



## **Public Sees Different Strengths and Weaknesses in Democratic Contenders**

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After two months of controversies surrounding statements made by Democratic candidates Illinois Sen. Barack Obama and New York Sen. Hillary Clinton, Sen. Clinton maintains an edge among Democrats on the character traits of experience, strong leadership, patriotism and judgment.

Democrats see Sen. Obama as stronger on the traits “trustworthy” and “saying what he/she believes.” Democrats see no difference between the candidates on the trait “shares my values.” These new findings are being released today by the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania (See Table 1).

Among self-identified independents, Sen. Obama is rated higher than Sen. Clinton on the traits “trustworthy,” “says what he/she believes,” “shares my values,” “strong leader,” and “has the judgment needed to be president.” Sen. Clinton is rated higher than Sen. Obama among independents on “experience” and “patriotism.” Self-identified Republicans were excluded from the analysis (See Table 1).

The trend lines for the seven traits the NAES survey has been tracking (see charts found in the Appendix) suggest the possibility of negative effects for Sen. Obama on the Reverend Jeremiah Wright issues and for Sen. Clinton on her comments about her trip to Bosnia as first lady. We have indicated with vertical lines on the charts what we see as major points in the campaign and other events that may have affected candidate ratings.

The field period for this analysis was February 26 through May 4, 2008 for the traits “strong leader,” “trustworthy,” “has the experience needed to be President” “has the judgment needed to be President” and “says what he (she) believes.” The field period for the trait “patriotic” ran from April 10 through May 4, 2008. The trait “shares my values”

is reported for the period April 10 to May 4, 2008. Self-identified Republicans were excluded from the analysis. Respondents were asked to rate Sens. Clinton and Obama on a variety of traits on a 10-point scale (See Appendix for full question wording).

NAES estimates that the percent of self-identified Democrats in the U.S. adult population is higher than the percent of the population that reports being independent. In the sample 3,977 identified as Democrats (35.9 percent) and 3,066 as independents (27.7 percent). The overall population for this survey is U.S. citizens (N=11,064)

The margin of error for Democrats is plus or minus 1.6 percent and plus or minus 1.7 percent for independents.

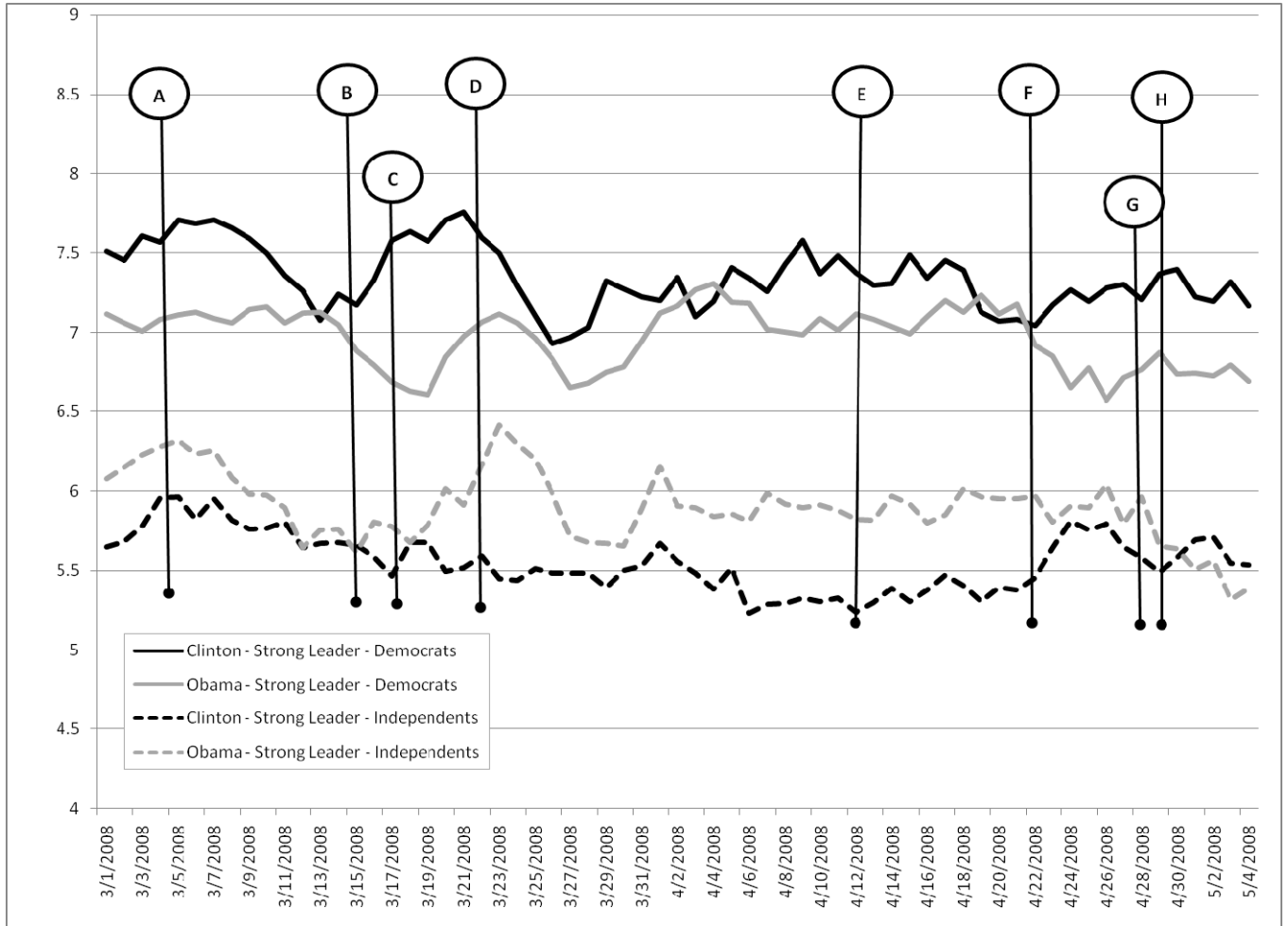
Ken Winneg, managing director of NAES, and Bruce Hardy, senior research analyst for NAES, analyzed these data.

## Appendix

Table 1. Average differences of trait ratings (Clinton minus Obama) by Democrats and independents

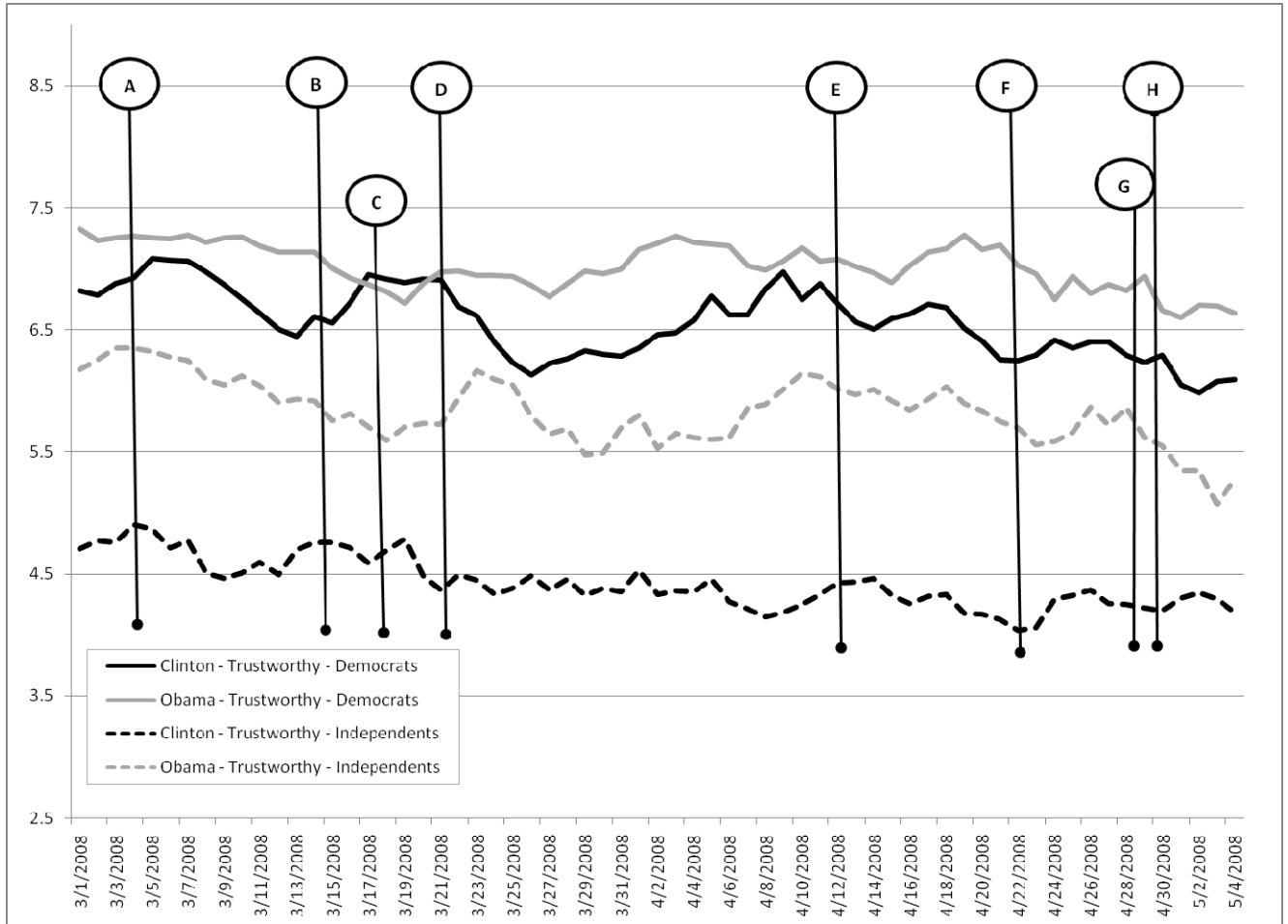
	Democrats	Independents
Strong leader <i>N</i>	0.396** 3,779	-0.302** 2,904
Trustworthy <i>N</i>	-0.462** 3,750	-1.401** 2,889
Judgment <i>N</i>	0.469** 3,759	-0.211* 2,884
Experience <i>N</i>	1.680** 3,799	1.034** 2,930
Say what he/she believes <i>N</i>	-0.370** 3,760	-1.010** 2,890
Patriotic <i>N</i>	0.692** 1,245	0.338** 983
Shares My Values <i>N</i>	-0.085 898	-0.658** 715
<i>Note: ** <math>p &lt; 0.01</math>, * <math>p &lt; 0.05</math></i>		

Figure 1. “Strong Leader”



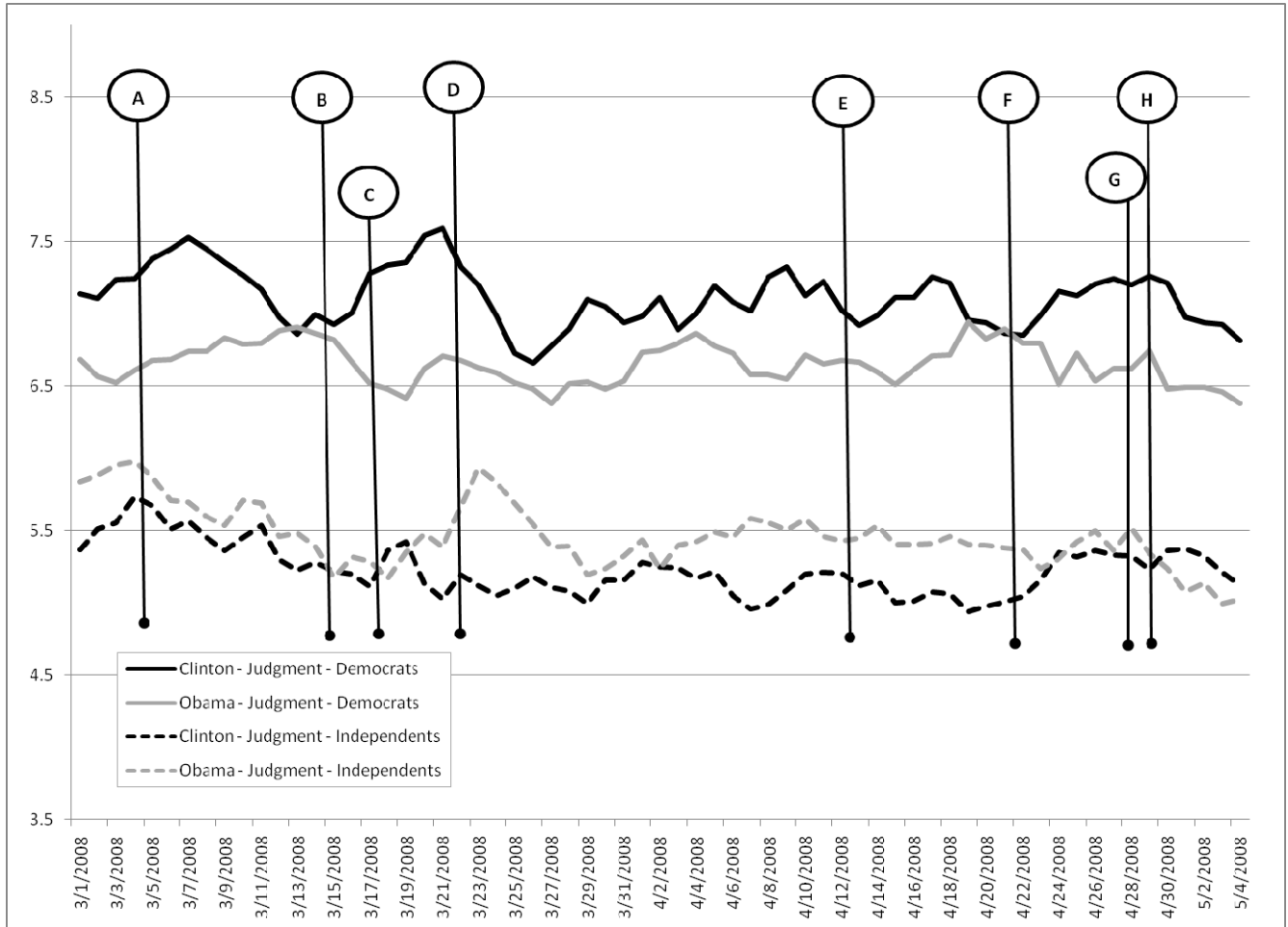
- A. 3/04/2008. Clinton wins Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island primaries. Obama wins Texas caucuses and Vermont primary.
- B. 3/15/2008. Video clips of Rev. Wright are widely broadcast on television, cable and the Internet.
- C. 3/18/2008. Obama makes speech on race and Rev. Wright.
- D. 3/22/2008. Clinton, sniper fire and Kosovo.
- E. 4/12/2008. Obama, bitter.
- F. 4/22/2008. Clinton wins Pennsylvania primary.
- G. 4/28/2008. Rev. Wright speaks at The National Press Club.
- H. 4/29/2008. Obama responds to Rev. Wright.

Figure 2. “Trustworthy”



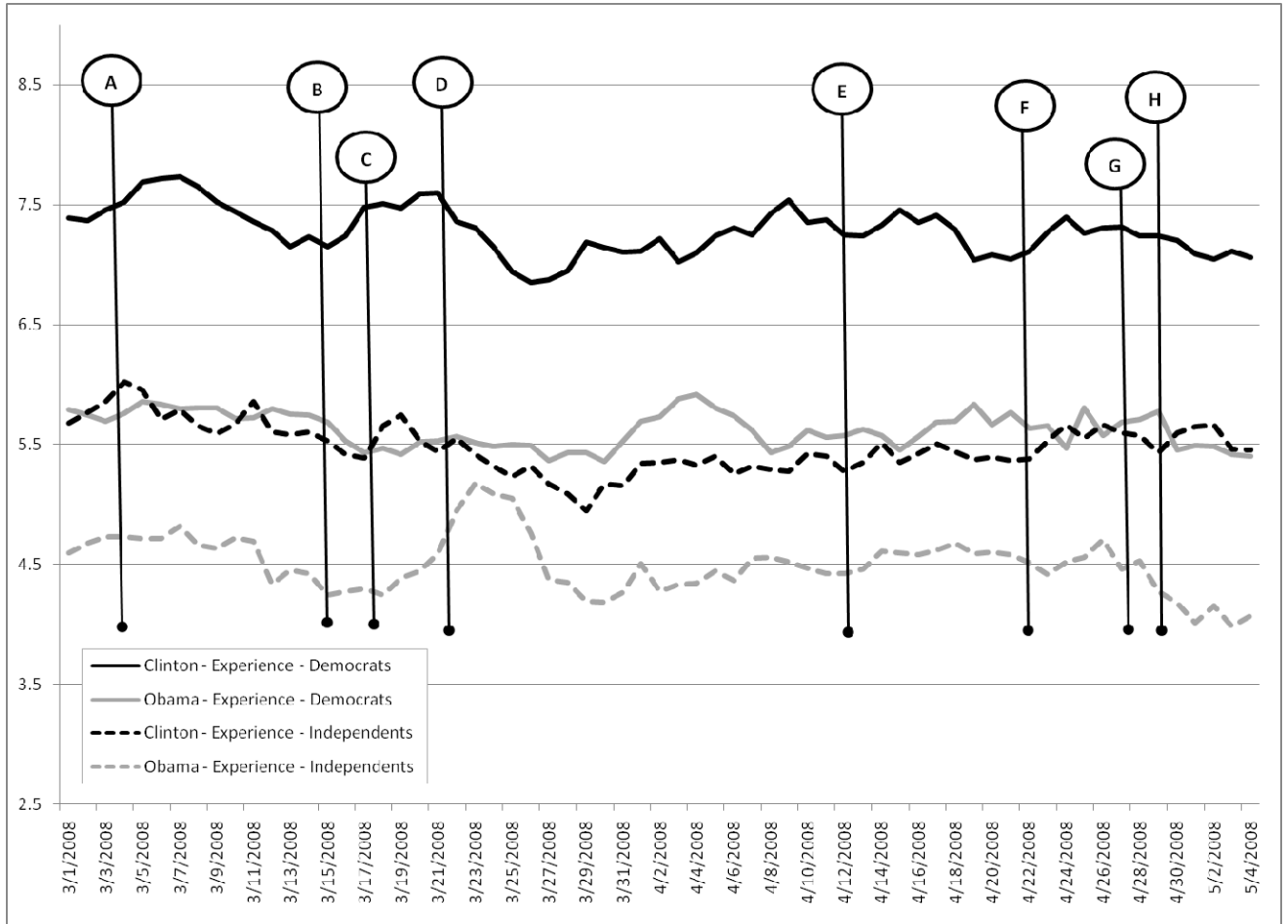
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Figure 3. “Has the judgment needed to be President”



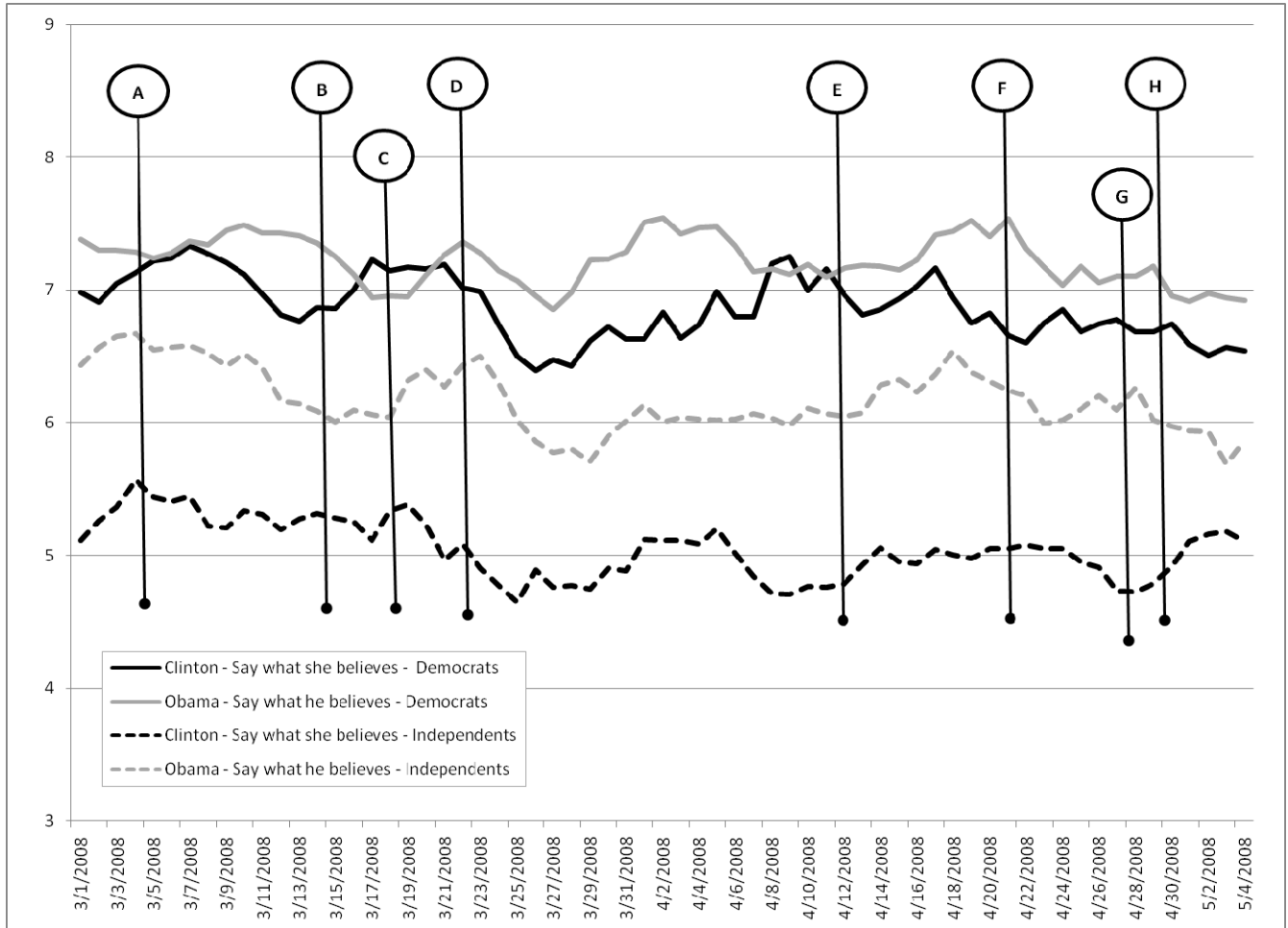
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- H. 4/29/2008. Obama responds to Rev. Wright.

Figure 4. “Has the experience needed to be President”



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- B. 3/15/2008. Video clips of Rev. Wright are widely broadcast on television, cable and the Internet.
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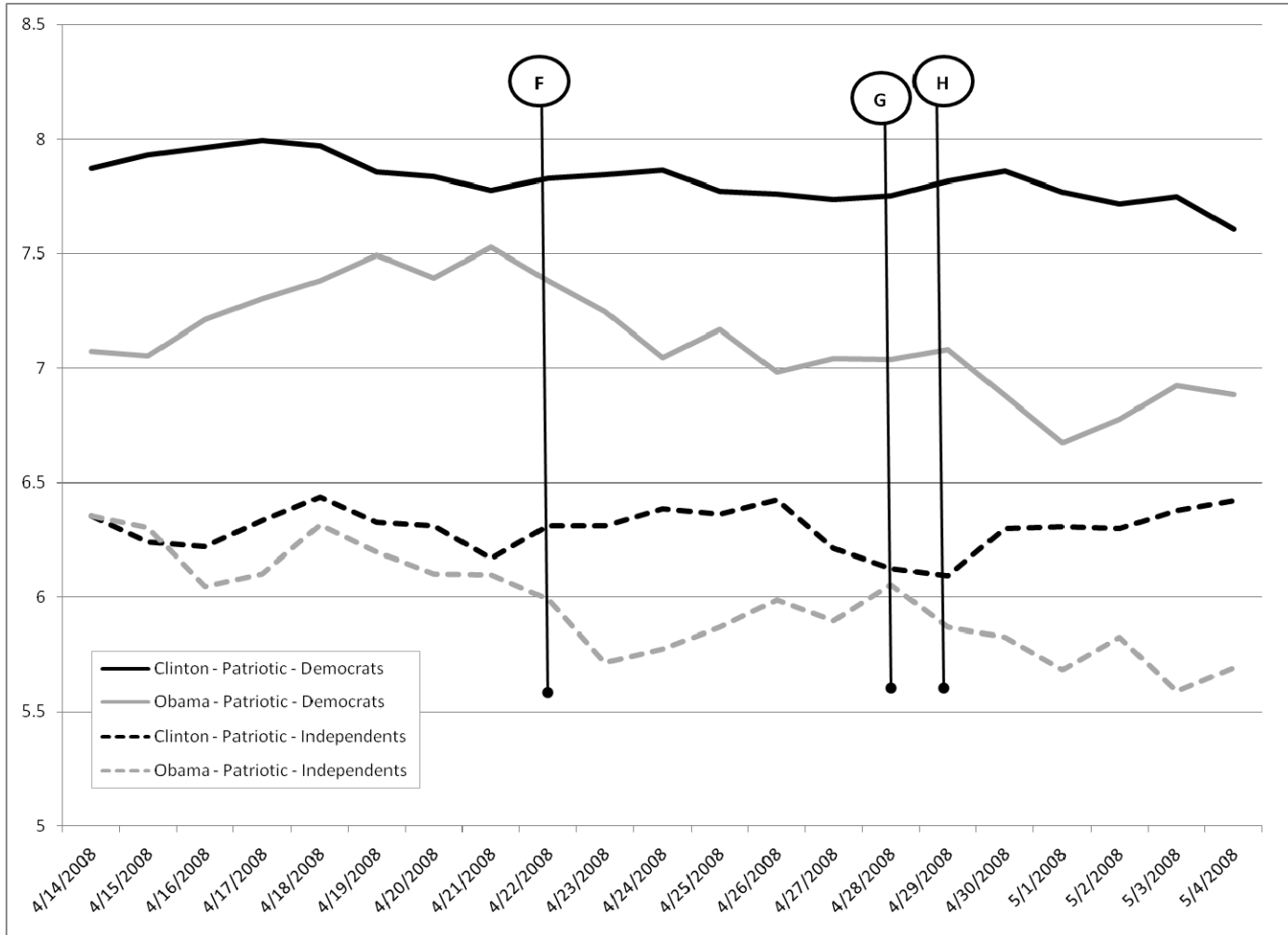
Figure 5. “Says what he or she believes”



- A. 3/04/2008. Clinton wins Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island primaries. Obama wins Texas caucuses and Vermont primary.
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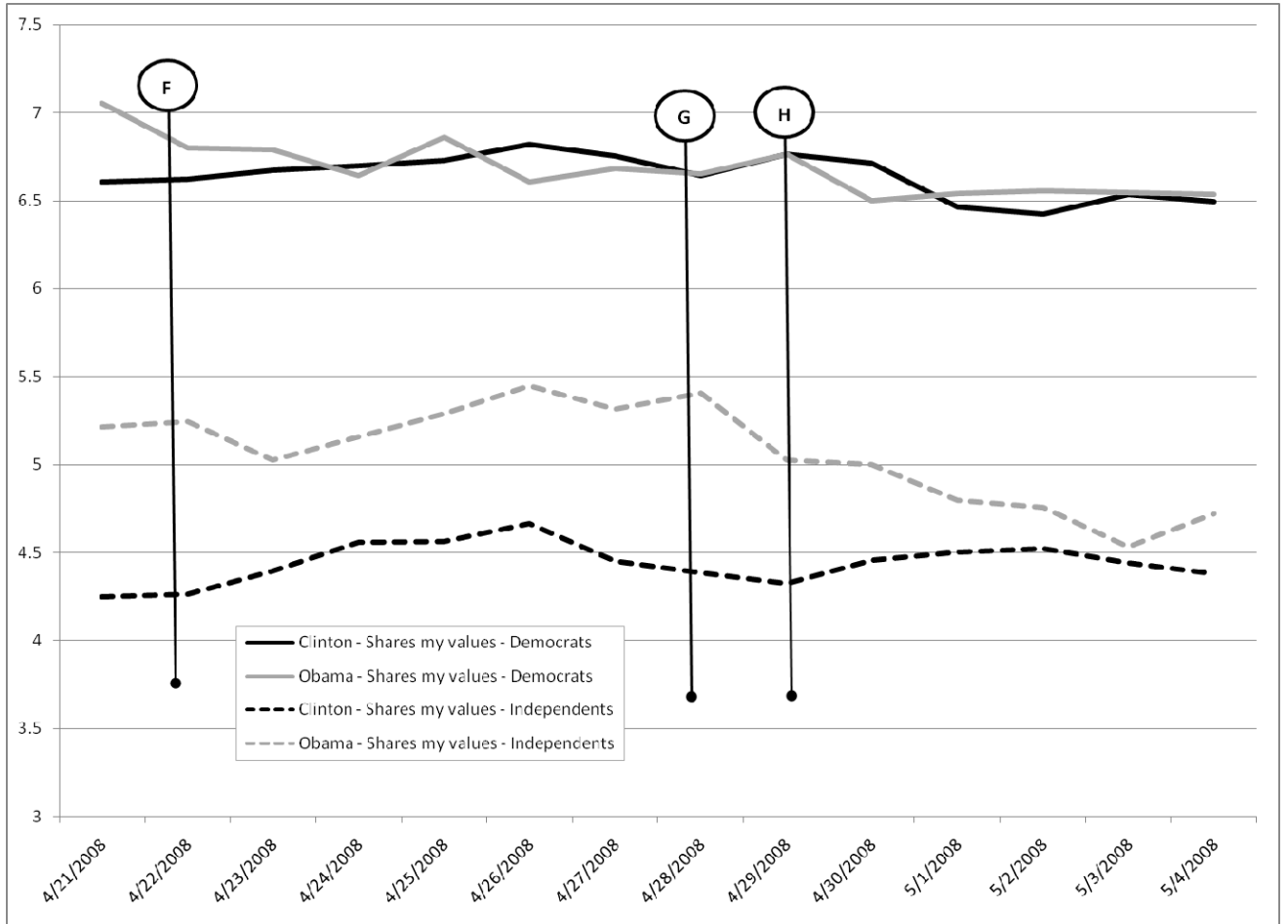


Figure 6. "Patriotic"



- A. 3/04/2008. Clinton wins Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island primaries. Obama wins Texas caucuses and Vermont primary.
- B. 3/15/2008. Video clips of Rev. Wright are widely broadcast on television, cable and the Internet.
- C. 3/18/2008. Obama makes speech on race and Rev. Wright.
- D. 3/22/2008. Clinton, sniper fire and Kosovo.
- E. 4/12/2008. Obama, bitter.
- F. 4/22/2008. Clinton wins Pennsylvania primary.
- G. 4/28/2008. Rev. Wright speaks at The National Press Club.
- H. 4/29/2008. Obama responds to Rev. Wright.

Figure 7. “Shares my values”



- A. 3/04/2008. Clinton wins Ohio, Texas and Rhode Island primaries. Obama wins Texas caucuses and Vermont primary.
- B. 3/15/2008. Video clips of Rev. Wright are widely broadcast on television, cable and the Internet.
- C. 3/18/2008. Obama makes speech on race and Rev. Wright.
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## **About the Survey:**

The National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is a survey conducted each presidential election by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. It is the largest academic election survey being conducted during the 2008 campaign. It ultimately will include between 45,000 and 50,000 rolling cross-section telephone interviews (one interview per respondent) and almost 100,000 web interviews (including up to five interviews with the same person) as the campaign evolves. The first web wave began in October 2007; the final interviews will be completed following the general election, November 4, 2008.

National Annenberg Election Surveys also were conducted in 2000 and 2004. The 2008 survey, as with past NAES polls, will examine a wide range of political attitudes about candidates, issues and the traits Americans want in a president. It will also place a particular emphasis on the effects of media exposure through campaign commercials and news from radio, television, newspapers and the internet. Additionally, the survey measures the effects of other kinds of political communication, from conversations at home and on the job to various efforts by campaigns to influence potential voters.

## **Methodology**

Data for this analysis come from the NAES rolling cross-sectional telephone survey. Because daily cross-sections are subject to random variation and uninteresting day-to-day fluctuations induced by sampling error we pooled the data across days to “smooth” out the random variation. Throughout this study, we employed a 5-day prior moving average, i.e., any particular day’s value is an average of values of that day and the preceding four days. The last four days of February are included in the sample in order to calculate the 5-day rolling average and allow us to start our trend line on March 1.

## **Questions:**

Respondents were told: “I am going to read you some phrases. For each one, please tell me how well that phrase applies to the following candidates [Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama – candidate names were rotated during data collection]. Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where ‘zero’ means it does not apply at all and 10 means it applies extremely well. Of course you can use any number in between: 1) ‘strong leader,’ 2) ‘trustworthy,’ 3) ‘Has the experience needed to be President,’ 4) ‘Has the judgment needed to be President,’ 5) ‘Says what he (she) believes,’ 6) ‘Patriotic’ (since April 10), and 7) ‘Shares my values’ (since April 17).