An Analysis of the Factors that Determine the Success of Congressional Campaigns

Paul J. Seigel
AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGNS

by

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Paul Jay Seigel
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of Party</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Independent Voter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of Candidate Orientation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of Issues</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of Campaigning</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Research Objectives and Methods</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dependent Variable—Success</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Federal Election Commission Reports</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Analysis of Data</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variable Correlations</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regression Analysis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Correlations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Factor Analysis</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Conclusion and Recommendations</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VI CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Cont.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Assistance</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Organization</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX E</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX F</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Incumbency Measure</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Professional Advertising Measure</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Management Measure</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Polling Quality Measure</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Correlations With Success</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Intercorrelation Between Variables</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regression on All Independent Variables</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regression Without Incumbency</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Partial Correlation Coefficients Controlling for Incumbency</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Partial Correlation Coefficients Controlling for Money</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Partial Correlation Coefficients Controlling for Incumbency and Money</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rotated Factor Matrix</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Regression on Factors</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>District Base Party Strength</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Campaign Cost Per Vote</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Full Data Set</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Winner's Perceptions of Their Own Victories and of the Variables</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Winner's Perceptions of Loser's Defeats and of the Variables</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Loser's Perceptions of Their Own Defeats and of the Variables</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Loser's Perceptions of the Winner's Victories and of the Variables</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GEOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN DESCRIPTION
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to determine which factor or combination of factors in a campaign for congressional office contributes most significantly to the success of a candidate.

Traditionally a candidate's party label has been the single most important vote-influencing variable in election campaigns. Issues and the intangible effect of candidate orientation have also figured prominently. This study recognizes and accepts the established importance of all of these variables and accordingly will not retest their influence.

What we will investigate, however, are several elements of campaigning that are often underestimated in terms of their influence on candidate success. Indeed, it has been argued that the political campaign in itself is a most critical component of candidate success. While party affiliation and issue orientation are important elements in an election, the presence of candidate appeal and image and its importance is not crystalized until it is projected through a campaign to the voters.¹

¹For this reason and because issue orientation and candidate personality are difficult to measure accurately they will not be included specifically as independent variables. It is, of course, expected that their influence will reflect itself in other variables of the campaign.
One measure of a candidate's success (or failure), therefore, is dependent upon how strategically his campaign is waged and upon how effectively his assets are projected through his campaign to his district.

Since the force of party affiliation is so strong this project will be structured to control for its influence. The dependent variable (success) will be defined in a manner that will sidestep the implications of party affiliation and which will allow us to consider more carefully other less studied factors which also effect the success of candidates.

It is then, the aim of this project to uncover and analyze the elements of congressional campaign strategies that result in the qualified success or failure of those campaigns.

Michigan's 19 races for congressional office in the 1976 general election constitute the population for this study. Nine separate independent variables are measured: years in office, money, professional assistance, campaign organization, polling, research, planning, use of volunteers, and literature distribution. Questionnaires were sent to each of the 38 major party candidates to determine how and to what extent each of the independent variables was involved in each campaign.

A factor analysis and a regression analysis were used to evaluate the relative impact and importance of each of the independent variables on the overall goal of candidate success.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Election campaigns and their strategies are a little studied and even less understood concern of students of political science. The literature in the area is more practical than scholarly. What campaign managers know, therefore, concerning campaigning and the impact of campaigning is limited. Thus, what campaigners often do is based more on assumption and conjecture than proven practice.

The most consistent and reoccurring theme in the literature on campaigning revolves around the notion of resources. As "The competitive effort of rival candidates for public office to win support of the voters...,"\(^2\) campaigns and their strategies are assumed to be based upon the understanding, organization, and use of various available resources.

In the most literal sense a resource is an entity that--if handled knowledgeably--should serve as an asset to a particular interest. In quite the same sense, however, a resource that is mismanaged is of a disproportionate advantage.

In the flow of an election campaign candidates compete to contract and then apply the "... political resources that can secure votes."\(^3\) The extent to which a campaign is able to acquire


and use such resources is functionally related to its chance for success. Among the many resources that are useful to acquire Leuthold lists candidate characteristics, party support, issue position, primary auxiliary group support, money, and people as the most crucial.\(^4\) Robert Agranoff adds to Leuthold's list such aspects as age, incumbency or nonincumbency, occupation, ethnicity, religion, residence, and so on.\(^5\) While Agranoff notes that most of these factors are unchangeable during the course of a campaign, he cautions that they must not be ignored when considering the advantages and disadvantages upon and/or around which a campaign plan is to be developed.

**Impact of Party**

Traditionally party preference has been deemed as the most significant factor influencing a voter's candidate choice. Such arguments have solid backing in the literature.

Generally the voter will be aware of very little about a candidate—especially the candidate for the less visible political offices. The voter will know what party the candidate represents, perhaps whether he is the incumbent or not, and little else. It is upon such a foundation and with such limited knowledge that a great number of voters mark their ballots.

Also important to consider in the context of voter party preference is the varying degree of attachment that voters hold to the parties. While most Americans are found to identify with

\(^4\)Ibid, p. 2.

one or the other of the two major parties, their support for the parties varies in its intensity. (In other words, there are strong Democrats and Republicans and not so strong or weak Democrats and Republicans.) And while many people claim independence in voting it is generally found that independents lean towards one of the two major parties over time. The greater the strength of the voter's identification with a political party, the more inclined the voter will be to vote for that party's candidate.

It stands to follow then that more than 80 percent of the strong party identifiers regularly vote for the candidate of their party. Weaker partisans average around 60 percent. Independents that can be determined to lean towards one party or the other tend to vote with the party in approximately four out of every ten instances.6

Undoubtedly a candidate's party affiliation is particularly important in the minds of many voters--either consciously or below the surface. Party predisposition is established at an early age and grows in intensity as a voter grows older. Agranoff's concession that "Party identification...is a very important ingredient in making up the vote"7 enjoys widespread support in the literature.


The Independent Voter

There is a growing body of voters that prefer not to commit themselves formally to either of the two major political parties. These voters—independent voters—are quite certainly "... a force to be reckoned with in American politics...." Indeed, the independent voter is a number one concern of campaigners everywhere at all levels of politics.

The independent voters are of extreme importance to campaigners because as a group they often hold critical voting power. It is true that many campaigns commence with the notion that they and their opposition already have a base of loyal party supporters who will back them regardless of what they do and, accordingly, gear their efforts toward winning the battle over the independents.

Who the independent voter really is and why he acts as he does is not precisely known by any stretch of the imagination. For years—since 1900—researchers have studied and debated (although not that fastidiously) the motivations of the independent voter. It was not until 1960 when The American Voter authors formally identified the so-called uninformed and unconcerned independent that any real attempt at a description of this vital portion of the American electorate was offered:

*Far from being more attentive, interested and informed, Independents tend as a group to be somewhat less involved in politics. They have somewhat poorer knowledge of the issues, their image of the candidates is fainter, their*

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*8Ibid., p. 30.*

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interest in the campaign is less, their concern over the outcome is relatively slight, and their choice between competing candidates, although it is indeed made later in the campaign, seems much less to spring from discovered evaluations of the elements of national politics.9

While many later descriptions of the independent only reiterated and supported the findings of The American Voter authors, there have been a few counter-explanations offered (in particular one by V. O. Key in 1961 and another by Walter DeVries and V. Lance Tarrance in 1972)10 that have been given much attention by the political science community.

After reexamining various data including that upon which The American Voter authors based their conclusions, Key maintained that switchers (independents) were quite different from the apathetic, disinterested, and uninformed voters that they had been pegged to be:

We have established patterns of movement of party switchers from election to election and the patterns of stability of the standpatter [straight party voter] that lead us to the conception of the voter that is not often propounded. From our analysis the voter merges as a person who appraises the actions of government, who has policy preferences and who relates his vote to those appraisals and preferences.11

According to Key, voters, in particular those voters who switch, do so as a result of a conscious examination of the policies and record of the government.

---


According to DeVries and Tarrance a major part of the problem in understanding the so-called "independent" voter is a matter of definition. While The American Voter author's concept of the independents is based on "...self-perception and self-description..."12 (i.e., what voters call themselves) DeVries and Tarrance base their concept of the "ticket-splitter" on voter's actual behavior. In other words, the DeVries and Tarrance ticket-splitter "...is a voter who moves back and forth across the ballot rather than voting exclusively for candidates of a single party,"13 whereas the Campbell, et al independent is simply a voter who claims to move back and forth.

The "ticket-splitter" as described by DeVries and Tarrance is in marked contrast to the independent as described by The American Voter authors. The ticket-splitter according to DeVries and Tarrance,

...is slightly younger, somewhat more educated, somewhat more white-collar, and more suburban than the typical middle-class voter. In addition, the ticket-splitter tends to consume more media output about politics and is more active politically than the straight Democrat (but less than the straight Republican).14

The voter DeVries and Tarrance depict is not uninformed and apathetic but rather, interested and aware of the personalities and issues generated by a campaign for political office.


14 Ibid., p. 61.
As noted previously, our knowledge of the independent voter is limited. We are not sure what his motivations are and research on the question is contradictory. Indeed, research has only just begun into the independent voter psyche.

Just the same--whether we understand their actions completely or not--their presence is undeniable and their numbers are apparently growing. Since 1937 the number of professed independents has more than doubled from 15 percent to 32 percent in 1976. Gallup data from 1976 indicates that among all voters independents greatly outnumber Republicans and that among young voters (24 and under) independents outnumber both major parties.\(^\text{15}\)

Slowly--but clearly--the base of party support is shrinking for both parties. The "swing" vote, the "balance of power," the stuff electoral majorities are made of, is now held by the independent voters. And campaigners are vividly aware of this reality.

Impact of Candidate Orientation

In an ever increasing quantity of election contests a number of voters come to back a particular candidate because of his personal appeal and the image which he projects.

Exactly what "image" or "appeal" is, is difficult to ascertain. Presumably it is a reflection of sorts which the candidate casts upon the voters and apparently it involves both policy and personality perceptions. How a voter "feels" about a candidate and how a voter thinks a candidate might handle the job are primary considerations.

\(^{15}\)Gallup Opinion Index, No. 131, June, 1976.
in defining the intangible effect of the image and appeal dimension. Researchers use various techniques to determine the image ratings of candidates (i.e., semantic differentials and feeling thermometers) but predictability is another thing altogether. An image is simply an image—as vague as the term itself implies. There is no precise method of predicting the effect of candidate image and appeal.

Whether this dimension of voting choice can be measured exactly or not, however, is secondary to the simple fact that an image or an appeal is indeed there and that it is perceived as there by the voters. It stands to reason then, that as candidate image and appeal become more important to voting decisions, that candidate orientation concerns must become a more emphasized aspect of campaigning. Towards this end Agranoff notes:

Unlike party appeal, which is largely a pre-existing sentiment, and which the candidate can expect, to some extent, from the party, the candidate and his campaigners must create candidate sentiment. The candidate organization can not merely associate itself with the party label or party organization but must formulate appeals which stimulate candidate voting.16

Impact of Issues

For years an ongoing debate has raged among those who study electorate behavior concerning the role that issues play in voter's candidate selections. According to Agranoff, "The controversy

centers around the critical question of the extent to which American voters adhere to the democratic ideal by using issue concerns as the basis for making voting decisions."\textsuperscript{17}

The authors of \textit{The American Voter} found that while there exists a consistency between a party's and a voter's position on most issues, more often the voter who holds an issue position is not aware of the differences between the major parties on these issues. The authors conclude that party preference is the more important influence and that the impact of issues is probably misperceived.\textsuperscript{18}

In \textit{The Responsible Electorate} V. O. Key countered arguing the democratic ideal that "voters are not fools" and contended that the electorate is "concerned about central and relevant questions of public policy, or governmental performance, and of executive personality."\textsuperscript{19}

After some discussion and input by other scholars (Walter Dean Burnham, David E. RePass, to name but a couple\textsuperscript{20}) \textit{The American Voter} authors undertook a study of the 1968 presidential election--using the Wallace candidacy as a basis--and ended up

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 38-39.

\textsuperscript{18}Campbell, et al., \textit{The American Voter}, p. 180.

\textsuperscript{19}Key, \textit{The Responsible Electorate}, p. 7-8.

altering their previous position:

They found substantial correlations between Wallace's issue positions on law and order, civil rights, Vietnam, and the voter's issue positions, whereas party identification was insignificant to these voters. The public reacted to the Wallace candidacy, they assert, as an issue candidacy....

...The Wallace findings show, as Key argued, the public can relate policy controversies to their own estimation of the world and vote accordingly, but one of the "cardinal limiting conditions is the drag or inertia represented by habitual party loyalties; as soon as features of the situation limit or neutralize the relevance of such a factor, issue evaluations play a more vital role."21


Gerald Pomper then in Voters' Choice illustrated a similar correlation between a voter's party identification and issue positions on several civil rights oriented issues.23 Pomper did not, however, demonstrate a causal relationship between casting

votes and a voter's issue preferences. To date no scholar has demonstrated such a relationship.

In terms of the question of issue impact and in particular its relevance to campaigners, Agranoff has noted:

What is clear is that for partisans, issues seem to be in some way involved in partisanship, but that there are cases in which issues seem to pull people away from their partisanship. Also under some conditions for some voters issues can become the single most important factor in voting decisions.\(^{24}\)

Agranoff stresses the argument that regardless of whether we know for sure how many issue voters there are, that campaigners should be aware that they do comprise a measurable portion of the electorate. The issue component of the electorate is very flexible and thus, should never be overlooked or underestimated by the campaigner.

Impact of Campaigning

It should be evident from our discussion thus far of the role of party, issues, and image in voting decisions that the voters do not perceive candidates through untainted eyes. If campaigns do indeed have an influence on some Americans, exactly what that influence is and precisely who is influenced depends on both the campaign strategy applied and on the predispositions of the voters the strategy is aimed towards.

It is within the groundwork and with a general understanding

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 43.
of the influence of party, issues and appeal that campaigners should form their strategies. They should begin with a general idea of how the mind of the voter ticks and what his predispositions are and proceed with a plan designed to enlist a plurality of voter support.

A campaign can have an impact in three basic ways: it can reinforce voter predispositions, activate voter predispositions, or it can convert a voter completely. In a study by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet it was shown that as many as 53 percent of the electorate were reinforced by campaigns. A lesser number were activated and still fewer were converted by campaigns. Accordingly it follows that campaigns are aimed not so much at converting voters as at protecting themselves with reinforcing and activating strategies from partisan "base" vote defection.

Reinforcement

The process of reinforcing voter predisposition is the most basic campaign technique and a most essential one. The reinforcement process works in the following manner for the campaigner:

The provision of new arguments and the reiteration of old arguments in behalf of his candidate reassure the partisan and strengthen his vote decision. Should he be tempted to vacillate, should he come to question the rightness of his decision, the reinforcing arguments are there to curb such tendencies toward defection. The partisan is assured that

he is right; he is told why he is right; and he is reminded that other people agree with him, always a gratification and especially so during times of doubt. In short, political propaganda in the media of communication, by providing them with good partisan arguments, at the same time provides orientation, reassurance, and integration for the already partisan. Such satisfactions tend to keep people 'in line' by reinforcing their initial decisions.26

**Activation and Persuasion**

Along and apart from reinforcing voters predispositions campaigns are also directed towards activating these predisposed views. Often certain voters hedge on their decisions on how to vote. Campaigns can be aimed to smooth over voter's hesitations and help push them to mark their ballots according to their partisan predisposition.

While the process of activation and persuasion is most commonly thought of in terms of its relationship to inattentive predisposed voters the process can reach a very feverish pitch when its target is the independent or undecided voting blocks.

Activating forces in a campaign can either operate through the mass media or via direct personal influence. The process of activation is most fluidly described by The Peoples Choice authors:

**Propaganda Arouses Interest:** As the campaign gains momentum, people who have not been interested begin to pay attention. At this stage it is the rising volume of propaganda which initiates the changes.

**Increased Interest Brings Increased Exposure:** As people

---

26Ibid., p. 88
'wake up' to the campaign, their aroused attention leads them to see and hear more out of the supply around them. The voter's initiative is more in evidence at this stage; but the relationship is circular. Increased attention brings increased exposure which further arouses interest and attention which adds to exposure and so on.

Attention is Selective: As interest increases and the voter begins to be aware of what it is all about, his predispositions come into play. Out of the wide array of propaganda, he begins to select. He is more likely to tune some programs than others; to go to some meetings rather than others; to understand one point in a speech than another. His selective attention thus reinforces the predispositions with which he comes to the campaign. At this stage the initiative is almost wholly with the prospective voter rather than with the propagandists. Whatever the publicity that is put out, it is the selective attention of the citizen which determines what is responded to.

Votes Crystallize: Finally enough latent lines of thought have been aroused and sufficient rationale has been appropriated from the campaign so that the decision can be made. The latent has become manifest; the uncertainty disappears; the voter is ready to mark his ballot.27

Conversion

The final and most difficult effect for a campaign to perform on voters is conversion. Converting voters is particularly difficult because of the solid obstacles of predisposition which exist in so many voters. It is next to impossible to convert the strong party faithful (strong party identifiers vote with the party more than 80 percent of the time) and accordingly, the conversion of opposition "base" support is seldom a successful campaign tactic. Also hindering conversion strategies is the

27Ibid., p. 75-76.
factor of the time at which voting decisions are made by most voters.

Although no specific research has been done on the timing of nonpresidential voting decisions it has been determined that fewer than four out of ten voters (and as little as 25 percent) in any given presidential campaign, decide how to vote during the campaign. The vast majority of voters decide who to vote for before the campaign is ever begun. Agranoff assures "...there is no reason to believe that the number of voters who decide during the campaign [non presidential campaigns] is not [also] within the 25- to 40-percent range."28

In addition to the evidence that most people decide how to vote prior to the beginning of the campaign, conversion attempts are compounded by other factors—reasons such as: the numerous voters whose decision comes with thenominating decision or after the primary campaign and before the general election effort, and those voters who (whether activated or reinforced) vote ultimately according to deep social and political predispositions.

Very important to note, however, is that the weaker a voter's predispositions, the higher the chance that he may be converted by a campaign. While the conversion factor does contribute to the fewest number of votes in most campaigns, this number in a close election can compute to equal the difference between success and

failure. Thus, it is critical that efforts toward conversion not 
be discounted by campaigners and that they be combined with 
activating and reinforcing strategies.

Summary

How then, do voters make candidate decisions? What, if any, 
impact do campaigns have on these decisions? And what can 
campaigners do to maximize their influence on voter decision-
making.

While we know a great deal about voter decision-making--what 
we know is limited by situation and circumstance. Because of the 
vast array of uncontrollable and unpredictable situational variables 
(i.e., coattails, ticket splitting, and voter turnout) what we 
expect from the electorate may not always be realized.

Yet what we know helps us.

We know that voter party preference is a strong factor in the 
process of voter choice--that the average voter knows little more 
about a candidate than his party label and, perhaps, whether he is 
the incumbent or not. We are aware that some people are more 
partisan than others--but that an ever increasing pool of "independent" voters refuses to adopt the label of either major political 
party. We know that the stronger one's party identification is 
(and that this attachment is formed early in life and grows over 
time) the more likely one is to vote with the party. The weaker 
a voter's party ties (i.e., the more "independent" the voter) the
more likely the chance that he can be swayed by campaign conversion strategies. We know that many campaigns evolve from the foundation that victory hinges on winning the "swing" vote.

We know less (and we are at odds over what we think we know) about the role of issues in voter choice. While some argue that issue impact is, at most, minimal, it is generally believed that depending upon circumstances, the right issue or issues can greatly effect even the strongly predisposed voter.

We are not sure what we know about the impact of candidate image and appeal but we reasonably assume that it is of major importance--if not primary importance--in the minds of many voters. Its influence appears to be increasing and, given the post-Nixon push for honesty in government, consideration of the candidate image and appeal dimension can be expected to play an even stronger role in future voter decision making.

Since we have a general understanding of voting behavior, we try to gear our strategies to where they will be the most effective--to where they will yield the most votes. Campaigners think that they can have an impact on voter choice.

They, therefore, aim a major effort toward reinforcing and activating the vast numbers of voters who vote their predispositions. They prod them and propagandize them to reassure them, to encourage them, and to discourage their defection. They reinforce and activate them not only with partisan appeals, but also with issues and personality. They do so recognizing that voters have
varying degrees of predisposition, and that even the most strongly partisan voter cares about some issues and is pleased by a favorably appealing candidate.

Campaigners also aim a portion of their time toward converting voters who are predisposed to vote for the opposition party. At the same time they direct a critical amount of effort toward winning the support of the very important independent "swing" votes which ultimately decide many elections. Such voters, contrary to the strongly predisposed voter, often make candidate choices late in the campaign and therefore are open to be influenced by the campaigner's strategies for a longer period of time. Usually only a few minds can actually be changed during the course of a campaign but in a close race a small percentage can loom very large when converted to counted ballots.

It still must be granted, however, that "although most professional politicians take for granted the efficacy of campaigns, scholarly analysis has often questioned their impact."29 In most elections most voters determine how they are going to cast their ballots prior to the actual commencement of the campaign. Beyond this many voters are largely unaware and limited in their willingness—if not their inability—to absorb ideas in a campaign. In fact, in many elections most of the eligible voters do not vote anyway.

In the final analysis one must weigh the impact of campaigns carefully. If they have an impact, as we have noted, that impact is limited to a large degree by voter predisposition and situational circumstances. The fact does remain, however, that some 25 to 40 percent of the voters, primarily the independent voters, do make voting decisions during the course of campaigns. And it has been shown that even the predisposed voter, regardless of when his decision is formulated, can be touched by reinforcing, activating and converting mechanisms in a campaign.

What we have then in retrospect is the answer to three basic questions. We have a general knowledge of how voters decide how to vote. We believe that campaigns can have an influence on voter choice (particularly the choice of independents). And we know now the underlying assumptions upon which campaign strategies are based.

What we do not know--and what is not known--is how campaigners can maximize the impact of their efforts--if, indeed, their efforts can be assumed to have any impact. As we noted earlier, election campaigns are a little studied and even less understood concern of students of political science. There is relatively little to be found in the literature dealing with the winning of political campaigns question and of that which is written, most is of the "practical manual" mold. It is a body of knowledge based on assumption, lacking empirical foundation.

This study breaks new ground. As it stands now, knowledgeable campaigners believe that they can affect the vote and they think they know, to a limited degree, how they can effect the vote. Accordingly,
our campaigners do what they think will work--what they think will be most successful--and hope that it is. The record, of course, clearly indicates that what campaigners expect is not always what happens.

Our goal is to discover what factors determine the success of a congressional campaign.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The intent of this research is to measure the impact of a series of independent variables including years in office, money, professional assistance, campaign organization, polling, research, planning, use of volunteers, and literature distribution on the success (or failure) of each of the 38 Michigan major party congressional campaign experiences and on the 1976 Michigan experience as a whole.

Dependent Variable—Success

The dependent variable is delineated so as to control for the independent influence of party affiliation.

Success is defined as the percentage that a given candidate for Congress scores in his district above the lowest percentage tallied in his district by one of the two candidates from the same party in the race for the State Board of Education.\(^{30}\)

The assumption here is that State Board of Education contests are decided along firm party lines and thus, when broken down by congressional district, reflect district party strength in

\(^{30}\)By using the losing candidate's tally we avoid the danger of dealing with figures that may be unusually high because one of the candidates happens to have strong name identification within a particular district.
their totals. Since the size of district and their boundaries are determined by the dispersion of population within them, it is often necessary that individual counties be apportioned among more than one congressional district (Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S., 186 - 1962).

This reality presents an obstacle for our project. While district results for congressional contests can be quickly obtained, corresponding totals for statewide board of education races are not so easily come by. Because district boundaries do not figure directly into statewide board of education outcomes, the State Election Division compiles returns by county rather than by congressional district.

To achieve continuity between the figures for congressional races and the contest for the state board of education--and to facilitate the comparison needed to measure our dependent variable--county poll books were examined where necessary (i.e., where a township or two from one county were found in a district apart from the majority of the county) to compute workable statistics.
The method, therefore, of computing the dependent variable (success) comes in the three stages depicted below:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Party strength} & = \text{Vote for party's least successful candidate for State Board of Education} \\
& \quad + \text{opposing party's least successful candidate for State Board of Education} \\
\text{Campaign Strength} & = \text{Vote for candidate} + \text{vote for his major opponent} \\
\text{Campaign Success} & = \text{Campaign Strength} - \text{Party Strength}
\end{align*}
\]

Independent Variables

The impact of nine independent variables are measured. Listed in the remainder of this section are nine elements that have had an impact throughout the history of election campaigning: years in office, money, professional assistance, campaign organization, polling, research, planning, use of volunteers, and literature distribution.

The variables are listed and discussed in order of their "expected" importance. The variable expected to correlate most strongly with campaign success is listed first, the expected next most important variable second, and so on.

All independent variable measures are relative measures because of the inherent competitive structure of the political campaign game. Campaigns are not conducted in isolated arenas but rather they are waged against and in reaction to an opponent's campaign and his strategies. It is because of this arrangement...
that what works in one instance does not work in a seemingly similar situation. One hundred thousand dollars is of a great advantage if one's opponent spends only one quarter that amount, however, the same amount of money takes on quite a different significance if one's opponent spends $200,000. Accordingly, all independent variable measures are computed according to the following formula:

\[
\text{Variable Measure} = \frac{\text{Candidate's measure for variable}}{\text{Candidate's measure} + \text{opponent's measure for the variable}}
\]

**Incumbency--Years in office**

Incumbency designates the holding of political office. In the strictest sense it is the term applied to the candidate seeking reelection for that office. The significance of incumbency rests with the assumption that incumbency serves as an advantage to the candidate. Huckshorn and Spencer assure us that "Most congressmen believe that this situation represents a significant advantage. Virtually all nonincumbent candidates would agree."\(^{32}\)

It has been estimated that the incumbent congressman has a two to three percent vote drawing advantage and that his franking privilege is worth as much as $7,200.\(^{33}\) The possession of

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office allows the incumbent to "campaign" earlier; he is sought as a speaker by groups within his district—and what he says is considered "newsworthy" so he enjoys easy access to the media. The incumbent is usually more familiar with the needs of his district, should have an already established campaign mechanism and staff, and has the benefit of experience in the voter's eyes. The incumbent with a good record in office can campaign on it.

And indeed, incumbents have shown impressive reelection rates throughout the years. C. O. Jones showed that nearly 94 percent of all renominated congressmen from 1954 to 1960 won reelection.34 Gerald Pomper reports in his early interpretation of the 1976 elections that 95.6 percent of the renominated congressmen won reelection.35

The insurgent has to construct a campaign organization from scratch, establish an identity, and campaign with issues to counter the experience and familiarity quotient of the incumbent.

In a more realistic sense, however, the state of incumbency is more than just a literal definition of who is running for reelection. Incumbency is a measure of candidate control over and familiarity (name identification) with his constituency.

A candidate does not have to be an incumbent congressman

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seeking reelection to reap some of the resource benefit of incumbency (although, under usual circumstances the incumbent congressman is at a distinct advantage). Other situations provide the insurgent with a measurable degree of control in a given constituency. With this in mind, the measure shown in Table 1 is applied to gauge the strength of incumbency as a resource.

**TABLE 1**

**INCUMBENCY MEASURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Status</th>
<th>Point Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congressman</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Senator</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Representative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Local Official</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecutor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurgent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If, for example, in campaign "X" the incumbent congressman "R" is opposed by a local city councilman "D", a total of eight points would be involved (R = 6, D = 2). Since all measures must be relative in comparison they must be expressed as such numerically. Therefore, in the example listed above each candidate's score would be divided by the total score of both candidates.
Computing this we result with relative measures of the incumbency variable in campaign "X" (R = .750, D = .250).

Money

Money can easily be defined as the number of dollars involved in the financing of a given general election campaign. The significance of campaign dollars rests simply with the fact that the more money a campaign has, the more leeway it has to do what it wants. Huckshorn and Spencer report that in their study "...Most respondents cited lack of money as a major cause of their defeat."36

The election game is an expensive one and it takes a lot of dollars to wage a credible campaign in a competitive race for Congress.

Relative measures for the money variable can be determined without problem. If in campaign "X" candidate "R" spends $125,000 and candidate "D" spends $75,000 the total expenditure for the general election campaign is $200,000. By dividing each candidate's individual expense by the total we obtain relative measures of the money factor (R = .625, D = .375).

Outside professional assistance

Professional management firms offer a wide variety of services and packages to assist and direct a candidate in the running of his or her campaign. Such services can include fundraising help, public opinion sampling assistance, media and advertising help, budget

direction, and so on.

Firms supplying such services began on a small scale during the early 1930's. Once used primarily for national campaigns, campaign management services are now finding a comfortable home at all levels of politics. Their significance (and acceptance) can be grasped in terms of their expansion and in terms of their particularly high success rates.

Our assumption is that the more professional aid a campaign receives, the better chance it will have for success.

One of the most critical areas in a campaign is advertising. The preparation of advertising materials is a science, and it takes an experienced person to wring the most from the dollars spent. Bad production can be extremely detrimental for a campaign. Without the advice of an advertising expert--skilled in political advertising--a campaign is at a disadvantage. The campaign with such help has a greater chance for success.

Also of importance in terms of outside help is assistance from groups and organizations such as the Republican National Committee, the Democratic National Committee, the National Committee for an Effective Congress, Americans for Constitutional Action, and so on. These and various other liberal and conservative groups offer free and highly professional assistance to candidates with whom they are particularly impressed.

Our method of gauging the relative measure of outside professional
assistance corresponds to the following two-part format: If in campaign "X" both candidates made use of any measurable degree of professional political consulting help, this assistance will be measured in terms of the question "How much?". If candidate "R" had media help, polling help, budgeting help, and fundraising help (i.e., assistance in four distinct areas of the campaign) he would receive a corresponding score of four. If candidate "D" had professional assistance in just one area he would receive a score of only one. By dividing each candidate's score by the total between them a relative measure for this type of outside assistance is arrived at (R = .800, D = .200). If in campaign "X" candidate "R" was not assisted professionally from the outside and candidate "D" was, candidate "R" would, of course, receive a score of zero and candidate "D" would receive a score of 1.0. The second part of the professional assistance measure is aimed directly toward professional advertising assistance. It is constructed as shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**

**PROFESSIONAL ADVERTISING MEASURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising Firm</th>
<th>Point Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington Political Firm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local General Advertising Firm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Prepared Advertising</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If in campaign "X" candidate "R" was assisted in advertising preparation and production by a skilled Washington, D. C. firm, he would receive an individual point score of four. If candidate "D" prepared and produced his own advertising he would receive a score of one. The total must then be divided into each of the individual scores to obtain the relative measures for professional advertising assistance (R = .800, D = .200).

To obtain the final computation for the overall independent variable of outside professional assistance one must average the scores of the two applied sub-measures (R = .800, D = .200).

Internal Campaign Organization

"It is not by accident," reads The Political Campaign, a United States Chamber of Commerce practical politics manual, "that the dominant political faction in many districts is called the 'organization'. Successful campaigns are always organized campaigns."37 Huckshorn and Spencer report that "Good campaign organization is recognized by those closely affected as an essential element for victory, although it does not guarantee it."38

Certainly organization is important and we expect it to correlate highly with campaign success. Whether or not organization is the "key to success," however, is a question we hope to


answer with this study. Accordingly, internal campaign organization is included as our fourth independent variable.

Our assumptions are basic and well accepted in the field. A good campaign organization requires a skilled campaign manager, and even the best manager requires adequate staffing to produce. In other words, a campaign run by someone who does not know politics and staffed haphazardly, is underskilled, will be overworked, and (assuming its opponent's campaign is well organized and staffed) in trouble.

It is also assumed that only a foolish candidate would manage his own campaign. The candidate's responsibilities as "candidate" are too vast to be shared with the duty of management. A two-part arrangement is applied to measure the internal campaign variable. Part one of the measure concerns the adequacy of the campaign manager (see Table 3).

If in campaign "X" candidate "R" ran his own campaign he would receive one point. If candidate "D" enlisted a professional manager from a professional management firm he would receive a score of five. As with the measures for the previously listed independent variables, the total must be divided into each individual score in order to obtain relative measures of the management aspect of internal organization (R = .167, D = .833).

The second part of the measure is directed toward internal campaign staffing. According to this measure a point is given for each staff person assigned to a specific task within the
campaign. If then in campaign "X" candidate "R" had only a campaign manager in charge of all aspects of the campaign he would receive zero points. If candidate "D" had a press secretary, a volunteer coordinator, a fundraising chairman, an advance man, and a speechwriter, he would receive five points—one point for each staff member with a specifically assigned responsibility. The total points would again be divided into each individual score to compute the relative measure for internal campaign staffing (R = .000, D = 1.0).

The relative results for each section of the variable would then be averaged to achieve the overall relative measure for internal campaign organization (R = .083, D = .917).

Polling

A poll is "An attempt to uncover public opinion or to forecast an election."39

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Through polling a candidate can gain insight into his district; he can determine what the voters desire and what issues they are most concerned about. The candidate can also poll his district to find out how strongly (or weakly) he is identified with or approved of by the voters in different areas of the district. By analyzing polling data the candidate can obtain critical information which should later help in the implementation of an effective campaign.

Poll analysis may show where in a district a candidate is running poorly. It can identify groups of voters and their individual interests, and it can present socio-economic and ethnic breakdowns. Using data derived from such polls a candidate can present himself and his programs in the most effective fashion to each group.

The primary significance of polling and survey research rests in the direction that they provide for a candidate and his campaign. Knowing who the voters are, where the voters are, and what the voters are concerned about are essential for any candidate who hopes to prepare a successful campaign strategy.

Polls are also helpful during a campaign. Their analysis may cause a campaign to alter its strategies to keep pace with changes in voter preference.

The measure for the independent variable of polling is a two-part measure. Part one can be figured with ease. If in campaign "X" candidate "R" takes one poll only he will receive one
point for the poll. If candidate "D" takes six polls, he will receive one point for each poll, or six points. A relative measure of the number of polls taken (or an approximate gauge of the extent to which a campaign has assessed a district accurately) is determined again in the same manner as in each of the previously discussed independent variables (R = .143, D = .857).

Part two of the polling measure examines the quality of the polling effort by the campaign. Table 4 illustrates the method of assigning points for the administration and analysis of the poll.

**TABLE 4**

**POLLING QUALITY MEASURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration of Poll</th>
<th>Point Award</th>
<th>Analysis of Poll</th>
<th>Point Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Pollster</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Professional Pollster</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politically Aware with Polling Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Politically Aware with Polling Experience</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If in campaign "X" candidate "R" had a professional poll taken (3 points) and had it professionally analyzed (3 points) he would receive a total score of six. If candidate "D" had a
professional poll taken (3 points) but analyzed it himself (and had no experience in survey research interpretation--zero points) he would receive a total point score of three. The relative measure for polling quality is computed in the same fashion as the relative measures for previously discussed variables ($R = .333$, $D = .666$).

The total relative measure for the independent variable of polling is determined by averaging the two sub-measures ($R = .238$, $D = .762$).

**Research**

Researchers and research committees operate within a campaign to gather data on the district and the opposing candidate. Information gathered by that researcher is invaluable to the candidate in the development of his or her overall campaign plan. Research is needed both prior to the actual development of the campaign strategy and also throughout the course of the campaign itself. Data on the last election should be gathered; historical data about the district as a whole should be examined; and census data and precinct voting patterns should be scrutinized. In addition, many other possible avenues of research are available to the campaigner--there are maps, voting records of opponents, published studies of district attitudes and behavior, and newspaper files for issue research. The supply of research sources is seemingly endless.

Research is significant for the same general reason that the research tool of polling is--a campaign must have a working knowledge of the attitudes of the voters that it must reach in order
to develop the most effective plan to attract their support. Our primary assumption here is that the more thoroughly a campaign is prepared (i.e., the more carefully and studiously decisions are researched), the better chance that campaign has for success.

Since reaching voters is the stuff elections are made of, it can be expected that exhaustive and careful research, like polling, will correlate strongly with campaign success.

Relative measures for the research variable are computed with little difficulty. For each method of research used by a campaign, the campaign is awarded one point. If then in campaign "X" candidate "R" examines census data, only he would receive one point for his research effort. If candidate "D" examines census data, past voting records of his opponent, historical data on the district's issue positions, and maps of target precincts, he would receive four points. The total figure for both candidates is then divided into their individual scores to compute the overall relative measure for campaign research (R = .200, D = .800).

Planning

The independent variable of planning is included as an afterthought and in reaction to the long-term planning experience of the Jimmy Carter campaign. It is not expected to correlate that strongly with the dependent variable.

The planning variable measures both how early (or late) the candidates decided to seek the congressional seat and how much planning time went into their efforts prior to the actual commencement
of the official campaign.

It is assumed that the more serious a candidate is about winning, the longer, and thus the more thoroughly, he will prepare his bid for election or reelection. We pose to test the relationship between such preparation and seriousness and campaign success.

The following method is used to measure the planning variable. If in campaign "X" candidate "R" began unofficial campaign preparations in November of 1975, he would receive a score of 12 for beginning 12 months prior to the election. If candidate "R" made his campaign announcement and began official campaigning in March of 1976, he would receive an additional four points (for a total of 16) for four months of preliminary planning. If candidate "D" began unofficial preparations in March of 1976 (the same month his opponent announced) he would receive eight points for beginning thought eight months prior to the election. If candidate "D" began his official campaigning in April of 1976, he would receive an additional one point (for a total of nine) for one month of planning.

Each candidate's individual scores (R = 16, D = 9) are then divided by the total (25) to compute the relative measures for the planning variable (R = .640, D = .360).

Use of volunteers

Volunteer workers are the backbone of every political organization. It would be difficult and impractical—if not impossible—to conduct a successful campaign without adequate numbers of dedicated volunteer workers....

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Campaigns depend upon volunteers. The more volunteers a candidate has, the stronger the campaign he or she can wage.

In a campaign there are many tasks that need to be done—typing, writing, research, bookkeeping, office work, filing, and envelop stuffing—and volunteers are needed to do them. Volunteers are also invaluable in the field, and the more of them there are, the better the candidate usually appears to the voters. Volunteers are used to distribute literature, bumper stickers, buttons, and other paraphernalia. They are needed to appear at rallies, mall blitzes, and so on.

The candidate whose campaign has the asset of a large and enthusiastic group of volunteers has an advantage over an opponent who does not. The candidate with a large force can reach more people on a more personal level (through his volunteers), and accordingly can usually wage a more extensive campaign.

The relative measure for the use of volunteers is as follows. If in campaign "X" candidate "R" operates with a volunteer force of 1000 and candidate "D" boasts an enthusiastic group of 2000 we have a total volunteer force of 3000. Again to achieve relative measures the individual candidate amounts are divided by the total (R = .333, D = .667).

**Literature distribution**

The preparation and distribution of campaign literature is particularly important in any campaign. The act of distribution in
itself can be considered a measure of a candidate's effort to make contact with the voters in his district. Literature distribution is included as an independent variable as a means by which to examine the value of this form of contact in a campaign--given the overall goal of candidate success.

There are two main types of printed materials that are frequently used in a campaign--general brochures and specific brochures. The general brochure need neither be gaudy nor expensive so long as it contains the desired message and reaches the voters. The brochure is beneficial to the candidate in many ways. Most important, it helps to expand the candidate's name identification, party identification, and relate some of his or her issue stands to the voters in his/her district. The brochures can be distributed at rallies, factory gates, meetings, picnics, and through direct mailing.

Specific brochures are also useful. Handouts and literature mailings can be aimed at special segments of the district--ethnic groups, the elderly, or the unemployed. Specific brochures are more personal appearing and help to create the impression in the minds of those toward whom they are directed that the candidate is particularly aware of their special concerns.

A two-part measure is applied to this final independent variable. If in campaign "X" candidate "R" distributes 150,000 general brochures and candidate "D" distributes 250,000, the total general literature distribution for the campaign is 400,000 brochures. By dividing each individual distribution figure by
the total relative measures of general brochure distribution are derived (R = .375, D = .625). For the second part of the measure in the same campaign, if candidate "R" uses only one specifically aimed leaflet and candidate "D" used four different brochures, the total specific literature count is five. Again by dividing the individual scores by the total we achieve a relative measure for specific brochure distribution (R = .200, D = .800).

As the final measure for the overall use of literature the scores of the two sub-measures are averaged together (R = .287, D = .213).

Research Design

Questionnaires were mailed to each of the 38 Michigan candidates for congressional office in the 1976 November general election (see Appendix A). The questionnaires were designed to determine how and to what extent each of the independent variables was involved in each campaign. A factor analysis and a regression analysis were applied to draw the correlations between each of the independent variables (and combinations among them) and campaign success.
CHAPTER IV

DATA COLLECTION

Completed questionnaires were returned by all but three of the sample members. Although it was expected that the losing candidates would respond less quickly and thoroughly than the winning candidates, no such pattern developed. While some members of the sample did respond more quickly than others, the fluctuation would appear to be related more to geographical influences than the candidate's status after the campaign. As displayed in Illustration 1, respondents from districts nearer the Third Congressional District answered slightly quicker on the average than respondents from the southeast corner of the state.

Democratic incumbents Lucien N. Nedzi and John Dingell, and the Republican challenger in the Twelfth District--David Serotkin--did not respond to the survey. A total of six phone calls and twelve questionnaires were directed to no avail at securing the responses of these three sample members.

An overall total of forty follow-up phone calls and eighty-three questionnaires were needed to achieve a near perfect return of 92.1 percent (35 of 38) of the questionnaires at an average return rate of 30 days.
NOTE: The average rate of response was 29.5 days. Map shows that as one moves away from the southeast corner of the state and nearer the Third District responses came a measurable degree more quickly and usually faster than the overall average.
Federal Election Commission Reports

Copies of the candidate's formal expenditure reports were obtained from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) initially so that comparisons could be made between the official figures and the respondents' answers to questions 2 and 3 in the candidate survey dealing with primary and general election campaign spending (see Appendix A). This was arranged originally to use as a check against the accuracy and the candidness of the individual questionnaires as they were returned. Ultimately the FEC figures were used instead of the questionnaire responses to calculate the measures for the money variables.

The underlying assumption here was that since most candidates have a good idea of what their campaigns cost, there would be little difference between what the candidates said they spent and their official reports. While this assumption proved to be generally true, only in one instance was there a considerable discrepancy between the survey response and the candidate's filed expenditure report. Isaac Hood, whose survey was answered by the First District's Republican Party Chairman, Ulysses Boykin, reported spending "nothing" in his survey. His expenditure report, however, filed with the FEC on January 26, 1977 lists total campaign expenditures at $11,982.83.

It is curious to note that the Republican challenger in the Sixteenth District, William Rostron, lists on his official expenditure report exactly the same amount as Hood. Rostron's survey response (completed by Robert Slater, Sixteenth District Republican Party Chairman), however, tallied with the official figures.

Both campaigns were token efforts and both were waged in very heavily Democratic districts within the metropolitan Detroit area. Both were supported by the Congressional Speaker Reform Committee based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and both candidates' expenditure reports were signed by the same person, Jane R. Threatt. Neither the candidates, Threatt, nor their Committee could be contacted concerning
a significant enough number of surveys were completed by someone other than the candidate (i.e., a campaign manager, administrative assistant, party chairman, or wife) so that the overall quality of the answers to the expenditure queries of the questionnaires was lacking. For this reason figures from the official FEC expenditure reports were used in lieu of the respondents' answers to compute the money measure.42

41 This discrepancy.

The apparent inaccuracy noted in Hood's survey can not be explained. It can only be assumed that since his campaign was so token and slight anyway, Ulysses Boykin was simply unaware of the campaign's expenditure total.

42 The following candidate's surveys are known to have been completed by someone close to the campaign, other than the candidate himself: John Conyers (Legislative Aide), Issac Hood (District Party Chairman), Edward Pierce (Campaign Manager), and William Rostron (District Party Chairman).
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

All findings are based on data collected and measured by the procedures described in Chapter III and Chapter IV of this study. A presentation of the full data set can be found in Appendix D.

Variable Correlations

In the first stage of the analysis correlation matrices were drawn to find the simple correlations between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable, and to determine the extent of the intercorrelation between the independent variables themselves.

As will be noted in Table 5, and as expected, an extremely high correlation was found to exist between incumbency and campaign success (.76). No other variable correlated nearly so strongly with the dependent variable. Otherwise only money (.47) and planning (.42) were found to correlate strongly with success.

Far more curious and instructional than the simple correlations, however, is the evidence of strong intercorrelation between many of the independent variables as illustrated in Table 6.

Most interesting are the intercorrelations which are shown to exist between incumbency and money (.54) and incumbency and research (.49). This evidence would concur with the argument that incumbents have an easier time raising money. The more experience a candidate
TABLE 5

CORRELATIONS WITH SUCCESS

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Organization</td>
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</table>

has in a district, the more sources he builds over time to tap later for campaign funds. The research and incumbency relationship may be attributed to the advantage incumbent congressmen have at being able to rely on their congressional staffs for campaign research and assistance.

Other moderately high intercorrelations exist between volunteers and money (.59), professional assistance and polling (.67), research and literature (.49), research and planning (.46), and planning and volunteers (.48). The intercorrelations reflect clearly the inherent overlap of different campaign functions.
### TABLE 6
INTERCORRELATION BETWEEN VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lit</th>
<th>Vol</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Res</th>
<th>Poll</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Abbreviations used correspond to the following key, Incumbency (Incum), Money (Mony), Professional Assistance (Prof), Campaign Organization (Camp), Polling (Poll), Research (Res), Planning (Plan), Volunteers (Vol), and Literature (Lit).
Regression Analysis

Although the evidence of intercorrelation is logical and expected, the extent of the intercorrelation between the independent variables poses some constraints on the amount of the dependent variable that can be explained with the regression analysis. Ideally, for an effective regression to be run, levels of intercorrelation between the explaining variables should be low. Low levels of intercorrelation reflect well defined measures for separate, distinct variables. Given the high degree of overlap and intercorrelation which is present, one must view the results of the regression analysis with care.

A regression was first run using all nine independent variables. Incumbency, as expected, explained more than half of the variance of the dependent variable (.58). Beyond this, only planning (.14) explained much of the remaining variance. More than 84 percent of the variance of the dependent variable was explained using all nine independent variables (see Table 7).

Most important to note is the position at which the variable "money" was entered into the regression equation. By entering money last, the analysis would indicate that in a campaign where all of the variables were present and competing, money has no measurable impact on candidate success. According to the regression analysis the incumbent edge is monumental.

Further regressions were run using several combinations of variables. The most instructive results came when incumbency was dropped completely from the equation (see Table 8). Immediately
### TABLE 7

**REGRESSION ON ALL INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient of Determination</th>
<th>Increase in Coefficient of Determination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
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<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
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### TABLE 8

**REGRESSION WITHOUT INCUMBENCY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient of Determination</th>
<th>Increase in Coefficient of Determination</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Professional Assistance</td>
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</table>
money shot from the last position to become the most important factor, explaining 22 percent of the variance of the dependent variable. Literature also moved upwards, moving into the second position (.11) followed by planning (.09) which dropped a position and which lost five percent of its explanatory power. Such analysis would indicate that in a campaign where incumbency is not a factor, money is of primary importance and that early preparation (planning) and voter contact (of which literature is a partial measure) combined are of almost equal importance. Without the influence of incumbency only 48 percent of the variance can be explained.

Obviously the intercorrelations first apparent in the correlation matrices bore an influence on the action of the variables in the regression equations. This is most visibly the case with money and incumbency. To assume that money is not important to successful campaigning even when the factor of incumbency is involved is naive. Access to money is simply inherent in the fact of incumbency itself and therefore obscured at this stage of the analysis.

Partial Correlations

To better clarify the intercorrelation between the independent variables, three partial correlation matrices were drawn, as illustrated in Tables 9, 10, and 11.

First incumbency was controlled (and because of its overlap
### TABLE 9

PARTIAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS CONTROLLING FOR INCUMBENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Succ</th>
<th>Mony</th>
<th>Prof</th>
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<th>Res</th>
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</table>

TABLE 10: PARTIAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS CONTROLLING FOR MONEY

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### TABLE 11

PARTIAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS CONTROLLING FOR INCUMBENCY AND MONEY

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Res</th>
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<td>.45</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with money, money was probably partially controlled here also) and the results indicate a strong correlation between planning (.59) and campaign organization (.47) and successful campaigns.

Next money was controlled and as expected only incumbency correlated well with success. It correlated very highly, however, at .68 which would only continue to support the argument that incumbency is the major factor in explaining congressional campaign successes. With incumbency as a factor and without the influence of money, campaign organization (.17) and planning (.34) correlate far less strongly with success.

Finally, when partial correlations were drawn with controls set for both incumbency and money, campaign organization and planning emerged again to correlate very significantly with the dependent variable (.58 and .46 respectively).

The evidence here viewed against the evidence already presented would seem to support only one conclusion: incumbency and money are strongly related, but incumbency is by far the more important of the two variables. Where money is controlled, incumbency correlates very highly with success. However, when incumbency is held constant campaign organization and planning correlate far stronger than does money with campaign success. Moreover, when both incumbency and money are controlled campaign organization and planning still correlate much more strongly with success than any of the other variables. In a campaign where neither candidate is an incumbent and where roughly the same amount of money is spent
by both, internal organization and planning appear to be the keys to a successful campaign.

Factor Analysis

The best explanation of what occurred in the 1976 Michigan congressional election campaigns became visible through the use of a factor analysis. Until this final analysis was performed, explanation of the variance of the dependent variable was always clouded by the intercorrelation between the explaining variables. The factor analysis accepts the complexity of the overlap among the independent variables and provided us with a unique but very logical explanation of the variance of the dependent variable.

Through the use of a rotated factor matrix, three entirely separate and distinct groupings (factors) of independent variables were formed (see Table 12). The first factor--an expression of total campaign effort--includes the variables campaign organization, research, planning, and literature. Factor two includes incumbency, money and volunteers, and reflects the overall level of political experience and control a candidate and his campaign have. The third factor is an expression of professionalism in a campaign, and includes the professional assistance variable and polling.

Next and finally, a regression analysis was run on the three created factors. As shown in Table 13 more than three-fourths of the variance of the dependent variable (.77) was explained by this method.
### TABLE 12

**ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Campaign Effort</th>
<th>Experience &amp; Control</th>
<th>Campaign Professionalism</th>
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<td>.04</td>
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</table>

Note: Only loadings above .6 were used to place variables on a factor.

### TABLE 13

**REGRESSION ON FACTORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Coefficient of Determination</th>
<th>Increase in Coefficient of Determination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign Effort</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second factor—the political experience factor (incum­bency, money and volunteers) had by far the most impact on campaign success (.63). The third factor, professionalism (professional assistance and polling) explained another 12 percent of the variance. In the presence of factors two and three, the first factor, campaign effort (campaign organization, research, literature and planning), is insignificant. Even if the political experience factor is dropped from the regression equation, the campaign effort factor explains very little of the dependent variable.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this study was to determine which factor or combination of factors in a campaign for congressional office contributes most significantly to the success of a candidate.

In order that we might examine more carefully several less studied contributors to congressional campaign success, this project was structured to control for the traditionally strong influence of party identification on these campaigns.

Nine potential influences (i.e., independent variables) were defined, discussed, measured, and analyzed by the researcher. Listed in order of their expected explanatory power at the outset of this research, the variables were: the level and extent of past public office holding by the candidates, money spent, the level of professional consulting assistance used by the campaigns, internal campaign organization--management--and staffing, polling effort and quality, research, planning time and forethought, the size and use of campaign volunteer corps, and the level of literature distribution.

The population for this study was the 38 Michigan major party candidates who vied for congressional office in the 1976 general election. An eight page questionnaire was sent to each of these candidates and their responses were carefully measured according to the guidelines discussed in Chapter Three of this study. This researcher is generally pleased with the results of the factor
analysis' and regression analysis' evaluation of the relative impact and importance of the nine variables on the success of the congressional campaign. Much has been learned which calls to be shared with potential candidates of the future for congressional office.

Incumbency

It was expected at the outset of this study that incumbency—as a measure of candidate control over and familiarity (name identification) within a district—would correlate the strongest of the nine variables with campaign success. This expectation was realized in full. Incumbency correlated the strongest of all of the variables (.76) and the incumbency variable explained by far the most of the variance of the dependent variable in the regression analysis (.58). When a regression was run on the three factors created in the factor analysis the experience and control factor (which included the incumbency variable and money and volunteers) easily explained the largest portion of the variance. Understandably, since an established incumbent usually has an easier time raising funds, there was observed a high intercorrelation between incumbency and money (.54).

Money

Money was expected to correlate second behind incumbency as the next highest explainer of candidate success. This also proved to be true by the research and analysis. The simple correlation
between money and success (.47) was the highest observed except for incumbency. As noted above, money showed a high intercorrelation with incumbency. Accordingly, it is understandable that money had little effect on the dependent variable when incumbency was also entered into the regression analysis—in this situation money was entered last and incumbency was entered first indicating that there is considerable overlap between the two variables (i.e., money is more easily assessible to someone with a high incumbency measure). Without incumbency in the regression equation money entered first and explained .22 per cent of the dependent variable. Money loaded into the experience and control factor, as noted above, and combined along with incumbency and volunteers to explain .63 per cent of the variance of the dependent variable when a regression analysis was performed.

Professional Assistance

It was assumed at the outset that the more professional assistance a campaign had the better its chances for success would be. Generally the findings of this study support this assumption.

The simple correlation between professional assistance and success was the sixth strongest of the nine independent variables (.27) and there appeared a strong and understandable intercorrelation between professional assistance and polling (.67) since good polling is usually performed by professional polling people. In the regression analysis when incumbency was included professional
assistance (and polling) entered seventh and eighth respectively and explained none of the variance of the dependent variable. When however, incumbency was dropped from the equation, professional assistance was observed to explain .04 per cent of the dependent variable as it entered fourth into the equation. The factor analysis created a campaign professionalism factor which included the professional assistance variable and polling and it is significant to note that the professionalism factor explained a hearty .14 per cent of the dependent variable when the regression analysis was run. Clearly professionalism, like access to money, while inherent in the campaigns of most incumbents, has an impact on the chances for success of all campaigns.

Campaign Organization

It was expected that internal campaign organization, management and staffing would correlate very highly with success. Traditionally the literature in the campaigning field has lauded the importance of good organization in campaigns. Interestingly however, organization did not prove to be that critical in the 1976 Michigan congressional elections. The simple correlation between campaign organization and success (.13) was the lowest of all of the nine independent variables and the organization variable explained little of the dependent variable during the regression analysis whether incumbency was included or not (.03 per cent with incumbency; .02 without incumbency). In the factor analysis campaign organization
loaded into the campaign effort factor along with research, planning and literature. When the regression analysis was run on the factors however, the campaign effort factor added nothing to the explanation of the dependent variable.

Polling

It was expected that polling effort and quality would prove to be the fifth most important independent variable. It was not however, observed to explain much of the dependent variable. Singly it correlated low with success (.19) and in both of the regression analyses (with incumbency and without incumbency) polling explained none of the dependent variable. Polling did show a high intercorrelation with professional assistance (.67) and loaded into the professionalism factor which explained .14 percent of the dependent variable.

Research

Like polling, research was also expected to correlate strongly with success. It did not however, like polling, explain relatively much of the success of candidates in Michigan in 1976. The simple correlation between research and success was the fourth highest (.31) yet it correlated only slightly higher than the use of volunteers and professional aid. In the regression with incumbency research explained only .02 per cent of the variance. In the regression without incumbency research added nothing to the explanation
of the dependent variable and had the least impact of all of the independent variables. Research had fairly high intercorrelations with the literature and planning variables and indeed, loaded into the campaign effort factor along with them. The campaign effort factor however, added nothing to the explanation of the dependent variable when entered into a regression analysis with the experience and control and professionalism factors.

Planning

Planning was not expected to correlate very highly with campaign success. The variable was included in this study as a last minute response to the Jimmy Carter experience and as a test upon the relationship between campaign preparation and seriousness and campaign success.

The planning variable proved somewhat surprising in this inquiry. Next to incumbency and money it was clearly the third most important explainer of campaign successes. Planning correlated well with success (.42) and entered second into the regression equation when incumbency was included (.14) and third into the regression equation when incumbency was dropped (.09) adding considerably to the explanation of the dependent variable in both situations.

The evidence clearly speaks that early planning and careful preparation is an advantage in any race for Congress.
Volunteers

Next to last in expected importance at the outset of this study was listed the use of volunteers. It was expected that the candidate with the larger volunteer force—who could reach the most people on the personal level, would have an advantage over the opponent with a smaller force. It was also admitted that the size of a volunteer force might further be a partial reflection of the personality and appeal of the candidate involved in a particular situation.

The use of volunteers proved to have only a slight amount of impact on candidate success. While the volunteer variable did correlate moderately with success (.30) it added very little to the explanation of the dependent variable in the regressions with and without incumbency.

The fact that volunteers did, however, load into the experience and control factor (which was the best explainer of campaign success) indicates that volunteers are important and that they are usually attracted by the incumbent, well financed candidates.

Literature

Finally, the distribution of literature—as a measure of a candidate's effort to make contact with the voters in his district—was expected at the outset of this study to be the least important of all of the nine independent variables to be tested.

Although the simple correlation between literature and success
was relatively low (.19), the regression analysis showed that the use of literature did have a moderately strong impact on the success of campaigns relative to most of the other variables. With incumbency included in the regression, literature explained .05 per cent of the dependent variable; without the influence of incumbency the literature variable explained almost twice as much (.11) and rated second in explanatory power only to money. Clearly, contact through literature played an unexpectedly important role in the Michigan congressional campaigns, particularly in campaigns where incumbency was not a large factor. One might suspect that the importance of literature distribution is mainly a reflection of the sort of name identification that is normally inherent in the incumbency advantage. It is probable that the effective use of literature can afford any candidate with at least a share of one of the most revered fringe benefits of incumbency—name identification.

Indeed, the research showed that in the 1976 Michigan congressional elections campaigning had an impact on candidate success, especially in the more competitive districts of the state where incumbents were not involved. Incumbency, as expected, did prove to be the most important factor in explaining campaigning successes. Only one incumbent congressman was defeated in the state (Richard VanderVeen by Harold Sawyer in the Fifth District). Sawyer, however, required more than $210,000 to record this victory. Where the factor of incumbency does not bare an influence (i.e., where both candidates have relatively equal measures of district exposure and access) campaign emphasis on organization and planning, voter contact
(as demonstrated in the correlation between literature and success), and, most importantly, money is essential for the campaign that wishes to maximize its chances for success.

And the analysis shows that were money is available, professional assistance (and the insights of polling and consulting and so on that comes with such help) provides an excellent choice for an expenditure.

While it is interesting to note how the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data compare to the original expectations of this researcher as based on the information contained in the literature in the area, it is also quite interesting to observe the position of the candidate's views on the variables (as indicated by the actual nature of what occurred in their campaigns) with the findings of this thesis.

There is agreement on all fronts that incumbency--level of previous representation in a district--affords the candidate with such status an almost insurmountable advantage. The analysis shows further that such candidates also have an inherent advantage over their opponents in the money department. Incumbent congressmen can be unseated but such outcomes are highly unlikely. Only with an incredible budget (as in the case of Sawyer) or a higher superior and professional campaign in total (as in the case of Howard Wolpe) should one even entertain the thought of trying to unseat an incumbent who is serious about maintaining office.

It is suggested that challengers not waste money trying to equal or even outspend their incumbent opponents. The advantages inherent in incumbency itself are worth far more than the average challenger.
can ever hope to raise and moreover, equaling an incumbent's spending is in no observable way correlated with increased chances for success. Very frankly, incumbents are simply the next best thing to invincible and the potential candidate who considers trying to unseat an incumbent is considering the next best thing to suicide.

The situation, however, is far different where the incumbent edge is not a factor in the contest. Such situations provide the ideal setting and circumstance for the intelligent campaign to have a marked impact on an election. The potential congressional candidate who finds himself in such a position should be aware of several points of information.

The amount of money spent in such situations is of absolute primary importance. The literature, the analysis of the data by this study, and the candidates all seem to concur on the importance of money in a campaign. What the analysis adds to the knowledge of campaigners in this respect is a demonstration of the relative unimportance of money in a campaign against an incumbent and the comparatively monumental importance of money in a contest void of an incumbent candidate.

Accordingly, it is recommended by this study that the potential challenger in such a situation give careful consideration and thought to the fundraising activities of their proposed campaigns. This is too critical to be overemphasized. Seventy thousand dollars was the average amount spent by candidates in 1976 in Michigan elections. For a candidate in such a situation (against an opponent
of equal stature and visibility) an "average" campaign and and
"average" financial base is not acceptable. A viable candidate
for Congress will need, at the very least, $75,000 and he can not
afford politically to spend anything less than his opponent if
winning is his objective.

The more professional one's campaign, the better also his
opportunity to have an impact on his own chances for success.
While there are several groups that will lend professional assis­tance free of charge, there are also an abundance of firms that have
a wide range of services for hire. The potential candidate who is
serious about winning can well afford to invest money in a pro­fessionally advised campaign.

The analysis of this thesis also indicates that in a contest
where an incumbent is not involved that careful long-term planning
and preparation and good campaign management, staffing and organi­zation in tandem can have nearly the same amount of impact on
success as the independent influence of money. The campaign with
a higher relative measure of all three should win. This discovery
is generally unsupported in the opinion of most of the candidates
although organization was seen as relatively valuable in the eyes
of most winning candidates. The literature traditionally has lauded
the value of good campaign organization.

It is the recommendation of this study, therefore, that poten­tial candidates plan and research their bids, their districts, and
their opponents with utmost care and thoroughness. It will be noted
that there was observed a strong intercorrelation between planning
and research by this study. There was also a high intercorrelation between planning and volunteers which leads this researcher, along with the discovery that winning candidates used nearly twice as many volunteers in their campaigns, to urge the recruitment by campaigns of sizeable volunteer forces. The dollar value of a well planned, well organized, and well staffed (both in terms of official positions and volunteers) and managed campaign is intangible, but the evidence of this study indicates that the combined value in terms of explaining success (where incumbency is not a factor) is only slightly less than that of money. Ideally for the campaign that has money, an investment into a professional firm that will assist with planning, management, and volunteer recruitment and coordination is an excellent decision.

In the final analysis then, this study submits that a tremendous amount can be done with a congressional campaign, particularly where an incumbent is not involved, to increase one's chances for success. Precisely what is to be done, of course, must be based on a careful evaluation of the specific arena in which a contest is scheduled to occur.

No single variable is the key to success in a campaign for Congress, yet some of the variables studied were clearly observed to have a greater impact on the success of the Michigan congressional races than others. The importance of the separate variables is of course, relative to the particular situation or campaign that they interact within.
Incumbency and money were the two most important contributors to the successful campaigns for Congress. According to every test applied this proved to be the case. The candidate who knows his district and who is known by his district—and the candidate who has the funding available to wage an extensive campaign—has an advantage over a candidate who lacks access, name identification, and money. Experience and control appear to be the keys to success.

Following these factors, aspects of campaign professionalism explain the next most significant portions of the campaign successes. Professional assistance and the highly intercorrelated variable of polling were observed to explain a significant portion of the success of the Michigan campaigns.

The variables of literature distribution and planning appeared to be of approximately equal importance in the campaigns studied, and in some cases as important and even more important as the aspects of professionalism. Literature as a measure of direct voter contact in a campaign and careful and thorough long-term planning are certainly factors which deserve consideration in a campaign if winning is the goal of the campaigner—particularly if the contest does not include an incumbent candidate.

Finally, campaign organization and followed by the research and volunteer variables were generally the least important of the nine variables tested in the campaigns. While good management, staffing, research, and volunteers are certainly not unimportant, relative to all of the other variables observed, these variables
had the least impact on the success of campaigns. Among the three—organization, research, and volunteers—organization proved to be the most important, followed by volunteers, and then research. The use of volunteers, it should be noted, however, did load into the experience and control factor along with incumbency and money. Alone, the volunteer variable explains very little.

Indeed it is clear: the campaign with the best chance for success—the campaign with the best chance to maximize its impact on success—is the campaign that is based on the most intelligent conception of the value and interaction of all the potential campaign variables and influencers.
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APPENDIX A

CANDIDATE SURVEY
1976 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION

1. What elected office had you held in the district prior to the 1976 Congressional Election?
   a. congressman
   b. state senator
   c. state representative
   d. mayor
   e. city councilman
   f. county commissioner
   g. other: _____________

2. What would you estimate the total cost of your 1976 congressional campaign to be?
   a. less than $25,000
   b. 25,000 to 50,000
   c. 50,000 to 75,000
   d. 75,000 to 100,000
   e. 100,000 to 125,000
   f. 125,000 to 150,000
   g. over 150,000: ___________

3. Was any of the total cost of your campaign spent in a primary?
   Yes         No

   If "yes", approximately how much money was spent in a primary?

4. How many different types of brochures and literature did you use during the campaign?

5. Considering all types of brochures, what would you estimate as the total number produced?
   a. less than 50,000
   b. 50,000 to 100,000
   c. 100,000 to 150,000
   d. 150,000 to 200,000
   e. 200,000 to 250,000
   f. 250,000 to 300,000
   g. over 300,000
6. Who served as your campaign manager for the general election?

7. What was the campaign manager's relationship to you? (i.e., friend, relative, business colleague, etc.).

8. What was this person's background in politics?

9. Approximately how many full time staff assistants were involved in the campaign?

10. What positions did these staff assistants hold in the campaign?

11. Did the campaign employ any paid campaign workers? Yes No

   If "yes", approximately how many campaign workers were paid? What jobs did the paid workers perform?

12. Did the campaign make use of any professional political consulting assistance? Yes No

   If "yes", who were they? What did they assist you in doing?

13. Did the campaign receive any assistance from any other outside politically experienced groups? (i.e., Democratic National Committee, Republican National Committee, National Committee for an Effective Congress, Americans for Constitutional Action, etc.) Yes No

   If "yes", which groups assisted you? What did they assist you in doing?

14. Did you advertise through the televised media? Yes No

   If "yes", who designed and produced the advertising?

15. Did you use radio advertising? Yes No

   If "yes", who designed and produced this advertising?

16. Did the campaign conduct any public opinion polls for the election? Yes No

   If "yes", how many polls were taken and at approximately when were they taken? Who drew the samples? Who did the interviewing? Who analyzed the poll or polls?
17. Did your campaign conduct research on your opponent's record and did you examine census data, voting patterns in the district, etc.? Yes  No

If "yes", in what areas did you research?

18. On approximately what date was the unofficial planning of the campaign begun?

19. On what date was the campaign officially announced?

20. In analyzing your victory, what general factors do you feel contributed most to your successful campaign?

considerable
little importance great

a. incumbency
b. ample money
c. sizeable volunteer force
d. ample and effective literature
e. efficient campaign organization
f. professional assistance
g. quality advertising
h. thorough research and polling

21. In analyzing your opponent's defeat, what general factors do you feel were his greatest obstacles to victory?

considerable
little importance great

a. lack of incumbency
b. lack of money
c. lack of volunteer help
d. lack of and ineffective literature
e. inefficient campaign organization
f. lack of professional assistance
g. less than quality advertising
h. lack of or poor research & polling
22. In analyzing your defeat, what general factors do you feel were your greatest obstacles to victory?

considerable
little
importance
great

a. lack of incumbency
b. lack of money
c. lack of volunteer help
d. lack of and ineffective literature
e. inefficient campaign organization
f. lack of professional assistance
g. less than quality advertising
h. lack of or poor research & polling

23. In analyzing your opponent's victory, what general factors do you feel contributed most to his successful campaign?

considerable
little
importance
great

a. incumbency
b. ample money
c. sizeable volunteer force
d. ample and effective literature
e. efficient campaign organization
f. professional assistance
g. quality advertising
h. thorough research

24. Approximately how many volunteers contributed time to your campaign efforts?

NOTE: Survey questions 20-23 were adapted from a candidate questionnaire administered to congressional candidates in the 1962 general elections. (Huckshorn, The Politics of Defeat, p. 247.)

Questions 20 and 21 were included on winning candidate's surveys only. Questions 22 and 23 were listed on only the defeated candidate's questionnaires.
APPENDIX B

TABLE 14

DISTRICT BASE PARTY STRENGTH

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<th>District</th>
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### APPENDIX C

#### TABLE 15

**CAMPAIGN COST PER VOTE**

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<th>Name</th>
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Dist & Candidate & Succ & Incum & Mony & Prof & Camp & Poll & Res & Plan & Vol & Lit \\
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9 & Fawley & -8.1 & .143 & .093 & .292 & .617 & .5 & 1.0 & .467 & .667 & .583 \\
10 & Cederberg & -1.47 & .667 & .556 & .834 & .167 & 1.0 & .667 & .679 & .667 & .375 \\
10 & Albosta & +1.47 & .333 & .444 & .166 & .833 & 0 & .333 & .321 & .333 & .625 \\
11 & Ruppe & +6.01 & .75 & .615 & .528 & .416 & .5 & .667 & .804 & .571 & .343 \\
12 & Bonior & +1.18 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 \\
12 & Serotkin & -1.18 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 \\
13 & Diggs & +.97 & .857 & .5 & .75 & .5 & .5 & 0 & 0 & 214 & .8 & .5 \\
13 & Golden & -.97 & .143 & .5 & .25 & .5 & .5 & 1.0 & .786 & .2 & .5 \\
14 & Nedzi & +10.31 & .857 & .944 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 \\
14 & Getz & -10.31 & .143 & .056 & .5 & .5 & .5 & 1.0 & .786 & .2 & .5 \\
15 & Ford & +12.74 & .857 & 1.0 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & 1.0 & 1.0 & 1.0 \\
15 & Walaskay & -12.74 & .143 & 0 & .5 & .5 & .5 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
16 & Dingell & +12.2 & .857 & .302 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 & .5 \\
16 & Rostron & -12.2 & .143 & .698 & .5 & .5 & .5 & 1.0 & .429 & .304 & .6 & .396 \\
17 & Brodhead & +4.33 & .857 & .311 & .0 & .65 & .0 & .571 & .696 & .4 & .604 \\
17 & Burdick & -4.33 & .143 & .689 & 1.0 & .35 & 1.0 & .429 & .304 & .6 & .396 \\
18 & Blanchard & +11.83 & .75 & .94 & .25 & .8 & .667 & .5 & .724 & .897 & .391 \\
18 & Olsen & -11.83 & .25 & .06 & .75 & .2 & .333 & .5 & .276 & .103 & .609 \\
19 & Broomfield & +5.05 & .857 & .726 & .0 & .143 & .0 & .0 & .195 & .5 & .0 \\
19 & Becker & -5.05 & .143 & .274 & 1.0 & .857 & 1.0 & 1.0 & .805 & .5 & 1.0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{TABLE 16 (Continued)}
\end{table}
APPENDIX E

CAMPAIGN COMPOSITE
1976 MICHIGAN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION

This section is a composite discussion of the actual nature of what took place throughout Michigan in the 1976 congressional campaigns. It is based on the candidate's own responses as contained on the candidate questionnaire and the candidate's expenditure reports as filed with the Federal Election Commission.

Incumbency--Prior Office Holding

Common in the background of more than two-thirds of the Michigan candidates was a high incidence of prior office holding--especially among the winners who, as a group, had a noticeable stronger and longer public background than the losers--and a far better day at the polls.

Of the twelve incumbent congressmen who ran for reelection in the 1976 Michigan congressional elections--all but one (VanderVeen) won. Of eleven candidates who ran having never held an elected post before, all but one (Stockman) lost.

The winning candidates had a vigorous record of prior public representation as state senators, state representatives, mayors, and members of city and county commissions. The highest prior post held by a losing candidate was that of state representative
(Wolpe and Albosta). Most losing candidates, as noted, had never run for public office before, although many had been active in intra-party committees.

Campaign Expenditures

A combined total of $2,633,531, or an average of $71,176 was spent by all the candidates in Michigan together. Winning candidates spent $1,394,767 averaging $77,487, just slightly higher than the overall average. Losing candidates spent a total of $1,238,764 for a slightly lower average of $65,198. Republicans on the whole outspent the Democrats by almost $500,000 ($1,536,576 to $1,096,955). Individually, Republicans averaged approximately $20,000 more per campaign than the Democrats ($80,872 to $60,971).43

Approximately $475,000 of the over 2.5 million spent was spent in the primaries. Of this figure $323,000 was spent by candidates who ultimately won in the general election. For many of these persons the primary was clearly the more important of the two campaigns—as the nominee of the party in control of the district general election success was almost assured. (Stockman spent $125,000 in the primary and only slightly over $25,000 in the general election.)

43All totals are based strictly on the candidate's filed expenditure reports. Congressman David E. Bonior's figures are not included in the totals because his most current totals could not be obtained.
While the average expenditure for all candidates was roughly $71,000, actual expenditures ranged from a high of $213,718 by Harold Sawyer to capture the Fifth District to lows of zero dollars by Richard Daugherty, Charles Diggs, Richard Golden, James Walaskay, and John Dingell. All but Diggs and Dingell were eventually losers, and as strongly entrenched incumbents opposed by token candidates (Diggs was opposed by Golden) neither had much need to spend.

Thirteen candidates spent less than $25,000, four spent between $25,000 and $50,000, six from $50,000 to $100,000, eight spent within the $100,000 to $150,000 range, and six candidates spent more than $150,000.

Use of Literature

On the average campaigns individually produced approximately 140,000 brochures apiece. Approximately five million pieces were produced in total throughout the state's campaigns for Congress.

The extent of the campaigns' specific literature selection ranged from the use of just one general brochure to the production and distribution of six specific brochures. Losing candidates seemed to rely on a larger number of specific brochures where, of the winning candidates, all but five used two or fewer pieces of literature. Four campaigns used no brochures at all.
Management and Organization

More than sixty-five percent of the campaigns in Michigan were managed by a friend or business associate of the candidate who had at least a moderate amount of campaigning experience. Three campaigns did not have a manager (Conyers, Cederberg, and Ford) and two candidates managed their own campaigns (Diggs and Walaskay). The use of professionals as actual campaign managers was infrequent.

The number of full time staff assistants varied greatly from campaign to campaign. Twelve campaigns employed no full time staff members. Of those that did, however, staff size ranged from one to twelve (Traxler). Although approximately two-thirds of the campaigns did use full time staff assistants only slightly over half of the campaigns employed these workers in paying positions.

An extensive list of paid and unpaid staff positions were evident in the state's campaigns. Listed and employed in various combinations were: campaign manager, assistant campaign manager, office manager, youth manager, press secretary, canvas coordinator, field coordinator, research director, finance chairman/treasurer, fundraising chairman, polling director, statistics director, scheduling/appointments, literature chairman, public relations/media/advertising chairmen, aid, advance men, driver, and secretary/receptionist.
Professional Assistance

Only thirteen of the campaigns relied on some form of advice from actual professional consulting firms. Twenty-one campaigns, however, were assisted in some form by various other politically experienced groups and political action committees. Involved in Michigan's congressional campaigns were: the state and national and congressional campaign committees of both parties, Americans for Constitutional Action, National Committee for an Effective Congress, Democratic Study Group, and the CEF. Actual professional consultants included: Paul Newman Associates, Los Angeles; Market Opinion Research, Ann Arbor; Rothstein and Buckley; Sefton Associates, Grand Rapids; Markey, Hutson and Lerew, Traverse City; Bailey, Deardorf, and Eyre; Peter Hart; and the Dallas Dort Agency in Flint.

Professional assistance for the most part was found in the nitty gritty areas of the campaigns: media, advertising, polling, statistics, theme development, issue identification, targeting, Get Out The Vote planning, speechwriting, fundraising, and organization.

Advertising

While only slightly over forty-five per cent of the campaigns advertised through the televised media, more than seventy-five per cent of them made use of the radio. These figures clearly underline the tendency of the state's congressional campaigners to
avoid the complicated and expensive nature of the region's media markets in lieu of good buys for radio dollars. Winning and losing campaigns did not differ in their universal tendency towards radio advertising.

Polling

Almost sixty percent (20 of 35) of the campaigns conducted public opinion polls at some point for the election. Campaigns administered from one to as many as six polls (Widgery). Usually just two and sometimes three polls were taken. A combined total of 56 polls were taken to aid campaigners throughout the state.

While polling was begun in some districts as early as May, 1973 (Wolpe) the vast majority of polling took place in the nine months between January 1 and October 31, 1976. Of this number equally as many were administered in August, September and October as in the entire six months prior. Put another way—of the 56 polls taken in preparation for the election most were taken between January and the election and almost forty percent of the overall total were administered in the final three months of the election.

Generally winning candidates were found to have polled earlier than losing candidates and most polling was assisted by professionally experienced persons. Market Opinion Research assisted five candidates of which all but one (Burdick) won.
Research

All but seven campaigns (all but two of the winners) indicated that they had conducted some form of research other than polling in preparation for their campaign. Areas of research mentioned included: newspaper research, voting pattern research, ticket-splitters, examination of opponent's record, census data, and demographic analysis' of voting blocks for targeting.

Planning and Announcement

On the average more than half of the candidates announced their candidacies somewhere between March of 1976 and the filing deadline in June. On the average, unofficial campaign planning began in the month or two months preceding the official announcement of intent to run.

Volunteers

While the size of volunteer forces varied greatly from campaign to campaign, a combined total of more than seventeen thousand gave their services to the Michigan congressional campaigns. Winning campaigns were assisted by almost twice as many volunteers on the average (640) than the losing campaigns (320).

The size of volunteer organizations ranged from the lows of ten campaigns that used less than fifty volunteers to a high by Congressman James Blanchard of 5,000 in the Michigan Eighteenth District campaign.
APPENDIX F

CANDIDATE PERCEPTIONS

The questions and the idea for this final section were borrowed from a study by Robert Huckshorn and Robert Spencer on the 1962 congressional elections. A discussion of their study can be found in The Politics of Defeat (New York: John Wiley, 1968).

While each candidate was only asked to evaluate their own campaign and the campaign of their opponent, in effect what the questions illicit was a personal evaluation on the part of the candidates of the independent variable used in this study. This study has argued that many times what campaigners do in an election is based more on "what worked in the past," conjecture and assumption, than on empirically proven effective practices. This study has shown what factors in a campaign for Congress had the greatest impact on the success of Michigan candidates. This section will emphasize the differences between candidate's perceptions of what is and was important and what this study found is and was important.

Table 13 and Table 14 represent the composite of the winning candidate's answers to questions 20 and 21 of the candidate survey (see Appendix A). Table 15 and Table 16 represent the composite of the losing candidates answers to questions 22 and 23 of the survey.

Winner's Perceptions of their own Victories and of the Variables

Only about half of the winners felt incumbency contributed to
TABLE 17
WINNER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR OWN VICTORIES AND OF THE VARIABLES

Question 20: In analyzing your victory, what general factors do you feel contributed most to your successful campaign?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>little/none</th>
<th>considerable</th>
<th>great</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ample Money</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sizeable Volunteer Force</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Organization</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Assistance</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Polling</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 18**

**WINNER'S PERCEPTIONS OF LOSER'S DEFEATS AND OF THE VARIABLES**

Question 21: In analyzing your opponent's defeat, what general factors do you feel were his greatest obstacles to victory?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>little/none</th>
<th>considerable</th>
<th>great</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Incumbency</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Money</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Volunteers</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Literature</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Professional Help</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Research/Polling</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 19

LOSER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR OWN DEFEATS AND OF THE VARIABLES

Question 22: In analyzing your defeat, what general factors do you feel were your greatest obstacles to victory?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>little/none</th>
<th>considerable</th>
<th>great</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Incumbency</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Money</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Volunteers</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Literature</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Professional Help</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Research/Polling</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 20

LOSER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE WINNER'S VICTORIES AND OF THE VARIABLES

Question 23: In analyzing your opponent's victory, what general factors do you feel contributed most to his successful campaign?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>little/none</th>
<th>considerable</th>
<th>great</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ample Money</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sizeable Volunteer Force</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Organization</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Assistance</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Polling</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The category "little/none" on Tables 17-20 assumes that candidates did not check a particular box felt that particular factor to be of no "none" importance.
their successful campaign, although almost three-fourths of them felt it to be of at least considerable importance. (The analysis of this thesis shows incumbency to be of primary importance.)

Somewhat more than half of the winners listed research and polling, money, literature, organization, advertising, and particularly volunteers as considerable factors in their success. Only professional assistance was listed by most of the winners as of little or no importance to their success. (The analysis of this thesis shows that, where incumbency is not a factor, money is of major importance along with organization and planning. Professional assistance is a good expense and, as a reflection of voter contact, literature correlates strongly with success.)

Loser's Perception of Winner's Victories and of the Variables

More than three-fourths of the losers felt incumbency was of considerable or great importance to their opponent's successful campaigns--and more than two-thirds felt money to be of considerable or great importance also. (The analysis of this thesis confirms this belief.)

More than seventy percent of the losers felt that volunteers, literature, professional assistance, advertising, research, and polling contributed little or nothing to their opponent's success. (The analysis of this thesis indicates that this is the case—if there is a strong incumbent involved in a contest.)
Loser's Perception of their own Defeats and of the Variables

In the analysis of their own defeats the losers saw the variables acting in pretty much the same way as they saw them acting in their opponent's victories. More than three-fourths of them felt that lack of incumbency was at least a considerable obstacle in the path of their success and more than two-thirds of the losers expressed the same belief about the lack of money.

More than eighty percent of the losers felt volunteers, literature, advertising, research and polling to be of little or no obstacle to their success. Perhaps it is notable that twenty percent of the losers at least recognized the "considerable importance" or organization and professional assistance (winners strongly, we will recall, saw professional assistance of no importance to their successes).

Winner's Perception of Loser's Defeats and of the Variables

The winners saw the loser's defeats far differently than the losers did--the winners saw lacking in the loser's campaigns roughly the same factors they saw as contributing most to their own victories.

It is most interesting to note that almost half of the winners felt that the lack of incumbency was of little or no importance in their opponent's losses (even though almost two-thirds of the winners though incumbency was of considerable importance to their own victory).
The winners were pretty much evenly split over their perceptions of the importance of all of the other variables on the loser's defeats.