

TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE OF THE 1998 CALIFORNIA GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

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Working Paper 2000-6

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In 1998 the USC Annenberg School was involved in an unusual effort in the realm of political communication – a research project to study the television news coverage of the California gubernatorial race, and also an intervention to attempt to improve that coverage.

Both projects were conducted under the auspices of the Alliance for Better Campaigns (ABC), a Washington, DC-based public interest group founded and led by former *Washington Post* political reporter Paul Taylor. Funded by a grant from the activist-minded Pew Charitable Trusts, the ABC in 1998 launched a ten-state experiment, using a variety of means, aimed at improving the conduct of the campaigns in those states. Many of these efforts focused specifically on improving both the quality and quantity of campaign media coverage during the 1998 election cycle.

The California effort was based at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication, which provided additional financial and organizational support. The principal investigator was USC Annenberg Associate Dean Martin Kaplan, a visiting professor of political communication and former chief speechwriter for Vice President Walter F. Mondale, who also served as deputy national campaign manager in Mondale's 1983-84 presidential bid. The intervention efforts were under the co-direction of two highly qualified campaign professionals: Dan Schnur, a columnist and former press secretary and communications director for Republican Governor Pete Wilson, and Michael Reese, a foundation officer and former *Newsweek* correspondent who had been communications director and deputy campaign manager for Democrat Kathleen Brown in her unsuccessful 1992 race against Wilson. The research component, under the direction of Martin Kaplan, was conducted by Matthew L. Hale, a doctoral candidate in the USC School of Policy, Planning and Development, who had also worked for Sen. Barbara Boxer and other Democratic candidates; in addition, Hale served as staff coordinator for the intervention.

Intervention

Our goal was to convince stations to provide more and better campaign coverage, and to persuade candidates to move beyond sound bites and provide detailed discussion of issues. Our strategy was not to attack either broadcasters or candidates, but to see whether we could be of service to them. This approach was supported by the members of our state-wide advisory committee, an impressive panel of notable Californians which included leaders from the media, academic and political worlds throughout California, with Governor Pete Wilson and Senator Dianne Feinstein as honorary co-chairs. The advisory committee also helped establish credibility for the ABC effort and provided advice and help throughout the process.

With input from the advisory council, we began contacting the news directors and general managers of targeted television stations. We made three main message points in soliciting their participation:

- ∑ This is a compelling way for your station to demonstrate its interest in supporting the development of higher standards for political discourse in the 1998 campaign.
- ∑ As Congress considers legislation that would mandate stations to give free airtime to political candidates, a broad effort to offer that time on a voluntary basis would be the most effective counter-measure.
- ∑ Participation in this project will attract news coverage for the stations involved from the state's newspapers and from national print and broadcast media.

Gubernatorial Race

The project developed a six-month strategy focused on building a network of cooperating broadcasters and participation by the major party candidates for Governor. The initial goal was to convince a small, select group of California stations to air a 5-minute exchange (a "mini-debate") between the two gubernatorial candidates every Monday night from Labor Day through Election Day. We believed that the television stations would be reluctant to part with five minutes of evening news time for a candidate discussion, but that candidates would jump at the chance. As a result our initial efforts focused on securing station participation.

A tactical decision was made to target a single affiliate in each of the state's four major media markets. The principal reason for this was the reluctance by station representatives to participate with competitors in their own media markets. We then sought a mix of different network affiliates, focusing principally on "strong" stations like KRON in San Francisco to help carry the weaker affiliates in other markets. Discussions were initially complicated by a desire by each station to sponsor one of the five hour-long debates agreed to by the candidates; they feared that participation in the mini-debates would eliminate them from consideration. As it turned out, KGTV in San Diego sponsored both the hour-long and five-minute debates; the others ultimately pulled out of discussions to sponsor the hour-long debates, for reasons other than our proposal.

Amazingly, by the time the state's June primary was held, the project had received commitments to air mini-debates from four major broadcasting affiliates in each of the state's four largest media markets: KRON (NBC), San Francisco; KCBS (CBS), Los Angeles; KCRA (NBC), Sacramento; and KGTV (ABC), San Diego.

Our strategic decision to accentuate the benefits of joining the ABC program worked well. In some markets, such as Sacramento and Los Angeles, however, we slightly moved away from our positive path by using competitive pressures to our advantage, and arguing that participation with this effort would be a way of distinguishing themselves from competing stations. Get-out-the-vote radio spots created by the Alliance for Better Campaigns narrated by Walter Cronkite, and television PSAs, were invaluable as sweeteners to these stations looking for public recognition (and competitive advantage) for their efforts.

In addition to our appeal to the self-interest of the stations, we also offered our expertise. Broadcasters today are woefully lacking in expertise and resources adequate to providing sustained and quality political coverage. The trick for us was figuring out how to provide what they needed -- whether questions for the mini-debates, or someone to book satellite time and handle other logistics. The campaign experience of Reese and Schnur convinced the stations that we could work with the campaigns. We offered to provide logistical support with a technical director, as well as background material for reporters and producers. These practical considerations indicate a clear lesson learned from the intervention effort: stations *want* to do more coverage of political campaigns, but lack the expertise and infrastructure to carry off sustained, quality coverage. As a credible outside entity, we were able to provide that.

Skeptics had warned us that it was inconceivable that major market network affiliates would ever agree to set aside five minutes out of their evening news programs once a week for a series of mini-debates. Yet four major California affiliates stepped up to prove the skeptics wrong, with many others expressing a willingness to air the broadcasts that we would make available in subsequent satellite feeds. The stations not only agreed to the concept, but also to a concrete proposal that was forwarded to the major party candidates for Governor and U.S. Senate.

Encouraged by our success with the stations, we began to focus our efforts on securing the participation of the two candidates for governor. We used the same non-confrontational approach. Again rather than appealing to some sense of civic duty, we attempted to convince the candidates that joining ABC was a positive strategic decision for them. We expected this portion of the intervention to be much easier to accomplish. Our optimism, however, turned out to be unfounded.

The two major party nominees, Gray Davis and Dan Lungren, agreed "in principle" to participate in a series of eight weekly mini-debates. However, by mid-summer the candidates had also come to agreement on five hour-long debates throughout the state (later pared down to four). The debates agreement -- representing a record number of appearances for gubernatorial candidates in any election year in recent history -- essentially delivered on what the project had been calling for, and by late August it became clear that there would not be agreement on the mini-debates. In 1994, there had been one debate between the gubernatorial candidates, broadcast on a Sacramento public television station on an early Friday evening. Having five debates scheduled allowed the campaigns to decline the

mini-debates. Additionally, as it became apparent that Gray Davis would win in a landslide, his incentive to participate disappeared. In retrospect, we may have made a tactical error in not pushing for firm commitments from the candidates earlier in the process. It is not clear, however, that even if we had done so, the candidates would have lived up to them.

Down-Ticket Races

By Labor Day, with the project's network of broadcasters still intact, we altered our strategy and began discussions with other campaigns, most notably those involved in the United States Senate race. When we were unable to come to terms with both campaigns, we again altered our strategy to a series of four mini-debates, featuring a mix of major initiative campaigns and candidates for down-ticket statewide races. This was agreeable to all but one broadcaster (KCRA in Sacramento), which was quickly replaced by another station in the market, KXTV (ABC).

Once signed on, the four stations agreed to -- and in most cases adhered to -- a proposal similar to the one sent to the gubernatorial candidates. On Tuesday, October 14, 1998, the project successfully kicked off its series of four mini-debates, with an exchange on Proposition 10 -- the tobacco tax initiative. Subsequent debates featured the candidates for Attorney General and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the campaign for Proposition 5 -- the Indian gaming initiative. The debates were carried on each of the four participating stations, and were also made available to other radio and television outlets throughout the state. To our knowledge, at least portions of some of the mini-debates were picked up in the media markets of Fresno, Santa Barbara and Monterey.

In the end, there was some veering from the agreed-on format. Two debates were held on Tuesdays; two were on Mondays. At least one station (KCBS) did not carry the debates in their entirety; instead, they edited them down to more compact two- to three-minute segments. In order to secure participation from the Proposition 5 campaigns, we altered the format for the last mini-debate to two-minute statements by each of the campaigns. Two of the four stations refused to air the debates in this altered format.

Interestingly, the mix of down-ticket and initiative mini-debates was one initially advocated by many members of our state advisory committee, who argued that the need for broadcast coverage of these races was greater than for the high-profile gubernatorial or senate races. Indeed, several broadcasters admitted they probably would have provided little or no coverage of these races absent the mini-debates. KCBS reported that the debates resulted in similarly expanded coverage of the Attorney-General race -- a down-ticket race that otherwise would have been ignored in the large Los Angeles media market. KXTV had been trying unsuccessfully to interview the incumbent Superintendent for Public Instruction; we helped finally make that happen through our mini-debates. KRON was able to recycle the debates for other pieces they produced on the campaigns, resulting in expanded coverage that otherwise would not have aired. In all, each of the stations seemed pleased with the results.

Media Monitoring

Methodology

Video Monitoring Service (VMS), a commercial firm, was hired to monitor television news coverage in five media markets: the four largest markets in the state -- Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Diego -- as well as Bakersfield, which ranks eighth. Figure 1 illustrates the geographical span of these markets, along with the populations within their reach. All told, 87% of California's population live in areas served by television stations in these five markets.

Stations monitored included all channels with news programs in these markets: broadcast as well as some local cable; network owned-and-operated, network affiliates, and independent stations; public television as well as commercial. Figure 1 also displays the stations in each market whose stories were analyzed. A total of 33 stations were analyzed with the following breakdown by market: in Los Angeles, 12 channels were monitored; in San Francisco, 8; in San Diego, 4; in Sacramento, 6; and in Bakersfield, 3.

Programming monitored included news from each day-part: early-morning and morning news; mid-day news; afternoon and prime-time adjacent local news; and late-night news. News was monitored on weekends as well as

weekdays. Different markets allocated news programming differently, as did different stations within markets, all of which was captured by the VMS system.

The period monitored ran from August 10, 1998, three months before the election, through November 2, Election Eve. Each week a total of 639 hours of local (non-network) news was monitored. All told, 7,688 hours of local news was aired during the time period.

VMS provided a content summary and time-code for a total of 1967 news stories that aired during this time period. These stories were found using a wide variety of search terms, including "Davis," "Lungren," "governor," "gubernatorial," "debate," "campaign," "election," and a wide range of "issue" topics. A content analysis coding mechanism was developed, roughly following previous work by Jamieson (1984 & 1993), Lichter & Noyes (1995) and Nueman, Just & Crigler (1992). The coding mechanism was pre-tested, and six students were trained in the coding procedure. Inter-coder reliability was tested at the beginning using Krippendorff's alpha. The resulting score of .85 indicates an acceptable increase of 85% over chance agreement. Coders were also checked every week to prevent against coder "drift," none of which was apparent. VMS provided the story summaries each week throughout the process.

The coding mechanism had two principal components. The first was calculating the amount of time each story aired; in the majority of cases this was a simple matter of subtraction, using the VMS-provided times the story started and finished. In approximately 40% of the stories, information was contained within a story summary that was in no way about the gubernatorial race. Many of these stories were collections of "headlines" or "stories we are following today" or part of a "bullet list." To count only the story time devoted to the gubernatorial race, judgments were made about how much of the story was extraneous to the governors race; this time was subtracted from the total time given by VMS. This process was checked against a small number of recorded news stories from the Los Angeles market and found consistent. VMS also included "teasers" or short promotions of upcoming stories. These were excluded from the final analysis.

The second component of the coding mechanism focused on story content by coding the overall focus of the story. Five categories were created: strategy; issue; 50/50 mix between strategy and issues; mixture, strategy dominant; and mixture, issues dominant. Strategy stories included those that focused on topics such as the candidate horserace, campaign tactics, fundraising, advertising, and attacks on other candidates. Issue stories focused on topics such as education, crime, the environment, and abortion. In most cases the issue was named in the VMS story summary.

The findings presented here represent a second round of data collection from VMS. After our preliminary report to the IGS conference, the news director of KCRA, Sacramento, Ed Chapuis, ran an audit of KCRA news stories to compare with our findings. The result caused us to question the accuracy of the VMS source data and to require VMS to re-run the data for the entire state. As a consequence, VMS acknowledged that some data had been lost. In its second round, the amount of gubernatorial news time increased. In the revised data presented here, we believe we have found all of the gubernatorial stories; to illustrate this, we have found slightly more KCRA stories than KCRA's own internal audit found. We have attempted in these findings to provide the stations with every benefit of the doubt, and to ensure the final tally is a fair one based on the data available.

Findings

Statewide results:

Out of the 7,668 hours of local news coverage monitored, a total of 34 hours and 36 minutes and 7 seconds contained information about the gubernatorial race. This figure represents .45% of the total amount of news time. A total of 1937 different news stories aired about the governors race.

We begin by examining how the news coverage varied from week to week through the monitoring period. Table One shows the week-by-week breakdown of statewide coverage. These results do not include broadcasts of the debates¹.

{Insert Table One Here}

Two notable points come out of this week-by-week analysis. First, by far the largest number of stories occurred toward the end of the campaign. In fact 6.53% of the total story time and 6.61% of the total number of stories occurred on the day before the election (November 2nd). The last week of the campaign accounted for 21.37% of the total amount of time and 20.44% of the total stories. The last month of the campaign contained 51.74% of the total gubernatorial time and 48.6% of the total number of stories, despite comprising only slightly more than 33% of the total amount of news time.

The second point is that regular local news coverage of the gubernatorial campaign clearly spiked statewide during weeks when candidate debate aired. During our time period three different debates took place (Aug. 18, Sept. 24, and Oct. 15). The first debate week (Aug. 18) accounted for 10.54% of the total time and 8.69% of the total stories. The second debate week (Sept. 24) accounted for 14.17% of total time and 12.66% of the total stories. The final debate week (Oct. 15) accounted for 16.23% of the total time and 13.27% of the total stories. Taken together the final week of the campaign and the three debate weeks supplied 62.31% of the total time and 55.06% of the total stories. Again these four weeks comprise only about 1/3 of the total news time monitored.

Over the time period the average length of a story was 63.33 seconds. This spiked during all 3 debate weeks to a high of 77.47 seconds. The between-week comparisons of story length were statistically significant ($t=14.69$, $df=12$, $p=.000$).

The influence of debates and the end of the campaign in driving news coverage can again be seen in Table Two when looking at the top ten individual days of gubernatorial coverage. The day before the second debate (Sept. 23) was the single highest day of coverage with 2 hours 19 minutes and 7 seconds of coverage. The only day not related to the end of the campaign or a debate receiving a great deal of coverage was August 11th. The major story of this day was a visit to California by President Clinton. The mentions of the gubernatorial candidates on this day were primarily 1) Davis attending a fund-raiser with Clinton or 2) Lungren commenting on the Lewinsky scandal. Take together these 10 days comprise 49.64% of the total amount of time and 43.37% of the total stories.

The results presented in Table Two also show how much coverage occurred on an average day during the time period. Overall, 26.92 stories aired on an average day, for a total statewide average coverage per day of slightly over 30 minutes. This breaks down further to a station average of under one story per day (.90) and 1 minutes per day per station over the entire time period. To place this in context, a recent proposal by the Gore Commission (*see www.bettercampaigns.org*), recommends that stations provide 5 minutes of candidate-centered discourse per night in the final 30 days of the election. In the final 30 days of the campaign, the stations each provided an average of 72 seconds per night of gubernatorial coverage. This figure is total coverage of the gubernatorial race, not just the candidate-centered recommendation of the Gore Commission.

{Insert Table Two Here}

A second statewide comparison is by time of day that stories aired. Perhaps the most notable finding from the day-part data is the large number of stories that aired in the early morning hours (5:00 am to 9:00 am). Although comprising only 28.45% of the total amount of time, these morning stories accounted for 37.47% of the total stories. Morning campaign stories tend to be of shorter duration than others throughout the day. In fact the average length of a morning story was around 28 seconds lower than those during the traditional evening news hour and the late night news. These results were also statistically significant ($t=8.04$, $df=3$, $p=.004$). It is also interesting to note the similarities in total time between the early morning and late night news programs. Although further analysis is necessary, it appears that there may be some “recycling” of gubernatorial news stories throughout the day. Table Three presents these results.

¹ Debates often aired outside of regular news programming, which was the focus of this study; as a result VMS did not catch all of them. Based on a review of Nielsen data, our best estimate is that the three debates during our monitoring period aired a total of 11 times. This additional 11 hours of coverage would increase the statewide total by about 1/3. Only one station (KCRA-Sacramento) aired all three debates.

{Insert Table Three Here}

Finally we turn to the content of the stories statewide. As noted above, the stories were coded as focusing on either strategy, issues or a mixture of strategy and issues. The results presented in Table Four show that 59.94% of stories were focused on strategy, while 26.08% of stories focused on issues. The breakdown for the remaining mixture of stories shows that 7.73% of the stories were coded as an even mixture of strategy and issues. Mixed stories where strategy was dominant comprised 3.97% of the stories. Mixed stories where issues were dominant comprised 2.29% of the stories.

Given the small number of stories coded as mixed-strategy or mixed-issue, we also collapsed these stories into the issue and strategy categories. In doing so we see the split between strategy and issues as 63.90% strategy, 28.37% issues, and 7.73% 50/50 mix.

{Insert Table Four Here}

Regional results:

Several interesting comparisons can be made by moving the unit of analysis to the regional or market level. We begin by comparing the total amount of time devoted to gubernatorial news by market. The San Francisco market led the state both in terms of the amount of time devoted to the race and in percentage terms², with a total of 12 hours 23 minutes and 15 seconds of gubernatorial news coverage. San Francisco also led the state for most stories with 710. San Francisco accounted for 36.28% of the total gubernatorial time in the state and 36.10% of the total stories. Overall .71% of the total amount of news time in the San Francisco market was devoted to the gubernatorial race, also the highest in the state.

In terms of total time the Los Angeles market provided 10 hours 11 minutes and 10 seconds of gubernatorial coverage spread out over 552 stories. In both of these categories Los Angeles ranks second behind San Francisco. In terms of percentage of total news time focused on the governor's race, however, only .40% of the Los Angeles total coverage was about the governor's race. This was significantly less than Sacramento's percentage of .56%. Sacramento, in producing 9 hours 11 minutes and 15 seconds of gubernatorial coverage, was only 22% lower than Los Angeles, despite the fact Los Angeles had twice as many stations monitored. As interesting as the market leaders are the market stragglers. The smallest market we studied, Bakersfield, actually produced slightly more gubernatorial time (2 hours 4 minutes and 6 seconds) than the San Diego market (1 hour 47 minutes), despite the fact we monitored 3 Bakersfield stations compared to 4 San Diego stations. Bakersfield, in percentage terms, was actually quite close to the Los Angeles market, with .36% of their total news devoted to the gubernatorial race. San Diego's percentage fell significantly below all other markets with .17%. The comparisons of percentage of total time devoted to the governor's race once again proved statistically significant ($t= 4.51$ $df=4$, $p=.011$). Table Five presents these results.

{Insert Table Five Here}

Moving to day-part comparisons, we find some interesting regional variation. In the San Francisco market a higher percentage of stories (48.17%) and total time (38.79%) appeared during the morning hours than either the evening (21.83% stories and 28.17% time) or late night (22.96% stories and 27.64% time) day-part. Sacramento also followed a similar pattern although more of Sacramento's time was aired in the evening day-part. Table Six presents these results.

{Insert Table Six Here}

² It is important to note here that the San Francisco data includes KNTV, an ABC affiliate in San Jose, which is technically a different media market. Excluding KNTV from the San Francisco market decreases the total amount of time for San Francisco to 11 hours 26 minutes and 37 seconds. At the same time, however, it increase the market's percentage of time devoted to gubernatorial news to .75%. Since the San Francisco market is still the leader in both categories we have left KNTV in the San Francisco market for our analysis but report the figures without KNTV in Table Five.

In both the full categorization and the collapsed version we see a similarity across regions in terms of the strategy/issue mix. Sacramento has a slightly higher percentage of stories devoted to issues (31%) than the other markets. San Francisco and Bakersfield produced the highest percentage of mixed stories (10%). San Francisco and San Diego shared the highest percentage of stories focused on strategy.

{Insert Table Seven Here}

Station-level results:

Before reporting the findings of station-level data it is important to note the effect that public television and Spanish-language stations have on the results. Although they clearly make an important contribution to the campaign coverage, they serve as outliers to the majority of the data we monitored. VMS only provides monitoring for a limited number of public television station programs, and they often focus exclusively on California politics (e.g. KQED's Northern California Politics show). For the two Spanish language stations, VMS only covers the English language news components and as a result the number of stories is restricted. We include these stations in the overall findings but caution against reading too much into their statewide rankings.

With this caveat, we focus presentation of these results on broadcast and cable stations, excluding the public and Spanish language stations except in Tables Eight and Nine. The station average amount of total gubernatorial time was 1 hour 10 minutes and 54 seconds. The top stations statewide in terms of total amount of gubernatorial coverage are: 1) KTVU-SF: 2 hours 38 minutes and 48 seconds; 2) KRON-SF: 2 hours 35 minutes and 16 seconds; 3) KCAL-LA: 2 hours 28 minutes and 49 seconds; 4) KCRA-SAC: 2 hours 13 minutes and 27 seconds. Four other stations (KGO-SF, KPIX-SF, KXTV-SAC and KOVR-SAC) approached 2 hours of total coverage.

In terms of the percentage of their total news time devoted to the gubernatorial race the rankings offer a slightly different perspective of the top California stations. The top stations in percentage terms include: 1) KTVU-SF (.88%); 2) KXTV-SAC (.78%); 3) KRON-SF (.71%); 4) KCAL-LA (.70%); 5) KGO-SF (.68%); 6) KCOP-LA (.66%). Four other stations (KPIX-SF, Bay-TV-SF Cable, KOVR-SAC and KQCA-SAC) had scores in the .60% range.

As evidence of how little coverage is offered in San Diego all four San Diego stations are among the bottom in terms of percentage of coverage devoted to the gubernatorial race, all with less than .20%. While KERO in Bakersfield, KXTL in Sacramento, and OCN Cable in Los Angeles had the low totals in terms of time, they all produced more than all San Diego stations in percentage terms.

In terms of total time the lowest statewide are 1) KUSI-SD: 10 minutes 59 seconds (.06%); 2) KERO-BAK: 18 minutes 28 seconds (.27%); 3) KXTL-SAC: 23 minutes 37 seconds (.47%) 4) KNSD-SD: 24 minutes and 12 seconds (.15%); 5) OCN-Cable-LA: 26 minutes 58 seconds. 6) KFMB-SD; 27 minutes 54 seconds (.13%). Table Eight presents these results.

{Insert Table Eight Here}

Since day-part calculations for individual stories are simply a function of when stations choose to air news there is little to be learned from analyzing how individual stations divide stories by day-part. We therefore move to findings about individual story content. The interesting factors here are which stations presented more issue-orientated coverage. Again the public television and Spanish language stations serve as outliers.

The first point to note is the apparent performance of the two cable stations in the data set. OCN-Cable in Los Angeles and Bay-TV cable both presented a higher percentage of issue-based coverage than any other station in their markets. This may indicate that these stations are attempting to fill a niche for issue-based campaign coverage not being filled by traditional broadcast stations.

A second finding is a slightly higher level of issue coverage among the Sacramento stations. Four Sacramento stations -- KXTL (39%), KCRA (38%), KMAX (36%), and KXTV (30%) -- produced over 30% of their total stories about issues. KGTV-SD and KCAL-LA and KTTV-LA also produced more than 30% of their stories about issues.

A third point is that generally the stations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego produced slightly more strategy-based stories than those in the markets Sacramento and Bakersfield. Los Angeles, for example, has three stations (four when including Spanish language KMEX) that aired around 70% strategy-focused stories. Although further analysis is necessary, it is possible that station size or market size affect the content of campaign stories.

A fourth point is that it appears San Francisco and Bakersfield stations produced more mixture stories than the other markets. The San Francisco data are particularly interesting given their dominant position in terms of total time devoted to the gubernatorial race. Table Nine presents these findings.

{Insert Table Nine here }

Discussion:

The overall picture of gubernatorial coverage in California is clearly quite grim. Less than half of one percent of the total amount of news time was devoted to arguably the most important campaign in the 1998 cycle. Of that minuscule amount of coverage more than half of it was devoted to discussions of campaign strategy, tactics, polls, candidate attacks or fund-raising activity, leaving voters with virtually no coverage of the main issues of the day. On a statewide basis the stations produced slightly more than 1 minute of news coverage each per day in the last 30 days of the campaign. This shows how far we are from the Gore commission recommendations of five minutes of candidate-centered discourse per station per night.

By and large the San Francisco and Sacramento markets provided significantly more gubernatorial coverage than the other markets. Efforts are currently under way to uncover reasons for these differences. Viewed at the regional or market level, however, we see a great deal of similarity in the general strategy focus of campaigns stories. The slight regional variations in story content that do exist become somewhat more apparent when looking at the station level, where again Sacramento appears to be providing slightly more issue-based coverage than the rest of the state. These results would seem to indicate that in areas where there is the popular perception of a more actively-involved electorate, like San Francisco and Sacramento, this perception may have an impact on the amount of campaign news coverage that broadcasters provide.

The results seem to point to a focus of campaign coverage during the early-morning hours. It is possible that stations use the early morning news to target men, and perceive that men are more interested in political news.

Finally, the results point to the power that debates have in driving campaign coverage. This would seem to indicate that future intervention efforts should build on this power by encouraging more debates and debate-like forums.

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Table One: Weekly Breakdown of Stories

Week	# of stories	seconds	minutes	hours	avg. story length **	% of total time	% of stories
Aug. 10 - Aug 16	166	6767.49	112.79	1.88	40.77	5.43	8.44
Aug. 17- Aug 23 *	171	13134.08	218.90	3.65	76.81	10.54	8.69
Aug. 24- Aug 30	78	2345.28	39.09	0.65	30.07	1.88	3.97
Aug. 31-Sept. 6	23	1896.71	31.61	0.53	82.47	1.52	1.17
Sept. 7 - Sept. 13	99	5715.78	95.26	1.59	57.74	4.59	5.03
Sept. 14 - Sept. 20	104	4953.17	82.55	1.38	47.63	3.98	5.29
Sept. 21 - Sept. 27 *	249	17646.34	294.11	4.90	70.87	14.17	12.66
Sept. 28 - Oct. 4	121	7651.54	127.53	2.13	63.24	6.14	6.15
Oct. 5 - Oct. 11	135	7566.42	126.11	2.10	56.05	6.07	6.86
Oct. 12 - Oct. 18 *	261	20218.59	336.98	5.62	77.47	16.23	13.27
Oct. 19 - Oct. 25	158	10049.21	167.49	2.79	63.60	8.07	8.03
Oct. 26 - Nov. 1	272	18482.34	308.04	5.13	67.95	14.84	13.83
Nov. 2 nd	130	8139.96	135.67	2.26	62.62	6.53	6.61
Oct. 26 - Nov. 2	402	26622.3	443.71	7.40	66.22	21.37	20.44
Totals	1967	124566.91	2076.12	34.60	63.33	100.00	100.00

* = Debate week

** $t=14.69, df=12, p=.000$

Week	
Aug. 10 - Aug 16	1 hr. 52 min. 47 secs.
Aug. 17- Aug 23 *	3 hr. 38 min. 54 secs.
Aug. 24- Aug 30	39 min. 5 secs.
Aug. 31-Sept. 6	31 min. 37 secs.
Sept. 7 - Sept. 13	1 hr. 35 min. 16 secs.
Sept. 14 - Sept. 20	1 hr. 22 min. 33 secs.
Sept. 21 - Sept. 27 *	4 hr. 54 min. 6 secs.
Sept. 28 - Oct. 4	2 hr. 7 min. 32 secs.
Oct. 5 - Oct. 11	2 hr. 6 min. 5 secs.
Oct. 12 - Oct. 18 *	5 hr. 36 min. 59 secs.
Oct. 19 - Oct. 25	2 hr. 47 min. 29 secs.
Oct. 26 - Nov. 1	5 hr. 8 min. 2 secs.
Nov. 2 nd	2 hr. 15 min. 40 secs.
Oct. 26 - Nov. 2	7 hr. 23 min. 42 secs.

Table Two: Coverage on top 10 days

Top Days	# of stories	total seconds	total minutes	total hours
Debate 2 (Sept. 23)	87	8346.91	139.12	2.32
Day Before election, (Nov. 2nd)	130	8139.96	135.67	2.26
Debate 3 (Oct. 16th)	94	7556.36	125.94	2.10
Debate 3 (Oct. 15th)	79	7544.18	125.74	2.10
Debate 1 (Aug. 18th)	74	6279.48	104.66	1.74
Debate 1 (Aug 19th)	74	5718.63	95.31	1.59
Debate 2 (Sept. 24)	89	5618.18	93.64	1.56
Clinton visit (Aug. 11)	100	4774.25	79.57	1.33
Last week (Oct. 30)	66	4213.02	70.22	1.17
Last week (Nov. 1)	60	3650.23	60.84	1.01
Totals	853	61841.2	1030.69	17.18
Statewide totals	1967.00	124566.91	2076.12	34.60
Percentage of total stories	43.37			
Percentage of total time	49.64			

** all others < 1 hr

Top Days

Debate 2 (Sept. 23)	2 hr. 19 min. 7 secs.
Day Before election, (Nov. 2nd)	2 hr. 15 min. 40 secs.
Debate 3 (Oct. 16th)	2 hr. 5 min. 56 secs.
Debate 3 (Oct. 15th)	2 hr. 5 min. 44 secs.
Debate 1 (Aug. 18th)	1 hr. 54 min. 39 secs.
Debate 1 (Aug 19th)	1 hr. 35 min. 18 secs.
Debate 2 (Sept. 24)	1 hr. 33 min. 38 secs.
Clinton visit (Aug. 11)	1 hr. 19 min. 34 secs.
Last week (Oct. 30)	1 hr. 10 min. 13 secs.
Last week (Nov. 1)	1 hr. 50 secs.
Totals	17 hr. 10 min. 41 secs.

Statewide Daily Averages

	number of stories	total seconds	total minutes
Totals	26.92	1800.46	30.01
Oct 4th to Nov 2	32.23	2173.17	36.22
Per station			
Totals	0.90	60.02	1.00
Oct 4th to Nov 2	1.07	72.44	1.21

Table Three: Statewide Totals by Day-part

Statewide Seconds by time of day (daypart)	# of stories	seconds	min	hrs	Percentage of total time	Percentage of stories	Avg. Story Length *
5:00 am to 9:00 am	737	35437.65	590.63	9.84	28.45	37.47	48.08
9:00 am to 3:00 pm	174	8774.18	146.24	2.44	7.04	8.85	50.43
3:00 pm to 9:00 pm	592	45215.47	753.59	12.56	36.30	30.10	76.38
9:00 pm to 12:00 am	464	35139.61	585.66	9.76	28.21	23.59	75.73
totals	1967	124566.91	2076.12	34.60	100.00	100.00	63.33

**Statewide
Seconds by time of day
(daypart)**

5:00 am to 9:00 am	9 hr. 50 min. 38 secs.
9:00 am to 3:00 pm	2 hr. 26. min. 14 secs.
3:00 pm to 9:00 pm	12 hr. 23 min. 35 secs.
9:00 pm to 12:00 am	9 hr. 45 min. 39 secs.

* $t=8.04$, $df3$, $p=.004$

Table Four: Statewide Strategy/Issue Breakdown

Story Focus	Number of stories	Percentages
Issues	513	26.08
Strategy	1179	59.94
50/50 split	152	7.73
mixed strategy	78	3.97
mixed issue	45	2.29
	1967	100.00

Story Focus	Number of stories	Percentages
Issues + Mixed Issue	558	28.37
Strategy + Mixed Strategy	1257	63.90
50/50 split	152	7.73
	1967	100.00

Table Five: Regional Time Comparisons

Total seconds by region	# of stories	seconds	minutes	hours	News		News		% of Gov *
					Hole	minutes	hours	per Week	
LOS ANGELES (10 hr. 11 min. 10 secs)	552	36670.22	611.17	10.19	9266400	154440	2574	214.5	0.40
SAN FRANCISCO <i>with KNTV</i>	710	45195.24	753.25	12.55	6393600	106560	1776	148	0.71
<i>without KNTV</i> (11 hr. 26 min. 37 secs.)	646	41197.76	686.63	11.44	5508000	91800	1530	127.5	0.75
SACRAMENTO (8 hr. 35 secs.)	444	28835.03	480.58	8.01	5184000	86400	1440	120	0.56
SAN DIEGO (1 hr. 47 min.)	136	6420.29	107	1.78	4665600	77760	1296	108	0.14
BAKERSFIELD (2 hr. 4 min. 6 secs)	125	7446.14	124.1	2.07	2095200	34920	582	48.5	0.36
Statewide totals	1967	124566.9	2076.1	34.6	27604800	460080	7668	639	0.45

% of total stories % of total time

LOS ANGELES	28.06	29.44
SAN FRANCISCO <i>with KNTV</i>	36.10	36.28
<i>without KNTV</i>	32.84	33.07
SACRAMENTO	22.57	23.15
SAN DIEGO	6.91	5.15
BAKERSFIELD	6.35	5.98

* $T = 4.51, df = 4, p = .011$

Table Six: Region by Day-parts

Seconds by time of day (daypart)	# of stories	total seconds	total min	total hrs	Market % of Daypart time	Market % of Daypart Stories	% of Market Time	% of Market Stories
5:00 am to 9:00 am								
<i>Bakersfield</i>	14	989.75	16.50	0.27	2.79	1.90	13.29	11.20
<i>Los Angeles</i>	140	5584.05	93.07	1.55	15.76	19.00	15.23	25.36
<i>Sacramento</i>	191	9470.15	157.84	2.63	26.72	25.92	32.84	43.02
<i>San Diego</i>	50	1861.02	31.02	0.52	5.25	6.78	28.99	36.76
<i>San Francisco</i>	342	17532.68	292.21	4.87	49.47	46.40	38.79	48.17
totals	737	35437.65	590.63	9.84	100.00	100.00		
9:00 am to 3:00 pm								
<i>Bakersfield</i>	18	739.5	12.33	0.21	8.43	10.34	9.93	14.40
<i>Los Angeles</i>	43	2738.42	45.64	0.76	31.21	24.71	7.47	7.79
<i>Sacramento</i>	57	2588.72	43.15	0.72	29.50	32.76	8.98	12.84
<i>San Diego</i>	6	266.96	4.45	0.07	3.04	3.45	4.16	4.41
<i>San Francisco</i>	50	2440.58	40.68	0.68	27.82	28.74	5.40	7.04
Totals	174	8774.18	146.24	2.44	100.00	100.00		
3:00 pm to 9:00 pm								
<i>Bakersfield</i>	60	3680.11	61.34	1.02	8.14	10.14	49.42	48.00
<i>Los Angeles</i>	196	15117.48	251.96	4.20	33.43	33.11	41.23	35.51
<i>Sacramento</i>	132	10887.05	181.45	3.02	24.08	22.30	37.76	29.73
<i>San Diego</i>	49	2798.82	46.65	0.78	6.19	8.28	43.59	36.03
<i>San Francisco</i>	155	12732	212.20	3.54	28.16	26.18	28.17	21.83
Totals	592	45215.46	753.59	12.56	100.00	100.00		
9:00 pm to 12:00 am								
<i>Bakersfield</i>	33	2036.78	33.95	0.57	5.80	7.11	27.35	26.40
<i>Los Angeles</i>	173	13230.27	220.50	3.68	37.65	37.28	36.08	31.34
<i>Sacramento</i>	64	5889.11	98.15	1.64	16.76	13.79	20.42	14.41
<i>San Diego</i>	31	1493.48	24.89	0.41	4.25	6.68	23.26	22.79
<i>San Francisco</i>	163	12489.97	208.17	3.47	35.54	35.13	27.64	22.96
Totals	464	35139.61	585.66	9.76	100.00	100.00		
Grand totals								
<i>Bakersfield</i>	125	7446.14	124.10	2.07	5.98	6.35		
<i>Los Angeles</i>	552	36670.22	611.17	10.19	29.44	28.06		
<i>Sacramento</i>	444	28835.03	480.58	8.01	23.15	22.57		
<i>San Diego</i>	136	6420.28	107.00	1.78	5.15	6.91		
<i>San Francisco</i>	710	45195.23	753.25	12.55	36.28	36.10		
Totals	1967	124566.9	2076.115	34.60	100	100		

Table Seven: Strategy/Issue Breakdown by Market

Strategy/issue mix by Market # of stories	Issue	Strategy	50/50 mix	mix-strategy	mix-issue
(Number of Stories)					
Bakersfield	125	29	74	12	6
Los Angeles	552	155	333	32	15
Sacramento	444	138	248	28	5
San Diego	136	35	84	11	0
San Francisco	710	156	440	69	19

Strategy/issue mix by Market # of stories	Issue	Strategy	50/50 mix	mix-strategy	mix-issue
(percentages)					
Bakersfield	125	23%	59%	10%	5%
Los Angeles	552	28%	60%	6%	3%
Sacramento	444	31%	56%	6%	1%
San Diego	136	26%	62%	8%	0%
San Francisco	710	22%	62%	10%	3%

Strategy/issue mix by Market # of stories	Issue +	Strategy +	50/50 mix
(Number of Stories)			
	mix-issue	mix-strategy	
Bakersfield	125	35	78
Los Angeles	552	170	350
Sacramento	444	143	273
San Diego	136	35	90
San Francisco	710	175	466

Strategy/issue mix by Market	Issue +	Strategy +	50/50 mix
(percentages)			
	mix-issue	mix-strategy	
Bakersfield		28%	62%
Los Angeles		31%	63%
Sacramento		32%	61%
San Diego		26%	66%
San Francisco		25%	66%

Table Eight: Station Time Breakdown

Total seconds	# of stories	Gov. Time	News Hole	News Hole hrs. per	% of gov
by station			Total hrs. week		to total time

LOS ANGELES					
KCAL		94 2 hr. 28 min. 49 secs.	354	29.5	0.70
KNBC		86 1 hr. 29 min. 29 secs.	378	31.5	0.39
KABC		68 1 hr. 18 secs.	324	27	0.31
KCBS		65 55 min. 2 secs.	390	32.5	0.24
KCOP		47 54 min. 18 secs.	138	11.5	0.66
KTTV		46 39 min. 42 secs.	282	23.5	0.23
KTLA		44 37 min. 17 secs.	294	24.5	0.21
KCET *		20 49 min. 51 secs.	30	2.5	2.77
KMEX **		26 26 min. 7 secs.	84	7	0.52
OCN-CABLE		46 26 min. 58 secs.	120	10	0.37
KOCE *		4 16 min. 14 secs.	30	2.5	0.90
KVEA **		6 7 min. 43 secs.	150	12.5	0.08
SAN FRANCISCO					
KTVU		158 2 hr. 38 min. 48 secs.	300	25	0.88
KRON		147 2 hr. 35 min. 16 secs.	366	30.5	0.71
KGO		127 1 hr. 59 min. 56 secs.	294	24.5	0.68
KPIX		147 1 hr. 58 min. 32 secs.	312	26	0.63
BAY-TV CABLE		48 1 hr. 14 min.	192	16	0.64
KNTV		64 1 hr. 6 min. 37 secs.	246	20.5	0.45
KQED *		9 39 min. 41 secs.	6	0.5	11.03
KOFY *		10 20 min. 24 secs.	60	5	0.57
SACRAMENTO					
KCRA		98 2 hr. 13 min. 27 secs.	378	31.5	0.59
KXTV		108 1 hr. 52 min. 17 secs.	240	20	0.78
KOVR		94 1 hr. 50 min. 20 secs.	294	24.5	0.63
KQCA		59 59 min. 19 secs.	162	13.5	0.61
KMAX		67 41 min. 35 secs.	282	23.5	0.25
KXTL		18 23 min. 37 secs.	84	7	0.47
SAN DIEGO					
KGTV		55 43 min. 56 secs.	372	31	0.20
KFMB		30 27 min. 54 secs.	366	30.5	0.13
KNSD		34 24 min. 12 secs.	264	22	0.15
KUSI		17 10 min. 59 secs.	294	24.5	0.06
BAKERSFIELD					
KGET		58 1 hr. 2 min. 35 secs.	234	19.5	0.45
KBAK		48 43 min. 4 secs.	234	19.5	0.31
KERO		19 18 min. 28 secs.	114	9.5	0.27

* Public TV

** Spanish

*** ($t=10.15$, $df=26$, $p=.000$ excluding Public and Spanish Language stations)
(all stations; $t=2.57$, $df=32$, $p=.015$)

Table Nine: Station Strategy/Issue Mix

Strategy/issue mix by station	Number of stories	Issue	Strategy	mix1	mix2	mix3
LOS ANGELES						
KCAL	94	28	50	8	3	5
KNBC	86	18	63	3	2	0
KABC	68	14	47	4	0	3
KCBS	65	17	40	6	2	0
KCOP	47	9	33	4	1	0
KTTV	46	15	28	1	2	0
KTLA	44	20	20	0	1	3
KCET	20	5	7	4	1	3
KOFY	10	9	1	0	0	0
KMEX	26	5	18	2	0	1
OCN-CABLE	46	23	19	0	4	0
KOCE	4	1	2	0	1	0
KVEA	6	0	6	0	0	0
SAN FRANCISCO						
KTVU	158	27	105	18	8	0
KRON	147	33	95	15	2	2
KGO	127	19	79	17	5	7
KPIX	147	37	92	9	5	4
BAY-TV CABLE	48	13	26	2	2	5
KNTV	64	16	37	7	3	1
KQED	9	2	5	1	1	0
KOFY	10	9	1	0	0	0
SACRAMENTO						
KCRA	98	37	52	5	3	1
KXTV	108	32	65	7	4	0
KOVR	94	22	50	6	13	3
KQCA	59	16	38	3	1	1
KMAX	67	24	34	5	4	0
KXTL	18	7	9	2	0	0
SAN DIEGO						
KGTV	55	18	30	4	3	0
KFMB	30	6	20	2	2	0

KNSD	34	9	23	1	1	0
KUSI	17	2	11	4	0	0

BAKERSFIELD

KGET	58	16	34	5	2	1
KBAK	48	11	28	5	1	3
KERO	19	2	12	2	1	2

**Strategy/issue # of stories
mix by station
(percentages)**

Issue Focus Strategy Focus 50/50 mix mix-strategy dominant mix-issue dominant

LOS ANGELES

KCAL	94	30%	53%	9%	3%	5%
KNBC	86	21%	73%	3%	2%	0%
KABC	68	21%	69%	6%	0%	4%
KCBS	65	26%	62%	9%	3%	0%
KCOP	47	19%	70%	9%	2%	0%
KTTV	46	33%	61%	2%	4%	0%
KTLA	44	45%	45%	0%	2%	7%
KCET *	20	25%	35%	20%	5%	15%
KMEX **	26	19%	69%	8%	0%	4%
OCN-CABLE	46	50%	41%	0%	9%	0%
KOCE *	4	25%	50%	0%	25%	0%
KVEA **	6	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

SAN FRANCISCO

KTVU	158	17%	66%	11%	5%	0%
KRON	147	22%	65%	10%	1%	1%
KGO	127	15%	62%	13%	4%	6%
KPIX	147	25%	63%	6%	3%	3%
BAY-TV CABLE	48	27%	54%	4%	4%	10%
KNTV	64	25%	58%	11%	5%	2%
KQED *	9	22%	56%	11%	11%	0%
KOFY *	10	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%

SACRAMENTO

KCRA	98	38%	53%	5%	3%	1%
KXTV	108	30%	60%	6%	4%	0%
KOVR	94	23%	53%	6%	14%	3%
KQCA	59	27%	64%	5%	2%	2%
KMAX	67	36%	51%	7%	6%	0%
KXTL	18	39%	50%	11%	0%	0%

SAN DIEGO

KGTV	55	33%	55%	7%	5%	0%
KFMB	30	20%	67%	7%	7%	0%
KNSD	34	26%	68%	3%	3%	0%
KUSI	17	12%	65%	24%	0%	0%

BAKERSFIELD

KGET	58	28%	59%	9%	3%	2%
KBAK	48	23%	58%	10%	2%	6%
KERO	19	11%	63%	11%	5%	11%

* Public TV

** Spanish