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Campaign Strategy: The Impact of Inter-Party Competition

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CAMPAIGN STRATEGY: THE IMPACT OF
INTER-PARTY COMPETITION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Government
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

J. Douglas Lewis

1973

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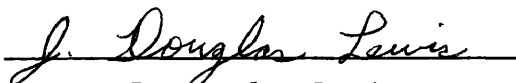
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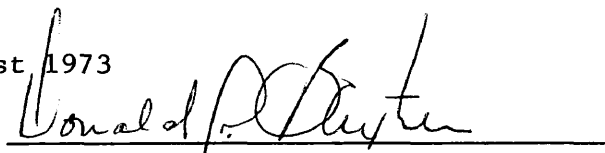
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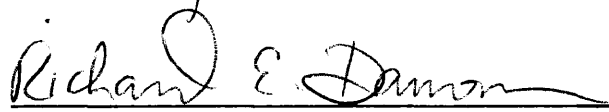
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Master of Arts


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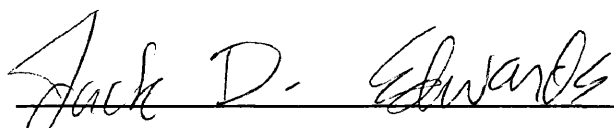

Jack D. Edwards, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to observe the association between inter-party competition and the campaign strategies employed by various Congressional candidates. The hypothesis is that candidates in competitive districts conduct more "rational" campaign strategies than candidates from noncompetitive districts. A campaign strategy is considered "rational" if the candidate: makes group appeals, emphasizes policy and constituency issues rather than ideological and personal ones; concentrates his time and efforts in areas of strength rather than weakness; engages in as much personal contact as possible; employs a simple, recognizable campaign theme; emphasizes his party affiliation if from the majority party and emphasizes his personal characteristics if from the minority party; and attempts to increase the voter turnout if a nonincumbent.

The campaigns in four Congressional districts in Virginia were observed during the 1972 election campaign. The data for the study came from direct interviews with the eight candidates in the four races. An index of inter-party competition was prepared and the candidate's responses were related to the amount of party competition in each district.

The results of the investigation confirmed the hypothesis. In this setting, candidates from competitive districts did employ more "rational" campaign strategies than candidates from noncompetitive districts.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY: THE IMPACT OF
INTER-PARTY COMPETITION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the relationship between the amount of competition in campaigns and various features of campaign strategy. Beginning with Key, political scientists have argued that parties facing competition are likely to have the most centralized control of nominations, and the greatest cohesion in state legislatures and in gubernatorial-legislative relations. And, as a result, they are likely to be the most effective and responsive governing agencies.¹ By now it is a common assumption among students of American politics that political leaders in a competitive two-party system are more responsive to the popular will ". . . not so much out of principle as out of fear of retribution at the polls."² To the extent that this assumption is correct, competitive elections are a basic feature of democracy, if that word is interpreted to mean popular control of political decision making.

One reason that competitive elections are thought to be such a basic aspect of popular control is that they produce what may be

¹V. O. Key, Southern Politics (New York: Vintage Books, 1949), ch. 14; V. O. Key, American State Politics: An Introduction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 201; Robert Golembiewski, "A Taxonomic Approach to State Political Party Strength," Western Political Quarterly, XL (1958), 494-513.

²Duane Lockhard, New England State Politics (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 327.

called "rational" campaigns; that is, campaigns which educate the public, which illuminate public issues and provide realistic policy alternatives, and which provide an opportunity for the indication of majority preference. Whether or not competitive campaigns actually promote rational strategies, however, is a question not carefully investigated in the literature of the field to this time. The purpose of this paper is preliminary inquiry which may fill in that gap somewhat.

This paper examines the general idea that the amount of inter-party competition affects key decisions made by candidates concerning their campaign strategies. Its thesis is that candidates in competitive campaigns are likely to employ campaign strategies that may be considered "rational," while candidates in noncompetitive races do not. They will be called "rational" campaign strategies here if they are strategies aimed at acquiring as many votes as possible.

The acquisition of as many votes as possible is assumed here to be the major objective of campaigns. A simple majority of the vote is enough to win an election, of course; indeed, in many races involving more than two candidates, less than a majority will be sufficient. Nonetheless, most candidates probably seek to obtain as many votes as possible, and not merely a majority. There are many reasons for this. One, the most obvious, perhaps, is that candidates have no way of judging their campaigning productivity accurately, so as to spend just enough energy, money, and other resources to produce a majority. Accordingly, the temptation is to spend as much as is

available, rather than an amount designed to produce a carefully gauged winning vote. In some cases, a candidate's ambition is to seek higher office beyond the present election, and, hence, his aim is not merely to win, but also to demonstrate an overwhelming vote-getting ability. In others, a candidate's hope may be to win by so large a margin as to reduce the chances of opposition at some future election. In all of these cases, candidates who hope to win try to do so by winning as many votes as possible, and not just a majority.

All candidates, however, do not actually hope to win. Some who have no hope of winning the election may run for entirely different purposes, such as gaining a reputation, or promoting some cherished cause. Even in such cases, however, it may be assumed that the candidate's objective is to win as many votes as possible. If a candidate's purpose in running for office is to increase his private business, the more votes he gets (even though losing), the greater the benefit to his business, one may assume. If the purpose is to give notoriety to some unpopular or little-known cause, the same is true. In virtually all cases, then, it is reasonable to assume that the single objective of all electoral campaigns is to win as many votes as possible.

An action or a decision is considered rational ". . . to the extent that it is correctly designed to maximize goal achievement."³ Thus, if the goal of a campaign is considered to be that of winning

³Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblom, Politics, Economics, and Welfare (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 38.

as many votes as possible, then what could be called a "rational campaign strategy" is one that has been determined by the experience of other candidates to be most effective in winning votes. The hypothesis of this paper is that candidates in competitive districts are more inclined to employ rational campaign strategies than are candidates in noncompetitive districts in that they:

1. make appeals to major groups in the electorate;
2. emphasize policy and constituency issues rather than ideological and personal ones;
3. concentrate their time and efforts in areas of strength rather than weakness;
4. engage in more personal contact;
5. employ a simple, recognizable theme;
6. emphasize their party affiliation if they are from the majority party and emphasize their personal characteristics if they are from the minority party; and
7. make a greater effort to increase the turnout if a nonincumbent.⁴

⁴These strategic points are taken from various books that have been written on the subject of campaign strategy and tactics; especially see, Lewis Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," in The Electoral Process, ed. by Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966); John Kessel, "A Game Theory Analysis of Campaign Strategy," in The Electoral Process, ed. by Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966); John Kingdon, Candidates for Office (New York: Random House, 1968); Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky, Presidential Elections (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); David Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968); Conrad Joyner, chapter in Practical Politics in the United

The argument is that candidates in competitive districts are forced to utilize these proven effective strategies; whereas in noncompetitive districts, because of the certainty of the outcome, both the winning and losing candidates can afford to waste resources in "nonrational" ways.

In order to pursue this research problem, it will be necessary first of all to identify very clearly what the elements of a "rational" campaign strategy are. This will be the burden of Chapter II, which follows. Chapter III, in turn, will deal with methods of the study, describing the design of the research project, the method used for measuring inter-party competition, and the setting in which the field research was carried out. The results of the study are presented in Chapter IV, leading to the conclusion that competitive contests do indeed promote the use of rational campaign strategies. The final chapter contains a summary of the findings, and a discussion of their significance.

States, ed. by Cornelius Cotter (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1969); Murray Levin, The Complete Politician (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962); Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970).

CHAPTER II

RATIONAL CAMPAIGN STRATEGY: A DEFINITION

Politicians have long believed that their behavior during election campaigns could determine their success or failure on election day.⁵ Numerous cases are cited in which candidates have campaigned vigorously against heavy odds and managed to win; and, also, cases in which overconfident candidates took the campaign too lightly and were upset. Nixon is an example: he believes that his performance during the 1960 campaign period cost him the Presidency in 1960.⁶

There is evidence that campaigns actually have relatively little effect on voting behavior.⁷ Political scientists have found that the factor most consistently related to voting decisions is the party identification of the voter, and also that most of the electorate decide on whom to support prior to the campaign.⁸ Nonetheless, campaigns may be seen to be an important part of the

⁵Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 1.

⁶Richard Nixon, Six Crises (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1962), ch. 6.

⁷Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld, and William McPhee, Voting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 132-37.

⁸Nimmo, The Political Persuaders, p. 3.

American political process:

The American political campaign is the means through which the public leaves its mark on the governmental process and through which a broad consensus is reached. It opens the way to the only truly accurate poll of the voters' political mood and desires. It requires the stewards of power to account for their activities and permits those who seek to replace them to challenge that accounting. And campaigns, whatever the intent of the candidates, usually do exercise an educational influence.⁹

This chapter examines what others have written about the elements of campaign strategy, in an effort to devise a working definition of a "rational" campaign, a necessary basis from which to devise the theory which guides this study. It begins with the writer's definition of a "rational campaign strategy" and then goes on to discuss each of the several aspects of campaign strategy which are thought to be associated with campaigns, and, hence, might be considered in the formulation of a definition of rational campaigning.

A. Definition of Rational Campaign Strategy

As mentioned in Chapter I, a "rational campaign strategy" is one that has been determined by the experience of other candidates to be most effective in winning votes. By examining what has been written previously about campaign strategy, the writer has chosen seven elements of campaigning that appear to have been most effective in winning votes in the past. For purposes of this research, a campaign strategy will be considered rational if the candidate abides

⁹American Institute for Political Communication, The New Methodology: A Study of Political Strategy and Tactics (Washington, D. C.: American Institute for Political Communication, 1967), Introduction.

by the following rules:

1. Group appeals. The candidate must appeal to groups, rather than to undifferentiated masses of people.
2. Area concentration. The candidate must concentrate his time and efforts in areas of strength rather than weakness.
3. Issue emphasis. The candidate must stress policy and constituency issues rather than ideological and personal issues.
4. Personal contact. The candidate must engage in as much personal contact as possible.
5. Theme. The candidate must employ a simple, recognizable campaign theme.
6. Party-personality. The candidate must emphasize his party affiliation if from the majority party and emphasize his personal characteristics if from the minority party.
7. Voter turnout. The candidate, if a nonincumbent, must attempt to increase the voter turnout.

Each of these elements is considered in the following discussion.

B. Group Appeals

It is difficult to speak about campaigns in general because of the many variations that are likely to exist.¹⁰ However, there are certain features that appear to be common to most campaigns. One of these is that most candidates attempt to develop group support. One

¹⁰ Charles Jones, "A Suggested Scheme for Classifying Congressional Campaigns," Public Opinion Quarterly, Spring, 1962, pp. 126-32.

way of viewing the electorate is that it is composed of a large number of groups and associations. Therefore, candidates often attempt to build a coalition of supporting groups which would be sufficient to elect them.¹¹

Froman has written on the subject of campaign strategy and tactics and states that ". . . one of the most important tasks confronting candidates for public office is the gaining and maintaining of group support."¹² The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has established that the voter's decision is based in part on his attitude toward the various groups in the electorate.¹³ These groups can be of many types: political, social, economic, and so on. Studies have indicated that 10 per cent or more of the members of a group may be affected by the decision of their leadership to oppose or support a candidate.¹⁴ They have also shown that even if the leadership does not take a position, group members may be affected by the fact that one of the candidates is a member of the group, for example, when Catholics vote more strongly for a Catholic candidate than they would have voted for a non-Catholic

¹¹John Kingdon, Candidates for Office (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 116.

¹²Lewis Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," in The Electoral Process, ed. by Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966).

¹³Angus Campbell, et al., The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), ch. 10.

¹⁴David Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 61.

candidate.¹⁵

If a candidate can acquire group support, he will have three of the basic processes of group life working to his advantage.¹⁶ First, groups serve as a means of communication: through discussions and conversations, information concerning the candidate can be made relevant to the concerns of group members. Second, groups provide criteria for evaluating and interpreting information so that it is likely that the group member will come to see the information in a particular way. And third, groups act as mechanisms to enforce conformity among their members. This conformity can be achieved because the most effective pressure on people is that of group pressure.¹⁷

Also, it should be mentioned that groups can provide two of the most important practical resources needed in a campaign: workers and money. Despite this evidence that group support is beneficial to candidates, a study by Kingdon of candidates for office in Wisconsin indicated that nearly one-half of the candidates interviewed replied that they did not make group appeals.¹⁸ There is also evidence that candidates do not adhere to another of the elements of the rational campaign strategy--that of concentrating major efforts in areas of

¹⁵Campbell, et al., The American Voter, pp. 314-21.

¹⁶Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 4.

¹⁷J. A. C. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion (Baltimore: Penquin Books, 1968), p. 50.

¹⁸Kingdon, Candidates for Office, p. 116.

strength.

C. Area Concentration

One of the rules of campaigning is that the candidate should concentrate on areas in which he is thought to be strongest.¹⁹ As Froman points out, it is much easier to get one's known supporters to cast a favorable vote than it is to activate latent support or to change the opposition.²⁰ Attempting to change the opposition is difficult because of peoples' predispositions which give rise to selective exposure, perception, and retention. This selectivity induces people to attend mostly to communications that reinforce already existing beliefs.²¹ Thus, it is much easier for a candidate to communicate with people who are already predisposed to vote for him.

Campaigning in areas of party strength is also realistic because of the fact that those people with party identification are more likely to vote than those without party affiliation.²² The evidence, then, indicates that the rational strategy is to campaign in areas of strength and not weakness. However, the Kingdon study

¹⁹Conrad Joyner, Chapter in Practical Politics in the United States, ed. by Cornelius Cotter (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 162.

²⁰Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 7.

²¹Joseph Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), pp. 19-27.

²²Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," pp. 6-7.

once again indicates that many candidates do not follow this basic strategic point: only one-third of the candidates answered that they concentrated on areas where they thought they would do well.²³

D. Issue Emphasis

What has been defined here as a "rational" campaign strategy includes the argument that certain types of issues should be stressed. Four issues can be identified for this purpose: policy, ideology, constituency, and personal. Policy and constituency issues, it will be argued here, are associated with rational campaigning. Ideological and personal issues have not been considered effective in winning votes and, thus, are not associated with rational campaigning.

There has been some question whether voters actually divide on the basis of issues at all. Because voters are so ill-informed about questions of public policy, it is frequently argued that issues are of little consequence. One study of the voters' knowledge of issues during the 1958 Congressional elections came to this conclusion: not more than a "chemical trace" of evidence was found that voters had any detailed information about the policy stands of the candidates.²⁴ However, one of the basic works in this field has established that one of the elements that voters base their decision

²³Kingdon, Candidates for Office, p. 119.

²⁴Warren Miller and Donald Stokes, "Constituency Influence in Congress," in New Perspectives on the House of Representatives, ed. by Robert Peabody and Nelson Polsby (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1969), p. 47.

on is the various issues of the campaign.²⁵ Also, a more recent study has indicated that voters usually are concerned with a few specific issues and that these can ". . . have a considerable impact on electoral choice."²⁶ In a particular campaign, a critical issue may have an impact such as was apparently the case with the tax issue in the 1962 Wisconsin gubernatorial race.²⁷ In this study it will be assumed that issues are an important ingredient of the voting decision.

Policy issues can be important in gaining support from opinion leaders such as newspaper editors and group leaders. These people usually support a candidate because of the candidate's stand on various questions of public policy and they could hardly do this if the candidate did not make evident his views on issues that concern public policy.²⁸

The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has established that most of the American electorate is not guided by ideology in its voting behavior.²⁹ There is also evidence that even among the party workers, in this case precinct leaders, less than

²⁵Campbell, et al., The American Voter, pp. 523-38.

²⁶David Repass, "Issue Saliience and Party Choice," American Political Science Review, June, 1971.

²⁷Kingdon, Candidates for Office, p. 115.

²⁸Ibid., p. 114.

²⁹Campbell, et al., The American Voter, ch. 10.

10 per cent are ideologically oriented.³⁰ A candidate, then, should run a nonideological campaign, stressing substantive policy issues, not ideological ones, thus seeking a broad base of support.

The Goldwater campaign of 1964 is generally considered a good example of an ideological campaign. If one of the parties runs a candidate from its outer wing, it tends to leave a vacuum in the center of the political spectrum which can be filled by the opposing party without losing any votes from its own side of the spectrum. The result, as in 1964: ". . . logically and inexorably, is a landslide at the polls . . ." for the opposition.³¹

Much of a Congressman's time is spent in helping his constituents with their individual problems, constituent service. A recent study indicated that 28 per cent of a member's time and nearly 41 per cent of his staff's time is devoted to serving constituents.³² This is due in part to the increased impact of government on the daily lives of people who, therefore, are frequently forced to turn to their representative for assistance. For a Congressman ". . . becoming a legislative expert in a less certain avenue to re-election than other

³⁰Samuel Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964), p. 303.

³¹Phillip Converse, Aage Clausen and Warren Miller, "Electoral Myth and Reality: The 1964 Election," American Political Science Review, June, 1965, p. 321.

³²John S. Saloma, Congress and the New Politics (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), pp. 184-85.

more constituent-oriented activities."³³ Therefore, a candidate should emphasize during his campaign what he can do for his constituents (constituency issues).

It is also argued that a rational candidate should not engage in personal attacks (personal issues) on his opponent. One reason is simply that it is usually not wise to publicize one's opponent.³⁴ There is evidence also that attacks of this sort may have the reverse of the desired effect.³⁵

In general, then, the rational campaign strategy would dictate that candidates stress policy issues and issues of constituent service and avoid ideological appeals and personal attacks. Here, again, not all candidates have seen fit to follow this strategy. However, a study by Huckshorn and Spencer indicated that candidates in close contests tended to emphasize policy and constituency issues far more than those candidates who were sure losers.³⁶

E. Personal Contact

Another rule of good campaigning is that the candidate should meet as many people as possible. Personal contact by the candidate

³³ Charles Clapp, The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 58.

³⁴ Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 16.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

³⁶ Robert Huckshorn and Robert Spencer, The Politics of Defeat (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), p. 209.

makes a ". . . more lasting impression than any other form of solicitation."³⁷ What politicians have long suspected is now being verified by social scientists: the more personal the communication, the more effective it is likely to be.³⁸ Congressmen seeking reelection have indicated that whatever else they do during a campaign they nearly always emphasize the personal appearance technique.³⁹

An appealing feature of this tactic is that it costs very little: in terms of cash outlay the candidate's time is a very inexpensive resource. Also, it helps the candidate to create the image that he is a man of the people, willing to listen to the ordinary citizen. Thus, candidates are willing to shake hands extensively at shopping centers, go door-to-door, and do other physically demanding activities just for that element of personal contact. The Leuthold study of Congressional candidates in the San Francisco Bay area found that the candidates agreed that personal contact was the most successful means of influencing voters. However, there was a wide discrepancy among the candidates as to how much personal contact they actually engaged in during the course of their campaign. Candidates in competitive races campaigned among the electorate over twice as many days as those candidates who were in

³⁷Joyner, Practical Politics in the United States, p. 166.

³⁸Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 16.

³⁹Clapp, The Congressman: His Work as He Sees It, p. 429.

noncompetitive races.⁴⁰

F. Theme

The purpose of a campaign theme ". . . is to simplify complex public issues into brief, clear, recognizable statements to the advantage of the candidate."⁴¹ A short and simple theme is important because voters are not likely to be attuned to complicated political messages and are more apt to remember a brief message.⁴² Also, if the theme is to be used on campaign literature, billboards, and other advertisements, the requirements of time and space make short themes a necessity. In fact, one political scientist considers a short concise theme to be more important than any particular issue that may arise during a campaign. Nimmo states that modern campaigns are fought not on the issues but on the themes and failure to have a theme can be very frustrating.⁴³ Perhaps two of the best examples of campaign themes working to the advantage of the candidate occurred in the 1960 and 1968 Presidential campaigns. John Kennedy's promise to "Get America Moving Again" and Hubert Humphrey's questioning of whether one could "Trust" his two opponents are credited with being assets to the respective candidate's

⁴⁰Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy, pp. 103-07.

⁴¹Nimmo, The Political Persuaders, p. 54.

⁴²Joyner, Practical Politics in the United States, p. 166.

⁴³Nimmo, The Political Persuaders, p. 55.

campaign.⁴⁴

G. Party-Personality

One factor facing all candidates when determining their strategies is whether or not their party is the majority party. The Survey Research Center has established that party identification has a very profound impact on electoral choice: that up to 75 per cent of the electorate simply vote their party loyalties at the polls.⁴⁵ It is also evident that the electorate, in part, makes its decision on an evaluation of the personal attributes of the candidates.⁴⁶ Therefore, ". . . the basic strategy for the majority is to emphasize party appeals and play down personal traits . . . the candidate of the minority, of course, stresses 'the man, not the party.'"⁴⁷ Kessel, by use of a game theory analysis of the 1960 presidential campaign, indicated that Nixon from the minority party should have placed the most emphasis on his own abilities and the least on his party. On the other hand, John Kennedy's optimal strategy would have been to devote the most attention to the Democratic Party and direct less attention to himself.⁴⁸ The John Volpe campaign for Governor of

⁴⁴Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 16; Theodore White, The Making of the President 1968 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969), pp. 418-19.

⁴⁵Campbell, et al., The American Voter, pp. 136-42.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁷Nimmo, The Political Persuaders, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁸John Kessel, "A Game Theory Analysis of Campaign Strategy," in The Electoral Process, ed. by Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 293-94.

Massachusetts in 1960 is a case of a candidate from a distinctly minority party following this strategy and achieving success. The Volpe campaign theme was: "Vote the Man, Vote Volpe."⁴⁹ This, then, is a basic element of the rational campaign strategy.

H. Voter Turnout

Another tactic that is relevant to most campaigns is that when faced with an incumbent, the challenger should attempt to increase voter turnout.⁵⁰ The reason for this is that it is considered much easier to bring a new voter into the system than it is to get an old partisan to change sides. If the electorate is not changed from the previous election, it is likely that changing the result will be quite difficult. Those people who have not voted in the past are most likely not affiliated with any party and are frequently indifferent to politics and, therefore, more easily swayed by campaign appeals, if the candidate can motivate them to turnout.⁵¹ Schattschneider has pointed out that it has always been true that one of the best ways to win a fight is to widen the scope of the conflict and that ". . . the expansion of the political community has been one of the principal means of producing change."⁵²

⁴⁹Murray Levin, The Complete Politician (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962), p. 299.

⁵⁰Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 12.

⁵¹Nimmo, The Political Persuaders, p. 25.

⁵²E. E. Schattschneider, The Semi-Sovereign People (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), p. 99.

Thus, the nonincumbent should attempt to widen the scope of the conflict by getting as many new voters to the polls as possible.

I. Summary

These, then, are the elements of the "rational" campaign strategy: candidates seek group support; concentrate their efforts in areas of strength; emphasize policy and constituency issues and avoid ideological and personal ones; engage in as much personal contact as possible; employ a simple, recognizable campaign theme; emphasize their party affiliation if a member of the majority party and emphasize their personal characteristics if a member of the minority party; and if a nonincumbent, attempt to increase the voter turnout. After this discussion of the elements of a rational campaign strategy, the following chapter deals with the theory and methodology of the study.

The main idea to be examined here is that electoral races in which inter-party competition is high promote the use of rational campaign strategies, as defined here. The following chapter will attempt to elaborate this theory somewhat, to devise an index of inter-party competition, and outline the methodology followed in the balance of the study.

CHAPTER III
THE METHOD OF THE STUDY: MEASURING
INTER-PARTY COMPETITION

This chapter presents the method of the study beginning with a description of how the data are gathered and analyzed, followed by an explanation of how the index of inter-party competition was prepared. The chapter concludes with a brief description of the setting, four Virginia Congressional districts that are observed.

A. The Study

The major source of data for the study comes from direct interviews with eight candidates in four Congressional districts in Virginia in the 1972 House elections. All of the candidates except one were interviewed in the six weeks immediately preceding the November 7 election. One candidate was not available until the middle of December. The interviews were conducted, for the most part, in the candidate's home or in his office, although two were conducted after rallies that were held in the respective candidate's behalf. All of the candidates were very accommodating; the interviews averaged about forty minutes in length. A copy of the interview schedule is in Appendix A and a listing of the candidates interviewed is in Appendix B. Also, to aid the analysis and the writer's understanding of the various campaigns, at least one member of each candidate's staff and one newspaper reporter from each district were

questioned. These responses were not quantified and were used, for the most part, to assist the writer in determining campaign themes and the number of personal appearances made by the various candidates. All the interviewing was done by the writer. Newspaper articles and campaign literature were both used as additional sources of information.

The candidate responses were quantified and related to the variable of inter-party competition. The factor of incumbency (incumbent or nonincumbent) was also considered when it was evident that there was a significant relationship between it and inter-party competition. This factor is often considered among the most important in political campaigns with the contest taking place between the "ins" and the "outs."⁵³ No tests of statistical significance were used. The size of the sample was too small to warrant generalization; the results are presented in percentages. The decision to use simple percentage tables was made for the same reasons as Kingdon stated in his study: large significant percentage differences could occur in the tables, but because of the small size of the sample would be considered statistically insignificant and, therefore, discarded.⁵⁴

⁵³David Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 3.

⁵⁴John Kingdon, Candidates for Office (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 160.

B. An Index of Inter-Party Competition

Competition in politics may be described as a relationship among those who are competing, and in the two-party system that characterizes American politics, it is almost always the relationship between the two major parties. Inter-party competition, then, is the feature of American politics studied, for the most part, by those who wish to explore the meaning of competition in an American setting.

Inter-party competition has been studied fairly extensively in the political science literature of the last decade. Of all the variables studied in the analysis of state party politics, perhaps the one receiving the most attention from political scientists has been inter-party competition. One of the most comprehensive reviews of this literature has been done by Pfeiffer.⁵⁵ His review indicates that four types of inter-party competition measures have been used: pendulum effect, percentage of elections won, percentage of the vote, and the alternation in office by the parties. After careful analysis of these types, Pfeiffer recommends the percentage of the vote as being superior.⁵⁶ He states that the simplest way to use the percentage of the vote is to compute the average margin of victory for the winning candidate. A version of this method is used by the

⁵⁵David Pfeiffer, "The Measurement of Inter-Party Competition and Systemic Stability," American Political Science Review, LXI (June, 1967), 457-67.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 462.

writer in determining the index of inter-party competition used in this study. The index of inter-party competition used here is the one suggested by David of the University of Virginia.⁵⁷ He argues that the truest test of competitiveness is simply to compute the runner-up's percentage of one-half the total vote, because to win the runner-up merely has to win one vote more than 50 per cent of the total vote.⁵⁸ This method results in a scale that has zero for its lower limit and approaches 100 as its upper limit; the closer to 100, the higher the level of competition. Thus, a party that received 45 per cent of the vote would rank at 90 on the scale because its percentage of one-half the total vote would be 90 per cent. For this study, the election results for the last ten years for the offices of Governor, United States Senator, and Congressman were combined to arrive at an index of inter-party competition for the four districts. The decision to use the results from only the last ten years (five Congressional, four Senatorial, and two Gubernatorial) was arrived at because of the fact that changes in Virginia politics have occurred in the recent past and it was felt that to consider additional results would distort the realism of the index. The results of the index are shown in Appendix B.

⁵⁷ Paul David, "How Can an Index of Party Competition Best be Derived?," The Journal of Politics, XXXIV (May, 1972), 632-38.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 635.

C. The Setting

The setting for the study is four Congressional districts in Virginia, two competitive and two noncompetitive. The four districts include Tidewater, Virginia, parts of Northern Virginia, and the Shenandoah Valley. Due to redistricting, all four had changed considerably from the 1970 election. The First district consists of the cities of Hampton and Newport News and several predominately rural counties in Tidewater.⁵⁹ Of the electorate, 80 per cent live in metropolitan Hampton--Newport News. The Second district is totally urban, consisting of the cities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach. Both districts depend heavily on the military, especially the Navy, as shipbuilding and repairing serve as the economic base for the area. Both districts also have substantial black populations: 22 per cent in the First and 31 per cent in the Second.

The Tenth district consists of much of the Virginia part of the Washington metropolitan area: the counties of Arlington, Loudon, and northernmost Fairfax. The residents are predominantly white--only 6 per cent are black--and have mostly middle and upper-middle incomes. Most depend either directly or indirectly on government payrolls. At the conclusion of registration on October 7, 1972, the Tenth had more potential voters than any other district in the

⁵⁹The following description of the four districts is taken from Micheal Barone, Grant Ujifusa, and Douglas Matthews, The Almanac of American Politics (Boston, Massachusetts: Gambit, 1972), pp. 833-55.

state, over 240,000.⁶⁰

The Seventh district includes the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and several counties east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It stretches from Virginia's northernmost county, Frederick, southward nearly to Richmond, encompassing twenty-one counties and four small cities. Nearly 70 per cent of the district's labor force are blue collar; much of the area is farmland with the economic base of the district consisting mainly of the production of livestock, poultry, and dairy products. Blacks comprise 9 per cent of the population; no other ethnic group has over 1 per cent.

D. Summary

With the theoretic basis, the methodology and setting now established, the next chapter deals with the results of the investigation. Do candidates from the more competitive districts tend to employ more rational campaign strategies than their counterparts in noncompetitive districts?

⁶⁰The Richmond Times-Dispatch [Richmond, Virginia], October 20, 1972, Sec. B, p. 1.

CHAPTER IV
THE IMPACT OF INTER-PARTY COMPETITION
ON CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

This chapter presents the results of the investigation to determine if rational campaign strategy and party competition are related. A campaign was considered rational if the candidate:

1. makes group appeals;
2. concentrates his time and efforts in areas of strength rather than weakness;
3. emphasizes policy and constituency issues rather than ideological and personal ones;
4. engages in as much personal contact as possible;
5. employs a simple, recognizable campaign theme;
6. emphasizes his party affiliation if from the majority party and emphasizes his personal characteristics if from the minority party; and
7. attempts to increase the voter turnout if a non-incumbent.

An index of inter-party competition was also prepared and is explained in Chapter III. Each of these seven elements of the rational campaign strategy are considered individually.

The writer interviewed eight candidates from four Congressional districts in Virginia. Of the districts, two were competitive and two were noncompetitive. The candidates' responses, along with

information acquired from campaign aides, were quantified and related to the factor of inter-party competition. The results, when possible, are shown in percentage tables. Various examples are also cited to help indicate the nature of the different campaign strategies employed.

A. Group Appeals

As mentioned in Chapter II, it is considered extremely important that candidates seek and acquire the support of groups. Therefore, candidates were asked, "In your campaigning, is there any group or groups of voters that you especially make an appeal to?" (See Appendix A.) Their replies suggest that the view that candidates seek a coalition of groups sufficient to elect them is not endorsed by all candidates. As Table 1 indicates, three of the four candidates in the two noncompetitive districts did not make group appeals. All four candidates in the competitive districts indicated that they sought group support.

An example of a campaign in which both candidates said they sought the support of groups occurred in the rural, competitive, Seventh district. Both candidates indicated they sought the support of farmers. Republican incumbent Robinson said that he could not be elected without their support; the first committee his organization formed was a "Farmers for Robinson" group that engaged in mass mailings to other farmers. Democratic challenger Williams' campaign literature stressed that he was a cattle farmer and understood and cared about the problems of the farmer. Both courted the elderly:

TABLE 1
 A CLASSIFICATION OF CANDIDATES BY DISTRICT
 COMPETITIVENESS AND USE OF GROUP APPEALS

(N = 8^a)

Appeal	District			
	Competitive		Noncompetitive	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Candidates using group appeals	4	(100)	1	(25)
Candidates not using group appeals	0	(0)	3	(75)
Total	4	(100)	4	(100)

^aTwo candidates in each of four districts.

Robinson by holding a special, well publicized, "Conference for Retired People," and Williams by making an issue of the fact that Robinson had voted against the bill to give Social Security recipients a 20 per cent increase in benefits. Williams consistently stressed that issue both in speeches and his campaign literature. Robinson attempted to combine these two groups with the support that he had from various business organizations. He was given the National Association of Businessmen's "Watchdog of the Treasury" award. Williams sought to add the youth vote, especially students, to his coalition.

Both candidates in the noncompetitive First district indicated that they avoided appeals to groups. The incumbent, Democrat Downing, said he sought broad-based support and made no efforts to acquire the votes of special groups. Perhaps the best example of this unwillingness to seek group support was stated by the challenger, Republican Wells:

I'm not making any appeals to ethnic groups or any other types of groups, in my estimation groups shouldn't be treated differently or given special treatment. I have even turned down money from groups who I thought would want favors in the future.

Thus, there would appear to be a tendency for candidates in close races to actively seek the support of groups, perhaps because of the closeness of the race they feel that they have to resort to every tactic available. For example, this was the explanation offered by Democratic challenger Miller in the competitive Tenth district: "I court the support of these various groups for a very simple reason. I need all the manpower, money, and publicity I can get. And, of course, their votes."

B. Area Concentration

One of the rules of rational campaigning is that candidates should concentrate on areas in which they are thought to be strongest. So candidates were asked whether they concentrated on voters in areas where they thought they were strong or where they thought they were weak. (See Appendix B.) As shown in Table 2, all the candidates in competitive districts said they concentrated on areas of strength, whereas the opposite is true of candidates in noncompetitive races. Thus, there appears to be a strong relationship between inter-party

TABLE 2
 A CLASSIFICATION OF CANDIDATES BY DISTRICT
 COMPETITIVENESS AND TYPE OF AREA
 CONCENTRATION

(N = 8^a)

Concentration	District	
	Competi- tive	Noncompe- titive
	Num- Per ber cent	Num- Per ber cent
Candidates concentrating in strong areas	4(100)	0(100)
Candidates concentrating in weak areas	0(0)	4(0)
Total	4(100)	4(100)

^aTwo candidates in each of four districts.

competition and this "rule" of campaigning. The best explanation is probably that offered by Kingdon: sure winners are able to experiment because of their safe position and sure losers likely felt they had to concentrate in weaker areas to have any hope of broadening their support enough to win.⁶¹ On the other hand, candidates in races where the outcome is less certain tended toward strategies that were designed to reinforce strong areas.

Robinson's campaign director, Bill Lee, gave the following explanation for his decision to stress strong areas:

We feel that we're just wasting our resources in going into some areas. I'm confident we can win if we can just make all of the people who are inclined to think like us aware of our campaign and then get them to vote.

Another view was expressed by the Treasurer of Wells' campaign, Larry Selman, who seemed not to be aware of this particular strategic point. He said, "We intend to concentrate most of our efforts right at the heart of Mr. Downing's strength." Both Wells and Selman were involved in their first political campaign.

C. Issue Appeals

As mentioned in Chapter II, candidate discussion of policy and constituency issues rather than ideological and personal issues was considered most effective in winning votes. To discover what issues were discussed, the candidates were asked two questions: which issues have you "considered most important for your election chances," and

⁶¹John Kingdon, Candidates for Office (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 121.

which issues have been "most harmful to your campaign." (See Appendix A.) The number of issues mentioned by each candidate ran from as few as four to as many as eight. From their responses, we can determine the saliency of the issues to each of the candidates.

The issues were grouped into four categories: policy issues, ideological issues, constituency issues, and personal issues. The method used to classify the issues is the same as used by Huckshorn and Spencer in their study of the 1962 Congressional campaign: a policy issue emphasizes factual information, a candidate's view on a specific area of public policy, and usually involves some potential or actual gain for some group or person; an ideological issue does not emphasize factual information, is largely of a philosophical nature, tends to simplify complex issues, and yields easily to passion, stereotype and sloganeering; a constituency issue is a service issue, involves case work, or a particular candidate can "do more for you" in terms of solving individual constituent problems; a personal issue deals with character allegations, specific to the age, personal characteristics, personal associations, and occupation of the opponent.⁶²

A distinction may be made among the four types of issues such that a single subject area might fall into more than one category. Constituency and personal issues are obviously different subject types, but policy and ideological issues must be considered in the context

⁶²Robert Huckshorn and Robert Spencer, The Politics of Defeat (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), pp. 197-208.

of how the issue is discussed. For example, the challenger in the First district, Wells, spoke of the issue of crime in terms of the "moral decay of our nation" (ideological), whereas the challenger in the Tenth district, Miller, addressed the same issue by emphasizing that he favored increased spending for additional policemen, better police pension plans and increased salaries for policemen (policy).

The results, as shown in Table 3, indicate that there would seem to be a relationship between inter-party competition and candidate choice of policy or ideological issues. A total of fourteen issues were mentioned in the competitive races; fourteen were also mentioned in the noncompetitive races. Candidates in competitive districts emphasized policy issues over ideological ones by a margin of six-to-one; candidates in noncompetitive districts chose ideological issues by nearly two-to-one. The most ideological oriented campaign was that of Wells in the noncompetitive First district. A newspaper report said that Wells offered the voters an ". . . applie pie, motherhood and the flag campaign."⁶³ Wells said that he wanted his campaign to ". . . project a program of constitutional government, fiscal responsibility and patriotic dedication to country." He appealed to the ". . . patriotic and religious instincts of Americans."

As Table 4 indicates, there does not seem to be a significant association between party competition and candidate choice of personal

⁶³The Richmond Times-Dispatch [Richmond, Virginia], October 10, 1972, Sec. B, p. 4.

TABLE 3

ISSUE EMPHASIS AND INTER-PARTY COMPETITION:
 POLICY AND IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN
 COMPETITIVE AND NONCOMPETITIVE
 DISTRICTS

(N = 28)

Issue	District	
	Competi- tive	Noncompe- titive
	Num- Per ber cent	Num- Per ber cent
Policy issues emphasized	12 (85.7)	5 (35.5)
Ideological issues emphasized	2 (14.3)	9 (64.5)
Total	14 (100.0)	14 (100.0)

TABLE 4
 ISSUE EMPHASIS AND INTER-PARTY COMPETITION:
 CONSTITUENCY AND PERSONAL ISSUES IN
 COMPETITIVE AND NONCOMPETITIVE
 DISTRICTS

(N = 18)

Issue	District	
	Competi- tive	Noncompe- titive
	Num- Per ber cent	Num- Per ber cent
Constituency issues emphasized	4 (50)	4 (40)
Personal issues emphasized	4 (50)	6 (60)
Total	8 (100)	10 (100)

or constituency issues. In fact, the campaign with the most emphasis on the personality of the candidate and the most name-calling was in the competitive Tenth district. Incumbent Republican Broyhill seldom referred to his opponent, Miller, but when he did it was in terms of "some demagogue or hypocrite."⁶⁴ Broyhill referred to Senator Edward Kennedy as "Chappaquiddick Teddy."⁶⁵ Kennedy had endorsed

⁶⁴The Washington Post [Washington, D. C.], October 20, 1972, Sec. B, p. 1.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 7.

Miller during the campaign and helped raise funds for the challenger. Miller cited the number one issue in the campaign as Broyhill's many "personal conflicts of interest."

The factor of incumbency does appear to be associated with these issues: incumbents emphasized 75 per cent of the constituency issues in both competitive and noncompetitive races; nonincumbents chose 70 per cent of the personal issues. Incumbents appeared to choose a strategy designed to make themselves appear to be above the partisan battle. They avoided personal attacks on their opponents (usually ignoring them) and stressed their efforts at constituent service.

D. Personal Contact

The amount of personal contact a candidate engages in is an important aspect of his campaign strategy. Most candidates believe that the more personal his communication with voters, the more effective he is likely to be.

One way of measuring how much personal contact candidates have with the electorate is to determine how many days they actually spent campaigning.⁶⁶ Candidates in competitive districts tended to campaign more than those in noncompetitive districts as Table 5 indicates. They averaged 86 days campaigning; noncompetitive candidates averaged 61 days. Incumbents averaged 39 days and nonincumbents, 104 days. Much of this difference between incumbents and nonincumbents

⁶⁶David Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 103.

is due to the length of the Congressional session, which kept incumbents in Washington until the middle of October. Also, to determine the amount of personal contact, campaign aides were asked to estimate how many times their candidate appeared before any sort of organized gathering of voters. Here, again, competitive candidates engaged in more personal contact as Table 6 indicates.

E. Theme

As indicated in Chapter II, a short and easily recognizable theme is an important part of a political campaign. By reading campaign literature and by interviewing campaign aides, one was able to determine if each campaign had a short, recognizable campaign theme. As Table 7 indicates, all the candidates in competitive districts had a discernible theme. The two who did not in the noncompetitive districts were both nonincumbents. Good examples of short themes were the Broyhill and Downing themes. The Broyhill theme, "Twenty Years of Effective Leadership," was designed to capitalize on the candidate's vast experience and record of service to his constituents. The Downing theme, "This Man Is Your Man," was also designed to capitalize on the fact that Downing had spent fourteen years as the First district's "man in Washington."

It is interesting also that when asked if they thought having a theme is of any importance in political campaigning, all four candidates in competitive races said yes. Of the four in noncompetitive races, three answered negatively or said that they felt that its importance was overrated by professional political managers.

TABLE 5

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS SPENT CAMPAIGNING
BY CANDIDATES IN COMPETITIVE AND
NONCOMPETITIVE DISTRICTS

Days Campaigning	District	
	Compe- titive	Noncom- petitive
Average days per candidate	86	61

TABLE 6

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONAL APPEARANCES BY
CANDIDATES IN COMPETITIVE AND
NONCOMPETITIVE DISTRICTS

Personal Appearances	District	
	Compe- titive	Noncom- petitive
Average days per candidate	55	30

TABLE 7
 A CLASSIFICATION OF CANDIDATES BY DISTRICT
 COMPETITIVENESS AND TYPE OF THEME USED

(N = 8^a)

Theme	District	
	Competi- tive	Noncompe- titive
	Num- ber	Per cent
Candidates using short, discernible theme	4 (100)	2 (50)
Candidates using no discernible theme	0 (0)	2 (50)
Total	4 (100)	4 (100)

^aTwo candidates in each of four districts.

Thus, there seems to be a tendency for candidates in competitive races both to have themes and to acknowledge their importance.

F. Party-Personality

One of the longstanding rules of campaign strategy is that candidates from the majority party should emphasize their party label and play down their personal characteristics. The reverse is true of candidates from the minority party.

To determine if this rule was followed, candidates were asked

whether they emphasized their personal characteristics or their party affiliation during the campaign. (See Appendix A.) All eight candidates responded that they stressed their own personal attributes over their party. Also, the four Democrats indicated that they were not anxious to have themselves linked to the national McGovern-Shriver ticket, which they perceived as being unpopular in Virginia in 1972. In this setting, there was no relationship between inter-party competition and this particular element of campaign strategy.

There is evidence that the American electorate has grown distrustful of their political parties and may be losing their habit of partisanship.⁶⁷ A survey by M. Johnson and Broder in 1970 indicated that ". . . not only are voters splitting their tickets and moving back and forth from election to election, but their perception of party differences is growing visibly weaker."⁶⁸ If this trend continues, perhaps the most "rational" course for a candidate to follow is to deemphasize his party affiliation even if he is from the majority party.

G. Voter Turnout

Another rule of good campaigning is that nonincumbents, the challengers, should make a determined effort to increase voter turnout. A recent study of registration and voting has indicated

⁶⁷ David S. Broder, The Party's Over (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 251.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

that there is a very close relationship between the number of people registered to vote and the actual voter turnout on election day.⁶⁹ The relationship was almost one to one: if City A had 1 per cent higher registration than City B, then voter turnout on the average was 1 per cent higher in City A.⁷⁰ Therefore, one way to determine if a candidate seriously attempts to increase turnout is to see how much emphasis he placed on registration. The four nonincumbents were asked how much emphasis they placed on registration drives: considerable, fair amount, or none. (See Appendix A.) The candidates in competitive races answered considerable; the noncompetitive candidate replied none. The reason cited by both sure losers for their nonemphasis was that they lacked the money and the organization to do so. The challenger in the competitive Tenth district, Miller, placed the most emphasis on increasing voter turnout, especially young voters. He had representatives on every major college campus in the state, whose job was to get students from the Tenth district properly registered so they could vote by absentee ballot. He indicated that his campaign "dedicated the entire month of September to getting people registered." Thus, there would seem to be an association between challengers' efforts to increase voter turnout and inter-party competition (see Table 8).

⁶⁹ Stanley Kelley, Richard Ayres, and William Bowen, "Registration and Voting: Putting First Things First," American Political Science Review, June, 1967, p. 362.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

TABLE 8
 A CLASSIFICATION OF CHALLENGERS BY DISTRICT
 COMPETITIVENESS AND AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS
 ON TURNOUT

(N = 4^a)

Emphasis on Turnout	District	
	Competi- tive	Noncompe- titive
	Num- Per ber cent	Num- Per ber cent
Candidates with considerable emphasis on turnout	2(100)	0(0)
Candidates with a fair amount of emphasis on turnout	0(0)	0(0)
Candidates with no emphasis on turnout	0(0)	2(100)
Total	2(100)	2(100)

^aOne candidate in each of four districts.

H. Summary

Nearly all the elements of a "rational" campaign strategy appear to be associated with the variable of inter-party competition. The questions of group appeals, area concentration, issue appeals (policy-ideological), personal contact, theme, and turnout are related to inter-party competition. Only the questions of party-personality and candidate choice of personal or constituency issues do not seem to be related to party competition. In the concluding chapter, there is a summary of the results and a look at the possible implications of the findings of this investigation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this investigation has been to observe the association between inter-party competition and the campaign strategies employed by various Congressional candidates. Both of these variables are important elements in the American political process. In fact, as previously mentioned, the factor of competition can be considered essential for democracy. And, the amount of real competition in election campaigns is ". . . an important measure of the meaningfulness of any democracy."⁷¹

The campaigns in four Congressional districts in Virginia were observed during the 1972 election campaign. Two of the districts were competitive and two were noncompetitive. Most of the data for the study came from direct interviews with the eight candidates in the four races. Campaign aides and one newsman from each district were also questioned. Thus, the study is limited because of the number of campaigns that were observed. Also, the results may be applicable only to areas such as Virginia where party politics have been in a state of flux in recent years.⁷²

⁷¹David Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 1.

⁷²J. Harvie Wilkenson, Harry Byrd and the Changing Face of Virginia Politics 1945-1966 (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1968).

The hypothesis of the study is that candidates in competitive races conduct more "rational" campaign strategies than their counterparts in noncompetitive races. A strategy is considered "rational" if the candidate: makes group appeals; emphasizes policy and constituency issues rather than ideological and personal ones; concentrates his time and efforts in areas of strength rather than weakness; engages in as much personal contact as possible; employs a simple, recognizable campaign theme; emphasizes his party affiliation if from the majority party and emphasizes his personal characteristics if from the minority party; and attempts to increase the voter turnout if a nonincumbent. The results of this investigation confirmed the hypothesis. Candidates in competitive races did conduct, for the most part, more "rational" strategies; only the questions of party or personality emphasis and candidate choice of personal or constituency issues do not seem to be related with inter-party competition.

There appears to be a reasonable explanation for the fact that all the candidates chose to emphasize their personal characteristics over their party affiliation. As previously stated, recent evidence indicates that the American electorate is steadily losing its habit of partisanship.⁷³ Also, the two major parties have not exhibited that much strength in Virginia elections in recent years; independents won the state-wide races in both 1970 and 1971. Both

⁷³David S. Broder, The Party's Over (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 251.

times they defeated candidates from the two major parties. Thus, it seems that candidates have deemed it more "rational" not to emphasize their party affiliation even if their party is in the majority.

Also, there was no important relationship between party competition and candidate choice of constituency or personal issues. Incumbents emphasized most of the constituency issues; nonincumbents most of the personal issues. It is logical for incumbents, who have a record of constituent service, to stress their previous service. Perhaps, however, it is incorrect to state that nonincumbents to be "rational" also have to emphasize constituency issues: they have no previous service and to bring this to the attention of the voter only aids the incumbent. It may be that nonincumbents are forced to use personal issues to get recognition both from the media and the electorate and therefore find it more useful to emphasize personal issues rather than constituency issues.

Candidates in competitive races sought the support of groups among the electorate and also concentrated their campaign activities in areas of perceived strength. Candidates in noncompetitive races did not adhere to these two strategic rules of campaigning. Campaigns in noncompetitive races were more ideologically oriented than those in competitive races. Candidates in competitive districts stressed policy issues; candidates in noncompetitive districts emphasized ideological issues. Candidates in noncompetitive races were also less likely to follow some of the other points that Froman considered

in a realistic campaign strategy.⁷⁴ They engaged in less personal contact; were more likely not to have a campaign theme; and if a nonincumbent, made less of an effort to enlarge the turnout. Therefore, at least in the campaigns studied, competition tended to be related to rationality in decision making by candidates. Kingdon also found that candidates in noncompetitive races adopted ". . . plans that are less than efficient for gaining support."⁷⁵ The explanation may be that sure winners, confident of victory, do not attempt to simply add to their support but also attempt to engage in a campaign to "educate" others. On the other hand, the sure losers, fairly certain of their defeat, may decide to "speak their minds" instead of trying to broaden their base of support.⁷⁶

Besides rationality in decision making, there would seem to be other beneficial aspects of campaigning in competitive districts. With candidate emphasis on policy issues and not ideological issues, campaigns in competitive districts are ". . . perhaps the ideal in popular concept of the democratic electoral process."⁷⁷ By exchanging views on specific areas of public policy, candidates are engaged in a

⁷⁴Lewis Froman, "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," in The Electoral Process, ed. by Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 12, 16.

⁷⁵John Kingdon, Candidates for Office (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 133.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Robert Huckshorn and Robert Spencer, The Politics of Defeat (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), p. 197.

very desirable method of informing the electorate. In fact, representative democracy may be defined in terms of the access of voters to issues of public policy, how these issues are discussed and the choices that are provided among the candidates. Also, there is evidence that candidates in competitive races are more accurately informed about voter opinions than candidates in noncompetitive races.⁷⁸ It is more likely, then, that their Congressional votes and actions will be more representative than the votes and actions of candidates from non-competitive districts.⁷⁹

The importance of competition is also indicated by the evidence gathered concerning political participation, a concept frequently used to measure the usefulness of democracy. Candidates in competitive races made a much greater effort to increase voter turnout. They spent money and considerable time in efforts to register new voters. They also engaged in a great deal more personal contact than candidates in noncompetitive races. They campaigned an average of twenty-five more days and also made nearly twice as many personal appearances as noncompetitive candidates. Thus, voters in competitive districts were more likely to be visited by a candidate or hear a campaign speech and therefore, at least to that extent, be involved in the political process.

In addition, it may be that competitive candidates by using short campaign themes serve an educational function. Most voters do

⁷⁸Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy, p. 60.

⁷⁹Ibid.

have only a short attention span and limited retention; therefore, it is likely that brief, easily recognizable campaign themes are useful in that they make it easier for those voters to understand the political debate.

Evidence has mounted recently that perhaps the amount of party competition is not as essential to democracy as previously was believed.⁸⁰ For example, a study of welfare politics indicated that welfare payments were not related to party competition as much as they were related to other factors such as per capita income and various other economic variables.⁸¹

However, this study does not reach the same conclusion as these recent investigations have. The findings of this investigation indicate that increased party competition is associated with variables considered important to democracy. Rationality in candidate decision increased as the amount of party competition increased. As competition increased, so did the amount of political participation, a concept that can be used to measure the usefulness of democracy.⁸² Candidates in competitive districts engaged in a more meaningful discussion of issues, also considered ideal for democracy.⁸³ Candidates in

⁸⁰Thomas Dye, Politics, Economics, and the Public (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966).

⁸¹Richard Dawson and James Robinson, "Inter-Party Competition, Economic Variables, and Welfare Politics in the American States," The Journal of Politics, XXV (May, 1963), 265-89.

⁸²Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy, p. 120.

⁸³Huckshorn and Spencer, The Politics of Defeat, p. 197.

competitive races also made greater efforts to educate the electorate. Thus, the results of this investigation seriously question the conclusion reached by various scholars in recent years that increased party competition is not essential to democracy.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. When you began your campaign, how certain were you of the eventual election outcome?
2. Why did you feel this way?
3. During your campaign, is there any group or groups of voters that you especially make an appeal to?
 - a. If yes, which ones?
 - b. If no, what is your overall campaign plan?
4. How have you attempted to win their support?
5. Have any groups endorsed your candidacy?
6. How important do you think these groups are in terms of your election chances?
7. Do you concentrate your efforts on voters in areas where you think you will do well, or where you think you'll run poorly, or what?
8. Since you began your campaign, how many days have you spent actually campaigning in your district?
 - a. How important is it that candidates get out and mix with the people?
9. How much emphasis have you placed on registration drives?
 - a. Considerable.
 - b. A fair amount.

- c. None.
10. Would a large turnout aid you or your opponent?
 - a. Why?
 11. Do you think your campaign has developed any particular theme?
 - a. If so, what?
 12. Do you feel that having a theme is of any importance in a political campaign?
 13. Which of the following three factors would you say is most important in determining the choice of the voters?
 - a. Party label.
 - b. Issues of the campaign.
 - c. Personal characteristics of the candidates.
 14. Which have you emphasized most?
 15. Turning to issues, which ones have you considered most important for your election chances?
 16. Why have these been so important?
 17. Which ones have been most harmful to your campaign?
 18. How have you presented your issues--did you deal generally with them or did you treat them in a more detailed fashion?
 19. Do you think your method of presentation has had any effect on your election chances?
 20. How important is it to you that you be elected, or are there other considerations that enter into your choices?
 21. Finally, is there anything else about your campaign that you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

LIST OF CANDIDATES INTERVIEWED

District	Incumbent	Challenger
Tenth	Joel Broyhill Republican	Harold Miller Democrat
Seventh	J. Kenneth Robinson Republican	Murat Williams Democrat
Second	William Whitehurst Republican	Charles Burlage Democrat
First	Thomas Downing Democrat	Kenneth Wells Republican

APPENDIX C

INDEX OF INTER-PARTY COMPETITION

As mentioned in Chapter III, the method used to determine this index is the one suggested by David.⁸⁴ The election results from the last ten years for the offices of Governor, Senator, and Congressman in the four districts were compiled to determine the runner-up party's percentage of one-half the total vote. This resulted in a scale ranging from 0 to 100; the higher the ranking, the greater the level of competition. It was felt that if a district ranked 80 or better (the runner-up party averaged over 40 per cent of the vote), it would be considered competitive. Leuthold, in his analysis of Congressional campaigns in California, also considered candidates who received 40- to 60-per cent of the vote to be in competitive races.⁸⁵ Also, incumbents falling in this range are frequently targets for special efforts by opponents because of the margin of their previous victory.⁸⁶ This increases the likelihood that the campaigns will be competitive. The results of the index are shown in Table 9.

⁸⁴Paul David, "How Can an Index of Party Competition Best be Derived?" Journal of Politics, XXXIV (May, 1972), 632-38.

⁸⁵David Leuthold, Electioneering in a Democracy (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968), p. 4.

⁸⁶Movement for a New Congress, Vote Power: The Official Activist Campaigner's Handbook (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970).

TABLE 9
THE RESULTS OF THE INDEX OF INTER-PARTY
COMPETITION

District	Runner-up's Percentage of One-half the Total of both Votes				Competition
	Con- gress- man	Sen- ator	Gover- nor	Aver- age	
Tenth	88.6	64.6	96.8	83.3	Competitive
Seventh	89.2	62.2	98.4	83.2	Competitive
Second	53.8	58.2	88.2	73.4	Noncompetitive
First	28.6	56.4	91.4	58.7	Noncompetitive

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