THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WHAT'S ON THE MINDS OF VOTERS?

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN POLITICAL VALUES

One year before the presidential election, the

Pew Research Center provides a portrait of the

American electorate

3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 5, 2003

Falk Auditorium

1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

[TRANSCRIPT PREPARED FROM A TAPE RECORDING.]

MODERATOR:

RON NESSEN
Journalist in Residence
The Brookings Institution

PRESENTER:

ANDREW KOHUT
Director, The Pew Research Center
for the People and the Press

DISCUSSANTS:

KARLYN H. BOWMAN
Resident Fellow
American Enterprise Institute

THOMAS E. MANN
Senior Fellow, Governance Studies
The Brookings Institution

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. NESSEN: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Brookings Institution. My name is Ron Nessen. I'll be the moderator for this forum.

Andy Kohut of the Pew Research Center for People and the Press will begin our program by detailing the results of a survey he is releasing at this hour, based on 4,000 interviews, focusing on the attitudes and values of Americans one year before the 2004 election.

Then, these findings will be analyzed and discussed by Andy and by Tom Mann, who holds the W. Averell Harriman Chair in the Governance Studies program here at Brookings, and by Karlyn Bowman, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a former editor of Public Opinion Magazine and an expert on American politics, polls and news media coverage of politics. And, finally, there will be time for your questions.

If you haven't already picked up a copy of the survey results, they are available out on a table in the lobby, and a transcript of this forum, details of the survey, and a lot of related material will be available on the Brookings website at brookings.edu.

So, to begin things, Andy Kohut.

MR. KOHUT: Thank you, Ron.

Every four years, at this time, we take a one-year forward look at the political landscape. The raw material for this is a survey series of questions that we have been asking since 1987 on people's basic attitudes and values.

This year, we asked 96 questions, most of which are long-term trend questions on beliefs about foreign policy, and civil liberties, race, religion and social values, and the survey was 2,500 people in the middle of the summer. We have literally

been analyzing that ever since, but we updated this survey with more recent trends on politics in Iraq in the second and third weeks of October.

We also dipped into the Pew Research Center database and pulled up 80,000 interviews over the past three years to look at trends in political--in party identification.

I am going to do something unusual today. I don't usually use PowerPoint slides or any slides. So what I am going to do is first tell you about the findings of the survey, and then I'm going to show you the findings of the survey because we have these long-term trends, and the graphics or the pictures really tell the story better than I could possibly do.

Our headline was, "The electorate is still 50-50, but more contentious than in 2000." Someone just called me, looked at the report, and he said you should change the headline to say, "50-50, but more so than in 2000."

[Laughter.]

MR. KOHUT: And I think that's a pretty good description.

Well, let me tell you about the findings first without looking at the pictures.

Our overall finding is that the national unity that we saw in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks has given way to intense political polarization and even anger. This is a very different political climate than it was even a year ago.

Now, national security is a focal point of partisan conflict. All Americans take a harder line on military matters and security issues, but there is a widening gap between the Republicans and the Democrats, but there is not only more partisanship on

national security issues, there's more partisanship on domestic issues, and I'm going to show you that.

Perhaps the most striking partisan disparity is in the trends that we find with regard to personal financial satisfaction, not on attitudes for the economy, which can be a political belief, but on how people feel about their own personal finances.

For many Republicans, things aren't much different than they were four years ago when the country was still doing very well, but Democrats and Independents judge their own personal finances very differently.

The polling that we have here found the widest partisan gap in religious commitment that we have seen since the survey series started in 1987. I've said something to that effect I think a number of times at this very podium. We keep seeing religion have more and more of an association with political attitudes, and here we are once again showing that.

The survey found that the overtime election left no footprints on public opinion. People have the same points of view about whether their vote gives them political power. Similarly, the business scandals, which seemed to have some impact on public attitudes last year, have a really minimal effect, given the size and nature of those scandals and the issues that arose from them.

Let me take you through the pictures now, and let's first start with the overall measure of political difference, and this is kind of a "wonky" slide. It's the average difference between the attitudes of Republicans and Democrats on 24 policy questions that we can look, compare and contrast since 1987. As you can see, at 17 percent, the difference is greater than it was even in 1994, that very historic year of partisan differences.

Now, the difference between 1994 and 2003 was that 1994 it was mostly a case of the Republicans getting angry and having different views on average, but in this environment, it's the Democrats, as well as the Republicans, going in different directions.

Certainly, taking a militant point of view or a strong defensive point of view is part and parcel of this. As you can see from the overall slope of that line, after 9/11, both Republicans, Democrats and Independents all took a stronger point of view. These questions deal with the importance of a strong military to preserving peace and protecting the country, getting even with our enemies and other forms of nationalism. And you can see that after 9/11, the lines all went up, but the Democratic line has backed off a great deal more in the aftermath of Iraq.

I will show you the specific questions, the specific ways this affects policies and attitudes.

Look at the comparison we have on how Republicans, Democrats and Independents feel about preemptive or preventive wars. Eighty-two percent of Republicans say it's often or sometimes justified, only 52 percent of Democrats hold that view, and Independents are closer to Democrats.

On holding citizens suspected of terrorism without trial, 72 percent of Republicans favor this measure, but only 46 percent of Democrats. Again, the Independents are closer to the Democrats.

On giving up civil liberties. Must we give up civil liberties to combat terrorism? A majority of Republicans hold this view. Democrats and Independents do not.

Was Iraq the right decision? Now, this is about two weeks ago. Republicans, at that point, were still universally of the view that it was the right decision. Democrats were, on balance, of the view that a mistake was made. Now, during the war, the Democratic numbers were about 50 percent.

I'd like to emphasize that the gaps that we're seeing are not all about 9/11 and response to foreign policy and security issues. There's some very serious and significant changes with regard to the domestic agenda, and I think the most important one is the way the Democrats have become more insistent upon social spending.

This trend charts the results of a question which says: Do you agree or disagree the government should help the needy people more, even if it means going deeper into debt?

And at 72 percent among Democrats, it's at an all-time high. And during the Clinton years, and not the Gingrich-Clinton years, that number was as low as 54, 52 percent, but the Democrats are coming back home with respect to social spending and domestic issues. And this is not only apparent in this question, but this is the single best question, issue on it. Look at the size of the gap between Democrats and Republicans--72 percent of Democrats have this view; 39 percent of the Republicans.

Now, I should also note that the Republicans are more of this opinion, but, still, the gap is really enormous, and part of what we are seeing in this new political landscape is the Democratic Party returning to its roots.

Now, this is I think very dramatic, but to my mind the most striking, surprising finding was, when we asked people about their own personal finances, the Republican numbers--this is two questions about how do you rate your finances, and are you struggling to make ends meet--the Republican views are not really different than

they were in 1999, but the Democrats have taken a dip, along with the Independents, and there's an ever wider gap on how people feel about their finances between the Republicans and the rest of the country.

As to the religious gap that I talked about earlier, this is the results of three questions dealing with belief in God or belief in prayer or the importance of prayer and other things, religious things. And you can see, when we first started doing these surveys back in 1987 and 1991, Republicans and Democrats basically had the same point of view. There wasn't much difference in the percentage of people who took a strong religious point of view between the parties, but ever since then, there has been a growing, the slope of that Republican line is ever higher, and we now have the widest gap we have ever had between Republicans and Democrats.

The survey found that the overtime election left no footprints. This is the single question that I thought would most show the impact of what happened at the end of the 2000 campaign. Do you agree or disagree voting gives people like me some say in about how the government runs things?

There's no difference. The numbers are just about what they were in 1999, both for whites and for African Americans. African Americans were obviously most outraged in 2000, and yet there is not a real downturn in this measure for that group.

What we do see is that African Americans, and if we had on this slide, black Democrats are much less likely to feel the government is run for the benefit of all people, much more so than white people, and that is largely a reaction to the Bush administration, I think, and not in reaction to the election.

Similarly, the business scandals of last year had a measurable impact. Here is a question that we have been asking since 1987. Government regulation of business does more harm than good.

This is one of three or four questions that we ask. And you can see in 2002 we had the lowest percentage agreeing with this statement. It was 48 percent. It's back up to 53 percent. Not as high as 57 or 63 percent, as in the mid '90s. So there is some impact, but when you look at the next slide, you see it's mostly a matter of Republicans reconsidering.

Last year, the percentage of Republicans feeling this way about government regulation fell to 63 percent, but they're back up to 65 percent; again, producing a wider-than-average gap between Republicans and Democrats on business issues, apparent not only in this question, but other questions as well.

Now, that's a real quick summary of the trends that we found, in terms of political beliefs and values. There's a lot more in the survey, but I don't want to hog all of the time up here.

Let me tell you, though, that there is a good deal in this survey about changing partisanship, and what we find is that party affiliation is now about dead even.

The GOP has made significant gains in party affiliation since 9/11, not since the beginning of the Bush presidency, but since the 9/11 attacks. Thirty-one percent of Americans identify as Republicans, thirty-two percent as Democrats and thirty-seven percent as Independents, and the GOP has made gains. An increasing number of voters self-identify with the Republican Party across the board, and certainly in so-called red states, as well as in swing states such as Michigan and Florida, and let me show you the trend.

Here is the trend in party identification among registered voters. Throughout the Clinton second term, the Democrats held a small plurality--36 to 31, pretty much, and that even held true for the first year of the Bush presidency. After the 9/11 attacks, and for the rest of 2001 and most of 2003, the party ID numbers have been even. So, too, since the war in Iraq, 34-33.

So, if the party ID numbers are at 34-33 among the Republican, among registered voters, that means the Republicans have a small advantage on a likely voter base, which you technically, in my view, you cannot achieve one year ahead of the election, just as the Democrats had a small likely voter advantage four years ago, but there is no question that the Republicans have made progress because of President Bush's popularity over this period of time, not only overall, but also in the most important swing states.

Here is a list of the states that have gone back and forth in recent presidential elections. As you can see, in almost all cases, the numbers are plus something Republican, from plus 10 Republican in Arkansas, plus 7 in Iowa, even plus 5 in Minnesota, plus 5 in Tennessee. All of the numbers, almost all of the numbers are in the Republican direction. The bolded ones are the significant ones.

Republican favorable trends are perhaps imperiled by rising discontent with the economy, President Bush's handling of it and his handling of the situation in Iraq and concern about the way Iraq is going. In this poll, and in most other polls, the public splits evenly on the question of whether they would vote for Bush or for some unnamed Democrat.

And what's interesting is, if you take the profile of or take the breakout of what we call the generic Bush versus an unnamed Democrat and contrast it with the exit

polls from 2000, you have almost exactly the same patterns as we saw on election night, with this 50-50 election, men going one way, women going another, a strong relationship to religion, region of the country and race.

So there is the potential for there to be a very, very close race, but I think there are a couple of important points that we make about this generic election, test election in the report.

First, eight years ago, President Clinton was in exactly the same position when we tested him against an unnamed Republican. It was about 50-50. And 12 years ago, in 1991, when Bush was tested against an unnamed Democrat, it was about 50-50. Obviously, Bush and Clinton went on to different outcomes one year later.

So the generic measure has a rather limited predictive value one year out. It reflects the potential for discontent with the incumbent president, not necessarily the realization of that, and Bush still has considerable strengths. When we test Bush against actual candidates, no candidate, even the well-known ones, jumps up as a marker in the minds of people discontented with Bush, as a reasonable alternative. Gephardt and Lieberman are pretty well known, for example. Certainly, Hillary Clinton is. But even though Bush is getting 50-50 on the generic, he still leads each of these challengers.

Now, I think you can rightly say that these challengers, the Democrats haven't gotten behind a candidate. That's true. But on the other hand, discontent with Bush is not great that people are grasping at Democratic candidates whom they might see as alternatives to Bush, which is another way of saying, one forward of the election, we are still a long way out.

Ron, I think I am going to leave it there. MR. NESSEN: Well, I think what we will do is begin our discussion phase by asking Karlyn Bowman to give her reaction to Andy's results.

MS. BOWMAN: Well, thank you very much, Ron, and thank you Andy. As all of you know, Pew has been in this business for 16 years, and I think, over the years, as Andy's presentation has revealed, they've just added enormously to our understanding of what makes the polity tick.

Increasingly, many of the pollsters, particularly those with media partners, are being driven by the media's agenda. We are told over and over again who is ahead, even though that we know that most Americans aren't familiar with many of the candidates and haven't thought much about the race yet.

The media pollsters poll intensely on a topic like homosexual marriage after the Supreme Court's Lawrence decision, then they drop it, only to return to it when there's another hot news story that focuses on the issue again.

This isn't true of all the pollsters, of course, but it seems to me increasingly true in a very competitive media polling environment, and it's true more and more often than in the past, and this has never been Pew's approach, and I think that that's what makes these polls have a special value.

I've read this poll. Actually, I've read it several times, and I urge all of you to do the same because there are so many stories in it. I think it's impossible for all of us to do justice to them in this brief presentation.

Some of the stories I think, as Andy mentioned, are very familiar to those of us who study American politics, the gender gap and the marriage gap are alive and well. We see, again, in this poll, the greater importance of religiosity than denomination

in our politics. But other stories here are new and important, and nearly all of the stories I think bear significantly on the presidential race.

I'd like to step back, but to reemphasize something that Andy touched on, and that is to go back to the 2000 election. I think all of us in this room remember how deeply and bitterly divided Washington was, and perhaps still is, after the 2000 election. In sharp contrast to our elites, in this city in particular, most Americans were measured and calm in their responses to that 36-day imbroglio. Most people were confident that the system would work. At no point did they see a crisis. I think, in part, that was because many Americans had positive views of both Al Gore, and George Bush, and also of the Supreme Court, and that probably enhanced their comfort level.

That may be why, and Andy has already alluded to this, that the Pew report says that the 2000 election has left no mark on public thinking. Americans are not more cynical about the political process nor are they more alienated from Washington. Americans do not feel more disenfranchised, if they ever did. Americans felt that our institutions worked, and they accepted the outcome.

Another story that we heard a lot before the 2002 elections, we heard over and over again predictions of the corporate scandals would have a big impact on the 2000 elections, to the detriment of President Bush. Pew reports, as Andy already said, that the impact of the business scandals has been minimal. The recently released exit poll from 2002 shows that only 5 percent of voters said that they cast their vote because of the corporate scandals, they said that that was the most important issue to them in casting their vote, and those voters split evenly between the two parties. So I think that should make us all a little careful about predictions at this very early stage of the campaign.

But more relevant to the 2004 election, I think this poll, and the ABC News-Post poll that was released a little earlier this week, and again this differs a little from what Andy said in his presentation, I thought the report suggested that you saw little of the anger that characterized the public mood in 1992 and again before the 1994 elections. I think what you said in the poll was, and I quote, that "the raw anti-government anger of the early to mid 1990s has subsided and remains low today," and I think that will be important for this election. It could change, of course.

But the big story for me in this poll was the parity that Pew finds in partisan identification. Of course, many pundits have been talking about this for a long time. In his introduction to the always readable Almanac of American Politics, in the 2004 edition, Michael Barone argued that he thought we were no longer a 49-49 nation. He thought that the results of the 2002 election make us more of a 51 Republican-49 Democratic nation.

And last week in the Weekly Standard, Fred Barnes looked at the impressive march of Republicans in state legislatures, governors' races and in the House, and he argued that a Republican realignment has already occurred.

Democratic pollster, Mark Penn, said earlier in the year that the Democratic Party was in its weakest position since the dawn of the New Deal.

Clearly, not all pundits agree with this analysis. The highly regarded Ruy Teixeira and the historian John Judis have a very different take on the political landscape at this point. They believe that women, Hispanics and professionals, will produce an enduring Democratic majority.

What I think is so helpful about the new Pew poll is it helps to sort out some of these claims, and this story, as I said, is a very big story. And what makes it so compelling to me is that other pollsters are finding the same thing.

In January, Harris Interactive reported the smallest Democratic lead in party identification that the survey organization had found since they started in 1969. Harris found that, in terms of party identification, the Democrats had a 21-point lead over the Republicans in the 1970s--that's averaging all of their polls--an 11-point lead in the 1980s, a 7-point lead in the 1990s and 3 points in their latest poll.

ABC News and the Washington Post released a briefing paper on Tuesday to find the nation at what they called "a rare point of national parity." For the first time in the 23 years of ABC News-Washington Post polling, precisely equal numbers of people called themselves Republicans, Democrats and Independents.

Pew's conclusions are based on tens of thousands of interviews that they have conducted over time, and both ABC News and the Post and Pew see the gains coming largely after the 2000 election. Both describe broad geographic and demographic gains for the GOP. I think it remains to be seen whether those are deep and enduring.

The willingness, of course, to call yourself a Republican or Democrat is determined by many things. Political philosophy clearly plays a role, as do events and personalities. Party identification doesn't determine votes, of course, but it's certainly better to be even than behind.

I think it's interesting to speculate a little about why these changes have occurred and what's driving them overall, and I think clearly they are being driven largely by demographic change.

The people who came of age during the Great Depression, who formed their first thoughts about American politics during FDR's era have carried with them their Democratic identification as they have aged. That made such an impressive impact on them that they have carried that identification with them as they have gotten older.

You see some evidence in the new Pew poll of a Reagan generation; that is, those people who came of age during the Reagan presidency look a little bit more Republican than the baby boomers and the group that follows them overall.

Clearly, the Democratic icons of FDR and John Kennedy brought many people into to Democratic fold, but I think today you have Republican icons, in terms of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, who made it more respectable to call yourself a Republican overall.

So I think the generational story is a very important story overall.

I think also the Republicans themselves made a generational change as a party with George W. Bush's candidacy. For all of Bob Dole's many strengths, he looked to many as a candidate of the past and not as a candidate who would be forward-looking overall. So, with the candidacy of George W. Bush, the Republicans made that change, which I think has been very important to the parity that we see in these party identification numbers.

I think these findings explain why, in Andy's poll, the red states look a little redder and the blue states look a little bit a paler blue, and, clearly, the parties are at parity in the swing states, where the Democrats have been losing ground overall.

I'd like to comment on only one other aspect of the poll. And Andy and I think Pew have described the country as evenly divided, but increasingly polarized, and I'd like to take issue with that latter characterization of increasing polarization.

I completely agree that that is an accurate representation of what the data in this poll, and many other polls, show. But I think it matters whether the country sees itself as deeply divided. It may be true in the political class in this city, but I'm not sure that it's true across the river in Alexandria or in Bethesda or in Peoria.

I think Americans, in all of the polling data that I see, want the same things for themselves, for their families, for their communities and for their country. They want the schools to educate their children well, they want to have opportunity for themselves and their families, they want the United States to have a strong and assertive foreign policy.

I think there may be some sort of self-fulfilling aspect to seeing our nation as a nation that's deeply divided. There have been a number of news stories in the last few weeks about the parties using new strategy in this election, going to their base and trying to turn out more of their base voters in part because of this deep polarization overall. I'd say that I'm a skeptic on the question, and that's where I'll leave the discussion.

Thank you.

MR. NESSEN: Thank you, Karlyn.

I want to move right on to Tom's reaction to and comments on the survey, but let me just do one quick follow-up to something that Karlyn said about the anger of the 1990s perhaps subsiding a little bit. And, Andy, you also mentioned some findings about anger in the survey.

MR. KOHUT: Yes, let me qualify. I agree with you, Karlyn, there is less anti-government attitudes, markedly less, in this survey compared to 1994, but the comparison with '94 was that '94 was a year in which there were greater differences

between Republicans and Democrats on a whole range of issues, as Republicans were moving in a more conservative direction.

In this survey, and in this year, we find the same pattern of greater differences, but it's a result of the Republicans going one way and Democrats going another. So I both agree, but I want to qualify that.

MR. NESSEN: Tom Mann?

MR. MANN: Thank you, Ron.

Karlyn, that was terrific, and, Andy, you gave a very interesting presentation. I've enjoyed having an opportunity to read virtually all of the Pew Center studies in the past. And occasionally commenting on them at forums here at Brookings and elsewhere, I've had the good fortune of teaming up with Karlyn on many occasions to try to make sense out of very complicated data on public opinion.

I think, as you will see, I agree with many things Karlyn says, but there are some points of disagreement as well. But I gravitated to the very same matters that she did, perhaps not surprisingly.

First, congrats to Andy and the Pew Center for what they do, as Karlyn said, that others don't do. They track stability and change over time and political values and attitudes. Other organizations oftentimes find it boring to repeat the same question. In this case, it's the virtue that allows us to track that stability and change, and every year or two, when Andy gears up to do this kind of comprehensive study, I'm so grateful that we have these data in the archive to draw on.

Secondly, you will find throughout this report careful, and oftentimes alternative, measurements of similar phenomena. The idea is to recognize how much a response set develops from question wording, and by using multiple items and forming

indices and alternative wordings for particular items you begin to get a much better feel for what exists in the form of public opinion and what does not because it's simply being led by the pollsters posing questions to respondents.

Thirdly, the Pew Center does real analysis. We don't just see marginal responses to questions. We see an effort to plumb the depth of relationships and help us understand what's going on, so kudos, again, to Andy and his colleagues at the Pew Center.

I believe the headline for this study is remarkably accurate: "Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized." What I am struck by, after reading through this report, is the extent to which the post-9/11 effects that we measured and recorded in public opinion have largely dissipated. We are, in real political terms, largely back to where we were on September 10th of 2001.

The structure of politics—American politics— has not fundamentally changed. The parties are at parity at virtually every level of public life, ideologically polarized, with very high stakes because of the parity and the polarization. It really makes a difference if Tom DeLay or Nancy Pelosi is majority leader of the House of Representatives and the public gets it. There are profoundly different world views between Republicans and Democrats; those views are more coherent, focused, and internally consistent among activists and elected officials and highly educated people, but they exist at the level of mass publics as well.

In the old days, we used to contrast the pragmatism and centrism and ideological diversity within parties at the mass level to the elite or activist level. But you know what's happened? And it's recorded, I believe, in this survey that there's been so much stimulus from the elite competition that the public is getting it, and they are

sorting themselves out ideologically into the two parties, and then the attitudes and values that they embrace oftentimes reflect that view.

I could think of nothing more than the 1950 Japanese movie “Rashamon” as I read through this report. You have some similar events occurring—policies, phenomena—and how you view it depends on whether you're a Democrat or a Republican. I mean, Andy put some examples up even of perception of financial well being, but it relates to almost everything. If you're a Republican now, you've become less cynical about government ever since the Republicans took control of the House in 1994 and George Bush won the presidency in 2000. You view it differently, and Democrats see it just the opposite. Well, if you think about it, that's pretty commonsensical if people have sorted themselves out ideologically, and I think that is exactly what we're seeing.

I was struck by the table on Page 23. I recommend it to you. It's called "The Electoral Landscape: 2000 vs. 2003." And what I wrote above it is: "Talk about stability." Look at the structure, the nature and structure of the vote. I grant you that 2003 features the most appealing of all Democratic candidates, that is, the generic Democrat—the Democrats have been searching for that candidate for many months—but the fact is it's a very useful measure.

And if you go down, you will see, with the exception of the youngest cohort, there is remarkable stability between what the exit polls in 2000 showed and what the preferences of registered voters were in September and October. It is remarkable. The only change is that Bush appears to have lost some support among young voters, but again that's 257 respondents (greater sampling fluctuation, so it may

not be that big), but I think that is extremely important to recognize. The parties are back at parity, and boy are they polarized.

Karlyn said she doesn't buy the polarization. At one level, I agree with her; that is, if you frame matters in terms of general goals and objectives Americans agree about a lot of things. Almost all say they're patriotic and believe in a strong national defense, and there are a whole host of consensual matters that pull us together. But on the policies that engage the efforts of Congress and the president, there are profoundly different views, depending on whether you're a Democrat or a Republican.

There simply isn't as much of a constituent base for politics in the center as we saw in earlier times. The fact is the anger toward government may well have diminished, but there is plenty of anger in the electorate—among Democrats toward George Bush and among Republicans toward Bill Clinton or Hillary Clinton or you name your favorite candidate.

One aspect of George W. Bush's campaign theme—"I will be a unifier, not a divider"—has simply not materialized during the three years of his presidency. Just the opposite has occurred in practice; he has further exacerbated, I would argue, the trends that were already there.

Now, you can ask the question: did he have any realistic alternative to playing to his base, initially, and trying to move from there, given the structure of American politics? Well, maybe not, but there were two dramatic events occurring in his national political life.

One was the closest and most controversial election in American history, which he might have used—having lost the popular vote and won the electoral vote by one because of the resolution of the Florida situation—he might have used that as a basis

to move away from his campaign and toward something that would be more unifying. You could argue it was perfectly rational for him doing what he did. Similarly, after 9/11, you could have imagined a much more long-term sort of consensual strategy to try to move toward unifying in a way that would last beyond the initial month or two, but he opted for a different strategy.

What that tells me is that it is almost certain that our politics are going to remain the same for a while. Don't look for any major political realignment coming out of this election. Don't look for any substantial move off our 50-50 politics. As events have evolved and leadership strategies have gone forward, the elites in this country have given the citizens every reason to stick to their guns, and the 50-50 nation I think will remain with us.

Now, the other point I'd like to address is these trends in party identification because it is one of the really interesting elements. There is a table on Page 13 that I commend to you. "Party Identification in the U.S., 1937-2003." You will see several things there. You will see a long-term Democratic dominance that actually was smaller in the early years of the New Deal but then grew during the period of the '50s and '60s and then late in '70s began to decline rather markedly.

Now, Andy makes a point about the importance of post-9/11 shifts to the GOP, both nationally and in swing states, and Karlyn also mentioned that and discussed that. I have a little problem with that interpretation.

First of all, if you look at that table, you will find any shifts occurring in that period look very minor compared to earlier shifts that had occurred. Certainly, we hit a position right near the end of the 1980s, so this isn't the first time that we've seen this kind of closing in the margin, which reminds us that party identification is a

complicated measure. It involves long-term attachments that are meaningful and provide the lenses through which people view politics but also short-term fluctuations in response to events which then wear off over time.

And if you look carefully at the Pew Center data and other data, what you'll see is that's exactly what's been happening. And the further we get away from the military operation in Iraq and toward the post-war complications, the gap between Democrats and Republicans begins to open again.

And if you include Independent leaners, which Andy measures and uses in other parts of the survey but for this does not, you will find that, in fact, the Democratic advantage is slightly larger. He's got a table in the appendix that indicates that among people who say they are Independents but then are asked do you feel yourself closer to the Democratic or Republican Party, there is a ten-percentage-point advantage for the Democrats among leaners. And what political scientists have discovered is that Independent leaners are almost as faithful in their partisanship as partisans. In fact, they are more faithful than weak partisans.

So I think the story is more complicated. If you were to factor that into the swing states, my guess is you wouldn't see much action, and what will be fascinating is to monitor this now over time to see if something else develops.

What I'd also call your attention to is one of the niftiest sets of tables I have ever come upon, which are on Page 15—in your published version, you even get a color version—because what it does is it combines age, gender and partisanship, and it is just striking in allowing us to see the gender difference play out over the various age cohorts. What is really striking are the differences among the youngest and the oldest cohorts by gender. It's as striking a finding as you will find.

Young women, to the extent they have any partisan identification—and the reality among young people is that they tend not to be much connected or attached—but to the extent they do, they are overwhelmingly Democratic, while young men are Republican. The same phenomenon occurs among the oldest cohorts to a degree that doesn't show up in other age cohorts. So it's a fascinating finding, and again kudos, Andy, for pointing that out.

The point I want to make about party ID is that it's important to monitor. It's exceedingly important at lower levels of office where we get extremely high levels of party voting and increasingly at the level of elections to the U.S. House of Representatives.

But in and of itself, it is a horrible predictor of the outcome of presidential elections. In fact, during the years in which Democrats had their largest leads in party ID, they mainly lost presidential elections—Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon. In fact, there are base party voters for each party, each candidate, but then these elections are referendums on the performance of the economy, on the perception of how the president and the president's party has done at home and occasionally abroad. That's what structures the outcome of the election more than party itself.

What we keep an eye on party for is whether there's signs of a breakout, of one party finally moving ahead. As Karlyn and Andy have said, we have seen the decline of the New Deal Democratic majority as it passes out of the electorate demographically and is replaced by a much more evenly divided electorate.

I don't see any signs of Karl Rove's hoped for Republican majority yet. If it's to develop, it's got to be reflected in policies that are viewed favorably and that are

sustainable over a period of time, that build new coalitions in the electorate. My guess is that at a time of economic anxiety and uncertainty and difficulties in the national security arena, you're not going to see the predicate laid for any signs of such a majority in this election. But if Bush is reelected and manages to put in place, with a Republican majority, a sustainable program of governing, then there is always that opportunity, but there is equally an opportunity for the public to view that program of governance as largely unattractive and unsuccessful and throw those rascals out and try another team.

In fact, if the president wins reelection, the 2006 election—we're always looking ahead; it's good for business—will, in fact, tell us much more about long-term Republican prospects for building a durable majority than anything we will see in 2004.

Thank you.

MR. NESSEN: Thank you, Tom. I want to join Tom and Karlyn in thanking Andy and Pew for taking on such a serious, and in-depth, and very enlightening survey. It's all about attitudes and values, and there are only two horse-race questions in the survey. So maybe I'll be forgiven because of my formal credentials as a journalist if I ask a follow-up question on the only two horse-race questions on the survey.

MR. KOHUT: Sure.

MR. NESSEN: How do you explain that a generic Democrat ties Bush, but all of the real Democrats lose to Bush in your survey?

MR. KOHUT: Two factors: One, the Democrats, the opposition hasn't gotten behind one candidate; secondly, it's a measure of perhaps weakness of the discontent, some measure of the discontent with Bush because not one of these

Democrats jumps out to people and says, yeah, I'll take him or her as an alternative to Bush.

I think that's the way I ended my presentation. The jury is still out on this election. Let's not get carried away. Clearly, Bush is not in the position that he was three or four months ago, but, you know, you're not a position to, the voters haven't come to big conclusions about him.

Now, there is one other thing to say. If you look at other polls, you'll see some polls showing Bush trailing some of these Democrats, and that's a measure of the American public not really thinking clearly about these Democratic candidates. Catch them on one day, and they're prepared to say, "Yeah, I'll vote for so and so over Bush," and then on another day they're back to voting Bush over Dean or Bush over Clark.

Can I make a few other comments?

MR. NESSEN: Sure.

MR. KOHUT: I want to thank you for your kind words about the Pew Research and what we've done. I was a horse race pollster for 20 years, following the latest trends for just a little bit of time, but I was rescued by the Times Mirror Company that made this big investment in research that takes a step back, and then rescued again by the Pew Charitable Trust to continue this. Pew has been underwriting it since 1996. So we owe both the Times Mirror Company, which no longer exists, and the Pew Charitable Trust a debt of gratitude.

I wanted to also say some things about some of your points.

Karlyn, on the business about lack of polarization, I think we can understand that a little bit about the way people accepted the outcome of the disputed election in 2000. The reason why the American public accepted it was, as you say, the

public continues to have faith in the political system, but the American public also did not have strong feelings about George W. Bush and Al Gore. They were kind of acceptable.

In fact, in our weekend after the election, we found that Bush and Gore got pretty high ratings, relative to pretty past presidential candidates, as sort of okay choices, and people didn't take to the streets over this disputed outcome as they might have in 1968. Can you imagine what would have happened if the Supreme Court had appointed someone to the presidency or made a decision about the presidency after 1968? The people would have taken to the streets.

Now, I would argue that there is more anger these days, and you can see it in a chart, in one of our releases in September, which Michael Dimock and Scott Keeter came up with, contrasting Bill Clinton at the depths of the Lewinsky scandal with George Bush today.

Bush has as many strong supporters among Republicans and strong detractors among Democrats as Clinton had vice versa back in September of 1998, and I don't think you would see the same kind of outcome if we had a disputed election because people feel more intensely about these issues--2000 was a time where people did have differences on issues, but they weren't so sharply drawn. That is my sense coming out of this survey.

Now, I think you're right, Tom, that a lot of what we have seen is the dissipation of the 9/11 effects, but the climate of opinion that we had after 9/11, but there are still some very important things that exist. The American public continues to feel threatened, and President Bush continues to get very high ratings for protecting the

country against terrorism, and that is one of the reasons why his approval ratings, with a bad economy, a deteriorating situation in Iraq, have yet to go through the floor.

I mean, the public continues to feel threatened and feels secure, feels some sense of security in Bush's stewardship of this, and this is something that the Democrats are going to have to address in order to be acceptable candidates in a different environment because of 9/11 than we had in 2000.

Now, as to Independents, I've talked to a lot of people over the past week or so about this report and this argument about are there really Independents. There are really Independents. I mean, these Independents, who lean Democratic or lean Republican, have in often cases different views from Republicans and Democrats, respectively. It's one of the reasons why you see the Independents closer to the Democrats on many issues and, in some cases, closer to the Republicans. Now, some of it may be because there are a few more Independents who lean Democratic, but Independents who are leaners, who just have a looser affinity to the parties are different, and I'll make a comparison for you.

We found, in an unpublished analysis of this poll, that Independents who lean to the Republican Party are showing much less loyalty to George W. Bush than Independents who lean to the Democratic Party with regard to a Democratic alternative.

Four years ago, it was just the other way around, where Republican leaners were more committed to Bush and Independent Democratic leaners were less committed to Gore.

So I don't think it's any one thing, but I have to tell you, you made a hell of a good explanation of party affiliation. It is that combination of both long-term

effects and short-term fluctuations, but I do have a different point of view with you on Independents.

MR. MANN: Ron, can I, just on the question you asked, I just simply wanted to supplement Andy's answer with one other factor, and you can see it on Page T-41 of the report, which lists all of the Democratic candidates. Actually, I think it begins on T-40, which has George Bush, and then T-41 has the others.

And what you will see is that the measures of how many respondents have actually heard of the candidates; this is recognition, not recall. We know that Americans can't call up from memory the names of the candidates, but the ones who just recognize the name when they see it, it ranges from a low of 21 for Dennis Kucinich to a high of 85 for Joe Lieberman. The only two with really substantially high recognition are Lieberman and Gephardt, which are 85 and 74. Kerry is 63. Howard Dean is 56.

The Democratic front-runner is recognized by only a little more than a majority of respondents in this survey. So that explains part of the difference between a generic Democrat and specific Democrats.

As a nominee comes forward, public attention will focus on that candidate. If President Bush has his way, the Republicans will help define that Democratic nominee right quickly, but there will be no question that he will be recognizable, and then you'll get a much more meaningful measure of the so-called horse race.

MR. NESSEN: Well, I found that statistic so astounding when I found it in your August survey that I tore it out, and I carry it around with me and show it to people, how few people have heard of some of the Democratic candidates.

Karlyn, did you have something?

MS. BOWMAN: I would just like to add to that. Gallup had a poll a few weeks ago, where they asked how many people could spontaneously identify the vice president, and I don't remember exactly what the numbers were, but I think only about a third could name Dick Cheney. So people follow politics so lightly, particularly at this stage of the game in an election campaign that, again, that's part of my argument about not being so polarized. I think that they follow politics at a much lighter level than all of us do in this city.

Clearly, the stakes between Tom DeLay and Nancy Pelosi are enormous for people in…for people outside see it that way.

MR. MANN: By the way, today's poll was can you name the departments that make up the president's Cabinet, and 58 percent could not name a single department from memory, and so it just puts it in perspective. People don't think about politics and government a lot, and, frankly, when it's not a part of your life, you have a real life. You're tending to other things, and that's okay.

The real question is are there appropriate shortcuts available that allow voters to find their way to sensible choices, that is, sensible or rational from their point of view and their interest? And the answer is, yes, we get them there over the course of the campaign in election years, so we shouldn't make too much of this inability to come up with names from memory, and we shouldn't be too smug about what we know and what they don't know.

MR. NESSEN: We're going to take audience questions. I want to just throw out one other matter for brief discussion before we go to the audience questions.

What do all of you think are the longer term consequences of what Andy has found out, what Andy was talking about?

MR. MANN: Well, there's so many things here. Let me tell you, in my mind, the two most interesting, longer-term trends deal with religion and tolerance, social tolerance, really touching on race in particular.

On religion, and Karlyn mentioned this earlier, to go from the late '80s to the late '90s and early 2000s is to see a sea change in our politics where, I think as you put it, Karlyn, religiosity, not your denomination, but the extent of your religious commitment and practice shapes your view of politics and influences the nature of your political participation. Again, that's among whites. It doesn't relate to blacks, where blacks overwhelmingly are overwhelmingly religious and Democratic, but among whites, it is striking. It's the most powerful predictor of party ID and partisan voting intention. And in a society that values religion as much as it did, when there are high levels of religious belief and commitment and practice, that's significant.

Now, having said that, one of the things Karl Rove has discussed in panels like this is the fact that there was a decline in percentage of evangelical conservatives who voted in the 2000 election. One of the concerns is whether that community will be mobilized in 2004.

The other issue has to do with social tolerance, more generally, attitudes towards interracial dating and homosexuality and a sort of range of matters that we call social issues. What you'll find is dramatic increases in people taking, if you will, an accepting and tolerant position of views that would not be considered traditional while at the same time oftentimes espousing policies that tend to be more conservative.

So there is, on the one hand, a sort of a tolerance in the give-and-take of everyday life and one's personal experiences and commitments but an overhang of traditionalism when it comes to policy preferences.

MR. NESSEN: Karlyn, do you have some thoughts on the longer-term consequences of Andy's findings?

MS. BOWMAN: Well, just one point. One of the pollsters said this week that they thought George Bush was a weakened president, but not a weak president, and I think the reason for that primarily is the national security issue, which Andy alluded to. He said that though there were differences between Democrats and Republicans on some of the measures in this survey, that this is a different country.

What, I guess, interests me in the long term is how that's going to change the politics of 2004, and I'm not sure we know the answer yet. It's probably too early.

MR. KOHUT: But I think, though, Karlyn, that the vacation that we've had from security issues and foreign policy issues as being relevant in presidential elections and national politics is over.

MS. BOWMAN: Absolutely.

MR. KOHUT: I mean, it's clearly over. And I would say that even though people don't know who the vice president is, they can have some pretty strong attitudes about what's going on in Iraq, how the economy looks, whether they feel threatened by terrorism, whether they feel it's okay or not to lock up U.S. citizens without a trial, so people tend to have strong views on issues that get to their gut even though they don't put it into traditional political terms that we put them in.

MR. MANN: I think that's absolutely right, that foreign policy—national security—will be a central issue in this campaign. While now the surveys report, by a 3- or 4-to-1 margin, people are more concerned about the economy than, say, they are about terrorism or Iraq, there is plenty of other indirect evidence that people are deeply

concerned about our vulnerability on terrorism and deeply concerned about what's happening in Iraq now and other hot spots around the world.

What is fascinating is that the Democrats' greatest disadvantage has been their reputation on the party best able to manage national security and national defense. They have been behind by 30, 35, 40 percentage points. That, according to some polls has narrowed, given the aftermath of the war against Vietnam, but remains a Republican—

MR. KOHUT: Iraq.

MR. MANN: Iraq, excuse me. But remains a Republican advantage. But if you listen to the president and the vice president, you can see very clearly every time they speak on this subject they say this is the most important battle in the war against terrorism because that is the linkage that garners broad public support. If the linkage is broke, the support is much more tenuous, and I think much of this campaign is about who frames the national security issue and is Iraq to be seen as a central or the central battle in the war against terrorism or, in fact, is it a diversion from an effective war against terrorism? That's the nature of the debate that I think will shape up.

MS. BOWMAN: I noticed an interesting finding in Andy's polls over the course of the summer. He asked that question about what's more important to you, is it the economy or terrorism, and you had a consistent about 15 percent volunteering both. Whenever I see in a poll of volunteered response, when it's a large group of people say spontaneously say both or say something other than what the questioner has asked, it always indicates to me that the question isn't being framed the way Americans are thinking about the issue.

Clearly, the economy is on the front burner right now. It's at a full boil, but terrorism is still on the back burner of the stove at a pretty steady simmer.

One of the other interesting things, too, about the foreign policy issue, is whenever an issue disappears from the polls and politics for a while, as foreign policy did, as Tom was alluding to earlier, it always comes back in a different form, and there's really nothing that tells us how this issue is going to be thought about I think that in 2004 at this point.

MR. NESSEN: All right. Now, if you have questions, raise your hand, and we'll recognize you. We have folks with microphones, and wait for the mike to arrive, and we'll start right here in the second row. Stand up and give your name also, please.

QUESTION: I'm Frank Bourne, a one-time Gallup employee.

This may be a diversionary question, but I just wondered whether Pew has done any work on the California recall election and, if not, are there any lessons learned from the vast amount of data which might throw some light on there, which is important for the national elections only to the extent that California is such a large factor in the electoral vote that one can't ignore what happens there.

MS. BOWMAN: We haven't done any surveys on it, but I think California continues to be very important. And as you can see in this report, California is somewhat more Republican than it was four years ago, in terms of party affiliation, and perhaps if Governor Schwarzenegger is successful, it will be even more so, and that is important.

MR. MANN: My view is that those are big "ifs" and that even if those ifs obtain, California is unlikely to be in play in 2004, absent signs of a Republican

landslide. And given everything we've said today and given the concern about the economy, even if it enjoys now steady growth and Iraq, the odds of a landslide are very slim.

So my guess is the Bush campaign has 8 to 12 swing states in mind that have much higher priorities than California. It's a very, very tough state for Republicans to win, particularly given the fact that the position of the National Republican Party on a range of social issues is dramatically at variance with Arnold Schwarzenegger's position and with the position of the majority of California's citizens.

I think California happened for a variety of reasons. It was a "perfect storm." It was Gray Davis, it was $2 million for petition signing, and it was the emergence of a sort of charismatic celebrity candidate who gave voters one chance to reject the party in power when things weren't going well. I don't think any of that conveys a sense of connection to a comparable party gain at the national level.

MR. NESSEN: Any other questions?

Yes, right over here.

QUESTION: Hi. Robert Rankin with Knight Ridder Newspapers.

Tom, I'd like to ask you I'm particularly struck by the chart on Page 19 about the partisan shifts in the swing states, where the Republicans have cut the Democratic edge on average from a 6-point Democratic edge to only a 1-point Democratic edge. Is that a normal kind of a shift given that the Republicans captured the White House or is that as striking as it appears? And if it's as striking as it appears to me, how does that fit in with your suggestion that you don't see any evidence that Karl Rove is close to getting his dream of a Republican majority? That looks like pretty significant movement to me.

MR. MANN: Yes. The numbers look large, because what you're doing is not looking at, say, what the difference in the Democratic total is, like in Michigan moving from 33 to 29, but looking at the Democratic advantage versus the Republican advantage and summing up over time. So the numbers begin to look very substantial, but to sort of shift back, you get a 2-percent difference produces, you know, a 2-percent shift Democratic to Republican produces a 4-percent gap there. And so be careful about interpreting the meaning of those.

Again, my own personal view is that if you were to redo these and do two things—one, look over time at post-9/11, because there was a surge, and so you had short-term effects twice—post-9/11 and post-military engagement in Iraq, and then they've fallen off after that.

If you limit yourself to the post-military engagement in Iraq, you will find these numbers decline substantially, I'm guessing, from what I've seen in these swing states. Andy may correct me. If you then factor in the leaners, from what I've seen from the data, I'm guessing it's much less significant. But who knows. There may be something real. There is no question that states like Minnesota and Iowa, Wisconsin, which had been seen to be part of the Democratic coalition, have become very competitive in recent elections.

So, yeah, there's probably something real going on, some shifting occurred, but sort of my recommendation is be wary about inferring from this to the presidential election because they don't translate very well. It's more important in trying to discern whether a genuine partisan shift is underway, and there I'd say the jury remains out.

MR. NESSEN: Andy, did you have something to add?

MR. KOHUT: I just want to add quickly to that. I think there's some truth to what Tom says here, but President Bush has been a successful president, from the public's point of view, for much of the time since 9/11, and that's what these trends reflect, and successful presidents benefit their parties. And if he gets past this bad patch, he's done a lot for the Republican Party across the board.

On the other hand, if the bad patch becomes the way things are, some of these trends may dissipate, but I don't think they're as up and down as you suggest. I think they're pretty strong over that period of time because he's been pretty strong over that period of time, not so in the past four months because of the problems we all know about.

MR. NESSEN: Yes?

QUESTION: Leah Chang.

My question is were there any findings in your study about the Hispanic electorate?

MR. KOHUT: About the Hispanic electorate?

QUESTION: Yes.

MR. KOHUT: Yes. The poll points out rather clearly--you should get yourself a copy of the report--that the Republicans have made great progress with Hispanics and party affiliation in the West and in many other parts of the country. There's a good deal in here about Hispanics.

MR. NESSEN: Okay. Let's go over to this side.

QUESTION: Tom Deemer with the Plain Dealer.

Going back to the swing states again, one swing state that Bush narrowly carried last time--Ohio--does not show a Republican gain at all. In fact, it's about status

quo or a slight Democratic gain. They just reelected a Republican governor. What do you make of that?

MR. MANN: It suggests to me the limits of using the sort of relative numbers of self-identified Democrats and Republicans in a state to forecast the outcome of statewide elections.

[Laughter.]

MR. MANN: That's what it tells me. There's something important here, because we live in the most partisan period in our politics probably since the 1940s. We have higher levels of party voting at various levels of government. And yet there's still enough play in the system that the outcome of statewide races and national races does not naturally mirror the balance of partisans unless it's highly lopsided.

I mean, Andy also has numbers here for the red and the blue states, and there it's sufficiently tilted toward one party or the other that it ends up being decisive, but there are a whole lot of important states—and Ohio is one of them—in which there's plenty of play in the system for either party to carry.

In the Ohio governor's race, it has a lot to do with the nature of the candidate, where he or she comes from, their reputation or particular coalition base and the like.

QUESTION: [Off microphone.] [Inaudible.]

MR. MANN: Exactly, and relatively as generous.

MR. KOHUT: There's another point to be made here, and that is while the Republican Party has made gains, and that's really clear over this period of time, and people are looking at things through a partisan prism, to a greater extent, we don't have an increased significant number of people describing themselves as strong Republicans

or strong Democrats, which means that links to party, in the end, aren't the be all and the end all of political choice. It's an important factor. You can't get around it, and it's not unimportant to look at these trends. And Bush's success is important, but it's not the only thing.

QUESTION: [Off microphone.] [Inaudible.]

MR. KOHUT: That's right.

MR. NESSEN: Back here on the aisle.

QUESTION: Karen Tomulty from Time Magazine.

I was just sort of struck by the fact that when Karlyn was explaining the data, it seemed to be rooted primarily in demographic factors, and Tom put a lot more emphasis on the style in which George Bush has governed. And I was wondering, Andy, does the data break the tie in here anywhere? I mean, how much of this is stuff that was just happening anyway and how much of it is directly attributable to George Bush and how hard he's pushed his agenda?

MR. KOHUT: Well, I think that it's a combination of both of those things. There's also another factor, a point that I've been trying to make here is that there's also the Democrats acting differently and thinking differently than they did in the '90s. The Democrats are really much closer to traditional to the Democratic beliefs about social spending and domestic issues than they were in the 1990s. So there's a third element going on.

But, yes, a lot of this is reaction to Bush. He is the big political figure, as the president always is, but I think Karlyn was right to point out that we've got the New Deal generation passing and older people now are people who grew up, who came of age

in the Eisenhower years, and pretty soon in the Kennedy years, and that makes for a different electorate than one who was shaped by the Depression.

MR. NESSEN: We'll take about one or two more questions.

MR. MANN: If I could just say that's really a nifty question, you know, because of course it's both, and it's partly what you're trying to explain. I mean, I agree with Karlyn. There is a kind of demographic march over time, and to understand politics, in many countries, I remember doing this in political change in Britain decades ago with this sort of elegant analysis of David Butler and Donald Stokes.

As certain cohorts pass out of the electorate, new ones coming in, you know, how it changes the composition of the electorate, but then that interacts with the stimulus that's coming from the political elites. As new cohorts enter, their experiences are shaped by the events but also by leadership styles, and Reagan had an impact on new voters coming in, and Bush is having an impact on some young voters. And what we're seeing is it really differs greatly by gender, that young men are responding favorably and young women are not.

MR. NESSEN: Back here on the aisle.

QUESTION: Thank you. My name is Jeffrey Wintegrate. I edit a political news--it's not a political newsletter. It's called FocusesReal.com.

I have one question, two parts.

On Page 14, you have a chart, and there are some figures concerning Jewish affiliation. My question on that, is there any significance in the change, given the small numbers?

And then on T-9, when you ask questions about terrorism, you don't break down the Jewish vote, and nowhere do I see anything about the Muslim vote, and

I'm wondering why you haven't done anything with the Muslim vote, and certainly would it be appropriate, at this stage of the game, Muslim attitudes towards the subject of terrorism and national security?

MR. KOHUT: It's certainly appropriate, but not accessible in a national survey. They still represent too small a percentage of the population, and I'm going to turn to Scott Keeter, who has the table in front of him; is that change statistically significant, Scott?

MR. KEETER: We've done about a thousand interviews with Jews in the two different time periods, but the difference is only, for those that don't have the book in front of them, the margin change is five points, and that would just barely meet the test of statistical significance.

MR. KOHUT: And my guess is that if you're really interested--not my guess--if you're really interested in that Jewish breakout on the other question, we'd be happy to provide it for you.

MR. NESSEN: Let's take one last question.

Jerry?

QUESTION: Jerry Mitchell from the Mitchell Report.

This question may suffer from what Karlyn was talking about earlier, but not knowing quite how to frame it. But I think the thing that I'm wondering about, and I gather that the poll does not address this--I have it, but I haven't read it--is I want to sort of tie together two factors that seem to be to be out there:

One is what, Tom, your colleague, Bruce Cain, calls "clicker politics," which is one way of thinking about what happened in California, that if you don't like what's happening, you hit the clicker and you change governors.

And then the sort of parallel piece to that for me is what sense anyone has of what MoveOn.org and other factors like that are having, and may have, on the long term, on this issue that you've been looking at for a long time.

MR. KOHUT: I think I'll address the Internet part of this question. I think that the Internet is a remarkable vehicle for allowing political emotion to have an impact, and Governor Dean or Dr. Dean generated a lot of political emotion just the way John McCain did when he won, remember, he won New Hampshire unexpectedly, and the money came pouring in over the Internet. The Internet is a very good vehicle to tap into that emotion. I think it's a less-good vehicle for ordinary candidates and more ordinary run-of-the-mill political activity.

I'm not so convinced--and Karlyn and Tom may have a different point of view--I'm not so convinced that the American public that you can extend this "click on, click off" analogy to the public at-large. I think there's a good deal of stability of people's attitudes about the choices they make.

MR. NESSEN: Karlyn, do you have any thoughts on that?

MS. BOWMAN: I agree with that completely.

MR. NESSEN: Tom?

MR. MANN: I agree, but that in no way diminishes the importance of the Internet for our politics and national politics. It is absolutely true. It's an activist, it's a tool for recruiting activists and recruiting donors and for allowing forms of political expression that wouldn't otherwise be there, but it has the potential for transforming our political financing system. I mean, 500,000 people aren't very many in a national election, but if they are consistent donors, that's big stuff. That's a huge change in our politics and creates some opportunities and dynamics that weren't there otherwise.

Similarly, with MoveOn.org and other Internet-based organizations of the political left and right, the possibility of helping to mobilize and frame agendas and shape broader public perceptions—and therefore political behavior—is I think significant.

If you think of the Internet as a direct means of communication with average citizens, then I think you're off base, but if you see it in indirect terms, primarily working through activists and donors, then you begin to see that the potential is far-reaching.

MR. KOHUT: I have just one postscript to this, and that is guys in pick-up trucks with rebel flags don't click on the Internet very much.

[Laughter.]

MS. BOWMAN: But I think the widespread use of the Internet in this campaign has got to make all of us rethink the thesis of [Robert Putnam's] Bowling Alone. I think these are new associational affiliations, and they're interesting for that reason.

MR. NESSEN: Any final words?

[No response.]

MR. NESSEN: Well, thank you, Andy. I think you've heard how important all of us think this work is, and I'm sure your findings will be causing even greater ripples than they have here. Tom, thank you very much, and, Karlyn, thank you very much.

Thank you all for coming.

[Applause.]

MR. NESSEN: There is a lot more information available on both the Pew website and on the Brookings website.