

**Appendix to Chapter 7,  
entitled  
“Vetting Candidates for Office,”  
from  
*Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media  
Establishment***

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**Political Party Defectors, Limbaugh & Fox Audiences, 2004**

## **Appendix 7.1 (see page 112 of *Echo*)**

### **Attitudes toward Limbaugh & Buchanan, 1996 Primaries**

More conservative than listeners and the population at large, talk show callers were likely supporters of Buchanan in the Republican primaries of 1996. Indeed *Talk Daily's* analysis of 60 hours of key shows from February 19-23 found that the shows had seven times as many pro-Buchanan callers as pro-Dole ones (63-9)<sup>i</sup> and that Buchanan fans outnumbered those of Dole, Alexander, and Forbes combined by almost 3 to 1. This raised the prospect that talk radio would mobilize Buchanan voters and sympathizers, legitimize the candidacy for those who thought he could not win, and do for him what some believe talk radio did for the Republicans in 1994.

In late February of 1996, Limbaugh took Buchanan head on claiming that he was not a conservative. His views, said the talk show host, ought to be embraced by the labor unions. And Limbaugh addressed Buchanan's supporters with the appeal, "You think...you are the leaders of the anti-government movement, but you are not. You are asking government to come in and protect your job--just as...any of the liberals asking the government to protect something in their life...Liberalism is designed to help you feel better and I think that's what Buchanan's 'conservatism of the heart' really means." "One of the things that worries me about this redefinition of conservatism [by Buchanan]," noted Limbaugh in early March, "is that now there's going to be a sect of the conservative movement which wants government action on its behalf..."(March 3, 1996)

Limbaugh's anti-Buchanan stance drew opposition from listeners who argued that it was unfair of the talk air host to say that Buchanan sounded like Clinton. A reported former Limbaugh lover now claims to despise him for trying to destroy Buchanan. Dolores accuses Limbaugh of injecting an "underhanded zing" into his discussion of Buchanan. Christina wants Limbaugh to apologize for being unfair to Buchanan. Indeed in an apparent attempt to traffic the information into mainstream news, Limbaugh had expressed surprise that Vladimir Zhirinovsky's "endorsement" of Buchanan had received scant news coverage which, Limbaugh said, pleased him because Zhirinovsky is a nut.

Throughout the exchanges about Buchanan, the conservative host worked hard not to drive Buchanan's supporters from the party--a move in keeping with the party's traditional attempts to assemble winning coalitions. "If the Buchanan brigades out there are mocked and impugned, laughed at and made fun of, you can kiss [the presidency] goodbye" (Feb. 21, 1996).

Our three-wave national survey suggested that Limbaugh did in fact affect his listeners' impressions of Buchanan but that his anti-Buchanan posture also took a toll on Limbaugh's popularity with his regular listeners. Table A7.1.1 shows that, in the Limbaugh listening group, while attitudes toward Buchanan became less favorable over time so did attitudes toward the host himself. This table focuses on groups of listeners defined by their reported listening early in the primary season before Limbaugh began his attacks on Buchanan.

When a more timely measure of PTR listening was obtained around the time that Limbaugh's attacks began, stronger conclusions were obtained. Especially telling is the finding that those who had not listened to Limbaugh's show at all in the previous week became more favorable toward Buchanan (an increase of .22) while those listening at least 1-2 days during that week became less favorable (-.28). This difference is statistically significant  $F(1,154) = 5.43$ ,  $p = .02$  and suggests that the only portion of our sample of Limbaugh regulars that became more favorable toward Buchanan during Limbaugh's attacks were those not tuning in during the period. Those who were tuned in to Limbaugh – getting their regular PTR fix – became less favorable toward Buchanan.

In addition, changes in attitude toward Limbaugh himself also depended on listening in the prior week. Those listening most became less positive toward Limbaugh and those listening least changed not at all. The four levels of listening differ significantly  $F(3,152) = 3.09$ ,  $p < .03$ , such that the lower levels show no change ( $M_s = -.029, -.020$ ) and the higher levels show change toward lower favorability ( $M_s = -.50, -.25$ ) toward Limbaugh.

Exposure to Limbaugh and his message about Buchanan is related to changes in attitudes toward Buchanan and toward the source, Limbaugh himself. Whether these changes can be attributed only to the content of Limbaugh's commentary or other outside forces is uncertain. The comparison groups are listeners to conservative talk radio and non-listeners. Both groups change negatively toward Buchanan suggesting that the decrease in favorability toward him is as likely the result of forces affecting all groups as it is the result of Limbaugh's attacks.

However, the derogation of Limbaugh during this same period by his listeners may be the audience's way of responding to cognitively inconsistent information. A valued source speaking negatively about a valued target can produce change in evaluations of the source even while the target remains unchanged. Such a process could explain the changes in attitudes toward Limbaugh for Limbaugh listeners and is consistent with the absence of change in Limbaugh attitudes among listeners to conservative PTR. However, it is inconsistent with the changes observed among non-listeners who became less favorable toward Limbaugh even though there was essentially no exposure to him during the period.

Finally all the difference scores representing changes in audience attitudes toward Limbaugh and toward Buchanan exhibited no significant effects resulting from demographic factors including party ID, education, age, race, or income. No  $p$  value was lower than .25.

Table A7.1.1. Changes in favorability toward Buchanan and Limbaugh over two time points during 1996 primary: Non-listeners, listeners to other PTR, and regular Limbaugh listeners

Listening Groups	Favorability toward Buchanan			Favorability toward Limbaugh		
	Time 1	Time 2	t-value (p)	Time 1	Time 2	t-value (p)
Non-List	2.50	2.38	-2.51 (.01)	2.40	2.27	-3.31 (.001)
Limbaugh	3.12	2.95	-1.80 (.07)	4.28	4.08	-2.89 (.004)
Conservative	2.96	2.76	-1.83 (.07)	2.64	2.63	-.10 (NS)
Lib/Moder	2.09	2.04	-.86 (NS)	1.93	1.93	00 (NS)

## Appendix 7.2 (see page 114 of *Echo*)

### Favorability toward McCain, New Hampshire primary, 2000

The following analyses are based on data from the NAES survey of the presidential election conducted in 2000. These data are publicly available on disk in the book *Capturing Campaign Dynamics 2000 & 2004* by Romer et al. (Oxford University Press). They focus on two longitudinal samples during the primary, one from New Hampshire and one from Super Tuesday. They consider the association between listening to Rush Limbaugh and attitudes toward Senator McCain (0 to 100 point scale) as well as intentions to vote for him (1=yes, 0=no).

#### New Hampshire:

**Table A7.2.1.: OLS Regression Predicting Post-Primary McCain favorability with pre-primary controls**

N=396, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .401

Predictors	B	SE	Beta	Sig
(Constant)	40.57	6.71		0.00
Pre McCain favorability	0.59	0.04	0.63	0.00
Party ID	-0.65	0.44	-0.06	0.14
Interest in the campaign	0.50	1.44	0.02	0.73
Follow public affairs	-0.30	1.31	-0.01	0.82
Female	4.28	1.71	0.10	0.01
Recoded Age	0.38	0.90	0.02	0.67
Education in years	-0.58	0.35	-0.07	0.10
Income	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.54
Listens to Rush as first host listed	-4.73	2.30	-0.09	0.04

Controlling for one's pre-primary favorability of McCain, exposure to Limbaugh is significantly negatively related to one's post-primary McCain favorability.

**Table A7.2.2.: Logistic Regression Predicting Post-Primary voted for McCain with pre-primary controls (only those eligible to vote in the Republican primary)**

N=196, Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>= .718

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
(Constant)	0.81	2.38	0.74	2.24
Pre intend to vote McCain	4.29	0.54	0.00	72.60
Party ID	0.25	0.21	0.25	1.28
Interest in the campaign	0.03	0.44	0.95	1.03
Follow public affairs	-0.52	0.50	0.30	0.60
Female	0.58	0.54	0.28	1.79
Recoded Age	0.25	0.27	0.35	1.28
Education in years	-0.20	0.13	0.12	0.82
Income	0.01	0.01	0.20	1.01
Listens to Rush as first host listed	-0.92	0.59	0.12	0.40

Controlling for one's pre-primary intention to vote for McCain, exposure to Limbaugh is not significantly related to self-reported voting for McCain.

**Appendix 7.3 (see page 114 of *Echo*)**  
**Favorability toward McCain, Super Tuesday primary, 2000**

**Super Tuesday States:**

**Table A7.3.1.: OLS Regression Predicting Pre-Primary McCain favorability with contemporaneous measures**

N=1062, Adj R<sup>2</sup> = .071

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig</b>
(Constant)	44.89	5.44		0.00
Party ID	-1.03	0.34	-0.10	0.00
Interest in the campaign	3.90	1.15	0.12	0.00
Follow public affairs	-1.07	1.02	-0.04	0.29
Female	-3.95	1.45	-0.08	0.01
Age recoded	2.67	0.77	0.11	0.00
Education in years	0.78	0.32	0.08	0.02
Income in thousands	0.05	0.02	0.09	0.01
Listens to Rush as first host listed	-10.18	1.88	-0.17	0.00

**Table A7.3.2.: Logistic Regression Predicting Pre-Primary Intention to vote for McCain with contemporaneous measures**

N=523, Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>= .269

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
(Constant)	-3.60	0.83	0	0.03
Party ID	0.59	0.08	0	1.80
Interest in the campaign	0.23	0.18	0.19	1.26
Follow public affairs	-0.33	0.16	0.04	0.72
Female	-0.15	0.22	0.48	0.86
Age recoded	0.16	0.12	0.18	1.17
Education in years	0.12	0.05	0.02	1.12
Income in thousands	0.01	0.00	0.06	1.01
Listens to Rush as first host listed	-0.85	0.26	0.00	0.43

Limbaugh exposure is significantly associated with less favorable pre-primary ratings of McCain and lower intentions of voting for McCain.

**Appendix 7.4 (see page 125 of *Echo*)  
 Political Party Defectors, Limbaugh & Fox Audiences, 2004**

**Party Defections 2004**

The 2004 NAES panel study surveyed respondents pre-election (July 15, 2004 to November 1, 2004) and post-election (November 4, 2004 to December 28, 2004). People in both waves were asked their party identification. The change in party ID variable was constructed by giving every respondent who did not land on the diagonal of the following cross-tab matrix a score of 1. Those who did land on the diagonal, i.e. those who were consistent, received a score of 0.

**Change in Party Identification**

		Party Identification – Pre-election				Total
		Repub.	Dem.	Indep.	Something Else	
Party Id	Rep	2480	76	262	68	2886
Post –	Dem	63	2485	268	52	2868
Election	Ind	193	228	1573	119	2113
	S. E.	52	49	120	174	395
Total		2788	2838	2223	413	8262

Logistic regression was used to predict change in party id (regardless of direction)

### Model Summary

Although only a small amount of the variance is explained in the model, Limbaugh listeners are more stable in their party identification.

Step	2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	7424.540(a)	.013	.020

### Variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a) Female	-.204	.059	12.052	1	.001	.815
Age	-.004	.002	5.029	1	.025	.996
Education	-.067	.013	27.145	1	.000	.936
Income	-.001	.001	4.080	1	.043	.999
White	-.120	.075	2.580	1	.108	.887
Religiosity	-.065	.022	8.647	1	.003	.937
Rush Limbaugh	-.352	.112	9.838	1	.002	.703
Constant	.135	.195	.477	1	.490	1.144

### Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	7394.732(a)	.013	.020