are 500 logical records in the data. In addition, each cycle cumulates data for presidential, Senate, House, and gubernatorial contests. What make the data even more valuable is the ability of the researcher to examine a large number of variables across time. However, the size of each of the databases makes it difficult merge all the data. I reduced the number of variables as a way to combine the data, limiting this research to only gubernatorial and Senate races.

Three dependent variables were identified: "ad tone" (attack, contrast, or positive), "focus" (personality or policy), and selected thematic issues. The independent variables are region (South or non-South), sponsoring candidate's party, and election year. In coding region, I relied on the Elazar definition of "traditionalistic" subculture to create a variable for the South. The remaining states are designated as non-South. Here are the states included in the "South" variable:

Alabama	Louisiana	Tennessee
Arkansas	Mississippi	Texas
Florida	North Carolina	Virginia
Georgia	Oklahoma	West Virginia
Kentucky	South Carolina	

Because all but one of the variables were nominal, conventional chi square analysis was employed. A number of dummy variables were also created to facilitate regression. Where results are useful, they are reported.   In order to avoid an "apples and oranges" analysis, the study was narrowed to include only candidate-sponsored ads aired in general elections; separate analyses were conducted for gubernatorial and Senate races.

ANALYSIS

Negative Ads. In their analysis of 2012 presidential campaign television advertising, Fowler and Ridout (2013) find strong evidence supporting the conventional wisdom that campaign advertising has become increasingly negative. They track ads for the 2004, 2008, and 2012 presidential general elections (52). They also examine congressional races for the 2000-2012 cycles; for these contests, the percentage of attack ads grew with each cycle. Note that data for 2006 was not available at the time of their study.

Using the same datasets, findings in this study were consistent, although attack ads do not constitute as large a proportion of total ads as were reported by Fowler and Ridout (Tables 1 and 2). Note that House races are not included in this analysis. There are general upward trends in negative advertising for both governor and Senate races (Figures 1 and 2). Election year is also a significant predictor of the relationship between region and ad tone. In most

years, the South is typically more on the attack than the non-South,[3] Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate that the trend of increasingly negative ads is somewhat more pronounced in Senate races than in gubernatorial contests. Figures 5 and 6 provide evidence that Southern Republicans run more negative ads than Southern Democrats; in contrast, non-Southern Republicans are somewhat less likely to run attack ads than non-Southern Democrats. Overall, region is not a very good predictor.

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[3] The 2010 election appears to be an outlier.

Table 1 GUBERNATORIAL AD TONE BY REGION BY YEAR			All	South	Non-South
2000	Attack		27%	27%	26%
	Contrast		24%	31%	20%
	Positive		49%	42%	53%
2002					
	Attack		29%	32%	27%
	Contrast		17%	18%	17%
	Positive		53%	50%	55%
2004					
	Attack		26%	26%	25%
	Contrast		20%	20%	20%
	Positive		54%	54%	54%
2008					
	Attack		17%	20%	16%
	Contrast		20%	18%	21%
	Positive		63%	63%	63%
2010					
	Attack		35%	28%	37%
	Contrast		25%	24%	25%
	Positive		40%	47%	37%
	TOTAL N		1185262	657204	528058
X^2 = p<.001 for each year.					

Table 2 SENATE AD TONE BY REGION AND YEAR			All	South	Non-South
2000	Attack		16%	13%	17%
	Contrast		27%	33%	26%
	Positive		57%	54%	58%
2002					
	Attack		16%	18%	12%
	Contrast		22%	21%	22%
	Positive		62%	62%	63%
2004					
	Attack		27%	27%	25%
	Contrast		20%	20%	21%
	Positive		54%	54%	54%
2008					
	Attack		20%	24%	13%
	Contrast		26%	27%	25%
	Positive		54%	49%	61%
2010					
	Attack		35%	29%	37%
	Contrast		28%	31%	27%
	Positive		37%	40%	37%
	TOTAL N		992487	473640	518847
X^2 = p<.001 for each year.					

Figure 1

Gubernatorial General Election Races
Negative Ads by Region
2000-2010
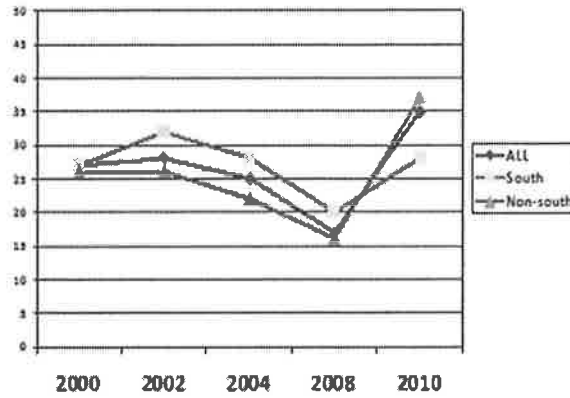### (2006 not available)

Figure 2

Senate General Election Races
Negative Ads by Region
2000-2010
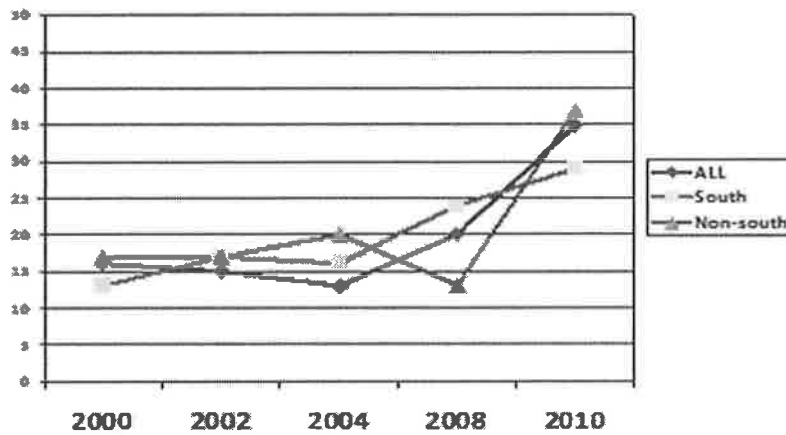### (2006 not available)

Figure 3

Gubernatorial General Election Races
Negative Ads by Party and Region
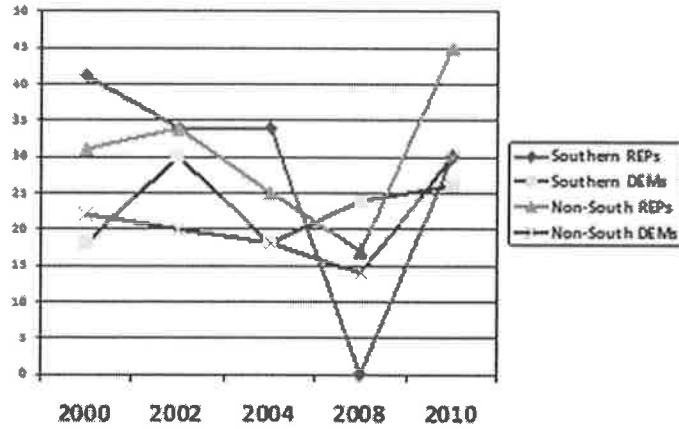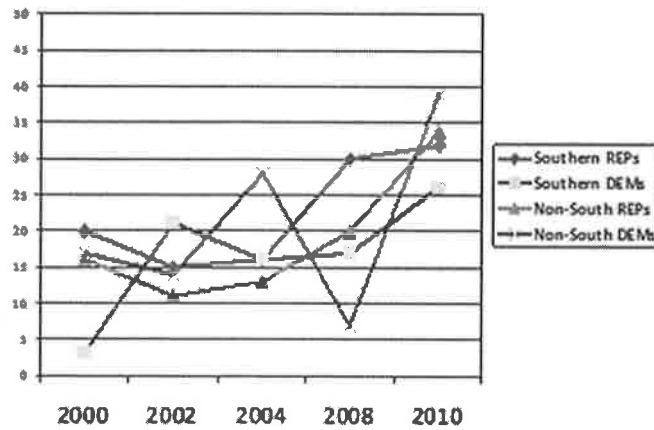## 2000-2010
[2006 not available]

Figure 4

Senate General Election Races
Negative Ads by Party and Region
2000-2010
[2006 not available]

Region combined with the sponsoring candidate's party identification is more strongly

related to ad tone (Tables 3 and 4). In gubernatorial races, both non-Southern Republicans

(37%) and Southern Republicans (32%) are more likely to air attack ads than non-Southern

Democrats (27%) and Southern Democrats (23%). The pattern for Senate elections is not as

linear. Here, non-Southern Democrats (28%), Southern Republicans (26%), and non-Southern

Republicans (26%) cluster together; Southern Democrats were least likely to utilize negative

ads. OLS regression revealed that both region and party identification are statistically

significant, though the candidate's party is more powerful in predicting the percentage of

attack ads aired (Table 4). The model itself is not robust.

Table 3
Gubernatorial General Election Races
Negative Ads by Party and Region
2000-2010
[2006 not available]

	Southern Republicans	Southern Democrats	Non-South Republicans	Non-South Democrats
attack	32%	23%	37%	27%
not attack	68%	77%	64%	73%

$X^2 = p < .000$.

Table 4
Senate General Election Races
Negative Ads by Party and Region
2000-2010
[2006 not available]

	Southern Republicans	Southern Democrats	Non-South Republicans	Non-South Democrats
attack	28%	20%	25%	29%
not attack	72%	80%	75%	71%

$X^2 = p < .000.$

Focus of Ads. Ads were coded as to whether they focused more on policy than on the personal attributes of candidates. Tables 5 and 6 demonstrate that ads, by a more than 2 to 1 margin, emphasized policy over personal characteristics. Personal traits were most noticeable in 2004 where nearly 30% identified candidate strengths and weaknesses. In reviewing elements of Southern political culture, research has demonstrated that voters in Southern states were more likely to be candidate-centered as opposed to policy-centered. In nearly every general election cycle, ads aired in the South tended to be more directed to the personal qualities (or lack thereof) of candidates than in the non-South. In 2010, for example, nearly one third of Southern ads were coded as "personal attributes," in comparison to 20% recorded for the non-South.

			Table 5 FOCUS OF GUBERNATORIAL ADS BY REGION BY YEAR		
		All	South	Non-South
2000	Policy	88%	81%	92%
	Personal Characteristics	12%	19%	8%
2002				
	Policy	81%	77%	84%
	Personal Characteristics	19%	23%	16%
2004				
	Policy	71%	67%	78%
	Personal Characteristics	29%	33%	22%
2008				
	Policy	97%	98%	96%
	Personal Characteristics	3%	2%	4%
2010				
	Policy	77%	69%	80%
	Personal Characteristics	23%	31%	20%
	TOTAL N	823570	349171	474399
X^2=p < .000 for all years.				

			Table 6 FOCUS OF SENATE ADS BY REGION BY YEAR		
		All	South	Non-South
2000	Policy	86%	90%	86%
	Personal Characteristics	14%	10%	14%
2002				
	Policy	80%	76%	85%
	Personal Characteristics	20%	24%	18%
2004				
	Policy	71%	67%	78%
	Personal Characteristics	29%	33%	22%
2008				
	Policy	74%	70%	79%
	Personal Characteristics	26%	30%	21%
2010				
	Policy	75%	77%	74%
	Personal Characteristics	25%	23%	26%
	TOTAL N	648342	293717	354625
X^2=p < .000 for all years.				

Figure 5

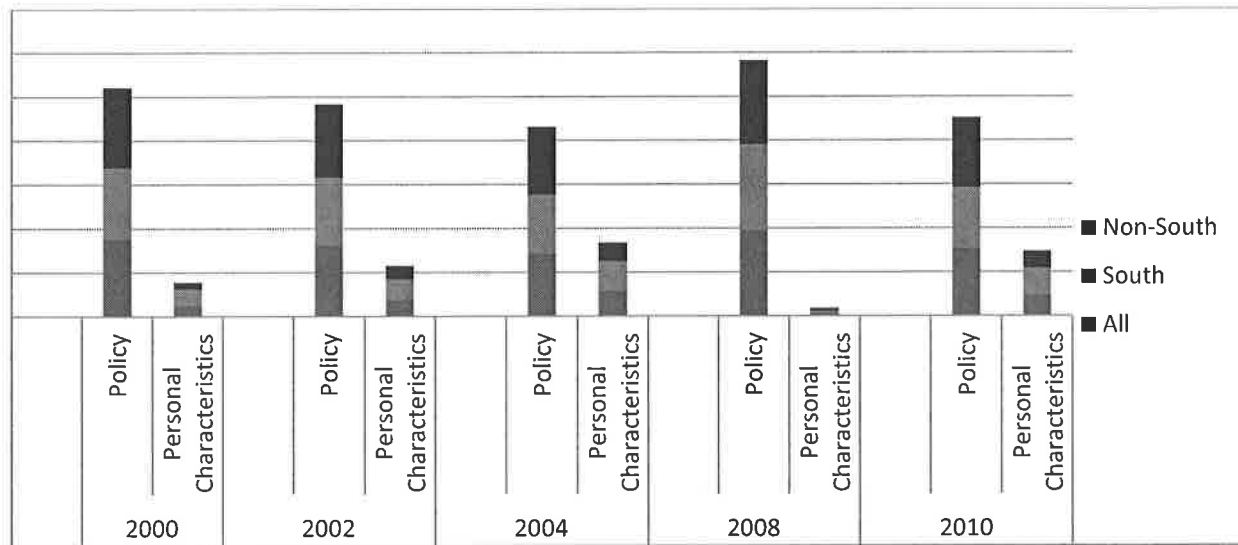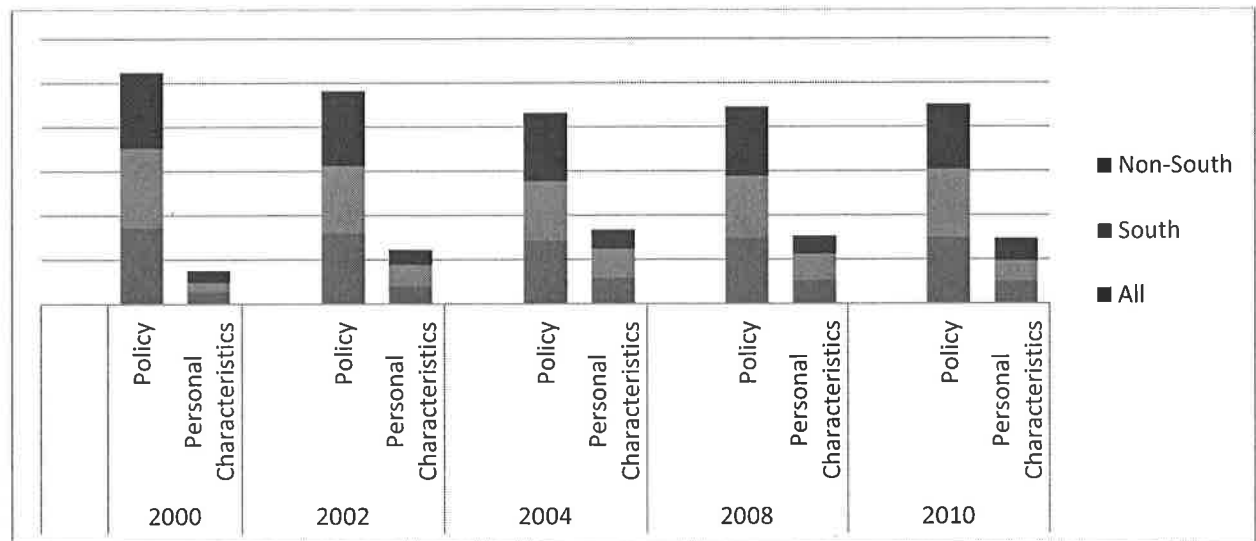## Focus of Gubernatorial Ads by Region by Year

Figure 6

Focus of Senate Ads by Region by Year

What about the relationship between the purpose of an ad, tone of the ad, and region. Table 7

shows that 50% of non-Southern ads highlighting personal attributes were attack ads; 26% of

the policy ads in the South were negative. The same was true for the South, where 40% of the

candidate-centered ads were negative, as opposed to 26% negative for policy-centered ads.

For Senate races outside the South, personal characteristic ads were somewhat more negative

than policy ads (34% to 27% negative). There was virtually no difference in tone inside the

South (Table 8).

Table 7
Gubernatorial General Election Races
Focus of Ad By Ad Tone and Region
2000-2010
[2006 not available]

	South		Non-South	
	Personal Characteristics	Policy	Personal Characteristics	Policy
attack	40%	26%	50%	26%
not attack	60%	74%	50%	74%

$X^2 = p < .000.$

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Table 8
Senate General Election Races
Focus of Ad By Ad Tone and Region
2000-2010
[2006 not available]

	South		Non-South	
	Personal Characteristics	Policy	Personal Characteristics	Policy
attack	28%	28%	34%	27%
not attack	72%	72%	64%	73%

$X^2 = p < .000.$

Thematic Issues. Over 50 issues were coded in the datasets. They were collapsed into six categories: personal characteristics, economic issues, social issues, law and order, domestic issues, and foreign-policy/defense. Social issues encompassed the more controversial wedge issues, such as abortion, gun control, and immigration. Domestic issues typically involved budgeting; examples included spending on education, Medicare, and Social Security. The first thing to note about Tables 9 and 10 is how relatively unimportant social issues, law and order, and foreign policy questions were in the overall distribution of advertising themes. For both gubernatorial and Senate races, political advertising in the South emphasized the personal qualities of candidates first, followed by domestic issues. Again, this is consistent with previous research. In contrast, non-Southern candidates were most likely to press economic themes, followed by domestic concerns; personal attributes ranked third.

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Table 9			
GUBERNATORIAL AD THEMES BY REGION			
[All Years]			
	All	South	Non-South
Personal Characteristics	30%	39%	24%
Economic Issues	34%	26%	40%
Social Issues	2%	2%	2%
Law & Order	3%	3%	3%
Domestic Issues	28%	26%	30%
Foreign Policy/Defense	2%	4%	1%
TOTAL N	1074572	457400	617172

X^2 = p<.000; phi=.197 p<.000.

Figure 7

Gubernatorial AD Themes by Region
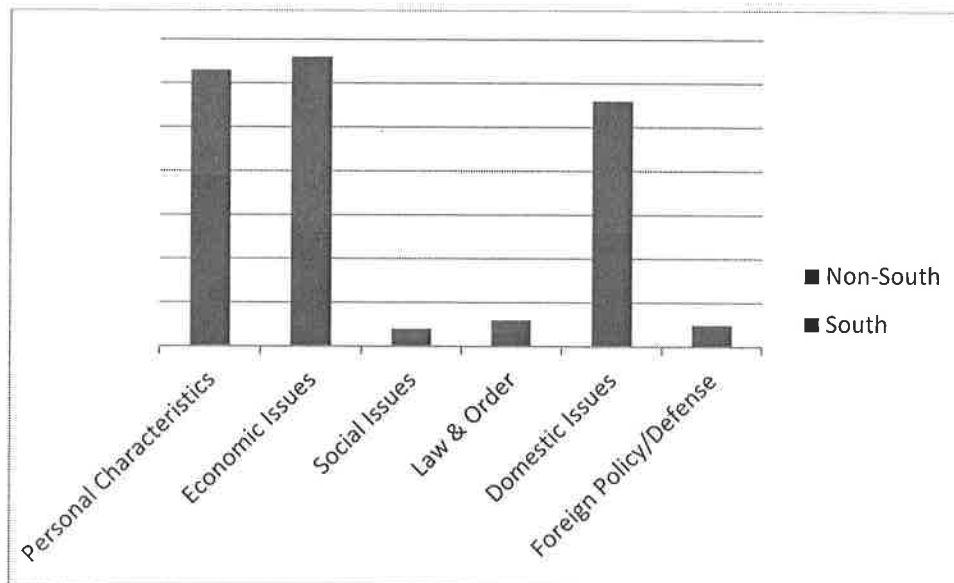
	Table 10		
	SENATE AD THEMES BY REGION		
	[All Years]		
	All	South	Non-South
Personal Characteristics	32%	42%	23%
Economic Issues	26%	22%	29%
Social Issues	4%	4%	4%
Law & Order	2%	2%	1%
Domestic Issues	31%	26%	34%
Foreign Policy/Defense	6%	4%	9%
TOTAL N	887494	423237	464257
X^2 = p<.000; phi=.214 p<.000.			

Figure 8

Senate AD Themes by Region
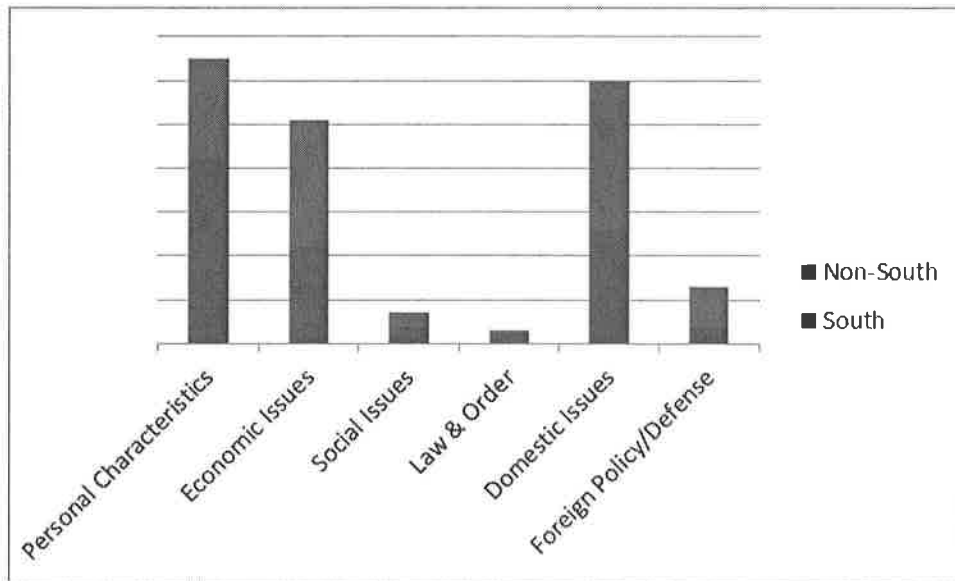
Not only was the regional variable statistically significant in predicting advertising themes, but, in combination, party and region reinforced this analysis. Both Southern Republicans and Southern Democrats (about 40%) were more likely to emphasize personal qualities in their ads as compared to about one-quarter of non-Southern Republicans and Democrats (Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11
Gubernatorial AD Themes
By Candidate's Region and Party ID

	Personal Characteristics	Economic Issues	Social Issues	Law & Order	Domestic Issues	Foreign Policy/Defense
Southern REP	37%	29%	2%	3%	25%	4%
Southern DEM	42%	23%	2%	3%	27%	3%
Non-South REP	20%	44%	2%	3%	31%	1%
Non-South DEM	27%	36%	2%	3%	30%	2%

$X^2 = p < .000.$

Table 12
Senate AD Themes
By Candidate's Region and Party ID

	Personal Characteristics	Economic Issues	Social Issues	Law & Order	Domestic Issues	Foreign Policy/Defense
Southern REP	41%	23%	4%	1%	27%	4%
Southern DEM	43%	21%	4%	2%	26%	4%
Non-South REP	23%	30%	3%	1%	40%	3%
Non-South DEM	24%	28%	4%	1%	29%	14%

$X^2 = p < .000.$

DISCUSSION

This research is at its beginning stages. While not really exploratory, there is a good deal more work to be done before additional systematic analysis can be undertaken. It is just a very, very massive database. That said, the research confirms that region affects both the tone of an ad as well as its content. Key findings from the study include:

- Southern candidates, especially Republicans, rely more heavily on negative ads than do their non-Southern counterparts.

- The sponsoring candidate's party identification may be a more powerful predictor than region. In combination, Southern Republicans and Southern Democrats are more likely to employ attack ads than were other candidates.

- When it comes to the purpose of an ad, it is clear that Southern candidates were more likely to focus on personal characteristics than policy issues. In gubernatorial races, the pattern was more pronounced.

- Ads which emphasized personal characteristics were more negative than ads which emphasized policy. This was true for both Southern candidates and non-Southern candidates.

- Six themes were used to compare the television ads of candidates by region. Consistent with the literature, Southern ads were more likely to focus on personal attributes and domestic issues than on economic issues. Leading the thematic list outside the South were economic concerns.

Questions which need to be resolved in additional research:

- Should there be more focus on general elections which are the most competitive? For example, candidates who run unopposed, as many do in the South, likely air more positive ads in general elections. This may account for the majority of ads in gubernatorial races in the South being more positive than negative.

- Should primaries be included?

- When it comes to analysis of issues, how can I best address whether the issue leans more to the right than to the left, since the coding does not usually specify?

- The role of party is an important one. Because the data are all nominal, dummy variables were used to conduct regression. Yet, neither linear nor binary logistical regression is satisfying to the researcher in measuring the relative power of region, party identification, and/or office. How can I get to a more power analytic model?

- How would these findings change with the addition of 2006 and 2012 data? Including these data allows for more confidence in longitudinal analysis and more ability to explore more fully the Americanization versus Southernization theses.

- To what extent does duplication in ads distort the results? Would a better research design be to create a new database where each ad is still the unit of analysis, but where there are no duplications?

- Finally, while previous studies compare the South with the non-South, is this really an optimum research strategy? So many "red" states outside the South resemble how the South votes. Should I employ not only Elazar's traditionalistic subculture, but also the other two?

Is the South really different? The answer is "yes" and "no." Region is related to whether an ad is negative or not. Southern ads are more likely to focus on personal characteristics than policy. Candidates in the South are more likely to choose to emphasize advertising themes which center on the personal over the economy and domestic spending. But party identification was a stronger predictor than region. Further research needs to sort that out. John Egerton's view in 1974 is likely to be the most on target: neither Americanization nor Southernization is apt; instead, North and South have simply exchanged vices.

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