The Nationalization of Local Campaigns and its Efficacy as a Campaign Strategy
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Thesis Statement

An examination of the messaging strategies employed by political candidates and their campaigns over the past few election cycles has yielded an interesting trend in the tactics of some local campaigns. Campaigns at the local level have increasingly directly referenced—either attacking or supporting—a policy and/or political figure at the federal level. While candidates and their advisors may have employed this method of messaging in past generations, it appears to have been brought to the fore in part by the proliferation of professionalization in local campaigns.¹

An initial examination of several instances in which campaigns have put the strategy to work revealed mixed empirical results on Election Day, with half losing their bid for a local office and the other half triumphant. As with any campaign strategy, utilizing nationalization, as it is defined herein, is not a 100 percent guarantee of success. Nevertheless, this inductive examination of several cases combined with the author’s professional campaign experience lead the author to assert that, when delivered in the proper context, environment, and tone, nationalization is indeed an effective campaign messaging strategy. It is the goal of this thesis to determine the efficacy of nationalization and the justification for its use in local elections.

Chapter 1: Introduction

From the time former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill uttered the phrase “all politics is local,” those words have become a permanent and ubiquitous element of our political vernacular. At its very core, O’Neill’s assertion is the succinct summary of a very profound truth that predates even the Speaker’s public assertion of it. Explicated, “all politics is local” means that, even at the highest levels of government, it is a politician’s responsibility to recognize, learn, and understand the issues that matter to the various electorates at the most basic level. It further means that the electorate votes on matters of a parochial rather than national interest.

The author’s first recollection of having heard O’Neill’s famous phrase was while working as a Regional Coordinator on a Congressional race in Louisiana. The campaign manager repeated that oft-spoken language: “All politics is local. In other words, nobody cares about the War in Afghanistan if their ditch is flooded.” While this example was certainly extreme and was spoken tongue-in-cheek, it contains an element of truth that proves a larger point.

To expand the phrase’s second meaning a step further, it can be argued that a citizen will cast their vote for the candidate they believe best understands the local concerns and is perceived as willing to take action to remedy the problems of the locality. That Bayou State campaign manager was correct in his assertion that national problems matter little to someone whose daily life is interrupted by local issues. And, in days gone by, if a candidate were to walk across a flooded ditch to talk to a resident about balancing the federal budget, she would likely have run him off her property. Historian James T. Patterson explains it this way: “Most people…did not go through the day thinking about
Big Political Issues. They tended, rather, to concentrate on concerns closer to home: their families, their neighborhoods, their work, their economic well-being, their futures.”

But all of that seems to be changing. While national politics still contain an element of local appeal, local campaigns have seemingly shifted away from parochial concerns and toward matters of national interest, including the invocation of federal politicians’ names and likenesses. In recent electioneering, particularly since the 2008 election of President Barack Obama, national policies and politicians have found their way into the messages of candidates for local offices. Utilized herein, messaging is defined as communication from a political campaign, conveyed to the public, delivered through direct mail, television or radio ads, or online advertising. “Local” is a term used herein to refer collectively to non-federal politics and positions. While these campaigns and their respective candidates do not always gain national media attention, as did Governor Scott Walker’s 2012 recall election, which will serve as a case study for examination in Chapter 3, their nationalization is nonetheless interesting and worthy of examination.

Nationalization, as used herein, is defined as a campaign strategy of delivering a message that either supports or rejects a federal or national policy; or attacks or supports a federal candidate or office holder. The first method by which nationalization is studied herein is through the study of four electioneering cases at various levels of government in which nationalization was utilized to some degree. The examination of these four cases details the background of the race, including the political environment; the degree to which nationalization was employed and by what method or methods; and the outcome of

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the race. Additionally, for each case, the question is asked: Why did the campaign decide to nationalize?

Commonly, the most basic form of governance in the United States is the city council. While the size of the council is certainly determined by the population of the city and thus can vary greatly, it is, in a majority of the country, the most local level of election, so the case studies begin there.³ In the District of Columbia, Patrick Mara was a candidate for the DC Council. He was attacked on the Internet for “support[ing] Mitt Romney’s campaign to defeat President Obama.”⁴ Although the general premise of the website is to assail the GOP candidate for his partisan affiliation (being a Republican, even a moderate one, in the District of Columbia is absolutely a hindrance), the references to his support for Mitt Romney—the Republican nominee for president in 2012—and opposition to Obama certainly qualify this as the nationalization of a local campaign as it is defined herein. This case was selected for study because it occurred in the author’s locality and thus the author was able to examine the race in real time through local media.

At the state legislature level, two cases are studied. The first case is that of Jeff Grisamore, a Republican running for the Missouri House of Representatives. In seeking his seat, Grisamore was the beneficiary of a Missouri Republican Party mailing which directly referenced President Obama – in person and in policy – and which sought to define his opponent as inextricably linked to the president. Selection of this case was prompted by the author’s acquaintance with the consultant involved. Similarly, the

³ Residents in the District of Columbia elect members to an Advisory Neighborhood Council who are more local than a ward’s councilman on the DC Council.

That is the case of Darrin Guidry who ran for the Louisiana Senate in that state’s 2011 cycle. Guidry, also a Republican, and his consultants attacked the Obama Administration’s moratorium on drilling for oil in the Gulf of Mexico, the lifeblood of the district in which Guidry ran. Guidry’s campaign made their attacks through direct mail as well as newspaper, radio, and television advertisements.

The final case examined here is that of the aforementioned recall attempt of Wisconsin’s Republican Governor Scott Walker. This case provided an interesting perspective because the campaign was waged in the summer of a presidential election year and ran on a strongly national platform. And because it was highly – and nationally – publicized, it presented a unique opportunity to examine media that would not ordinarily cover local, or even gubernatorial, elections. The attempt to recall Governor Walker, waged by Democrats and liberal activists groups, particularly unions, was a very important effort for both sides. Indeed, it was so crucial for the Democrats that Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), told CNN’s Candy Crowley that the Wisconsin was effort a “dry run” for November, when Obama was up for re-election.5

Moving beyond the case studies, a more in-depth analysis of nationalization is conducted through an online directed survey instrument which was e-mailed to general political consultants (See Appendix A). First is a qualitative discussion of the reasons consultants listed for deciding to nationalize a local campaign. Instinctively, several

potential reasons initially presented themselves, including the increase in professionalization in local elections. One primary indication that professionalization has led to the increase in nationalization is that the same consultants are handling races at all levels, meaning their messaging is cutting across the federal-nonnear federal line. Secondly, the increase in news penetration, often called the 24-hour news cycle, potentially contributed to the rise in nationalization. In years past, network television and newspapers were the only sources of news for the electorate. Then cable news such as CNN and Fox News appeared on the scene, providing Americans with round-the-clock coverage of news and politics. Voters are now privy to Internet news sources and even news at their constant beckon-call with social media applications on smart phones. Lastly, yet tangentially linked to the first and second points, is the fact that voters are inundated with a national message. When campaign strategists and media types are promoting a national message with regularity, the electorate expects to hear that message. Thus, local candidates are compelled to deliver it.

Finally in this project the efficacy of nationalization is studied by data gathered through the survey instrument. In their responses, these political professionals provided information about campaigns in which they employed nationalization. Study of the outcomes of those elections in comparison to results from other historical and contemporaneous elections provided a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of nationalization.

Studying and writing about this increasingly popular strategy aims to accomplish two goals. First is the intent is to fill a void in the body of academic knowledge. As will

6 Strachan, _High-Tech Grass Roots: The Professionalization of Local Elections._

7 Ibid., 39.
be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, no academic sources, or strategic sources for that matter, were located which directly study or discuss the phenomenon of nationalizing local politics. In applying academic quantitative research methodology to determine efficacy of this strategy, the goal is to fill not only the discussion void, but also the research void. Secondly, and most importantly in the purview of the program for which this thesis is written, the intent is to target political strategists and consultants by qualitatively discussing why political professionals are employing this strategy and demonstrate to the professional audience the effectiveness of nationalization.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

A wealth of literature exists on campaigning, both in the academic world and in the realm of practical politics. These sources range from peer-reviewed articles to 100-page manuscripts which delineate a personal narrative with intermittent strategic advice based solely on direct, but anecdotal, observation of what worked for the author in his or her own campaign. And while there is a wealth of literature on campaigns, there is a dearth of it on local campaigns; and no literature whatsoever exists on the trend studied herein.

Not only do political scientists frequently write articles on their research into campaigning, which are published in academic journals such as *American Political Science Review*, they have also written host of books primarily for use in the instruction of both graduate and undergraduate students. These academic sources focus on answering questions of campaigns and elections utilizing accepted scientific methodology. While there is no reason to take exception to this approach to studying campaigns, nor are there are any inherent fallacies with academic study of campaigns and elections, they rarely offer any profound or meaningful implications or suggestions for political practitioners.

Beyond the academic study of campaigns and elections, multitudes of strategy books exist for the purpose of counseling candidates and their advisers on how to win an election. Although some books are written by previous candidates – both victorious and defeated – many are authored by seasoned political experts. The preeminent book in this field is *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics, and Art of Political Campaign Management*, currently in its fourth edition, by Daniel M. Shea and Michael John Burton,
both of whom are practitioners and scholars. While guides such as these serve as terrific resources for political strategists, consultants, and campaign managers, they are rarely academic in nature, leading political scientists to doubt their quality and value, and are infrequently published (the fourth edition of Campaign Craft was published in 2010), which leaves political practitioners in need of an immediate source of up-to-date and authoritative information on the practice of politics.

Considering the highly competitive nature of elections, the need for current information is undeniable and unavoidable. That need is met, primarily, by the monthly Campaigns & Elections magazine, which also publishes more frequent online content. With articles on topics ranging from how the reader can to land their next campaign job, to tips on launching their own consulting firm, to detailing the shift from direct mail to digital campaigning, this publication serves as a sort of professional journal for those who earn their living campaigning. It is, therefore, akin to the section of PS: Political Science & Politics which examines “The Profession” of its readership.

It is the desire of the author to study and understand campaigns with a full-spectrum vision; that is, to examine campaigning from both an academic and practical standpoint. This thesis is no different. Because the purpose of this thesis is to reach both scholars and practitioners in the fields of politics and political science, reference was sought from these three very diverse sources of information: Academic writings, strategic publications, and the professional journal of politicos.

Because of their rigorous research methodology, an initial belief was that the more prestigious publications—peer reviewed or nationally published books and articles—would yield the highest quality information regarding campaigning. It was thus
surprising when discovered that some of the most promising literature on nationalizing local elections came not from scholarly articles or campaign strategy books, but rather from *Campaigns & Elections*. This should not have come as a bombshell though for aforementioned reasons, namely that *Campaigns & Elections* is published regularly, both in print and online, as a source of contemporary information on the practice of politics.

As an example, Noah Rothman wrote an article for *Campaigns & Elections* entitled “The Politics is National, Politicians are Local.”\(^8\) Despite his focus on Congressional races, Rothman astutely observes that candidates “may have been successful at nationalizing the issues…so the politics may not be local but the candidates sure are.”\(^9\) Rothman, although limiting his scope to federal elections and a “list of anointed [insider candidates] that have fallen” to “no-name [politicians] and local business people,” observed what was likely the manifestation of a trend whose genesis was noticed, yet not analyzed, by Heineman a decade earlier.\(^10\)

By their very nature, electoral campaigns are highly competitive; this is no less true at the local levels than at the presidential level. The distinction is merely one of scale. Heineman astutely wrote in a 2000 article that “both parties are competing fiercely to win state legislative seats.”\(^11\) He argues that this competition for state legislature seats is being waged so as to control the redistricting process, including Congressional

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\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid.

redistricting. Unwittingly Heineman noticed the beginnings of the phenomenon which is studied here—the role of national policies and politicians in local elections.

Information contained in campaign strategy books is frequently broad, general advice on how to win a campaign. Most of these books, written by former candidates or campaign experts, begin with campaign structure. They discuss various staff positions, qualifications for those positions, and opine on how a candidate might go about locating qualified applicants for their campaign staff. Strategy books then go into detail on other campaign elements such as district research, fundraising, and messaging.

Despite the local focus of many strategy books on the topic of messaging, which is a primary component of the research contained herein, none of the ones accessed mentioned—much less encouraged—a national message in a local campaign. Certainly, “each campaign is unique, each candidate is unique, and each election produces unique styles of campaign material,” but Shaw calls messaging “the foundation” for the rest of the campaign.\(^ {12,13}\) And in a political environment where “campaign tactics…do matter,” candidates and their advisers are compelled to deliver the right message.\(^ {14}\)

Indeed, delivering the right message is so critical that it has been a focus of scholars and practitioners alike. In his broad and deep academic analysis of political language, Hart claims: “If democracy is a dialogue…there has never been a greater need


to discover who said what to whom and how.”

While Hart’s work is seminal in the language of candidates and office-holders, other academics, such as John G. Geer, have focused their research efforts on the effects of negative advertising. And although Seaborn’s thesis focused on developing a model by which to study political ad effectiveness, he made some insightful academic discoveries with practical implications.

On the strategic front, most authors appear to recognize “the challenge that campaigns face is finding the right message, the right tactics and identifying the right people to target.” Thus, they tend to provide overarching messaging advice and leave it to the campaigners to “effectively [define] a message [that] resonate[s] with voters.” Some authors, like McNamara, simply provide their readers with a list of steps to define a message while others like Faucheaux (both a scholar and practitioner, himself), lay out a meticulous and comprehensive message development strategy.

Furthermore, few sources exist discussing, even broadly much less with great depth, local elections and politics. Indeed, as Marschall and colleagues observe, “this


17 Seaborn, Effectiveness Modeling for Political Advertising.


19 Ibid., 46.

20 Ibid., 45.

area of inquiry is relatively unexplored… [and] the literature rather small and not particularly cohesive.”22 One aspect of local politics that is particularly prevalent in the various literature is the decline of local parties. Both strategic writers and articles in *Campaigns & Elections* have recognized their decline. For instance, Shea and Burton assert that “campaign tactics…do matter” because of the decline in partisanship, while Neil Reiff attributes their decline to drastic alterations in the campaign finance laws and regulations.23,24

The declining role of parties is also noted in the academy.25 Burns and colleagues note that “State parties are in many ways more important than the national parties,” and that “the national parties…are largely federations of state parties.” Both Lunch and Agranoff note, in 1987 and 1972 respectively, that the local party system has been in a state of constant decay, leading to a rise in “Candidate Centered” campaign strategy and execution.26,27 Agranoff also takes note of the rise in the professionalization of politics generally:

> The party professional has given way to a new type of professional – the advertising and public relations man, the management specialist, the

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27 Ibid., 4.
media specialist, the pollster – who performs services for candidates based on the skills he has acquired in non-political fields.28

In 2010, Bosma studied in depth the profession of political consulting.29 This is a trend that Strachan would study in 2003 as it relates to local elections.30

Aside from Rothman’s Campaigns & Elections article, only one work could be located which discussed nationalization, but it was not in the context of local campaigns. Indeed, Lunch did not deal with campaigning at all in The Nationalization of American Politics; rather, he discussed governance and a transition of power from states and localities to the federal government.31 So, although Lunch used the same language used herein, his meaning and context were completely dissimilar to the definition and usage by this work.

One final note on the literature used herein must be offered. Although they were not discussed in this chapter, the use of periodicals and newspapers, along with political blogs, served a tremendous role in this project. Although little mention was made in these media regarding nationalization as a campaign strategy, they served as valuable resources for the next chapter, the case studies.

28 Ibid., 4.


30 Strachan, High-Tech Grass Roots: The Professionalization of Local Elections.

Chapter 3: Case Studies

Discussion of local campaigns and their strategies begins with understanding their intricacies. In years gone by, one could engage in discussion of local campaigns and it was understood that they differed drastically from federal campaigns, and even from smaller elections for national office, such as campaigns for Congress. Local campaigns in the bygone era involved discussions about drainage pipes and which candidate for sheriff won that year’s chili cook-off. The conversation about local politics has changed, however, as local issues, such as road maintenance, have become federal issues because the projects require federal money. And as the conversation changes, local candidates must adapt their messaging in order to appeal to the electorate. Indeed, that change in messaging for local campaigns is what this thesis is about.

In the interest of studying nationalization in depth, this chapter analyzes four races at various local levels, using a qualitative case study methodology. Later chapters will cover the strategy more broadly. The races in this chapter are discussed in order of their size from smallest to largest, and they range from a city council race to a campaign for governor. Studying these four cases will provide an opportunity to ask questions dealing with nationalization, and examine the circumstances surrounding the nationalization across the different campaigns. The predominant question asked herein is “Why is nationalization employed in local campaigns?” This has proven to be the most difficult question to answer based on publically available information. Indeed, in most cases, the answer has remained elusive.
A second question asked in the case studies that follow is “Did nationalization work?” This proved to be equally difficult to answer. Any campaign strategist will tell you that proving a single element of a campaign was the strategy or tactic that won the election is next to impossible. Indeed, campaigns frequently rely on a seemingly “all of the above” strategy in an attempt to persuade as many voters as possible to cast their vote for that particular candidate. Direct mail, television advertisements, and an e-mail from the campaign all provide empirical support for this, conveying essentially the same message; this trio of advertising tactics, along with the multitude of others, is part of a larger campaign plan with the solitary goal of persuading voters in order to win the election. Given that there is no ‘silver bullet’ to winning a campaign, and given the difficulty of determining a specific element provided victory, it cannot be definitively concluded that the nationalization of these campaigns led to the victory – or loss – of any of the candidates in the races analyzed.

**Patrick Mara – DC Council (2013)**

Patrick Mara’s race for the DC Council, Washington’s local governing board, provides several interesting differences from the other three cases studied in this chapter. First, because the campaign took place within the nation’s capital, which is still constitutionally subject to Congressional oversight, it provides an exciting opportunity to examine this phenomenon in a particularly unique context: One in which federal issues very frequently are local issues. Second, the attack does not appear to be coming from the campaign of any of Mara’s numerous opponents, but rather from an outside entity, as the website attacking him does not contain the requisite “paid for” line.
With the 2012 presidential elections having only shortly passed, Patrick Mara sought an at-large seat on the DC Council in an April 2013 special election. It was his second bid at such an office, all the while serving as a member of the DC Board of Education. His previous unsuccessful bid for a District-wide seat was a 2011 campaign for another at-large Council seat, also in a special election.

In that 2011 campaign, the website PatrickMaraIsARespublican.com made its first appearance, hosted by “a DC resident who wants to share Patrick Mara's anti-DC background.” Attacking, or holding accountable, a candidate for positions they endorse which are contrary to the interest of the people they seek to represent is a common and justifiable message. And the District of Columbia, which holds a 12:1 Democratic registration advantage over Republicans, predictably awards its presidential votes overwhelmingly, 90-plus percent, to the Democratic nominee. However, none of this qualifies the Mara campaign as having been nationalized. But simply linking Mara to his partisan affiliation isn’t the purpose of the website. Although the URL and site headline focus on the candidate’s partisan affiliation – Mara is indeed a member of the


34 Ibid.


36 Interestingly, and perhaps uniquely, DC “No Party” registered voters, otherwise known as Independents, also hold a commanding advantage over a major party, in this case, a nearly 3:1 advantage over Republicans. (See previous note.)

37 Morrissey, “Patrick Mara and the R Word.”
Republican Party – it is the content of the site that deems this case worthy of examination herein.

Mara’s 2013 campaign for DC Council was waged against six other competitors: Five Democrats and a member of the DC Green-Statehood Party. The Green-Statehood party candidate was eventually removed from the ballot after a successful challenge to his petition for candidacy.\(^{38,39}\) Despite a mammoth registration advantage by the Democrats, No Party registrants, and other left-leaning constituencies in the District of Columbia, Mara stood a fairly decent chance at election. He was the solitary Republican candidate in a field of six, meaning the base of each of the other five competitors – ordinarily more than plenty to overcome a Republican challenge – would be split between all five. And according to DC election laws, only a plurality was needed to win.

In addition to his high name recognition from previous campaigns and the benefit of being the solitary Republican in such a crowded field, Mara collected a hefty sum of money in campaign contributions. Nearly 550 donors contributed to Mara’s campaign, providing his coffers with in excess of $65,000.\(^{40}\) That is not an insubstantial amount of money on which to run a city council campaign, even in the drastically expensive Washington, DC media market.


But despite the presence of all of the necessities to wage a victorious campaign – high name recognition, a favorable field, and comfortable financing – the deck was stacked against Mara, both in terms of his partisan registration and the content of the aforementioned website.

On the heels of the 2012 presidential election, in which the District of Columbia awarded Obama nearly 91 percent of its vote share, it goes without saying that any opposition to the president would be viewed in an unfavorable light, and that’s precisely what PatrickMaraIsARespublican.com highlighted. Mara, as a Republican elected official, was ostensibly duty-bound to support his party’s nominee for president. The operators of the website sought to inform the voters of the District of Columbia of Mara’s support for Obama’s opponent (See Appendix B): “Mara made six campaign contributions to Mitt Romney's campaign and can be seen here in this photo with Josh Romney, son [of Governor Mitt Romney], happily submitting signatures to get Mitt Romney on the ballot in Washington, DC.”

41 By tying Mara, a local candidate – and about as local as one gets – to a federal politician, namely GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney, the purveyors of PatrickMaraIsARespublican.com nationalized this hyper-local race.

And, at least superficially, nationalization seemingly paid off. Mara, in the crowded field of six, finished third, securing nearly 14,000 of the 57,000 votes cast in the special election, garnering just shy of 24 percent of the vote for the field’s lone

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Republican. A more in-depth discussion of nationalization’s effectiveness will follow shortly.

An attempt was made to contact the owner of PatrickMaraIsARepublican.com in order to secure an interview for this project. That contact attempt was unsuccessful as an e-mail sent to the address displayed on the website went unanswered. Even had the interview been granted, no guarantee could have been made as to the truthfulness of the responses. In a best case scenario, even had the interview taken place, speculation would have been high.

So, the question of “Why nationalize this race?” remains unsatisfied, leaving the author to pure speculation. The first possible answer is that Obama is such a popular figure in the Democratic bastion of the District of Columbia that one dare not oppose him, lest one reap the consequences of electoral defeat. But if the popularity of Obama were the sole justification for nationalizing this particular campaign, the data show that it was an unreasonable move. Because Mara garnered nearly a quarter of the vote from the same electorate that had given Obama 91 percent of its vote only five months previously, it is obvious that there were some crossover voters; that is, some voters who cast their ballot for Obama also, a short 20 weeks later, pulled the lever for Mara.

Another possible solution as to why the Mara race was nationalized, one that represents a more jaded view of electoral politics, is that his political opponents – whether they are the other campaigns or members of the at large community – were simply grasping at straws in an effort to prevent a Republican from holding a seat on the

By all accounts, Mara is a reasonably “clean” politician, with nothing to hide. Nationalizing the race, attempting to defeat Mara by linking him to Romney, could have simply been a last ditch effort by nefarious, behind-the-scenes forces. That’s not to say that all anonymous political speech is nefarious; indeed the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers were published anonymously. However, because of the inability to contact the people responsible for the website, the answer to “Why?” may never be obtained.

Regardless of the reason why the race was nationalized, the question remains, “Was the nationalization effective?” Answering that question would require knowledge of the end goal of those involved. Mara was as strong a contender for District-wide office as Republicans had put forth in quite some time and, as previously discussed, could have very well been elected with enough of the Democratic vote split between so many left-wing candidates. So if the website’s purpose was to keep Mara below the roughly 35% of the vote he would have needed to win, the nationalization was likely successful. However, speculation remains as to whether nationalization was necessary to accomplish that end. Alternatively, if the purpose of the nationalization was to turn out all of Obama’s supporters against Mara, two possible conclusions can be drawn. The first possibility is that the nationalization largely failed; that is, invoking Obama against Mara did not sway many Obama voters to oppose Mara. A second possibility in that scenario is that an insufficient number of Obama voters were exposed to the anti-Mara website to be convinced to vote against the Republican candidate. Thus, insufficient evidence exists to determine the efficacy of nationalization in this case.
Jeff Grisamore – Missouri House of Representatives (2008)

Two Thousand Eight was an historic year in which the United States elected its first president of color. But, just as Obama was immensely popular in some factions of the electorate, his policies were greatly unpopular among Republicans and conservative Americans. In Missouri, which yielded a near 50-50 split between Obama and Arizona Senator John McCain, the Republican nominee for president in 2008, Republican State Representative Jeff Grisamore was running for re-election in his suburban Kansas City district and was being challenged by Democrat Jason Norbury. Grisamore pulled of a sizable victory, besting Norbury by nearly 19 points.43

Norbury is a bankruptcy attorney and had once before run for public office. In 2006, Norbury, running unopposed, became the Democratic nominee for state senate in Missouri’s 8th senatorial district. He was defeated in the general election that year by more than 16 points before deciding to run against Grisamore in 2008.44 Grisamore, initially elected to the Missouri legislature in 2006 was facing his first re-election battle in 2008. According to his official biography on the Missouri House of Representatives website, Grisamore, a former pastor, is “a humanitarian leader who engages in care for orphans, widows and the poor.”45

Because both Norbury and Grisamore had run for public office in the Lee’s Summit area only two years before, both candidates probably went into the 2008


campaign with reasonably similarly high name recognition. The scales likely tipped slightly in favor of Grisamore because of the power of incumbency. Both candidates were well suited financially, according to the website FollowTheMoney.org. Grisamore raised $40,939, well below the state average for winning state house candidates that year of $64,123. But the surprising figure is not that Grisamore raised less money than the average winning candidate, it is that he raised about 10% less than his opponent. Political donors contributed $44,622 to Jason Norbury’s campaign in 2008, more than double the amount raised by losing state house candidates that year.

Despite his depressing fundraising numbers, Grisamore was not out of the race. The Missouri Republican State Committee aided the freshman legislator by distributing a piece of direct mail; indeed it was that mail piece that qualifies this campaign as having been nationalized. The mail piece (See Appendix C) was a six inch by eleven inch card depicting on one side a pea pod with the faces of Norbury and Obama tinted green and placed inside the pod with the headline: “They are two peas in a pod: Barack Obama and Jason Norbury.” The reverse side of the mailer went on to compare the agenda of Norbury to that of the Democratic nominee for president in 2008. After outlining similarities between the two candidates’ platforms on issues ranging from fiscal matters to social issues, the mail piece concludes: “Barack Obama and Jason Norbury. Simply out of touch with Jackson County values.”

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47 Ibid.
Given “the news media’s continuing interest in attack advertising,” it seemed that surely, with the state Republican Party headquarters comparing a Democratic state house candidate to Barack Obama, some media outlet – a blog at least – would have written something about it. However, that does not seem to be the case. A search of LexisNexis for “Jeff Grisamore” yielded only five news articles for the one year prior to the election; all five were related to his duties in the legislature and no articles were located mentioning the campaign. Searching “Jason Norbury” on LexisNexis produced only a single news article for the year leading up to Election Day, published by the *St. Louis Daily Record*, and it contained simply a list of attorneys running for the legislature that year who were facing opponents. No other articles were found relating to the Grisamore versus Norbury race of 2008, with the exception of one mentioning the race results. Additionally, no articles were discovered discussing the race in general, or the negative nationalized direct mail piece specifically, on any of Missouri’s top political blogs, including *Beyond November*, *PoliticoMo*, *St. Louis Today’s Political Fix*, and *Show-Me Daily*.

Again, the question “Why?” is raised. Why nationalize a race for the Missouri House of Representatives? First, since the mail piece mentioned specific points of policy, it is safe to assume that a matter of policy led to the nationalization. The policy points raised on the mail piece are valid issues, particularly in a fairly conservative state like Missouri, and especially in a Republican heavy district like House District 47. The policies mentioned were related to taxes, government spending, gun rights, and abortion.

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49 In 2008, Grisamore was elected to the House of Representatives in District 47. Following the redistricting of 2010, the district was renumbered to 34, its current numeration.
While these are surely winning issues for Republicans in the 47th district, if Norbury indeed fell in step with his party on them, the case could have been made against him without invoking Obama’s name, that is, without nationalizing the race. Something besides policy must have been driving the nationalization of the race in the 47th.

Again, an obvious justification for linking Norbury to Obama is the unpopularity of the latter and his policies in the district. Although Missouri is considered a red state, Obama was not, in 2008, a particularly unpopular figure there. He lost the statewide vote to McCain by roughly 3900 votes out of the 2.9 million votes cast, a difference of 0.1 percent. Presidential vote totals by state house district are not available on the Missouri Secretary of State website, but in Jackson County, where District 47 was entirely located, McCain bested Obama by 1900 votes, or 1.1 percent. This data can be viewed two ways. First, Jackson County provided an extremely close competition between Obama and McCain. A difference of only 2000 votes out of 186,000 ballots is, by any account, a tight contest. Looking at the data through that lens, one is led to conclude that Obama, while losing the county, was not particularly unpopular there thus making the nationalization a shot in the dark. The second way to view the Jackson County data is in its proper context of comparison to the statewide vote. Obama lost Missouri by 4000 votes; he lost Jackson County by 2000 votes. That is, half of his loss margin came from a single county, while the other half came from combining the other 113 counties and one independent city in the entire state. This analysis of the data suggests that Obama actually is unpopular in Jackson County and thus in the 47th District when compared to the remainder of the state. However, regardless of how one views the data now, it is viewed in hindsight. The votes had not been cast, much less tallied, when the
nationalized mail piece was distributed. The only way Republicans could have known about Obama’s popularity would have been with data gleaned from public opinion polling, which, based on the final tally, would have likely shown a tight race. With numbers that close, the definitive conclusion could not have been made that Obama was such an unpopular figure as to warrant his inclusion on the mail piece.

Having addressed the issues of policy, popularity, and polling, the answer to why this race was nationalized remains unanswered. Remaining possibilities include an intuitive decision by the staff at the Missouri Republican Party or their outside consultants. Without the input of those key decision makers, it is impossible to determine what information, data, or intuition drove them to determine nationalizing this race was beneficial. Having the advantage of hindsight, Grisamore’s margin of victory seems to indicate that he would have been victorious without this mail piece, so it cannot be stated with certainty that the nationalization benefited Grisamore. It can be concluded fairly confidently, however, that the mailer did not hinder Grisamore in the county that provided half of McCain’s margin of victory over Obama in Missouri. Therefore, as in the Mara case study, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of nationalizing this race cannot be definitively concluded.

**Darrin Guidry – Louisiana Senate (2011)**

Long-time Democratic State Senator Butch Gautreaux was forced into retirement by the legislature’s fairly new term limit requirement, leaving open a seat on the bayous of Terrebonne, Lafourche, and St. Mary Parishes, in south central Louisiana. Despite

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**Footnote:**

50 In the interest of full disclosure, the author has an intimate knowledge of this race having worked as the campaign manager for the losing candidate. Indeed, it was the author’s experience on this campaign that provided the inspiration and interest for the study of the topic contained in this thesis.
having elected the Democrat Gautreaux to the state senate for three consecutive terms, the 21st senatorial district is a solidly conservative one. It is a very heavily Catholic and family oriented area. Not to mention, the eastern part of the district, Terrebonne and Lafourche, is home to a large portion of Louisiana’s off-shore oil drilling and production operations.

With Gautreaux ineligible for another term, two Republicans qualified for the election: Bret Allain, a landowner from the western side of the district in St. Mary Parish, and Darrin Guidry, a newspaper publisher from Terrebonne Parish in the eastern part of the district. Neither candidate had ever before been elected to public office, although both Guidry and Allain had served in appointed capacities on various governmental boards. Both candidates came into the election on essentially equal footing with regards to name recognition; Guidry’s name identification was 34 percent, while Allain’s was 30 percent. Campaign financing was also fairly equitable throughout the race, until late in the fall when Allain contributed large amounts of his personal wealth to put him ahead. By the end of the race, Allain spent nearly $536,000 for 51 percent of the vote, while Guidry raised and spent $288,000, for 49 percent. On Election Day, only 772 votes separated the two Republicans.


In an effort to determine media coverage of the race, searches of LexisNexis, local newspapers, and state political blogs were conducted. A search of LexisNexis for “Darrin Guidry,” was conducted and narrowed to include only articles from 2011. Only two relevant results were returned, neither of which sufficiently examined the campaign nor discussed its nationalization. A LexisNexis search for “Bret Allain,” again narrowed to the election year, yielded only eight articles, which were similar in nature to the ones in the Guidry search. The topic of nationalization was not discussed in any of the articles. Searches for “Darrin Guidry” and “Bret Allain” on The Hayride, Louisiana’s leading conservative leaning political blog, returned only two election year results: One was an Election Night recap while the other was an article in which Allain and Guidry were simply among a list of candidates for the state senate that year. LaPolitics, a long-running political report which covers elections in Louisiana and the state legislature, produced no 2011 results for searches of both candidates’ names. LaPolitics, unlike a typical political blog, has a paid subscription service, which is delivered weekly, in addition to content published on its website and publically accessible free of charge. It is possible that LaPolitics published material on the race in its articles available only by subscription, but those archives are inaccessible to the public.

Local newspaper websites were searched for information relating to the race. These media outlets included the Morgan City Daily Review, Franklin Banner-Tribune (which shares a website with the Daily Review), Houma Today, and The Daily Comet (which shares the Houma Today website). Queries for both “Bret Allain” and “Darrin Guidry” on these sites returned no meaningful results on the race.
A search of the website of one local newspaper was more fruitful, however. Utilizing the search term “Bret Allain” on the website of *Tri-Parish Times* produced ten results on the race. Searching for Guidry’s name on that website would have been counterproductive as he is the owner and publisher of that newspaper. Most of the articles, including two editorials, were simply coverage of the campaigns and candidates speaking at various debates and board meetings. However, some of the articles returned in the *Tri-Parish Times* query were meaningful, both in terms of covering the race and to the presently studied topic. The first indication of nationalization appeared in an article published on May 6, 2011. In the article, Guidry is quoted as saying, “I will fight the Obama Administration’s attempt to cripple our oil and gas industry with moratoriums, permitoriums [a term coined to describe the Obama administration’s refusal to issue off-shore drilling permits] and higher taxes.”55 Moreover, the articles show that shortly before Election Day, Allain began expressing a nationalized message as well. In an October 12, 2011, article published by *Tri-Parish Times*, Allain was quoted, echoing Guidry’s message against the Obama administration’s drilling moratorium. He stated, "The president [Obama] says the oil moratorium is over, however, we know it is not."56

In preparation for the October 22nd Election Day, the Guidry campaign conducted a baseline poll in late August before beginning the campaign’s paid messaging through direct mail, radio, and a very limited local television buy. One of the items polled was the drilling moratorium implemented by the Obama administration following the


explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, better known as the BP Oil Spill, in the spring of 2010. The moratorium had not only negatively impacted the oil and gas industry, along with its sister services industry, and put thousands of people out of work, the policy had a devastating effect on grocery and general stores that supplied food and other necessities to off-shore oil platforms. The moratorium had shattered the economy in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, which thrived on the oil business. So then, unremarkably, disapproval of the moratorium and Obama was widespread. When asked if they would be more likely or less likely to support Guidry based on the information that “Darrin Guidry knows that Barack Obama’s drilling moratorium has been devastating to the local economy, and he opposes burdensome regulation and supports speedier drilling permit approvals so the economy can start growing again,” 82 percent of respondents answered that they would be more likely to support him.57

The Guidry campaign seized on this data and began its direct mail program, constantly lambasting the Obama administration and the drilling moratorium. Although there was little or nothing a state senator could do to impact the moratorium, it was a focal point of the Guidry campaign, because the Guidry team understood that “effectively defining a message requires the issue to resonate with votes, be easily understandable and consistent through the campaign.”58 The moratorium fell in line with these three criteria and fit perfectly into Guidry’s larger narrative about jobs and job creation, which was the number one response when surveyors asked what the top priority for voters was in that

The first three pieces of mail (of nine total) distributed by the Guidry campaign addressed the issue of the moratorium. Moreover, the issue was mentioned in the campaign’s only television spot, aired exclusively on local television station HTV, which served Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes. The moratorium furthermore became fodder in newspaper advertisements and radio spots to complement the direct mail program. In all, the issue of the oil moratorium comprised approximately 40% of the messaging coming out of the Guidry campaign. (For an example of the anti-moratorium advertising, see Appendix D).

Although the Obama administration’s drilling moratorium polled especially poorly, the decision to include the president and the moratorium in the poll was an intuitive decision made by Guidry and his consultants. Guidry’s main campaign message focused on jobs and the economy, and the drilling moratorium was a topic of daily conversation on the campaign trail. After months of speaking to constituents and repeatedly hearing their stories associated with the moratorium, the Guidry team wondered how an anti-moratorium message would be received by the broader electorate, so it was included in the poll. Not surprisingly, the poll results, as previously discussed, showed that a vast majority of district 21 residents, who either work in the oil industry or know someone who does, stood in opposition to the moratorium, so it was integrated into the Guidry message.

When the August poll was conducted, Guidry was leading Allain by two percentage points, well within the survey’s five point margin of error. As the campaign continued, moving toward Election Day in late October, the Guidry campaign continued

its barrage of advertising in the mail, on television and radio, and in newspapers across the district. And while only 40 percent of the campaign’s material was nationalized, the message of Guidry’s promise to stand against the moratorium continued through to Election Day. In the end, a nationalized message, as popular as it may have been, was not enough to award Guidry the victory, although it did allow the political newcomer to make a very strong showing on Election Day.

**Scott Walker – Wisconsin Governor Recall (2012)**

Although state governors frequently have the clout and ability to influence or impact federal policy and are frequent players on the national stage, accompanying presidential candidates visiting their state, testifying in Congressional hearings, and maintaining working relationships with their U.S. Senators, their races are rarely played out with a national message. Such was certainly not the case when Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, a Republican, faced a recall election in 2012, just months before that year’s presidential election and in the midst of the presidential campaign. Indeed, the attempted recall of Walker gave national Democrats an opportunity to test out their messaging and ground game in the run up to the presidential election. And they seemingly took full advantage of the prospect. Indeed, the Chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz of Florida, called the Democratic operation in the Wisconsin recall a “dry run” for November. However, not all Democratic operatives agreed that Wisconsin was the national race it seemed. Stephanie Cutter, Obama’s deputy campaign manager in 2012 was quoted as telling MSNBC, the left-leaning national media outlet, that the Walker recall was “a

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gubernatorial race … [that had] nothing to do with President Obama.” But the media, as will be shown later, did not agree with Cutter’s observation.

In excess of a million Wisconsinite signatures were collected only 16 months after Scott Walker was elected Governor. Those signatures were sufficient to force a recall election of Walker, following a heated and nationally publicized battle with public sector unions over reforms to pensions, among other practices. During the fight between legislative Republicans and Democrats, some Democratic state lawmaker obfuscated their duties by fleeing to neighboring – and Democrat-friendly – Illinois. The unions weren’t alone in their battle against the Republican legislators and governor, however. The New Yorker magazine illustrated it this way:

Vast crowds of demonstrators descended on the Capitol Building, in Madison: teachers, students, white- and blue- and pink-collar workers—even, to the surprise of some, cops and firefighters…By the second week, hundreds of protesters were physically occupying the Capitol, sleeping on the marble floors. One day, farmers drove their tractors into the center of Madison—the Tractorcade—and police estimated the crowd at a hundred thousand. Prior to the recall attempt of Walker, only two governors had ever faced a recall election in the United States and neither had survived, so Democrats liked their chances of deposing the hardline Walker.


But their battle would be an uphill one. Both Walker and his opponent in the recall, who was ironically the same candidate whom Walker had defeated in 2010 to win the governorship, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett had high name recognition, although the advantage was certainly Walker’s simply as a result of the highly publicized fight with the unions.63 Between being sworn into office in January 2011 and when the recall date was set in May 2012, Walker, according to The Christian Science Monitor, had raised $30.5 million; Barrett had raised barely more than a tenth of that sum, $3.9 million.64 Moreover, all public polling since Barrett entered the race showed Walker with comfortable leads, outside the margin of error. The final Real Clear Politics average of all public polling showed Walker with a 6.7 percent lead over Barrett (51.5-44.8); the final vote awarded Walker a 6.8 percent victory (53.1-46.3).65

LexisNexis returned 999 results on a search for “Scott Walker.” That number was reduced to 296 when searching for the term “recall” within the results. However, it was the publically available Google search engine that yielded the most results. An online query, using Google, for “Scott Walker Recall” yielded 13.8 million returns, when narrowed to include only news articles. The search confines were narrowed to include only news articles dated between May 1, 2012, shortly before the recall date was announced, and June 4, 2012, the day before the election. Because this race was tremendously high-profile, brief summaries of the top 100 search results were read and

63 Find a citation for this.

64 Guarino, “Why did Dems spend so little on Wisconsin recall election?”

the top articles mentioning the nationalization of the Walker recall were read in completion. Despite the Cutter’s assertion that the Walker recall election was not of national importance, many news articles were discovered that showed the overwhelming nationalization of the race. And unlike the previous case studies, the nationalization crossed partisan lines.

Political scientist Arnold Shober told *The Christian Science Monitor* that “Republicans are trying very much to make this a national referendum on Obama,” while the Democrats added their national “war on women” message to their pro-union argument against Walker.66,67 Adding the presence of national politicians to the already nationalized message provided another facet of nationalization, when both Romney and former Pennsylvania Senator and Republican presidential hopeful Rick Santorum visited Wisconsin to lend support to Walker, and former President William Jefferson Clinton made appearances on Barrett’s behalf. Notably absent from the proceedings, however, was Obama.

Previous cases studied herein had little to no media coverage, and when the media did cover the race, there was no coverage of the nationalization as a campaign strategy. The nationalization found in news articles came from direct quotes from the campaigns or candidates. Walker’s recall election yielded precisely the opposite results: Media outlets not only covered the nationalization of the campaigns and the national messages from the opposing sides, they contributed to the nationalization. The first notable

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66 Guarino, “Why did Dems spend so little on Wisconsin recall election?”

example of the media foreseeing a nationalized campaign came on January 15, shortly after Walker’s opponents announced they had submitted over a million signatures to place the governor on a recall ballot, when the *New York Times* said the campaign would serve as “a sign for the presidential race.” Only two days later, the Washington political blog, *Politico*, said there was the likelihood that the Wisconsin campaigns and the presidential race would overlap: “[T]he [Wisconsin recall] contest is sure to seep into the presidential election between President Barack Obama and the Republican presidential nominee.”

As the campaign wore on and the national messages were delivered from both sides of the Wisconsin recall, the media continued to pay attention to it and cover it as a national indicator. In the days leading up to Election Day, *The Christian Science Monitor* told its readers, “For a preview of the November presidential election, look no further than the dogfight over the governorship of Wisconsin,” while CNBC asked, “could the outcome spell trouble for Democrats—and even President Obama?” And so, as the

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media covered the “battle viewed largely as a barometer for November's showdown,” the question, again, is “Why?”

Coming to a definitive conclusion as to why this race was nationalized is even more difficult than previous cases. First, so many various participants were involved in the election. Labor unions and business groups, tea parties and presidential candidates, both national political parties, and the news media all played a role in nationalizing the Walker recall election. And each had their own reasons for doing so. Second, determining the reason for nationalization proves problematic because the recall occurred in the midst of a presidential election. With the political parties and their allies, along with the media and everyday Americans, already enthralled in the discussion of the presidential race, including a notoriously contentious Republican nominating season, discussing the Walker recall in terms of national messaging and political figures likely seemed to be a natural approach, and a simplistic one. One conclusion that can be definitively drawn is that all participants had a national message to deliver, and they accomplished that goal.

Walker’s recall election also provided an interesting situation that is worthy of discussion. As previously mentioned, both sides of the Walker recall – Democrats and Republicans – nationalized this race. Because of this, nationalization both succeeded and failed. Likewise, both political parties both succeeded and failed. On the one hand, the Republicans nationalizing the race with appearances by presidential contenders Romney and Santorum won in that their party’s governor, Scott Walker, became the first governor

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in United States history to survive a recall. On the other hand, Democrats lost for a few reasons. First, there was the aforementioned funding gap between the candidates; and it was a vast one. Democrats are notoriously prolific fundraisers, so their failure to raise sufficient funds for Barrett’s campaign was a major failure worthy of note. Second, despite making the Walker recall a testing ground for their presidential message and ground game, they failed to convince a majority of the Wisconsin electorate that Walker’s policies were detrimental. Third, they allowed their allies to get off message, which is always disastrous for a campaign. Rather than focusing on the issue at hand, namely Walker’s fight with the unions, and making the recall a true referendum on that topic, Democratic allies waded into the “war on women” message, in effect making the recall more about having another shot at a Barrett governorship than truly about Walker’s battle with public sector unions.

Both political parties also experienced the opposite effects following the Walker recall. While national Republicans won the recall and retained a Republican governor and Democrats failed miserably at ousting the union-busting Walker, their fortunes reversed five months later. Despite an abysmal showing in June, Democrats were able to secure an Obama victory in Wisconsin in November, thus handing national Republicans, whose vice-presidential nominee was a Wisconsin congressman, an even bigger loss than they would have suffered in Wisconsin had Walker lost. The Wisconsin attempt to recall Scott Walker proved that elections are not necessarily good predictors of elections. And it proved that nationalization can be simultaneously both a good strategy and a bad one.
Chapter 4: Research Design & Methodology

While case studies like those in the previous chapter can provide a great opportunity to examine a phenomenon, they are largely anecdotal and cannot provide quality information about a larger trend. For example, four campaigns which employ nationalization do not prove that other campaigns are employing the strategy. Credibility that nationalization is a larger trend is built by the fact that the nationalized campaigns were held in geographic diversity, but even that doesn’t independently prove a trend. Moreover, anecdotal case studies certainly do not predict the continuation of a trend. The four races studied in Chapter 3 were all held within about five years of one another. Simply because something occurs for half a decade does not indicate that it will continue to occur. With the case studies behind, the next task is to examine the phenomenon of nationalization in local campaigns on a broader scale. Through both quantitative and qualitative examination, nationalization will be dissected and the answers to four questions will be sought:

1. Is nationalization of local campaigns a trend? That is, are non-federal campaigns being nationalized across the country?

2. Is the utilization of nationalization in non-federal races increasing? Put another way, are more local campaigns being nationalized now than in previous elections, and will more of these campaigns be nationalized in the future?

3. Why are local campaigns nationalized? This question was asked in each of the case studies, but it is asked again through the lens of in depth data.

4. Is nationalizing a local race effective? Do campaigns which employ nationalization win elections?
With these four research questions in mind, the following hypotheses are put forth:

1. Nationalization of local campaigns is a trend.

2. The use of nationalization in local campaigns is on the rise and will continue to increase in the next few years.

3. Nationalized local races will produce a larger margin of victory than other contemporaneous and historical campaigns. (Null: Nationalization will have no effect on the margin of victory.)

Because this study focuses on non-federal races, including small down-ballot races such as city council and state legislative campaigns, a full content analysis of even a sample of these races would have been both cost and time prohibitive. Thus another method of gathering data on these races had to be utilized. For decades, the political consulting industry has been rapidly growing. This prolific growth in the political consulting profession has essentially been both cause and effect; that is, a growth in political consultancy has led to more campaigns hiring consultants, and more campaigns hiring consultants has led to an even greater expanse of the political consulting industry. Growth in the industry is also expanded by the specialization that comes from new campaign techniques, such as digital media and microtargeting. In years past, only large campaigns such as presidential or senatorial campaigns could afford to employ consultants, but that is no longer the case. In her study of the professionalization of local campaigns, Strachan found that even down-ballot campaigns are now retaining

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consultants, and they’re doing so at a hurried pace.\textsuperscript{74} With non-federal campaigns, even those races down-ballot, retaining the services of political consultants, this seemed a reasonable conduit for gathering information about local campaigns.

Akin to the medical profession’s move away from general, or family, doctors in favor of specialty doctors such as oncologists or emergency physicians, the political consulting profession has also, in recent years, witnessed a rift in its membership. General consultants are still prevalent in the industry, but a vast majority of practitioners have found a specialized field in which to focus. Some of the sub-fields, or specialties, of political consulting include media (television), direct mail, and the aforementioned digital guru. While some general consultants also provide services in these specializations, the more nuanced ones are left to experts. However, while “each of the consulting specialties…participates in what is sometimes called the battle for ‘interpretive dominance’ within electoral campaigns,” specialized consultants rarely, if ever, are kept informed of what’s happening in other areas of a campaign.\textsuperscript{75} For example, a consultant who makes an advertising purchase for a campaign likely will not be privy to the goings on in the campaign’s direct mail operation. The general consultant serves as an overseer of the specialized consultants, in much the same manner as a general contractor superintends the work of subcontractors on a construction site, in order to ensure a continuity of message is maintained. Put another way, the general consultant guarantees that the message in each tactic of a campaign’s message strategy is the same.

\textsuperscript{74} Strachan, \textit{High-Tech Grass Roots: The Professionalization of Local Elections.}

\textsuperscript{75} Bosma, \textit{Images of Political Consultancy in American Presidential Campaigns}, 15.
In conducting research for her professionalization study, Strachan conducted a survey of political consultants which she added the results to interviews conducted with newspaper reporters in order to grasp the depth of the proliferation of political consulting to down-ballot races. Modeling Strachan, in order to study the nationalization of non-federal races, a directed, online survey was developed utilizing the Internet-based Qualtrics Survey Software and distributed via e-mail to general political consultants across the country. Besides attempting to duplicate Strachan’s success in surveying political consultants, this group was selected because of their position atop the political world. Indeed, they have been referred to as “modern-day political bosses.”76 Because of their status in contemporary campaigning, “consultants are responsible for the entire strategic orientation that drives contemporary electioneering.”77

Despite their prevalence in the political world, for several reasons, no comprehensive national database of political consultants exists. First, political consulting is not a licensed profession – nor should it be. But because it is not, states do not maintain a registry of political consultants. Second, political consultants are not required to be certified (a mark of proficiency from a professional organization, rather than a governmentally required license), although the notion of certification has been circulated within the profession.78 Still yet, with no certification required, a comprehensive list is not available. Third, many consultants, particularly those in smaller races are not full-


77 Bosma, Images of Political Consultancy in American Presidential Campaigns, 5.

time consultants; they hold other professions and either manage campaigns in their spare
time or lend their non-political skills to political candidates.79 These moonlighters may
not even consider themselves political consultants, so they would not necessarily affiliate
with others who do. To overcome the gap in available data on political consultants, a list
had to be manufactured. In order to compile the list of consultants to survey, three
resources were used: The membership directory of the American Association of Political
Consultants, Campaigns & Elections magazine’s annual “Political Pages,” and the
author’s personal networks. Survey participation was also solicited in online groups of
political professionals on the social networking site, LinkedIn.

As discussed previously, general consultants most frequently oversee specialized
consultants and thus have greater knowledge of the overall campaign message and
strategy. Because of this higher level of insight, only general consultants were selected
for participation in the directed survey. Two screens were utilized to permit only general
consultants to provide data for examination. First, a pre-survey screen was conducted
when the consultant information was selected from one of the three resources previously
mentioned. Secondly, a screening question led the survey, mandating that participants
acknowledge that they were indeed a general consultant, according to the definition
provided. For the purposes of this study, a general consultant is defined as a political
operative who does not specialize in a particular tactic (e.g. digital, media, or direct mail)
but rather offers general and broad strategic advice to candidates for political office, even
if they additionally provide tactical services to the candidate. Once a survey respondent

guaranteed their status as a general consultant, they were asked a series of questions regarding nationalization. In total, 164 general consultants responded to the survey.

Once the data were collected, they were examined for answers to the four aforementioned questions. The first three questions – Is nationalization a trend?, Is nationalization on the rise?, and Why are campaigns nationalizing? – were subjected to qualitative analysis. In order to determine if the nationalization of local campaigns is a trend, the state in which a consultant’s primary business office is located, and thus the state in which they do most of their business, along with states in which they stated they had nationalized a non-federal race were indicated on a map. A visual representation provided the best mechanism by which to determine if nationalization is a nation-wide trend. Determining whether or not nationalizing local campaigns is increasing came down to a matter of a consultant comparing the frequency with which nationalization is used now as compared to two other points in time – one in the past and one in the future. These figures were then tabulated to determine whether consultants are nationalizing local races now than in the past and whether the anticipate nationalizing more in the future.

Answering the question of why local campaigns are nationalized was a matter of allowing consultants two separate opportunities to answer the question. First, consultants were given four choices as to why they nationalized a race:
1. Popularity or unpopularity of the federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy in the state or district;

2. Result of polling conducted on the federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy;

3. Intuitive decision by the candidate or campaign staff;

4. Consultant’s suggestion

Consultants were additionally given an open-ended response block, marked “Other,” in which they had the opportunity to give another reason for nationalizing aside from the four listed. Responses to this question were tallied and ranked on a scale from one to four, with one being the most common reason given by consultants and four being the least common. A second question posed to consultants with the goal of answering “Why?” was another open-ended opportunity for the respondent to briefly explain what message they were attempting to convey by nationalizing the race. Responses to these questions will be discussed in the qualitative chapter in the effort to understand why campaigns and their consultants are nationalizing local races.

The final question, “Is nationalization effective?” is best answered quantitatively. For each campaign in which a consultant provided sufficient data for further examination, results from that race was placed into their proper context and examined in comparison to results from similar races in the state on the same Election Day. Results were also examined in comparison to elections held for the same office in the three previous cycles. Instances in which more than two candidates were included in the final results, the margin of victory between the top two vote recipients was calculated. In order to
examine nationalized races in these two contexts, two t-test distributions were conducted using:

\[ t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\hat{\sigma}_{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}} \]

For the t-test conducted to compare the electoral results of nationalized campaigns to results from the same election for similar seats, there were 21 degrees of freedom (df). The t-test comparing the results of nationalized campaigns to that office’s three previous elections had 30 df.

In the retrieval of data, a number of problems were encountered, which excluded some races which consultants advised they had nationalized. First, only races from 2008 forward were analyzed. This required the exclusion of one race from 2004. Second, because of their unique structure, campaigns in multi-member districts were excluded. This included races in Maryland and New Jersey. Third, statewide races in which no comparable races were located were excluded.
Chapter 5: Qualitative Analysis

Is Nationalization a Trend?

Campaigns at all levels convey messages to the electorate that reflect the beliefs, philosophy, or positions of a candidate which are unique and do not reflect the ideology of the larger population. In recent years, a gubernatorial candidate in New York ran as a member of the Rent Is Too Damn High Party while a candidate for New Jersey Governor ran his campaign on the message that the Central Intelligence Agency was responsible for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. However, these messages rarely ascend to a level of prominence worthy of analysis. Indeed messages such as these are mostly viewed as extreme and are anecdotal at best. Thus, discussing the nationalization of local campaigns in anecdotes offers an insufficient analysis of the strategy. Determining whether the strategy is a national trend, or even a regional one, is necessary.

General consultants who responded to the survey were asked to identify the state in which their consulting business is headquartered. Although many consultants have built a reputation and business outside their home state, the bulk of a consultant’s business is frequently conducted in their home state, in which they run campaigns at the state level and below. Because of this business in their home states, it was logically concluded that consultants who identified having nationalized a non-federal race have likely done so in those states. In addition to the states in which consultants are headquartered, the ones who provided data on specific races which were nationalized were asked to identify the state in which the campaign was nationalized. These states were identified and indicated on a map in order to determine whether nationalization is a national trend. Figure 1 shows the states which have been identified by these criteria.
In total, 34 states plus the District of Columbia were identified in which a non-federal campaign was nationalized. Although other campaigns in the remaining 16 states may have been nationalized, none were identified through the survey. States in which nationalized local campaigns were identified are in every region of the country. States which lean Democratic as well as Republican dominated states have borne witness to a nationalized local campaign. Considering the fact that 68 percent of the states in the United States have been identified as having at least one nationalized local campaign, and that those states are found in every region of the nation, nationalization of non-federal campaigns does indeed appear to be a trend. Thus H1, Nationalization of local campaigns is a trend, is confirmed.

Is Nationalization Increasing?

An impetus to study the nationalization of local campaigns was the seeming proliferation of the strategy. Watching races around the country, it appeared that an increasing number of non-federal races were making references to national policies and
politicians; however, those instances were simply anecdotal and did not prove a true increase in the use of the strategy. To prove the assumption that nationalizing local races was indeed on the rise, consultants were asked in the survey a series of questions regarding their use of nationalization in comparison to various points in time.

First, consultants were asked to provide the number of local campaigns for which they had employed a nationalized strategy. They were asked to provide this number for campaigns from 2008 to the present day as well as for campaigns prior to 2008. Not all consultants interviewed provided exact numbers and some provided no data at all. However, 80 of the 164 consultants gave precise numbers. For those consultants, prior to 2008, they indicated they had nationalized 616 local races. From 2008 onward, consultants indicated they had nationalized 831 local campaigns, representing a 34.9 percent increase in nationalized races since 2008. Only 19 of the 79 consultants indicated they had nationalized fewer races since 2008 than they had nationalized prior to 2008.

Of the 19 consultants who reported nationalizing fewer races since 2008, 10 of them were Democratic Party operatives, seven were Republicans, one identified as a consultant for Independent or Third-Party candidates, and one did not report their partisan affiliation. Indeed, Democratic Party consultants were the only group to report a decline in nationalized local races since 2008; they indicated a 27.5 percent decrease in nationalized non-federal races. Independent and Third-Party consultants reported a 5.3 percent increase in nationalized local campaigns while Republican Party consultants indicated a 46.5 percent increase.
Next, consultants were asked more qualitatively to compare how frequently they use nationalization in local campaigns at the time of the survey as compared to prior to 2008. In total, 86 consultants responded to this question. Of the 86, 33 of the consultants, or 38.4 percent, indicated they used nationalization in local campaigns with “about the same” frequency as they did prior to 2008. Five consultants (5.8 percent) indicated they used nationalization in local campaigns less frequently than they did before 2008. The remaining 48 consultants (55.8 percent) reported they nationalized local campaigns more frequently than they had in 2008. Table 1 shows these numbers based on the tenure of the consultant. Table 2 shows these numbers based on the consultant’s age, and Table 3 shows the breakdown based on partisan affiliation.

Table 1: Nationalization Frequency by Tenure of Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you nationalize local races...</th>
<th>0-3 Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>4-10 Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>11-20 Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>21+ Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than prior to 2008</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same as prior to 2008</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than prior to 2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Nationalization Frequency by Age of Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you nationalize local races…</th>
<th>Aged 18-27</th>
<th>Aged 28-35</th>
<th>Aged 36-45</th>
<th>Aged 46-55</th>
<th>Aged 56+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than prior to 2008</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same as prior to 2008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than prior to 2008</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Nationalization Frequency by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you nationalize local races…</th>
<th>Democratic Party</th>
<th>Republican Party</th>
<th>Independent or Third-Party</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than prior to 2008</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same as prior to 2008</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than prior to 2008</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, anecdotal empirical evidence suggests that the strategy of nationalizing local campaigns is continuing to be utilized by political consultants. In the suburbs of North Dallas, a primary campaign for the Texas State Senate is being waged between two Republicans – a longtime incumbent viewed largely as a moderate, Senator John Carona,
and a political newcomer, Don Huffines, who is running to the right of the incumbent. In addition to direct mail pieces from the Huffines campaign linking Carona to Obama (See Appendix E), some well-known national Republican political figures – Santorum and Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky – have come out in support of the challenger. The data collected from political consultants indicates that they are nationalizing more local campaigns now than in 2008 and the empirical evidence seemingly lends support to that data.

Finally, in an effort to determine the proliferation of nationalization in local campaigns, consultants were asked to qualitatively estimate how frequently they anticipate nationalizing local races from the present date until 2020. Significantly, 55 of the 86 consultants (63.95 percent) reported they anticipate utilizing nationalization in “about the same” number of races as they currently do. Only four consultants (4.7 percent) indicated they would nationalize less frequently than they presently do while the remaining 27 (31.4 percent) reported they would nationalize more local campaigns in the years to come. Table 4 shows these numbers based on the tenure of the consultant. Table 5 shows these numbers based on the consultant’s age, and Table 6 shows the breakdown based on partisan affiliation.


81 Ibid.
Table 4: Anticipated Frequency of Nationalization by 2020 by Tenure of Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you plan to nationalize local races...</th>
<th>0-3 Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>4-10 Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>11-20 Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>21+ Years as a Consultant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than now by 2020</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same as now by 2020</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than now by 2020</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Anticipated Frequency of Nationalization by 2020 by Age of Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you plan to nationalize local races...</th>
<th>Aged 18-27</th>
<th>Aged 28-35</th>
<th>Aged 36-45</th>
<th>Aged 46-55</th>
<th>Aged 56+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than now by 2020</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same as now by 2020</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than now by 2020</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Anticipated Frequency of Nationalization by 2020 by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you plan to nationalize local races...</th>
<th>Democratic Party</th>
<th>Republican Party</th>
<th>Independent or Third-Party</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than now by 2020</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the same as now by 2020</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than now by 2020</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the empirical evidence supports that nationalizing non-federal races will continue to be a campaign strategy utilized by candidates and their consultants. More than two years before the 2016 gubernatorial election in Missouri, the former Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Republican Catherine Hanaway, announced her candidacy for that state’s chief executive position. Kevin McDermott, a political reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* indicated that the Hanaway campaign would likely tie her Democratic opponent, sitting state Attorney General Chris Koster, to Obama. That strategy – the strategy of nationalizing a non-federal race – had been successful in Missouri, according to McDermott. As with the increase from 2008 to present, the data indicating the continuation of nationalization into the future is supported by empirical evidence.


83 Ibid.
The data clearly indicate that nationalization in local campaigns has been on the rise since 2008. General consultants indicated in substantial numbers that they use nationalization more frequently than they did prior to 2008. Indeed 50 percent more consultants answered that they nationalize non-federal races more than those who nationalize these campaigns less than in 2008. However, nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that they will employ the strategy of nationalization at similar levels of frequency as they currently do. Thus, H2, that nationalization is on the rise and will continue to increase in the future, is only partially proven by the data.

**Why are Local Campaigns being Nationalized?**

The question of why non-federal campaigns are nationalized was asked in each case study. And in only one was an answer satisfactorily attained. The same question was asked of consultants in two ways. These questions were asked of consultants for each candidate they entered into the system as having nationalized the race. There were a total of 32 responses. First, consultants were given four possible reasons for employing the strategy – popularity or unpopularity of the national figure or policy, result of polling, an intuitive decision by campaign staff, and the consultant’s advice – plus the open-ended option of “Other.” They were asked to rank these explanations in order of their importance. Second, consultants were asked to briefly explain the message the campaign was attempting to convey to voters.

Of the possible explanations for nationalizing non-federal campaigns, consultants listed the popularity/unpopularity of the national figure or policy as the number one reason. With 32 responses, the mean of the popularity/unpopularity response was 1.47. Intuition by the campaign staff was listed as the second most popular explanation with an
arithmetic mean of 2.47. Polling is frequently the leading driver behind campaign strategy and messaging, so it was surprising that it was listed as only the third most important explanation at 2.81. Advice of the consultant (3.31) and other justifications (4.93) concluded the ranking portion of why consultants and campaigns nationalized local races.

More qualitatively, consultants were asked what message the campaign was attempting to convey to voters in its nationalization strategy. Consultants provided this data for 30 campaigns. Seven of these 30 campaigns (23.3 percent) indicated that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA, or Obamacare) was the topic of their message. Six of the seven campaigns stood in opposition to the law while one indicated that their message was the “need to provide a state legislature willing to implement the ACA.” Consultants were also asked if the campaign’s message of nationalization was positive or negative. Two consultants said they didn’t know or couldn’t remember. Nineteen of the 32 campaigns (59.4 percent) ran negative nationalized messages while the remaining 11 campaigns (34.8) indicated their nationalized message was a positive one, including demonstrating the candidate’s “strong ties to good national Democrats.”

Based on party identification, Democratic campaigns utilized a negative nationalized message in four campaigns and a positive nationalized message in six campaigns. Of the five Independent or Third Party consultants who provided this data, only one of their nationalized local campaigns was positive while the other four were negative. For Republicans, 11 nationalized races were negative and only four were positive. Thus, Republicans reported nearly thrice as many negative campaigns as Democrats and only two-thirds as many positive ones as their counterparts in the Democratic Party.
One question which was not considered in this research design was the rebuttal to nationalization. That is, how did local campaigns which were on the receiving end of negative nationalization respond to their opponent’s strategy? This question was raised via e-mail by a Democratic political consultant in Utah. He indicated in his e-mail that nationalization of local races was prevalent in Utah: “every campaign against us was nationalized.” According to the strategist, Democrats who were targets of nationalization “found success in going the opposite direction.” By focusing on parochial issues, Democratic candidates were able to “overcome GOP registration advantages” and forge a path to victory. Appendix F shows direct mail pieces which “pushed back against nationalization of local campaigns.”

**Tactics of Nationalized Messages**

Because campaigns employ a wide variety of messaging tactics, consultants who indicated having nationalized a local race were asked by which means they delivered these nationalized messages to the voters (N=157). Respondents were given a list of messaging tactics and asked to select the tactic or tactics they utilized to deliver nationalized messages to voters in non-federal elections. The list of tactics included direct mail, radio advertisements, television advertisements (on either broadcast or cable), newspaper advertisements, Internet sites, and social media. Consultants were also given an open-ended “Other” option to indicate additional methods of voter contact. Forty-three percent (n=68) of consultants indicated they utilized all six forms of voter contact and 18 of the 68 listed additional voter contact tactics used to convey a nationalized message to voters. In total, 21 consultants listed additional tactics. One-third (n=7) of
those listing additional methods indicated using phone calls and six utilized field or door-to-door canvassing. All but four campaigns used three or more of the tactics.

Remarkably, all 157 consultants indicated they had used direct mail to communicate a nationalized message to voters. Social media was the second most frequently utilized tactic (n=135) for nationalizing a race; the prevalence of social media usage is likely because it is free and thus reserves crucial campaign funds for other forms of voter contact. Compared to social media, only two fewer consultants reported using Internet sites (n=133). Radio advertisements (n=119) and television advertisements (n=114) were utilized in 75.8 percent and 72.6 percent respectively by the consultants to convey a nationalized message. Newspaper advertisements (n=98) were used by fewer consultants than any other method of voter communication, but were still used by nearly two-thirds of consultants.
Chapter 6: Quantitative Analysis

**Demographics of Nationalization**

Before discussing the analysis of the efficacy of nationalization, some demographics of who is nationalizing local campaigns will be highlighted. As part of the directed survey, general consultants were asked demographic questions about themselves and their company. This data was solicited to deepen the understanding of nationalization.

One hundred and sixty-four general consultants were surveyed. Of the 164, 82.3 percent (n=135) of them provided information on their partisan affiliation. More than half of the general consultants surveyed indicated that they had consulted on a campaign which employed a strategy of nationalization. Moreover, consultants who identified with the Republican Party were one-third more likely to nationalize a local race than were consultants in the Democratic Party. Table 7 demonstrates the breakdown of these data points.

Table 7: Nationalization by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalized a local race?</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Democratic Consultants</th>
<th>Republican Consultants</th>
<th>Ind/3rd Party Consultants</th>
<th>Total by Party ID’d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, information was solicited on a consultant’s tenure in the industry. The question was asked, “How long have you been a political consultant?” Based on the
data, it was revealed that consultants who had been in the industry between four and 10 years were the most likely to have nationalized a local campaign, while consultants who had been political consultants for 21 years or more were the least likely to nationalize a local campaign. The results of nationalization based on tenure are roughly bell-shaped. Table 8 provides data on the respondents’ tenure in the field of political consulting as it relates to whether or not they have nationalized a local race.

Table 8: Nationalization by Tenure of Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalized a local race?</th>
<th>0-3 Years Consulting</th>
<th>4-10 Years Consulting</th>
<th>11-20 Years Consulting</th>
<th>21+ Years Consulting</th>
<th>Total based on Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultants were also asked their age at the time of the survey. Like the results based on tenure, the age distribution is roughly bell-shaped. Respondents aged 36-45 were the most likely to nationalize a race while younger consultants, aged 18-27, were the least likely. An interesting observation based on the age of consultants when compared to the tenure of consultants is that the lower likelihood is on opposite ends in the two demographics. That is, more experienced consultants were less likely to nationalize while the youngest consultants were less likely than their oldest counterparts. A possible, yet untested, conclusion that can be drawn from the age discrepancy is less a comparison to tenure than a comparison to partisan leanings. Younger Americans tend to be more Democratic than Republican; and Democrats, as revealed by the data, are less
likely to nationalize local races than their Republican counterparts. Table 9 demonstrates a consultant’s likelihood of nationalizing a race based on their age.

Table 9: Nationalization by Age of Consultant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalized a local race?</th>
<th>Aged 18-27</th>
<th>Aged 28-35</th>
<th>Aged 36-45</th>
<th>Aged 46-55</th>
<th>Aged 56+</th>
<th>Total based on Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, in the demographic category, consultants who provided data on individual campaigns were asked about the candidate’s status in the race, that is, were they the incumbent, the challenger, or running for an open seat. Thirty-two consultants responded to this portion of the survey and indicated that challengers were nearly twice as likely (n=11, 34.375 percent) to nationalize a local race as were incumbents (n=6, 18.75 percent). However, candidates for open seats were significantly the most likely to nationalize a race (n=15, 46.875 percent).

**The Efficacy of Nationalization**

Campaigns for public office are about one thing in the minds of the candidates and the professionals who run the operation: Winning the election. As previously discussed, any campaign manager or political consultant will tell you there is no ‘silver bullet’ to winning a race. That is, no single tactic or message will lead to victory on Election Day. That fact, however, does not keep practitioners from seeking novel methods to win elections; and it does not keep academics from studying the results of those methods. Nationalization of non-federal races is no different. Practitioners are
nationalizing non-federal campaigns in a concerted effort to win elections and that nationalization is worthy of scholarly examination to determine the efficacy of the strategy.

In addition to the two legislative case studies in Chapter 3 84 – Grisamore (Missouri House of Representatives) and Guidry (Louisiana Senate) – 19 campaigns were identified in which general political consultants indicated they had advised the campaign on a nationalized message, and for which sufficient data existed for examination. Consultants revealed that campaigns for offices at all levels of government had, to some degree, delivered a national message. Of the 21 specifically identified and studied herein, the offices sought by candidates who nationalized their campaign were: Gubernatorial (n=4), Lieutenant Governor (n=1), State Senate (n=5), State House (n=6), Mayoral (n=2), Municipal Legislature (n=2), and School Board (n=1). As in the four cases studied earlier, the results of these 21 elections were mixed: 10 of the campaigns were victorious while 11 fell to defeat. Consultants were also asked to indicate on a 1-100 scale how much of the campaign was dedicated to a national message (N=32). Responses were recorded on both extremes (1 and 100) and the mean score was 33; that is, on average, 33 percent of messaging on nationalized local campaigns was dedicated to the nationalized message.

Historical context was ascertained by gathering election results for each of the 21 offices in the three elections preceding the studied campaign. Placing a campaign in historical context has many useful purposes for practitioners. Primarily, history tends to

84 The Mara and Walker Case Studies were not included in the quantitative analysis because they were both special elections which prohibited contextual analysis of their results.
repeat itself where voter turnout is concerned. Having historical data allows a campaign practitioner to determine roughly what turnout will be in their election, thus allowing them to approximate the vote share their candidate will need to secure in order to win the election. Historical context also serves a purpose in the academy, allowing academics to detect trends in voting patterns. Examining an electoral campaign in historical context is indeed a useful tool for studying campaigns. In total, data was gathered from 63 previous elections. In uncontested elections, the margin of victory was recorded as zero.

However, while turnout typically stays approximately the same over the course of time, attitudes and voter motivations are more fickle and tend to vary drastically from one election to the next. Thus, while an historical examination is warranted, so, too, is a contemporaneous one, placing the campaigns studied herein in context against similar elections on the same Election Day. Where possible, the precise comparisons were used. For example, when examining a state senate seat, all of the state senate seats in a state were selected for comparison. However, in some instances, exactly comparable positions do not exist, as in the case of a gubernatorial race. In these cases, similar positions were used for comparison. In the instances of gubernatorial elections, other statewide offices such as lieutenant governor or attorney general were selected. Uncontested elections were not included in the data, nor were contests where not comparable contemporaneous elections existed.

When gathering data for contemporaneous analysis, it was noted that a large number of elections included write-in candidates who had pulled several percentage points away from properly filed candidates, thus yielding a substantial number of campaigns which for all intents and purposes were uncontested yet technically had
extraordinary margins of victory – into the upper 90s in some instances. In the historical
data, uncontested elections were recorded as zero and uncontested elections in this
section were excluded; for the sake of consistency, contemporaneous elections which had
extraordinarily high margins of victory (greater than 75 percent) were also excluded. In
sum, data was gathered on 425 contemporaneous elections for comparison.

The 21 races examined yielded a mean margin of victory of 2.44 and a variance of
587.84. Historical races for the positions examined yielded a mean margin of victory of
17.14 and a variance of 428.57. Contemporaneous elections for the 21 campaigns
analyzed herein yielded a mean margin of victory of 24.13 and a variance of 283.99.

The hypothesis was put forward that nationalization of local campaigns would
increase the margin of victory for those campaigns. The null hypothesis was that
nationalization would have no effect on the margin of victory for local campaigns that
employed the strategy. In an effort to determine the efficacy of the strategy of
nationalization in local campaigns, those non-federal races which employed a
nationalized strategy were held in comparison to historical races for the same position
and to contemporaneous elections for similar positions on the same election day. When
placed in these two contexts, the results of a one-tailed t-test yielded statistically
significant results.

When compared to historical elections, nationalized local races produced
significant results. In this context, P=0.0092, yielding statistical significance at the 0.01
level. Similarly, contemporaneous results yielded incredibly statistically significant
findings at the 0.01 level. In contemporaneous elections, P=0.0003. With this level of
statistical significance achieved, H3N, Nationalization will have no effect on the margin of victory, can be rejected.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

Empirical yet anecdotal evidence of non-federal races employing a strategy of making reference to national politicians or policies led to several assumptions about this phenomenon dubbed herein as nationalization. After discovering a dearth of information in existing literature about the phenomenon of nationalization, it was hypothesized that local campaigns across the United States were utilizing nationalization at an increasing rate. It was also hypothesized that the strategy of nationalization was an effective one for local campaigns. After studying anecdotal occurrences of nationalization through case studies, a more rigorous method of answering the questions of nationalization was employed.

A directed survey instrument was deployed, soliciting responses from general political consultants from across the country. One hundred and sixty-four general consultants took the survey and provided valuable data with regards to nationalization. Through the data gathered from the survey, two of the three hypotheses were fully confirmed, while the third was partially confirmed. It was determined that nationalization of local campaigns is indeed a nationwide trend, having discovered nationalization in 36 states and in every region of the country. The hypothesis that nationalization increased the share of votes received on Election Day was confirmed with statistical significance at the .01 level when nationalized local campaigns were compared to both historical elections for the same position and contemporaneous elections for similar or equivalent positions in the same state. Finally, the hypothesis that nationalization of local campaigns has increased and will continue to increase was partially confirmed when it was discovered that nationalized local campaigns have indeed
increased since 2008 but that consultants indicated they would largely maintain the current level of nationalization through 2020.

A common question asked throughout the research was “why are local races nationalized?” In the case studies, the question was answered only once which resulted from access to internal campaign information. The reason for nationalization in the remaining three case studies was left to speculation. Consultants, however, provided extremely valuable insight into why the campaigns they directed employed a strategy of nationalization. The primary reason for nationalization was the popularity or unpopularity of the national politician or federal policy in the district. Moreover, the most prevalent policy mentioned by non-federal politicians was the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, which was mentioned in nearly a quarter of the campaigns and was most frequently reflected in a negative light.

The implications of this research have the potential to be profound. “Whether it be new technologies, the adoption of successful strategies and techniques from other campaigns, or simply changes in the conventional wisdom about what works,” candidates for public office, their campaigns, and political consultants always search for novel and effective strategies and tactics for electioneering. With this research proving with statistical significance that nationalizing local races increases vote share for the candidates, consultants who correctly implement this strategy could see an increase in the number of winning campaigns they direct.

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85 Bosma, Images of Political Consultancy in American Presidential Campaigns, 19.

67
All research has its limitations, and this project is no different. An ideal methodology for this research would have been a content analysis of a random sample of campaign literature and advertising. However, time and monetary constraints prohibited this type of analysis. A content analysis of randomized samples of campaign messaging would have led to results which could be more confidently generalized. However, with a nationwide survey of political consultants, meaningful and important conclusions were still reached.

A second limitation to this research was the lack of a centralized database of political consultants. The list compiled from the American Association of Political Consultants directory and the *Campaigns & Elections* “Political Pages” resulted in a very limited number of potential respondents. While a meaningful number of consultants provided valuable data, because the sample was not truly random, the results herein cannot be generalized.

However, with limitations comes opportunity for further research. Because this topic has not been previously investigated, ample opportunity exists to extend the research on the topic and expand the understanding of the phenomenon. The primary opportunity for future research comes from one of the aforementioned limitations. Given the proper resources, a content analysis of a random sample of local campaign materials would provide a more reliable and generalizable result.

A second and intriguing opportunity for additional research would be to extend the scope of the research to span several decades and analyze nationalization trends by party when the opposite party controls the White House. Because so much of the content
studied herein as well as data gathered from the survey was seemingly executed by Republicans against the Democratic President Obama, it would be interesting to examine local campaign materials over the course of time to determine what effect the president’s political affiliation has on the strategy of nationalization. Expanding this opportunity, researchers could also conduct analyses based on control of the Congress.

Thirdly, another potential for further research would be to include rebuttals to the nationalization. As discussed previously, refutation of the nationalization strategy was not considered in the research design for this project, but the topic was raised by a consultant via e-mail. Researchers in the future have the opportunity to expand on this research by examining not only the nationalized race but also the effect a strong rebuttal can have on the efficacy of nationalization.

At the outset of this chapter, the research of this project and the results of that research were discussed. To summarize, the hypotheses presented herein were either partially or fully confirmed by the research. Nationalization of local campaigns is a growing nationwide trend. Despite mixed empirical results on Election Day, the data demonstrate that nationalization increases the vote share on Election Day, proving that the strategy of injecting national politics into non-federal campaigns is a successful one.

Increasing knowledge about the nationalization of local campaigns was the primary intent of this project. A close secondary goal was to provide data which is valuable for both political professionals and political scientists alike. Political practitioners are constantly seeking innovative methods of winning campaigns. While intuition and public opinion polls frequently drive message and strategy, practitioners can
also utilize the information contained in the academy to improve the way they wage campaigns. Academics continually study a vast range of topics in the campaign world specifically, and in politics more generally. However, only on rare occasions do academic articles contain information relevant to practitioners. This project is hopefully the first step to bridging the divide between the academic and the practical. After all, the two spheres seek the same goal: Understanding the world of politics a little bit more.
Appendix A: Directed Survey

As a part of an academic study on local campaigns, this questionnaire is directed to general political consultants in order to determine the expanse and efficacy of the use of a national message in non-federal campaigns. This study will help both political professionals and academics understand the “nationalization” of local elections. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this brief survey. Your input will be beneficial to both the practice of politics and the academic understanding of campaigns. Please rest assured that all of your responses will calculated in aggregate numbers and your individual responses will be kept in the strictest of confidence. Your privacy as well as the privacy of your clients and the strategic decisions you make in conjunction with them is a top priority for me.

Q1 For the purpose of this study, a general consultant is a political operative who does not specialize in a particular tactic (e.g. digital, media, or direct mail) but rather offers general and broad strategic advice to candidates for political office, even if they additionally provide tactical services to the candidate. Based on this definition, do you consider yourself to be a general political consultant?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey
Q2 In which state is your business located?
Select from list

Q3 How long have you been a political consultant?

- 0-3 years
- 4-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21+ years

Q4 What is your current age?

- Under 18
- 18-27
- 28-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56+

Q5 Are you a consultant for candidates in the...

- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Independents or Third-Party Candidates

Q6 In a typical election cycle, how many candidates for elected office do you serve?

(Please provide estimated number.)
Q7 During your entire career, have you ever worked for candidates for the following offices (select all that apply)?

- [ ] Governor
- [ ] Other statewide offices (not U.S. House or Senate)
- [ ] State Senator
- [ ] State House (choose if your candidate was running in Nebraska)
- [ ] Mayor
- [ ] Municipal legislative office (e.g. city council)
- [ ] Other municipal or county office
- [ ] Other ________________
- [ ] None

Q8 Thinking about only the candidates for the offices you answered in the previous question, please check the messaging tactics utilized in those campaigns. (Check all that apply.)

- [ ] Direct Mail
- [ ] Radio Ads
- [ ] Television (broadcast and cable) Ads
- [ ] Newspaper Ads
- [ ] Internet Site(s)
- [ ] Social Media
- [ ] Other ________________

Q9 For the purpose of this study, “nationalization” is defined as the use of a national message or reference to a federal politician in the strategy of a non-federal campaign. For example, a Democrat running for state senate in Massachusetts compares his Republican opponent to Ted Cruz, a national politician, his messaging would
constitute nationalization. As another example, a Republican running for Governor in
Louisiana makes an argument against President Obama’s drilling moratorium, a federal
policy, her message would be considered nationalization.

Have you advised candidates for non-federal offices to employ a message strategy that
would be considered nationalization according to this definition?

☑ Yes
☒ No
If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey
Q10 Still thinking about only the candidates for the offices listed in prior questions, from 2008 to date (including the 2008 cycle), in approximately how many did you employ a message that directly referenced a federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy? (Please provide estimated number.)

Q11 Still thinking only of races for these offices, prior to 2008 (not including the 2008 cycle), in approximately how many did you employ a message that directly referenced a federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy? (Please provide estimated number.)

Q12 Now, in the next few questions, I’m going to ask you about your perception of the political climate as it relates to the use of nationalization in local campaigns.

Q13 Thinking about the past few years (2008-Present), would you say that you now use nationalization in local campaigns...

☐ More than you did prior to 2008
☐ About the same as you did prior to 2008
☐ Less than you did prior to 2008
Q14 Thinking about the next few years (Present-2020), compared to right now, do you plan to use nationalization in local campaigns?

☐ Less over the next few years
☐ About the same over the next few years
☐ More over the next few years

Q15 Finally, I’m going to ask you for some detailed information on the local candidates and campaigns for which you employed a strategy that directly referenced a federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy. Although these responses are lengthy, their completion is very important to the legitimacy of this study. Please include as many candidates from 2008 (including that year’s cycle) to date as you can recall. Remember to only include non-federal candidates. Although not all questions require a response, please be as detailed as possible. This survey will permit you to save and return later if you need to gather the information. Remember, your responses are very important. Please advance to the next question.

Q16 Name of candidate #1 (This information is requested only for additional research. The candidate will not be contacted or mentioned in the study. Your clients’ confidentiality is very important.)
Q17 What year did this candidate seek office?

- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013

Q18 Political party of candidate #1

- Democratic
- Republican
- Independent
- Other ________________

Q19 Office candidate #1 sought?

- Governor
- Other statewide office (NOT U.S. House or Senate)
- State Senator
- State House (select if candidate ran in NE)
- Mayor or County Executive
- Municipal or County legislative office (e.g. city council)
- Other municipal or county office
- Other

Q20 State in which candidate #1 sought office?

Select from list
Q21 In the election, was candidate #1 the...

- Incumbent
- Challenger
- Running for an open seat

Q22 How much of the campaign message for candidate #1 would you say was devoted to nationalizing?

_______ Degree of Nationalization

Q23 Was the national message during the campaign of candidate #1...

- Positive
- Negative
- Don't know/Can't remember
Q24 By clicking and dragging the following choices, please rank the reasons for nationalizing candidate #1's campaign.

_____ Popularity/unpopularity of the federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy in the state/district
_____ Result of polling conducted on the federal politician, office-holder, personality, or policy
_____ Intuitive decision by the candidate or campaign staff
_____ Your suggestion
_____ Other (Explain)

Q25 Briefly, what message were you trying to convey to voters by nationalizing candidate #1's campaign?

Q26 Which communication tactic did you use to nationalize candidate #1's campaign?

(Select all that apply.)

- [ ] Direct mail
- [ ] Radio ads
- [ ] Television (both broadcast and cable) ads
- [ ] Newspaper
- [ ] Internet sites
- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Other (please describe) ____________________
Q27 Was the use of nationalization in candidate #1's campaign for...

☐ the general election
☐ a closed primary
☐ an open primary
☐ a party caucus or convention
☐ both nominating and general

Q28 Did candidate #1 win?

☐ Yes - won general election
☐ Yes - won the nomination but NOT the general election
☐ No
☐ Don't know/can't remember

Q29 Do you have another candidate's information to offer?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Next Candidate Info
If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Thank you for your valuable time and ...

Q30 Thank you for your valuable time and input in this very important research project. Again, please rest assured that your responses are private and that only aggregated data will be used. Your privacy and your clients’ privacy are important to me.
Appendix B: Mara Website Screenshot
Appendix C: Grisamore Mailing
Appendix D: Guidry Advertisement

“OBAMA’S OIL MORATORIUM IS KILLING OUR ECONOMY.”
- Darrin Guidry

Darrin Guidry will fight the OIL MORATORIUM and get our economy growing.

☆ No Moratorium, Get the Oil Industry Growing
Darrin Guidry knows that Barack Obama’s drilling moratorium has devastated the local economy. He opposes burdensome regulation and supports speedier drilling permit approvals so the economy can start growing again and people can return to work.

☆ Darrin Guidry Created Thousands of Jobs
Darrin Guidry helped create thousands of new, high-paying jobs and retained thousands more as a leader on the Terrebonne Economic Development Authority. He will use this successful experience to help make Louisiana a more job-friendly and business-competitive state.

(985) 655-3049
DarrinGuidry.com
facebook.com/DarrinGuidryforSenate

ENDORSED BY:
LOGA
LOUISIANA OIL & GAS ASSOCIATION
Appendix E: Carona Obama Highway

Brought to you by State Senator John Carona
We're Not Kidding. Carona Really Did It.
He Tried to Name a Highway After Obama.

S.B. 1510
By: West, Carona
Transportation & Homeland Security

President Obama's victory is an inspiration

It would be a lasting tribute expressive of the significance of President Obama's election to name a highway in that region in his honor.

S.B. 1510 authorizes that portions of Interstate 20 be named in honor of President Barack Obama.

Vote Against John Carona
Appendix F: Nationalization Rebuttals
WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

www.electtimcosgrove.org

VOTE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU.

- Your Advocate for Our Community.
  Building bipartisan support; listening and talking with you at your doorstep and our townhall meetings.

- Your Advocate for Our Schools.
  Securing funding for school libraries and fighting to provide quality education through smaller class sizes for more individualized attention.

- Your Advocate for Our Children and Families.
  Fighting to provide a safe environment to raise our families by placing additional penalties on those who would use the Internet to harm our children.

- Your Advocate for Our Troops.
  Providing a program for our men and women in uniform and their families as they face the strains of long-term deployment.

With your help I will continue to serve our community as your Advocate for the issues that affect all of us in Murry and in Washington including the economy, education, energy, and the environment.

Thank you for your support this upcoming November 2nd.

YOUR ADVOCATE

Rep. Tim Cosgrove
Democrat
District 44 (Murry) / Murry
877 Foster 035 South 1 Murry Blvd
802-466-7467
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TIM COSGROVE

YOUR ADVOCATE

STATE LEGISLATURE
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