

GEORGE W. BUSH AND THE PERMANENT CAMPAIGN TRAIL*

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ABSTRACT

Media coverage of the 2004 presidential election emphasized the role of the “swing states” and the high level of attention they were receiving in the form of presidential visits. This study demonstrates that President Bush did indeed bias his travel toward the swing states in 2004, but that such strategic bias was evident from 2001 onwards, suggesting a “permanent campaign”. With reference to Bill Clinton and other previous presidents, George W. Bush’s strategic travel is presented as both the continuation of a trend of perpetual campaign travel, and the specific result of Bush’s organizational outlook and the close electoral contest of 2000. The implications of the disappearing distinction between “campaigning” and “governing” will be explored, with specific reference to the problems related to permanent strategic travel, such as taxpayer-financed campaigning and better representation for those living in electoral target areas.

* This study presents data on George W. Bush’s presidential travel between 2001 and 2004. The information is drawn from a larger, comprehensive study comparing previous presidents from Eisenhower onwards. Though the focus of this paper is George W. Bush, reference is made to the broader material where it illuminates the particular case study.

“I try to balance my job with my desire to win four more years”¹

- George W. Bush, August 2004

News coverage of the 2004 election campaign was laden with references to “swing states”; constantly mentioning the number of times the candidates had visited a particularly competitive state. Horse-race journalism became geographic, with visit tallies to each state replacing the traditional considerations of who was ahead or behind in many news stories. The strategic concentration of campaign visits in states where the result could best be influenced was not presented with any judgment, but as a savvy strategy given an overtly close electoral map. Throughout the frenetic coverage of a fast-paced campaign, no one stopped to ask a simple but important question – if President Bush is traveling strategically now, *when did he begin to do so?* This article seeks to answer that question, and address the implications of an incumbent presidential campaign that may begin much earlier than the point at which the media or the public pays attention.

The president’s role as head of state provides ceremonial duties and events he must attend around the country¹: he is a figurehead who must visit areas struck by disaster, he has an executive role and may sign bills in locations other than Washington D.C, and he has a partisan role, visiting areas to show support for elected officials of the same party. All of these roles require some presidential travel, and not all of the locations are under the president’s control. Assuming, however, that most events have flexible locations, it is important to examine whether the president’s travels are biased towards electorally valuable states, and if so, whether this strategic allocation of trips pervades his entire term in office. Such a study can illuminate the extent to which *campaigns* determine elements of *governance*, undermine the distinction between the two, and foster a “permanent campaign”. The implications are far-reaching; from taxpayer-funded campaigning to excessive incumbent advantage and the possibility that skewed travel translates into skewed representation.

I shall argue that a “permanent campaign” has been developing since the 1970’s, where both congressional trips to the district and presidential public appearances have gained greater importance. Presidential travel has become an electoral resource, yielding more and more appearances that are increasingly allocated on a geographically strategic basis, in order to enhance the incumbent’s chances of reelection. Under the permanent campaign, the president’s travel is allocated according to an electoral strategy from the day he takes office. This thesis suggests that George W. Bush would travel more than previous presidents, and that his trips would be allocated according to an electoral strategy (visiting competitive states) not only in his re-election year, but throughout his first term. I shall test this hypothesis using Bush’s yearly travel schedule, with strategic

¹ Elected officeholders will be referred to as “he” throughout this study. This is not intended to overlook the presence of women in politics, but rather to reflect that presidents thus far have been male, and to avoid cumbersome language.

comparisons to Bill Clinton and to the number of trips made by previous presidents, in order to determine whether his travel reflects a trend of permanent campaigning.

THE PERMANENT CAMPAIGN

The term, "permanent campaign" was introduced to the lexicon by Patrick Caddell, Jimmy Carter's pollster, who included it in a transition memo to Carter in 1976. This memo, and the concept, gained wider attention in 1980, with the publication of Sidney Blumenthal's book *The Permanent Campaign*². The term initially served as "shorthand in the political community for the use of governing as an instrument to build and sustain popular support"³, referring to the continuing use of political campaign consultants following an election and their presence on the staffs of elected officials. However, as Norman Ornstein and Thomas Mann note, this definition became too limited given "the growing importance of campaign strategies, tactics, and resources in all aspects of American public life."⁴ Instead, the "permanent campaign" came to reflect a situation where "candidates for the presidency and Congress now are in a perpetual campaign mode... The line between campaigning and governing has all but disappeared, with campaigning increasingly dominant."⁵ As Hugh Heclo confirms, "the permanent campaign is something different from government's perennial need for public support. Every day is Election Day in the permanent campaign. Such campaigning is a nonstop process seeking to manipulate sources of public approval to engage in the act of governing itself."⁶ While typically referring to communications resources, such as the president's broad opportunities for television coverage, it could be argued that a visit to a particular state or locality is primarily designed to engender support and gain (local) media coverage, and hence would count among the "sources of public approval". Furthermore, as Anthony King has concluded, "the evidence suggests that in recent decades presidents themselves, despite the apparent security of their fixed and relatively long terms, have come to see their own tasks in increasingly election-oriented ways."⁷

The Development of the Permanent Campaign

The permanent campaign is principally an artifact of party decline following electoral reforms in the 1960's and 1970's. The 1969-1971 McGovern-Fraser Commission made primaries "the preferred method of delegate selection"⁸ for the Democratic Party presidential nominating convention, and the Republican Party soon followed suit. Also in 1971, the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) was passed, limiting campaign contributions and creating a system of federal "matching funds" for small donations raised by the candidates. Both of these reforms lowered the barriers to entry in the presidential race and undermined the power of the parties. The emphasis of campaigns shifted from party to candidate, requiring candidates to establish personal support networks in order to secure reelection, rather than rely on party organizations, which in turn led to the professionalization of campaigning and the rise of campaign consultants.⁹ Primaries, in particular, served to extend the duration of the campaign,

which traditionally began on Labor Day. States competed to be the *first* primary, and thereby influence the dynamics of the contest, and this process of campaign extension has continued, such that a starting point for the campaign can no longer be accurately identified¹⁰.

Several political scientists have tracked the changing nature of political campaigning, and their observations can be used to construct a model of permanent strategic campaign travel. In the candidate-centered environment, David Mayhew's seminal work "The Electoral Connection" described how congressmen as rational actors structured their activities around the goal of reelection¹¹, and Richard F. Fenno developed this theme, noting the increased importance of the congressional district under a candidate-centered structure¹². Congressmen's perception of their role within the district changed and had a large impact on travel: generating personal support required personal attention; hence they needed to be *seen* more in the district. Fenno established that congressmen used trips home to build support and help secure reelection,¹³ and Glenn Parker then showed that such trips *increased* in the period following the reforms¹⁴. Hence, travel to the district, at least for Congressmen, became more important.

The circumstances generating increased congressional district attentiveness are replicated at the presidential level, and would arguably force him to become more available to the constituencies that elect him. As such, the president's travel becomes more important, and given the profusion of media outlets around the country, more visible. However, given the vast size of the president's "district", his travel is constrained by scarce resources – primarily time. Efficient resource allocation becomes an issue in the electorally motivated context - the president's time must be spent where it can yield the largest reward. This means targeting travel to those localities that might make a difference to the election outcome. According to the journalistic coverage of the 2004 election and consistent with an intuitive understanding of campaigns, those states where a *difference* could be made were those that were most competitive in the 2000 election. Resources would therefore be allocated according to competitiveness.

Fenno's conception of congressional districts can be used to illustrate the presidential campaign rationale based on competitive states: he suggested that a Congressman visualizes his district in concentric circles, with the core being his closest and most fervent supporters, and the exterior rings being constituents who did not vote for him. Within this larger circle is his *reelection constituency*, those constituents who did vote for him, or are *likely* to vote for him, but vary in their intensity of support¹⁵. It makes sense then, that for reelection purposes, a congressman should be most concerned about those voters at the edge of the reelection constituency – those he must retain within his support circle in order to win. He may also be concerned with extending his support beyond his initial victory, and may reach out to those voters just beyond his reelection constituency, those who may be sympathetic to his views, but require more attention to become supporters. This model can be applied at a presidential level, replacing the individual constituents with states. If we consider "safe" states as the inner ring of a president's reelection constituency, then the edge becomes the competitive states.

If we accept, as the media observed this past election, that a presidential candidate's travel in the run-up to the election is overtly strategic, then we can apply the permanent campaign context to consider the situation for a presidential incumbent - how does the *president* determine his schedule when he is apparently *not* campaigning?

THE 2004 ELECTION – WAS THE MEDIA CORRECT?

*"Bush has concentrated his energy on the road, traveling at a more frenetic pace than President Bill Clinton, who had traveled more than other presidents."*¹⁶

- Terence Hunt, *The Associated Press*, September 16th, 2004

The Washington Post, USA Today, and various other media outlets¹⁷ kept tallies of the number of visits made by *both* President Bush and Democratic opponent John Kerry to the states with the closest results from 2000. However, the number of states examined and the start and end dates for these tallies differed. It is therefore important to determine the extent to which President Bush's travel in 2004 was itself overtly strategic, given that anecdotal evidence and partial visit tallies do not always yield an accurate picture. The methodology for determining what constitutes a presidential visit and assessing strategic design is explained below.

Methodology

Presidential travel data are gathered from the *Public Papers of the Presidency*, published by the Government Printing Office. This publication records all the appearances made by a president during his administration, with their date, location, and any remarks¹⁸. A "trip" is counted when the president makes a speech or significant remarks in an area outside of Washington D.C or Camp David (MD), between Inauguration Day and Election Day of his first term in office. If the president travels to various locations *within* a state, but makes significant remarks at each location, then this is counted as multiple trips to that state (even if all the trips occur on one day). For George W. Bush, trips to Crawford, Texas, the location of his ranch, are not counted unless he makes substantial *public remarks* there.

To determine if trips are allocated according to an overall strategy, it must be apparent that certain *types* of states are emphasized at the expense of others - i.e. the president's resources are *concentrated*. To determine whether resources are concentrated requires a baseline measure for comparison: I will use a proportional allocation based on the Electoral Votes of each state. Hence, under this system, if California's 55 Electoral Votes represent approximately 10% of the Electoral College, then I would expect 10% of the president's resources, including travel, to be allocated to that state. Therefore, to "concentrate" resources in certain types of states, means to consistently travel to those states *more than proportionally*.

It may seem more obvious to simply determine what percentage of a president's overall number of trips is spent in the competitive states each year. However, this measure does not distinguish between size and competitiveness - a high percentage of

time spent in competitive states may simply reflect that those states are the largest (and would therefore be allocated a large number of trips proportionally).¹⁹ Additionally, using this basic percentage measure prevents further comparison with previous administrations, as presidents will not always face the same competitive states or travel the same amount as their predecessor, and this would have important effects on the percentage figures.

The first step in my method is to calculate an “expected” number of trips per state, if a president were to solely use Electoral College votes as his guiding strategy.

| | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Total no. of trips made by president | x | % Electoral Vote per State | = | Expected no. of trips per state ⁱⁱ |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---|--|

If a president allocates his travel proportionally, based on electoral vote, then the expected number of trips per state should be statistically the same as the *actual* number. Systematic discrepancies between actual and expected number of trips suggest that the president is concentrating his resources in certain states, using an alternative allocation strategy to the proportional concept, such as basing allocations on competitiveness.

I will compare actual and expected number of trips, and translate that into a percentage, in order to account for the size of the various states (for example, 2 extra trips to California is not equivalent to 2 extra trips to Montana, which has a much lower number of Electoral Votes and thereby a much lower proportional allocation of trips).

$$\text{Actual Trips} - \text{Predicted Trips} / \text{Predicted Trips} * 100 = \% \text{ Difference from Expected}$$

By subtracting predicted from actual, the +/- sign in the result denotes whether the state was visited *more* or less than predicted. If certain types of states consistently receive large, positive, “Per cent difference from Expected” scores, then I will consider this an ‘amplification effect’ of visits towards that type of state. For George W. Bush, I am testing *competitive amplification*, or a demonstrated amplification effect towards competitive states.

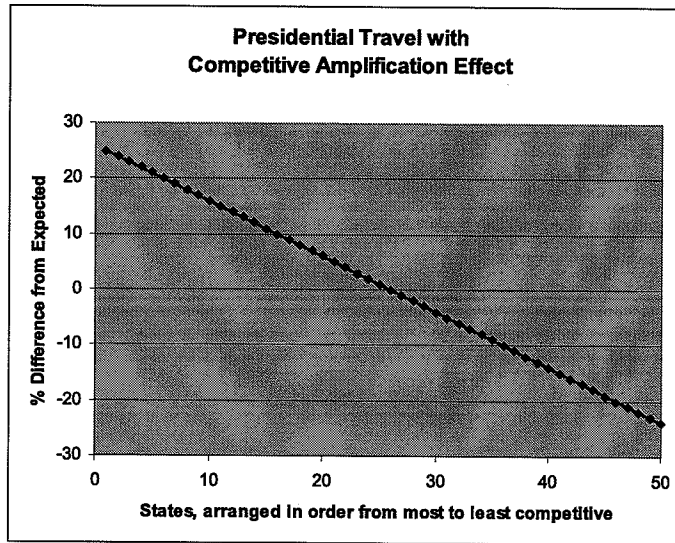
Unlike the number of Electoral College votes assigned to each state, “competitiveness” cannot be assigned a specific value. Instead, using the presidential election results of 2000, states can be ranked in order from the closest result to the largest margins of victory – the most to least competitive. I will demonstrate these results

ⁱⁱ Some rounding error is inherent in calculating this “expected” measure, i.e. the sum of the expected number of trips per state is more or less than the total number of trips made by the president. This is because the calculated result is often fractional and yet there cannot be a “partial” trip. As such I have rounded the expected visits to whole numbers.

graphically, plotting '% Difference from Expected' on the y axis, against all states arranged from most to least competitive on the x axis.

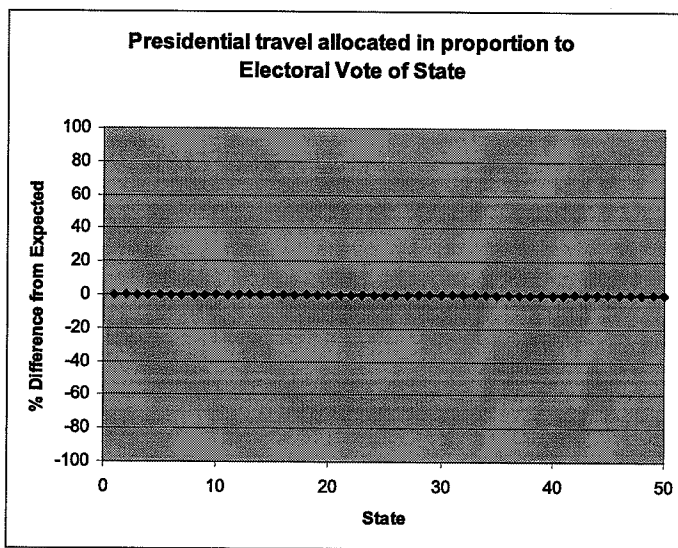
If Bush is concentrating his resources in competitive states, I should see a graphical result like Chart 1, which shows that the most competitive states are visited more than expected (as a percentage), while the reverse is true for the "safer" states.

Chart 1 - Example of a competitive amplification effect



However, if President Bush allocated his travel proportionally, I would expect to see a horizontal trend line at 0% on the y axis, as shown in Chart 2.

Chart 2 - Example of proportional allocation

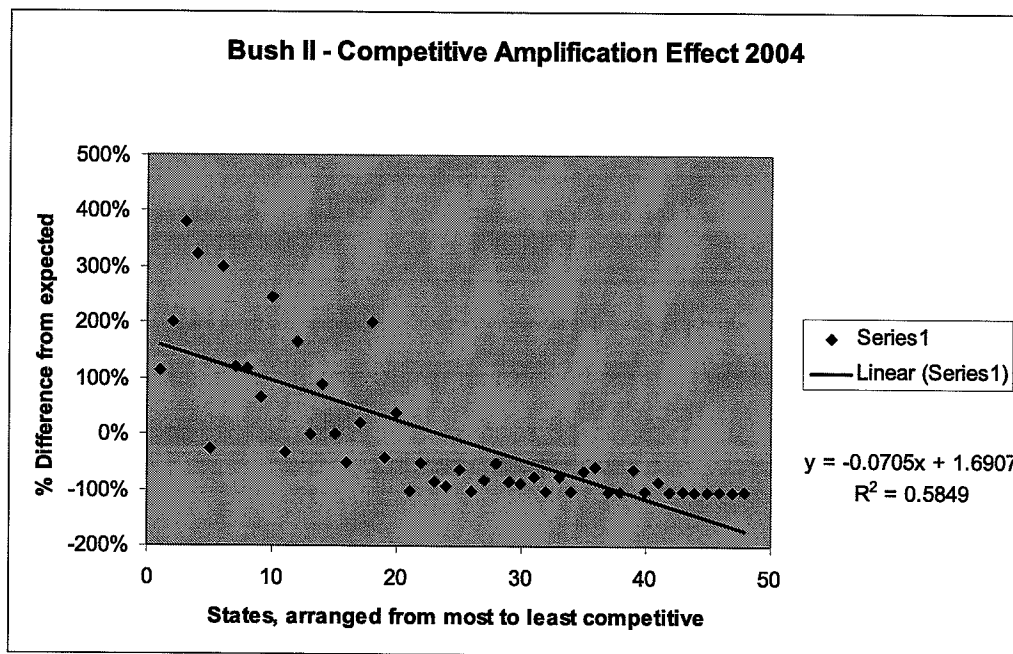


Note: The scale indicated on the y axis of both charts is for the purposes of illustration only. Actual results may vary.

Finally, I will exclude Maryland and Virginia from the chart analysis given their proximity to Washington D.C. and the number of federal agencies located in both states (often necessitating a presidential visit). As neither state was considered “competitive” in the 2004 election, removing them does not impede the validity of the results, and any relevant differences between the 48 state and 50 state analyses will be notedⁱⁱⁱ.

Results

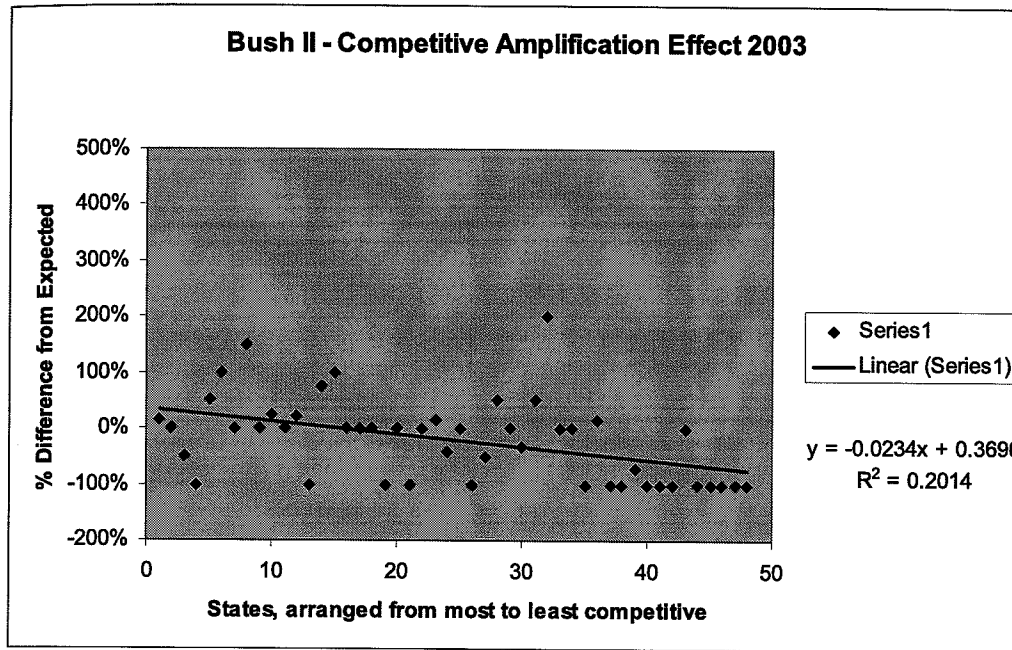
As demonstrated in the chart below, competitive amplification characterizes the travel of George W. Bush in 2004. The trend line lies in the predicted direction, higher for the more competitive states, and the R^2 of 0.5849 is highly significant, demonstrating that the trend line explains much of the variation in the chart.



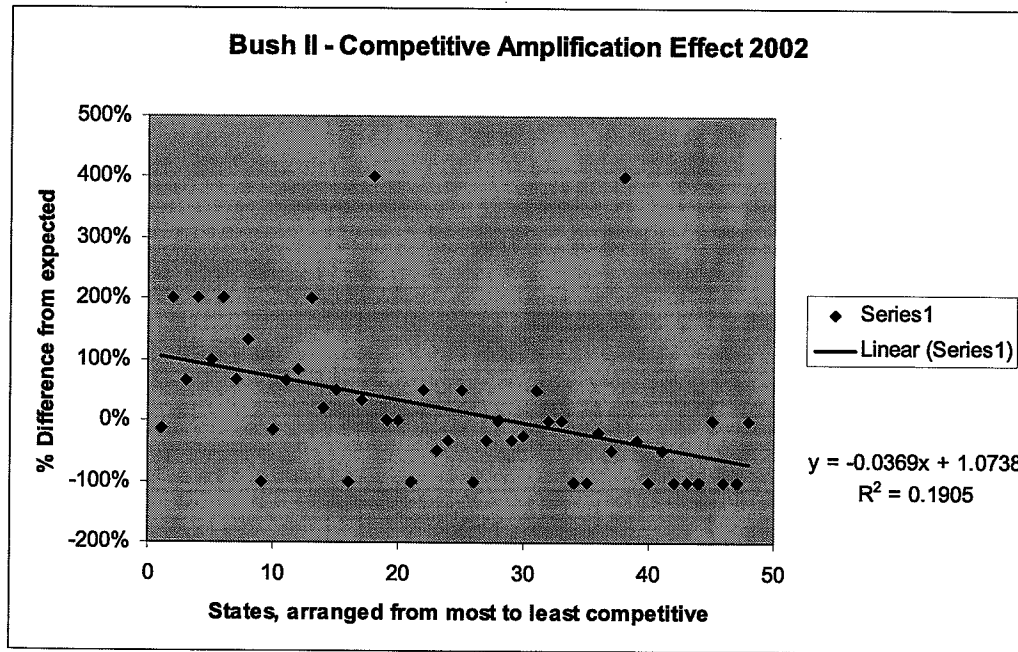
277 Total Trips in 2004, (284 including MD and VA)

ⁱⁱⁱ Both states were outliers in 2001, 2002 and 2003 if all 50 states are included in the analysis. Interestingly, in 2004, MD and VA are no longer outliers, indicating that trips are being even more strategically allocated. However, I have excluded MD and VA from all charts to maintain consistency.

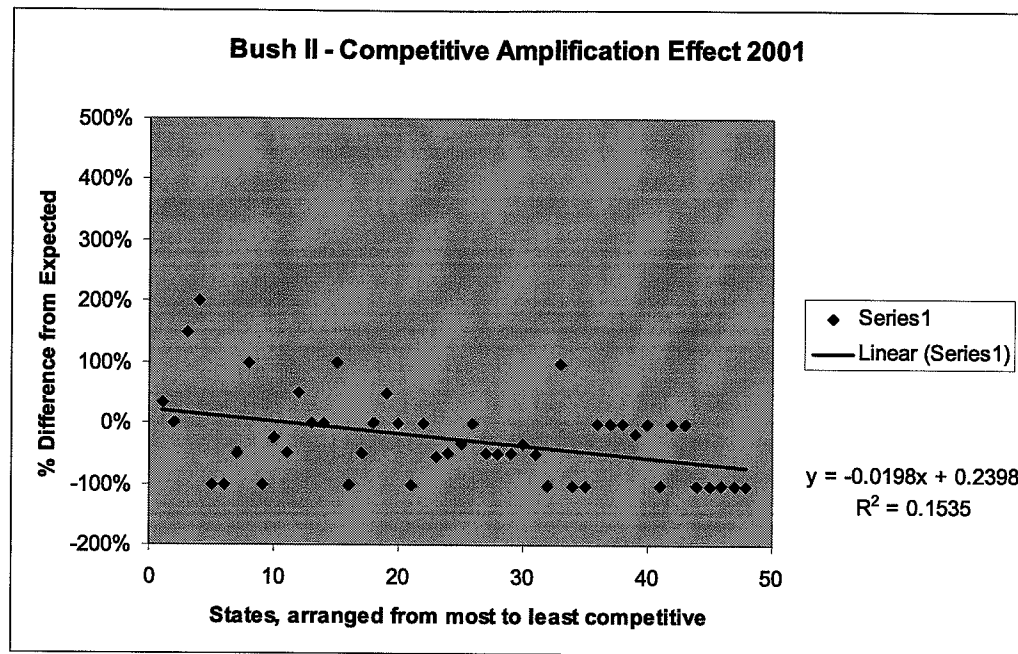
It is important to consider, however, whether these 2004 results reflect election year calculations, or if Bush began to travel strategically at an earlier point. The results for the previous years of Bush's term are presented below.



102 Total Trips in 2003 (118 including MD and VA)



152 Total Trips in 2002 (160 including MD and VA)



83 Total Trips in 2001 (110 including MD and VA)

The year-by-year analysis demonstrates an amplification effect in terms of visits towards competitive states in all four years of George W. Bush's first term. The trend lines are significantly higher than the 0% point in the left of the chart (where the most competitive states are located) and significantly lower than 0% in the less competitive, right side of the chart, indicating that the allocation is not proportional. The slope of the line increases from 2001 to 2002, with a very small decrease in slope in 2003, and then a particularly steep line in 2004. Such a slight decrease in 2003 is understandable given that 2002 was a midterm year and hence it is likely that Bush actively *campaigned* in competitive states. Furthermore, the R _ scores are consistently significant and grow in strength each year, culminating in a particularly large score of 0.5849 in the final year.

Even if Maryland and Virginia are *not* removed from the analysis, the trend lines still denote competitive amplification, and the R _ values are very similar except in the case of 2001, where the R _ drops to 0.0639 if the two states are included. However, this difference is explicable due to the large number of visits to Virginia in 2001, 21 trips in total, of which 12 were necessary visits related to the military or CIA installations in the state. In fact, 8 of the trips were made following September 11th, and 6 of those were directly related to the attack on the Pentagon, located in Arlington, Virginia.

As such, it seems that George W. Bush did indeed strategically allocate his trips to competitive states from the first year of his administration, as my hypothesis predicted, and his travel became increasingly strategic as the 2004 election approached.

THE PERMANENT CAMPAIGN – IS IT A TREND?

The analysis of George W. Bush's travel data indicates a level of permanence to the president's campaign activities. It is important to consider therefore, whether this result is simply unusual, a product of the specific circumstances of the 2000 and 2004 elections and unlikely to be repeated, or whether Bush's travel pattern is indicative of a growing trend of permanence.

The close initial election (which emphasized highly competitive states) and the stability of the electoral map across all four years of the administration may have encouraged and sustained a "permanent campaign" oriented towards the most competitive states. Additionally, the personal experiences of George W. Bush may have forged a particularly precise electoral strategy – specifically the lessons from his father's loss in 1992, and his managerial personality.

Bush came into the presidency with an experienced transition team, most of who had worked for his father. This team felt that George H.W. Bush had failed to campaign for reelection early enough, had not recognized a changed electoral context (whereby his apparently "safe" states had become "competitive" in the intervening four years between 1988 and 1992) and was severely compromised by the candidacy of Ross Perot²⁰. The veteran staff working for his son may have felt that a permanent, organized campaign would be necessary to secure the 2004 election. As noted in the *New York Times*, "aides said he was determined not to repeat the mistake of his father, who refused to immerse himself in his re-election drive until late, and was not nearly as combative in his losing effort against Bill Clinton in 1992."²¹ The Bush campaign team had the knowledge, determination, and resources to implement a large-scale permanent campaign effort, and this was rewarded by a more convincing victory in 2004.

Furthermore, one should not underestimate the impact of George W. Bush himself, beyond the experience of his staff, as an organized and effective manager. Much has been made of his position as the only president with an MBA, but this training is certainly apparent in aspects of his organization and attitude.²² Bush has been a model of efficiency and adherence to a precise strategy, whether in terms of his communications "message", legislative agenda, or travel plans.

In order to determine whether Bush's travel result is truly a one-time occurrence or indicative of a trend in political campaigning, his data must be placed in context. In a more comprehensive study on the presidential travel strategies of presidents, I demonstrated that no previous president who had served a full term and ran for reelection (from Eisenhower onwards) showed a strong pattern of amplification toward any particular type of state, including the most competitive states for each.²³ Bill Clinton, often considered one of the most strategic presidents, did not demonstrate a pattern of competitive amplification on an initial analysis, where states are ranked by the closeness of the result in the 1992 election. However, Ross Perot's candidacy has a significant effect on the measurability of "competitiveness" in that election, as Perot's share of the vote in some states arguably delivered the victory to Clinton. On a further analysis of the original data, I have found that if the states where Perot most likely contributed to

Clinton's victory are considered to be his "most competitive", then a strategic pattern of travel can be discerned^{iv}.

Table 1 - Comparison of R_ values for Bill Clinton and George W. Bush²⁴

| CLINTON | | BUSH | |
|---------|--------|------|--------|
| 1993 | 0.196 | 2001 | 0.1535 |
| 1994 | 0.068 | 2002 | 0.1905 |
| 1995 | 0.1429 | 2003 | 0.2014 |
| 1996 | 0.2793 | 2004 | 0.5849 |

Table 1 shows that the pattern of strategic travel under George W. Bush is stronger than that of Bill Clinton, except in their first year of office. Bush's R_ scores are particularly high in comparison, in the midterm and general election years. This limited analysis demonstrates some evidence of a "permanent campaign" under Bill Clinton, and greater evidence under George W. Bush, indicating a developing trend.

The number of trips undertaken by a president can also be used as an indicator of a permanent campaign. Lyn Ragsdale has argued that the attention brought upon candidates by the decline of parties makes imagery a key aspect of presidential elections: to convey this imagery, she suggests "presidents engage in a perpetual campaign of public appearances that consume ever more of their time."²⁵

Table 2 - Number of Trips in each year of the Election Cycle, by President

| President | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Total |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Eisenhower | 19 | 30 | 21 | 24 | 94 |
| Nixon | 22 | 50 | 48 | 38 | 158 |
| Carter | 28 | 62 | 52 | 125 | 267 |
| Reagan | 25 | 58 | 50 | 111 | 244 |
| Bush I | 69 | 102 | 77 | 254 | 502 |
| Clinton | 93 | 111 | 98 | 212 | 514 |
| Bush II | 110 | 160 | 118 | 284 | 672 |

Table 2 shows that presidential travel has been steadily increasing since the Eisenhower administration and confirms Ragsdale's observations on the increasingly perpetual nature of public appearances (on a technological issue, Eisenhower did not have the benefit of Air Force One, as it was not until 1962 that a jet aircraft, a Boeing 707, was purchased specifically for that purpose²⁶). Ronald Reagan is the major exception to the upward trend

^{iv} The states where Perot had the greatest impact are taken from the Center for Voting and Democracy's Plurality Victories project. See <http://www.fairvote.org/plurality/perot.htm> for further information.

depicted - traveling *less* than Jimmy Carter in all four years in office. This exception may be explained by both strategic considerations and personal preference - referring to Stuart Spencer, Reagan's campaign consultant in the 1966 California gubernatorial race, Sidney Blumenthal notes that: "Reagan's campaign, of course, relied heavily on television. Spencer cut out many needless personal appearances at shopping malls and banquets, partly because Reagan tired and got irritable under a stressful schedule. Spencer also recognized that television could replace shaking voters' hands."²⁷

The largest single increase in travel from one president to the next comes during the administration of George H.W. Bush, who made more than half of his total trips in his final year alone. His 502 total trips represent an increase of 235 over the next highest president's total, that of Jimmy Carter. In contrast to Bush I, Clinton presents the smallest overall increase in travel of any president in the data set, and he is the only president other than Reagan to show any decrease - he does not make as many trips as Bush I in their respective fourth years of office. Clinton's absolute number of trips is still large, perhaps reflecting a new standard set by George H.W. Bush, but he does not push beyond that level. Finally, George W. Bush has dramatically exceeded the previous Clinton total - producing the second biggest increase after his father's.

All of the presidents studied record their highest trip totals in the second and fourth years of office, when midterm and general elections occur, indicating that travel is indeed an electoral tool. The fact that trip totals are rising when comparing *each individual year* in successive administrations indicates a growing "permanence" to the campaigns, and so George W. Bush's high totals place him within the context of a permanent campaign trend, in some respects *accelerating* that trend with his huge overall trip total.

Hence Bush's travel is reflective of a trend towards increased travel and permanent campaigning, but the electoral context may have served to exacerbate the trend. He did not win the popular vote, and owed his election to tiny majorities in a handful of states - winning 18 states with margins of 10% or over which translated into only 146 electoral votes. The reapportionment following the 2000 census actually advantaged Bush: the states he won in 2000 would have yielded 278 votes in the Electoral College, as opposed to 271, but the support of all of those states was far from guaranteed. Contrast this with Reagan, who traveled less than his immediate predecessor, but had won 44 of the states in 1980, securing 241 electoral votes with victory margins in the state of over 10%. Reapportionment added 10 electoral votes to these safest Reagan states, meaning he went into the 1984 election practically assured of 251 votes, 19 short of victory. Reagan did not have to court swing voters or swing states - his reelection constituency, to use Fenno's terminology, could be constructed almost entirely from his safe states. The *context* of an election can dictate the geographic targets within an electoral strategy, and can thus influence the extent to which a "permanent campaign" is necessary.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

George W. Bush has raised the bar in terms of both the *level* of presidential travel, and the *precision* of trip allocations. In the 2004 election, his organizational efficiency paid off, but the key point is that *he was able to spend four years systematically implementing a reelection plan*. When you are already president, and there is no official start date to the campaign, why not schedule some of those “official” visits in electoral target areas? As the electoral battle becomes one of marginal superiority, why not start sooner and sooner? Ragsdale notes that “there is no evidence of a saturation point – a point at which presidents cannot physically add just one more public appearance into a day, week, or year.”²⁸ Writing in 1998, she questioned whether the behavior of Bush I and Clinton marked the beginning of a period “in which the president’s schedule of public appearances is all but frenetic.”²⁹ George W. Bush seems to confirm this prediction – his large number of appearances raises the saturation question. How much travel is *physically* possible? How much can a president travel and still do his job?

It is likely, however, that the number of trips will remain at least as high in the next administration, given the *expectations* of the public, the positive local media coverage engendered, and the numerous requests for presidential visits from states, localities, party colleagues, and interest groups. The overall scheduling mechanics of an extensive travel operation costing millions of dollars, involving thousands of staff members, and hundreds of campaign trips make adherence to an overall strategy (or at least a set of criteria for prioritizing requests) extremely likely.

That said, whether the current permanent campaign trend is simply maintained or *accelerated* in the immediate future much depends on how the 2008 victory is won. A substantial victory, with few true “swing” states and stable victory margins over the course of the term, would yield a strategic rationale of visiting safe states. The incentives for frenetic travel in such a context are reduced, as it requires less effort to retain the support of a safe state than to retain or gain the support of a highly competitive one.

This study is not intended as an attack upon the electoral strategies of George W. Bush. It is likely, given the preceding campaign trends and closeness of the 2000 election, that Al Gore would have undertaken a similar policy of permanent strategic campaign travel. In fact, many of the Democratic primary contestants of 2004 began visiting key nominating states such as Iowa and New Hampshire as early as 2001, indicating they were undertaking their own “permanent campaign.”³⁰ The real problem is that, as president, George W. Bush has perquisites such as Air Force One. Though ostensibly the president must reimburse the taxpayer for *campaign trips* he makes using federal resources, this does not apply to “official” visits he makes to places that may happen to have strategic value. The potential for taxpayer-funded campaigning and a large incumbent advantage is thus apparent.

Furthermore, the concept of “governance” loses meaning if the president is campaigning for reelection from his first day in office. Hugh Heclo concedes that, in some respects campaigning and governing *should* be linked, as “without good-faith promise making in elections and promise keeping in government, representative

democracy is unaccountable and eventually unsustainable",³¹ but argues that the major problem is one of operational rationales. He describes campaigns as analogous to a "battle"; they are persuasive, adversarial due to the zero-sum outcome, and geared only toward one point in time. Governing, on the other hand, is more akin to "steering" a ship, seeking to direct and communicate rather than simply persuade, it is collaborative, deliberative and geared toward a longer time scale.³² Critically, a campaign need not explore the "truth" - its only role is to make the candidate attractive. Conversely, the deliberative world of "governing" presents a forum for ideas, rational consideration, and the testing of truth claims, all aimed at the ideal of legislating for the public good.³³ Campaigns do not foster deliberation, due to their intense, adversarial nature where a candidate will *oppose* his opponent's legislative proposals *no matter how good they may be*. Heclro fears that "the more that campaigning infiltrates into governing, the more we may expect the values of a campaign perspective to overrule the values of a steersman perspective"³⁴, yielding a more antagonistic form of politics. He concludes that campaigning has indeed infiltrated governing such that "by the beginning of the twenty-first century, American national politics had gone past a mentality of campaigning to govern. It had reached the more truly corrupted condition of governing to campaign."³⁵

If the campaign mentality pervades the presidency, then it follows that measures deemed most attractive to electorally targeted areas will be promoted by that administration. The president will become an advocate for the concerns of the crucial states (providing they do not alienate his base) and thereby improve the representation of those areas at the expense of others^v. It is unlikely that George W. Bush would have promoted legislation in his first term that was generally unpopular in the highly competitive states of Ohio or Florida. In fact, given the large number of retirees in the latter state, one could suggest a cynical justification behind the president's intense support for the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003.

The irony of the permanent campaign is that it *yields diminishing returns to effort*. A circular process exists where more effort must be expended with each election cycle to produce only so much electoral return, such that the next time even more effort will be required. In this sense, the permanent campaign becomes a debilitating race to the bottom, and a phenomenon that is becoming ever more apparent in the election campaigns of modern presidents.

^v While the president's role is not typically regarded as *representative*, his voice can advance particular interests such as those of a geographical area. That area therefore becomes better represented.

- ¹ Quoted in Nagourney, Adam and Elisabeth Bumiller. "Bush Takes On Direct Role in Shaping Election Tactics." *The New York Times*. August 29th, 2004. p. 1.
- ² Ornstein, Norman, and Thomas Mann. *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institution and Brookings Institution. 2000. p vii.
- ³ Ornstein and Mann, p. vii.
- ⁴ Ornstein and Mann, p. vii.
- ⁵ Ornstein and Mann, p. vii.
- ⁶ Hecla, Hugh. "Campaigning and Governing: A Conspectus". In Norman Ornstein & Thomas Mann (Eds.) *The Permanent Campaign and Its Future*. Washington, D.C.:AEI & Brookings Institution. 2000. p 17.
- ⁷ King, p. 33.
- ⁸ Wayne, Stephen. *The Road to the White House, 1992. The Politics of Presidential Elections*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1992. p 91.
- ⁹ Wayne, 1992. p. 109.
- ¹⁰ Wayne, Stephen. *The Road to the White House, 2000. The Politics of Presidential Elections*. New York: Palgrave. 2001. p. 102.
- ¹¹ Mayhew, David. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. 1974. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- ¹² Fenno, Richard F. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71, No.3 (Sep., 1977).
- ¹³ Fenno, p. 890.
- ¹⁴ Parker, Glenn R. "Cycles in Congressional District Attention". *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 42, No. 2 (May, 1980).
- ¹⁵ Fenno, p. 886.
- ¹⁶ Hunt, Terence. "Campaigning full-time job for president", The Associated Press, September 16th, 2004. Retrieved 12/11/04 from <http://www.showmenews.com/2004/Sep/20040916News021.asp>.
- ¹⁷ See: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/elections/2004/charting.html>, and http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/elections/nation/president/2004-05-24-battleground-states_x.htm. Other media outlets produced articles with reference to trips counts at various points during the campaign.
- ¹⁸ Data for George W. Bush and Bill Clinton are available at www.gpoaccess.gov.
- ¹⁹ See Colantoni, Claude S., Terrence J. Levesque and Peter C. Ordeshook. Campaign Resource Allocations Under the Electoral College. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (Mar., 1975). p 141.
- ²⁰ Boller, Jr. Paul F. *Presidential Campaigns; From George Washington to George W. Bush*. New York. Oxford University Press. 2004. p. 388.
- ²¹ Nagourney and Bumiller.
- ²² King, William R. "Hail to the Chief Executive Officer". *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. April 1, 2001, p E1.
- ²³ Charnock, Emily. *The Permanent Campaign Trail: Strategies of Presidential Travel and the Electoral Incentive*. Independent Study at American University, 2004. Unpublished.
- ²⁴ The state of Arkansas is also removed from Bill Clinton's data. Clinton did not own a house in Arkansas but visited regularly. He tended to make more public comments due to his lack of a private residence, but these trips did not seem intended as public appearances. Arkansas skewed the results and was excluded.
- ²⁵ Ragsdale, p. 158.
- ²⁶ "Air Force One". Retrieved 12/11/04 from the White House Military Office Website, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/whmo/af1.html>.
- ²⁷ Blumenthal, Sidney. *The Permanent Campaign*. New York: Touchstone. 1982. p. 173.
- ²⁸ Ragsdale, p. 149.
- ²⁹ Ragsdale, p. 149.
- ³⁰ John Kerry, John Edwards, Howard Dean, Richard Gephardt, Joe Lieberman, Al Sharpton and Al Gore (though not a 2004 primary candidate) had all made multiple trips to Iowa and New Hampshire in 2001 and 2002. See Appleman, Eric M. "Visits to Iowa" and "Visits to New Hampshire". *George Washington University Online Project: Democracy in Action: P 2004, Race for the White House*. 2004. Retrieved 2/17/2005 from <http://www.gwu.edu/~action/2004/iavisits02.html>
- ³¹ Hecla, p 4.
- ³² Hecla, p 10-11.
- ³³ Hecla, p 14.
- ³⁴ Hecla, p 15.
- ³⁵ Hecla, p 34.