

ATTRIBUTE AGENDA-SETTING IN AN OPEN PRIMARY:
AN EXAMINATION OF PRESS COVERAGE AND POLITICAL AD EFFECTS

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This thesis is dedicated to my family, particularly my wife—Lisa, who traveled this road with me through the peaks and valleys. Her example taught me perseverance.

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ABSTRACT

Creating a favorable candidate image is one of the more difficult tasks a political consultant faces. Besides researching which issues their client will address, the consultant must analyze what attributes voters find most appealing in a candidate. Then, through a complex process, a candidate image is finally packaged and presented to the public.

This thesis looks at the end result of the packaging process for a Mayoral candidate in East Baton Rouge parish. By examining the press coverage and campaign ads in a local election in a mid-size city, this study expands on previous second level agenda-setting research. Literature in this area has mostly focused on national and international campaigns where there is heavy and extended media coverage.

In addition to examining the media effects, the electorate, media habits, and campaign interest are studied to see whether there are any predictors to attribute agenda-setting. Also, this analysis focuses on one candidate in a multi-candidate open primary. The multitude of candidates waging multimedia campaigns in a short time span may produce too much clutter and confusion for any real second level effects to take place, but this a worthwhile study as it could lead to future studies in multi-candidate presidential primaries.

A public opinion survey was conducted over the last three days of the open primary in an effort to capture the strongest media effects. Over a seven-week period the media coverage and ads in this campaign were analyzed for content to determine whether there is a significant display of attributes.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2000, voters in East Baton Rouge Parish (Baton Rouge) were asked to make a decision they had not faced since George H. W. Bush was elected President. For twelve years, Mayor Tom Ed McHugh had presided over the parish. McHugh ended his tenure as Mayor without scandal and with a balanced budget, and many credit his administration for returning honesty, ethics, and integrity to city hall. His shoes would be hard to fill, but that would not deter several candidates from trying.

Louisiana utilizes a unique system for electing her public officials. Rather than holding the traditional two-party closed primaries, an open primary is held instead. Regardless of party affiliation, and if no one receives over 50% of the vote, the two candidates that garner the most votes face each other in a general election runoff. With limited qualifying criterion, the number of candidates running for an office can approach cartoonish proportions. But, in this state the unusual is expected and the usual met with disappointment.

Within this context, the field of candidates hoping to succeed McHugh peaked at only six. However, unlike other elections, there was not a candidate representing the confederate flag party, and nobody qualified with the last name McHugh as an attempt to confuse inattentive yet determined voters. The six who qualified were substantial candidates, representing all geographic areas of the parish, African-American and white, both major political parties, and both genders. From qualifying day to election day, the candidates would have six weeks to carve out enough support to earn a place in the runoff.

This study examines the candidacy of Roxson Welch. A female, Republican from the northern part of the parish, Welch has the credentials to make a fine mayoral candidate with her

background as a Metro Council member and award-winning, public elementary school teacher in an era when education appears to always top the list of most important problems facing that respective community. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the field of candidates vying for this seat were all relatively new faces on the scene; each familiar to only small pockets of voters. The Welch campaign would have to deliver an image/message that could attract voters to her candidacy and away from each opponent in this multi-candidate race.

But, what kind of image she will project will be both perceiver-determined and stimulus-determined (Garramone, 1983); the former created by demographic, experiential, and environmental factors and the latter would be the cognitions created by media effects. Voters engage an election holding prior political cognitions or schemas (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk, 1986, p. 524). The demographics and psychographics of the electorate can play a significant role in electoral outcomes. Are these political cognitions permeable, and to what extent and effect will media messages from the press and advertising influence voters' political attitudes? The success of the Welch candidacy will be determined by the campaign's ability to match her image to voters' expectations.

With respect to candidate image and public perception, one of the best predictors of voting decisions is candidate-voter homophile. This may sound simple, but developing and communicating this image requires extensive research, analysis, production, and targeted distribution. For this reason, campaigns often expend large sums of their budgets on public opinion surveys to find out what everyday people are thinking. In fact, focus groups, the research tool de jure, is a setting where high paid professionals invest thousands of dollars for the chance to participate in a perverse voyeuristic exercise: watch normal, fully clothed people, giving their opinions. Candidates work extremely hard at relating to the common person, and

sharing their values. Homophile is directly tied to the competition between perceiver and stimulus determined image making. From the first time the voter is introduced to the candidate, a sufficient amount of information about the character and ability of the candidate is transmitted (Graber, 1993). The key for the candidate is whether they will be afforded the opportunity to deliver their message a second time, or was the first time really their only chance at making an impression.

In addition to homophile, researchers have found that voters structure their candidate evaluations around the ideal candidate image (Miller, et. al., 1986). Welch will be judged not only on her own merits and appearance, but also determined by the characteristics voters most want in a mayor. Typically, the incumbent is the standard from which future evaluations are juxtaposed (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1980). In this situation, McHugh, although he is not seeking reelection, represents the incumbent. Given his high approval ratings, it can also be presumed that candidates may want to align their image, issues, and style with those of the popular mayor. Stark contrasts in image will create dissonance.

Another potential obstacle for Welch's candidacy, which affects most office seekers, is reaching those most likely to vote. In Louisiana, when voter turnout is expected to be low, then older, more conservative voters become a disproportionate slice of the electorate. These voters also have what Miller et al. (1986) called a "richer" political memory. This reservoir of political cognitions, attitudes, and beliefs act as a shortcut for all new political information. Candidate images, as in information units, are filtered through this elaborate political memory like gold and pyrite through a pan. Voters deposit the valuable information for later retrieval. According to Miller and his colleagues (1986), higher educated, politically knowledgeable, and attentive voters are most likely to refer to personality images to base their vote decision.

Regarding those politically attentive voters, who are they and what do they do that make them so special to this study? First, they are information seekers. The local newspapers, local television news, interpersonal communication network, the Internet, and other sources of information are integral components in their decision-making processes. Second, in an agenda-setting study at the first level, measuring the media's ability to set the public's agenda requires a public that uses the media. And, in a second level agenda-setting study, where the voters' perceptions of the candidate's attributes are the main focus, media usage is a prerequisite.

The outcome of a local election campaign can usually be predicted before it starts. Potential candidates evaluate the field and analyze the voting habits of the pertinent jurisdiction. It is in those marginal districts where the media campaigns and press coverage can play a decisive role. Although the open primary system is conducive to niche advertising, stressing issues or image traits recognizable and meaningful to enough voters to guarantee a place in the general election, the cluttered media environment produced by so many candidates disseminating their appeals over the same channels may be counter productive to agenda-setting and creating a winning candidate image.

This thesis aims to empirically examine both the first and second levels of agenda-setting by looking at the case of Roxson Welch. First, in order to assess the second level agenda-setting effect, both media content and media effects were studied. This two-way approach examines the source and the receiver and it lends itself to being a more confident method for evaluating possible relationships. This study details the advertising messages and strategy of the Welch campaign. Then, by using content analysis, press coverage and ads were examined. Finally, a timely public opinion survey evaluates the Baton Rouge electorate's assessment of the candidates.

Second, the open primary system provides for a large field of candidates. In order to get into a runoff, a candidate needs to create a base if it does not already exist; then, if that still is insufficient to make it to the general, the candidate must devise a strategy that attracts undecided voters. This strategy could entail garnering endorsements by individuals with either narrow or broad-based appeal, depending on the circumstances. A campaign may also advocate wedge issues or project an image catering to a specific audience; one just large enough to get them into a runoff. With an African-American in the race, a white candidate may view this tactic worthwhile. For example, former Klan leader, David Duke, was able to convert his extreme racist views into short-lived, yet very real political success by understanding that there are enough voters in this state, unfortunately, that share his opinions on race and government services. The open primary, with its multiple candidates and the various political strategies they use, is ripe for political communication research to tap into the political marketing of campaigns. The second question for this study is: how successful was Welch's campaign in delivering a targeted, effective message?

Third, the media habits of a particular electorate are interesting as they might shed light on how different demographic groups use the media for political information. For example, is there a marked difference between age groups in their preference of medium for political information? Does television serve as the main source for one ethnic group more than another? Also, where do we find an active interpersonal communication network and can we see its effect in a mid-sized town like Baton Rouge? While larger cities may be dominated by media, both paid advertising and press coverage, and smaller towns more influenced by the number of relatives you have in your family, the mid-size markets could be caught somewhere in the middle.

Fourth, as a key element to this second level agenda-setting study, fourteen pre-selected attributes were probed to see whether Welch's image was portrayed and received favorably, and did this portrayal correlate to her level of support. After all the campaigns have come back out of the field with their public opinion polls and focus group data, the issues of the race will be the same. Thus, the topics discussed in the campaign in news coverage and ads will be the same. Therefore, images will play a decisive role in distinguishing the candidates from one another. The biography ads produced by each campaign will touch upon attributes that voters find most appealing. Experience and leadership, for instance, will be stressed because McHugh has been viewed as possessing both, and the next mayor will be compared to this standard. When a candidate raises a welding mask over their face to reveal the "common man," the importance of what an image means to candidate success could not be more pronounced. If the electorate is not inspired by a candidate's image, his/her ability to do the job will be a moot point.

Finally, this agenda-setting study may raise important questions and issues for other researchers to explore as mediated communication increases its influence over political decisions. In national elections, the press plays a vital role, some would argue too influential, in creating the agenda and keeping the two major party candidates confined to this agenda. In the years ahead, as the Internet becomes a more viable vehicle for niche campaigning, and television, radio, and mail become more targeted, will the press still rival commissioned media in terms of setting the public's attribute agenda? Already, local elections are waged in this atmosphere where the press's presence has receded as a response to paid advertising's increased influence. The Baton Rouge market, based on experience, is one that plays up Louisiana's reputation for flamboyant candidacies and sensational campaigns. There is only one candidate in this scenario that gains, therefore, the opponent(s) must spend campaign resources in response.

When a race maintains tranquility, the press looks to create stories about fringe topics and relegates debate about the issues to last minute, Election Day guides; hardly what is expected of a capital city press. With local elections as mere afterthoughts, campaigns are forced to contact the voters through paid advertising. Too often, it seems like this is a racket that television station and newspaper sales representatives and reporters have concocted to boost profits. The press is an integral piece of the puzzle, and involvement has enormous ramifications on the political communication and marketing processes.

The Field of Candidates

In this section, the dynamics of this field of candidates will be presented to help the reader better understand the Welch campaign strategy. The open primary multiplies the number of considerations a campaign must make when formulating a strategy. Issues, themes, and, perhaps most importantly in today's mediated atmosphere, candidate image are extensively researched and carefully crafted to maximize appeal. Each candidate in this election entered the race with strengths and weaknesses- geographical, financial, qualifications, race, and gender- so the goal became how to capitalize on the former and hide the latter while your five opponents are doing the same.

Of the six entrants, Kip Holden (D) was the only one who had experience running for Mayor. In 1996, Holden, an African-American, State Representative, challenged incumbent Mayor Tom Ed McHugh but came up short when the vote fell mostly along racial lines. Holden, to stand a chance this time around, created a "runoff" strategy for the primary aimed at attracting white voters in the general election. A tough, anti-crime message, replete with a police helicopter fleet patrolling at night, was designed to re-assure white voters about Holden's strong commitment to fighting crime and protecting the citizens. Holden's skin color was going to be a

factor for many white voters in this predominantly white parish, so, to win, he had to use the entire primary to get his message out to these voters. Given the likelihood that no single candidate would win over 50% in the first primary, there would be a majority of voters looking for a second choice in the general election.

Race would be a disadvantage in the runoff, but an advantage in the primary. As close as there is in politics to a guarantee, Holden would have a spot in the second election. His appeal among African-Americans would force the other five candidates to figure out how to divide the remaining 65% of the electorate. White candidates would have small window of opportunity to attract African-American voters to their candidacy, but conceiving and implementing a strategy to connect with this subgroup of the electorate may not be an efficient use of time or resources given the high probability of failure. If the Holden campaign fails to show any progress among white voters, history will repeat itself in 2000.

The most likely challenger to Holden's base would be Donna Mayeux (D). Mayeux, as the only other democrat in this race, would have the potential to siphon off votes from Holden in this particular community. In addition, by way of background and vita, she would also connect with upper and middle class white voters. As a lobbyist, civic leader, and civil engineer, Mayeux presented a well-rounded, credible image.

The Mayeux advertising campaign stressed experience, and her commercials featured testimonials from some of the areas most recognized leaders. These endorsement ads showcased Mayeux's broad appeal across race, socioeconomic status, gender, and age. A south Baton Rouge native, Mayeux attempted to present an image that clicked with this University community and the yuppie professionals residing there. Finally, her campaign did not roll out the television ads until the final three weeks. This schedule was due to, in part, McHugh's

endorsement process. It was rumored that McHugh found Mayeux and one other candidate as viable choices for his endorsement. To be certain, if McHugh endorsed Mayeux, her commercials would concentrate almost exclusively on the endorsement. However, in the end, she was not endorsed, and her testimonial ads were used to show credibility among various and disparate audiences.

When McHugh finally endorsed Bobby Simpson (R), it amplified Simpson's message that he was the best qualified to lead the city-parish. Simpson came to the race by way of the Baker Mayor's office. Baker, a town in the northern part of the parish, was a geographic base Simpson hoped would catapult him into the runoff. His media campaign would emphasize his accomplishments as the Mayor of Baker, especially in the areas of education and fiscal management. McHugh's endorsement just three weeks before the election sent a message to the large number of undecided and unfocused voters unfamiliar with Simpson: he's my top choice for successor, so trust me again to lead you in the right direction. Simpson's advertising campaign would feature his record as Mayor, his understanding of the major issues facing the entire parish, from north to south and east to west, and the endorsement by the popular Mayor.

Had McHugh not been so popular, Fred Dent (R) may have been a more attractive candidate. Known for his leadership of the anti-tax group, Taxbusters, Dent has a reputation as an outsider, but caustic in his approach. Without the "throw the bums out" sentiment, the Dent campaign would have to find other sources and issues for momentum. And, since a tax proposition would not sit atop the ballot, Dent's battle cry would not be heard. With limited funds in his war chest, Dent's advertising campaign and, therefore strategy, would have to coast on fumes from previous political campaigns. The Dent campaign never got off the ground.

Where Dent had a meager war chest, Rolfe McCollister (R) could reach into his personal bank account to finance his campaign from start to finish, but his vast network of friends in the business community would make sure that was not necessary. Either way, Rolfe would enjoy the luxury of an abundance of resources. But as Michael Huffington showed in California, knowing what to do with your resources is another story. McCollister, the owner and publisher of the *Baton Rouge Business Report*, built his reputation as a savvy businessman, respected columnist, and as a proud Baton Rouge native with strong and deep ties to the community. These qualities, combined with his outsider appeal, formed the issues and image agendas promoted by the McCollister team. But, would 2000 be the year for an outsider who lacked political experience?

Against this backdrop, the Welch campaign had to create a strategy that could adapt to the rest of the field. At every turn the opposition is blocking Welch, with few opportunities to score major points among any one major section of the electorate. Gender as a tool to get into the runoff would not work because 1) Mayeux neutralized the issue, and 2) is a myth that female voters prefer female candidates when all other factors are equal. Geography could not be used as a distinct selling point because Simpson's strong presence in the northern part of the parish, which was in Welch's council district, and the other four candidates coming from the more densely populated south, confined Welch to only a small portion of her Metro council district.

The Metro council district, as a potential base, was not as solid as it looked on paper. Roxson filled her husband's seat on the council after he was elected to a judgeship. When re-election time came, due in large part to her husband's immense popularity, Welch went unopposed. Thus, an easy victory in the short term could be costly in the long term because her constituents never had to invest their votes in her candidacy on its own merits. A re-election

campaign provides an opportunity for self-promotion. Token opposition is an incumbent's best friend, especially an incumbent who is looking down the road to bigger races.

As an award-winning teacher, education and school related issues would be her natural strength. However, the Mayor's office in this jurisdiction plays virtually no role in education policy. McHugh, tired of being chastised for an area in which he had little control, warned the candidates not to waste too much time harping on this issue because of the office's severely limited responsibility. To heed his advice, Welch's campaign would render itself almost powerless and directionless. The campaign would either have to take a risk and advocate a stronger role for the next mayor in the area of education or try to find another issue where she would have a comparative advantage.

Finally, regarding Holden's stronghold in the African-American community, Welch, a recent convert to the Republican Party, may have had a better chance gaining their support had she not made the party switch. In a crowded field of republicans, Welch, a grandmother of two mulatto girls, as a democrat may have been a viable option for those voters who were 1) not satisfied with Holden, or 2) felt they were wasting their vote because of his slim chances to prevail in the general election.

In sum, there was only so much room to maneuver for each of these candidates. Whether their limitations derived from geography, gender, race, fund raising ability, or the absence of an issue, each candidate was forced to go exploring outside their natural bases. McHugh, obviously, set the tone in this race. The public's reverence for his administration provided equilibrium to this political race that is rarely seen. Absent of major issues, especially once education was put in its proper context, this election boiled down to who was going to be the next McHugh.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Agenda-Setting Theory

McCombs and Shaw's 1972 study is one of the most often cited pieces of mass communication research. Its hypothesis suggests that increased salience of an issue in the mass media influences the salience of that issue among the public. Up until this study's publication, the effect of the mass media on the public's cognitive processes still remained mere speculation. If most Americans get their political information from newspapers and television, it seems only logical that research be conducted to find out, specifically, if there is a correlation between issues the news media present and issues the public find most important.

The 1972 Chapel Hill study examined undecided voters during the 1968 presidential election. McCombs and Shaw (1972) chose undecided voters in order to maximize the chance of finding an effect. Undecided voters, by definition, have not made up their minds yet; therefore, the role of the media is more prevalent as Election Day nears. The researchers' methodology involved both content analysis and interview/surveys to measure the media's impact on setting the public's agenda (in a relatively isolated community).

Results of this study did show a strong correlation between what the media focused on and what issues the public found most important at election time. Over the next thirty years, agenda-setting, as a theoretical concept, would be evaluated by a great number of mass communications, political science, and sociology scholars through over 200 articles (Rogers, Dearing, and Bregman, 1994, p.72). The ramifications of this theory are overwhelming, because it suggests that the news media control what the public think about, and consequently, what issues will be neglected. The media, as the primary public agenda-setter, frame the debate on

which campaigns focus their attention and resources, which subsequently reinforces the media's coverage of the issues. McCombs and Shaw elevated the role of mass communications as a field of great consequence to political, historical, and sociological research.

Rogers, Dearing, and Bregman (1993), in a retrospective, praise the significance of the Chapel Hill study in terms of what it has done to re-shape the study of the media's effect on public opinion. Essentially, McCombs and Shaw established a new research tradition by giving a name to what others had been studying for decades. Also, they provided a methodology that enables researchers to monitor the press (content analysis) and study what impact the press generates on the public (survey research). Most importantly, agenda-setting research showed that there is a strong relationship between the media's agenda and the public's agenda. How political debates are held and political decisions made became less mysterious and our dependence on the media was finally realized.

Also, agenda-setting research has seen an increase in literature because it shares some key questions with other sub-fields of mass communications. For example, in recent years, researchers have been studying how the press constructs news frames to determine whether there is a relationship between the design of the news presentation and the public's attitude toward that issue or person. Journalistic practices in political reporting are also of consequence in studying the agenda-setting theory. Why do journalists report from a strategic point of view instead of focusing on issues? To what extent does tone of coverage have an affect on viewers' perceptions about the candidates or their platforms? Are the reporters letting personal idiosyncrasies color their reporting or are their sources controlling how they report an issue? Gatekeeping, what stories made it to the press or on air, also contributes to the development of the agenda-setting theory. For instance, it would be impossible for campaign finance reform to have salience on the

public's agenda if the news media refused to run stories about this issue. As the examples provided here show, this all-encompassing theory has created an enormous body of research over the last thirty years. Unfortunately, this mass of literature becomes a problem for those who attempt to formulate one succinct definition of the theory because it has connections with many concepts.

Most researchers, however, have primarily stayed within four areas of agenda-setting research; each one contributing to the agenda-setting theory as a whole (McCombs and Shaw, 1993). The first area involves the initial question raised by McCombs and Shaw in 1972--if the media provides salience to certain issues, does that salience transfer to the public's agenda of issues (McCombs, 1992, p.815)?

Another group of researchers study the contingent conditions that enhance or limit the effect of agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1993, p.59). Included in this list of conditions are demographics, exposure to media, interest in subject, and primary sources for media. Individuals have different thresholds for displaying an agenda-setting effect. Examining the point for which agenda-setting occurs with, for instance, a given electorate can shed light on the relationship between media and political decision-making. For example, in one study Weaver and Drew (1993) found that media exposure and attention to the campaign were not strong predictors for agenda-setting. Rather, self-identification with party affiliation (Republicans) and "knowledge of the issue stands" were stronger predictors (Weaver and Drew, 1993, p.366).

The third area of agenda-setting research has explored who sets the media's agenda. Are there key individuals in the community, say public officials or business leaders, influential in setting the media's agenda? Is coverage merely a response to events and pseudo-events? Who is influencing the editorial decisions? As media power accumulates in fewer hands, those hands

will have a more dramatic clout in shaping the issues for discussion and the parameters of that discussion in our society. Corporate mergers and acquisitions have swallowed the media industry, leaving a public unsure about who is doing the spoon-feeding- General Electric, NBC, Microsoft, Viacom, AOL TimeWarner, etc.

Finally, there is a fourth area in this broad theory. Second level agenda-setting, the examination of an issue or object through its attributes, has emerged to a prominent status within agenda-setting research since the mid-1990s. As McCombs writes, “the second level... further explicates Walter Lippmann’s (1922) idea of the mass media as a major bridge between ‘the world outside and the pictures in our heads’” (McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, 2000, p.78). Attribute agenda-setting research addresses one of the weaknesses in first level agenda-setting: does frequency dictate salience and affect public opinion? First level studies may show a match between the public’s agenda and the media’s but that does not necessarily show an affect on attitude. At the second level, salience can be measured by whether messages, either concerned with issues or objects, affect an individual’s cognitions, attitudes, beliefs then actions.

In contemporary political culture, attribute agenda-setting research can attain an important position in communication research because it can concentrate on the relationship between image and context with attitude and behavior. Researchers from different branches of the social sciences can examine media effects and cultural consequences. As political campaigns continue their torrid pace towards complete marketing and commodification, agenda-setting studies shall remain a fixture in political communications research. In the following section, the maturation of second level agenda-setting will be discussed as it relates to the present study and future political communication studies.

Second Level Agenda-Setting

The 1976 presidential election provided researchers with the first opportunity to examine attribute agenda-setting. Weaver, Graber, McCombs, and Eyal (1981) found “a high degree of correspondence” between the attributes of Carter and Ford stressed in the Chicago Tribune and those attributes stressed by Illinois voters” (McCombs, et. al., 2000, p.81). Earlier in that election year, during the primaries, Becker and McCombs (1978) found that the agenda of attributes in Newsweek corresponded significantly with the New York voters’ “descriptions of the contenders for their party’s presidential nomination” (McCombs, et. al., 2000, p.81). Through panel studies, these pioneers in agenda-setting research were able to track second level effects over time. These studies are important because they reveal how voter attitudes are permeable to media influences.

More recently, international mass communication scholars have strengthened the body of work in attribute agenda-setting. The political systems and partisan press in many countries enhance researchers’ ability to compare the attribute agendas of the press and public. The multiple party system, such as you might find in Spain, Italy, Germany, or Japan, is aided by partisan publications that tend to their party’s propaganda needs. A Basque-affiliated party in Spain will use their media sources to promote an agenda of issues perhaps completely different than the Socialists. Voters amicable to this agenda will have a completely different rank-ordering system as they head into the voting booth. With so many parties competing for seats, issues and images converge to not only secure their base, but also attract undecided voters or leaners. The media, party sponsored or impartial, becomes an excellent subject for an attribute agenda-setting study.

Perhaps, the article produced by Takeshita and Mikami (1995) is the most referenced study in this emerging sub-field. Their research was concerned with issue and sub-issue salience in the 1993 General Election in Japan. The authors hypothesized that second level agenda-setting establishes the context for how general issues are perceived by the public. The principle question they were studying was whether the media participated in biased coverage. And, consequently, did this biased coverage have political ramifications (Takeshita and Mikami, 1995, p.29)?

Based on the results of their content analysis and public opinion survey, Takeshita and Mikami found that “the media played a contributing role in building the tendency to vote for non-LDP candidates” (Takeshita and Mikami, 1995, p.38). The findings are significant because they demonstrate the media’s ability to affect the public’s attitudes, opinion, and beliefs. This influence, where an issue such as reform is described with attributes favorable to one party’s platform, can alter the make-up, and subsequently, the direction of government’s policies and laws. In Japan, 1993, a new government was ushered in on the cresting wave of reform; a wave whose strength primarily came from a media that is constantly producing new waves.

Via McCombs and his colleagues, two studies from Spain examined attribute agenda-setting in provincial elections. Following up on Roberts and McCombs (1994) first level and intermedia agenda-setting study, Lopez-Escobar et al. studied advertising’s ability to set the media’s agenda of attributes (Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, and Lennon, 1998, p.228). Again, utilizing a content analysis of the various media and comparing those results with survey research yielded similar results to that of Roberts and McCombs (1994) study. However, in addition to advertising’s influence on the press, researchers found that these press organizations would then relay attribute agenda in the ads to other media outlets. Thus, the candidate’s

advertising could create image advertising that could be reinforced by other independent media outlets; the tail wagging the dog.

In the follow-up Pamplona study, McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, and Llamas (2000) examined two dimensions of the attribute agenda. First, they measured the substantive attributes. Traditionally, communication researchers have divided these into three categories: job-crucial, ideology, and personality (Nimmo and Savage, 1976). However, in this study they added two more categories- integrity and biographical background- due to a recent political scandal involving corruption in office (McCombs et al., 2000). Next, the affective attributes, or tone, were considered in the coding scheme of each substantive attribute. This is one of the few studies where tone is factored into the equation. Its addition is important because “descriptions of political candidates both in the media and by voters frequently are conveyed in a positive or negative tone” (McCombs et al., 2000, p.82).

Overall, the methodology for this study was borrowed from previous agenda-setting projects. First, they conducted a telephone survey that consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions. The questions dealt with candidate attribute perception, media habits, and requests to describe the candidates in the respondent’s own words. Next, the research team gathered “total election coverage in the seven principal mass media used in Pamplona for information about the candidates” (McCombs et al., 2000, p.84). Their unit of analysis was any assertion about a candidate that appeared in a newspaper or television news story, television advertisement, or voter’s response from the open-ended questions.

Based on the results of the correlation test, they found 15 of the 21... statistically significant (McCombs et al. 2000, p.85). Newspapers were found to have the strongest match between media agenda and public agenda. Also noteworthy, researchers found a correlation

between the agenda of a medium's primary audience with the medium's agenda. In this area, again, newspapers showed the strongest agenda-setting influence (McCombs et al. 2000, p.88). The value of this study resides in its concrete measurement of newspaper's attribute agenda-setting effect. A partisan press may reinforce a rigid partisan political system in countries like Spain. In the U.S., however, where objectivity is the desired goal, do newspapers have still the dominant role in second level agenda-setting as discovered in Spain?

From Taiwan, Chen used the mayoral election of Taipei City as his opportunity to study "the contingent conditions of the media image-setting effect on the public," and any possible predictions of "voter's affective evaluations of different candidates" (Chen, 1992). Chen also used content analysis and survey research to compare covered messages with voter perceptions. Along three dimensions- personal, partisan affiliation, and issue and policy stand- 12 attributes were measured for tone. Next, a rank order of attributes stressed in the press was compared with a rank order of attributes stressed by the public.

According to the findings, the hypothesis that the "salient candidate attributes in the press came to be salient elements in the perceived images of voters" was supported (Chen, 1992). Regarding the contingent conditions of image agenda setting, the study found different intervening variables for different candidates. Age, occupation, rural vs. urban, were the factors that contributed to different levels of attribute agenda-setting effect. There was no correlation between gender and agenda-setting effects. This study continued the trend in Taiwan of looking at image as a predictor of voting behavior, but it also diverges from the norm in that it looked beyond perceiver-determined factors in image agenda-setting. Future studies may utilize Chen's method of examining both perceiver and stimulus-determined issue and candidate images so as to create a more extensive account of the media agenda-setting process.

In the United States, recent agenda-setting studies have concentrated on both the attributes of candidates and issues. For example, Jasperson, Shah, Watts, Faber, and Fan (1998) looked at how the federal budget deficit was portrayed in the media. They concluded that how the deficit was framed and the frequency of each frame contributed to how the public perceived this issue (Jasperson, et. al., 1998, p.217). Similar to Takeshita and Mikami, in terms of attribute agenda-setting, this study establishes how the media can directly influence the publics' cognitions regarding an unobtrusive issue.

In candidate studies, Bryan (1987) found a strong correlation between newspaper attribute agenda and public attribute agenda, and, in accordance with previous agenda-setting studies that focused on TV ads, an even stronger correlation was found between ads and public agenda. However, as Tipton, Haney, and Baseheart (1975) noted, interpersonal communications is a real impediment in studying attribute agenda-setting in local races. So, in consideration of this fact, the methodology of this thesis will reflect the possibility that interpersonal communications may play a role in attribute agenda-setting.

Regarding methodological strategy, Kiouisis, Bantimaroudis, and Ban (1999) depart from the much-traveled course. Through a laboratory experiment they manipulated two attributes-- qualifications and personal traits-- of two fictional candidates (Kiouisis, et. al., p.418). Qualifications were defined by educational background (high and low), while personality traits was defined by corruption level (high and low).

As part of the experiment, journalism students were asked to read fictitious articles, then, to mask the researchers' intentions, the students were asked to find misspelled words, re-write the headlines, answer open-ended questions, and rate the candidates along six semantic differential scales (Kiouisis, et. al., p.419). For testing qualifications, three scales were assigned

to measure whether the respondents found the candidate in the article to be informed, knowledgeable, and intelligent. In terms of personality, the candidates were measured by whether they were perceived to be honest, sincere, and trustworthy.

The results of the experiment showed a match between the public's opinion about a candidate's corruption level and the media's portrayal of corruption. For education, there was no correlation. Overall, researchers found certain attributes have a more profound effect on the public's opinion than others. They suggested future research should measure the effects of multiple exposures to candidate traits on public salience, test whether other "properties of candidate qualifications promote interest in political figures," and examine other candidate traits at both the substantive and affective levels (Kiousis, et. al., p.425). In addition, they pointed out it may be useful to conduct research in the context of multiple candidate primaries where media plays an important role in shaping the race.

In sum, second level agenda-setting research has enjoyed a recent upswing during the 1990s, and all signs point to this trend continuing. American and international communications scholars have been exploring the relationship between image and political cognitions as mass media becomes the dominant source for political information. This thesis adopts the methodology from the above-mentioned studies, while charting its own course by focusing on the attribute agenda of one candidate in a local election. Where previous candidate studies have concentrated on either a parliamentary election involving strict partisan allegiances between candidates, voters, and the media, or general elections with only two candidates, this thesis will examine the media effects in an open primary setting. The media may not be the most influential source of information in this scenario. As much as we would like to show media agenda-setting effects, a local election in this primary structure may display how weak media effects are at the

end of a campaign. It is hoped that this thesis will be another building block in this rich area of communications research, one that shows strengths and limitations.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Previous first level agenda-setting studies have primarily focused on issue salience in the general election campaign setting. In this scenario, media coverage of the campaign shines the spotlight brightly on a limited number of issues and researchers measure to see whether this coverage registers on the public's menu of issues proportionate to the coverage. Typically, there is agreement between the issues stressed by the campaigns' advertising and those represented in news coverage (television and newspaper), but the level of salience and lag time may show slight differences. This study departs from previous research by attempting to filter the paid and free media messages about Welch in the context of an open primary with five opponents.

Specifically, this study examines four questions related to agenda-setting effects, at both the first and second level, but focuses on how Roxson Welch is perceived by the voters at the end of the process. If an attractive image is the key to success in mediated political campaigns, it will be instructive to examine an electorate's standards.

RQ 1: Did the news coverage and/or the Welch advertising campaign have a first level agenda-setting effect in this election? If so, to what extent did these agendas, in news and advertising, converge or compete?

H1A: The press coverage and the Welch ads created a first-level agenda-setting effect.

H1B: Both the press coverage and Welch's advertising campaign will show a strong correlation and a convergence of issues at the first level.

Within the body of literature in second level agenda-setting, the study of a specific candidate's image versus a multi-candidate field will be uniquely situated. The attributes

projected through the media, free and paid, will be the attributes available for public inspection and, subsequently, image perception. But, each candidate image will be competing for the public's attention and retention. When all six candidates are vying for distinction within the voters' minds, ultimately candidate evaluations are not based solely on each candidate's image but also on the overall rank and ordering comparisons voters make in the image/decision making process. Looking at party primaries could advance second level agenda-setting research. This would provide insight into how individuals in a particular party process candidate images and what are the sources that have the most influence over their decision-making process: media, social networks, individual past experiences.

RQ2: Did the Welch advertising campaign play a dominant role in creating her candidate image? If the advertising campaign was the dominant source of information, and the created image was efficacious, then the belief that media consultants play the most powerful role in a campaign, especially at the local level and in an open-primary, is confirmed.

H2: The Welch television advertising campaign will have a stronger attribute agenda-setting effect than both television and newspaper press coverage.

Unlike previous agenda-setting studies, particularly at the second level, this study will combine newspaper and television news coverage under the same umbrella and compare their combined effects to those achieved through Welch's advertising campaign. Due to the limited coverage, per/medium analysis would have weaker results than this revised approach. Bryan's (1997) study showed both newspaper and television advertising have strong effects at the second level, and Roberts (1994) found newspaper coverage and television advertising were stronger sources for agenda-setting than television news coverage. However, neither of these studies compared total press coverage versus advertising.

Also, based on the presumption that a crowded field will mitigate the press' ability to set the public's attribute agenda, this study is interested in analyzing the open-primary setting as an optimal arena for media consultants, especially in the context of political marketing techniques and the role of campaign finance.

Next, there is an opening in political communications research for studying how demographic groups view a candidate's image. As the melting pot and an active democracy, there should be more attention paid to how race, gender, education, party affiliation and geography shape the way voters view candidates. The elaborate thought processes we go through in making decisions, especially political candidate selections, are manifestations of who we are demographically and how we perceive candidates' images.

RQ3: Do specific attributes show a differentiation in salience according to demographic groups or are the effects universal?

H3: The attributes will show varying effects based on demographics.

Some of the earlier studies focusing on candidate image found that higher educated voters are more likely to use candidate image as their primary determinant or cue (Nimmo and Savage, 1976; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk, 1976) for basing their candidate selection. Missing from this literature are comparisons of voters' opinions about a candidate's different types of attributes: job-crucial and personality.

RQ4: Is there a marked difference between how higher and lower educated voters perceive the Welch image along job-crucial and personality attributes?

H4: Higher educated voters will view Welch more negatively along personality attributes than job-crucial attributes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This thesis continues the long tradition of utilizing the content analysis and public opinion survey as its main research tools in assessing media impact (Kepplinger, 1989, pp.180-181). In order to gauge public perception of Welch's attributes, a public opinion survey was conducted during the final week prior to the primary election. The results of the survey were then compared to the results of the content analysis. In the content analysis, total press coverage (television and newspapers) and television ads were measured for how they portrayed Welch's image along fourteen attributes: "a leader," "competent," "experienced," "trustworthy," "dependable," "sincere," "aggressive," "intelligent," "physical appearance," "speaking ability," "understands major issues," "shares your values," "communicate with people," and "relates to people like you."

There are several issues related to the two methodologies that were used in this project. Typically, one of the flaws in this methodological arrangement has dealt with not creating compatible categories for both content and public opinion analyses (Kepplinger, 1989, p.181). To ameliorate this problem, this thesis attempts to strictly adhere to the study of these fourteen attributes. If there is a stimulus-determined attribute agenda-setting effect, this extensive list of attributes will reflect this influence on the public's perception of the Welch image. Explicit display or expression of the attributes or a universally recognized synonym was used, that attribute was coded and recorded for frequency and valence. Interpersonal communications, unfortunately, could not be measured for effect, nor could prior held opinions.

Public Opinion Survey

Southern Media and Opinion Research in Baton Rouge, La. donated the polling facilities and labor to make the phone survey possible. From October 4th- October 6th, 2000, 300 East Baton Rouge Parish registered voters who had the most recent birthday in their domicile were the respondents for this study. At the 95% confidence level, the poll has a margin of error of 5.2%. The questionnaire was divided into five categories: campaign interest, sources of political information, attention to the campaign, attribute assessment, and demographics. Each section contributes to the understanding of how Welch's images may be perceived. The complete survey questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

Campaign interest, as numerous researchers have noted, is one of the strongest predictors of voting, and a contingent condition for agenda-setting (Weaver, 1991, p.39). Voters who follow the campaign closely do so through the media. And they are seeking information that will eventually lead them to a decision. In order to measure campaign interest, the survey asked the following three questions:

Q2: The election for Mayor-President will be held on October 7th. Do you think you will definitely vote in that election, will probably vote, or probably not vote?

Q6: How closely have you been following the campaign for Mayor-President: very closely, somewhat closely, or not closely at all?

Q13: If you were in the voting booth right now, for whom would you most likely vote for Mayor-President?

In Q2, the intent is to filter out non-voters and look at turnout levels. In terms of this study, voters and non-voters are of interest because both groups can have established perceptions of Welch's candidate image. Next, Q6 directly goes to campaign interest. Those who are

following it very closely vote and use media persistently. Finally, Q13 is seeking to find out who are likely winning the horse race. It also provides a cue towards their personal preference, and, indirectly as a result, the Welch candidate image at the end of the election.

One of the components in agenda-setting studies is examining the public's media usage habits and sources of political information. To study media effects, the sources and habits play an integral role in determining there is a correlation between the public's attribute agenda and the media's attribute agenda. For consultants, this research could show where voters turn for most of their information, and whether habits change at various points of the campaign. This data would be used to formulate an efficient and effective media and campaign strategy. In order to study media usage habits and source dependence, this survey asked three questions:

Q3: We are interested in finding out where people have gotten information about the Mayor's race. How many days a week do you: (1-7 days)

- a. watch local news on television
- b. listen to the radio
- c. read The Advocate newspaper

Q4: Where would you say you have gotten most of your information about the mayor' race? (Do not read) (Record only one)

Q5: Please tell me if you got a lot, some, a little, or no information about the Mayor's race from the following sources:

- a. local television stations
- b. radio
- c. The Advocate newspaper
- d. Internet
- e. Mail
- f. From friends, family, and other people

In Q3, the respondent was asked to state their dependence on three sources. Those who cite heavy usage will be more susceptible to agenda-setting effects. Next, Q4 asked the respondent to name the source that has provided them with most of their information about the mayor's race. Finally, in Q5 each medium was rated along a semantic scale to investigate to

what extent the respondent feels that each medium has contributed to their overall knowledge about the race.

Through the next series of questions, the study examines issue salience, advertising recall, and the issues Welch addressed during the campaign. In combination, the three questions will help establish the level of attention paid to the campaign, and how this effects voters' attribute agenda. The questions are as follows:

Q7: Based on what you have heard or read, what would you say are the top issues in the race for Mayor? (Probe: any other issues?)
(Record up to 5)

Q8: Have you seen a lot, some or no television commercial for:

- a. Fred Dent
- b. Kip Holden
- c. Donna Mayeaux
- d. Rolfe McCollister
- e. Bobby Simpson
- f. Roxson Welch

Q9: We are interested in all of the candidates for Mayor-President, but for this particular survey, we want to focus in on one of the candidates, Roxson Welch. What do you recall as the issues Roxson Welch addressed? (Top seven Responses)

In Q7 and Q9, the perceived issues of the Mayor's election and Welch campaign are ranked and compared. This compilation of data will be useful when examining whether the two agendas had agreement. Also, Q9 reveals the extent to which voters perceived Welch's issues, and this question presents an opportunity to study agenda-setting at the first level. Specifically, this question implicitly seeks the agenda-setter; the content analysis will provide the answer.

In response to Q8, the interviewee provided information regarding television commercial penetration. Viewing an ad is an imperative for agenda-setting studies that examine campaign advertising's effect. Familiarity is a prerequisite if you are attempting to evaluate a stimulus.

Each scale, “a lot,” “some,” “none,” and “don’t know/won’t say” provide critical information for the study. The more familiarity an individual has with a candidate’s ad, the more complete the image of that candidate will be in the voter’s mind. With the aid of cross tabulation and correlation tests, individuals across demographic groups can be evaluated to determine whether Welch ads influenced perceived attributes of Welch’s image.

In second level agenda-setting studies, the traits or attributes of an issue, object or candidate, in this case, are examined to see whether the media’s agenda (portrayal) of those attributes shapes the public’s agenda. The creation of an image agenda is the creation of a perception, which then leads to forming an opinion. Over time, the aggregation of opinions about a particular topic solidifies into an attitude, ultimately forming a core belief that is hard to unravel by competing or dissonant images and appeals. In the attribute assessment section of the poll, respondents were asked to judge Welch’s 14 attributes. These attributes were selected because they represent the two areas voters find most important when selecting a candidate: job-crucial and personality images. The two questions (both semantic differential scales) used to ascertain this information with are:

Q11: Please tell me how much you think the following words describe Roxson Welch- a lot, some, a little, or not at all:

- a. a leader
- b. competent
- c. experienced
- d. trustworthy
- e. dependable
- f. sincere
- g. aggressive
- h. intelligent

Q12: On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent, how would you rate Roxson Welch on:

- a. physical appearance
- b. speaking ability
- c. understanding major issues

- d. sharing your values
- e. being able to communicate with people
- f. relating to people like you

In sum, the public evaluated the candidate along these attributes. At some sub-conscious or conscious level, voters dissect candidate images until they finally pick the one who most comfortably fits their expectations (Miller et al., 1986). This section of the survey isolates the Welch candidate image. Rating Welch's attributes discloses a lot of information about the public's political cognitions and favorable image types.

Finally, the last section of the questionnaire centers on the demographics of the respondents. These data categories allow researchers to check the demographics of the sample. The seven questions asked in this survey provide a complete snapshot of the residents in East Baton Rouge Parish:

Q15: Are you registered to vote as a Democrat, Republican, or some other party?

Q16: Regardless of how you are registered to vote, do you more often agree with the actions of the Democrats or Republicans?

Q17: What is your age? (are you:)

Under 25; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65 or over; won't say

Q18: What is the highest level of education you completed?

Less than High School; High School Grad; Some College- Not Grad; College Grad; Advanced Degree

Q19: Are you male or female? (Ask if necessary)

Q20: What is your race or ethnic background?

Q21: As I read several income categories, please stop me when I get to the category that is the total annual income for all people in your household:

Less than 20,000; more than 20,000 but less than 40,000; more than 40,000 but less than 60,000; more than 60,000 but less than 80,000; more than 80,000 but less than 100,000; more than 100,000; won't say

The questions pertaining to party affiliation and level of agreement with party actions (Q15 and Q16) reveals the ideological leanings of the electorate. In the South, being a registered Democrat does not necessarily equate to voting for a Democrat. The South led the charge in the Republican revolution regardless of party registration. In Q17, the survey breaks down the sample by age. Age is an important factor because as the turnout level decreases, older voters become a disproportionate total of likely voters. Also, older voters are more politically involved and knowledgeable. Therefore, they use media to gain the information necessary to make wise voting decisions. Education levels, in Q18, is an important variable when evaluating how different voters use the media, follow the campaign, recall specific issues, and view the Welch image. Again, according to Miller, Malanchuk, and Wattenberg, higher educated individuals will use candidate image as the primary determinant in basing their voting decision. Also of significance is that higher educated voters are more likely to vote in low turnout elections. In Q19 and Q20, the electorate is divided by gender and race respectively. Contrary to popular opinion, female voters do not automatically flock to female candidates (citation). But, this survey item is of interest because it explains how females view the field and Welch specifically. In contrast, African-Americans in East Baton Rouge Parish usually vote for the African-American candidate. Regarding this dynamic, responses by this segment of the population will be helpful in understanding how they perceive the Welch image, and whether this image influences their vote in a certain direction.

In sum, the opinion survey aims to assess effects. The questionnaire is comprehensive without being too invasive. The sample's demographics, overall, match that of East Baton Rouge Parish. Females made up 56% of the sample; 68% were white while 26% were black; and Democrat registration was 58% while Republicans were at 30%.

Content Analysis

The media- monitoring device used for this agenda-setting study is the content analysis. Content analysis has a long history in communications research. However, if the coding scheme a) does not fit with what one is investigating, and b) subjectivity enters the coding process, then the content analysis may be invalid or fraught with error (Kepplinger, 1991, p.180). Newspaper coverage, television coverage, and television advertisements were the three media sources analyzed in this study. The unit of analysis was the assertion of an issue and attribute relevant to this study (See Appendix for Coding Sheets, B, C, and D).

Over a seven-week period, August 11th- October 6th, 2000, all newspaper articles from The Advocate covering the mayoral contest were gathered. The Advocate was selected because it is the only major local daily newspaper covering the election. During this same time period, the local 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m. newscasts on WAFB and WBRZ were collected and analyzed. These two stations were selected because they are the only local stations that have newscasts in the Baton Rouge media market. In addition to the paper coverage and newscasts, the Welch-sponsored television advertisements were also collected for analysis. Within this seven-week span, a total of 5 different thirty-second ads were aired to promote the Welch candidacy.

Coding Procedure

For The Advocate newspaper, each story was coded in the following manner: a story number was assigned; date; story type; story location; page location; number of paragraphs in the story; number of photographs where Welch is mentioned or quoted; source of Welch coverage; topic of story; does the main topic feature Welch; secondary topic of story; does the secondary topic feature Welch; and attribute display (were any of the 14 attributes portrayed in the story,

and if so, what was the tone?). Although the coding sheet went beyond measuring the substantive and affective attributes, the categories pertaining to topics are helpful in that they allow for the comparison of issue agendas.

The television news content analysis covered the three evening newscasts each day on WAFB and WBRZ. Each news story featuring the mayor's race was coded according to: station; date; length of segment on the race (in seconds); length of coverage on Welch (in seconds); source of story; topic of story; main topic features Welch; secondary topic of story; secondary topic features Welch; and attribute display.

In order to measure advertising effect on attribute agenda-setting, it was necessary to code all Welch commercials that aired during the seven week period. Each commercial was coded according to the issues of the ad and the attributes of Welch portrayed by the ads. Issue salience can be computed by multiplying the number of seconds dedicated to that issue by the gross ratings points (grp) run for that commercial. For example, if education appeared in the ad for 10 seconds, and that ad had 500 grp pushing it, then education's total would be 5000.

Regarding attribute display, as is the case with coding the newspaper and television coverage, if any attribute is explicitly mentioned or a clearly synonymous word is used, then the attribute is registered according to whether it was favorable, neutral, or unfavorable. If the attribute does not appear, a (2) is assigned declaring that attribute not relevant. Physical appearance and speaking ability were coded as neutral in order to maintain objectivity. What one person finds delightful another may find disastrous.

Finally, intercoder reliability registered 97%. This high level of agreement can be attributed to three factors. First, the coding sheets were clearly explained and void of opportunities to interject subjectivity. Second, the coder was knowledgeable about the process.

And finally, the attribute display section lacked relevant cases for reasons to be explained in the chapters of Findings and Discussion. Overall, the content analysis captured the coverage in both quantity and tone. The Welch commercials were measured for effect on attribute salience according to station logs and the author's firsthand knowledge of the media buy.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

A Summary of Key Poll Findings

The survey was conducted over the last three days of the primary campaign. For the purposes of this study, there are four sections of the questionnaire: campaign interest, source for political information, campaign awareness, and assessment of candidate's attributes. The demographic breakdown is representative of the jurisdiction. These four areas represent the most important external factors in political decision making. The following section is a summary of the key findings in each area; to see the results for the entire survey turn to Appendix A.

Campaign Interest

Traditionally, when voters are asked if they will be voting in an election, the affirmative response is usually higher than actual turnout; this poll found exactly the case. If the poll results were accurate, then 84.3% would definitely be voting in the election. According to official returns from the Secretary of State's office, the actual turnout in the primary was not quite half this number 40% (See Appendix A, Q2).

Next, a more telling indicator of actual campaign interest is a question directly asking respondents to categorize their interest. Simply, there is no better way to get an honest answer. Quantifying the categories by hours or days per week, for example, can be helpful but using broad category ranges allows for just as helpful information that may be as equally accurate. The poll showed 29.7% stated they were following the campaign "very closely" and 52% said "somewhat closely" (See Appendix A, Q6). These numbers are instructive, but, then again, what one person defines as "very closely," and "somewhat closely" may be more of a matter of personal standards and expectations for being interested and involved in the local election.

Finally, later in the poll there is a question attempting to discover vote intention if the election were being held that moment. There were two major findings for this section. First, according to this survey 37.7% were still undecided at the end of this primary (See Appendix A, Q13). This was a strong indication that turnout would be light, because, as shown earlier, actual turnout rarely traces the level of voting intention expressed by an anonymous voter in a survey. Second, the ranking of the candidates corresponded accurately with final, Election Day results with one exception. Welch polled much higher with blacks than her actual, final tally would show. In terms of assessment of attributes, the rank-order has no effect. Thus, one of the main concerns about this poll, whether this specific question was contaminated by its placement, was settled by the fact that most voters were honest in expressing their choice. This level of honesty, although measured indirectly, re-confirms the credibility of this poll.

Sources for Political Information

Through three differently worded questions the sources for political information were measured to see if there was any noticeable correlation between a particular audience and image attributes. One question measured usage habits on a weekly basis, a second question was open-ended to determine primary source for political information, and the final question asked how much each source had contributed to their overall knowledge about the Mayor's race. After reviewing the three questions, two facts emerged with little surprise. One, television and the newspaper were, by overwhelming margins, the top two media sources utilized by the electorate. And, two, interpersonal communications seem to have a strong presence in local elections, which easily surpassed the role the Internet played in this elections process.

In terms of television's role in providing political information, the survey showed that 74.6% of the electorate watched local news at least 5 days per week (See Appendix A, Q3).

Unfortunately, the sparse coverage of the campaign could not match the intensity for which the voters brought to the campaign. Over 80% of those surveyed said they “got a lot or some” information about the mayor’s race from television (See Appendix A, Q5). Yet, based on the results of the content analysis, the coverage of the campaign was sporadic and superfluous. By comparison, the local newspaper was cited by 60.7 % as a source they turned to at least 5 days a week (See Appendix A, Q3). Also, 69.6% of those surveyed used the newspaper for “a lot,” or “some” of their information about the race (See Appendix A, Q5).

This poll indicates that television and newspaper are the top two media choices for voters. Fifty-two percent of the people responded they used television “a lot” for the information about the race and 50.3% cited The Advocate newspaper. Mail (24%), friends, family and others (20%), and radio (19.7%) trailed far behind as major sources of campaign information (See Appendix A, Q5). With mail achieving a 24%, this is an indication that the campaigns dedicated resources to target habitual voters.

In sum, the main sources of political information for Baton Rouge voters remain television and newspaper. In addition, with heavy reliability on television news, it is highly likely that the Welch ads, like most typical political ads, were quite visible in this campaign because they were placed within news broadcasts.

Campaign Awareness

The next section of the questionnaire attempted to gauge how closely the respondent had followed the campaign and whether candidate’s ads had been seen. In order to achieve this measurement, open-ended questions probed issue awareness for the entire race, and the Welch candidacy specifically. Each interviewee was asked whether they had seen “a lot,” “some,” or none of the six candidate’s television commercials. Among the issues, education/schools,

traffic, crime, and sewage matters were chosen by the voters as the “top issues in the race for Mayor.” Education/schools, which was seen as the top issue, did get substantial coverage in the campaign.

When asked about Welch’s menu of issues, 40.8% of the respondents could not answer a single issue, but 38.7% answered education (See Appendix A, Q9). This is a sign that the campaign’s wheels have been spinning but not gaining solid, identifiable traction. Welch established her connection to education, but more people were unsure about what she actually stood for at the end of the campaign. If the respondents were unfamiliar with Welch’s ads, then this disconnect would be understandable. But, her ads had been seen. In fact, 82% said they had seen “a lot” or “some” of her ads (See Appendix A, Q8f). Next to Donna Mayeux, Welch had the highest score in ad visibility, yet nearly 41% “could not recall” the issues Welch had stressed during the campaign. Time, money, and talent that had been heavily invested resulted in little to stick out at the end of the process. The voters’ disinterest and indifference towards Welch provides a signal that her campaign did not generate the desired effects.

Attribute Assessment

In this part of the study that examined the second-level agenda-setting impact, fourteen attributes were selected for evaluation. These attributes represent many of the fundamental traits we seek in candidates for elective office. As noted earlier, the content analysis revealed that through the duration of this primary there were few messages, by way of candidate ads or press coverage, which conveyed these attributes. Therefore, the results of the survey imply that voters developed their impression of Welch’s candidate image either independently of stimuli or they elaborated on the messages that were presented and then were able to make judgments about Welch’s image.

According to the poll results, the voters generally held neutral opinions about Welch. Without external communications creating this impression, it must be deduced that Welch's image received the benefit of the doubt. Respondents rewarded Roxson for being a credible, but not incredible, candidate (See Table 4.1). For example, 35% answered that the attribute "sincere" applied "a lot" to her image, but "sincere" nor an obvious synonym was used one time to describe Welch during the campaign (See Appendix A, Q11f). Also, the responses "a lot," "some," and "don't know/won't say" were consistently registering around 30% each. Only the trait "intelligent" spiked into the mid forties (46.3% saying "a lot"); this could be the result of voters perceiving candidates as possessing comparatively superior mental capabilities; though this perception usually changes once they get elected (See Appendix A, Q11h).

Overall, "intelligent," "trustworthy," "dependable," and "sincere" were the attributes that scored the highest for Welch. On the other end of the scale, "shares your values," relating to people like you," "and "physical appearance" scored the lowest. Without strong media portrayal of these attributes, the respondents must have either perceived Welch as demonstrating these qualities naturally, or what they did see or read about was a sufficient amount for forming an opinion. If the voters' view of Welch could be summarized based on these poll results: indifference, polite deference, and uncertainty. In the context of this overall lukewarm reception, the response to "shares your values," and relates to people like you" may reveal that candidate/voter homophile posed a potential problem for Welch.

In sum, respondents revealed that Welch's image was perceived as satisfactory, but not inspiring. Nearly a third were unable or unwilling to comment on these attributes. Given the rigorous collection of media samples and permeable, yet structured, trait categories, these findings reinforce the fact that stimulus played virtually no role in Welch's image construction,

Table 4.1 Mean Scores for Welch Attributes

A LEADER	3.76
COMPETENT	3.99
EXPERIENCED	3.94
TRUSTWORTHY	4.19
DEPENDABLE	4.19
SINCERE	4.16
AGGRESSIVE	3.96
INTELLIGENT	4.41
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	3.70
SPEAKING ABILITY	3.91
MAJOR ISSUES	3.72
SHARES VALUES	3.48
COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE	3.81
RELATING TO PEOPLE	3.56

or the image was so weak that the attempts at persuasion were ignored. Where noteworthy differences arose, Welch's image was not positively affected. Welch was not perceived as faring well against the prototypical candidate image that voters use as a measuring stick.

Additionally, the poll showed an electorate that was inattentive, undecided, and indifferent to Welch. Media usage habits showed a heavy reliance on television and newspaper for their political information, but only 29.7% said they were paying very close attention to the race and 37.7% were still undecided three days out. Furthermore, according to the survey, Welch's ads had been received by over 80% of the audience, but her image did not create a favorable or strong impression. With limited and fractured news coverage, the ad campaign should have created a more compelling image. The ads were given ample opportunity to convey efficacious images since this campaign was void of attack advertising, which consumes precious resources and opportunities, and the press played such a small role. Advertising should have shown an attribute agenda-setting effect, but it appears that the voters' political candidate schema negated Welch's attempts.

Summary of Content Analysis Findings

Attribute Display

Over the seven-week period, there were a combined total of 102 stories about the Mayoral election. The Advocate ran 59 stories about the race and 81% of the time Welch was in the story/editorial. On TV, WBRZ and WAFB ran a total of 43 stories. This includes segments that were repeated from one newscast to the next. WBRZ ran a total of 22 stories, and 68% featured Welch. WAFB ran a total of 21 stories about the Mayoral election and Welch was represented in 76% of those stories. Overall, Welch was featured in 77% (n=79) of all the stories concerning the Mayoral election.

Of these 79 stories that presented Welch to the electorate, explicit attribute display occurred only 4.4% of the time. This amount includes all attributes that were mentioned in positive, negative, or neutral terms. In fact, 60% of the attributes displayed in the news coverage were considered neutral because of their subjective nature: physical appearance and speaking ability.

The five television ads that ran during this period were also analyzed for attribute display. The first Welch ad advocated student accountability, tougher laws against truancy, and better pay for teachers. Additionally, the ad promoted Welch's career as an educator. Of the fourteen attributes tested, only the subjective categories "physical appearance," and "speaking ability" were measurable. The ad did not directly mention or display another one of these attributes.

The next ad that aired focused on crime and public safety. Through personal connections, Welch was able to convince the local fire and police unions in Bator Rouge to endorse her candidacy. In an attempt to appear like she was gaining momentum, and was firmly on the side of law, order, and public safety, the campaign unveiled an ad that highlighted the endorsements and expressed Welch's stance in favor of rehabilitation over incarceration. Whether this sent contradictory signals is a question for another study, but what is unquestionable is that this ad did not communicate anything about Welch's attributes. Only "a leader" and "physical appearance" were highlighted in this ad.

What is usually the first ad of a campaign became Welch's third ad. Since the education and public safety ads did not gain traction, the campaign tried to demonstrate her qualifications as a public official. In the third ad, her biography and record as a Metro council member became the new message. To settle questions about experience, this ad tried to introduce Welch to the electorate and remind them that her service on the Metro council distinguished her from the rest

of the field. Again, only three attributes were demonstrated: “a leader,” “experience,” and “physical appearance.”

After being off the air for nearly three weeks, Welch’s campaign, short on cash, emerged from “black” with two ads solely created to revive a hapless campaign. Over the last two weeks of the primary, the campaign ran 1000 gross rating points worth of television (approximately \$60,000 in the Baton Rouge DMA) pleading to the public to elect her because she is not a part of the corrupt “good old boy system,” and that all of her opponents were following her lead in the area of education. These ads were simple productions of straight, on-camera speaking parts. In both ads, “a leader,” “physical appearance,” and “speaking ability” could be measured for effect.

In close, it is obvious from this content analysis that the attributes under examination were almost completely absent. When the news coverage did feature Welch, only 4.4% of the time was any of these attributes displayed. The absence in television ads was more conspicuous. At the end of the campaign, with a large undecided block still looking for cues, the Welch campaign ran ads with the candidate speaking on camera. Based on first hand knowledge, Welch’s tone of voice, speech pattern, and dialect were the subject of some anecdotal ridicule. There was never focus group research to analyze the viewer’s response to Welch’s voice or appearance. In addition, positive attributes could not be displayed in the “talking head” spot because it requires the speaker to make comments about themselves; risking the appearance of looking arrogant.

From this account, it is apparent that the voters’ perspective of Welch would not be influenced by a preponderance of attribute display. Finally, the news coverage was fair towards Welch. In all, the press maintained a constant, strong signal of neutrality. Voters would not be swayed by either news coverage or ad effects in terms of attribute agenda setting.

Issues

Of the issues the press covered, education, traffic, the horse race, and candidate biographies received the most coverage. However, the newspaper, particularly, focused on the candidate forums, and the coverage was dictated by trying to appear fair and balanced towards all six candidates. This method of coverage relied on quotes, even if they were disjointed from the other candidate's comments or ideas, and it felt like the aim of each article was to achieve equality even at the expense of helpful information. In the end, the topics of these "forum" oriented articles concentrated on the matters of that specific audience.

Coder Reliability

The 97% coder reliability figure is high because of the simplicity and the certainty of content. First, the press coverage consisted of detailing the source of coverage; the date the article was published or the segment ran; length of segment or article, depending on medium; length of coverage featuring Welch; contributing author; topic of story; did the topic feature Welch; secondary topic; did the secondary topic feature Welch; and the fourteen attributes under examination. Their categories were straightforward, and subjective interpretation was kept to a minimum.

Second, the coding scheme incurred disagreement only in the measurement of article length and duration of news segment. More importantly, there was no disagreement in the attribute display section. The coder was informed about the attribute categories and what could constitute portrayal. The few specimens where attributes were displayed made analysis simple and accurate. With respect to the ads, it was even more straightforward. There was complete agreement between coders regarding attribute display and ad length on an issue.

In sum, this coding scheme accomplished the main objective of accurately cataloguing news coverage and ads. In hindsight, the coding sheets will not consist of so many categories in the next attribute agenda-setting study. This was not a high profile election where media coverage was heavy. And, the five television ads did not present an image of Welch consistent with these attributes. Thus, there is good reason for the high level of uncertainty found in the survey about Welch's candidate image.

Research Question 1

In order to test hypothesis one, the newspaper and television analyses were combined to provide the cumulative news coverage. The issues were then ranked according to frequency in coverage. Welch ads were then analyzed to record the number Welch's overall issue display, each issue was ranked. The issues portrayed in the news media were found to be correlated with the issues voters identified as important.

Based on the testing results, this study confirms that there was a first level agenda setting effect. The media's issue agenda transferred to the public's issue agenda. The news had a correlation of .689 and the ads had a correlation of .677. However, there was not a significant correlation between ads and news .597 (See Table 4.2).

This result shows that the public's issue agenda was influenced by both news coverage and ads. However, the one issue that garnered the most responses, when the news coverage, survey, and Welch ads were compared was "other." The news coverage in The Advocate routinely featured stories about appearances at forums with quotes from each of the six candidates filling the space. No single issue or candidate stood out in the newspaper's coverage. On television news, when a story did appear, it recapped a forum appearance, or divided a single issue into quotes written on the screen for each of the six candidates. And, as mentioned above,

Table 4.2 Correlations between News, Survey, and Ads

		NEWS	SURVEY
SURVEY	r	.689*	
	p	.027	
	n	10	
AD	r	.597	.677*
	p	.068	.032
	n	10	10

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

- 1) significance level
- 2) p-value
- 3) number

voters could not pinpoint Welch's issues to any degree of certainty. In other words, if the voters had to rely on her ads for direction, they did not know what the mayoral campaign was about in terms of issues. Education, which could be defined by a slew of factors, fixing the sewer system, improving traffic conditions, and fighting crime all received lower rankings than the category "other" when respondents were asked to describe the Welch agenda.

In respect to the Welch ads, the majority of Welch's advertising was dedicated to issues that did not show up on the public's agenda. Outside of education, crime, her biography, and the sewer system problem, most voters could not name a specific issue that Welch advocated. There was not one campaign issue that achieved salience. This raises an important point that will be elaborated on later: either voters did not know enough about Welch or they knew enough to support someone else. Without any dominant issues and her biography's lack of potency, her campaign's attempts at persuasion fell flat. In terms of election outcomes, this does not bode well for a candidate when neither the candidate's issues nor personality gain traction.

In sum, although there were significant first level agenda-setting effects from both news and ads, the public could not identify the main thrust of the Welch candidacy. Given that the survey was conducted at the end of the campaign, these results offer evidence that Welch's advertising had not created a deep, lasting impression on the voters' agenda. Also, there was no correlation between ads and news. This is interesting because in most campaigns, candidate advertising and news have a strong relationship. An ad is produced in response to a news story or a news story causes the salient issue in the ad campaign. The open primary system may contribute to the absence of this relationship. Press coverage might refrain from focusing too much on one candidate or risk the criticism of playing favorites. Also, the press coverage could

be spread too thin to cover each candidate in this open primary process. This leads to an environment ripe for heavy spending and extremists.

Research Question 2

The next main subject of this thesis is concerned with second level agenda-setting. Again, the news coverage and ads were evaluated by total attribute assertion along with the fourteen attributes tested in the survey. These attributes were ranked and then compared to the results of the survey to see whether there was a second level effect. According to the results, neither the news coverage nor Welch ads had any significant correlation with the public's attribute agenda for Welch's candidate image. Therefore, along these fourteen attributes there was no second level agenda-setting effect, thus hypothesis two is rejected.

However, a closer look at the voters reveals some important distinctions in how they perceive Welch's attributes. In the following section, job-crucial attributes (a leader, competent, experienced, speaking ability, understands major issues, communicates with people, trustworthy, dependable and intelligent) and personality attributes (relating to people like you, sincere, aggressive, physical appearance, and shares your values) will be analyzed to see if there is a correlation between those attributes and the level of campaign interest. Also, sources of information will also be analyzed to see whether there is a relationship between source and perception..

In order to discern whether the campaign interest had any effect on attribute perception, correlation tests were performed using the question, "How closely have you been following the campaign for Mayor-President?" Among job-crucial attributes, there was a significant correlation between campaign interest and whether the respondent perceived her image as "a leader" (-.149), "experienced" (-.138), "trustworthy" (-.265), "dependable" (-.202), and

“intelligent” (-.171). In terms of these job-crucial attributes, “competent,” “speaking ability,” and “understands major issues” showed no correlation with campaign interest. Regarding personality attributes, “sincere” (-.198), “aggressive” (-.138), “physical appearance” (-.144), and “shares your values” (-.181) showed a significant correlation with following the campaign (See Table 4.3).

In review, without explicit media portrayal of these attributes, campaign interest may be related to the Welch attributes as a product of what voters expect of any credible candidate for office, and what they conveniently retrieve from the information projected by Welch’s image. Looking at both classifications of attributes, it was found that campaign interest is linked to forming an opinion about Welch along most of these attributes. This is an interesting finding because it shows that even in a campaign with limited media effects, this group is able to form an opinion about Welch. If anyone is paying attention to the campaign in the media, it is this group. However, given that the attributes were only explicitly displayed in 4.4% of the media coverage and ads featuring Welch, it might be deduced that campaign interest does not require stimulus because of strong preconceived cognitions. Those that follow campaigns will have an established prototypical candidate that all prospective candidates will be measured against. Given that Welch’s candidate image profile was slightly better than average, this subconscious comparison acted like a filter, where her attributes were compared to those of the prototypical candidate’s.

Regarding sources of information, this study looked at whether there is a correlation between those who watch local news on television for most of their information about the Mayoral election, those who read the newspaper as a primary source, the effects of an interpersonal network, and those who said they had seen Welch’s advertising. These sources

Table 4.3 Correlations between Campaign Interest and Attributes

	Followed Campaign
A Leader	-.149* .027 221
Competent	-.128 .059 220
Experienced	-.138* .043 216
Trustworthy	-.265** .000 195
Dependable	-.202** .005 188
Sincere	-.198** .004 212
Aggressive	-.138* .042 218
Intelligent	-.171* .011 223
Physical Appearance	-.144* .027 234
Speaking Ability	-.094 .151 233
Major Issues	-.123 .073 215
Shares Values	-.181* .009 206
Communicate with People	-.084 .212 221
Relating to People	-.078 .242 224

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- 1) significance level
- 2) p-value
- 3) number

will be evaluated to see if there are any noticeable trends among this atmosphere of weak second-level effects.

Local television news was cited as the number one source for information about the mayor's race. For example, 60.3% of the electorate said they watched local news seven days a week (See Appendix A, Q3a). Given this fact, which is true in almost any contemporary American campaign, media buyers will place their client's ads within news programs. It is a simple game of finding the most voters for the least price. Over this period of study, the voting audience should have had a sufficient amount of information about Welch from her ads since two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, or roughly 5000 gross ratings points, had been placed. And, as the survey showed, regardless of which medium was the respondent's major source for information about the mayor's race, over 80% said they were familiar with Welch's ads.

Local television news, as a primary source, showed a significant correlation with eleven of the fourteen attributes. As reliance intensified, voters formed opinions about Welch's image. "A leader" (-.272), "competent" (-.200), "experienced" (-.197), "trustworthy" (-.287), "dependable" (-.340), "intelligent" (-.248), "physical appearance" (-.236), "speaking ability" (-.218), "understands major issues" (-.199), "shares your values" (-.180) and "relating to people like you" (-.233) showed a significant correlation with local television news as a source (See Table 4.4). Although the attributes may not have been mentioned, those that followed the campaign through television coverage were more likely to form opinions on all but three of these tested attributes.

In comparison, those who cited the newspaper as their number one source for information about this election were less likely to show a link between source and opinion about attributes. Only "trustworthy" (-.168) generated a relationship with the newspaper audience. This may

Table 4.4 Correlations between Attributes and Sources

	Local Television	Newspaper	Interpersonal	Welch Ads
A Leader	-.272** .000 219	.031 .644 218	-.007 .916 220	-.325** .000 221
Competent	-.200** .003 218	.087 .203 217	.046 .495 218	-.217** .001 220
Experienced	-.197** .004 214	-.101 .143 213	.092 .178 214	-.279** .000 216
Trustworthy	-.287** .000 193	-.168* .020 192	-.071 .329 193	-.153* .033 195
Dependable	-.340** .000 186	-.099 .179 185	-.028 .702 186	-.140 .055 188
Sincere	-.187 .007 210	-.067 .334 209	.011 .880 210	-.163* .017 212
Aggressive	-.065 .339 216	-.019 .781 215	-.011 .875 216	-.177* .009 218
Intelligent	-.248** .000 221	-.013 .851 220	-.021 .757 221	-.377** .000 223
Physical Appearance	-.236** .000 232	-.023 .732 231	.040 .547 232	-.276** .000 234
Speaking Ability	-.218** .001 231	.020 .764 230	.096 .144 231	-.244** .000 233
Major Issues	-.199** .004 213	-.031 .658 212	.029 .678 213	-.143* .036 215
Shares Values	-.180* .010 213	.000 .997 203	-.037 .599 204	-.176* .012 206
Communicate with People	-.124 .067 219	.028 .679 218	.032 .634 219	-.120 .075 221
Relating to People	-.233** .001 222	.081 .231 221	.027 .691 222	-.126 .060 224

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- 1) significance level
- 2) p-value
- 3) number

imply that newspaper readers, lacking the visual and aural presentation that the newscasts provide, in addition to the political commercials that air within a news broadcast, are less capable of forming these opinions if the attributes are not presented. The newspaper format is restrictive in what information about a candidate's image it displays to its audience. Unless it is an extensive profile, replete with assorted photographs, newspaper coverage in a local election, particularly in the open primary, will have limitations. At this point, there is no explanation for why "trustworthy" showed a correlation. It was not mentioned in the media sources for the Welch image at any point in the campaign.

As Tipton et al. (1975) suggested, image agenda-setting might be difficult to find in local elections because of the social network that exists. Interpersonal communication can be a stronger force of image construction than media messages. Conversations in the barbershops, coffee shops, or bars may generate more impact than do the thirty second ads, twenty-second campaign news byte, or the countless numbers of peripherally relevant paragraphs covering the horse-race. In these social settings like-minded voters gather to discuss the issues and the candidates' styles and images too. Where a pollster may find restrained criticism, the banter during happy hour will obviously be freer flowing and direct. Real opinions about how a candidate looks, speaks, and acts are shared like a bowl of peanuts and pretzels. This interaction may, at some conscious or subconscious level, affect prior voter opinion. It may not be as dramatic as the impact of the spiral of silence, but even slight shifts in opinion can alter political decision-making when voters are comparing candidates.

Against this backdrop, Welch's attributes were correlated with respondents that answered "friends, family, and other people" had been a source of information in the mayor's race. In an

intriguing trend, for both job-crucial and personality attributes, no correlations were found between attributes and this source of interaction and information (See Table 4.4).

Finally, Welch's ads were tested to see whether ad awareness had a relationship with opinions about her image. The results of this correlation test showed that respondents were more likely to have opinions about her image if they had seen her ads. Eleven out of the fourteen attributes displayed a relationship. The two attributes that scored the highest were "intelligent" (-.377) and "a leader" (.325) (See Table 4.4). The more the voters saw her commercials, the more likely they were to form an opinion about these two attributes. "Intelligent", as Table 4.2 illustrated, also had the overall highest score among the fourteen attributes tested for Welch. Just by appearing on television, and in the absence of a negative environment, candidates may be perceived more strongly among certain attributes. Voters expect candidates to be leaders, intelligent, and experienced.

Research Question 3

The third hypothesis states that the attributes will show varying effects based on demographics. In the following section, race, gender, party affiliation, education, and income were examined to determine what type of relationship these subgroups have with the measured candidate image attributes.

First, given the white/black composition of the electorate in East Baton Rouge parish, the way a candidate is perceived along racial lines could foreshadow a candidate's success. For example, in this crowded field, especially among Republicans, the candidates must be able to connect with a large enough percentage of the electorate to get them into a runoff. With five white candidates and one black candidate in a parish with 29% of the electorate being black, the

white candidates will not concede a place in the runoff with the black candidate. It is imperative for a campaign to try to connect with both majority and minority voters.

The study found no correlation between race and attribute agenda-setting or race having a significant relationship with opinions about Welch's attributes (See Table 4.5). Race was not a statistically significant factor in determining whether a single attribute had a perceivable effect. Race often plays a role, consciously or unconsciously, in how individuals should appear politically correct without prejudice. As the Doug Wilder campaign in Virginia and David Duke's gubernatorial and senatorial races showed, racism affects poll findings. The "under the radar" vote attributed to Duke's polling numbers indicates that even under conditions of maintaining anonymity, respondents can be less than candid when racial matters enter the scenario. This indifference towards race reported in the survey may be a weakness; therefore this result is as much intriguing as it is inconclusive. Media messages may be an inadequate rival to social norms, interpersonal communication networks, and pressures when race is an important element in an election.

Next, this study wanted to examine whether gender played a significant role in voters' perception of a candidate's image. Contrary to the myth floating throughout the community of political communications practitioners, female candidates do not automatically enjoy a gender gap among female voters. And, male candidates still have an advantage over female candidates among male voters. In this study, along all attributes tested, there were two significant correlations between respondents' gender and Roxson Welch's attributes. Female respondents were more likely to form an opinion of Welch along the attributes "experienced" (.167) and "physical appearance" (.131) (See Table 4.5). It is interesting that the attribute "physical appearance" generated a relationship with female voters and not male voters. This attribute was

Table 4.5 Correlations between Attributes and Race, Gender, Party, Education, and Income

	Race	Gender	Party	Education	Income
A Leader	.101	.114	.181*	-.089	-.124
	.141	.090	.012	.192	.090
	214	221	194	219	188
Competent	.115	.118	.193**	-.023	-.104
	.092	.080	.007	.738	.156
	215	220	194	218	187
Experienced	.062	.167*	.164*	-.036	-.020
	.369	.014	.023	.601	.784
	210	216	192	214	183
Trustworthy	-.092	.099	.090	-.060	.006
	.206	.169	.238	.490	.937
	190	195	173	193	167
Dependable	-.018	.078	.086	-.074	.038
	.806	.289	.271	.318	.629
	183	188	164	186	161
Sincere	-.015	.044	.092	-.042	.024
	.827	.526	.210	.540	.748
	208	212	188	210	184
Aggressive	.093	-.004	.000	.042	.018
	.176	.948	.999	.537	.808
	212	218	193	216	186
Intelligent	.059	.043	.136	-.029	-.126
	.386	.520	.058	.673	.085
	217	223	196	221	188
Physical Appearance	.041	.131*	.129	-.053	-.083
	.541	.045	.067	.422	.248
	226	234	206	232	194
Speaking Ability	.090	.066	.249**	-.116	-.048
	.180	.315	.000	.077	.512
	225	233	205	231	193
Major Issues	.105	.073	.212**	-.093	.003
	.131	.287	.003	.177	.971
	209	215	189	214	183
Shares Values	.061	.122	.168*	-.005	-.002
	.393	.080	.024	.945	.975
	199	206	180	204	174
Communicate with People	.061	.144	.166*	-.065	-.078
	.374	.090	.020	.341	.287
	216	221	195	219	188
Relating to People	.097	.103	.256**	-.093	-.078
	.156	.125	.000	.166	.284
	217	224	197	222	190

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- 1) significance level
- 2) p-value
- 3) number

purely subjective in analysis. Also, the number of times that Welch appeared on the screen or in a photograph may have a limited relationship with overall attribute evaluation. Some respondents may find that she has a strong, positive appearance, which fits with their image of how a Mayor should appear. As Table 4.2 showed, this attribute was scored lower than average. If the campaign attempted to create an advantage with female voters by delivering a targeted message, say about education, or playing up her role as a mother and teacher, the results showed this strategy did not work. These results confirm previous research in this area. However, due to the fact there were no second level agenda-setting effects found in the media analysis, the results pertaining to the relationships based on gender are inconclusive.

Third, party affiliation is an important demographic variable when looking at key indicators and for voting trends. For all the attributes tested, there was a significant correlation between registered Democrats their opinions about the following attributes tested for Welch: “a leader,” “competent,” “experienced,” “speaking ability,” “understands major issues,” “shares values,” “communicates with people,” and “relates to people like you.” Among Republicans, Welch’s own party affiliation, there were no significant correlations. This result may show that Republicans were less likely to use media for forming their opinion about Welch’s image. In the competition among four fellow Republicans, Welch’s image may not have been a relevant factor.

Fourth, of all the demographics tested, education has traditionally been one of the more significant factors in the decision-making process and predictor of voting behavior (Weaver, 1996). This study found no correlation between education and attribute assessment. This finding may be a consequence of the limited media influences and lack of image attributes displayed overall. However, the absence of a correlation between education and a single personality attribute contradicts Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk’s (1986) findings. They

found that higher educated persons are more likely to focus on a candidate's image when basing their voting decisions. But, due to the unusual circumstances presented by the open primary, low level of interest in the race, and consequently, deficient media involvement, a generalization cannot be derived from what very may well be an anomaly.

The fifth variable investigated has been found a strong predictor of voting behavior and interest in politics. Income levels, as a socioeconomic indicator, have had inconclusive results as a determining factor for agenda-setting effects. Unfortunately, this study too will shed little light on the relationship between incomes and attribute agenda-setting. Again, the result indicates no significant correlation between Welch's attributes and income levels.

In sum, only party affiliation and gender showed any significant correlations with opinions about Welch's attributes. In what turned out to be a low-interest primary, the media can play an important role in creating the candidate's image. For reasons already mentioned, media may have been subservient to impenetrable prior attitudes. Although the second research question was answered in the negative, there were interesting results emanating from the correlation tests. Using the voting predictors campaign interest, sources of information and demographics, this thesis studies the other possible factors contributing to image formation.

Research Question 4

Education has historically been one of the key variables involved in selecting political candidates. The Miller et al. study (1986) placed new emphasis on the relationship between education and candidate image perception. Higher educated voters were more likely to hold a candidate's image as more important than the issues when coming to a decision. Taken from Miller et al.'s (1986), findings this study tested the voters' perceptions of these attributes

according to education levels. Specifically, do voters that have attained higher levels of education view personality attributes of Welch more negatively than the job-crucial attributes?

As the record player skips, education showed no correlation with the tested attributes. This result magnifies the complete irrelevance of the media in contributing to the creation of Welch's image. Without a discernible distinction based on education, Welch did not show a connection or disconnection with higher educated voters. In fact, across the board Welch' image fell squarely in the "neutral" category. Since there was a low turnout, which is disproportionately attended to by voters who have attained levels of higher learning, this foreshadows a long election day for the Welch campaign.

In conclusion, the lack of any affective campaign or news coverage might have plagued the inquiries of this study. However, at least the findings are uniform for the entire electorate. There was not an agenda-setting effect for one audience, and the demographic variables did not present a distinction. Local television news and awareness of Welch's ads showed significant correlation with forming an opinion about the tested attributes. The wholly lacking evidence of an attribute agenda-setting effect is consistent among all groups. With not one group showing a second level effect, this shows that the criteria for political decision-making may be more similar than different regardless of the demographic makeup of the electorate. Voters can make judgments, categorize candidates, and make quick decisions with only small amounts of information available. Welch's fate was in the hand of the perceiver, and the poll results show that her campaign and its image/message never got off the ground.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This thesis has taken one step further down an emerging path of inquiry into attribute agenda setting and local elections. Attribute agenda-setting seems a bridge between political communications and political sociology that will offer several journeymen bountiful exploration; regardless of whether they discover nuggets of gold or goldmines. The subject is not new, but the vigor to investigate is thriving. From cave drawings to streaming video on a candidate's website, the attention to detail in crafting an appealing and inspiring image is the first step in the process of achieving power. In politics, there are more losers than winners, but every candidate enters a race on relatively equal footing. Where is that line between victory and defeat drawn among equals? The political communications industry has blossomed in this country with each new technological development, but this poignant question still remains.

The Roxson Welch campaign was the subject of this analysis. The thesis examined the first and second levels of agenda-setting and whether there were any attribute agenda-setting effects in the primary. After investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in this campaign, Welch finished in fifth place in this first primary. The race stayed on the high road, so the dismal results could not be attributed to an anti-Welch media campaign. As the poll suggested, the electorate's overall opinion of Welch fell into a category of indifference. In the absence of influential television ads and news coverage, a second level effect was not found, but this void does not preclude the electorate's ability to create a political schema based on the Welch image.

When a campaign begins, voters quickly assess the qualifications of the competing candidates. The candidates, in this open primary especially, took similar positions on issues as the public opinion poll dictates. Therefore, the distance between opposing candidates to the

issue is negligible so as to avoid being viewed as holding an extreme view. The axiom about finding only dead armadillos in the middle has been replaced: in the primary you win your base early and sprint to the middle. With so few areas of distinction between campaigns, candidate image becomes the key between victory and defeat. For example, when candidate George W. Bush failed the reporter's pop quiz about foreign leaders in the winter of 1999, that snafu established a candidate image that still haunts President Bush today.

In a future study, increasing the number of campaigns to be monitored will provide a richer body of research. This study concentrated on the Welch campaign solely. This limitation narrowed the focus to only an observation of her message information communicated to the voters through the media. Whereas, a study that includes the entire field adds an important dimension: the opposing candidate image(s). If we accept the concept that actual candidate images are measured against a prototypical candidate image, then a multi-candidate field with multiple attributes displayed is quickly reduced to a succinct rank-order list structured around how each candidate rates against this prototypical image. As a campaign rolls toward Election Day, the tracking polls indicate whether momentum has been lost or gained, then the campaign must react accordingly. Issues and images are interchangeable as each sheds light on the other. Campaigns gain momentum relative to their opposition; an opposition that has access to the same numbers must react when their image declines in the voters' estimation. This chess game becomes more involved when more players are introduced. Being able to study a multi-candidate field would enhance subsequent attribute agenda-setting research because it could examine how the different campaign strategies interact with the public, the news media, and the opposition. At the first-level, we accept the position that the media does not tell us what to think but only what to think about. This leg of the theory has been proven strong. Will the second-

level achieve the same prominence? There must be more research into attribute agenda-setting because if the media tells us how to think about an issue or person (by attribute display) it can influence what we think.

One man's junk is another man's treasure. There is no denying that this thesis craved a breakthrough result, but a result finding the mundane and an absence of a second level agenda-setting effect will suffice; for this study revealed several interesting developments.

First, the demographic independent variables showed near uniformity in their resistance to any substantive agenda-setting effect and attitudinal shift. While education, income, and race, to name a few categories, have shown a correlation to political decision-making, this study found a universal attitude of indifference when it came to Welch's image and uncertainty about the issues advocated by her campaign. Party affiliation was correlated with opinion formation, but the attribute valence showed no relationship. The audience had similar expectations and standards, which apparently were not met by the Welch campaign.

Second, voters judged attributes regardless of whether there was a stimulus triggering a response. Neither the Welch ads nor the media coverage displayed the attributes perceived by the voters to any meaningful degree. However, routinely, over sixty percent of survey respondents were able to make a judgment regarding Welch along the fourteen attributes examined. Any subsequent research should probe attribute assessment by allowing the voters to recall attributes in an open-ended question rather than measuring what may turn out to be nonexistent attributes. Candidate image should also be pre/post tested to monitor attitude changes throughout the campaign process.

Also, a hindrance to second level studies can be found in the measurement devices. Does the content analysis accurately reflect an image communicated visually, without a verbal cue,

and received through the individual cognitive processes? How do you account for an unintentional message? For example, the attribute “shares your values,” important in voter/candidate homophile, unless expressed explicitly in an ad or news segment, is a vague category left to the viewers’ interpretations. The thesis showed that there was not an articulation of a “value” element to her image, but anecdotal evidence suggests that there could have been a negative reaction to the ads that featured her mulatto grandchildren because Louisiana politics is deeply divided by race, as David Duke’s appeal can attest. Questions arose about her family, and, consequently, her values when the two children were featured in the first ads of the campaign. There was no noticeable trace of a detrimental impact, but indifference is not momentum either.

Next, if a second level effect is difficult to find in local elections, then Louisiana’s open primary system may make it nearly impossible for media campaigns to really produce an effect. The press, already in the pursuit of the ever-evasive ideal of objectivity, is under immense pressure when the field of candidate swells beyond two in such a short period of time. The coverage that emanated from this multi-candidate field was vacuous at best, but more accurately, it was a plastic watchdog that only pretended to have both bark and bite. Coverage was fractured, leaving the candidates and their platforms an equally distributed, predetermined number of paragraphs. Candidate debate was stifled by the desire to appear objective. Discourse did not exist, and the most important problem facing the community, education, was not even an issue for which the Mayor’s office had jurisdiction. Without issues, without images, the race for mayor was without direction. Salience is felt by viewing differences in frequency, so when there are no differences, the public’s ability to ascertain what is salient is nullified.

With a neutered press, campaign advertising assumes a greater role. But, a multi-candidate field might have asserted limitations to advertising's effectiveness. Financially, there is a finite number of campaign dollars that can be raised and spent in an open primary for a local election when you have several candidates involved. The role of campaign contributions, therefore, will increase as advertising becomes the only means by which a candidate can establish an identity. If not independently wealthy, this forces a candidate to dial for dollars or make promises in return for financial support.

In turn, multi-candidate fields result in multi-candidate identities competing for the electorate's attention. The time frame between qualifying and the primary election is a six-week period filled with constant appeals, images, clutter and noise. Extremism sometimes works in Louisiana under this scenario, especially in statewide races, because a multi-candidate field reduces the number of votes it takes to get into a runoff and it exerts pressure on the press to try to give equal time and space to each candidate. Incumbency, too, is protected by a system that emphasizes campaign advertising over a free and watchful press. An incumbent has a comparative advantage over his opposition, particularly if there is more than one opponent, in terms of fundraising. Although there was not incumbent in this race, when a popular incumbent mayor endorses one of the candidates running in the open primary, this gives that candidate a big boost. In this election, Bobby Simpson's campaign broke from the pack after McHugh's endorsement. McHugh sent a strong signal about Simpson's capability, and consequently, his image through this endorsement.

Expanding the scope from a local election to a statewide race in the open primary system may provide a better venue for an attribute agenda-setting study because the electorate is much more interested in a gubernatorial race than a mayoral contest. Louisianans view the

governorship like a kingdom because so much power is controlled at the state level, and the throne seekers are all too eager to engage in this spectacle. It would be interesting to step back in time to be able to analyze how the voters' attribute agenda was affected by the Foster campaign of 1994-95. An unknown commodity in Louisiana politics, Foster's media campaign would have provided an interesting study of how a candidate goes from virtual obscurity, to benefiting from an association with one of America's most notorious hate mongering propagandists, David Duke, to the Governor's mansion. The open primary system at the statewide level would be a more fruitful project for observing image creation, where the local election was a more useful lesson in understanding how political cognitions work in the absence of strong media presence.

Fourth, the interpersonal communications networks showed no distinct impact on the race or Welch's image in terms of the electorate's attribute agenda. Thus, it appears that all external forces were muted and ineffectual. When the social networks were tested for a correlation with the attributes, none was found. And, when the networks and attributes were put through cross tabulations, valence was neutral.

Therefore, finally, this study was useful in that it shed light on how voters create candidate images when no strong influence is present. Credible candidates for office are held in higher regard than a stranger or your next-door neighbor. This respect for the candidate refutes the notion that all politicians are despised. Attributes that were not even presented in this campaign for Welch were given better than average marks.

For future political consultants and political campaign managers, the open primary system has weaknesses that can be taken advantage of if the campaign has the resources. As was shown in this local race, the press cannot and will not dedicate its reporters to covering the entire field of candidates. The campaign will be able to create, control, and adapt the candidate's

image through the media without the presence of a watchful press. Expenditures in extensive focus group and survey research should be allocated before the campaign begins to get a sense of what type of candidate image the voters will find most appealing. Then, the campaign should meticulously create ads and campaign literature that promote this image. Well-financed, unknown candidates will benefit the most under Louisiana's system.

Louisiana can also serve as a good training ground for doing national campaigns since the open primary forces candidates to go after the middle, where all national campaigns are also won. Unlike states where there is a closed primary system, Louisiana offers a wonderful opportunity for consultants because you get to stay in the game a little longer, which means your candidate has more time to raise and spend money on advertising and retainer fees. James Carville and Raymond Strother launched their successful careers from the bayou state. That they handle Democrats only should come as no surprise because the Democrat party in Louisiana (and throughout the South) has, since the Civil Rights movement, had to maneuver between the base of the party on the left and the conservative democrats who still harbor some resentment for the north's re-intrusion in the 60's led by Kennedy and Johnson. Louisiana consultants, especially on the democrat side, are adept at creating targeted and loaded messages. With the multi-candidate fields, the press has a more difficult time catching candidates in contradictions between different messages to different constituencies. And, trying to remain objective is always at the top of the priority list.

Overall, this thesis accomplished what it set out to do: determine whether the Welch campaign or the media was the dominant source in creating a second level agenda-setting effect. However, this study was not without its shortcomings. As mentioned earlier, it may prove more useful to probe for attributes through a focus group, and then create a questionnaire based on the

results. This study adopted several attributes like a big net that is cast to gather its prey. The results were not negatively affected because of the overall lack of a true media influence, but, in a future study, a more extensive examination may be compromised by too many attributes under inspection.

Also, if afforded the opportunity, the sample size for the questionnaire could always stand to be increased to reduce the margin of error. A truer snapshot is taken with a larger sample. But, for the purpose of this thesis, the sample was sufficient to provide illustrative results. In terms of research design, using focus groups periodically throughout the campaign would provide a useful resource for gauging media effects throughout the campaign. Alternative media can be evaluated to test their effects on attribute agenda-setting. For example, a voter may provide useful information about how a mail piece contributes to image agenda-setting, and whether it plays a more prominent role than believed. In addition, the focus group can represent the social network that has an effect on political decision-making. Pre/post tests could demonstrate how image maybe a byproduct of unconscious or subconscious influences.

In closing, there are several barriers to assess and capture attribute agenda-setting effects in local elections. As first level agenda-setting has blossomed into a productive theory for understanding the role of media in our everyday lives, second level studies can be more useful even if they show that the perceiver is still the strongest determinant in candidate image creation. The Welch campaign made several errors- some would say the biggest was entering the race- but neither the positives nor negatives appeared to dramatically impact her image. This study could not conclusively state that the media played no role in the election, but the Welch image appears to be more of a perceiver-determined creation than stimulus-determined. Perhaps, this will be a

noteworthy finding for future second level agenda-setting studies at the local level or in multi-candidate fields.

APPENDIX A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
FREQUENCY RESPONSES
SAMPLE SIZE (n=300)

MOR 2138 Hobbs
 10.4.00

ID

INTERVIEWER

Hello, this is _____ with Southern Media & Opinion Research
 We are working with an LSU graduate student for a thesis
 project on the upcoming election for Mayor-President.

PRECINCT

1. I need to speak with the registered voter in your household who has had the most recent birthday. Are you that person? (If yes, continue; if no, ask to speak with that person) YES... 100.0

2. The election for Mayor-President will be held on October 7th. Do you think you will definitely vote in that election, will probably vote, or probably will not vote? DEFINITELY VOTE... 84.3
 PROBABLY VOTE... 9.7
 PROBABLY WILL NOT VOTE... 4.7
 (DNK/WS)... 1.3

3. We are interested in finding out where people have gotten information about the Mayor's race. How many days a week do you: (1-7 days)

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>NEVER</u>	<u>WS</u>
a. watch local news on television	3.0	7.0	5.7	5.0	12.0	2.3	60.3	4.0	0.7
b. listen to the radio	6.0	6.0	5.0	4.7	6.7	2.0	48.7	21.0	0.0
c. read the Advocate newspaper	6.7	10.7	4.3	4.0	3.7	2.7	54.3	13.7	0.0

4. Where would you say that you have gotten most of your information about the Mayor's race? (DO NOT READ) (RECORD ONLY ONE) TELEVISION... 45.7
 RADIO... 6.3
 NEWSPAPER... 28.0
 INTERNET... 1.3
 MAIL... 4.0
 OTHER PEOPLE... 8.0
 OTHER (SPECIFY): _____ 5.0
 (DNK/WS)... 1.3

5. Please tell me if you got a lot, some, a little or no information about the Mayor's race from the following sources:

	A				
	<u>LOT</u>	<u>SOME</u>	<u>LITTLE</u>	<u>NONE</u>	<u>(DNK/WS)</u>
local television stations	51.7	29.0	13.0	5.3	
b. radio	19.7	25.0	24.3	29.7	1.3
c. the Advocate newspaper	50.3	19.3	13.7	15.3	1.3
d. Internet	3.0	4.7	3.7	85.7	3.0
e. mail	24.3	26.0	21.0	26.3	2.3
f. from friends, family and other people	20.0	26.7	21.7	30.3	1.3

How closely have you been following the campaign for Mayor-President: very closely, somewhat closely, or not closely at all?

VERY CLOSELY.....	29.7
SOMEWHAT CLOSELY.....	52.7
NOT CLOSELY AT ALL.....	17.3
(DNK/WS)	0.3

7. Based on what you have heard or read, what would you say are the top issues in the race for Mayor? (PROBE: ANY OTHER ISSUES?) (Record up to 5)

(TOP SEVEN RESPONSES)

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS	61.0
TRAFFIC	27.3
CRIME	20.7
SEWAGE/SEWER FEE	17.7
DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY	16.3
TAXES	15.0
ROADS/INTERSTATE/STREETS	14.0

8. Have you seen a lot, some or no television commercials for:

	<u>A LOT</u>	<u>SOME</u>	<u>NONE</u>	<u>(DNK/WS)</u>
a. Fred Dent	5.7	45.0	45.7	3.7
b. Kip Holden	15.7	52.7	29.0	2.7
c. Donna Mayeux	33.7	50.3	14.7	1.3
d. Rolfe McCollister	38.7	42.0	18.0	1.3
e. Bobby Simpson	35.0	41.3	21.7	2.0
f. Roxson Welch	35.3	46.7	16.0	2.0

9. We are interested in all of the candidates for Mayor-President, but for this particular survey, we want to focus in on one of the candidates, Roxson Welch. What do you recall as the issues Roxson Welch addressed?

(TOP SEVEN RESPONSES)

DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY/NOT SURE	40.8
EDUCATION/SCHOOLS	38.7
GET RID OF GOOD OLE BOYS	8.7
FIX SEWER SYSTEM	5.7
OTHER	3.0
TRAFFIC	2.7
CRIME	2.7

10. If you were trying to describe Roxson Welch to a friend from out of town, what words would you use?

(TOP SEVEN RESPONSES)

DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY	35.0
OVERALL POSITIVE GENERAL COMMENT	12.0
CREDENTIALS/QUALIFICATIONS/CAPABILITY/RECORD (POSITIVE)	9.3
REFUSED TO COMMENT	6.0
APPEARANCE (POSITIVE)	4.3
ISSUES (POSITIVE)	3.3
FAMILIARITY (NEUTRAL)	3.3

11. Please tell me how much you think the following words describe Roxson Welch--a lot, some, a little or not at all

	A LOT		A LITTLE		NOT AT ALL		(DNK/WS)
	LOT	SOME	LITTLE	AT ALL	DNK	WS	
a. a leader	25.3	31.7	8.7	8.0			26.3
b. competent	30.0	33.0	4.3	6.0			26.7
c. experienced	30.0	28.3	8.0	5.7			28.0
d. trustworthy	31.7	27.0	3.7	2.7			35.0
e. dependable	27.0	30.0	3.0	2.7			37.3
f. sincere	35.0	27.7	4.3	3.7			29.3
g. aggressive	32.3	26.3	8.3	5.7			27.3
h. intelligent	46.3	22.7	3.7	1.7			25.7

12. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent, how would you rate Roxson Welch, on:

	POOR					EXCELL		(DNK/WS)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
a. physical appearance	3.3	5.3	24.3	23.3	21.7			22.0
b. speaking ability	1.3	6.3	17.3	26.0	26.7			22.3
c. understanding major issues	4.0	6.0	16.3	25.3	20.0			28.3
d. sharing your values	6.3	5.7	22.3	17.3	17.0			31.3
e. being able to communicate with people	3.7	6.7	14.7	23.3	25.3			26.3
f. relating to people like you	8.0	7.0	17.3	20.0	22.3			25.3

13. If you were in the voting booth right now, for whom would you most likely vote for Mayor-President?
(READ NAMES IF NECESSARY)

FRED DENT	2.7
KIP HOLDEN	12.3
DONNA MAYEUX	9.3
ROLFE McCOLLISTER	11.7
BOBBY SIMPSON	13.7
ROXSON WELCH (SKIP TO 15)	12.7
(UND/DNK/WS)	37.7

14. Why wouldn't Roxson Welch be your first choice?
(TOP SIX RESPONSES) (n=262)

DON'T KNOW/WON'T SAY	21.8
NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT HER	12.6
DOES NOT WANT TO SAY PRIVACY	8.8
STILL DECIDING	5.7
LACKS ABILITY/QUALIFICATIONS	5.3
VOTING FOR BOBBY SIMPSON	5.0
OTHER	5.0
OVERALL NEGATIVE	5.0

These last few questions will help us sort your answers with the other people participating in our survey.

15. Are you registered to vote as a Democrat, Republican or some other party?	DEMOCRAT..... 58.3 REPUBLICAN..... 30.0 OTHER..... 9.3 (DNK/WS)..... 2.3
16. Regardless of how you are registered to vote do you more often agree with the actions of the Democrats or Republicans?	DEMOCRATS..... 34.3 REPUBLICANS..... 37.7 (WS)..... 28.0
17. What is your age? (Are you:)	UNDER 25..... 5.3 25 - 34..... 7.7 35 - 44..... 21.3 45 - 54..... 26.7 55 - 64..... 10.7 65 OR OVER..... 26.3 (WS)..... 2.0
18. What is the highest level of education you completed?	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL... 3.0 HIGH SCHOOL GRAD..... 23.7 SOME COLLEGE-NOT GRAD.. 21.3 COLLEGE GRAD..... 34.0 ADVANCED DEGREE..... 17.0 (WS)..... 1.0
19. (ASK IF NECESSARY) Are you male or female?	MALE..... 44.0 FEMALE..... 56.0 (WS)..... 0.0
20. What is your race or ethnic background?	WHITE..... 68.3 BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN. 26.0 OTHER..... 2.3 (WS)..... 3.3
21. As I read several income categories, please stop me when I get to the category that is the total annual income for all people in your household: (READ CATEGORIES)	less than \$20,000..... 10.3 more than \$20,000 but less than 40,000.. 22.0 more than \$40,000 but less than 60,000.. 18.0 more than \$60,000 but less than 80,000.. 15.0 more than \$80,000 but less than 100,000.. 6.3 more than \$100,000..... 11.0 (WS)..... 17.3

APPENDIX B TV NEWS CODING SHEET

Guide:

The following is the coding scheme for all stories covering the Mayor's race that appeared on either WBRZ or WAFB television stations during this period of analysis.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1 Station | _ | [1. WBRZ 2. WAFB] |
| 2. Date | _ _ / _ _ / _ _ | [mo/day/year] |
| 3. Length of Segment | _ _ _ | [in seconds, e.g. 015, 080, 120] |
| 4. Length of Coverage
Of Welch | _ _ _ | [in seconds, e.g. 015, 080, 120] |
| 5. Source for story | _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ | [1. Journalist 2. Welch 3. Third Person
4. Opponent] |
| 6. Topic of Story | _ | [1. Education/schools,
2. Get rid of good old boys,
3. Fix sewer system,
4. Traffic
5. Crime
6. Campaign Finance Report
7. Biography
8. Polls
9. Endorsement
10. Other] |
| 7. Main topic
features Welch | _ | [1. Yes, 2. No] |
| 8. Secondary Topic
of story | _ | [1. Education/schools,
2. Get rid of good old boys,
3. Fix sewer system,
4. Traffic
5. Crime
6. Campaign Finance Report
7. Biography
8. Polls
9. Endorsement
10. Other] |
| 9. Secondary Topic
Features Welch | _ | [1. Yes 2. No] |

10. Attribute Display

[1. Favorable, 0. Neutral, -1 unfavorable
2. Not relevant; the story is both text and photo/caption where they exist- An attribute is displayed when the attribute tested is mentioned explicitly, or a clearly recognized synonym is used in the story.]

a Leader	—
Competent	—
Experienced	—
Trustworthy	—
Dependable	—
Sincere	—
Aggressive	—
Intelligent	—
Physical Appearance	—
Speaking Ability_	—
Understanding Issues	—
Sharing your Values	—
Being able to Communicate with Other people	—
Relating to people like You	—

APPENDIX C NEWSPAPER CODING SHEET

Guide:

The following is the coding scheme for all stories in The Advocate that consisted of the campaign coverage of the Mayor's race for the time period under analysis.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1. Story Number | _ _ _ | [such as 001, 034, 136, etc., also write down the number of the story in the newspaper] |
| 2. Date | _ _ / _ _ / _ _ | [mo/day/year] |
| 3. Story Type | _ | [1. Standard article, 2. Editorial, 3. Newsbrief] |
| 4. Story Location | _ | [1. A-Section, 2. Metro Section, 3. Other] |
| 5. Page Location | _ | [1. A-Front, 2. A-Middle, 3. A-Back, 4. Metro Front, 5. Metro Middle, 6. Op-ed; If story starts on the front page and is continued somewhere in the middle or end, it is still considered a front page story] |
| 6. No. of Paragraphs | _ _ | |
| 7. No. of Paragraphs featuring Welch | _ _ | [where Welch is mentioned or quoted] |
| 8. Sources of Welch Coverage | _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ | [1. Journalist, 2. Welch, 3. Third Person, 4. Unknown—by paragraph. A new source requires a new number.] |
| 9. Topic of Story | _ | [1. Education/schools, 2. Get rid of good old boys, 11. Fix sewer system, 12. Traffic 13. Crime 14. Campaign Finance Report 15. Biography 16. Polls 17. Endorsement 18. Other] |
| 10. Main topic features Welch | _ | [1. Yes, 2. No- Welch featured in respect to the main topic of the article.] |
| 11. Secondary Topic of Story | _ | Secondary topic is defined as an individual topic that immediately follows the main topic in the news story regardless of the location. |

1. Education/schools,
2. Get rid of good old boys,
- 3 Fix sewer system
4. Traffic
5. Crime
6. Campaign Finance Report
7. Biography
8. Polls
9. Endorsement
10. Other]

12. Secondary Topic
Features Welch —

[1. Yes 2. No- Welch is featured in respect to the
Secondary topic of story.]

13. Attribute Display

[1. Favorable, 0. Neutral, -1 unfavorable
2. Not relevant; the story is both text and photo/caption where
they exist. An attribute is displayed when the attribute tested is
mentioned explicitly, or a clearly recognized synonym is used in
the coverage.]

- a Leader —
- Competent —
- Experienced —
- Trustworthy —
- Dependable —
- Sincere —
- Aggressive —
- Intelligent —
- Physical Appearance —
- Speaking Ability_ —
- Understanding Issues —
- Sharing your Values —
- Being able to —
- Communicate with —
- Other people —

- Relating to people like —
- You —

APPENDIX D TV AD CODING SHEET

Guide:

The following is a coding scheme for Roxson Welch television ads aired during the time period under analysis. All ads are 30- seconds in length. After the content has been logged, each issue and/or attribute will be given a weight of influence factor based on gross ratings points multiplied by the time dedicated to issues and tone applied to the attributes stressed in the ads. (The gross ratings points for the media flight will be gathered from agency documents.)

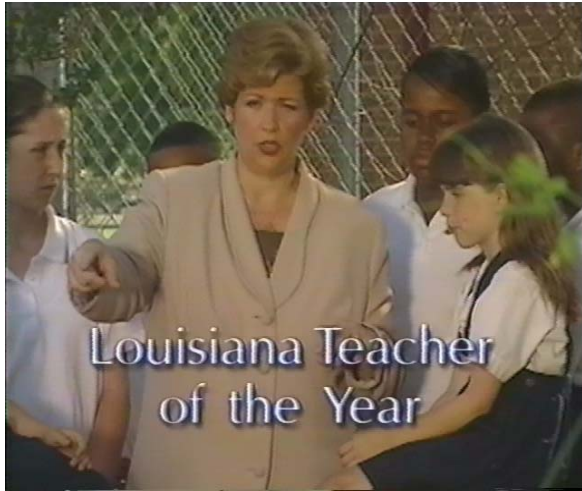
Television Ad # ___

Issue	No. of Seconds
1. Education/ Schools	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
2. Get rid of Good old Boys	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
3. Fix sewer system	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
4. Traffic	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
5. Crime	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
6. Experience/ Qualifications	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
7. Endorsements	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]
8. Other	_ [seconds dedicated to issue]

An attribute is displayed when the attribute tested is mentioned explicitly, or a clearly recognized synonym is used in the ad.

<u>Attributes</u>	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Not Relevant</u>
	1	0	-1	2
a Leader				
Competent				
Experienced				
Trustworthy				
Dependable				
Sincere				
Aggressive				
Intelligent				
Physical Appearance				
Speaking Ability				
Understanding Issues				
Sharing your Values				
Communicate with Other people				
Relating to people like You				

APPENDIX E “EDUCATION”



“Education”

:30 Television Ad Script

Welch:

As a mother, grandmother, and teacher...

I know the importance of education...

As Mayor, education will be my most important job...

I'll attend school board meetings...

I'll stand for stronger discipline... better pay...

I'll reform Head Start making it an educational program...

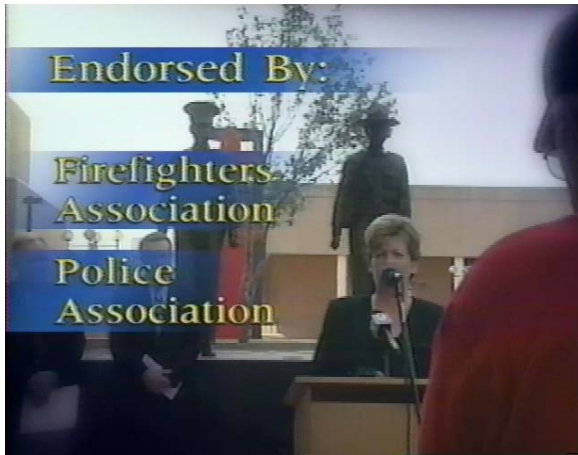
I'll cut truancy by putting kids back in school... no excuses...

Rather than a hotel downtown, why didn't they demand that the Riverboats build schools for our community?

Announcer:

Roxson Welch... Mayor.

APPENDIX F “PUBLIC SAFETY”



“Public Safety”
:30 Television Ad Script

Announcer: Her courage, competency, her leadership and her commitment to the safety of our families have won Roxson Welch the endorsement of both Firefighters and Police...
Those who know best know Roxson Welch is best for public safety...
Roxson has zero tolerance for criminals...
And Roxson Welch also has a new approach to fighting drugs among our people...
Start drug rehabilitation programs to help them off drugs to prepare themselves to find jobs...
Common sense...
Independence...
Always...
Roxson Welch... Mayor.

APPENDIX G “ATTACK SIMPSON”



“Attack Simpson”
:30 Television Ad Script

Announcer: On the metro council she successfully fought for term limits...
 She’s a leader... not a career politician...
 Her plan... get results... not more studies...
 As chairperson of the finance committee, she’s fighting waste, corruption,
 and deals... she’s a fiscal conservative...
 Her plan... fight harder as Mayor...
 Her leadership for public safety has won the endorsements of police and
 firefighters’ associations... she’s proven...
 Her plan... keep putting public safety first...
 More experience than all the rest...
 Roxson Welch... Mayor.

APPENDIX H “WINNING MESSAGE”



“Winning Message”
:30 Television Ad Script

Welch: Announcing for Mayor I said I was running to reform education in our parish...
My opponents laughed, said I should run for school board...
Now, suddenly, they’re running on education too...
Are they running for education or just election...
I’ve spent my professional life in our classrooms...
An adjunct professor at LSU and a trainer of teachers...
On the metro council I’ve stood for reform... not good old boy politics...
They’ve stopped laughing because our message is winning.

APPENDIX I “GOOD OLD BOYS”



“Good Old Boys”
:30 Television Ad Script

Welch: On the metro council, I made a choice...
 I stood for reform not more good old boy politics...
 I led the successful fight for term limits against politicians...
 I fought the political deals at the bus company... corruption at the council
 on aging...
 I’ve stood against the sewer rip off of our taxpayers...
 I want the sewer lines fixed not the good old boys’ pockets lined...
 If it’s more good old boy politics you want...
 You won’t get it from me.

APPENDIX J ELECTION-DAY RESULTS

RESULTS	
Fred	
Dent	<u>6,339</u>
Melvin 'Kip'	
Holden	<u>34,780</u>
Donna	
Mayeux	<u>12,680</u>
Rolfe	
McCollister	<u>21,820</u>
Bobby	
Simpson	<u>27,928</u>
Roxson	
Welch	<u>7,847</u>

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VITA

Scott Hobbs, a native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Louisiana State University in 1996. Between 1995 and 2001, he was an associate with a political consulting firm. Here, the Louisiana history and political education accelerated. While serving in a consulting capacity to over 60 political campaigns in Louisiana, Alabama, Texas, Georgia and California, he pursued his master's degree in mass communication (political communication concentration) at Louisiana State University. Today, he serves as a communications director for the Commissioner of Elections and Registration, Suzanne Haik Terrell. If asked about his two best days, he would say today and the day he married Lisa McMillan.