Do Swing Voters Swing Elections?

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American presidential electoral politics are shaped to a great degree by two qualities: their competitiveness and their partisanship. American presidential politics are about as competitive as politics gets. Even landslide presidential election rarely reach a 60-40 split of the two-party vote and most presidential elections are decided in the 55-45 percent range. American politics in general are also very partisan and they have become more so in recent decades. Among reported voters in the 2004 election, about 40 percent identified strongly with either the Democratic or Republican parties and another 55 percent indicated some lesser level of party identification.[1] With competitive and highly partisan politics, it is natural that campaigns and those who observe them focus on those voters who are relatively uncertain about who they will vote for in an election. These potentially persuadable or "up for grabs" voters have become known as swing voters. Not being firmly committed to vote for a candidate, these undecideds or persuadables can swing their votes toward one candidate or the other.

Politicians and political observers have long attempted to determine the characteristics of these swing voters in a hope that, once identified, messages could be crafted to push or pull their decision one way or the other. Former Vice President Spiro Agnew in the late 1960s talked about swing voters as the "silent majority." Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg (1971) identified

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[1] These percentages were calculated from American National Election Study (NES) data and have been corrected for the disparity between the vote division in the data and the actual national vote division. The proportion of strong party identifiers among reported voters in 2004 is very close to what it was in the 1950s and early 1960s, the heyday of modern partisanship as documented by the classic study of *The American Voter* (Campbell, et. al., 1960). Those who are less identified with a political party include those who said that their identification was not very strong (about 29 percent in 2004) and those who initially said that they were independent but then said that they leaned toward a party (about 26 percent). Keith et. al. (1992) provide an array of evidence to indicate that these "leaners" are the equivalent of "not very strong" (often labeled "weak") partisans.

these swing voters by the characteristics that they lacked as the "unyoung, unpoor, unblack." Later efforts to tag the elusive swing voter labeled them as Reagan Democrats, angry white men, soccer moms, NASCAR dads, security moms, and most recently mortgage moms.

The substantial attention devoted to swing voters is based, at least in part, on an implicit assumption that swing voters swing elections, that the votes of swing voters decide who wins presidential elections. The competitiveness of presidential elections and the partisanship of the electorate, providing many voters with a strong "standing decision" to vote for their party's standard-bearer, makes the importance of the swing vote a reasonable assumption. It is an especially reasonable assumption when the parties are relatively evenly balanced in partisans as they have been since the mid-1980s. It is quite likely that the median voter positioned to decide the election is also a swing voter. This does not mean, however, that most or even a majority swing voters vote for the winning candidate or that the winning candidate requires a majority of the swing vote. It may be possible to win presidential elections with a large and activated base vote and a small fraction of the swing vote.

The question posed in this chapter is whether winning presidential candidates in recent elections have carried or won a majority of the swing vote and whether they won because of the swing vote. If presidents are elected because of the swing vote, then the importance often attributed to swing voters by campaigns and the media is warranted. If, on the other hand, the swing vote has not been instrumental in electing presidents, then the role of the swing voter in the political landscape should be reassessed. If carrying the swing vote is not the key ingredient to a popular vote plurality, then how much of the swing vote do candidates need to win to achieve a popular vote victory?

Who are the Swing Voters?

In order to determine the impact of swing voters in determining presidential elections, they must first be identified. What is distinctive about swing voters, what distinguishes them from non-swing voters, is that they are to some significant degree unsettled about how they will vote. It is clear that this is a matter of degree, that all voters are potentially open to changing their vote up until the moment it is cast. But voters differ in their uncertainty about how they will vote and some are much more open to being moved than others. At some level of this uncertainty, they can be labeled swing voters.

Three aspects of this vote uncertainty should be noted. First, the voter is not necessarily aware of or cognizant of his or her uncertainty about their vote choice. What makes a swing voter is the actual uncertainty of how the voter will vote and not whether the voter is subjectively willing to admit to this uncertainty. Many voters may harbor the illusion that they are open to either side in an election when their vote choice is effectively well decided and predictable. Though voter-supplied information about the vote is useful in assessing the extent to which the vote choice is unsettled, someone is not a swing voter because they say they are a swing voter. There must be a real possibility that their vote is moveable.

Second, at least for the purposes of this analysis, a swing voter is a voter. That is, swing voters are assumed to have turned out to vote. It is, of course, possible to include in the uncertainty about voting the decision of whether the potential voter will bother to vote. It would be understandable for many potential voters who are torn about who to vote for may decide to abstain from voting. For the purposes of this analysis, these non-voters were both potential voters and potential swing voters who, by opting not to vote, did not fulfill their potential.

Third, the uncertainty about how a voter will vote can (and most probably does) change over time. For instance, for many voters, their vote choice may be significantly less certain four or five months before the election than four or five weeks before the election. With more information and greater focus on that information, voters may become more settled in their vote for a candidate. It is, therefore, important to be time-specific in ascertaining who is and who is not a swing voter. In this analysis, given data limitations of available survey data, swing voters at two points in the election will be examined: pre-campaign swing voters and campaign swing voters. Pre-campaign swing voters are voters who we have reason to suspect are considerably uncertain in their vote well before the campaign begins. Their swing voter status is largely independent of the particular candidates running in the election. Campaign swing voters are voters who we have reason to suspect are considerably uncertain in their vote once the general election campaign is underway. These are swing voters who are unsettled in their vote after having information about the presidential candidates running in the particular election.

Who are the pre-campaign swing voters and how can they be best identified? The identification of pre-campaign swing voters draws on four different measures in the NES studies. First, pre-campaign swing voters are assumed not to be ideologically predisposed to vote for either of the major political parties' candidates. Since the 1972 election, the American National Election Study (NES) has asked a national sample of potential voters what their ideological perspectives are. Using this measure, swing voters are assumed to be neither liberals disposed to vote for the Democratic Party's presidential candidate nor conservatives disposed to vote for the Republican Party's presidential candidate. Second, among reported voters who are self-declared moderates or are unable or unwilling to described their ideological perspective, pre-campaign

swing voters are assumed not to be strongly identified with either political party. Third, among these reported voters who are moderates (or ideological "don't knows") without strong party identifications, pre-campaign swing voters are assumed not to be more supportive of one of the political parties than the median strong party identifier. The strength of a potential swing voter's relative affect for a political party is measured using thermometer scales asking respondents to rate their attitudes towards the political parties from zero (the maximum disaffection) to 100 (the maximum affection). These are asked separately about the Democratic and Republican parties and then combined into a single one-hundred point index (with 2 being the most pro-Republican score and 99 being the most pro-Democratic score). The median strong Republican had a score of 30 and the median strong Democrat had a score of 70. Pre-campaign swing voters, then, must have a party thermometer index score of more than 30 but less than 70. Finally, any respondent reporting that they had "known all along" how they would vote was classified as not being a pre-campaign swing voter.

Who are the campaign swing voters? Two indicators in the NES surveys were used to identify campaign swing voters. First, in every election since 1952, NES has asked potential voters to respond to a battery of four open-ended questions about what they like or dislike about each party's presidential candidate. Respondents may provide as many as five responses to each of the four questions. A simple count of these responses was found to be highly predictive of the reported vote choice (Kelley and Mirer 1974, Kelley 1983). The direction and intensity of a voter's preference can be measured by the sum of positive mentions ("likes") about the Democratic Party's candidate plus negative mentions ("dislikes") about the Republican Party's candidate minus the sum of positive mentions ("likes") about the Republican Party's candidate

plus negative mentions ("dislikes") about the Democratic Party's candidate. This index ranges from a positive ten (the maximum preference for the Democrat candidate) to negative ten (the maximum preference for the Republican candidate).

The second indicator used is the voter's party identification. This is meant to capture some unstated predispositions toward the candidates. Since the intensity of party identification is associated with loyalty rates in voting, strong Democrats are score a positive two, weak and leaning Democrats a positive one, weak and leaning Republicans a negative one, and strong Republicans a negative two. These party identification scores are added to the likes/dislikes measure to arrive at an index ranging from positive twelve (pro-Democrat) to negative twelve (pro-Republican).

An inspection of the predictive success of this index indicates that those scoring two or over are very likely to vote for the preferred party's candidate. In elections since 1952, 93 percent of respondents scoring more than one on the index voted for the Democratic presidential candidate and 96 percent of respondents less than negative one voted for the Republican presidential candidate. Those with scores of plus or minus one are much harder to predict. Only 66 percent of those with a score of one voted for the Democratic Party's presidential candidate and 73 percent of those with a score of negative one voted for the Republican Party's standard-bearer. The votes of those with a zero score have split nearly evenly, though with a slight Republican tilt (55 percent Republican to 45 percent Democratic). These voters with short-term evaluations (augmented by partisanship) near neutrality (negative one, zero, or one) are considered to be the campaign swing voters.

This likes/dislikes measure of the campaign swing vote corresponds fairly closely to the

thermometer measure used by Mayer in this volume.[2] The underlying voter preference measures (before collapsing the measures to the simple dichotomous categories of swing and non-swing voters) are highly correlated. Over the ten elections since 1968 in which both measures are available, the median correlation between them was quite strong (r = .84). Each measure was about equally and closely associated with the vote (median r = .78 for the thermometer measure and .77 for the likes/dislikes measure). In the typical election since 1968, both measures classified about 77 percent of the cases identically. This correspondence would have been even higher, but the cut-points selected by Mayer were more generous in classifying swing voters on the thermometer measure than the cut-points I used with the likes/dislikes measure. Mayer's coding typically counted an additional eight percent of reported voters as swing voters (a median of 24 percent using Mayer's measure and cut-points as opposed to 16 percent using my measure and cut-points). Thus, even with identical underlying measures of vote preferences, the two counts would have had an eight percentage point disparity. Overall, there appears to be a good degree of overlap between the measures, providing assurance that each is a credible basis for designating voter status as a swing or non-swing voter. While Mayer's thermometer measure is the simpler measure (even if the cut-points were tightened to a plus or minus 10 thermometer points rather than 15), the likes/dislikes measure is used here because it is available over a longer series of elections (since 1952 instead of 1968 for the thermometer measure).[3]

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[2] The comparisons of the thermometer and likes/dislikes measures are of reported voters for the major party presidential candidates.

[3] An added virtue of the likes/dislikes measure is that it permits examination of the content of these swing voters likes and dislikes. It might be helpful for campaigns to know if swing voters were responding more to particular issues or candidate traits.

How Many Voters are Swing Voters?

Figure 1 displays the percentages of pre-campaign swing voters in each election since 1952 and campaign swing voters in each election since 1972. In all cases, NES data have been weighted to reflect the actual division of the national two-party vote. As is apparent from the figure, among reported voters, pre-campaign swing voters ranged from 18 to 30 percent with a median of 22 percent. Campaign swing voters ranged from 13 to 23 percent with a median of 16 percent. Put differently, the vote choice of one out of roughly every four or five voters is unsettled going into the typical campaign and the vote choice of one out of roughly six voters remains unsettled during the typical campaign. In each election, as one might expect, the numbers of pre-campaign swing voters exceeded the numbers of campaign swing voters. The peaks of both pre-campaign and campaign swing voters appear to have occurred in the early 1970s during the depths of partisan dealignment and the transition to the new party system and, though there has been a perceptible decline in swing voters over the last several elections, there were an unusual number of unsettled votes in the 2000 election between Al Gore and George W. Bush.

/Figure 1 about here/

The numbers of swing voters are best appreciated when set in some perspective. First, in all elections and with respect to both pre-campaign and campaign swing voters, those who are settled in their vote choice substantially outnumber swing voters. In the typical election, the vote choices of nearly 80 percent of reported voters were largely settled before the campaign began and nearly 85 were effectively settled once the campaign was underway. Second, there are more unsettled votes "in play" during a campaign than suggested by most preference polls. Presidential

preference polls rarely indicate an undecided vote of more than four to six percentage points. A more accurate portrait of the electorate would indicate three or four times as many unsettled votes. Third, with presidential elections typically decided by a vote margin of between four and five percentage points (the winning two-party vote percentage over 50 percent), there are certainly enough swing voters to be decisive in the typical presidential election.

The Pre-Campaign Swing Vote

Table 1 presents the analysis of the pre-campaign vote for the presidential candidate who received the majority of the national two-party presidential vote. With the exception of the 2000 election, this is an analysis of the swing vote for the candidate who was elected to the presidency. The central question of interest is whether pre-campaign swing voters have determined which party's candidate won the majority of the popular vote? Though it is commonly assumed that carrying the swing vote is critical to winning a majority of the popular vote and with it the presidency, the evidence suggests otherwise.

/Table 1 about here/

The perception that carrying the pre-campaign swing vote is essential to a presidential victory may be due to the regularity with which the winning presidential candidate captures a majority of the swing vote. Seven of the nine presidential candidates since 1972 who received a majority of the popular vote also won a majority of the vote of pre-campaign swing voters. The only exceptions were the two most recent elections. In 2000, despite falling short of a popular vote majority, George W. Bush rather than Al Gore narrowly carried the majority of the pre-campaign swing vote. In 2004, George W. Bush carried the popular vote but without a majority of the pre-campaign swing vote. Aside from these two cases, however, presidential candidates

winning the overall vote also won the pre-campaign swing vote and each of the nine majority-winning presidential candidates received at a minimum 44.8 percent of the pre-campaign swing vote. In effect, if winning presidential candidates did not carry the pre-campaign swing vote outright, they came close to doing so.

Does the fact that winning presidential candidates usually captured the swing vote majority or came very close to doing so mean that the swing vote made these candidates the winners? With only one exception, the answer is no. In eight of the nine elections examined, the winning presidential candidate had already carried a majority of the vote among voters who were *not* pre-campaign swing voters. In only one of the nine elections, the 1976 race between Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, did the swing vote majority override an opposite majority among non-swing voters. Those who were not pre-campaign swing voters gave Gerald Ford a narrow majority of their votes, while pre-campaign swing voters counteracted this by giving Jimmy Carter a 56 percent majority–but this was the only election in which the pre-campaign swing vote overrode the larger vote among non-swing voters.

Additional perspective on the importance of the pre-campaign swing vote to assembling a popular vote majority can be gained by determining what percentage of the pre-campaign swing vote the winning candidate needed in order to arrive at fifty percent of the two-party vote. Some simple algebra permits the determination of the critical pre-campaign swing vote percentage needed to put the candidate over the top. Based on the relative size of the pre-campaign swing vote and that portion of the electorate who were not pre-campaign swing voters as well as the vote division that these non-swing voters provided to the winning candidate allows the calculation of the percentage of the swing vote needed by the winning presidential candidate.

The calculated needed pre-campaign swing vote percentages are presented in the eighth column of table 1.

The calculation of the needed pre-campaign vote indicates that every winning presidential candidate since 1972 has needed at least 17 percent of the pre-campaign swing vote, but only Jimmy Carter in 1976 required a majority from pre-campaign swing voters in order to secure his popular vote majority. In general, the data indicate how little winning presidential candidates have depended upon the pre-campaign swing vote. While it is clear that presidential candidates winning their elections by landslide proportions, such as Nixon in 1972 and Reagan in 1984, would not need many swing votes to arrive at a majority, presidential candidates winning with majorities well short of landslides also were not swing-voter-dependent. The median winning presidential candidate in this period needed to attract only 38 percent of the pre-campaign swing vote in order to achieve his popular vote majority. That is, the typical winning presidential candidate since 1972 could lose the pre-campaign vote by a landslide and still win a majority of the national popular two-party vote. The notion that pre-campaign swing voters swing elections is a myth. Presidential candidates have not been able to win election without some portion of the pre-campaign swing vote, but most do not need more than two of every five swing voters.

The Campaign Swing Vote

Though presidential elections do not turn very often on who receives a majority of the pre-campaign swing vote, there remains the possibility that votes that appear unsettled during the campaign are more important to the election's outcome. Table 2 presents the analysis of the campaign swing vote. Unlike the pre-campaign swing vote analysis, the analysis of campaign swing votes covers the fourteen presidential elections since 1952. The analysis, though based on

different indicators of what constituted a swing voter, in most respects supports the findings regarding pre-campaign swing voters.

/Table 2 about here/

As in the case of the pre-campaign swing vote, winning presidential candidates usually received a majority of the campaign swing vote. The winning presidential candidate captured a majority of the campaign swing vote in 10 of the 14 elections since 1952. In the four elections in which the winning presidential candidate fell short of a swing vote majority (Eisenhower in 1956, Nixon in 1968, Carter in 1976, and Clinton in 1992), they attracted at least 46 percent of the swing vote in three of these cases. The winning presidential candidate with the lowest percentage of the campaign swing vote was Bill Clinton in 1992. With this exception, winning presidential candidates have done well among those unsettled about their vote during the campaign.

As in the analysis of the pre-campaign vote, the success of winning presidential candidates among campaign swing voters does not mean that they won because of this success. Winning presidential candidates tend to do well among non-swing voters as well as swing voters. A majority of the campaign swing vote offset an opposing majority of the non-swing vote in only one of the fourteen presidential elections since 1952. That exception was the legendary 1960 election between then Vice President Richard Nixon and then Senator John Kennedy. Nixon narrowly carried the vote of the large number of settled non-swing voters in the campaign while the campaign swing vote split nearly 55 to 45 in Kennedy's favor. Other than this one exception, the division of the swing vote either reinforced or merely muted the verdict of those who were settled in their votes early in the campaign.

The very limited impact of campaign swing voters is also evident from the calculations of what percentage of that vote winning candidates required in order to assemble their majority. As in the analysis of the pre-campaign swing vote, it is possible to deduce the percentage of the campaign swing vote that winning presidential candidates needed to arrive at a majority. The percentage of the campaign swing vote required for the winning presidential candidate's majority is presented in the eighth column of table 2. In only one instance, the Kennedy-Nixon race of 1960, did the winning candidate need a majority of the campaign swing vote to capture his overall majority vote. Those candidates who went on to win by landslides (Johnson in 1964, Nixon in 1972, and Reagan in 1984) did not need any or very few votes from campaign swing voters. Even setting aside these candidacies whose majorities were well settled before the campaign, the typical winning presidential candidate in this period was well enough supported that they required only about one third of the campaign swing vote. Eisenhower in both 1952 and 1956, Reagan in 1980, and Clinton in both 1992 and 1996 required less than a third of the campaign swing vote to win their popular vote majorities. As in the case of the pre-campaign swing vote, the dependence of a presidential election victory on success in winning a majority of the campaign swing vote is a myth. Most winning presidential candidates have been able to ride to victory with a minority of swing vote support.

The Impact of the Swing Vote

The analyses of both pre-campaign and campaign swing voters indicate that, contrary to conventional wisdom, presidential candidates do not need to carry a majority of the swing vote in order to win a majority of the total two-party popular vote. Presidents have needed to pull some support from pre-campaign swing voters, but usually not very much. They have typically

required less support, and in a few elections have needed no support, from campaign swing voters.

The fact that elections are competitive and highly partisan apparently has not relegated the electoral verdict to swing voters as a group. The turnout and relative loyalties of the respective partisan bases have varied enough that they can effectively decide elections with only the help of a relatively small share of the swing vote.

Although this finding deflates the conventional wisdom claims of the importance of swing voters, it is nothing new. It is consistent with a substantial body of electoral research over the years. Paul Lazarsfeld, a co-author of *The People's Choice* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet 1944) and *Voting* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954), two landmark studies in the field of electoral research, wrote in the 1940s that "in an important sense, modern Presidential campaigns are over before they begin (1944, 317)." It is not that campaigns have no impact, according to Lazarsfeld, but (in the age before digital photography) that campaigns are "like the chemical bath which develops a photograph. The chemical influence is necessary to bring out the picture, but only the picture pre-structured on the plate can come out (p.330)." This perspective may exaggerate the fixed nature of public opinion and underestimate the potential for vote shifts, but it is not far off the mark in suggesting that most of the fundamental influences on elections are in place well before the campaign begins.

The belief that presidential elections are often effectively decided before the general election campaigns begin to settle the vote choices of swing voters is not confined to academic students of elections. James Farley, Franklin Roosevelt's campaign manager in his 1932 and 1936 presidential victories, promulgated "Farley's Law": that presidential elections were decided

before rather than after Labor Day of the election year (Troy 1996, 191; Faber 1965, 186).

The marginal character of the importance of swing voter to presidential elections is also consistent with the findings of the National Election Studies that typically two-thirds of voters say they decided how they would vote at or before the national nominating conventions in the summer of the election year (Campbell 2000, table 1.2). It is also consistent with the marginal impact of the independent vote on presidential elections (Campbell 2000, table 4.1), with late deciding voters splitting evenly between the major party candidates with a tilt toward returning to vote for their party's standard-bearer (Campbell 2001a), the greater importance of pre-campaign party unity to candidates (Campbell 2007), the importance of pre-campaign fundamentals in permitting election results to be accurately predicted (Campbell 2005), and the infrequency with which campaign effects have decided which party has won the presidency (Campbell 2001b).

With an abundance of evidence indicating that swing voters (or late deciders, preference changers, and independents) have a very limited impact on presidential elections, why do they receive the enormous attention that they do? One reason may be the democratic belief that elections should not be decided until voters go into the polling booth to cast their ballots, that voters should keep open minds and listen to all that the candidates have to say before they reach a final decision. Journalists, political junkies, and supporters of trailing candidates also want to keep the election story alive (or to keep hope alive) and elevating the role of the swing voter is one way to do so. Finally, the history of both pre-campaign swing voters and campaign swing voters is that they each made a critical difference in at least one election. Pre-campaign swing voters were responsible for electing Jimmy Carter in 1976 and campaign swing voters were responsible for electing John Kennedy in 1960. There is always the possibility that swing voters could make a critical difference in the next election, but if history is a guide–they will not.

Figure 1. Swing Voters as a Percentage of Reported Voters, 1952-2004

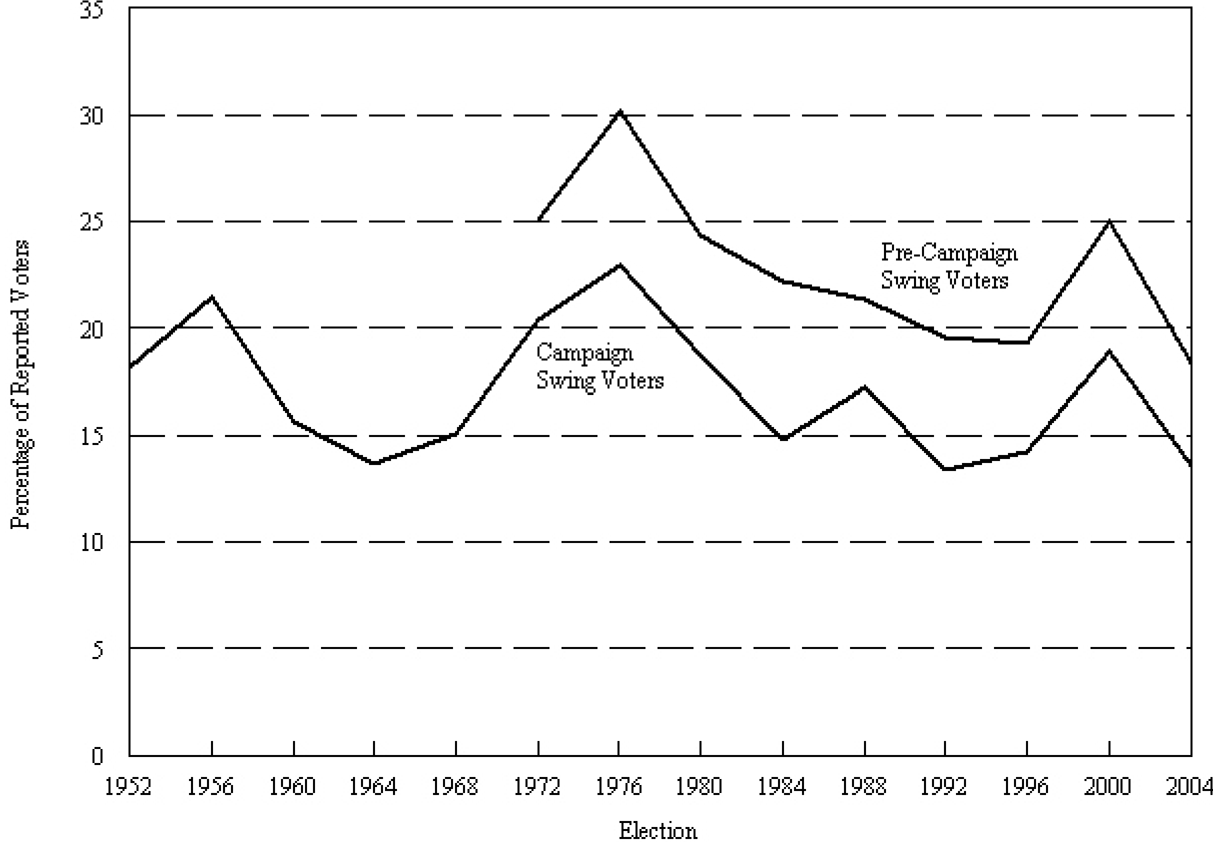

Table 1. The Pre-Campaign Swing Vote, 1972-2004

Election	Winning presidential party	Swing voters as percent of the total vote	Non-swing vote % for winner	Swing vote % for winner	The winner received a majority of the swing vote	Swing vote majority determined the winner	Swing vote % needed by the winner	The winning candidate needed a majority of the swing vote
1972	Republican	25.1	61.1	64.0	Yes	No	17.0	No
1976	Democrat	30.2	48.7	56.4	Yes	Yes	52.9	Yes
1980	Republican	24.3	51.2	67.9	Yes	No	46.1	No
1984	Republican	22.2	57.6	64.7	Yes	No	23.4	No
1988	Republican	21.4	53.3	56.3	Yes	No	38.0	No
1992	Democrat	19.6	52.2	58.6	Yes	No	40.9	No
1996	Democrat	19.3	53.0	62.1	Yes	No	37.6	No
2000	Democrat	25.0	51.3	47.0	No	No	46.0	No
2004	Republican	18.4	52.7	44.8	No	No	38.0	No

Note: The winning presidential party is the party whose candidate won a majority of the national two-party vote. All vote percentages are of the two-party vote. Vote percentages are calculated from the American National Election Study's (NES) Cumulative Data File. The data are reweighted to conform to the actual two-party vote. Pre-campaign swing voters are reported voters in the NES surveys who claimed to be moderate ideologically or responded "don't know" to the ideology question, were not strong party identifiers, indicated that they had not "known all along" how they would vote, and did not have a difference on the political party "thermometer items" more extreme than the median strong partisan. This last criterion meant that a voter could only be counted as a pre-campaign swing voter if he or she reported a major party thermometer index score between 30 and 70, where the index ranged from 2 (most pro-Republican Party) to 99 (most pro-Democratic Party).

Table 2. The Campaign Swing Vote, 1952-2004

Election	Winning presidential party	Swing voters as percent of the total vote	Non-swing vote % for winner	Swing vote % for winner	The winner received a majority of the swing vote	Swing vote majority determined the winner	Swing vote % needed by the winner	The winning candidate needed a majority of the swing vote
1952	Republican	18.1	54.5	59.1	Yes	No	29.9	No
1956	Republican	21.5	60.4	48.1	No	No	11.9	No
1960	Democrat	15.7	49.2	54.9	Yes	Yes	54.3	Yes
1964	Democrat	13.6	62.8	52.1	Yes	No	0.0	No
1968	Republican	15.1	50.6	49.2	No	No	46.5	No
1972	Republican	20.4	62.9	57.6	Yes	No	0.0	No
1976	Democrat	22.9	52.2	46.0	No	No	41.4	No
1980	Republican	18.7	55.2	55.9	Yes	No	27.5	No
1984	Republican	14.8	57.2	70.8	Yes	No	8.9	No
1988	Republican	17.3	53.4	56.3	Yes	No	33.7	No
1992	Democrat	13.3	55.2	41.9	No	No	16.0	No
1996	Democrat	14.2	53.8	60.5	Yes	No	27.2	No
2000	Democrat	18.9	50.3	50.3	Yes	No	48.9	No
2004	Republican	13.5	50.6	55.5	Yes	No	46.3	No

Note: The winning presidential party is the party whose candidate won a majority of the national two-party vote. All vote percentages are of the two-party vote. Vote percentages are calculated from the American National Election Study's (NES) Cumulative Data File. The data are reweighted to conform to the actual two-party vote. Campaign swing voters are calculated using the NES questions about voter likes and dislikes about the presidential candidates and the voter's party identification. Each mention of a like for a party is counted for it and a dislike counted against it. A party identification for a party is counted in its favor and a strong identification is counted further to its credit. The total of these counts can range from +12 in favor of the Democrats to −12 in favor of the Republicans. Those with scores of −1, 0, or +1 are classified as campaign swing voters.

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