DO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES MATTER?
MODERATION EFFECTS ON PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TRAIT EVALUATIONS

By

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Abstract

The present paper investigates the effects of experiences linked to previous presidents on the presidential candidate evaluations. Building an analytical framework on the trait ownership theory combined with theories related to the relative stability and openness of presidential schemata constructions, it analyses how the candidate trait evaluations are moderated by the previous presidential evaluations, proposing an alternative operationalization based on cohort analysis. Using the American National Election Studies for the 1984-2004 period, and covering six presidential elections, a preliminary foundation based on variance analysis of candidate evaluation scores is offered, and it is followed by multilevel regression models to determine the respondents' misevaluation - and its direction - of the candidates. Results indicate that previous experiences statistically and substantively matter when the candidates are evaluated, and there are different evaluation patterns between Democrats and Republicans. However, the number and political color of previous presidents are important aspects that change the extent of the impact generated by previous experiences. Furthermore, it is shown that previous experiences matter differently for the single traits, bringing support to the proposition that decomposition of the overall evaluations is indeed necessary. When this decomposition is used, the results point to a largely different evaluation formation process for the moral evaluations.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

The victory of Barack Obama in the latest American elections and the 2008 presidential election campaign *per ensemble* revealed an impressive importance of the person running for office and his characteristics. The long and extensive media coverage of the prenomination period amended by the record funds collected and invested in the 2008 campaign presented a candidate in almost all possible states and stages of his development, emphasizing various characteristics and issue positions assumed. The wins registered in swing-states or states with predominantly Republican electoral heritage could be good indicators of a persistent and successful campaign that relied mostly on the candidate as a person. The relative importance of how a presidential candidate is perceived by the public has been studied extensively during the past decades, yielding various and not always converging conclusions about its impact on voting behavior. In parallel with a partisan realignment (Miller and Schofield 2003), extending development of mass-media and internet, the choice of the presidential candidate and his strategy remained crucial issues, and counted as surprising determinants of electoral wins.

Even though there is no clear agreement on how exactly the presidential candidate's characteristics and trait influence the voters, consistent research shows that these perceived traits do indeed matter in the vote decision-making process (Markus 1982; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; Kenney and Rice 1988; Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Funk 1999; Prisby 2005). These findings enable researchers to nuance and extend the spatial models concerning issue positions and proximity, widening the research questions and methods in the direction of social cognition theories or theories from psychology. Nevertheless, recent scholarly work (Hayes 2005) proposes the 'trait ownership' theory, positing that citizens infer candidate trait information from the type of issues that are handled

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by the candidate. Somewhat conversely, according to Popkin (1994), since there is no perfect information context, people tend to start with the assessment of 'personal data' available (or perceived) on the candidate, and infer from these appreciations the possible political positions and competencies. Moreover, this process takes place in a setting framed by political predispositions and stereotypes filled with symbolic representations (Zaller 1991; Zaller 1992) that conjoin into a causal narrative (Popkin 1994). This causal narrative supposes the existence of a presidential idealtype that serves as a benchmark when the actual presidential candidate is evaluated, involving clinical processing that enables a 'best-fit' decision-making (Popkin 1994). Attitude beliefs that influence candidate selection can be viewed as the product of previously held attitudes and beliefs (Kenney and Rice 1988), but these are open to change when powerful input is received (Peffley 1989). The criteria used in candidate evaluation reflect broader categories that can be grouped into competence and personal traits (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986), and depending on the level of education, political information and the party preference, they have different weights in the electoral decision-process (Kinder et al. 1980; Glass 1985; Funk 1999; Goren 2002).

Given these theoretical considerations, the present paper attempts to integrate the competing assertions of previous research, proposing a model of trait evaluation formation that considers the extent of moderation effects by past experiences on the candidate evaluations. Based on the relative stability and openness of presidential schemata constructions, I hypothesize that even if evaluation of presidential competence traits (knowledge and leadership) at t_i is determined by the issue positions associated with the candidate at t_i, these evaluations are moderated by the relevant individual presidential idealtype held at t_i. Furthermore, I conceptualize the relevant individual presidential idealtype held at t_i as a consequence of all the previously encountered presidential issue related performances and problem-solving methods. This set of hypotheses refers only to competence

traits and states that the issue-handling of past presidents determines the idealtype for competence. Thus, even if the presidential candidate at t_i reveals 'objective competence', the citizens will evaluate him or her by comparison, using shortcuts conditioned by previous experiences. For example, when evaluating Bill Clinton's competence on various issues, voters involuntarily assess these competence traits through the lenses of how Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush etc had handled the similar issues.

Furthermore, when discussing the personal presidential traits (care and morality) a similar logic can be applied. As derived from the theory, people who have less political information will rely more on these personal trait evaluations in the vote decision-making. I expect that for people with low political information the previous personal trait evaluations will have more powerful moderation effects.

Since theory shows that depending on party preference and political awareness, different importance is given to traits and different t_i evaluations are done, I expect significant differences in the weights of past experiences when the idealtype is constructed. In addition to political information, these differences are related essentially to the number of previous experiences, to the hypothesized higher influence of the direct previous president, and to the political preference of the individual.

In order to test these hypotheses, I will use the analysis of different cohorts in the American National Election Survey (ANES) integrated datasets. This way of investigation is needed because there is no available panel data, but since the items in the ANES did not change, it can be analyzed as repeated survey. Due to data constraints, the period of interest is 1984-2004, period that covers six consecutive presidential elections. The analysis carried out structures the data into full cohorts for the 1984-2004 time span, and these are composed by cells that are defined by age-group and year. This structuring is needed because the previous experiences are age and year dependent, and this structure calls for a multilevel approach

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where the clustering is given by cells that are defined by one age-group and one year of election. Furthermore, four candidate evaluation traits are analyzed, and these are: knowledge, leadership, care, and moral. These traits represent two competence and respectively two personal traits. The first section of the analysis reveals differences in variances between years, age-groups and cohorts. The second part tests the moderation effects of the previous experiences on the presidential candidate trait evaluations, looking at how and to what extent respondents sub- or supra-evaluated their own candidate. These misevaluations are compared to an 'objective score' that is calculated based on a sub-sample in which the respondents have the maximum possible education and the highest level of political information. For both sections of the analysis, in addition to the previous experiences the effects of party identification and level of political information are of specific interest. The overall form of operationalization, the use of the ANES non-panel survey data and the method of approaching the clustered cohort data yields confers the major part of the contribution to the present research on presidential trait evaluations and their formation.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. The next section offers an overview of the current state of literature together with the theoretical framework and the conceptualization necessary for the analysis. Furthermore, the testable hypotheses and expectations derived from previous research will be formulated. Chapter 3 discusses the data and operationalization issue, whereas Chapter 4 is dedicated to the analysis that is presented in two sub-chapters. The preliminary analysis reveals the different variance components for several variables that reflect candidate trait evaluations. The multivariate section is a multilevel analysis where the impact of previous experiences on the candidate sub- and supra-evaluation is dissected, bringing evidence to the thesis that these previous presidential evaluations indeed matter. Discussion and conclusions are offered in the last chapter.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

Presidential performance and personal traits have been focal points of several studies during time, most of them relying on the ANES dataset, specific items from the Current Population Survey, or directly commissioned surveys. From the perspective of the present paper, two main topics from the past research need specific attention: how do presidential idealtypes intervene in trait evaluations and how people evaluate presidential traits? The starting point is given by the consensus in the literature that presidential traits do matter in the vote decision (Markus 1982; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; Kenney and Rice 1988; Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Funk 1999; Prisby 2005). These candidate evaluations matter even more, since there is evidence for the direction of the effects that go from the character assessment to the approval, and not the other way around (Greene 2001), resulting in direct influence on the vote choice. Theory suggests that presidential traits can be grouped in performance and personal traits (Kinder et al. 1980), but further research argues that using only these cumulative categories is not sufficient, since more distinct and decomposed traits do have specific impacts on voting behavior (Funk 1999). Other previous research also points into this direction, since depending on the election year several different dimensions in evaluation are found using factor analysis (Hellweg 2004). In some cases the genuineness and leadership seem to be significant dimensions, in other cases the trustworthiness and demeanor (Hellweg 2004). However, looking at the dimensions mentioned previously, it is straightforward that they can be operationalized only for experimental studies, because of the lack of items in the large N-sample surveys.

Throughout this paper, I will accept the premise that the content of the traits matters (Funk 1999), and decomposing personal traits for example in morality, likeability and care, or competence traits into knowledge, leadership, and intelligence is the most encompassing way

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to handle the trait evaluations. Notwithstanding, competence for performance and integrity for personal traits can be considered a good proxy (Funk 1999).

When it comes to a candidate's electoral success, Louden and McCauliff (2004) propose authenticity as a decisive criterion. Understood as "the candidate's fit with self" (Louden and McCauliff 2004, 100), even the authors accept that it is only a theoretical concept that is very hard to measure (and it was not measured to this point). The concept presupposes information about the candidate and it also assumes a quasi-knowledge about the person (from a political perspective), sources necessary for the comparison and the authenticity decision. Even if it is not a pure rational process, one could argue that the authenticity decision is 'more correct' if the candidate is re-running for office. Otherwise, it implies a comparison between how the candidate is perceived to be, and how he actually acts, comparison that should be a turning point for the vote-decision or endorsement. When these types of comparisons are analyzed, but even on a more general level for 'absolute' trait evaluations, the next issue is how these evaluations are carried out, as cognitive processes.

Decisions about candidates, but also about parties can be made in an environment where there is sufficient amount of information. This element is considered as focal part of the rational decisions. However, the levels of information vary among citizens or voters. Thus, based on limited information, inferences are made. As Brady and Sniderman (1985) argue, people estimate the position of the parties or the candidates, and these estimations are given by perceptions about the objects (parties or candidates). There is a significant segment of guessers among voters (Brady and Sniderman 1985), and their perception is influenced by affects, but also by the general perception how groups see the political actors (Brady and Sniderman 1985). Furthermore, in low information environments, voters tend to use shortcuts and cues (Lau and Redlawsk 2001). Among these shortcuts, one of most important is the party shortcut (Conover and Feldman 1979), but all-in-all these heuristics prove to be highly

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efficient when compared to decisions met in high information environment. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that an overwhelming part of these results are based on experimental research. Rapoport, Metcalf and Hartman (1989) cross-reference their experimental results with survey data, finding that people generally make inferences and these inferences are more frequent for the candidates are less well known. Their findings indicate that citizens infer from the issue positions to traits, and inference from party issue positions or perceptions about parties to candidates is also frequent (Conover and Feldman 1989). Even more importantly, Conover and Feldman (1989) posit that when there is no information available, people use their previous experiences, materialized also in the form of some perceptions about political actors that are present over time in the public arena. This indicates a higher rate of the usage of previous information or experience for people with lower political information; these experiences or cues point into the direction of an idealtype that could serve as a benchmark in the comparisons, in an information-rich environment, but also in low information

Discussion about presidential idealtype (Popkin 1994) can be linked to the prototypes (Kinder et al. 1980) that reflect 'categories that people hold about the nature of the world' (Kinder et al. 1980, 316). More precisely, as Kinder et al. (1980, 316) further develop, 'an ideal presidential prototype in particular consists of the features that citizens believe best define an exemplary president'. Given this definition, it is not surprising that party preference strongly determines which traits are considered more important (Goren 2002; Prisby 2005; Hayes 2005; Goren 2007). This relevance and importance feature can be seen as similar to the issue importance and its moderating effect on vote choice when spatial models of issue voting are discussed (Fournier et al. 2003). The different level of importance given to specific traits is extendable for different levels of education as well, since there is empirical evidence that more educated people tend to favor performance trait evaluations, whereas less educated people reach to personal trait evaluation when the vote choice is made (Kinder et al. 1980;

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Glass 1985; Peffley 1989). This importance is investigated using two different measures: impact on vote choice or impact on the overall candidate thermometer scores (Funk 1999).

Restraining the analysis only on competence[1] traits, differentiation between retrospective and prospective evaluations are considered (Miller and Wattenberg 1985; Popkin 1994; McCurley and Wombak 1995), and an overwhelmingly retrospective evaluation generates incumbency-advantage (Kinder et al. 1980; McCurley and Wombak 1995; Goren 2002).

Although it is important to determine the 'direction' of the evaluation, but as sources of information, information processing, and trait evaluation processes are considered from a social cognition perspective, theory asserts that present evaluations, opinions and attitudes rely on previously held attitudes (Marcus 1982; Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; Kenney and Rice 1988; Zaller 1991; Zaller 1992; Popkin 1994). These previous attitudes and evaluations act as cognitive shortcuts or cues when decision about a candidate is made (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986), and in a sense they can be formulated as selected stereotypes with symbolic representations (Zaller 1991). Furthermore, these previous attitudes affect the prototypes that are formed and used as a benchmark (Popkin 1994). The idealtype or the ideal president's image tends to stabilize over time (Hellweg (2004), and since there is no perfect information context, the less well formulated schemas or the easy shortcuts are preferred as sources of inference (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; Popkin 1994). This stabilization can also be linked to the long-term stability of political predispositions (Sears and Funk 1999). As Popkin (1994) proposes, starting with personal traits as sources of inference – being the easy shortcuts – for political performance can grant chances for the challengers or newcomers in the political race. Nevertheless, this relationship is bidirectional, because people tend to think that information about performance reveals personal traits as

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[1] Derived from the role and function of the president, the presidential candidates' previously held job has an impact on the competence evaluations (Hellweg 2004; McDermott 2005).

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well (Zaller 1992; Popkin 1994). On the other side, presidential priming theory states that since presidents in office or presidential candidates are not just 'leaders', they incorporate in their strategies and public image information from opinion polls, in order to associate themselves with issues that are important for the public (Jacobs and Shapiro 1994). Yet again, these effects may be limited, because when only one campaign is analyzed, empirical evidence suggests that there is no further decomposition of trait and vote evolution, which indicates that no further factorial complexity or sophistication is gained during the campaigns (Hellweg 2004). Overall, campaign strategies indicate that issue positions and president or candidate traits and images are not mutually exclusive and can yield added results (Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Funk 1999).

Even though issue positions and traits could be considered complementary determinants of vote choice acting on different level, recent research posits that there is empirical evidence for a 'trait ownership' theory. This theory reflects on the fact that citizens mostly infer trait information from the issues that are handled by the president or candidate (Hayes 2005), and candidates tend to emphasize the traits on which they are considered to outscore their opponent. This theory is developed from the initial "issue ownership" proposition by Pretrocik (1996) positing that candidates tend to emphasize issues on which they perform better than their counter-candidate. Citizens rely on the assumption previously mentioned that this information on issue choice and issue handling says something about the person (Popkin 1994; Hayes 2005). This approach calculates with an enhanced partisan bias effect (Goren 2007) that is doubled by the negativity bias during vote choice decision (Goren 2002; Goren 2007), which asserts that candidate evaluations are determined to a higher extent by impressions on the candidate when the citizen identifies more with the candidate's opposition (Goren 2002; Goren 2007). Accepting these underlying assumptions is important, because the moderation effect strongly depends that the category of issue or problem is

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identical. Throughout this analysis, I will rely on the assumption that there is a relative stability in the issue importance over time, which is specific for the party identification. This is supported by the "issue ownership" theory, assuming political parties and candidates that position themselves on issues that are better handled by them. The stability over time can be expected because of the tradition building or consolidation/differentiation efforts of political parties. Furthermore, the stereotypes about the parties developed by the citizens (Pretrocik 1996) also suggest clear linkages between specific issues and traits, and parties.

Consequently, based on theoretical implications derived from the brief literature review presented above, in the present analysis I rely on the trait ownership theory (Hayes 2005) when discussing the eventual formation process of trait evaluations. Most of the previous research is concerned with changes that occur in these evaluations in a short period of time, namely during election campaigns. Using panel data, this type of analysis yields results considering the different changes that occur at a t_i time (one election campaign), but they do not encompass the long-term investigation of trait evaluation formation. Since longitudinal panel data is not available, I will look at the American National Election Studies as repeated surveys, discussing separate cohorts during time, and the modifications present at these levels.

Drawing on the assumptions deducted from previous research on trait evaluation and presidential idealtype formation, the first element of the present theory conceptualizes a framework where the previously held attitudes are hypothesized as shapers of the present attitudes, but there is a level of openness in how this set of previous attitudes can change. The complete theoretical framework indicates the need of using the issue importance and the assertion that trait evaluations can be linked to issue positions. However, based on the data

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that is available[2], there is no possibility to compare the important issues over time. Nevertheless, the full conceptual framework incorporates the relative importance of an issue for a citizen (Funk 1999; Goren 2002; Hayes 2005). More precisely, the positions of candidates or presidents on issues held as important or problematic – need specific handling - could have an increased influence on the competence trait evaluations. The formulation and development of the trait evaluations will be influenced by the previous experiences of how other presidents handled important issues.

Switching to personal president and candidate trait, considering the inferential processes involved in trait evaluation formation (Kinder et al. 1980; Popkin 1994; Goren 2002; Hayes 2005), a similar logic can be applied. The trait evaluations for previous presidents offer a general framework for standards in personal traits that will be used in the comparison to the actual presidential candidate (Popkin 1994). The level of personal trait evaluation introduces the differences from the perspective of political awareness and information. Citizens who have less political information will rely more on these personal trait evaluations in the vote decision-making (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; Popkin 1994). Figure 2.1 presents the extended theoretical model that comprises the competence and personal trait evaluations and the effects of issue positioning. As previously mentioned, the effects of candidate positioning and issue importance are not tested here[3]. The analysis is structured into two different sections. The first part will look at the candidate evaluation scores (knowledgeable, leadership, care, morality and combined collapsed scores), analyzing the variance components generated by the fact that the observations are from different time points, and the respondents are from different cohorts.

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[2] Only three pseudo-issues are present in all the ANES editions (1984-2004), but these are unfortunately very generally formulated, and thus the comparison over time of these importances – on the respondents' level and on the candidates' declarative level – is not possible.

[3] In worst case scenario, not accounting for the variance explained by these aspects could decrease the explanatory power. Nevertheless, the focus of this paper is on the previous experiences, and separate testing is possible.

Figure 2.1 Extended theoretical model
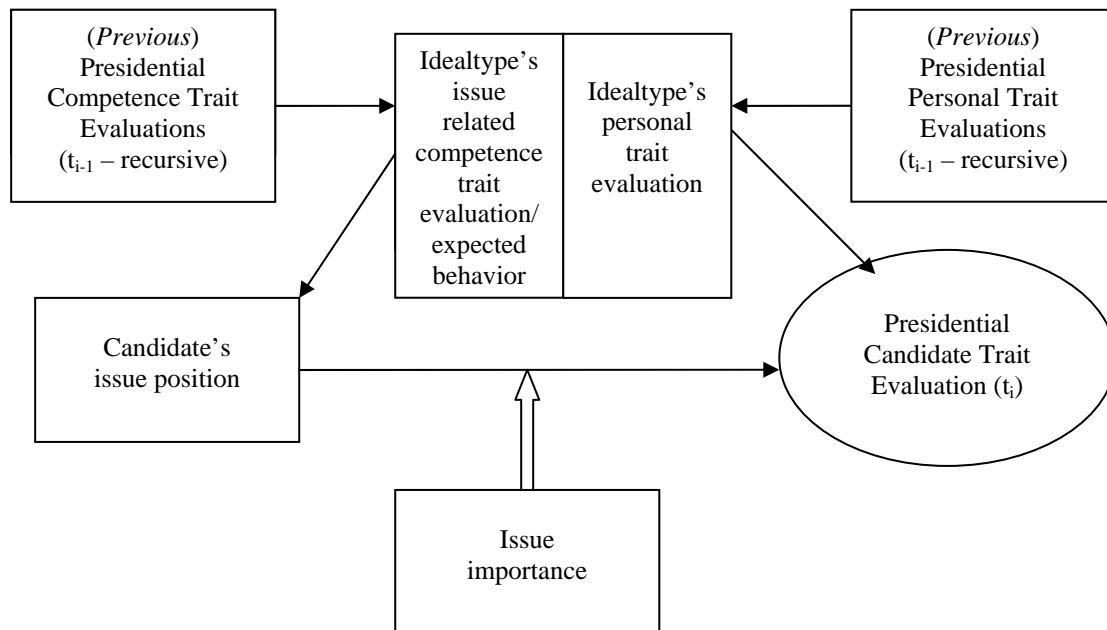
For the multivariate analysis, the misevaluation of the candidate will be used. This misevaluation reflects the deviance from the 'objective evaluation score' given by the most educated and politically informed sub-sample that shares the same party preference as the respondent. This misevaluation can be supra-evaluation or sub-evaluation. Supra-evaluation happens when the respondent gives higher scores for the candidate than the calculated 'objective evaluation' of the candidate, whereas sub-evaluation occurs when the evaluation scores given by the respondent are lower than the 'objective evaluations'. Choosing this conceptualization allows a more direct look at the presidential idealtype's effect on the evaluations. Accepting that the presidential idealtype serves as a benchmark, this involves comparison. Thus, this term is best described by a difference between values, not by absolute values. Even if the sub- or supra-evaluation is not measured as distance in evaluation from the idealtype, a relative measure is needed in order to assess the effects of previous experiences, because it offers the possibility to see how the evaluation patterns actually change. If in the multivariate analysis the absolute values of candidate evaluations are taken into consideration,

the only inference that can be drawn is whether there is an increasing or decreasing effect, but not in a comparative manner.

Relying on the present theoretical framework and considering the data availability, the main hypotheses are as follows. Firstly, the central hypothesis is that previous presidential evaluations that reflect experiences with previous presidents do have an effect on the candidate trait evaluation in a given election. In order to find supporting evidence, the previous presidential evaluation has to be a statistically and substantively significant predictor of the misevaluation of the candidates. The relationship hypothesized for the type of misevaluation is that the better the previous presidents were, the higher the odds to sub-evaluate the candidate running, because the sequentially constructed idealtype will have an actual content based on experiences that were evaluated high. In order to test the existence of presidential idealtypes, the number of previous experiences should be taken into consideration. Consequently, it is expected that, depending on age – that also reflects the number of previous encounters with presidents in office, previous experiences have a different impact on the candidate trait evaluations. Secondly, I expect different evaluation patterns depending on party identification, and this would mean differences in variances over time for the own candidate evaluations and for the misevaluations as well. In addition, the party identification should be a significant predictor of the misevaluation in the multivariate analysis section. Moreover, I hypothesize that party identification – or more precisely same party identification with the previous president – has an impact on the idealtype formation, and thus, if criterion of same political color is met, it is expected to influence the candidate evaluations differently. Third, political information is also hypothesized to have a significant effect on the misevaluation, resulting in lower misevaluation for those who are politically more sophisticated. Fourth, and last, the analysis of single trait evaluations is expected to yield different results in terms of impact and significance. Based on the competence and

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personal trait decomposition, it is expected to see convergence for the knowledge and leadership traits on one hand, and for care and morality on the other hand. More precisely, when identical models are run for prediction the misevaluation on the different traits, it is expected that the explanatory power of the independent variables will be more similar for the two competence traits; also, similarity between the results for the two personal traits is expected.

The present theory has two possibly problematic aspects. Firstly, according to previous research, control for incumbency must be included in the analysis if no distinct data is available for the person when he was in office and when he was re-running as candidate[4]. A careful look at the period under consideration suggests that the re-runners should not influence the results, since all the incumbent presidents (one term) participated as candidates as well for a next term. All the presidents that could serve as previous experience were also in the status of direct re-runners, having both statuses. Moreover, a specific control is introduced in order to account for the same political color of the respondent and the previous president. Secondly, because of the lack of direct data on the idealtypes, several inferences have to be made from other items of the ANES dataset. More importantly, the cohort analysis finds its legitimacy in the assumption that people from the same cohort were exposed to the same presidents and experiences that obviously differ on an individual level, depending on demographic and political variables. As the formation of idealtypes is a cumulative and sequential process that depends on the importance and character of each president's input, a comprehensive assessment needs 'objective' presidential performance and activity evaluation. The detailed operationalization of the concepts is offered in the next section.

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[4] APPENDIX 1 presents the candidates, presidents, and election outcomes for the period analyzed.

3. DATA AND OPERATIONALIZATION

The empirical part of the thesis uses the integrated American National Election Survey (ANES) dataset. The time period covered is 1984-2004, containing six presidential elections, and the pre-election responses are taken into consideration[5]. The ANES includes specific candidate trait evaluation questions since 1980, and these come as complementary items to the classic thermometer evaluations (ranging from 1-100 and having a general character). Eight candidate traits are asked and these refer to how: intelligent, compassionate, decent, inspiring, knowledgeable, moral, good leader, and caring the presidential candidate is. All the respondents were asked to evaluate the incumbent president, the presidential candidate from the Republican Party, and the presidential candidate from the Democratic Party. Additionally, four other items contained direct evaluations of these candidates, and they refer to the 'type of emotions' triggered by these persons: anger, fear, hopefulness, and pride[6]. This would total eight trait evaluations, four triggered emotions (affects), and one general thermometer evaluation for each of the three persons of interest. Unfortunately, not all the questions were asked repeatedly in all of the ANES editions between 1980 and 2004, and thus the analysis is reduced to four trait evaluations[7] (knowledgeable, leadership, care, and moral) that appear in each edition since 1984.

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[5] Looking at the pre-election data reduces the campaign effects on the evaluation scores. This way, no control is needed for the different types of campaigns through the years, assuring higher comparability of the measures.

[6] The three emotion questions differ from the trait evaluations in their format of measurement as well. The wording of the 'affect' is an episodic emotional measurement, because it also relies on the frequency of the emotions triggered (Ottati, Steenbergen, and Rigle 1992, 428-29). Based on the ANES integrated dataset codebook "Political figure affects – General text", the precise interviewee situation is as follows: "*Now we would like to know something about the feelings you have toward [NAME of political figure]. Has [NAME of political figure] -- because of the kind of person he is, or because of something he has done -- made you feel [AFFECT]*".

[7] Initially, a set of five trait evaluations was considered, but surprisingly the 'intelligent trait' is missing for the Republican candidate in 1996. No explanations or indications were found on the ANES official website or in the codebook for the integrated dataset or the 1996 dataset. With the goal of keeping the comparable measures for all the period studied, the 'intelligent trait' evaluation was dropped from the analysis completely.

Throughout the whole analysis, the most important variables are the ones reflecting the presidents and presidential candidates' trait evaluations. The data constraints already mentioned created the situation that only four trait evaluations can be kept. Nevertheless, these are equally distributed between competence (knowledgeable and leader) and personal traits (caring and moral). This aspect is important, since the differences between these two types of traits are also of interest. A preliminary principal component analysis[8] suggests that it is indeed possible to reduce the dimensionality of these traits, keeping one proxy value for the competence traits and one for the personal traits, the present analysis accepts the idea that the substance and content of these traits do indeed matter (Funk 1999). Consequently, all the four traits will be analyzed separately as well, and no direct competence/personal trait reduction will be used.

The evaluation items are the answers given by the respondents in a setting in which the interviewer introduces the set of traits as follows: "*I am going to read a list of words and phrases people may use to describe political figures. Think about [NAME of the political figure]. The first phrase is [TRAIT]. In your opinion, does the phrase [TRAIT] describe [NAME of the political figure] extremely well, quite well, not too well or not well at all?*"[9] This formulation is among the most used evaluation questions, and it can be considered a semantic belief measure (Ottati, Steenbergen, and Rigle 1992), and contrary to episodic measures it does not consider "the frequency of specific events or episodes" (Ottati, Steenbergen, and Rigle 1992, 429). It reflects the respondent's subjective certainty that the political figure possesses the attribute mentioned in the question. There are other possible methods of measurement, but the measurement effects are not significant, and thus this measurement method effectively represents the subjective evaluations of political figures (Ottati, Steenbergen, and Riggle 1992).

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[8] Results not reported here.
[9] ANES integrated dataset codebook: Political figure traits – General text.

The answers describing how well the actual trait describes the political figure range from "Extremely well" (coded as 1) to "Not at all" (coded 4). Although this is an ordinal four-scale item, it will be treated as a continuous, because the inner steps on the scales can be considered commeasurable. In order to make more straight-forward the interpretation of the evaluation scores, all the variables were recoded that the maximum value (4) reflects the best evaluation and the minimum value (1) reflects the worst evaluation. This reversed coding is in line with previous researches as well (Funk 1999; Hayes 2005). A collapsed trait variable is created by simply summing the four trait evaluation scores[10], referring to overall evaluation, and ranging from 4 (minimum score, when all four trait evaluations were 1) to 16 (maximum score, when all four trait evaluations were 4).

In several stages of the analysis the whole sample between 1984 and 2004 will be used, and thus there is a stringent necessity to account for differences in trait evaluations that are given by the party identification[11]. Along these lines, combined measures are created for each trait and the collapsed variable. This combined measure is computed only from the evaluation scores of the candidates. The combined measure for single traits is computed by subtracting the evaluation score given to the Republican presidential candidate from the evaluation score given to the Democratic presidential candidate. Consequently, for knowledgeable, leadership, care, and moral traits, the combined measure will take up values from -3 (where the Democratic candidate's evaluation score is 1 and the Republican's is 4) to 3 (where the Democratic candidate's evaluation score is 4 and the Republican's is 1). Since

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[10] Previous research suggests that, depending on party identification, the importance of traits is not uniform (Hayes 2005). Democrats are weight some traits as more important than Republicans, and the other way around. These effects are differentiated impact on the overall thermometer or on the vote choice itself. Since none of these relationships is analyzed here, and the traits are investigated separately, this is only an auxiliary measure, and no weighting is used in the construction of the collapsed variable. Moreover, sub-samples for Democrats and Republicans will be analyzed separately in order to avoid any possible bias generated by the different importance given to traits.

[11] Throughout the whole paper, the party identification uses the 3-category ANES item; for this variable "*Strong Republicans*" and "*Leaning Republicans*" are collapsed into the "*Republicans*" category, "*Strong Democrats*" and "*Leaning Democrats*" are collapsed into the "*Democrats*", and the remainder category is "*Independents*". For the multivariate analysis, two dummy variables will be introduced (Democrat and Republican), and the estimates for Independents are given when both dummy variables take the value 0.

the Democratic presidential candidate was chosen as a point of reference, the positive scores mean a better evaluation for this candidate, whereas the negative scores show a better evaluation for the Republican presidential candidate. Thus, it is expected to have negative values for the combined scores for respondents who declared themselves Republicans and positive scores for those that consider themselves Democrats. Using the same calculation method, a combined measure for the collapsed trait evaluations is also computed. This score ranges from -12 (where the Democratic candidate's overall evaluation score is 4 and the Republican's is 16) to 12 (where the Democratic candidate's overall evaluation score is 16 and the Republican's is 4), and its interpretation follows the same line as the one for the single traits. Yet again, these complementary measures are firstly needed for the analysis that does not use the sub-samples based on party identification; furthermore, the evaluations given to the candidates are not independent from each other. Accordingly, it can be expected that people evaluate candidate in pairs and the negativity bias (Goren 2002; Goren 2007) could also influence the evaluation score given.

To assure an even more dynamic picture of these evaluations, another set of complementary measures is computed. The absolute value of the evaluation scores is important in itself, but it also has to be connected to the general evaluations in the sample for the given year. Using these measures, it becomes important whether the respondent did sub-evaluate or supra-evaluate the candidates on the single traits (or overall), and how big the misevaluation was. The focus on sub- or supra-evaluation needs a baseline evaluation that can be considered an 'objective' or 'real' evaluation of the president or the presidential candidates. In order to compute this point of reference, I will rely on the spatial-directional voting literature (Zaller 2004, 174; Lau and Redlawsk 2006, 85), where this 'objective' value is computed mostly for issue positions and candidate positioning. Calculating or designating an objective evaluation value based on the sample means that the subjective or 'perception

like' characteristics of these evaluations are preserved. The objective evaluations are computed for each election year for each political figure of interest. The baseline evaluation scores stem from the most educated[12] and most informed independent respondents. Choosing the independents reduces the distortion given by the party identification. The highest education refers to people that have a college degree or more, and they have a very high level of political information[13]. The evaluation scores of this category of respondents is averaged for all the previously presented single trait scores, collapsed scores, and combined scores. The extent of sub- or supra-evaluation of each individual's scores is computed as differences between the evaluation scores given and the objective value (Evaluation – Objective value, for the same measure). In addition, a party identification sensitive objective evaluation score is also computed, using the same method of high education-high political information calculation. In this case, the selected respondents have declared themselves either Republicans or Democrats. This measure will be used to evaluate the sub- or supra-evaluation taking into account the party identification as well. Extensive descriptive statistics, evolution in time and detailed comparisons of these objective scores will be offered in the next section, together with the variance analysis for sub- and supra-evaluation.

The multivariate analysis uses two different dependent variables that reflect the sub- and supra-evaluations. The continuous measurement refers to the extent of misevaluation; the absolute value of the sub- or supra-evaluation of the own candidate compared to the 'objective' value given by the average of respondents with the same party identification is taken. For the sign of misevaluation, a dichotomous variable is used, taking the value 1 if the respondent supra-evaluated the candidate, and 0 if there was sub-evaluation. This measure

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[12] The original 4-category ANES education variable is used, where category 4 stands for "*College or advanced degree*", being the highest possible level of education.

[13] The interviewers are asked to evaluate each respondent's level of political information after the interview. This measure is highly correlated (correlation coefficient around 0.8) with other more sophisticated political information scores (Bartels 1996), and thus it will be used in order to select the respondents for the 'objective' evaluation scores. The level of political information is coded as a 5-scale variable, 1 reflecting very high level of political information, whereas 5 the very low level of information. This is recoded to the inverse.

also takes into account party identification sensitive averages for the objective values, representing the sub- and supra-evaluation generated by personal characteristics and evaluation patterns, not the ones caused by party identification.

The previous experiences refer to scores computed for the direct previous incumbent president. For example, the previous president's evaluation for a respondent from 1992 refers to how George Bush's average evaluation scores looked like, when this average is party identification sensitive. Thus, one cell will have two different values for this previous presidential evaluation: one for the Democrats and on for the Republicans. These evaluation scores are coded as presented above (1-4 for single traits and 4-16 for collapsed evaluation).

A weighted previous presidential evaluation is calculated in order to see the age effects. As the respondent is older, this also means that he/she had more previous experiences with presidents. The baseline value for number of previous experiences is 1 for the individuals from 1984. This way, the quantifiable previous experiences are taken into consideration. As a respondent gets older (higher age-group), the number of these previous experiences increases. Only those experiences are taken into consideration where the president had the same political identification as the respondent. According to the theoretical framework, a higher number of previous experiences should reduce the effect of the direct previous president's evaluation. Consequently, the inverse of the number of previous evaluations is used, and the actual score is multiplied by this. The formula for the weighted previous presidential evaluation /previous experience is: number of previous presidents with the same party identification. For example, a Republican respondent from 2004 being in the sixth age-group (43-47 years old) has 4 (George W. Bush, George Bush, Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan) previous presidents plus the baseline 1, making it a total of 5.

The data covers six election years, and the respondents are classified into 14 age-groups. These age-groups cover a very small time span of four years. This four year step is

given by the distance between the elections. From one election to another, respondents shift from one age-group to the next one. As mentioned the theoretical section, this 'operationalization compromise' is necessary because there is no panel data available. Appendix 2 presents the clustered dataset with the afferent numbers of observations for each category. A new cell identification variable was introduced, a nominal identification number that represents the year and the age-group in which the respondent falls. Nine full cohorts can be built[14], by shifting vertically the years and horizontally the age-groups.

Appendix 3 displays the total sample sizes for each cell, and also the number of observations for each party identification category. The sample sizes are important, because multivariate analysis will be carried out on them. Although there is a decreasing sample size as the cohorts 'get older', even the last cohort has a sufficiently big number of observations to carry our quantitative analysis on it. The nine cohorts cover the period 1984-2004 as follows: Cohort 1 for respondents born between 1966 and 1970, Cohort 2 for respondents born between 1961 and 1965, Cohort 3 for respondents born between 1956 and 1960, Cohort 4 for respondents born between 1951 and 1955, Cohort 5 for respondents born between 1946 and 1950, Cohort 6 for respondents born between 1941 and 1945, Cohort 7 for respondents born between 1936 and 1940, Cohort 8 for respondents born between 1931 and 1935, and Cohort 9 for respondents born between 1926 and 1930.

The cleaning, recoding, and preparation of the dataset was done in SPSS 15; all the variance and multivariate analysis was done using R version 2.8.1. Any other analysis specific or auxiliary variables will be described in the part when the models are built.

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[14] Only full cohorts are assessed. Furthermore, covering a 20 years period guarantees that there is enough variability among the presidential candidates and incumbent presidents with regard to characteristics, office time and party membership.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis part of this thesis is structured into two main stages. First, a preliminary analysis discusses the different sources of variance that can be found in the presidential and candidate trait evaluations. Substantively, this stage has a more descriptive character, presenting the nature and amplitude of variances over time or across age-groups. Building on these results, the second stage of the analysis focuses on possible determinants of the evaluation scores, building a multilevel model that covers the age-group and year effects.

4.1 Variance in presidential trait evaluations: consistency or dispersion during time?

Throughout this section, an in-depth analysis of the changes in the presidential candidate evaluations will be carried out. It is essential to get the necessary information about how these evaluations change, because it is the basis of any further multivariate analysis. The first stage of the combined analysis is concerned with the variance in the different candidate trait evaluations that is generated by the three units of interest: year, age-group, and cohort. These variances are calculated by using the intra-class correlations. This enables the identification of the consistency and persistence of the candidate trait evaluations. The intra-class correlation figures indicate what percentage of the variance in the dependent variable is given by the specified clustering variable (Bliese 2006). In the following part of this section, I will report the percentage of variance the groups used as clustering variables: year, age-group and cohort. In order to compute and compare the variances, the grouping variables are sequentially changed from year, to age-group and finally to cohort. All the variances were calculated using the intra-class correlation (ICC1) from the *multilevel* package of R. Moreover, for all these variances significance levels were calculated; these levels indicate whether the variance

between and within years, age-groups or cohorts is indeed statistically significant based on the sample used. All the significance levels were achieved by running chi-squared distance significance tests, and thus they are one-tailed significance levels[15].

Running the intra-class correlations for the 6 election years (where grouping variable is *year*), one can approximate the percentage of variance in the presidential candidate evaluations between years; this is generated by the fact that the candidates change from election to election. If this measure turns out very small, this would mean that the effects of candidates on their evaluation by the respondents are very small. A high percentage of the variance in the evaluation scores between years would mean that the person of the candidate is in fact an important source of the differences in evaluations. The effects of evaluations of different traits on the candidate thermometer scores vary depending on the elections, and also, the respondent's party identification is an important aspect that influences the effects of different traits on the overall evaluation and on vote choice. Consequently, variance components will be calculated for sub-samples, taking into consideration the party ID of the respondent[16]. The variance components for years for all age-groups are presented in the first row of the tables ("Variance for years"). Also, the third section of the tables ("Variance in a given age-group") reflects variances generated the fact that the observations are from different years. However, this section reports separately variance components for age-groups, because in this manner one can see how different election years affected a given age-groups. Finally, when the "Variance for cohorts" is reported in the last section of the tables, it also reflects

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[15] The chi-squared distance test uses differences in deviance and degrees of freedom between two models (Luke 2004). In this case, in order to determine the significance levels for all variances the following method was used: a null-model (intercept only, *df*=1) was estimated (using R's *glm* command for generalized linear models) for all dependent variables (combined collapsed trait, knowledgeable trait etc), and the log-likelihood of the model was transformed into deviance using the classical formula, where deviance=-2Log-Likelihood. Simultaneously, a multilevel null-model was run (intercept only, *df*=2) for the same dependent variables, and a clustering variable was specified (year, age-group, or cohort). Using the difference of between the first and second models' deviance degrees of freedom (that was always 1, since only one additional parameter had to be estimated in the second model), the chi-squared distance significance was calculated.

[16] This generates two new sets of variances, based on the following groups: Democrats or Republicans.

variances determined by different years. But in this case, the age-group effect is also encompassed by the variances between cells.

Secondly, the intra-class correlations for age-groups (grouping variable: age-group) are also valuable information sources in the process of identifying the characteristics of candidate trait evaluation patterns. The necessity of this set of intra-class correlations[17] is given by the legitimate question whether there is some specific evaluation process that is encountered in a given age-group, independent from the election. A very high variance explained by the 'age-group membership' would suggest that there is a low level of consistency (or persistence) in the candidate trait evaluations. In order to assure the further comparability of the intra-class correlation results, all the 14 age-groups will be kept in the analysis. Nevertheless, it can be argued that if the age-groups are cover such a small time period (4 years), no major differences can be observed. Changes in presidential candidate evaluation traits may appear only in a given life-stage that is described by more than one age-group (4 years)[18]. Variances for age-groups for the entire sample are reported in the second row of the tables. In the second block of variances ("Variance in a given year"), these age-group effects are broken down for each of the six election years. Also, in the last section of the tables ("Variance in a given cohort"), the age-group effects are also present, together with the year effects.

Finally, the most important set of intra-class correlations are the ones calculated for the cohorts (from 1 to 9). This case is best described as an analogy with a hypothetical

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[17] The calculations will be done for the previously mentioned subgroups as well.
[18] The main goal of this thesis is not to analyze the age-effects on vote or candidate trait evaluations, and thus I will stick to the 4-year age-groups, since this is important for the conceptualization of the entire life-cycle coverage. However, a special set of variances could be computed collapsing several age-groups. Developmental theories of voting (Plutzer 2002) can be considered as sources for the points in age, where a possible turn or shift in the evaluations can be hypothesized. Also, attitude stability tends to be lower for individuals in young adulthood (Markus 1986).

individual, advancing through the age-groups while time is not fixed[19]. A low result for the intra-class correlations for these chains would mean that a very small variance in the dependent variable is associated with differences between cells from one cohort, pointing into a direction of persistence of candidate trait evaluations throughout the aging process for different elections. However, one additional consideration is needed here. Cohorts that start with higher age-groups are expected to present smaller variances, since quasi-stabilization may be already manifesting its effects. Consequently, those cohorts that run through a time span that encapsulates a period of life at a higher age are expected to manifest lower intra-cohort variation than the ones with 'younger' age-groups. The third row of the tables presents the variances between the nine cohorts, indicating how different these nine cohorts are from each other. The last section of the tables reports the variances in a given cohort, and this section is of major interest. These variances are generated by the fact that observations are from different years and different age-groups, but the cohorts are conceived as sequential "chains". Thus, the nature of cohorts implies higher stability than age-groups taken randomly from different years. The variances for different cohorts and their relationship to values for other cells of the sample is the first clue for how consistent the cohorts are from the perspective of the presidential and presidential candidate trait evaluations.

Table 4.1.1 reports the variance components for the whole sample. The variances for the combined measures are reported for each single trait and the collapsed evaluation as well. An overwhelming part of the variances are statistically significant. It is clear that the variances for the combined-collapsed trait evaluations are much smaller than for the single traits taken separately. This first finding indicates that the overall evaluations are more consistent throughout years (and also age-groups), but substantive differences appear when looking at the single trait evaluation. When looking at the combined-collapsed trait

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[19] It has to be emphasized that this is only an analogy or a proxy used because of the lack of panel data. Panel data with repeated answers from the same respondent would best ensure that the actual measure accurately describes the changes in the presidential trait evaluations during one lifespan.

evaluations, the age-group 9 and 12 is most affected by the fact that presidential candidates change. The variances in years (generated by different age groups membership) are not substantively significant, and thus, for the combined-collapsed measure, the age effects for one given election are not very important. Focusing on the single trait combined evaluation scores, the variances look slightly different. For the knowledgeable trait, younger age-groups (1-5) and younger cohorts (1-4) register higher intra-group variances than the older ones, indicating stabilization for this trait component as the age increases.[20] The picture for the leadership trait is fuzzier, since there is small, but statistically significant intra-age-group and intra-cohort variance. Nevertheless, the oldest age-groups (12-14) and the oldest cohort appears to be more stable, not registering variance. It is also evident from the findings that the most powerful age-group effect was found in the 2004 elections, accounting for 2.40% of the variance of the leadership trait evaluation scores. The care trait evaluation behaves similarly to the leadership trait, but the variance for years is even less. This could indicate that generally the all candidates who run for the presidential office are considered 'caring' enough; the status itself guarantees some amount of care. Finally, when the candidates' morality comes into question, the results indicate a completely different pattern of evaluation. In this case, the year effects are very powerful, accounting for almost 8% of the variance[21]. This is further increased for the middle age-groups (7-9), reaching around 13%, and for cohort 5 as well. Interestingly, the older age-groups or cohorts are less stable when morality evaluations are considered. Overall, looking at Table 4.1.1 one may say that the most important finding is that the morality trait evaluation registers the most variance throughout years, and thus the candidates in different years are mostly differentiated by their perceived level of morality. Secondly, the older age-groups and cohorts are more sensible to the problem of morality, registering higher intra-age-group or cohort variance than the younger ones. Finally, it is clear

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[20] Age-group 12 and cohort 8 are exceptions.

[21] It is worth mentioning that, although substantively small, but statistically significant are the age effects as well. In this sense, the morality evaluation behaves similarly to the leadership trait evaluation.

that the previously accepted theoretical considerations related to the substantive or content-wise difference of traits and trait evaluations (Funk 1999) are reinforced by the fact that the variance components differ from trait to trait, and more importantly they tend to drop when the collapsed evaluation measure is used.

Table 4.1.1 Variance components for candidate trait evaluations (1984-2004)

	Combined-Collapsed	Combined Knowledgeable Trait	Combined Leadership Trait	Combined Care Trait	Combined Morality Trait
Variance for Years	0.57%***	2.25%***	2.56%***	0.99%***	7.77%***
Variance for Age-groups	0.26%***	0.14%***	0.55%***	0.14%***	0.51%***
Variance for Cohorts	0.13%***	0%***	0.50%***	0.16%***	0.03%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	0.50%***	0.19%***	1.41%***	0.49%***	0.06%***
1988	1.23%	0.31%	0.33%	0%	0.04%
1992	0.03%	0.14%	1.27%***	0%	0.72%**
1996	0.32%**	0%	0.33%*	0.11%*	1.66%***
2000	1.23%***	0.79%***	1.04%***	0.60%**	0.71%***
2004	1.84%	1.98%***	2.40%***	0.59%	1.17%*
Variance in a given age-group					
1	1.98%*	6.69%***	2.54%***	0.79%	4.00%***
2	1.16%	5.01%***	4.57%***	0.70%	3.24%***
3	1.36%*	5.50%***	2.43%***	1.44%*	6.72%***
4	0.60%	2.31%***	4.50%***	0.78%*	7.10%***
5	0.44%	1.32%**	3.43%***	2.15%***	6.19%***
6	0%	1.03%*	3.35%***	0%	3.96%***
7	1.10%	0.31%	2.55%***	1.36%*	13.46%***
8	1.93%**	4.57%***	2.76%***	1.23%	13.67%***
9	3.17%**	0.53%	3.86%***	3.07%***	11.27%***
10	0%	0.70%	3.14%***	1.99%**	6.59%***
11	0.36%	0.37%	5.30%***	1.24%	8.59%***
12	2.96%*	7.39%***	0%	0.02%	16.54%***
13	0%	0%	0.79%	0%	6.46%**
14	2.50%	1.29%	2.93%	0%	13.73%***
Variance in a given cohort					
1	0.05%	1.82%***	0.04%	1.21%**	7.02%***
2	1.13%*	2.06%***	3.03%***	1.04%**	8.45%***
3	0%	1.78%***	3.93%***	1.38%**	5.39%***
4	3.34%***	4.48%***	7.65%***	2.21%***	9.74%***
5	2.75%***	0.20%	7.44%***	1.50%*	13.58%***
6	0%	0.01%	3.00%***	0.71%	9.49%***
7	0%	2.46%*	2.59%**	0%	10.24%***
8	1.64%	3.54%***	2.53%**	0.37%	12.90%***
9	2.29%	1.12%	2.51%*	1.92%*	13.89%***

Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

However, this could also indicate that the respondents should be grouped separately based on party identification. For this reason, Table 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 report the same variance components for two sub-samples: Democrats and Republicans. These are still the combined evaluation scores, and they are kept even if sub-samples are analyzed, because they contain a more dynamic picture of the candidate evaluations, since both candidate evaluations are in the combined measure. Results will be interpreted in a comparative matter, focusing on similarities or differences between the two sub-samples.

As a first remark, when party ID sub-samples are used, the combined collapsed trait evaluation score variances are higher, and they are not substantively lower than the variances for the single trait evaluation scores. The results presented in Table 4.1.1 indicated the in case of this combined-collapsed measure for the whole sample, there is no important variance generated by the years or age-groups. The two tables suggest that there is higher variance in the combined trait evaluation scores among Republicans than among Democrats[22]. One important exception is the knowledgeable trait evaluation, which is more year sensitive among Democrats. Firstly, looking at the age-group effects in given years, high statistically significant variance is in 2004 for Republicans, whereas no variance can be found for Democrats. Conversely, the highest age-group effect among Democrats is in 1996[23], but there is no age-group effect among Republicans. More precisely, Republicans' combined trait evaluations for the George W. Bush – John Kerry candidate pair varied greatly among age-groups, and no such variance can be found among Democrats. Similarly, the combined evaluations for the Bill Clinton – Bob Dole candidate pair varied extensively among Democrats, but this did not happen among Republicans. This example also shows that

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[22] As a note, it has to be mentioned that main implication of the use of combined trait evaluation score is that these variances reflect not only how they perceived their 'own' candidate, but also how the other competitor was evaluated.

[23] Very similar to what happened in the 2000 elections. In this case, there was a statistically significant age-group effect among Republicans as well, but these effects were smaller.

Democrats and Republicans may have different patterns of evaluations, and these manifest themselves as variance differences even in one specific year.

Table 4.1.2 Variance components for Democrats' candidate trait evaluations (1984-2004)

	Combined-Collapsed	Combined Knowledgeable Trait	Combined Leadership Trait	Combined Care Trait	Combined Morality Trait
Variance for Years	3.41%***	6.55%***	1.86%***	1.18%***	10.64%***
Variance for Age-groups	1.03%***	0.67%***	2.05%***	0.61%***	0.20%***
Variance for Cohorts	0.15%***	0.19%***	0.68%***	0.18%***	0%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	1.04%***	0.82%***	2.18%***	0.36%***	0%***
1988	1.38%	0.25%	2.44%**	0.56%**	1.89%**
1992	0%	0.78%	2.54%***	0%	0%
1996	2.60%***	0.48%	1.47%**	2.17%**	1.27%**
2000	2.65%***	1.92%***	3.09%***	1.75%***	0%***
2004	0%	0%	1.14%	0%	0%
Variance in a given age-group					
1	1.89%	8.99%***	0.10%	0%	6.18%***
2	5.64%***	9.68%***	4.91%***	1.60%	9.76%***
3	3.20%**	9.79%***	2.20%*	2.95%**	6.16%***
4	2.18%	7.86%***	3.29%***	1.16%	7.66%***
5	1.49%	3.28%**	1.22%	1.43%	10.15%***
6	6.74%***	6.81%***	5.72%***	0.09%	10.59%***
7	6.37%***	3.87%**	3.14%**	3.04%**	16.65%***
8	3.55%*	10.37%***	1.14%	0.32%	15.75%***
9	2.84%	2.48%	0%	1.16%	9.81%***
10	2.48%	5.95%***	0%	2.58%	9.05%***
11	0%	1.61%	0.23%	0.07%	6.43%**
12	8.41%**	10.96%***	0%	1.73%	20.58%***
13	0%	0.06%	0%	0%	8.93%**
14	5.46%	3.14%	9.26%	0%	14.97%**
Variance in a given cohort					
1	3.58%**	5.06%***	1.98%	2.74%**	10.89%***
2	4.41%***	6.77%***	4.36%***	1.49%	11.42%***
3	2.23%	7.06%***	2.57%**	0.09%	9.07%***
4	7.62%***	11.96%***	4.78%	0.59%	13.17%***
5	3.09%	2.94%	6.30%***	0.53%	10.25%***
6	5.38%**	4.88%**	7.71%***	5.87%***	7.96%***
7	9.01%***	6.48%***	6.17%***	0.52%	9.77%***
8	3.51%	3.90%**	2.18%	0.86%	16.95%***
9	5.82%	6.82%**	3.76%	4.75%**	10.38%***

*Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.*

Table 4.1.3 Variance components for Republicans' candidate trait evaluations (1984-2004)

	Combined-Collapsed	Combined Knowledgeable Trait	Combined Leadership Trait	Combined Care Trait	Combined Morality Trait
Variance for Years	4.48%***	0.99%***	8.72%***	3.55%***	17.26%***
Variance for Age-groups	1.59%***	0.80%***	0.66%***	1.92%***	1.13%***
Variance for Cohorts	0%***	0.06%***	0.35%***	0.44%***	0.00%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	2.55%***	2.32%***	2.66%***	2.14%***	0%**
1988	0.10%	0.26%	0%	2.20%**	0.55%
1992	2.88%**	0.88%	0.76%	2.38%**	3.44%***
1996	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.05%
2000	1.31%***	0.80%**	1.24%***	0.53%***	0.54%**
2004	6.16%***	5.51%***	3.81%**	4.06%**	2.49%*
Variance in a given age-group					
1	3.19%	1.95%	3.96%	3.43%	3.62%
2	0.35%	1.16%	6.82%***	0.88%	3.07%*
3	1.95%	3.20%**	6.57%***	2.28%*	16.39%***
4	2.91%**	2.38%**	9.48%***	1.44%	14.94%***
5	3.84%**	1.10%	4.18%***	1.88%	14.17%***
6	4.73%**	0%	9.08%***	3.28%	14.44%***
7	8.15%***	0%	11.31%***	8.25%***	25.97%***
8	7.07%***	5.53%**	16.87%***	3.15%	26.52%***
9	17.25%***	3.73%	13.28%***	12.10%***	25.92%***
10	7.45%**	0%	17.20%***	3.60%	28.43%***
11	3.39%	2.21%	14.26%***	1.44%	24.20%***
12	7.72%*	5.67%	3.85%	2.21%	23.27%***
13	1.23%	0%	7.54%	0.31%	16.94%***
14	0%	0%	0%	5.56%	28.02%***
Variance in a given cohort					
1	4.10%**	0.47%	2.86%*	5.17%***	15.60%***
2	2.61%**	0%	8.63%***	3.58%***	11.62%***
3	8.43%***	0%	15.57%***	8.58%***	20.38%***
4	9.88%***	5.14%***	12.62%***	5.08%***	17.15%***
5	11.95%***	0.18%	16.92%***	6.59%***	29.38%***
6	8.10%***	0%	7.14%**	8.24%***	28.35%***
7	5.07%	0%	10.20%***	6.10%*	35.99%***
8	4.44%	3.71%	12.39%***	0%	23.00%***
9	3.10%	0%	2.76%	1.82%	29.47%***

Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

Looking at intra-age-group (percentage of variance between years) and intra-cohort variances (percentage of variance between years and age groups - cells), the variances highly differ between Democrats and Republicans for the combined knowledgeable trait evaluations.

Although generally there is much higher variance among Republicans, for the knowledgeable trait variances among Democrats seem substantively higher. For the other three single trait evaluations, Republicans register high statistically significant variance components for the intra-age-group and intra cohort sections. The care trait still remains the most stable, but for the younger cohorts (1-6) among Republicans high variances are found.

The variances for the moral trait evaluations among Republicans are almost twice as high as the ones for Democrats, suggesting again that the moral trait evaluation suffer the most changes throughout time. For some cohorts, these variances are around 25-30%, implying that one third of the total variances in these candidate trait evaluations stem from the differences among candidates that run in different elections (years). Even though this finding should not strike as surprising, it is interesting to observe that only the moral trait registers this high level of variance. In this sense, the evaluations for other traits are susceptible to be more stable, pointing to a different evaluation scheme or no real change in how the presidential candidates appear to be on these traits. In order to test the latter possible explanation, the sub- and supra-evaluations of the presidential candidates will be analyzed. Nevertheless, the potentially different evaluation scheme can be also tested by looking at these sub- and supra-evaluations, but for this case the comparative benchmark should be party identification sensitive ('objective' evaluations will be drawn only from the highest educated and politically most informed segment of supporters).

Before reporting and interpreting the variances in the sub- and supra-evaluations, a careful look at the objective evaluation scores is demanded. Knowing the structure and evaluation of the objective values helps in better grasping the value of the changes in the sub- and supra-evaluations. If the objective evaluation scores constantly drop, it is not surprising to detect supra-evaluations; conversely, if the objective evaluations increase (go close to the maximum values), it is highly improbable to find extensive supra-evaluations. With the goal

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of settling this question, Figure 4.1.1 presents the combined collapsed evaluation scores from the benchmark segment, depending on the party identification[24]. The most educated and politically informed Democrats' (objective evaluation score when sub-sample is Democrats) combined collapsed evaluation scores have a major decrease for 1992 and 1996 (Clinton candidacy). However, since the combined values are used, this can be due to the fact that for these years the Republican candidates had good evaluation scores as well.

Figure 4.1.1 Objective values for combined-collapsed evaluation scores depending on party identification (1984-2004)
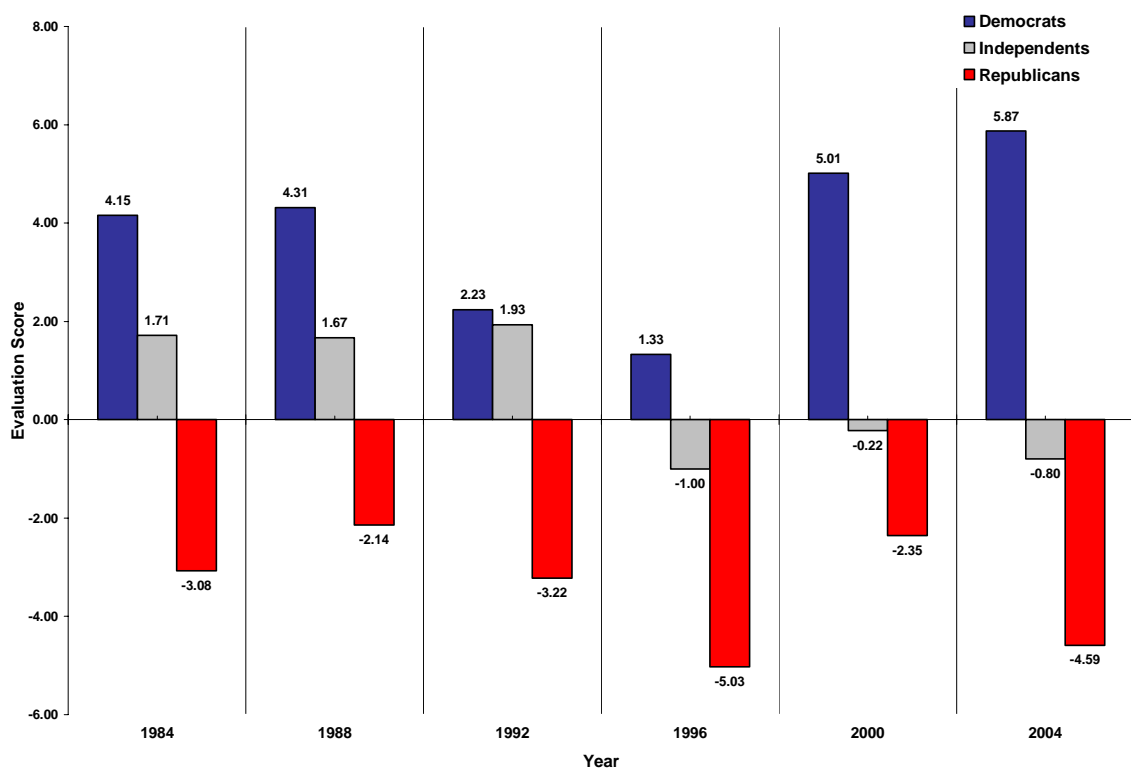
For 1992 the Democrat and Independent objective values are very close (2.23 and 1.93), reflecting similar appreciation or evaluation of the candidate-pairs for that given election. The 'objective' scores for Republicans reach the minimum for 1988 and 2000, and interestingly they are at maximum (-5.03) in 1996. Looking only at these two sets of 'objective' evaluation scores, it seems that there is a negative correlation between how

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[24] Positive values mean a net advantage in evaluation for the Democratic candidate; negative values mean a net advantage in evaluation for the Republican candidate. The closer the values are to 0, the more similar/equal the two candidates are perceived.

presidential candidate pairs were evaluated and which candidate won the elections. When Democrats saw a clear advantage on the side of their candidate (1984, 1988, 2000, 2004) that candidate lost the presidential elections; when Republicans evaluated their own candidate as being clearly superior, the candidate lost the elections. On possible explanation already stems from the preliminary analysis presented above: the combined-collapsed scores should be decomposed, since different patterns and importance is given to different trait evaluations depending on the party identification. Depending on the party identification, the distribution or representativeness of the highly educated and informed segment is different. Consequently, no general inference about the impact of trait evaluations on vote choice can be drawn based on this analysis. However, looking at single traits, it can suggest that if only the educated segment would be of consideration, which trait evaluations are better proxies for the election outcomes. Figures 4.1.2 to 4.1.5 listed in APPENDIX 4 display the combined evaluation scores for the four single traits. It is clear from the decomposed graphs that the evaluation for the moral-trait can not explain the electoral win of the Democrats in 1992 and 1996, because here Bill Clinton's net evaluation score is negative. The evaluation of how caring the democratic candidate was in 1992 and 1996 is best correlated with the actual outcome, whereas for Republicans the leadership trait evaluation seemed more important for the electoral outcome in 1984 and also in 2004. Yet again, based on the nature of the analysis, these are not conclusions that could be generalized, but it shows some preliminary importance components, and these will be used in the next section when the time-series analysis is run.

This section is also concerned with getting an insight also on how the Independents evaluated the candidates. As expected, the values are much closer to 0, indicating a more balanced evaluation. This of course is given by the fact that there is no party identification effect that alters the evaluation process. The combined-collapsed 'objective' evaluations given by Independents are in favor of the Democratic candidate for 1984, 1988 and 1992, and in the

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three subsequent elections these evaluations reflect a net advantage for the Republican candidate (a smaller net advantage). For the knowledge and care single traits, all the evaluations suggest a net advantage for the Democratic candidate, whereas on morality Republican candidates score better from 1992 to 2004. For leadership, the picture is very symmetric for scores and years, advantages altering depending on the elections. There is one single occasion when the evaluations given by the Independents reflect a higher net advantage for one candidate than the advantage perceived by the candidate's own supporters. In 1992 the Democratic candidate was perceived more caring by the Independents than by the Democrats. On the same token, in 1992 Bill Clinton was perceived less moral from his own supporters than from the Independents. This brief overview of the objective evaluations suggests that the effects of Bill Clinton's candidacy were more controversial and out of pattern than the other candidates' runs. Generally, there are changes in the 'objective' evaluations throughout the years considered in this analysis, and the turning point is in 1996, when the evaluation scores from Independents shift into a net advantage for the Republican candidates. The combined-collapsed score's evaluation reflects divergent trends for the single trait objective evaluations, where some traits always 'go' to the Democrats, and some traits always 'stay' at the Republicans. These figures compared the 'objective' values that can be derived from Democrats, Independents and Republicans. Throughout this part of the analysis I wanted to make sure that the sub- and supra-evaluation scores presented below are not artificial, reflecting a constant drop or increase in the objective scores that were used as baseline comparison values.

Table 4.1.4 reports the averages of sub- and supra-evaluations when the baseline comparison is the objective score from the Independents. When looking at the whole sample, for the combined-collapsed scores there is a general sub-evaluation until 1996, and from there on there is an increasing supra-evaluation. This pattern can be found for the moral trait

Table 4.1.4 Averages of sub- or supra-evaluation compared to the 'objective value from independents'

	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004
Combined collapsed						
Whole sample	-1.90	-1.48	-1.90	0.45	0.63	1.03
Democrats	0.55	0.64	0.19	2.99	3.29	4.59
Republicans	-4.72	-3.76	-4.76	-2.84	-2.47	-3.39
Combined knowledgeable						
Whole sample	-0.69	-0.51	-0.62	-0.17	-0.35	-0.26
Democrats	-0.21	-0.15	-0.30	0.22	0.10	0.43
Republicans	-1.22	-0.91	-1.06	-0.70	-0.87	-1.07
Combined leadership						
Whole sample	-0.03	0.05	-0.55	0.22	-0.17	0.49
Democrats	0.71	0.69	0.02	0.85	0.55	1.49
Republicans	-0.91	-0.64	-1.32	-0.61	-1.07	-0.73
Combined care						
Whole sample	-0.36	-0.37	-0.88	-0.51	-0.007	-0.18
Democrats	0.44	0.32	-0.16	0.30	0.81	0.87
Republicans	-1.29	-1.14	-1.88	-1.54	-1.00	-1.46
Combined moral						
Whole sample	-0.80	-0.63	-0.54	0.94	0.35	0.87
Democrats	-0.38	-0.25	-0.09	1.59	0.94	1.68
Republicans	-1.30	-1.07	-1.19	0.05	-0.34	-0.15

Note 1: For the whole sample and also for the sub-samples, the sub- and supra-evaluations are the ones compared to the objective value computed from the highest educated and best informed independents. A negative sign means that the 'objective evaluation' was higher than the one given by the respondent. A positive sign means that the 'objective evaluation' was lower than the one given by the respondent. Since these are combined values, for the first one (collapsed) they range from -12 to +12, whereas for the different combined traits they range from -3 to +3. For both cases, the higher and positive value means a higher evaluation for the presidential candidate of the Democrats.
Note 2: For the whole sample and also for the sub-samples, the sub- and supra-evaluations follow a normal distribution.

evaluations as well, whereas for knowledgeable and care a small, but constant sub-evaluation

is present.

Analyzing the sub-samples, the combined-collapsed measure shows supra-evaluation

for both Democrats and Republicans, and these are generated by the party identification.

Leadership is the only single trait where all the sub- and supra-evaluations have the expected

directions, reflecting supra-evaluations for both sides. Interestingly, Democrats sub-evaluated

on the knowledgeable trait the candidates from 1984 to 1992, and this phenomenon also happened for care in 1996. In line with the previously presented 'outlier' status of morality, here as well Democrats tended to sub-evaluate the perceived net advantage of their candidate from 1984 to 1992, and then the evaluations changed. Overall, for the collapsed and also for the single trait measures, one can argue that Republicans fit the expected pattern of constantly (to different extent) supra-evaluating their candidate compared to the 'objective value', whereas Democrats tend to fluctuate throughout time. These results should be viewed through the lenses of previous findings for the variance components of absolute measures. Thus, the initial finding (based on table 4.1.2 and 4.1.3) was that there is substantively higher variance among Republicans when it comes to the combined trait evaluations, but this high variance seems to have no effect on the patterns of sub- or supra-evaluations. Conversely, although there is lower variance among Democrats, there is no stable pattern in sub- or supra-evaluations.

In other words, Republicans seem to follow more compactly the 'objective' evaluations, but register a higher variance on these given limits. As a next step, variances in the sub- or supra-evaluations for Democrats and Republicans are investigated. These variance components are analyzed to offer a general perspective on how the sub- and supra-evaluations relate to the independent objective score. The multivariate analysis uses the party identification sensitive misevaluations, and thus Table 4.15 and Table 4.1.6 are reported in APPENDIX 5. Based on these previous findings, it is expected to see higher variance among Democrats, suggesting that the evaluation process that results in either sub- or supra-evaluation is highly affected by the changing candidates. As expected, when the effects of years are considered for the intra-age-group and intra-cohort levels, the variances are very high and statistically significant for both groups (Democrats and Republicans), but it is also straight-forward that these variances among Democrats is almost twice as high as among

Republicans[25]. The lowest variance among Democrats is for age-group 13 (15.96%), and this value is very close to the maximum (16.13% for age-group 12) among Republicans.

Likewise, the highest value for intra-cohort variances is 11.67% among Republicans (cohort 8), but even this is well below the minimum observed among Democrats (15.59% for cohort 9). There is no general pattern that would suggest the decrease of variances as age increases, and thus the sub- and supra-evaluation mechanisms are not stabilized at an older point of life. The most extensive similarity between Democrats and Republicans in terms of variances is for the combined-care trait, but the previously observed tendencies continue to persist. The variances (and also the differences between Democrats and Republicans in terms of these values) culminate for morality again, Democrats registering over 40% variances for this trait sub- or supra-evaluations.

These results for variance components stress again that the evaluation processes for Democrats and Republicans differ substantially. Moreover, when sub- or supra-evaluations are considered, the variances are much higher than the ones detected for the absolute evaluation scores. It is possible to argue that this could be an artifact of the operationalization, because the Independent 'objective' score also change throughout the six election years. But this consideration must be instantly rejected, because if the 'objective' value is taken as a proxy for the perception about the candidates that describes accurately their real traits, using it in the operationalization should decrease the variance. The underlying argument here is that if only the combined evaluations in absolute score are taken into consideration, the main source of variance between years is given by the fact that different candidates are running for election. If their actual characteristics are compiled into a distinct measure ('objective' value) that is used as a baseline for comparison, this should indeed reduce the unexplained variance. Allowing a reduced scale where the relative scores could vary, and accepting that some

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[25] When the effect of age is taken under review, the sub- and supra-evaluations among Republicans from 2004 are most extensively affected. Conversely, for Democrats the age-effects peaked for the 2000 elections.

differences in the candidate traits are captured by the 'objective' evaluation scores, takes away from the potential variance that can be observed. However, the present situation reflects the opposite, the variances in sub- or supra-evaluations pointing to the existence of additional sources of differences besides the fact that the candidates change throughout the elections. Thus, it can be argued that these higher variances are somewhat unexpected, and yield a better snapshot of the cognitive evaluation procedures and their outcomes, because they are 'relative' measures including a comparative (with the objective evaluation scores) aspect.

Finally, Table 4.1.7 and 4.1.8 present the variance components for sub- and supra-evaluations, when the baseline comparison value is the evaluation given by the most educated and politically informed segment of respondents with the same party identification. This second type of operationalization takes into account the party identification not just in a form of a sub-sample, but also as a form of perception determination. When the 'objective' values are computed based on the Independents, one could argue that these are somewhat closer in evaluation patterns to one party's supporters than to the other party's supporters. Looking only at the objective evaluations from Independents, Democrats and Republicans, this assertion has indeed some support, and the important question becomes whether whatever determines the different patterns of evaluations is party identification specific (and valid for all the respondents with the same party ID), or it is specific for each individual. As it is already clear that there are party specific patterns, lower levels of variances are expected for these last two sets. Nevertheless, if significant variances are detected, it is susceptible that these party identification specific patterns do not capture all the sources of differences, and thus differences in individual experiences may be hypothesized as sources of variance. The results from the last two tables come as complementary evidence and empirical foundation for the time-series models that will be built in the next section, and the main concern of this variance analysis is to see how the sub- and supra-evaluation of respondents' 'own candidate'

Table 4.1.7 Variance components for Democrats' candidate trait sub- or supra-evaluations
(1984-2004, where the objective score is party ID sensible)

	Combined-Collapsed	Dem Cand Knowledgeable Trait	Dem Cand Leadership Trait	Dem Cand Care Trait	Dem Cand Morality Trait
Variance for Years	11.69%***	2.89%***	6.25%***	1.83%***	9.19%***
Variance for Age-groups	1.09%***	0.75%***	1.51%***	1.36%***	1.50%***
Variance for Cohorts	0.40%***	0.80%***	1.40%***	0.86%***	1.15%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	1.04%***	0%***	2.17%***	1.39%***	4.92%***
1988	1.38%	0.89%	2.22%**	0.72%**	2.38%***
1992	0%	1.60%**	3.27%***	0.80%	0%
1996	2.60%***	2.30%***	1.60%***	1.62%***	0%***
2000	2.65%***	0.74%***	0.89%***	2.97%***	4.81%***
2004	0%	0%	0.51%	1.04%	0.26%
Variance in a given age-group					
1	9.92%***	3.32%*	12.30%***	2.14%	9.96%***
2	15.02%***	4.87%***	5.94%***	4.37%***	13.70%***
3	13.57%***	4.34%***	7.55%***	3.76%***	13.81%***
4	13.49%***	2.51%**	3.70%***	1.35%	10.33%***
5	12.67%***	3.71%***	4.00%	1.12%	12.84%***
6	8.21%***	2.10%*	5.12%***	0.14%	8.42%***
7	12.39%***	3.30%**	8.33%***	0.68%	7.72%***
8	9.16%***	4.46%**	8.58%***	4.13%**	8.80%***
9	7.66%***	1.75%	4.23%**	0%	6.19%***
10	13.47%***	1.09%	8.20%***	1.89%	4.97%**
11	16.18%***	4.28%**	8.88%***	2.65%	8.62%***
12	3.07%	0.43%	8.66%***	2.54%	1.44%
13	13.00%**	0%	0.55%	0.42%	4.64%
14	9.10%	4.38%	5.51%	4.30%	5.56%
Variance in a given cohort					
1	14.72%***	3.68%***	12.12%***	2.24%**	11.13%***
2	7.75%***	2.32%**	2.49%**	2.35%**	9.22%***
3	10.67%***	1.38%	9.01%***	0.99%	6.39%***
4	7.88%***	0%	3.31%***	0.69%	13.23%***
5	8.11%***	2.12%	0.69%	1.99%	6.28%***
6	17.62%***	1.51%	6.37%***	2.90%*	4.97%***
7	24.12%***	6.04%***	12.14%***	4.24%**	14.09%***
8	15.17%***	0.28%	1.41%	4.20%**	8.18%***
9	9.51%***	3.09%*	4.87%**	4.18%**	3.06%

Note: *** is $p<0.01$; ** is $p<0.05$; * is $p<0.1$. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

Table 4.1.8 Variance components for Republicans' candidate trait sub- or supra-evaluations
(1984-2004, where the objective score is party ID sensible)

	Combined-Collapsed	Rep Cand Knowledgeable Trait	Rep Cand Leadership Trait	Rep Cand Care Trait	Rep Cand Morality Trait
Variance for Years	2.21%***	11.09%***	3.79%***	0.42%***	1.78%***
Variance for Age-groups	1.19%***	0.53%***	0.28%***	1.86%***	2.46%***
Variance for Cohorts	0.20%***	0.31%***	0.03%***	0.53%***	1.26%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	2.55%***	1.01%***	0.67%***	1.34%***	2.52%***
1988	0.10%	1.85%**	0.04%	2.72%**	3.80%***
1992	2.88%**	0%	0.35%	2.63%***	1.66%
1996	0%	0.45%	0%	0.79%	1.47%
2000	1.31%***	0%*	0%***	0.43%***	2.35%**
2004	6.16%***	3.46%*	1.29%	1.70%	3.62%**
Variance in a given age-group					
1	4.16%*	11.09%***	4.78%**	0%	0%
2	4.51%**	16.52%***	6.71%***	0%	1.89%
3	3.57%**	13.93%***	5.10%***	0%	0.67%
4	4.32%***	14.04%***	4.41%***	1.08%	3.72%***
5	3.47%**	7.65%***	3.52%**	0%	5.98%***
6	3.23%	6.85%***	2.45%	1.34%	1.32%
7	3.93%**	8.62%***	0.62%	0.67%	0.96%
8	3.23%	11.43%***	1.91%	0.88%	0.19%
9	4.27%	11.29%***	1.25%	0%	6.49%***
10	0.36%	7.60%***	2.11%	0%	0%
11	0.61%	14.10%***	2.32%	0.73%	0%
12	1.60%	5.11%*	5.53%*	1.67%	3.37%
13	0.38%	11.30%**	1.86%	0.82%	0.22%
14	0%	22.40%***	4.52%	6.30%	0%
Variance in a given cohort					
1	4.07%***	12.33%***	8.34%***	0%	1.82%
2	2.11%*	13.39%***	2.61%**	0.68%	3.19%**
3	5.50%***	17.13%***	3.24%**	0.47%	2.58%*
4	2.20%	9.41%***	0%	0%	0.37%
5	2.76%	13.17%***	2.43%	3.57%*	2.50%
6	0.63%	3.35%	2.30%	2.70%	4.79%**
7	0.51%	6.62%**	0%	0%	0%
8	1.25%	11.16%***	2.57%	0%	0.46%
9	2.43%	14.44%***	2.53%	0%	4.21%

Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

varies over time. At this point of the analysis, abandoning the combined measures is justified,

because the intra-party variances for supporter sub- or supra-evaluations are of interest, and

the determinants of these variances may have to be tested differently later on. These results also point to a higher intra-cohort and intra age-group variance among Democrats than Republicans. It can be inferred that the supporters of the Democratic Party are more heterogeneous, registering different sub- and supra-evaluations even when the baseline comparison is with the 'objective' evaluations given by a segment that shares their party identification[26]. In the Republican sub-sample, variances for older age-groups (7-14) and older cohorts (4-9) are not significant, suggesting consistency in the sub- and supra-evaluation patterns. One exception though is the knowledgeable trait, and here 10-11% variances are present for all age-groups and cohorts. Clearly, this indicates less crystallized patterns of evaluations and major differences in the knowledgeable trait for Republican candidates that are not grasped by the 'objective' value[27]. Furthermore, only three age-groups and two cohorts have statistically significant inner variances for the morality trait sub- or supra-evaluations, signaling consistency in the sub- or supra-evaluations for this trait.

At the beginning of this section it was suggested that the descriptive statistics for variances (for any given 'dependent variable') should indicate lower variances in the cohorts than for age-groups[28]. Since no age-group is directly comparable with one of the cohorts, there is no meaningful and straight forward way to compare the variance components. The results suggest that the intra-cohort variances between cells are present and they are statistically significant, displaying no obvious persistence or higher consistency for these units.

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[26] One artificial source of the lower variance for Republicans could be given by the fact that the Republicans are slightly more educated on average, and they are also older. In this sense, it could be argued that the 'objective' evaluation score better represents the average Republican voter. Nevertheless, the difference in average education is very small, and is highly improbable that it has a significant effect on the sub- or supra-evaluations.

[27] This can be determined either by unanimous sub-evaluation of one candidate, and unanimous supra-evaluation of another candidate, or by diverging evaluations for one candidate. These scenarios will be analyzed in the next section, but looking at the variances in a given year (very low, exception 2004), the first explanation seems more plausible.

[28] Intra-cohort and intra-age-group variances that stem from the fact that the observations are from different years.

This stage of the analysis was a necessary preliminary descriptive step, and it contributes to a better understanding of the 1984-2004 candidate trait evaluation data from the ANES. Even though no specific hypothesis was tested, based on the variance components and their structure, some tentative preliminary conclusions can be formulated.

(a) Presidential candidate trait evaluations vary across election years, and this variance can be found for Democrats and for Republicans as well. However, the variances are different with regards to extent and also how they are distributed among age-groups or cohorts. The findings of this preliminary analysis have an important implication for the subsequent steps of analysis from a methodological and statistical perspective. For absolute and relative values of evaluations, for any type of operationalization or 'dependent' variable, statistically significant variance was found across years. This guarantees that the multivariate analysis carried out will have dependent variables that do take up different values, making the analysis statistically meaningful.

(b) Evaluating the presidential candidates' moral trait is the most sensitive to the changes in the person of the candidate, and there is no observable stable evaluation pattern for this trait. Furthermore, the moral trait varies more among Democrats, and this finding is valid for the sub- or supra-evaluations as well.

The sub- and supra-evaluations of candidates (no matter which 'objective' evaluation is used as reference category) also varies across years, indicating that the differences in evaluations are not only generated by the 'objective' difference between candidates running in different years. These findings point to different evaluation schemes that may well depend on the different cognitive comparisons that make reference to previous experiences. Distinct patterns of sub- or supra-evaluations can be found among Democrats and Republicans, and to what extent these sub- or supra-evaluations can be explained by previous evaluations of presidents becomes the main question of the next section.

4.2 Previous experiences as determinants of the misevaluation of candidates: multilevel analysis

In order to test the possible influences of previous presidents on the candidate evaluations, the present section of multivariate analysis considers the full nine cohorts from the whole sample. Respondents' experiences with previous presidents stack up and create the main content of these evaluations, manifesting themselves as benchmarks for comparisons. The decision to qualify a president or a presidential candidate as highly moral (maximum score on trait evaluation) is not determined only by the existing moral standards of the respondent, but is also influenced by how moral the presidents were perceived. This confers a relative or comparative aspect of these evaluations, practically meaning that the understanding of the content of evaluation scores – or what do they actually reflect – are best done by looking at the previous incumbent presidents' traits. The theoretical framework presented in the second chapter indicates a justified main claim of this paper that the presidential role is not something absolute in terms of evaluations; the straightforward implication is that the focal relationship that should be tested is between the candidate evaluation scores and previous experiences.

4.2.1 Methodological considerations and model specification: Collapsed trait evaluations

These theoretical expectations are amended by the results of the preliminary analysis in the previous section. Looking at the variance components, it is clear that there are changes throughout years in the evaluations, and these evaluation patterns are different when it comes to respondents with different party identification[29]. Similarly, variance differences are to be

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[29] The multilevel analysis carried out in this section considers only respondents that declared a specific party identification. The main reason for the analysis of this sample excluding the independents is that the variance tests indicated different evaluation patterns between the supporters of the two parties and these different patterns are of interest. Moreover, some of the concepts developed in the theoretical framework are party

found between different single traits, indicating that some traits evaluations are more 'fixed', while other vary consistently throughout time or age. The variance components suggest that some individuals are more similar than other in the database used. The intra-class correlation for the sub- or supra-evaluation[30] when the clusters are the cells from all the nine full cohorts[31] is 0.02978, indicating that around 3% of the variance is between clusters. Also, using the cells as clustering variables already accounts for the possible variances generated by the difference in years and age-groups. Furthermore, the lack of panel data induces the necessity to build the previous experience based on the averages of the previous age-group in the previous year, making the value of these previous president evaluations identical for the individuals in one given cell, for respondents with the same party identification[32].

This section proposes the analysis of these effects through the lenses of the observed sub- or supra-evaluations of actual candidates. When operationalizing the sub- or supra-evaluation of candidates by the respondents, two distinct ways are available. The sub- or supra-evaluation can be seen as a dichotomous variable, where the value 1 stands for supra-evaluation and 0 for the sub-evaluation[33]. Nevertheless, if the extent of sub- or supra-evaluation is also a question that should be addressed, this concept can be operationalized as a continuous variable that reflects the deviance from the 'objective' evaluation of the candidate; this operationalization disregards whether the misevaluation is sub- or supra-evaluation, and it

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identification dependent (for example same party ID with previous presidents, previous president's evaluation).

[30] In this case the net sub-or supra-evaluation is operationalized as the dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if there is supra-evaluation and 0 if there is sub-evaluation.

[31] The multivariate analysis is concerned only with the section of the data that covers the full cohorts. Thus, there are 54 cells in total, given by the fact that there are 6 election years and 9 full cohorts.

[32] As presented in the Data chapter (chapter 3), a cell is defined by the year and the age-group, being a component of one given cohort. Each cohort is built up by six cells that shift for year and age-group simultaneously.

[33] Coding the sub- and supra-evaluation this way is in line with the data structure, since there are no respondents who did give the exact same evaluation as the baseline comparison (educated and politically informed independents, or educated and politically informed members from the same party supporters as the respondents).

is only interested in the extent of it[34]. Thus, the more pertinent concept is the misevaluation; it incorporates the difference in score from the 'objective' evaluation of the candidate.

Both of these variables take into consideration the sub- or supra-evaluation that is sensitive to party identification. Democrats tend to supra-evaluate the Democratic candidate, and similarly, Republicans tend to supra-evaluate the Republican candidate. For this reason, the net sub- and supra-evaluation of interest is the one that strips this concept from the party identification influence. Consequently, the net sub- and supra-evaluation is calculated as a difference between the evaluation score given by the respondent and the 'objective' score, computed as an average from the most educated and politically informed segment that shares the respondent's party identification. By this, the sub- and supra-evaluation scores reflect those deviances from the 'objective' values that are determined by personal characteristics. As hypothesized in the present paper, one expected determinant of this net misevaluation and its direction (sub- or supra-evaluation) should be the previous experience with presidents. In the first part of this analysis section the sub- and supra-evaluation of the collapsed trait evaluation is used, further decomposition on single traits will follow later in this chapter. All the regressions were run for misevaluation computed as overall misevaluation (collapsed trait evaluations that sum up knowledge, leadership, care, and moral trait evaluations). The previous experiences with presidents also reflect these collapsed evaluation scores.

The nested data structure and using cell averages as proxies for the previous experiences generates the need of a multilevel analysis. When the response variable is continuous and the extent of misevaluation is of interest, a linear multilevel regression model is built, and this is estimated by residual maximum likelihood (REML) estimation. When the response variable is dichotomous, a multilevel logistic regression model is built, and it is estimated with Laplace approximation.

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[34] Technically, the modulus of the sub- or supra-evaluation value is used – see Chapter 3 (Data).

Before presenting the model specifications and the results of the empirical multivariate analysis, a short reiteration of the theoretical justification of the 'previous experience' conceptualization is needed. As discussed in the second chapter, the influences on candidate trait evaluations are expected to be generated by those experiences that are linked to previous presidents, not previous presidential candidates. The presidential role and the cognitive image about this function and person is a concept that gathers the traits and characteristics of presidents that were office holders. The four-year presidential mandate puts the person into a leading position that is visible and communicated, generating content and expectations towards the presidential role. Candidates that did not win the elections do not have the real possibility to shape these roles and functions in the public's perception. Thus, when the effects of previous experiences are investigated, these rely on the office holder presidents' traits. Party identification and the number of previous presidents (related to the age) could also influence the effects of previous experiences. With regard to this aspect, one may argue that previous presidents of the same political color as the respondent have a much more substantive impact on the actual candidate evaluations. If there are many previous presidents that were observed by the respondent (or implicitly it is an older respondent), this could moderate the impact of the immediate previous president – incumbent before the elections. These aspects are handled by specific controls and interaction terms in the models that follow.

Model 1 is the random intercept linear multilevel regression model where the dependent variable (*SubSupraC*) continuous, reflecting the misevaluation of the candidate compared to the 'objective' value.

Level 1 specification:

$$SubSupraC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Polinf + \beta_2 Edu + \beta_3 Nonwhite + \beta_4 Female + \beta_5 Dem +$$
$$\beta_8 IdenT + \beta_9 Pprev + \beta_{10} PprevW + \beta_{11} Pprev*IdenT + e$$

Level 2 specification:

$$\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} Cohort + r$$

where *SubSupraC* is the continuous response variable that represents the extent of deviance or misevaluation of the candidate that has the same political color as the respondent. These scores are the net sub- or supra-evaluations encompassing only the evaluation deviances that are generated by personal characteristics, and so the party specific evaluation deviances are excluded. The farther the values are from 0, the higher the extent of deviance. *Polinf* represents the respondent's level of political information and it is coded as a five-scale continuous variable, where 5 is the maximum level of political information (very high) and 1 is the minimum level (very low). *Edu* reflects the respondents level of education coded on 4-scales, where 4 stands college degree and 1 stands for no education. *Female* and *Nonwhite* are dummy variables for gender and race, taking the value 1 if the respondent is a female in the first case, and if the respondent is not white for the second one. In case of the race dummy variable, 1 stands for all other races, and white is the reference category. *Dem* is a dummy variable for the party identification, being 1 if the respondent is Democrat and being 0 if the respondent is Republican. *IdenT* is a dummy variable that takes the value 1, if the respondent's party identification is the same as the direct previous president's party membership; conversely, it is 0 if the party ID is different. As an example, in 2004 for a respondent who declares him/herself a Democrat the value of *IdenT* will be 0, because the direct previous president in office, between 2000 and 2004, was George W. Bush (R).

Pprev are *PprevW* are the predictors that contain information on the previous experiences. *Pprev* is the previous president's evaluation score that is computed based on the average evaluation among respondents with the same party identification given by the respective cell of the incumbent president before the election[35]. *PprevW* [36]is the weighted

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[35] These averages that represent the evaluation scores for the previous president are also party identification sensible. To increase the resemblance between the respondent and the source of the previous president's evaluation, the averages were computed for the same party identification as the respondent's. Methodologically, this means that each cell (the clustering variable) has two distinct values for the previous presidential evaluation (one for Democrats and one for Democrats), making this variable an individual level predictor, since the value is not uniform for each cell.

score for the previous evaluation that takes into consideration the number of same political color previous presidents that were encountered by the respondent[37]. In order to test whether it is important from the perspective of impact on the candidate trait evaluations that the previous president is of the same political color as the respondent, the last predictor is an interaction term between the dummy variable *IdenT* and the value of the previous president's evaluation. Finally, the equations for both level have the specific error terms *e* and *r*.

Model 2 is the random intercept multilevel logistic regression[38] model where the dependent variable (*SubSupraC*) is coded as dichotomous, becoming 1 if the respondent supra-evaluated the candidate compared to the 'objective value', and 0 if sub-evaluated him.

Level 1 specification:

$$\text{(Link function Logit)} \text{SubSupraC} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Polinf} + \beta_2 \text{Edu} + \beta_3 \text{Nonwhite} + \beta_4 \text{Female} + \beta_5 \text{Dem} + \beta_8 \text{IdenT} + \beta_9 \text{Pprev} + \beta_{10} \text{PprevW} + \beta_{11} \text{Pprev*IdenT} + e$$

Level 2 specification:

$$\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} \text{Cohort} + r$$

The only difference between Model 1 and Model 2 is in the dependent variable, and implicitly the coefficients estimated by the models and their interpretation. Consequently, the coefficients will be logistic regression coefficients that represent log-odds. Using the exponents of these coefficients, the effects of the independent variables on the odds of supra-evaluating will be analyzed. Employing both types of analyses assures that the effect of previous presidents on the extent of misevaluation and on the direction (sub- or supra) of this misevaluation are assessed as well. However, comparing the coefficients or drawing comparative inferences based on Model 1 and Model 2 is methodologically and substantively inappropriate The results for the linear regression analysis coefficients offer insight on how

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[36] Because of the method of calculation, this variable has very small values. The mean centered variable ranges from 0.1 to 0.23, and thus it was multiplied by 10 to get interpretable coefficients in the regressions.

[37] For detailed description of these variables and examples for values check Chapter 3 – Data.

[38] Multilevel modeling is also appropriate for binary data, presenting no statistical disadvantages (Guo and Zhao 2000)

the previous experiences influence the deviance from the average objective evaluation of the own presidential candidate. Conversely, using the dichotomous dependent variable the logistic analysis tries to answer a fundamentally different question: what are the effects of the previous experiences on the probabilities to supra-evaluate the current presidential candidate?

Both for the linear multilevel regression and for multilevel logistic regression all the continuous variables were grand mean centered, in order to get interpretable intercepts. This step allows the interpretation of the intercept, since all the continuous variables will be on their average value. Exception is education, where the coding from 1 to 4 was changed to 0 to 3, and thus when the intercept is interpreted this means that we are in the case where the education is the lowest. Interaction term is not mean centered, because in their case the averages are not meaningful. When the intercepts are discussed, the interaction term is 0, and it will be presented extensively when the variable is equal to this value.

Assessing model fit when employing multilevel models relies on comparisons between models. Two null-models are run to set the baseline for model comparison. The first one is a pooled regression null model, and the second one is the multilevel null model where the intercept is let to vary randomly without any predictors.

Pooled baseline null model specification for linear regression:
$$\text{SubSupraC} = \beta_0 + e$$
Pooled baseline null model specification for logistic regression:
(Link function Logit) $\text{SubSupraC} = \beta_0 + e$
Baseline multilevel null model specification for linear regression:
Level 1: $\text{SubSupraC} = \beta_0 + e$
Level 2: $\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + r$
Baseline multilevel null model specification for logistic regression:
Level 1: (Link function Logit) $\text{SubSupraC} = \beta_0 + e$
Level 2: $\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + r$

The models are nested and thus the difference in deviance (-2LL) serves as an indicator of model fit (Luke 2004), and the Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) is used. Adding

more parameters in the estimation automatically reduces the deviance, but this difference in deviance has to be statistically significant to demonstrate that the second model is better (Luke 2004). The statistical significance of the difference in deviance is assessed by chi-squared distance test (Luke 2004). Similarly, the AIC is also expected to be lower if the more specified model better fits the data.

4.2.2 Results and interpretation: Collapsed trait evaluations

Table 4.2.1.1 presents the goodness-of-fit statistics for Model 1, Table 4.2.1.2 presents the coefficients and significance levels of the fixed effects for Model 1. The goodness-of-fit statistics indicate that the pooled baseline model is outscored by both multilevel models, and the difference in deviance is highly significant. In line with this measure of fit, the Akaike Information Criterion is also decreasing as the more sophisticated models are employed. These goodness-of-fit statistics show that the multilevel model with the specified second-level predictors of the intercept yields the best fit and it is net superior to the baseline models.

Table 4.2.1.1 Goodness-of-fit statistics for the linear multilevel regression model

	Akaike Information Criterion (AIC)	Deviance	DF	Chi-squared distance and significance
Pooled Baseline Model	-	32635.39	2	-
Baseline ML Model	32420	32414	3	221.39***[39]
Model 1	28162	28136	13	4277.7***
Sample size	5421 observations in 54 cells			

*Note: *** is p<0.01; One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.*

At first glance, looking at the coefficients from Model 1 displayed in Table 4.2.2 the most important finding is that previous presidential evaluation score is highly significant. The

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[39] Chi-squared distance significance test between the two null models. Since the models are nested, and the specified model outscores the null multilevel model, it implicitly has a much better fit than the pooled null model as well.

intercept does not reach statistical significance, and so the first influential variables are education and level of political information. Surprisingly, a higher education and level of political information increases the misevaluation. A tentative explanation could be that the this segment has higher expectations, and thus misevaluation increases but in the direction of sub-evaluation. Gender has no significant effect on the extent of misevaluation of candidates, but being Afro-American or Latino does increase the misevaluation. This group of people may have other media consumption and evaluation patterns when it comes to candidates, looking for other characteristics in a candidate. Other source of inference for the trait evaluation may increase the misevaluation. Based on the variance analysis in the previous section one could expect a difference in the extent of sub- or supra-evaluation between the supporters of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and these results confirm such a difference. Being Democrat reduces significantly the misevaluation, suggesting that Democrats have a clearer and more unified view about their candidates, placing converging evaluations. The dummy variable that indicates the importance of the identical party identification for respondent and previous president is has a huge positive effect on the misevaluation, showing that the misevaluations much higher when the previous president was of the same political color as the respondent[40]. However, this variable assessed alone can not yield much explanation, since its real importance is given by the interaction with the previous presidential evaluations.

The previous presidential evaluation reaches very high statistical significance, and has a positive effect; one unit increase in the previous evaluations pushes up the misevaluation by 0.262. The better perceived (objective value) the previous president was, the higher the misevaluation of the candidate will be. Even though this model does not give details about the direction of the misevaluation, this effect is not surprising.

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[40] Looking at the database, this may not be surprising: it is already known that being a Republican increases the misevaluation (Party ID dummy variable), and there four previous Republican presidents, making it more frequent for Republicans to get the score of 1 for this dummy variable.

Table 4.2.1.2 Model 1 multilevel regression fixed effects for misevaluation

	MODEL 1
Individual level fixed effects	
Intercept	-0.068
	(0.336)
Education	0.154***
	(0.057)
Political Information	0.075**
	(0.049)
Gender (Female = 1)	0.168
	(0.089)
Race (White = 0)	1.529***
	(0.135)
Party identification (Democrat = 1)	-2.174***
	(0.170)
Identical party ID with previous president (IdenT = 1)	5.159***
	(1.486)
Previous presidential evaluation	0.262***
	(0.07)
Weighted previous presidential evaluation	-0.693***
	(0.1393)
Interaction: previous presidential evaluation and Identical party ID	-0.469***
	(0.135)
Cell level intercept fixed effects	
Cohort identification control	0.070
	(0.051)

Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. Two-tailed significance levels. Standard errors in parenthesis.

The actual candidate can be as good or even better objectively than the previous president, but the influence of the previous experience will deteriorate the individual judgment present in the evaluation of the candidate. A tentative interpretation would be that a very good previous president sets the benchmark so high that an extensive sub-evaluation follows. This interpretation will be discussed when the multilevel logistic regression will be presented, because that analysis can offer a straightforward answer. Interestingly, when the

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significant interaction term's negative effect is taken into consideration the increase in misevaluation determined by the previous presidential evaluation is cancelled out, reducing the misevaluation. This interaction takes higher values when the previous president's party identification is the same as the respondent's (dummy variable 1). This would mean that generally, if the previous president was of the same political party, the misevaluation of the candidate decreases. In this case, the main implication derived from this coefficient can be the following: in order to reduce the positive effect of previous presidential evaluation on the candidate misevaluation, the previous president has to be of the same political color. The canceling out or reduction of misevaluation happens extensively for those cases where the respondent has the same party identification as the previous president. This indicates an interpretable link granted by the identical party identification, but it is not powerful enough to decrease the dummy variable's effect on its own.

Finally, the weighted previous presidential evaluation must be discussed. Considering how this variable is computed, the statistically significant and negative effect on the misevaluation would mean that the higher the number of previous experiences the higher the misevaluation. Moreover, the increasing number of previous experiences amends the effect of the immediate previous president's evaluation effect resulting in higher misevaluation. Overall, this effect points into the direction that if there are many previous experiences the actual candidate is being assessed on different scales or his evaluation becomes more blurry, because of the overwhelming and different previous experiences. Interpreting this way, this effect brings evidence to a stacked up effect of previous experiences, manifesting their influence on the evaluations.

As one of the major questions raised even in the interpretation of the analysis above was related to the direction of the misevaluation, the results of the multilevel logistic regression will be interpreted in order to offer a possible explanation and complete this

analysis with in depth reflections on the nature of misinterpretation. For the multilevel logistic regression (Model 2) the goodness-of-fit statistics are displayed in Table 4.2.1.3 and Table 4.2.1.4 presents the coefficients and significance levels of the fixed effects.

Table 4.2.1.3 Goodness-of-fit statistics for the multilevel logistic regression model

	Akaike Information Criterion (AIC)	Deviance	DF	Chi-squared distance and significance
Pooled Baseline Model	7104.6	8469.03	1	-
Baseline ML Model	8371.7	8368	2	101.03***
Model 2	6985.1	6961	12	1406.6***
Sample size	5421 observations in 54 cells			

Note: *** is p<0.01; One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

Similar to the linear models, the goodness-of-fit statistics for the logistic regression also demonstrate that the pooled baseline model is outscored by both models that allow variance between the clusters, and the difference in deviance is highly significant. Furthermore, the Akaike Information Criterion is also decreasing together with the further specification of the models. Compared to the fit-statistics reported in Table 4.2.1.1 it can be seen that the difference in deviance (and AIC) between the two multilevel models, and the gain in fit compared to the pooled version are both higher for the linear multilevel model. Nevertheless, independent from the method of analysis (linear or logistic regression), the multilevel model with the specified variables that reflect previous experiences performs much better in predicting the variance in the dependent variables.

The fixed effects for Model 2 reveal the same preliminary finding as the Model 1: all the variables related to the previous president's evaluation scores are statistically significant, bringing further support for the claim that previous presidential evaluation has an impact on

the actual candidate's evaluation. The direction of the evaluation is neither influenced by the level of education or political information, nor by gender. Race is significant, and being Afro-American or Latino increases the odds of supra-evaluating the candidate. The negative effect of being a Democrat powerful, reducing the probability of supra-evaluation to 0.23.

This finding clearly suggests that Democrats will tend to sub-evaluate their candidate. If the respondent and the previous president share their party identification, the probabilities of supra-evaluation increases substantively. Yet again, this variable should not be interpreted separately, because its important effect is when it is used together with the previous evaluation score as an interaction term. Previous presidential evaluation appears to slightly increase the odds of supra-evaluation. The substantive explanation of this result is intuitive and further supports the claim that the previous experiences moderate the candidate's evaluation scores. The effect is small, and comes against the previous expectation that the better perceived (objectively) the previous president was, the higher the benchmark for comparison. Although, sub-evaluation would be more probable, because if the candidate is compared to a better president this yields sub-evaluation, this is not the case for this variable. But, the interaction term sustains the previous claim. This is very similar to what was identified in the linear multilevel regression results: the effect of the previous experiences is attenuated only when the respondent and the previous president share party identification, eliminating the supra-evaluation. This also suggests a bigger impact of the previous presidential evaluations if the previous president was of the same political color as the respondent. The interaction demonstrates the importance of this element. In case of the weighted previous presidential evaluation, looking only at the sign of the coefficient one would say that it decreases the effect of the immediate previous experience. In case of the weighted previous presidential evaluation, looking only at the sign of the coefficient one would say that it decreases the effect of the immediate previous experience.

Table 4.2.1.4 Model 2 multilevel logistic regression fixed effects - Logistic regression coefficients and Exponents for Sub- or Supra-evaluation

	MODEL 1
Individual level fixed effects	
Intercept	-0.026/0.97
	(0.175)
Education	0.057/1.06
	(0.037)
Political Information	0.023/1.02
	(0.032)
Gender (Female = 1)	0.068/1.07
	(0.059)
Race (White = 0)	0.594/1.81***
	(0.088)
Party identification (Democrat = 1)	-1.188/0.30***
	(0.104)
Identical party ID with previous president (IdenT = 1)	1.452/4.27*
	(0.829)
Previous presidential evaluation	0.079/1.08**
	(0.039)
Weighted previous presidential evaluation	-0.224/0.80***
	(0.077)
Interaction: previous presidential evaluation and Identical party ID	-0.107/0.90***
	(0.075)
Cell level intercept fixed effects	
Cohort identification control	0.031/1.03
	(0.024)

*Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. Two-tailed significance levels. Standard errors in parenthesis.*

However, the operationalization of this variable suggests exactly the opposite: the more previous evaluations there are, the smaller the value of this variable[41]. This implies that

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[41] This can not be compensated with a slight decrease in the previous evaluation score. Adding one experience doubles the value in the denominator, decreasing the overall value of this variable much faster than any drop in the previous evaluation could counterbalance it.

as the number of previous experiences increases, the immediate previous president's evaluation's impact is amended by the impact of this variable as well. Results that the 'blurriness' generated by the higher number of 'impulses' and experiences mentioned previously manifest itself in supra-evaluation.

Combining the results of the two models for the variables related to the previous experiences, the following overall partial conclusions can be formulated. Previous experience matters for the extent of misevaluation and for the type of misevaluation as well. Better evaluated presidents lead to higher deviance from the objective evaluation of the candidate. When preceding presidents were evaluated as good or very good this slightly increases the odds of supra-evaluating. Democrats overall tend to be more inclined to supra-evaluate their candidate compared to the objective evaluations, and their supra-evaluations reaches a much higher extent compared to the Republicans. For both analyses it is also straightforward that the effects attributed to the immediate previous president's evaluation scores are moderated by the fact whether the previous president had the same party identification as the respondent. When looking at the interaction terms, if the previous president and the respondent have the same party identification, the misevaluation is reduced, and pushed in the direction of sub-evaluation.

The number of previous experiences increases the positive effects of the immediate previous president evaluation score's on the extent of misevaluation, and it also extends the odds of supra-evaluation. These two last findings bring support to the claim that the more previous experiences introduce an element of blurriness in the evaluation procedure, many previous impacts having and interplay. The next section further decomposes the analysis, focusing on single trait evaluations and the changes induced by the previous presidential evaluations.

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4.2.3 Single trait evaluations: model specification, results and comparisons

In line with the findings of the variance analyses, one can expect different patterns of evaluations for distinct traits. In addition, the theoretical framework based on issue ownership suggests that Democrats and Republicans accord different levels of interest and importance to different traits. It is also expected to get different impacts for political information, since personal traits are more a source of influence for people with lower political information. Consequently, this section of the analysis re-runs all the models presented previously (with the same specification), for the four single traits: knowledgeable, leadership, care, and moral. The linear and the logistic multilevel models run for this section have identical specifications as the ones presented previously, changing the dependent variables to the misevaluation and sub- and supra-evaluations calculated for each trait separately. Furthermore, the explanatory variables that refer to the previous presidential evaluations are evaluations given for the specific traits. The goodness-of-fit statistics are calculated based on the same null models, the only difference is the dependent variable that reflects the single trait for each model. APPENDIX 6 contains Table 4.2.2.1 and Table 4.2.2.3 that present the goodness-of-fit statistics for the linear and logistic multilevel models, defalcated for the single traits.

The calculated comparative model fit statistics clearly show that the specified multilevel models have a better explanatory power than the null models used as baseline models for comparison. One apparent exception can be seen at for the care trait, where the null multilevel model does not prove to be better than the polled null model. However, when the explanatory variables are specified, the chi-squared distance is 1547.63, significant at $p < 0.000$ level. This suggests that in case of the care trait, the variance between cells is not that high, attributing similar fit for the pooled null model as well. Nevertheless, the specified multilevel models fit well the data, and thus the interpretation of the results is meaningful,

leading to representative conclusions. Similar to the previous cases, the logistic regression fit statistics indicate better model fit for the multilevel models, and more precisely there is an important gain in fit for the specified multilevel logistic model. This statement is valid for all the four different traits, and the highest gain in fit (or technically the best fit if they are compared) is for the knowledge model. Notwithstanding, all models perform very well, indicating increased explanatory power.

Table 4.2.2.2 presents the fixed effects and their significance levels broken down to single traits. The political information, party identification and previous presidential evaluations are of extreme interest. In contrast with the collapsed trait evaluation analysis, here the intercepts are highly significant. A hypothetical white Republican male respondent with the lowest education, average political information having previous president with an average evaluation for the single traits and a previous president that was a Democrat (Identical party identification 0), will slightly misevaluate his actual candidate. This misevaluation is the highest for the moral trait and the lowest for the knowledgeable trait. Education and political information are statistically significant (except for education for leadership and political information for knowledgeable trait), indicating that an increase in these variables decreases the misevaluation. This decomposed finding is in contradiction to what the collapsed analysis suggested, and thus that could have been influenced by the summing up of these single traits. These directions suggest that better educated people and people with more political information evaluate the candidate closer to the objective value. The effects are very similar in extent, so there is no evidence that political information would count differently for the single traits. Race is also significant, and predicts as expected based on the previous findings that white people misevaluate less the candidate.

Table 4.2.2.2 Single trait multilevel regression fixed effects for misevaluation[42]

	KNOWLEDGE	LEADERSHIP	CARE	MORAL
Individual level fixed effects				
Intercept	0.465***	0.566***	0.625***	0.629***
	(0.023)	(-0.048)	(0.029)	(0.0376)
Education	-0.0183***	-0.032	-0.044***	-0.022***
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.005)
Political Information	-0.003	-0.016**	-0.019***	-0.016***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.0049)
Gender (Female = 1)	-0.005	0.001	0.011	0.003
	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.009)
Race (White = 0)	0.0342**	0.063***	0.049**	0.088***
	(0.014)	(0.001)	(0.02)	(0.0137)
Party identification	0.0553***	0.0082	-0.0287	-0.0766***
(Democrat = 1)	(0.012)	(0.022)	(0.0186)	(0.0219)
Identical party ID with	0.366***	0.310	-0.055	-0.015
previous president	(0.115))	(0.215)	(0.096)	(0.048)
(IdenT = 1)				
Previous presidential	0.083***	0.143***	0.017	-0.0627**
evaluation	(0.025)	(0.036)	(0.0179)	(0.024)
Weighted previous	0.0036*	0.0176***	0.006**	-0.0157***
presidential evaluation	(0.0021)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Interaction: previous	-0.0949***	-0.1248*	0.023	0.0143
presidential evaluation and Identical party ID	(0.037)	(0.075)	(0.037)	(0.018)
Cell level intercept fixed effects				
Cohort identification control	0.0002	-0.001	-0.005*	-0.0005
	(0.0022)	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.0058)

*Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. Two-tailed significance levels. Standard errors in parenthesis.*

The differences in the party identification coefficient signs and significance levels indicate that the differences observed in the variance analysis were pertinent. This variable is

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[42] Looking at these coefficients it should not be surprising that the effects are smaller. Since they are unstandardized effects, and the dependent variable defalcated for single traits has a much smaller range, caused by the coding of the variables.

significant only for the knowledgeable and moral trait and has a different impact. In the first case, being a Democrat increases the misevaluation, whereas in the latter case it reduces the misevaluation. Democrats are likely to have a more converging evaluation on the moral trait, whereas there are divergences regarding the knowledgeable trait; this is exactly the opposite for Republicans. Not reaching statistical significance for the leadership and care trait shows that in case of these traits the extent of misevaluation is not influenced by the party identification. The dummy variable for identical party identification for the previous president is only significant for the knowledge trait, increasing the misevaluation. From this finding we can infer that the effects on misevaluation for the other three traits are independent from the fact whether there was a match with regards to party identification, but the a complete assessment can be done by looking at the interaction term as well.

Previous presidential evaluations on the given trait prove to be important in case of the knowledgeable trait (increasing the misevaluation), the leadership trait (increasing the misevaluation to a bigger extent), and for the moral trait, where it actually decreases the misevaluation. The same pattern can be observed for the weighted previous presidential evaluations, but here the variable reaches significance for the care trait as well. The moral trait misevaluations clearly follow a different pattern, the previous presidential evaluations having different effects on it than on the other traits. The weighted previous presidential experience has the same sign as the previous presidential evaluation, but this only apparently suggests a reinforcement of the effect. The more previous presidents, the less the misevaluation will be for the first three traits, and inverse for the moral trait. This suggests that the higher number of previous presidents could stabilize or crystallize the evaluation pattern for the knowledge, leadership, and care traits, and make a fuzzier evaluation for the moral trait. Finally, the interaction term is statistically significant only for the first two traits, this meaning that although the dummy variable was not significant for the leadership trait, the interaction gains

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significance. The signs of the interaction follow the same pattern as the one for the collapsed evaluation, displaying again that in order to reduce the positive effect of previous presidential evaluation on the candidate misevaluation; the previous president has to be of the same political color. Overall, the effects of the previous presidential elections are the most questionable for the care trait, suggesting a statistically significant relationship only for the weighted previous presidential evaluation, signaling that the misevaluation for this trait is not conditioned by the previous experiences. Restating the findings from Section 4.1, the multivariate analysis posits that there are different patterns of misevaluation depending on the party identification, and the moral trait evaluations are very different from the other three trait evaluations.

The sub- or supra-evaluation for each single trait is dissected based on the logit coefficients of the multilevel logistic regression run separately. The fixed effects listed in Table 4.2.2.4 are more balanced for the personal determinants, no major difference in the statistical significance can be observed among the four traits. However, the intercept and the variables of interest like party identification and previous experiences demonstrate that the trait evaluation differences are also present when it the direction of the misevaluation is assessed. The intercept is only significant for the knowledgeable trait. For the same hypothetical individual presented above, one may say that he is more likely to supra-evaluate the candidate on the knowledge trait (the probability of supra-evaluation is 0.874). This does not prove to be valid for the other traits. Education is also significant, positing that an increase in education reduces the odds of supra-evaluating. Interestingly, political information has the different effect, increasing the odds of supra-evaluating for all the four traits. Looking back to the previous results, where the effect of political education was to increase the extent of misevaluation, it seems that this goes into the direction of supra-evaluation. Being a female also increases the odds to supra-evaluate the candidate, and this also is a

Table 4.2.2.4 Single trait multilevel logistic regression fixed effects for Sub- or Supra-evaluation

	KNOWLEDGE	LEADERSHIP	CARE	MORAL
Individual level fixed effects				
Intercept	1.943***	0.493	0.048	0.311
	(0.348)	(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.389)
Education	-0.084**	-0.156***	-0.087**	-0.096***
	(0.037)	(0.03)	(0.039)	(0.035)
Political Information	0.222***	0.156***	0.196***	0.168***
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.031)
Gender (Female = 1)	0.237***	0.222***	0.238***	0.240***
	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.061)	(0.056)
Race (White = 0)	0.394***	0.545***	0.483***	0.365***
	(0.086)	(0.097)	(0.091)	(0.086)
Party identification	-1.519***	0.284**	-1.261***	-1.505***
(Democrat = 1)	(0.093)	(0.124)	(0.120)	(0.151)
Identical party ID with	10.888***	-4.168***	-2.935**	0.696**
previous president	(1.013)	(1.243)	(1.17)	(0.299)
(IdenT = 1)				
Previous presidential	1.969***	0.697***	-1.565***	-0.315*
evaluation	(0.22)	(0.198)	(0.179)	(0.165)
Weighted previous	-0.33***	0.056*	-0.060**	-0.230***
presidential evaluation	(0.025)	(0.033)	(0.026)	(0.024)
Interaction: previous	-3.473***	1.095**	1.121**	-0.307***
presidential evaluation and Identical party ID	(0.33)	(0.435)	(0.469)	(0.114)
Cell level intercept fixed effects				
Cohort identification	0.053	0.023	0.086	0.086
control	(0.05)	(0.053)	(0.056)	(0.065)

*Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. Two-tailed significance levels. Standard errors in parenthesis.*

uniform pattern for all the presidential traits. The last three variables mentioned have statistically significant effects, but substantively they only change the probabilities with 3-5% in favor of supra-evaluation. Party identification reveals that for knowledge, care and moral

traits being a Democrat means that it is more likely that sub-evaluation will happen. These effects are not only highly significant, but they also decrease the odds of supra-evaluation substantively. When the respondent is Democrat (and all other variables are held constant), the probability of supra-evaluation drops to 0.17 for knowledgeable trait, to 0.22 for care, and to 0.18 for morality. The exception here is the leadership trait, where being a Democrat increases the probability of supra-evaluating the candidate on this trait, although this change is minor again (around 5%). Even more surprisingly, the effects of the identical party ID variable are also dispersed. A huge positive effect can be found for the knowledgeable trait (over 90% chances for supra-evaluation). This value should be interpreted carefully, since this variable is most interesting when it enters the interaction term (and this will decrease very intensely the odds). A slight positive effect can be found for the moral trait, resulting in a 0.67 probability of supra-evaluation. In case of leadership and care, having a previous president of the same political color increasingly pushes the evaluation into sub-evaluation. Thus, for two traits this identical party ID means high chances of supra-evaluation, for the other two it determines sub-evaluation. The previous presidential evaluation reaches statistical significance for all the traits, and for the 'competence traits' yields supra-evaluation, while for the 'personal traits' it generates higher odds for sub-evaluation. This is the first obvious case, where the grouping into competence and personal traits is reflected by the results. The positive effect on the knowledge supra-evaluation is similar in extent to the negative effect for care. Practically, having better evaluated previous president does not have converging effects on all of the traits. This suggests that there are different previous schemata for the traits, resulting different reactions towards the candidates that manifest themselves either as supra-evaluation or as sub-evaluation. When the weighted previous presidential elections are taken into consideration, the effects are less powerful, and the only exception is leadership, where an increase in this variable would mean higher odds for supra-evaluation. Yet again, the

operationalization of this variable indicates that for three traits the more previous experiences result in higher odds of supra-evaluation, whereas for leadership this means slightly higher odds of sub-evaluation. Finally, the effects of the interaction term manifest similarity between the knowledgeable and moral traits, although the effects vary in extent. Leadership and care are converging on this aspect, registering increased odds of supra-evaluation when the previous president was of the same political color. The signs of the interaction are opposite to the ones for the dummy variable alone, and they are also different from the previous evaluation coefficient signs for two traits (knowledgeable and care). Considering that is an interaction term, one of the most important finding is that these two variables when taking them together do alter the effects of the single variables, manifesting a joint effect that can be seen as moderator for some traits.

Looking at the results from both of the decomposed analysis, one may argue that the misevaluation patterns are different for the four traits. Political information affects more the misevaluation on the care trait, and it reaches the maximum effect for knowledgeable trait for the logistic regression. Party identification is important for the knowledgeable and moral traits, suggesting distinct misevaluation patterns for Democrats and Republicans when these traits are considered. Their effect on the supra-evaluation is also similar for these two traits, but they are important predictors for leadership and care as well. When previous presidential evaluations are considered, the misevaluation on care is positively affected, but all the other traits are negatively affected by the increase with one unit of this predictor. The effects on the supra-evaluation probabilities show an organization of the dimensions around the competence and personal traits. However, the number of previous experiences and the interaction terms are important modifiers of these effects, in some cases reinforcing the effects of previous presidential evaluations, but in some cases attenuating them (for example knowledgeable or leadership).

5.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Candidate trait evaluations fill in important gaps when looking at the vote choice. Their impact is definitely attached to the electoral system, and in the case of the United States this could be considered one of the main reasons for the extensive research in this field. Analysis of the candidate and presidential trait evaluations builds on different theoretical and analytical backgrounds, and the main research questions range from the impact of these evaluations on vote choice, party preference, or overall thermometer ratings of the political figures. The additional particularity of these evaluations is that they refer to perception about individuals, but they are not stripped by the complete political context that covers parties, issue positions, and previous experiences. Theories about the presidential trait evaluations are converging to the general conclusion that these evaluations indeed matter and they can be milestones in the electoral decisions and outcomes. However, there is no straightforward viewpoint on how these evaluations are formed as processes, and what factors determine how people evaluate a president or a candidate. Furthermore, even if the cognitive inferential processes can be parsed in an experimental setting, some longitudinal aspects of these processes are undiscovered.

The present thesis attempted to fill in these gaps, integrating the theory of presidential schemata and trait ownership into a unified analytical framework. Looking at the previous experiences as previous presidential evaluations, specific cohorts from the ANES were analyzed for the 1984-2004 time period. The main goal was to cover as many elections as possible and still maintain the same evaluation dimensions for comparability. One of the main limitations of the paper was the lack of panel data, but this also lead to one of the major part of added value: looking at cells that are defined by the age-group and the year, creating

cohorts that could represent a hypothetical individual's evolution in time. Four traits were analyzed: knowledgeable, leadership, care, and morality, but combined and collapsed measures were also used for the overall and relative overall evaluation scores. When the previous experiences were operationalized, the averages from these preceding cells were used, but in addition to the control for year and age effects, party identification was also used in order to increase the resemblance between the individuals in these different cells. Building full cohorts that had the same 'objective' experiences, first a variance analysis was carried out, followed by a multilevel regression analysis.

The dynamic and relative nature of these evaluations was maintained by looking at misevaluation of the candidates, misevaluation that could be manifested in two different directions: sub- or supra-evaluation. The point of reference for the misevaluation was calculated based on the spatial-directional theories that assign an objective value (usually to issue positions) based on a sub-sample composed of respondents with high education and political sophistication. By this component of the analysis, the problem of perceptions was also addressed, since no real qualitatively calculated objective value was used. The highly subjective nature of these perception based evaluations makes it necessary to discuss about a reality that is given by the perceptions of the respondents.

Throughout the paper it was hypothesized firstly that previous experiences matter for the actual candidate evaluations. Their effect can be called as moderation, since it alters the effects of determinants that only refer to the present. Also, these previous experiences may have an influence on these determinants strictly linked to the present. The previous experiences proved to be significant determinants of the evaluations. This conclusion is valid for the overall candidate evaluation, but also for the single traits separately. Yet again, as expected, the effects vary from trait to trait, indicating different patterns for the distinct trait evaluations.

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For the competence traits the number of previous presidents attenuates the effect of the direct previous president evaluation, whereas for the personal traits it emphasizes it. In whichever direction these effects would be manifested, the overall conclusion is that the competence traits are more sensible to the whole previous experience. This implies that the benchmarks used for these trait evaluations are more deeply rooted in older experiences, manifesting themselves as moderators. This statement is supported by the variance analysis findings as well, because there are lower variances between years for the competence traits as for the personal traits.

The distinct evaluation patterns for different traits were confirmed by the variance analyses. A clearly differently evaluated trait was morality, reaching very high variances between years, age-groups and also cohorts (internally). In case of the morality trait a negative relationship was found between the direct previous presidential score and the misevaluation of the own candidate, whereas for the other traits this effect was positive. Higher evaluation for previous presidents may induce higher uncertainty in the perceptions about the candidates, leading to misevaluation. In case of morality it can be argued that these are more compact and internally converging evaluation patterns. The direction of this misevaluation also varied from trait to trait, but the expected competence vs. personal trait dimension was found. For the competence traits a surprising positive relationship was found, indicating higher odds for supra-evaluation. The expected direction would have been a shift to sub-evaluation, because of the high previous appreciations. But before making inferences based solely on the direct previous presidents' evaluation, one must notice the effects of these evaluations when they are nuanced by the number of previous experiences. In this case, the competence and personal are distinct dimensions.

The different evaluation patterns related to single traits also find support when the findings for the political information are considered. Whereas for the collapsed evaluation the

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results suggest that the higher the level of political information the bigger the extent of misevaluation, the decomposed results point into the opposite direction. Moreover, for the linear multilevel model, political information does not reach significance for the knowledge trait, indicating that political information is a more important determinant for the personal trait evaluations. Notwithstanding, political information increases the odds of supra-evaluating the candidate on all the four traits.

Not surprisingly, Democrats and Republicans tend to be very different when the evaluations are done. It is very important to mention that the multivariate analysis considered the evaluations of the candidates separately, taking the scores for the Democratic candidate from the Democrats, and the scores for the Republican candidate for the supporters of the Republican Party. This way, the evaluation patterns of the own candidate were analyzed. For the collapsed evaluation, Democrats tend to misevaluate less their candidate, but if this happens it is a sub-evaluation. This finding was already suggested when the objective evaluation scores were compared. This would mean that Democratic candidates and presidents do not differ largely from each other – possibility that can be dismissed based on the evaluation score variances and the objective values, or the evaluation schemes are pretty similar among Democrats. Decomposed for single traits, party identification has opposite effect on knowledge and morality, displaying once more the distinctness of the competence and personal trait.

Overall, relying on the preliminary analysis with highly significant variances between groups and the multilevel models that showed good fit, it can be inferred that previous experiences with presidents matter when it comes to the evaluation of the present candidates. Controlling for year, age and also party identification, the paper demonstrates a continuous effect that changes depending on the number of experiences and how the incumbent president acted. Furthermore, it is safe to conclude that for the single traits the evaluation patterns

differ. There is no convincing evidence that in this case knowledge and leadership evaluations tend to act similarly, in opposition to care and moral evaluations, which would constitute the personal trait block. For some cases this convergence can be found, but generally the moral evaluation seems to be the outlier, invoking different evaluation patterns.

To further extend the research using the framework elaborated by thesis, one possibility would be to look at interactions between the single traits, analyzing how previous evaluation for one trait could influence the evaluations on another trait. Following the conclusions of this research, one could except completely different patterns between the supporters of the two parties, but also depending on the level of political sophistication. Another possible path of extension could be using other datasets or extensive panels, or replicate this analysis on a panel that covers one or two elections. As an example, this period can be extended further back in time using the trait evaluation databases constructed based on the open-ended evaluations analyzed in Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk (1986). Although the long-term approach guarantees a better insight on the changes in the presidential evaluation patterns and the presidential schemata, using panel data would assure that the same individuals are analyzed. For both of these possibilities, the present research laid down foundational aspects related to the importance and impact of the previous experiences, and the distinctions that can be found for various individual and group related characteristics.

APPENDIX 1

Presidential elections with candidates and popular vote, 1984-2004

	1984		1988		1992		1996		2000		2004	
	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
Candidates	W. Mondale	R. Reagan	M. Dukakis	G. Bush	W. Clinton	G. Bush	W. Clinton	B. Dole	A. Gore	G. H. W. Bush	J. Kerry	G. H. W. Bush
Popular vote	40.6%	58.8%	53.4%	45.6%	43%	37.4%	49.2%	40.7%	48.4%	47.9%	48.3%	50.7%
Elected president	Ronald Reagan [R]		George Bush [R]		William J. Clinton [D]		William J. Clinton [D]		George H. W. Bush [R]		George H. W. Bush [R]	

Note 1: The table is set up from election to election, although the official presidential term starts only from January of the subsequent year (beginning with 1933, the Inauguration Day is on the 20th of January).

Note 2: In the 1992 presidential elections, Ross Perot as independent candidate won 18.9% of the popular vote.

Note 3: For the 2000 presidential elections, although the popular vote was higher for the Democratic candidate (Al Gore), the electoral vote was 271:266 in favor of George W. Bush.

Note 4: From the perspective of the present analysis it is important to mention that Ronald Reagan was the president in office before 1984 (1980-1984).

APPENDIX 2

Table 3.1 Cohorts and full sample sizes for age-groups, years and cohorts (1984-2004)

Age-group \\ Year	1 18-22	2 23-27	3 28-32	4 33-37	5 38-42	6 43-47	7 48-52	8 53-57	9 58-62	10 63-67	11 68-72	12 73-77	13 78-82	14 83-	Sample size for years
1984	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9						2181
1988		Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9					1997
1992			Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9				2445
1996				Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9			1693
2000					Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9		1768
2004						Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Cohort 7	Cohort 8	Cohort 9	1195
Sample size for cohorts	-	-	-	-	-	1263	1343	1215	1112	848	667	600	638	553	
Sample size for age groups	700	1026	1271	1388	1174	988	856	775	705	708	596	496	347	249	

Note: The main goal of this table is to present how the cohorts look like. Total sample sizes are reported because these are important from the perspective of the variance analysis; for decomposed sample-sizes and sample sizes for cells that are not in the full cohorts check Table 3.2.

APPENDIX 3

Table 3.2 Democrat/Independent/Republican sample sizes for age-groups, years and cohorts (1984-2004)

Age-group / Year	1 18-22	2 23-27	3 28-32	4 33-37	5 38-42	6 43-47	7 48-52	8 53-57	9 58-62	10 63-67	11 68-72	12 73-77	13 78-82	14 83-	Sample size for years
1984	81/29/70	124/33/90	133/30/117	127/37/118	72/30/89	83/11/57	72/9/50	76/8/49	66/15/49	80/13/48	56/10/53	46/8/46	26/8/25	17/2/18	1059/243/879
1988	56/16/57	90/36/79	117/31/107	119/30/110	99/28/97	75/15/58	67/12/50	56/7/48	64/11/60	60/7/49	57/8/42	42/5/28	31/8/25	19/1/20	952/215/830
1992	67/28/49	93/32/83	147/48/130	156/36/142	123/25/79	122/24/78	83/19/75	76/12/47	64/13/51	86/17/54	83/12/47	57/8/38	46/8/33	26/5/23	1229/287/929
1996	37/4/32	73/17/39	85/17/59	113/16/87	101/20/86	96/18/50	68/9/55	58/9/53	54/7/45	51/8/39	50/10/42	49/4/32	28/5/13	31/1/22	894/145/654
2000	52/21/22	61/24/46	63/26/58	91/18/94	101/26/89	97/22/61	90/12/65	82/13/63	61/12/41	45/9/44	39/10/29	48/5/26	31/4/24	24/3/16	885/205/678
2004	43/11/25	61/8/37	57/8/38	43/7/44	54/12/43	58/13/50	50/14/56	64/8/46	35/11/46	44/13/41	23/5/20	29/3/22	18/2/12	13/3/5	592/118/485
Sample size for cohorts	-	-	-	-	-	590/168/505	645/156/542	625/123/467	533/122/457	393/98/357	348/56/263	311/50/239	342/53/243	302/45/206	
Sample size for age groups	336/109/255	502/150/374	602/160/509	649/144/595	550/141/483	531/103/354	430/75/351	412/57/306	344/69/292	366/67/275	308/55/233	271/33/192	180/35/132	130/15/104	

APPENDIX 4

Figure 4.1.2 Objective values for combined-knowledgeable evaluation scores depending on party identification (1984-2004)
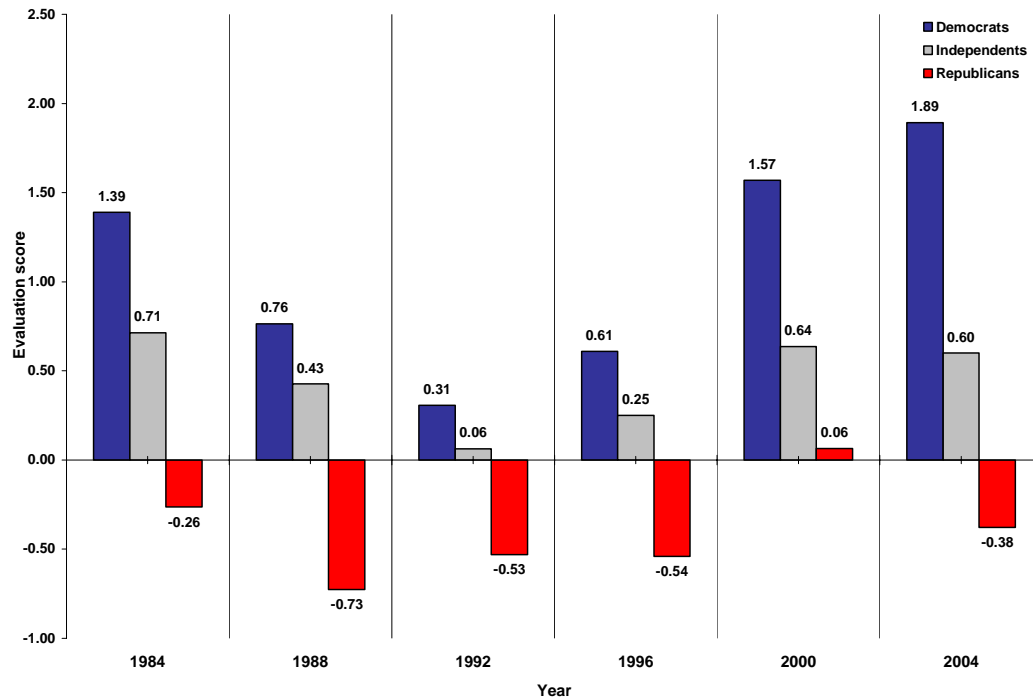

Figure 4.1.3 Objective values for combined-leadership evaluation scores depending on party identification (1984-2004)
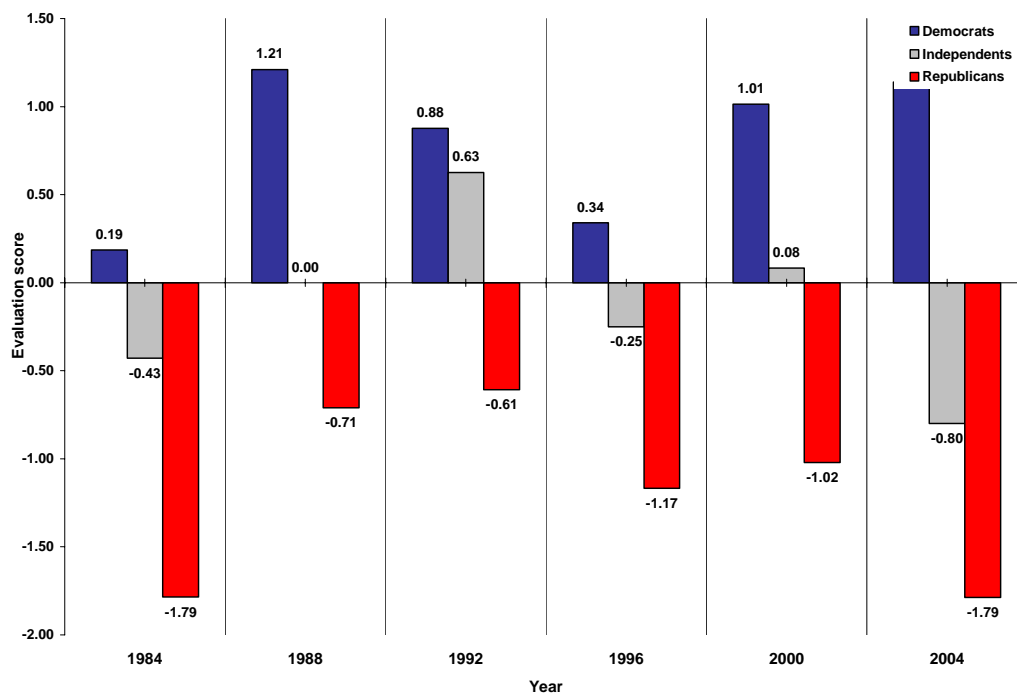
Figure 4.1.4 Objective values for combined-care evaluation scores depending on party identification (1984-2004)
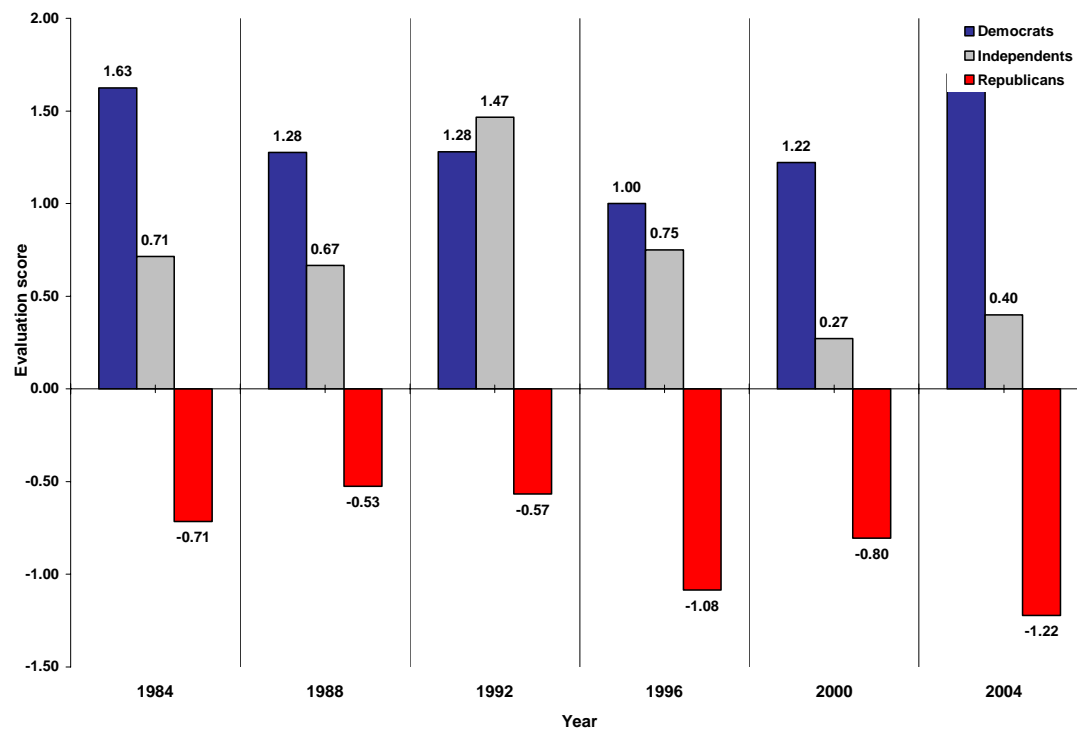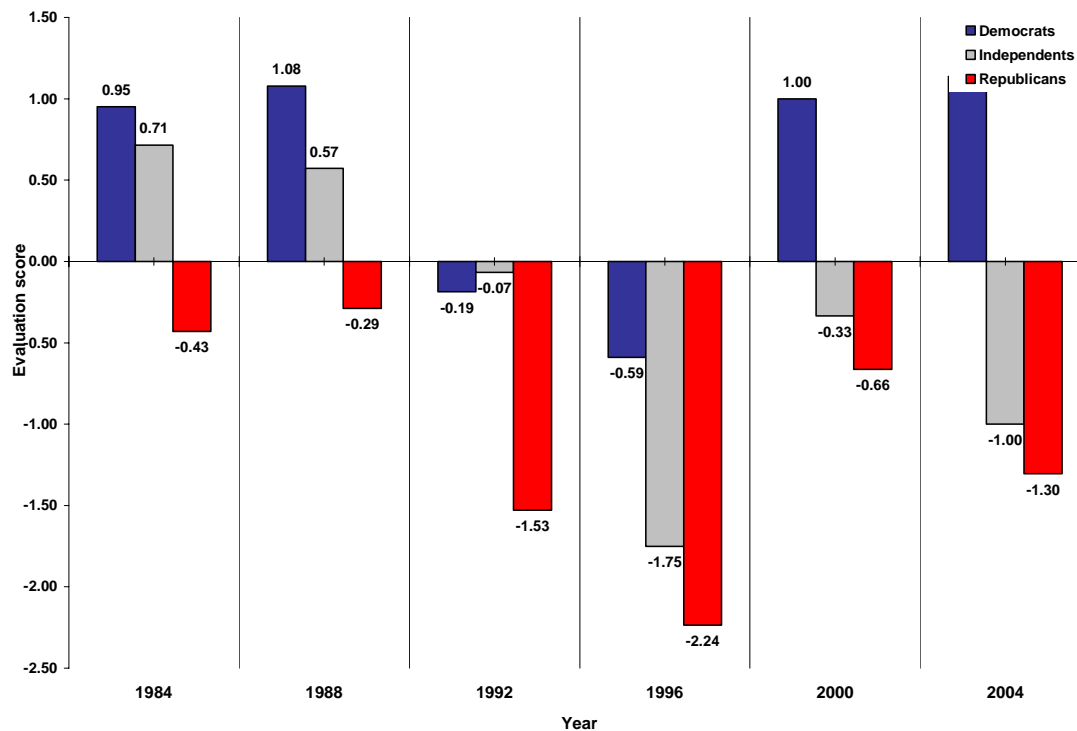

Figure 4.1.5 objective values for combined-moral evaluation scores depending on party identification (1984-2004)

APPENDIX 5

Table 4.1.5 Variance components for Democrats' candidate trait sub- or supra-evaluations
(1984-2004, when the objective measure comes from the Independents)

	Combined-Collapsed	Combined Knowledgeable Trait	Combined Leadership Trait	Combined Care Trait	Combined Morality Trait
Variance for Years	21.81%***	7.02%***	13.34%***	10.77%***	43.86%***
Variance for Age-groups	1.25%***	0.67%***	1.71%***	0.49%***	0.31%***
Variance for Cohorts	0.02%***	0.13%***	0.57%***	0.00%***	0.58%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	1.04%***	0.82%***	2.18%***	0.36%***	0%***
1988	1.38%***	0.25%	2.44%**	0.56%*	1.89%*
1992	0%	0.78%	2.54%***	0%	0%
1996	2.60%***	0.48%	1.47%*	2.17%**	1.27%**
2000	2.65%***	1.92%***	3.09%***	1.75%***	0%***
2004	0%	0%	1.14%	0%	0%
Variance in a given age-group					
1	20.71%***	8.35%***	12.39%***	9.45%***	39.60%***
2	28.44%***	9.92%***	19.27%***	11.07%***	49.35%***
3	24.14%***	10.73%***	20.30%***	7.22%***	43.66%***
4	18.68%***	8.91%***	14.39%***	8.54%***	42.13%***
5	16.51%***	3.37%**	11.23%***	9.31%***	42.91%***
6	26.30%***	8.18%***	18.16%***	15.25%***	45.10%***
7	24.16%***	5.43%***	10.57%***	8.58%***	41.45%***
8	19.11%***	8.53%***	5.61%***	8.80%***	43.94%***
9	21.05%***	1.83%	8.76%***	18.19%***	41.46%***
10	22.29%***	6.36%***	12.96%***	15.13%***	46.78%***
11	20.14%***	4.00%*	10.32%***	12.39%***	47.93%***
12	21.63%***	8.98%***	14.42%***	14.75%***	41.58%***
13	15.96%***	5.13%	8.53%**	7.02%*	42.71%***
14	18.20%***	5.46%***	22.00%***	4.83%	36.09%***
Variance in a given cohort					
1	24.23%***	8.82%***	23.09%***	11.25%***	42.24%***
2	19.35%***	6.17%***	12.08%***	10.90%***	37.32%***
3	19.65%***	7.91%***	10.06%***	6.30%***	43.28%***
4	25.35%***	11.75%***	8.96%***	13.89%***	38.01%***
5	17.75%***	3.75%*	13.32%***	11.01%***	39.81%***
6	28.08%***	6.51%***	13.53%***	15.03%***	47.98%***
7	37.82%***	9.98%***	19.02%***	17.81%***	53.99%***
8	27.52%***	6.08%***	10.81%***	14.95%***	49.32%***
9	15.59%***	5.82%**	10.55%***	10.50%***	33.67%***

Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

Table 4.1.6 Variance components for Republicans' candidate trait sub- or supra-evaluations
(1984-2004, when the objective measure comes from the Independents)

	Combined-Collapsed	Combined Knowledgeable Trait	Combined Leadership Trait	Combined Care Trait	Combined Morality Trait
Variance for Years	7.83%***	3.53%***	6.12%***	7.42%***	24.56%***
Variance for Age-groups	0.71%***	0.70%***	0.69%***	1.34%***	0.03%***
Variance for Cohorts	0.22%***	0.04%***	0.02%***	0.31%***	0.23%***
Variance in a given year					
1984	2.55%***	2.32%***	2.65%***	2.14%***	0%**
1988	0%	0.26%	0%	2.20%**	0.55%
1992	2.88%**	0.88%	0.76%	2.38%***	3.44%***
1996	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.05%
2000	1.31%***	0.80%**	1.24%***	0.53%***	0.54%**
2004	6.16%***	5.51%***	3.81%**	4.06%**	2.49%*
Variance in a given age-group					
1	7.60%***	1.55%	0.74%	0.70%	27.84%***
2	9.30%***	3.99%**	9.05%***	6.28%***	28.54%***
3	13.30%***	5.01%***	11.48%***	5.88%***	28.78%***
4	13.93%***	5.14%***	7.64%***	8.63%***	26.06%***
5	7.19%***	1.88%	3.97%***	6.90%***	27.36%***
6	6.79%***	1.00%	9.21%***	12.35%***	20.81%***
7	1.24%	0.24%	3.94%**	12.97%***	17.22%***
8	13.67%***	9.72%***	7.62%***	9.06%***	21.46%***
9	7.08%***	7.42%***	2.90%	7.55%***	21.77%***
10	5.21%*	1.33%	8.09%***	7.06%***	17.23%***
11	7.96%**	8.61%***	4.47%	5.21%*	33.55%***
12	16.13%***	6.73%**	9.12%**	5.79%*	33.85%***
13	6.01%	3.90%	1.10%	11.22%**	25.12%***
14	6.98%	7.58%	6.73%	9.83%	39.25%***
Variance in a given cohort					
1	7.19%***	3.76%***	10.34%***	7.17%***	21.75%***
2	6.41%***	3.58%***	5.79%***	6.97%***	24.60%***
3	6.61%***	3.91%**	12.19%***	8.39%***	18.36%***
4	8.83%***	6.16%***	1.60%	9.05%***	19.84%***
5	7.65%***	4.78%**	5.75%***	12.52%***	23.88%***
6	6.10%***	0%	3.21%	12.19%***	29.83%***
7	0.38%	0%	2.25%	3.76%	19.11%***
8	11.67%***	6.90%**	9.86%***	6.81%**	28.87%***
9	5.32%	3.20%	2.41%	10.06%**	30.03%***

Note: *** is p<0.01; ** is p<0.05; * is p<0.1. One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

APPENDIX 6

Table 4.2.2.1 Goodness-of-fit statistics for linear multilevel models for single traits

	Akaike Information Criterion (AIC)	Deviance	DF	Chi-squared distance and significance
Knowledge				
Pooled Baseline Model	-	6537.48	2	-
Baseline ML Model	6530.9	6525	3	12.48***
Model 1 Knowledgeable	5719.1	5693	13	831.83***
Leadership				
Pooled Baseline Model	-	9967.07	2	-
Baseline ML Model	9890.6	9885	3	82.07***
Model 1 Leadership	8533.8	8508	13	1376.8***
Care				
Pooled Baseline Model	-	11180.47	2	-
Baseline ML Model	11186.3	11180	3	0.47
Model 1 Care	9658.3	9632	13	1548.0***
Moral				
Pooled Baseline Model	-	5319	2	-
Baseline ML Model	5182.9	5177	3	142***
Model 1 Moral	4420.1	4394	13	782.83***

*Note: *** is p<0.01; One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.*

Table 4.2.2.3 Goodness-of-fit statistics for multilevel logistic regression models for single traits

	Akaike Information Criterion (AIC)	Deviance	DF	Chi-squared distance and significance
Knowledge				
Pooled Baseline Model	9752.8	9750.772	1	-
Baseline ML Model	9262.9	9259	2	491.772***
Model 2 Knowledgeable	7442.3	7418	12	1840.6***
Leadership				
Pooled Baseline Model	9502.4	9500.367	1	-
Baseline ML Model	8679.9	8676	2	824.367***
Model 2 Leadership	7157.9	7134	12	1542.0***
Care				
Pooled Baseline Model	9611.5	9609.477	1	-
Baseline ML Model	8435.9	8432	2	1177.477***
Model 2 Care	6875.6	6852	12	1580.4***
Moral				
Pooled Baseline Model	9480	9477.937	1	-
Baseline ML Model	9189.2	9185	2	292.937***
Model 2 Moral	7861.4	7837	12	1347.8***

Note: *** is p<0.01; One-tailed chi-squared significance levels.

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