

PROGRESSIVE AMBITION: WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Over the last several decades, scholars studying progressive ambition have almost exclusively directed their attention towards determining what factors contribute to politicians running for higher office. However, this extensive body of research only tells half of the story. A unique, yet vitally important aspect in the development of political ambition also affects the final electoral outcome. What previous scholars have overlooked is that, ultimately, voters decide the fate of politicians, not the politicians themselves. Candidates can have all the ambition in the world, take the necessary preliminary actions, make the right decisions and run at exactly the right time but whether they win or lose is contingent entirely upon the minds of voters. Therefore, an important unresolved gap in the literature appears to be how the public perceives progressive ambition. Utilizing a methodological mix of actual voting data and experimental research, my dissertation aims to provide groundbreaking theoretical insight on the research question: what effect does progressive ambition, if any, have on voter preferences?

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## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

“Ambition must be made to counteract ambition.”<sup>1</sup> This famous statement made by one of our nation’s founding fathers, James Madison, in reference to the separation of powers helped ease public angst towards the prospective government. Yet attracting far less attention in another essay, Madison wrote an equally powerful statement about ambition, “Duty, gratitude, interest, and ambition itself, are the chords by which they will be bound to fidelity and sympathy with the great mass of the people.”<sup>2</sup> Here, Madison speculates about the impending relationship between politicians and the public they will serve. A better understanding of precisely this relationship within the context of ambition is a fundamental goal of this dissertation.

Clearly, ambition has been a pervasive influence in American politics dating all the way back to our nation’s founding. But despite its longstanding relevance, ambition today has taken on a new connotation. As politicians begin to ascend the political ladder, thereby becoming more prominent and powerful, their motives for seeking career advancement are destined to attract more and more scrutiny. While most politicians openly express their primary interest rests in the desire to serve the will of the people, the public still largely remains skeptical of their representatives. According to a reporter for *Time* magazine, a staffer for one presidential candidate during the 2008 Republican primaries walked up to a guy wearing a shark costume after a New Hampshire debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Published between 1788 and 1789, the *Federalist Papers* were a series of eighty-five essays, written by Madison along with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, adamantly advocating the ratification of our U.S. Constitution. See (Hamilton et al. 1961 [1788], 290).

<sup>2</sup> See (Hamilton et al. 1961 [1788], 321).

He asked the man if he liked Ron Paul, the candidate most synonymous for attracting eccentric supporters. “No. They’re all nuts,” replied the man. “I’m just a guy in a shark suit.”

The accredited Gallup polling organization has tracked trust levels for the three branches of government annually over the last decade and found trust in Congress recently reached an all time low of 36% in 2010.<sup>3</sup> These figures are likely to continue trending downward given all the uncertainty surrounding our flailing economy and national debt crisis. Even Mark Twain (1897) once wrote, “It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress” (pg. 98). An increasingly prevalent attitude found across our country today underscores this public disenchantment with elected representatives: all politicians are alike and, at the end of the day, self-interested. Distinguished political philosopher John Rawls once went as far as to equate ambition to the “x” factor in algebra, implying that it could be factored out of discussions without significantly affecting the result.

This dissertation aims to demonstrate that political ambition cannot simply be “factored out” of the vote choice equation but instead should be treated as an intrinsic element with major implications. Candidates certainly are cognizant of public attitudes toward ambition. For example, when Bob Dole ran for president in 1996, his campaign team was concerned about his status as a senator posing a real hindrance to his electoral chances. The potential liability of the office became so great in Dole’s mind that he

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gallup.com/poll/143225/trust-legislative-branch-falls-record-low.aspx>

eventually resigned his seat and title of majority leader in the U.S. Senate in an effort to reshape his image to voters foremost as a citizen and presidential candidate. While his strategy proved unsuccessful, it does underscore the extent of the concern politicians have with respect to how the public perceives their political ambition.

### **The Birth of “Progressive” Ambition**

While ambition has captured the attention of both voters and candidates over the years, political scientists virtually ignored the phenomenon until Schlesinger (1966) began his seminal study with the words, “Ambition lies at the heart of politics” (pg. 1). In his theory of political ambition, Schlesinger explains the decision to seek higher office by first describing the types of ambition politicians can embody and second the opportunity structure they must then confront. More specifically, he contends there are three types of ambition a politician can embrace: discrete, static, or progressive. Discrete ambition is the desire to run for an office once then relinquishing the seat upon the term’s completion. Static ambition is the urge to run continually for re-election to the same office. With progressive ambition, the object is to obtain higher office over the course of a political career. So unlike static ambition where a politician is content holding a certain office, progressive ambition means he or she wants to move up the political ladder over time.<sup>4</sup> Schlesinger then constructs a paradigm to conceptualize how this opportunity structure has a profound effect by arguing ambitious office seekers will likely attempt to secure a more highly regarded office if they face favorable political and structural

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<sup>4</sup> (e.g. city mayor → state representative → U.S. House representative → U.S. Senator → President)

circumstances at that time. In short, politicians aiming for higher office exhibit an observable political phenomenon known as “progressive ambition.”

Schlesinger’s pioneering work spawned a litany of research on progressive ambition over the next half century. As will be shown shortly, focusing on certain individual, structural and temporal circumstances surrounding running for higher office has allowed scholars to make significant strides towards understanding the act of progressive ambition. Unfortunately, still only half of the story has been told. Therefore, my dissertation’s primary goal is to call attention to a potentially epochal factor that has not yet been addressed by political scientists. I contend another vitally important aspect of progressive ambition, the public’s perception, also affects the final electoral outcome.

### **Research Question**

Previous scholars have overlooked the reality that voters decide the fate of politicians, not the politicians themselves. A candidate can have all the ambition in the world, take the necessary preliminary actions, make all the right decisions and run at exactly the right time but whether they win or lose is entirely up to the voters. Hence, all politicians are at the mercy of the ballot box, no matter if they are discrete, static, or progressively ambitious. Thus, an important overlooked gap in the existing literature seems to be how the public perceives political ambition. Scholars cannot ignore this integral half of the story when it comes to analyzing politicians and their quest for higher office. Since every politician’s political fate is in the hands of the voters, the public’s perception of ambition should be a critical variable that coincides with the other known

factors already associated with political ambition. As a result, my research question is: what effect, if any, does progressive ambition have on voter preferences?

In doing so, the underlying assumption is that a relationship exists between ambitious politicians and the subsequent reaction invoked by the public in regards to this lust for political power. Consequently, the public's perception of ambitious politicians should matter, at least to some degree, when voters cast their vote. The bigger empirical question becomes then: to what extent? In other words, how does the public generally regard progressive political ambition? Is it most often viewed in a positive or negative light?

On one hand, perhaps the public has a natural affinity for ambitious candidates. Barack Obama's historic presidential win in 2008 certainly lends some credence to this notion. But does his win pattern precedent or should it be viewed as an anomaly? On the other hand, perhaps the public regards politicians using an office as a political stepping stone with discontent. The public could very easily react unfavorably towards a candidate running for a particular office only to use it as a springboard for another office higher up the political ladder shortly thereafter. And secondly, is any reaction attached to progressive ambition, either positive or negative, enough to significantly impact the electoral outcome or does it merely make a marginal difference?

### **My Contribution**

The remaining chapters of this dissertation provide several new contributions to both the ambition and candidate evaluation literatures. First, I supply an exhaustive

comprehensive review of the ambition literature to date. Second, I offer an innovative theoretical argument about the public's perception of progressive ambition. My cardinal hypothesis is that the public is more likely to react negatively towards ambitious candidates as their perception is influenced heavily by two elements: expectations and certain personality traits. Third, I find compelling evidence supporting this assertion based on voting data of ambitious candidates seeking higher office at two different political levels. Fourth, I use an experimental design in order to conduct a study to determine if the public reacts any differently to the timing of progressive ambition. Contrary to my second hypothesis, the public does not view aggressive ambition any less favorably than conservative ambition. Finally, this leads to the unexpected, nascent empirical discovery that the public reacts disparately towards "potential" ambition and "certain" ambition.

### **Dissertation Overview**

Chapter two starts by showing the real world implications progressive ambition has for our democracy. Next, I review the extant literature on progressive ambition within the context of three broad classifications: individual, structural and temporal. I then also review the candidate evaluation literature in order to provide a logical framework for my theoretical argument. I then argue the public evaluates ambitious candidates based on two critical aspects: personal expectations and personality traits. As a result, I speculate not only that the public's perception matters but that the public will likely react negatively towards ambitious candidates seeking higher office. I also hypothesize the public will react more negatively towards 'aggressive' progressive

ambition than ‘conservative’ progressive ambition. These two hypotheses are tested extensively in chapters three and four. Finally, I conclude with a pragmatic discussion about the difficulties ambition presents with respect to measurement.

Chapter three explores how the public has voted for ambitious politicians across multiple election cycles. I compare inter-election changes in two-party vote share of ambitious candidates with their non-ambitious peers seeking re-election. This approach encompasses two different political levels: presidential and senatorial ambition. I then estimate cross-sectional time series regression models to determine the statistical significance of the results.

In chapter four, I create an experimental design with two different samples and multiple treatments designed to capture the public’s perception of ambitious politicians. A carefully constructed survey now becomes the primary mechanism for extrapolating data. The first sample is administered to college students in introductory political science courses. Later, a second sample using the same questions is given to jury pool subjects reporting for jury duty to increase both representativeness and robustness. I then estimate ordered logit regression models to determine the statistical significance of the results. Rather fortunately, this approach unveils a distinction between “potential” and “certain” ambition in the eyes of voters.

Chapter five summarizes my theoretical argument and recaps the subsequent quantitative findings. I then discuss this dissertation’s impact on the discipline along with several new doors now open for future research. Local elections, governorships,

primaries, gender, race and a threshold of vulnerability all warrant further discussion on the matter. I also revisit political ambition's self-induced perils. Finally, I conclude by asserting experiments offer our best chance for a better understanding of how voters react to progressive ambition.

## CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

Schlesinger's pioneer study sparked a voluminous amount of literature on political ambition. A central theme throughout this extensive body of research implies that ambition matters in the world of politics. However, little research has been devoted to explaining precisely why studying political ambition itself is of such supreme value. Therefore, I open this chapter highlighting the historical significance ambition has had on our political system.

### **Why Ambition Matters**

Political ambition is so deeply embedded within our society that it is often taken for granted. Fortunately, ambition's value becomes more evident if we consider a fundamental principle to democratic success – accountability. One of the hallmarks of our nation's longevity is the fact that a vast majority of the most powerful positions are all publicly elected offices. Accountability is assured because men and women seeking either to gain or maintain political office understand the voting public determines the electoral winners and losers. Hence, aspiring politicians must adopt policies congruent with voter preferences (Downs 1957; Dahl 1961; Prewitt 1970; Choi 2010). Failure to do so could have grave electoral consequences; especially considering, some studies (Key 1966; Fiorina 1978; Fiorina et al. 2003; MacKuen et al. 1992) suggest voting behavior is either retrospective or prospective based on the economic nature of the times.<sup>5</sup> As Dahl

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<sup>5</sup> Fiorina (1978) finds strong empirical support for voters exercising retrospective voting based on the economic times at the presidential level. MacKuen et al. (2003) counter with a prospective approach,

(1956) said, “Political elites operate within limits set by their expectations as to the reactions of the group of politically active citizens who go to the polls” (pg. 72). Or as Downs (1957) put it more bluntly, “Parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies” (pg. 28). Essentially, Dahl and Downs, along with chief architect Mayhew (1974), elucidate this fear of accountability causes all politicians to be one thing: single-minded seekers of re-election. However, this outlook rests largely on a crucial assumption: an endless supply of men and women seeking to gain and then maintain a political office. What happens if the proverbial deep well filled with ambitious candidates were ever to run dry? While his introduction attracted headlines, Schlesinger (1966) balefully concludes,

*To slight the role of ambition in politics, then, or to treat it as a human failing to be suppressed, is to miss the central function of ambition in political systems. A political system unable to kindle ambitions for office is as much in danger of breaking down as one unable to restrain ambitions. (pg. 2)*

Schlesinger’s warning is clear: a lack of ambition in politics can be regarded as inimical to the interests of democratic longevity.

In short, our democracy relies on accountability as a pillar of long-term success. In turn, accountability depends on the desire of ambitious candidates to perpetually run for office, thereby fostering competitive elections. Since its absence could potentially jeopardize the viability of our political system, ambition is a subject warranting

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classifying voters as either peasants or bankers and conclude the electorate largely acts like bankers because they anticipate what is coming so they are not so myopic to any sudden shocks that transpire.

paramount concern not just here but on a broader scope as well. Given its conceptual magnitude, what factors might then affect ambition? In order to better synthesize and synopsisize all of the studies over the last half-century, I group existing research on ambition into three broad classifications: *individual*, *structural* and *temporal*.

### **Progressive Ambition**

The first category encompassing factors influencing ambition can be described as individualistic in nature. This candidate-centered approach can be broken down further into three subgroups: the decision calculus, legislative activity and gender. Most of the early literature emphasizes the importance of the decision calculus of ambitious politicians. Here, political ambition is defined in rational choice terms. The concept of rational choice was first developed by Downs (1957) as a rudimentary theory of political behavior from an economic perspective to better explain how voters act when it comes time to vote. Downs assumes voters are rational, utility maximizers seeking to achieve their goals while exerting the least amount of energy and resources necessary. If voters are treated as rational actors, then they have ordinal i.e. ranked, preferences, in favor of the outcome yielding the highest possible utility.

Black (1972) extends the rational choice model to apply towards ambitious politicians. Assuming politicians behave rationally with respect to their political goals, they will confront a decision, examine the alternatives, and eventually select the scenario best maximizing their utility. Unlike Schlesinger's theory, he argues the opportunity structure does not cause ambition directly but rather serves as a filter to assist in determining which candidates emerge for higher office. Rohde (1979) then predicts

which members of the U.S. House will seek higher office, sampling all members of Congress, not just those members that did in fact run. Accordingly, he concludes almost all members of the U.S. House possess progressive ambition. In other words, if a House member was offered a position as a Senator or a Governor tomorrow, without any cost or political risk, they would not hesitate to accept the higher office. Rohde also introduces the concept of risk taking and asserts risk takers are more likely to seek higher office than members who are not risk takers. Essentially, ambitious politicians are classified as “risk-bearers” and those who are not are called “risk-averse.” While several other scholars (Levine and Hyde 1977; Fowler and McClure 1988; Kazee 1994; Dowling and Lem 2008) also focus on the decision calculus aspect now synonymous with running for higher office, these three works serve as the empirical foundation for many future ambition studies and also the strategic politician model discussed later.

The decision calculus of candidates is not the only area of interest in this genre. Others (Hibbing 1989; Herrick 1993; Victor 2004) focus on the legislative behavior of ambitious politicians. They conclude politicians set the stage prior to running by altering their congressional activity level. Not only do ambitious candidates begin adopting a voting record designed to appease a larger constituency, but they also undertake more legislative activity than their less ambitious peers. We observe this through several actions including: credit claiming, sponsoring and passing legislation, participating in debates and motions on the floor, giving public speeches, and appearing on various media networks.

Most recently, research on female candidates has provided even more clarity. Researchers using gender in order to fill this void in the literature have reached competing conclusions. On one hand, some scholars have made the argument women are less ambitious than men. For example, Fox and Lawless (2001, 2004) assert men often are labeled as more ambitious than women because women are more likely to factor in their family life and weigh the costs of juggling their personal life amidst that of their professional. Others (Constantini 1990; Burns, Schlozman, Verba 2001) even go as far as to suggest this conceived notion of an ambition gap stems from women being socialized at very early age to see themselves as unqualified participants in politics. Another view claims women that do decide to run do so for different reasons than men. While men seek power, prestige and policy inroads, women enter for the likes of friendship and networking (Constantini 1990). In short, even though women typically share the same personal traits and professional credentials as men, these studies all suggest women are less inclined to run for higher office. However, the preponderance of research pertaining to gender and ambition done disagrees with these findings.

The other camp evinces women are not less ambitious than men. To illustrate, even though Fulton et al. (2006) find female state representatives less ambitious than their male peers, they conclude women are still just as likely to run for Congress. According to them, women are more cognizant of the benefits obtained from winning higher office than are men, helping to mitigate their natural lower levels of ambition. Many other articles offer compelling support for the belief women are more ambitious than men (Palmer and Simon 2003; Maisel and Stone 2006; Williams 2008). Some of

these proponents (Bennett and Bennett 1993; Inglehart and Norris 2003) contend more women today are not only running but running successfully due to changing societal expectations about gender roles. That is, a woman's role is no longer seen as exclusively domestic.

In terms of structure, certain institutions play a key role in dictating the decision to seek higher office. The exact influence depends upon the institution at hand. The two subsets having attracted the most attention are: legislatures and political parties. For example, Robeck (1982) argues state legislators usually run for higher office in open primaries and that their odds of winning are much greater if they come from a more professional legislature background.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Squire (1992; 2007) creates a measure of legislative professionalism based on salary, staff size and session time in order to try and quantify the institutional value of a legislative office offers. Herrick and Moore (1993) coin the term "intrainstitutional" ambition, where members pursue leadership positions within their current political strata. That is, politicians, like Tip O'Neil whose political goal was to become House Speaker, can fulfill their progressive ambition simply by elevating within their current institution without actually ever running for higher office. In contrast, Wanless (2010) elucidates how the vast majority of the literature focuses on variables reducing candidates' inclination to run and focuses on factors like the Electoral College votes or an important committee membership helping increase candidate viability. As for parties, Fiorina (1994; 1999) finds partisan differences

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<sup>6</sup> Most existing literature classifies legislatures as "professional" if they meet on an annual basis as opposed to "amateur" legislatures that meet more sporadically. For a thorough review of studies pertaining to legislative professionalization, see Hedlund (1984) and also Fiorina (1994).

account for diverging attitudes about the value of holding legislative office, citing Democrats would typically find a full time job more valuable than their Republican counterparts because the latter tend to have more profitable careers established elsewhere. Other research on divergent partisan opportunity structures, party loyalty and party position-seeking all demonstrate an impact on candidate's progressive ambition (Abramson et al. 1987; Hibbing 1989; Treul 2009).

Finally, the third broad category can be classified as temporal, or time based. Authors have devoted careful attention to the timing of running for higher office. For example, Fox and Lawless (2005) and Maestas et al. (2006) draw distinctions between ambition formation and ambition implementation. Other scholars pay careful attention to the age, timing and term status of ambitious candidates. The very young and very old usually do not run for higher office (Brace 1984). Plus, the decision of when to run matters just as much as the decision whether to run and that a candidate's outlook either improves or diminishes depending upon running in the middle or at the conclusion of their term (Hain 1982; Copeland 1989).

Other research devoted to strategic politicians coincides well with this temporal element. As best espoused by Jacobson and Kernell (1983, 1989), a "strategic politician" is characterized as someone who is very calculated when deciding whether or not to enter a race. As with ambitious politicians, the opportunity structure remains the same. Strategic politicians seek the best opportunity available within a stratified political climate to maximize their benefits at the expense of minimized costs. While being strategic inspires politicians not only to be risk-averse, it simultaneously urges caution

because risk-takers stand to lose not just their current office but potentially their entire political career depending upon the election results. As such, they attest national political forces greatly influence the candidacy of strategic politicians. Other works (chiefly Bianco 1984; Lublin 1994; Carson 2005) substantiate Jacobson and Kernell's findings and stress strategic politicians do in fact account for other factors like: local forces, economic conditions, and party-line voting when considering higher office.<sup>7</sup> In sum, the existing factors affecting political ambition can be classified appropriately into three broad categories: individual, structural and temporal.

Collectively, these findings have shed tremendous intellectual insight on political ambition. However, the ambition literature remains incomplete and more work must be done to augment these achievements. My assertion is a critical aspect of the story remains untold: the public's perception. Since voters ultimately have the final say in elections, it is imperative we uncover how they view progressive ambition. But first, we must supplement this literature review with a discussion of how the public has come to evaluate candidates traditionally.

### **Candidate Evaluation**

Voting behavior has been successfully partitioned by political scientists over the years into three schools of thought: sociological, psychological and rational choice. Proponents of the sociological school, or the *Columbia* model, argue an individual's political attitudes are shaped primarily by family, friends, co-workers and religion

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<sup>7</sup> For critiques of the Jacobson-Kernell strategic politician theory, see (Bond, Covington, and Fleisher (1985) and Born (1986).

(Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954). In contrast, the psychological school, or the *Michigan* model, contends electoral behavior is driven by party identification and candidate evaluation (Campbell et al. 1960). Finally, rational choice theorists, or the *Rochester* model, unceremoniously emphasize rationality (Downs 1957). Of these three schools of thought, the Michigan model's focus on candidate evaluation is most integral to the development of the theoretical argument in this dissertation.

Early scholars thought two dimensions of candidate evaluations existed: party identification and issues (Weisberg and Rusk 1970; Knight 1985; Jacoby 1986; Lau 1986). For many, ideology seems to have the biggest influence on voting behavior (Stimson 1975; Hagner and Pierce 1983; Knight 1985; Jacoby 1986, 1989; Lyons and Scheb 1992; MacDonald and Rabinowitz 1993). For others, the best answer appears to be issue positions (Rabinowitz et al. 1982; Knight 1985; Jacoby 1986; Lau 1986; Miller and Shanks 1996; Alvarez 1998; Peterson 2005). A third dimension, personality, is noted at the time but receives little substantive thought and even is dismissed by some as a form of "irrational" behavior (Converse 1964; Miller and Miller 1977; Page 1978).

But not everyone concurs. Stokes (1966) became the first scholar to contend personality characteristics matter more than either ideology or issues regarding inter-election vote changes. Other scholars also embrace personality as a viable third dimension of candidate evaluation, especially as the *American Voter* model attracted heavy criticism following the decline in party identification. They defy conventional wisdom by stressing the impact personal characteristics have in assessing how candidates are likely to perform if they were to win a prospective office (Popkin et al. 1976; Shabad

and Anderson 1979; Kinder and Abelson 1981; Kinder 1985, Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 1986; McGraw and Steenbergen 1995). In fact, Miller et al. (1986) staunchly advocate candidate evaluations are one of the most important yet underdeveloped facets of American voting behavior. Likewise, Kinder (1985) argues judgments of candidate personalities are a potent basis for making candidate evaluations.

Intuitively, this is a logical conclusion when we consider how the personal characteristics of candidates have become such an important heuristic for voters over the last few decades. This idea has been developed extensively in the social psychology literature. Social cognition studies deal with individual's memory, specifically how we first gather and later process information (Lau and Sears 1985). Since becoming politically informed requires considerable time investment, social cognition theory assumes people are "cognitive misers" that desire a more efficient method for processing information (Nisbett and Ross 1980; Taylor and Crocker 1981). Thus, people readily use candidate schemas to help aid our memory process by storing and retrieving information in a timely manner. These sets of heuristics then enable the public to quickly make inferences about candidates before voting (Lippman 1965; Hurwitz 1985; Rosenberg et al. 1986; Rahn 1993, Lau and Redlawsk 2001).

Two theories have emerged regarding how the public actually processes information prior to using cognitive shortcuts. While both models have shown how political opinions are formed, disagreement arises over how information is processed (Hastie and Park 1986; Lavine 2002). According to the memory based model, opinions are constructed at the time a judgment is expressed by immediately recalling as much

information as possible (Kelly and Mirer 1974; Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992). In contrast, the online model does not dispute the idea that opinions are formed at the initial judgment but rather that they can also be updated over time with new information called summary tallies. Most studies believe the latter approach is employed more frequently by the public (Lodge et al. 1990; McGraw et al. 1990; Lodge et al. 1995; McGraw et al. 2003).

Additional research has come to an interesting realization: voters do not always evaluate each candidate in the same way. MacDonald et al. (1988) explore voting behavior from a rational choice perspective, where two candidates should be judged by individuals using the same criteria otherwise they are acting irrational. Yet, they find this is not the case at all; instead, different candidates evoke different evaluative criteria. Pierce (1993) expands on this notion and finds candidates are evaluated differently by voters with different levels of political sophistication. Why might voters use certain criteria for one candidate but different criteria for another? Moskowitz and Stroh (1996) argue the answer rests in how voters emphasize their expectations and situational cues. In other words, even when presented with identical information on candidates, voters inevitably cast judgments according to their expectations for each individual candidate.

In sum, personal characteristics are fundamentally important in candidate evaluations. They serve as a cognitive shortcut that voters often rely on when evaluating political contests. In fact, Miller et al. (1986) along with McGraw and Steenbergen (1995) find sophisticated voters place greater emphasis on personal traits than ideology or

issues in their evaluations. But which characteristics do voters care about? Do some weigh more heavily on the minds of voters than others?

Fortunately, several personality traits already have received significant scholarly attention across multiple disciplines to provide us with some perspective. Leadership has been examined extensively in the psychology and business arenas in addition to political science. For example, voters desire leaders that are not self-interested (Smith et al. 2007). Little et al. (2001) uncover how facial features are often used by voters as a heuristic in the evaluation of presidential leaders in times of war and peace. Other works find qualities such as dedication, intelligence, sensitivity and dynamism, among others, exemplify strong leadership in business-organization settings (Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; Offerman et al. 1994; and Epitropaki and Martin 2004).

Trust is another major characteristic the public heavily scrutinizes over in their candidate evaluations (Sullivan et al. 1990). While our democracy rests on the pivotal assumption that our elected officials are trustworthy, this notion has been difficult to gain acceptance by many. Politicians are often perceived as lacking honesty, integrity and civic-mindedness (Kerbel 1995; Lipset and Schneider 1987). Distrust towards politicians largely stems from a growing dissatisfaction with the political processes they are placed in charge of (Miller 1974; Hibbing and Theiss-Moore). Of course, political distrust can be highly partisan. Voters are much more inclined to evaluate candidates in a positive light if they share the same party affiliation (Citrin 1974; Patterson et al. 1992; Kimball and Patterson 1997).

Finally, some scholars preferred to describe personality characteristics as different dimensions of candidate evaluation. According to Miller et al. (1986) competence is the primary dimension from 1952-1984 but they also note how integrity and reliability have become more prevalent since 1964. Similarly, Lau and Sears (1981), Kinder (1986) and Mondak (1995) all stress a candidate's electoral success hinges on the public perception of his or her competence, integrity, and reliability.

### **Theory & Hypotheses**

Fenno (1977) asks, what does an elected representative see when he or she sees their constituency? Similarly, I ask: what does the public see when they see their ambitious representative? In both cases, the problem is perception. As Fenno points out, there is a lack of coherent knowledge about the perceptions members of Congress have according to their constituencies. This underdevelopment has caused us to be overly concerned about the behavior of politicians themselves in lieu of the behavior of those with the final electoral say, *the people*. Now that we have a general idea how characteristics matter, the looming question becomes how the public perceives these personal traits in their evaluation of progressively ambitious candidates.

I contend the public formulates their reaction to progressive ambition based upon how they evaluate candidates according to their own personal expectations in conjunction with four key character dimensions: *leadership, trust, reliability* and *self-interest*. Personal expectations originate from a number of sources. Voters often lean on their own life experiences in formulating candidate expectations. A voter may be very passionate about specific issues like abortion or gun control and thereby prefer candidates with

similar philosophical positions. Voters also establish personal expectations retrospectively based on a candidate's past performance. For example, if an ambitious candidate has a strong track record creating jobs in his or her city or state, voters likely expect the candidate to be able to produce the same results on a larger scale if elected. Although, candidate track records can be misleading to some degree. Some smaller cities and states are easier to manage than others. The political landscape at the time might exaggerate records of accomplishment as well. The important point is that voters base their initial expectations on what matters most to them personally.

Certainly, candidates try to influence voter expectations on the campaign trail by stating their vision of the future, if elected. Voters construct their expectations as part of a two-stage process. First, candidates must meet the initial requirements in order to receive votes otherwise it would be irrational to vote for someone that does not fulfill one's initial expectations for that office. Second, while future expectations do not necessarily have to be grandiose, voters also cast their ballot because candidates have convinced the public effectively that they intend to fulfill certain promises once elected based on their campaign rhetoric. Ideally, politicians then try to live up to these public's expectations once elected not only from a policy standpoint but by connecting with voters via strategies like constituency service and personal vote (Cain et al. 1987). However, the act of progressive ambition, in effect, also triggers voters to judge candidates according to certain traits: leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest.

At first glance, leadership seemingly would appear to be a desirable trait in the eyes of voters. However, leadership is a delicate balance. According to Smith et al.

(2007), the public needs leaders but at the same time there is a strong tendency to dislike those who are. Anthropologists have characterized this public discontent towards leaders as “anti-big-man behavior.” In other words, “big man behavior” has been met with resistance or even dismissal in every social unit observed throughout history (Smith et al. 2007). Naturally, we should expect some public apprehensiveness then towards higher office seekers who are leaders by definition.

Trust may be the most intrinsic component for building a successful relationship between politicians and the public. Yet, trust is also a precarious entity. Trust is hard to win and requires constant effort to be sustained. Politicians win elected office undoubtedly in part by earning voters’ trust over time. This is where the public’s perception really plays a key role. The act of running for higher office calls into question the amount of trust between a candidate and voters. The underlying assumption here is that political trust hinges on voter expectations. If politicians meet expectations, voters are more likely to be trusting and vice versa. Since voters are known for altering their opinion towards politicians based on their own personal expectations, ambitious politicians should be concerned about doing anything that could be perceived as detrimental to their current expectations, resulting in decline in trust.

A big way running for higher office could have an adverse effect on voter expectations pertains to the allocation of resources. Members of Congress will likely have to redirect a substantial portion of their focus towards the campaign trail. This causes ambitious candidates to devote time away from other areas, like constituency services. Hence, their current expectations become superseded by new expectations

coinciding with winning higher office. In this sense, progressive ambition poses a real problem for candidates with respect to fulfilling voter expectations, especially when candidates run aggressively. If the public gets the impression the candidate cares more about his own career than that of the constituency's interests, they could rethink their candidate evaluation because of unmet expectations. Therefore, candidates must juxtapose the personal benefits ambition brings against the public costs associated with appearing self-interested.

Governor Chris Christie's decision not to seek the Republican Party's nomination in 2012 illustrates my theoretical argument perfectly. Elected in 2009, Governor Christie has become well respected for his straight talk and candor on political issues. Although he stated numerous times that he was not interested in running for president, many prominent conservatives, pundits, other members of the media, and ordinary citizens pressed him to reconsider. After reconsidering, Governor Christie reaffirmed his decision not to run. In a televised press conference, he said "I have a commitment to New Jersey that I simply will not abandon." He later added, "It just didn't feel right for me to leave before the job was done." Clearly, Governor Christie was unwilling to run for higher office until he first fulfilled voter expectations based on his campaign promises. His decision emphasizes the premium he places on traits like leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest.

Personality factors should also matter when voters go to the polls because the character of the person elected into often makes a huge difference. For example, Wattenberg (2006) finds candidate evaluations of personal attributes gave George W.

Bush the victory over John Kerry in 2004. Bush consistently received higher evaluations relative to Kerry on traits such as: reliability, integrity and overall leadership. Hence, progressive ambition could cause voters to question the reliability of a candidate if he or she neglects current expectations to pursue political advancement.

As for self-interest, it all comes down to how the public perceives the congruence of leader's intentions relative to the group as a whole. People dislike leaders that come across as self-interested. Great leaders, such as Eisenhower, Kennedy and Reagan, embodying strength, modesty, and reticence are typically adored by the public more so than others because they have effectively convinced the larger group that they do not crave the spotlight for their own personal gain (Smith et al. 2007).

As a result, ambitious politicians are faced with a proverbial catch twenty-two. On one hand, experience is regarded as a very positive attribute by the public; yet, the term ambition is often viewed negatively as a sign of self-interest. In other words, the political conundrum for higher office seekers is that the public prefers experienced politicians yet we dislike that they are ambitious which is often predicated on experience.

In sum, leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest are four key personality traits that influence how the public evaluates ambitious politicians. These traits in conjunction with personal expectations greatly assist voters in their overall candidate evaluation of ambitious politicians. As such, how higher office seekers approach progressive ambition could greatly influence the public's candidate evaluation. This leads me to my first formal hypothesis:

*H1: Voters are more likely to react negatively towards progressively ambitious politicians using an office as a stepping stone.*

I argue the pursuit of higher office could cause ambitious politicians in many instances not to fulfill the promises that got them elected into office to begin with. In turn, this causes voters to re-evaluate their expectations, which is more likely to produce a less favorable candidate evaluation. Critics might argue politicians make empty campaign promises all the time. While that may often be the case, I posit there is a difference between not meeting expectations for an office currently held and not meeting expectations as a result of seeking yet another office.

The act of progressive ambition also primes voters to give careful consideration to four personality traits in their candidate evaluation: leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest. While leadership is likely viewed positively with respect to ambition, I speculate that the remaining three traits are likely to be met with more criticism. More specifically, voters could lose trust in ambitious politicians if they fail to meet their current expectations before running for higher office. Higher office seekers may also strike the public as less reliable by virtue of redirecting attention away from personal vote matters to that of their campaign. Similarly, this shift in focus towards their own campaign in lieu of constituency services may be perceived as an act of self-interest.

Furthermore, compelling literature suggests certain actions attract positive attention while other actions invoke a negative reaction. For example, Parker and Davidson (1979) attempt to solve the mystery as to why Americans love their

congressman or congresswoman so much more so than Congress as a whole. They find individual representatives are judged more favorably due to their constituency service efforts. Yet, the decision to seek higher office forces candidates, at least to some degree, to shift their focus away from this good public image endeavor to their own self-interest in that of the campaign. Logically, if people evaluate candidates in a manner that has been shaped largely by the candidates themselves, as McDonald et al. (1988) contend, then it only makes sense that we should reasonably expect the public to perceive ambition with at least some discontent.

Granted, ambitious candidates could elicit positive evaluations by voters. In fact, studies on challenger quality have defined political experience as the primary indicator (Jacobson 1981, 1989; Bianco 1984; Born 1986; Abramowitz 1988). Candidates that have held elected office previously are much more likely to have electoral success than those who have not. But as mentioned earlier, the public clearly values experience and ambition differently. While experience is usually regarded favorably, ambition generally is met with some degree of discontent.

The concept of a “negativity bias” provides one explanation why voters could potentially take opposing views on ‘qualified’ candidates versus ‘ambitious’ candidates. A negativity bias occurs when negative attributes outweigh their positive counterparts with respect to decision making (Fiske 1980; Skowronski and Carlson 1989). The rationale here is that since most people are genuinely happy with their lives, negative information always resonates more sharply (Lau 1985; Klein 1996). Hence, a positive trait and negative trait taken together respectively produce a negative reaction rather than

offset in the public's eyes (Skowronski and Carlson 1989; Klein 1991; Martijn et al. 1992; De Bruin and Van Lange 2000). This is an important theoretical point - any negative reaction towards ambition with respect to trust, reliability and self-interest is likely taken as a sign of character weakness which subsequently outweighs all the good synonymous with factors like experience and leadership (Goren 2002, 2007).

Moreover, I am unsatisfied merely establishing causal directionality; ergo, I dig deeper by examining whether the public views the manner in which politicians are progressively ambitious any differently. As an illustration, the 2008 presidential election provides the perfect political backdrop for juxtaposing aggressive versus subtle progressive ambition. Only four years prior, a little known Illinois State Senator named Barack Obama, coming on the heels of winning the Democratic primary for U.S. Senator, delivered the keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic Convention. His positive demeanor and impressive oratory skills exhibited in that speech not only thrust the public spotlight on him but also launched him on the fast track to political stardom. Only a couple months later, he became a U.S. Senator; then after serving for a little more than just two years in office, he launched a presidential campaign that saw him progress from: a dark-horse primary candidate to the primary frontrunner to the Democratic Party nominee to the eventual 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. His skyrocketing ascension up the political ladder to become the historic first African American president is now a textbook example of progressive ambition.

However, another kind of progressive ambition exists and, as luck would have it, Obama's opponent John McCain serves as an ideal prototype. In complete contrast to

Obama, McCain completed two terms in the U.S. House in the early 1980s prior to serving as U.S. Senator for nearly 30 years before running for president. While he too was once regarded as a dark-horse candidate, he eventually secured the Republican nomination based on his impressive political experience. Without question, Schlesinger and company would classify both Obama and McCain as progressively ambitious, albeit each clearly showcases two very distinct approaches.

The idea of aggressive versus a more wait-your turn approach to political ambition warrants more consideration. Specifically, I ask whether these two contrasting styles make any difference in the public's attitude towards ambition via survey research. If so, does the public give more favorable candidate evaluations to aggressive ambitious politicians or conservative ambitious politicians? Accordingly, my second theoretical hypothesis states:

*H2: Voters are more likely to react negatively towards "aggressive" progressive ambition rather than "conservative" progressive ambition.*

### **Measuring Ambition**

As a final thought, I want to point out just how difficult it is to actually measure progressive ambition. Political ambition theory's key premise is that individual's current behavior often foreshadows their future aspirations. Political scientists assume most candidates are ambitious on some level by their very nature of running for office. Yet, as Mitchell (2010) points out, little empirical research has been devoted to better explaining where ambition comes from or what factors influence levels of ambition. Most cases rely on the choices legislators make in the upcoming election cycle as an indirect proxy for

their ambitions. Hence, ambition is tough to capture because we can only observe the behavior once it manifests, *post-hoc*. This is especially problematic from an empirical standpoint since the independent variable, whether or not a candidate elects to run, occurs after the dependent variable, how legislators behave in their current office (Moreland 2010). In other words, a candidate might be burning inside with ambition but we would never know if they do not elect to run for higher office. Therefore, a key concern for measuring ambition is that it is inherently outcome-based. Countless politicians may harbor private ambitions but there is no way for us to know unless they signal us in some credible fashion.

Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to counteract this measurement limitation. If ambition scholars could construct a creative wish list for how to measure ambition – direct communication would undeniably be the Pareto optima choice. Beyond that, scholars surely would prefer to have the ability to administer surveys to every politician at the local, state and national levels. However, both of these approaches are impractical sources of measurement.

Aside from the enormous amount of time and money such research would necessitate, scholars would have to confront a major issue in biased responses. For example, even if one was successfully able to obtain survey responses from every single politician, at any level, there is no way of telling whether their responses are indicative of how they honestly feel or rather simply what they think the public wants to hear (Herrick 2001). A vast body of research substantiates this incongruence between politicians' true preferences and their actual roll call voting behavior, with the idea being they will do or

say whatever is necessary to win (see most notably: Miller and Stokes 1963; Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1974, 1975). So while others see ambition best measured as a type of psychological construct (Herrick and Moore 1993; Herrick 2001; Maestas et al. 2006), I contend progressive ambition could be attitudinal, i.e. contingent on the minds of voters, and behavioral, i.e. contingent on behavioral changes the candidates make once they begin campaigning.

Consequently, I foresee only two viable ways to measure how the public reacts towards progressive ambition. First, the public's perception of ambition can be measured by looking at how they actually voted for real candidates by looking at differences in vote shares and margin of victory. Second, the public's perception of ambition may be measured by asking the public how they potentially would vote for hypothetical candidates, controlling the information exposure via experiments. The former is explored in chapter three and the latter approach is implemented in chapter four. My aim is for these two measures, taken together, serve as a strong methodological examination of my theory while also helping to ensure both the validity and generalizability of the results.

### **Chapter Summary**

Despite all the success previous ambition scholars have enjoyed, an important piece of the puzzle that has not been addressed until now is how the public perceives progressive ambition. Previous efforts are missing the big picture. While politicians have the ability to impact their own election chances, ultimately, the electoral outcome is controlled by the voters. As such, voter perception matters most. Therefore, the purpose

of this dissertation is to serve as the principle exploratory study analyzing the public's perception of ambitious candidates.

The foundation for my theoretical argument regarding the public's reaction to progressive ambition rests squarely in candidate evaluation literature. Previous research in this area has centered on two concepts: expectations and personal characteristics. It has become evident that voters evaluate each candidate differently based upon their own expectations. Voters also evaluate personality characteristics such as leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest as cognitive heuristics when deciding amongst candidates. This poses a real problem for higher office seekers on both fronts. First, ambitious candidates must be concerned about not fulfilling voter expectations when running for higher office. Any apparent shift in both focus and resources away from the current job at hand to the campaign trail could be construed negatively. Second, researchers generally agree that leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest personality characters matter to voters and are used as heuristics in their candidate evaluations. Of these four traits, only leadership is likely to be viewed positively with respect to ambition. Therefore, I contend the public is more likely to react negatively towards politicians in their ambitious pursuit of higher office.

I also explore whether or not a temporal element exists as well. That is, if the public does react negatively it could be in response to the manner in which the ambitious politician sought higher office instead of reneging on existing expectations. Hence, we must determine if there is any difference in the public's eyes whether the higher office seeker is aggressive or subtle in their tactical approach. I speculate

aggressively seeking higher office is likely to elicit a more negative reaction than if done in a more subtle, wait-your-turn manner.

### **CHAPTER THREE – REAL CANDIDATE ANALYSES**

On the Ides of March in 44 BC, Roman Emperor Julius Caesar was assassinated on his way to the Senate floor. His death and the subsequent political turmoil left in the aftermath have been well documented throughout history. Caesar was undeniably a man with great political aspirations. One of the underlying themes characterized by his death is that: great political ambition breeds great political enmity. While politicians today no longer worry about literally being stabbed in the back, they do still fear being removed from office by another means – electoral defeat.

This fear of electoral reprisal has to be one of the paramount concerns for any prospective, resolute politician striving for higher office. Consequently, how voters react towards political ambition has major implications either way. On one hand, if the public's reaction can be seen as positive, we can likely expect more politicians not only to run but to run aggressively for higher office; on the other hand, if the public's reaction appears as negative, we can likely anticipate politicians to be more cautious in weighing their decision calculus to run for higher office. Therefore, this chapter aims to identify both the causal directionality and magnitude of the public's reaction by studying presidential and senatorial level ambition.

The thrust of my hypotheses in the previous chapter speculate that the public reacts to progressive ambition in a negative manner. A suitable approach then to examine this negative effect involves by comparing electoral results across multiple classes of political office. Observing progressive ambition in this light offers several

benefits. First, it serves to directly quantify the impact of the public's attitude by looking at changes in the candidates' total vote share before and after seeking higher office. Second, observing current members also eliminates any potential concerns about the changes resulting from other factors that could arise from simply being out of office. That is, the longer a candidate is removed from his previously held office, the more difficult it becomes to compare distally to the electoral results for his higher office attempt. And third, the internal validity of my argument stands to strengthen if any effect is shown to persist across the various political classes. But first, I open with a discussion as to why politicians would consider leaving their current office, either the House or Senate in this case, in pursuit of higher office.

### **Presidential Ambition**

The presidential selection process provides a natural forum conducive to studying ambition theory. The U.S. Senate is widely viewed as a launching pad to the presidency. After all, only one sitting member of the U.S. House, James Garfield, has ever successfully captured the White House. Scholars have affectionately described the Senate as the: "presidential incubator," "presidential nursery" and "presidential pre-school" (Peabody and Rohde 1976). Conventional wisdom suggests senators should be able to convert their name recognition and campaign experience into an electoral edge during the campaign. Moreover, the political opportunity structure also favors senators significantly over other office holders by offering greater flexibility as far as when to run given their six-year terms. These strengths caused Schlesinger to conclude, *ceteris paribus*, the Senate is a more highly valued office than being Governor.

But surprisingly, this idea of the Senate as the “manifest office” has not come to light when reviewing presidential history. Out of our nation’s forty-four presidents, only Warren G. Harding, John F. Kennedy and Barack Obama have ever come directly from the U.S. Senate. In contrast, six sitting governors have successfully made the transition directly into the White House. Overall, the United States has had sixteen former senators and twenty former governors become president. Why have governors been more successful than senators and representatives at winning the most coveted political office?

While House members have likely been the least successful primarily because they serve the smallest constituency, former senators have actually been more successful than sitting senators because a vast majority helped improved their chances by first serving as either the vice-president or as a vice-presidential nominee. Furthermore, the public often tends to favor governors because of their executive experience. Governors are better able to portray themselves as Washington outsiders, a luxury congressmen do not have. This outsider image often resonates well with voters who have grown weary of constant partisan bickering over policy matters made public by the media. But even more critically with respect to ambition, senators and governors likely vary in their success rates for the presidency due to governors being more willing to invest heavily in their campaign than senators (Burden 2002).

The Senate’s staggered election cycle can be either advantageous or detrimental to prospective ambitious politicians depending upon the circumstance. When a senator’s term concludes in a presidential election year, they face a difficult decision as to which office is more valuable. For example, Bob Dole (1996) choose to resign in order to

devote everything to the presidential campaign while other senators like Ernest Hollings (1984), Lloyd Bentsen (1988), Phil Gramm (1996), Orrin Hatch (2000) and Joe Biden (2008) withdrew early on after failing to galvanize much support so they could instead focus on re-election. On the other hand, senators not up for re-election for another two or four years can test the waters with a lot less political risk. This seemingly harmless form of presidential probing is not entirely without risk as some senators such as Vance Hartke (1972), Birch Bayh (1976) and Frank Church (1976) each lost their next re-election attempt after running for president early in their term. Thus, senators can either be positively or adversely affected by their term length depending upon the timing of their decision to run.

In contrast, governors must confront term limits that often force their hand. Outgoing governors wishing to extend their political career often run for president because they, like former senators, have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Unless they run for senator or president, the pinnacle of their political career ends when their term expires. As a result, sitting governors typically invest more heavily in their presidential campaigns than do sitting senators. Hence, this institutional barrier complicates our ability to differentiate risk-bearing ambition from nothing-to-lose ambition.

Another important distinction is that while members of Congress share the same legislative abilities, governors inherently possess different functional capabilities as chief executives. On one hand, the public expects legislators to pass necessary laws to preserve our best interests. On the other hand, governors are expected to oversee the

lawmaking while offering policy direction. Thus, I argue it is difficult to compare apples to oranges in this particular instance because the public perceives these two political offices differently. Consequently, I focus exclusively on House and Senate members who share the same expectations and at least stand to lose something, whether now or later, by choosing to run for higher office. Similarly, former House and Senate members are excluded from these data since they too essentially have nothing to lose by entering the race since they are already out of political office.

### **Senatorial Ambition**

Explanations behind the electoral security of House incumbents dominated congressional research in the 1970s (Mayhew 1974; Abramowitz 1975; Ferejohn 1977; Fiorina 1971). One of the overarching themes from their respective conclusions is that an “incumbency advantage” exists making it extremely difficult for opponents to successfully unseat those in office. In other words, House incumbents rarely lose re-election. House members often secure a “free ride” after leveraging institutional tools such as franking, an organized staff, and name recognition provide that are so crucial in races with smaller constituencies. Their electoral strength has attributed directly to a lack of quality challengers. So why then, would these incumbents be willing to risk the comforts of their current position for higher office?

House members traditionally have an unmatched advantage over all other candidates seeking election to the Senate. The U.S. House has served as the main pipeline for aspiring U.S. Senators. Today, approximately half of the current senators obtained experience by first serving in the other chamber (Johnson et al. 2009). Yet

rather surprisingly, most representatives do not actually run for higher office. For example, as shown shortly in this data set, only 139 representatives sought a seat in the U.S. Senate between 1972 and 2008. That number only equates to approximately two percent of all representatives every election cycle.

For those candidates who do run, we can expect several things to happen. Ambitious U.S. House members are less likely to leave behind positions of seniority and more likely to run in smaller states (Copeland 1989; Kazee 1994; Lee and Oppenheimer 1999) where competition is weaker and name recognition travels farther. But more importantly, we can expect U.S. House members to run when the opportunity structure presents a strong probability of success. Usually, this optimal time is when the race is classified as an open seat, or without the presence of an incumbent. As Copeland (1989) points out, the key decision is not a question of whether to run but more a personal struggle over when to run.

### **Data and Methods**

The aftermath of the 1968 presidential election provides a perfect starting point for one major reason: institutionalized reforms. These post-election reforms took power away from the convention's party leaders and has since entrusted it into the hands of primary voters. Starting in 1972, all presidential candidates have been required to secure their party's nomination via competing in the primary process as opposed to the old continuing caucus method. As such, it is within this new political era, where the power now truly rests in the hands of the voting public, that it seems most appropriate to study how ambitious politicians fair over time.

This chapter's primary goal is to test my theory and supporting hypotheses by analyzing attempts at higher office across two different political ambition levels: presidential and senatorial. First, I compare the election results for 57 ambitious candidates from either the House or Senate that made presidential bids between 1972 and 2008 (N=57). For the aforementioned reasons, this list does not include former members of either the House or Senate nor any former or current governors. In addition, these data comprise only officially declared candidates and dismiss individuals that only formed presidential exploratory committees before dropping out. This is a necessary precursor to ensure comparisons are only made amongst candidates with full-fledged presidential bids. Fortunately, there is still considerable variability across the data even with these parameters. Some candidates withdrew quickly from the presidential race after failing to gain any traction while others engaged in lengthy nomination battles, while a select few even went on to become their party's eventual nominee. I then replicate this approach to study how representatives seeking to become senators fared during the same time period from 1972 to 2008 (N=139).

To test my hypotheses, this approach investigates the public's reaction to progressive ambition by comparing each candidate's share of the two-party vote percentage across two election cycles. Here, I juxtapose results from the candidates' previous election, also referred to as  $t-1$ , with that of the first election results after running for higher office, called  $t$ . Since time  $t-1$  signifies the last election results prior to the display of ambition, this could range anywhere from two to six years ago depending upon which chamber the member of Congress resides in. Time  $t$  represents the first

election results after their presidential bid. This year varies based on the individual candidate. For example, time  $t$  for representatives is always two years later. However, time  $t$  for senators could be anywhere from zero to six years depending upon at what time the presidential election falls within their staggered senate term. Hence, the candidate's two-party vote share is my dependent variable.

In addition, times  $t+1$  and  $t+2$  were given careful consideration as a way of identifying any patterns that might trend over time. However, I elected not to compare additional time periods given the difficulty they pose with respect to exogenous variables. That is, should a directional correlation be established, it becomes increasingly problematic to cite ambition as the primary source behind electoral changes as time mounts. A much more likely scenario is that any potential long-term trends are merely indicative of a short-term decline at time  $t$  which then erodes over time. For now, any long-term trends are purposely ignored in order to establish a clear picture of progressive ambition's immediate electoral impact.

There is also a major benefit to using the share of two-party vote percentage over other measures as the primary dependent variable. Since we cannot establish retrospectively whether a vote for a third party candidate is an indictment against the incumbent or merely a vote against the two-party establishment, the two-party vote share eliminates third party votes from the equation by coming up with an aggregate vote share solely between the two major parties. Thus, any concerns over how third party candidates might potentially skew the findings are mitigated. This creates a cleaner measure for quantitative purposes.

### **Bivariate Analyses**

Out of the 57 congressmen seeking the presidency between 1972 and 2008, only 35 permit drawing comparisons between the previous and first election after displaying ambition. The other twenty-two cases are omitted due to the candidates failing to seek re-election at time  $t$  for various reasons. For example, seventeen of those twenty-two candidates either retired or were defeated during the primary. Two others, Senator Bob Dole (1996) and Representative Dick Gephardt (2004) resigned to focus on the presidential campaign. The 2008 election provides the remaining exceptions as Barack Obama became the only ambitious candidate to actually win his presidential bid, while Joe Biden resigned to serve as Vice President and Hillary Clinton resigned to become Secretary of State.

Table 3.1 illustrates the change in two-party vote percentage between ambitious and non-ambitious candidates at both the presidential and senatorial level. Here, a simple overall average is computed based on vote share changes for candidates seeking higher office. Clearly, these preliminary results offer compelling evidence supporting the hypotheses that the public reacts negatively towards political ambition. At the presidential level, 77 percent of ambitious candidates lost vote share compared to their non-ambitious peers up for re-election that lost just 44 percent of the time. Similarly, 87 percent of senate hopefuls lost vote share relative to their non-ambitious peers who again lost vote share only 44 percent of the time between election cycles.

**Table 3.1: Two-Party Vote Share for Ambitious vs. Non-Ambitious Candidates (Direction)**

Presidential Level (1972-2008)					
	Ambitious			Non-Ambitious	
	<u>%</u>	<u>Obs</u>		<u>%</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Lost	77.1	27	Lost	44.3	618
Gained	22.9	8	Gained	55.7	776
Total	100.0	35	Total	100.0	1394
Senatorial Level (1972-2008)					
	Ambitious			Non-Ambitious	
	<u>%</u>	<u>Obs</u>		<u>%</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Lost	87.2	129	Lost	44.7	191
Gained	12.8	19	Gained	55.3	236
Total	100.0	148	Total	100.0	427

Source: All data compiled by author using the Almanac of American Politics.

Table 3.2 then juxtaposes the average deltas between ambitious and non-ambitious candidates. At both levels of political office, ambitious candidates lose vote share, on average, while their non-ambitious colleagues slightly gain vote share across the two time periods. Former presidential candidates lost roughly 3% of their vote share from time  $t-1$  to time  $t$ . This negative effect is even more pronounced at the senatorial level. Senate aspirants lost, on average, 13% of their vote share in seeking higher office. In contrast, non-ambitious peers up for re-election generally increased their vote share by one percent.

**Table 3.2: Two-Party Vote Share for Ambitious vs. Non-Ambitious Candidates (Magnitude)**


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Presidential Level (1972-2008)		
	<u>Mean (%)</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Ambitious	-3.37	35
Non-Ambitious	0.9	1391
Senatorial Level (1972-2008)		
	<u>Mean (%)</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Ambitious	-13.3	148
Non-Ambitious	1.1	427

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Source: All data compiled by author using the Almanac of American Politics.

The intensity of the magnitude across the two political levels is also noteworthy. Perhaps ambitious representatives lose more because they accumulate higher margins to begin with. For example, we know the incumbency advantage is at its pinnacle in the U.S. House. House incumbents enjoy over a 90% success rate for re-election because they often face such weak challengers (Hinckley 1980). Baseball serves as a perfect analogy to illustrate my point. Elite prospects typically have no statistical trouble down in A or AA minor leagues but often struggle once they first reach center stage and face stiffer competition in the major leagues. Similarly, House incumbents can sustain extremely high vote share totals while facing weak challengers, only to struggle against quality challengers that senate races usually attract. Thus, senate aspirants could be losing more because of the level of competition faced; whereas, senate candidates running for president generally are accustomed to facing quality challengers – causing tighter margins from the outset.

Although these preliminary findings strongly support my assertion that the public reacts negatively towards politicians displaying progressive ambition, it is far too early to conclude this loss in vote share can be primarily attributed to political ambition.

Ambition could very well masquerade other equally important factors. By that, ambition could conceivably have no real causal effect on the public's voting behavior due to the presence of a more viable, unforeseen variable. Four factors are of chief concern: partisan tides, tenure, political experience and campaign spending.

For example, one might plausibly expect Republicans will see the same change in their two-party vote share as Democrats when averaged over time. Granted, some variation between the two parties could exist for certain elections when the political climate drastically changes. Certainly, ambitious Republicans in 1994 could have been regarded more favorably than their Democratic counterparts while ambitious Democrats could have received higher candidate evaluations by the public in 2008 than did Republicans. Although, partisan tides do not have to be longstanding necessarily and can quickly change. The odds of winning for ambitious Republicans were not good in 2008 yet ambitious Democrats faced the same difficulties just two years later in 2010. Thus, political power has a way of evening out so we should expect any Republican gains in 1992 to be offset later by Democratic headway such as in 2008.

A second factor that could explain why candidates were overwhelming dealt a loss in vote share running for higher office pertains to their length of service.

Specifically, a candidate's tenure could play a part in their election returns. First term incumbents are much more electorally vulnerable than are their more seasoned

congressional peers. Decades of research devoted to the concept of an incumbency advantage have reached the same succinct conclusion: incumbents rarely lose (Erickson 1971; Mayhew 1974; Cover 1977; Ferejohn 1977; Born 1979; Alford and Hibbing 1981; Gelman and King 1990; Cox and Katz 1996; Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart 2000). Conventional wisdom regarding incumbents is they don't lose largely because they are the beneficiaries of such advantages like: name recognition, deep war chests, weak challengers and credit-claiming.

Yet, incumbents are not immortal. They are most vulnerable, aside from scandal, during their first re-election. Thus, it is possible many ambitious candidates struggled because of their lack of tenure before seeking higher office. Of course, each term's significance is weighted differently depending upon the chamber of residence. In practice, a first-term senator should be less vulnerable than a first-term representative since his term equates to being in office three times as long. By the same token, a seven-term representative should be less vulnerable than a freshman representative. In other words, freshman congressmen and congresswomen should be more likely to lose vote share when running for higher office in comparison to their more entrenched colleagues.

**Table 3.3: Two-Party Vote Changes for Ambitious Candidates Based on Tenure**

<u>Political Class</u>	<u>Years in Office</u>	<u>Mean (%)</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Presidential	2-6	-1.1	6
	6+	-3.7	29
Senatorial	2	-3.7	11
	2+	-14.0	137

However, Table 3.3 finds the exact opposite to be true. The length of service is dichotomized into two categories for both levels. Since candidates are most vulnerable in their first re-election attempt, the line of demarcation is set at two years for the senatorial level and six years for presidential level. When split accordingly, freshmen candidates do not suffer a larger decline in their percentages. In fact, the results indicate entrenched candidates with tenure actually lost *more* than their less seasoned but equally ambitious peers. In short, these data effectively debunk the number of years in office as a plausible alternative behind why ambitious candidates suffered a loss in vote share after seeking higher office. In order to be considered a factor, one would expect a greater loss in vote share for ambitious freshmen than their more entrenched peers; but in actuality, Table 3.3 finds the opposite effect. Ambitious, tenured candidates suffered a greater loss in vote share.

The remaining two possibilities deal with the issue of challenger quality. Scholars perpetually contend congressional elections have been marked by incumbents facing a dearth of quality challengers (Erickson 1971; Mayhew 1974; Ferejohn 1977; Fiorina 1977; Born 1979; Hinckley 1980; Mann and Wolfinger 1980; Jacobson 1980, 1981). This body of literature has primarily relied on two key indicators: political experience and campaign expenditures. Most define political experience as a dichotomy of whether a candidate has ever previously held elected office of any kind (Jacobson 1981, 1989; Bianco 1984; Born 1986; Abramowitz 1988). If the answer is yes, then the candidate is considered a quality challenger. Elected office as a prerequisite serves as a filter for identifying candidates that have enjoyed previous success managing a campaign,

staff, time and resources – thereby obtaining invaluable experience solidifying their status as formidable opposition.

The initial obstacle challengers must overcome is name recognition. People are often reluctant to vote for someone they know very little about (Mann and Wolfinger 1980; Abramowitz 1980; Westlye 1983). Beyond that, incumbents exacerbate challengers' chances by having resources at their disposal worth hundreds of thousands of dollars annually (Cover 1977; Perdue 1977). What factors then help determine whether incumbents will face a strong or weak challenger? Several theories have offered insight. Jacobson and Kernell (1983) posit national conditions help shape party expectations while Bond (1985) argues local political forces in conjunction with national standing have the biggest impact.

Most studies, however, have focused on the role campaign spending plays in determining electoral outcomes. This measurement is correlated with political experience. Challengers with prior political experience typically raise more money and know how to spend it than their inexperienced peers. Jacobson (1978) found the key is not necessarily how much the incumbent spent but rather how much money the challenger spent. He found using standard OLS regressions that any increase in spending by both candidates favors the challenger. Put more succinctly, incumbent spending matters little; challenger spending matters a lot (Ansolabehere 1994).

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 requires all candidates spending more than \$5000 to file a detailed report as to how they allocated funds. Most studies

since have relied on these campaign expenditures reported to the FEC since 1972.

Unfortunately, the relationship between campaign expenditures and quality challengers is extremely difficult to measure for several reasons. One, the variable's nature does not permit it to be expressed as a linear function. Second, Jacobson readily admits OLS campaign spending models suffer from endogeneity.<sup>8</sup> That is, they underestimate the effect of spending by incumbents and overestimate the effect challenger spending has. The solution for many (Bond 1985; Jacobson 1990; Erickson 1998) has been to take the log of total expenditures in order to account for diminishing returns.<sup>9</sup>

To address the issue of challenger quality, Table 3.4 indicates the frequency distribution for how often ambitious candidates faced quality challengers with respect to political experience. The purpose is to determine whether these ambitious candidates seeking higher office attract high quality challengers more frequently than non-ambitious candidates seeking re-election. If so, then challenger quality could explain the higher losses in two-party vote share by the higher office seekers. That is, perhaps astute challengers recognize the risks involved with seeking higher office and view progressive ambition as a sign of vulnerability. As such, one might expect challengers should be more inclined to run against susceptible ambitious candidates.

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<sup>8</sup> Endogenous variables when treated as explanatory variables are correlated with the error term (Johnston 1972).

<sup>9</sup> Note: an adjustment must be made for candidates that do not meet the reporting minimum of \$5000 since the log of zero is undefined.

**Table 3.4: Challenger Quality - Ambitious vs. Non-Ambitious Candidates**

Presidential Level (1972-2008)					
	<i>Ambitious</i>		<i>Non-Ambitious</i>		
	<u>Freq</u>	<u>Obs</u>		<u>Freq</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Quality:	31.9	22	Quality:	18.2	408
Non-Quality:	68.1	48	Non-Quality:	81.8	1831
Total:	100.0	35	Total:	100.0	2239

  

Senatorial Level (1972-2008)					
	<i>Ambitious</i>		<i>Non-Ambitious</i>		
	<u>Freq</u>	<u>Obs</u>		<u>Freq</u>	<u>Obs</u>
Quality:	47.3	130	Quality:	47.1	280
Non-Quality:	52.7	145	Non-Quality:	52.9	315
Total:	100.0	275	Total:	100.0	595

Note: Quality challenger defined as opponent has elected office experience.  
 Presidential level includes all non-ambitious only for years needed.  
 Source: All data compiled by author using the Almanac of American Politics and Congressional Biographical Directory.

However, the results are somewhat mixed. At the presidential level, ambitious candidates attracted almost 14 percent more quality challengers than their non-ambitious counterparts. Yet, ambitious senate hopefuls attracted a virtually identical percentage of quality challengers relative to their peers seeking re-election. Since neither case exceeds 50 percent, it seems unlikely to conclude ambitious candidates naturally attract a higher percentage of quality challengers thereby reducing their two-party vote share across the two elections.

Finally, Table 3.5 reveals the actual difference in means scores for ambitious versus non-ambitious candidates.

**Table 3.5: Difference in Means Test Results – Ambitious vs. Non-Ambitious Candidates**

Presidential Level (1972-2008)						
<u>Variable</u>	<u>Obs</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Err.</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>P</u>	
Two-Party Vote	2308	0.01	0.01	0.86	.19	
Party ID	2308	0.11	0.06	1.86	.03	
Tenure	2308	-3.98	0.95	-4.86	.99	
Experience	2308	-0.14	0.48	-2.87	.99	
Expenditures	2248	0.01	0.27	0.39	.35	

  

Senatorial Level (1972-2008)						
<u>Variable</u>	<u>Obs</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Err.</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>P</u>	
Two-Party Vote	871	0.02	0.01	2.55	.01	
Party ID	871	-0.08	0.04	-2.34	.99	
Tenure	871	3.33	0.57	5.82	.00	
Experience	871	-0.00	0.04	-0.08	.53	
Expenditures	801	0.07	0.02	4.17	.00	

One-tailed test where  $P = \Pr(T > t)$

The difference in means of the four variables of concern is now expressed using a one-tailed test given the negative directionality of my central hypothesis. In this case, the independent variable, type or a candidate's status as an ambitious or non-ambitious politician, serves as the logical cut point separating the two groups. The null hypothesis in this case is that ambitious candidates are not more likely to lose votes than their non-ambitious peers. Since the p-values are less than .05, we can reject the null hypothesis for party identification at the presidential level and two-party vote, tenure and expenditures at the senatorial level. That is, the means of the two groups for these respective variables are in fact statistically different from each other.

## **Multivariate Analyses**

Although compelling, these bivariate findings are insufficient without being coupled with a more rigorous statistical test. Therefore, I now proceed to conduct multivariate analyses in an effort to dismiss political ambition as a spurious factor with respect to candidate's two-party vote share. To do so in the appropriate manner, I create a cross-sectional time series data set, also known as panel data. The advantage of this approach is that I am able to examine multiple observations for candidates over time. This is an especially useful technique considering the panel data set is unbalanced. For example, an ambitious politician may only run once, necessitating a comparison between just two elections; however, a non-ambitious politician up for re-election may have numerous observations over the thirty-six year time period. By assigning a case identification number to each candidate, I am able to create panels. Hence, this approach effectively permits analyzing all ambitious and non-ambitious candidates' changes in vote share from time  $t-1$  to time  $t$ , irrespective of their frequency, over a span of thirty six years using an OLS regression with fixed effects.<sup>10</sup>

I use fixed effects as opposed to random effects for a couple reasons. One big advantage fixed effects offer is the ability to control for all stable characteristics of the candidates in the study, thereby greatly reducing concerns over bias. Since it is unrealistic to control for every potential factor affecting ambition, fixed effects helps account for any differences across candidates that might impact my dependent variable. Hence, the use of fixed effects removes the effect of time-invariant characteristics in

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<sup>10</sup> To determine the appropriate model, I ran a Hausman Test which strongly advocated using fixed effects.

order to determine the independent variable's net effect. Also, fixed effects models are less restrictive than random effects models. Fixed effects are captured in this model by adding yearly election dummies, omitting one election year, causing any effect to be picked up by the constant term.

Thus, I test the negative reaction hypothesis by specifying the following multivariate model in Table 3.6:

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Two-Party Vote} = f(\textit{Type} + \textit{Tenure} + \textit{Party Identification} + \\ \textit{Political Experience} + \textit{Campaign Spending} + \textit{Fixed Effects}) \end{aligned}$$

where

*Two-Party Vote* = candidate's two party-vote share percentage;

*Type* = candidate's current status as ambitious or non-ambitious politician in terms of seeking higher office (coded dichotomously);

*Party Identification* = candidate's party affiliation (coded dichotomously);

*Political Experience* = opponent has held previous elected office (coded dichotomously)

*Campaign Spending* = candidate's total campaign expenditures<sup>11</sup> (coded as a ratio relative to opponent); and

*Fixed Effects* = controls for unobserved, time-invariant factors.

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<sup>11</sup> In order to adjust for inflation, I also use the Consumer Price Indexes (CPI) conversion factor to transform campaign expenditures reported by the FEC into constant (2009) dollars. Otherwise, the data would carry unequal weight across time.

**Table 3.6: Cross-Sectional Time Series Progressive Ambition Model (OLS Estimates with Fixed Effects)**

	<u>Presidential</u>	<u>Senatorial</u>
Type	-0.02** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Party ID	-0.03*** (0.00)	-0.03*** (0.01)
Tenure	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Experience	-0.05*** (0.00)	-0.05*** (0.01)
Expenditures	0.26*** (0.01)	0.30*** (0.02)
Constant	0.45*** (0.01)	0.42*** (0.02)
Observations	2248	801
Prob > chi2	0.00	0.00
Rho	0.35	0.21
R-squared: within	0.30	0.46
R-squared: between	0.55	0.52
R-squared: overall	0.45	0.49

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test since assuming negative directionality. I include, but do not report, yearly dummies for election years.  
 $p < .1 = *$ ;  $p < .05 = **$ ;  $p < .01 = ***$

In this model, time series cross-sectional data represent the average effect progressive ambition has on candidate's two-party vote share when progressive ambition varies across time and between candidates by one unit. Most importantly, Table 3.6 reports a statistically significant relationship between a candidate's two-party vote share and running for higher office. That is, a candidate's change in status from non-ambitious to ambitious results in a -0.02 unit decrease holding all the other variables constant.

Since the response variable is the candidate's two-party vote, this equates to a two percent loss in vote share. This statistically significant result directly supports my hypothesis of a negative reaction by the public. Unfortunately, there is no similar statistically significant relationship found at the senatorial level. The term 'rho' is known as the intraclass correlation. As such, 35 percent of the variance is due to differences across the panels at the presidential level but just 21 percent of the variance across the panels at the senatorial level.

### **Implications**

Overall, both bivariate and multivariate analyses of panel data for actual candidates demonstrating progressive ambition yield similar conclusions. Bivariate analyses offer strong support for my first hypothesis stating the public largely reacts negatively toward ambitious politicians. In this study from 1972 to 2008, 77 percent of ambitious candidates lost vote share at the presidential level while 87 percent of ambitious candidates lost vote share at the senatorial level. In contrast, their non-ambitious peers up for re-election only lost vote share approximately 44 percent of the time at both levels. Hence, progressively ambitious politicians lost vote share, at least, 30 percent more often than their static peers. Moreover, the same story remains the same with respect to the effect's magnitude. Presidential aspirants lose roughly three percent of their vote share from time  $t-1$  to time  $t$  while senate hopefuls witness a decline in vote share by approximately 13 percent upon seeking higher office. Conversely, their non-ambitious colleagues consistently gained one percent of the vote share across election cycles at both levels.

Multivariate analyses largely confirm these findings. Table 3.6 reports a statistically significant relationship between a candidate's two-party vote share and running for higher office. Specifically, a one-unit change in status by a candidate from non-ambitious to ambitious produces a loss in vote share by -0.02 or two percent. Albeit a relatively small margin on the surface, it is important to stress that just two percent is enough to change the political landscape greatly. For example, just a one percent shift in vote share would have changed the 2010 election outcome of two U.S. Senate races and thirteen U.S. House races. These numbers would be even higher if we consider the historical average loss of ambitious candidates in this study at around three percent. However, there is no similar statistically significant relationship found at the senatorial level. As for the control variables, the model indicates a statistically significant influence for party identification, political experience and expenditures relative to candidate's two-party vote share with a 99 percent level of confidence. Each of these controls could then, at least in part, contribute to the stark contrast in vote share fluctuations amongst ambitious and non-ambitious candidates that is transparent throughout the other tables.

In sum, this particular approach has served to improve our understanding of the public's sentiment towards ambitious politicians. However, this method is not without limitations. One potential complication stems from the results being inherently driven by "loser's bias." That is, I am testing only losers at the presidential level. Successful senators or representatives must risk their status as "winners" in their quest for higher office. Since all of the observable ambitious candidates ultimately failed in their presidential bid, their image could have been tarnished going forward at time  $t$ .

There are two ways to alleviate this concern. First, voters are historically inattentive. However, their political awareness is more likely to increase when their own representative or senator runs for president. So, when an ambitious candidate loses the presidential bid, voters in his or her district are now cognizant of the fact their member of Congress wanted, and may still desire, to leave them and is too ambitious for his or her own proverbial britches. Thus, it may not be a matter of a loser's bias. Rather, voters are simply more attuned to their own representative's ambition, and they do not like it. As a consequence, their current political office becomes tainted because the public now perceives it as a fall-back option.

Second, any potential bias is likely more pronounced for candidates that made deep presidential runs and less intense for those that prudently resigned from the race early on. However, senatorial aspirants as "winners" actually lost a much greater percentage of their vote share than presidential hopefuls did as "losers." Regardless, this potential limitation is difficult to account for using post-hoc election data. One solution is to utilize a different methodological approach. Therefore, chapter four takes losers out of the equation via an experimental design.

Another limitation centers on the methodology employed. While the inter-election vote share loss is easily identifiable, the rationale behind the decline is not. Pinpointing the source of public animosity towards ambition is extremely difficult when analyzing post-hoc electoral data. For example, voters could just be turned off by political ambition in general. Or perhaps there are specific traits associated with ambition, such as self-interest or trust, which sparks voter resentment toward candidates.

As a result, another methodological approach is needed. Thus, I strive to delve into the psyche of voters by asking more specific questions designed to better understand their true attitudes and perceptions toward progressive ambition.

### **Chapter Summary**

The central purpose of this chapter is to determine how the public actually votes for real candidates displaying progressive ambition. Thus, I track two-party vote shares for ambitious politicians both at the presidential level and senatorial level from 1972 to 2008. My aim has been to identify a pattern across both political classes in order to strengthen internal validity and draw inferences about how the public perceives political ambition.

In choosing these two high-profile offices, I also restrict the data exclusively to current members of Congress and thereby omitting many more potential cases involving former members and current governors. My justification is two-fold. First, current congressmen must risk their current office and thereby stand to lose something in choosing to run for higher office. Conversely, former members have virtually nothing to lose by running because they are already out of political office. Since many state governorships have term limits, governors too often only run out of necessity near the end of their term. Second, governors also have different functional abilities as executives rather than legislators that could be either beneficial or detrimental depending upon the circumstances. Moreover, the public has different expectations for each job which presents problems theoretically. Hence, former congressmen and governors along with current governors are omitted in order to ensure the sample only includes public

evaluations of candidates with similar institutional capabilities that collectively share the same risk in exhibiting progressive ambition.

The 1972 election provides the perfect starting point because that was the first election in which presidential candidates were truly selected by the people via direct primaries in the wake of institutional reforms. Bivariate analyses convincingly produce a negative correlation between political ambition and the public based on changes in two-party vote share. In comparing election results before and after seeking higher office, ambitious candidates consistently lose vote share across both presidential and senatorial levels. On average, 77 percent of ambitious candidates lose vote share after running for president while 87 percent of ambitious candidates lose vote share running for senate while their non-ambitious peers up for re-election only lose vote share 44 percent of the time at both levels. In terms of magnitude, ambitious candidates lose on average three percent of their vote share at the presidential level and 13 percent of their vote share at the senatorial level while their non-ambitious peers actually gain vote share by one percent across both levels. Together, these data offer strong support to my theory and hypotheses that the public reacts negatively towards progressive ambition.

The more rigorous multivariate analyses only reinforce these findings. An OLS estimate with fixed effects reveals a statistically significant relationship between a candidate's two-party vote share and status as ambitious versus non-ambitious at the presidential level. Yet, no statistical significance is found at the senatorial level. However, three of the four control variables: party identification, political experience and expenditures are shown to be statistically significant.

While this approach offers convincing evidence supporting my negative reaction hypothesis, it does have limitations. One limitation is the inability to account for a “loser’s bias” at the presidential level, post-hoc. Another limitation stems from restrictions inherently imposed on post-hoc electoral data. While the inter-election loss in vote share is strongly evident thanks to bivariate analyses, the rationale behind the change is not. Consequently, the next chapter uses a different methodological approach, experimental design, to ask more specific questions about public attitudes and perceptions concerning progressive ambition.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – EXPERIMENTAL CANDIDATE ANALYSES**

As I alluded to in the introduction, my primary method for understanding the public's perception of progressive ambition involves conducting an experiment. Due to the complexity experiments often entail, I begin this chapter with a road map to help make the literary navigation more seamless. First, I demonstrate how experimental research recently has become a powerful analytical approach for explaining voting behavior. This constitutes defining what exactly an experiment is while recognizing its primary goals and concerns; I also show why a single experiment is the best modus operandi for performing analyses on the relationship between progressive ambition and candidate evaluation along with a sound rationale for using students and jury pool subjects as samples.

Second, the basic research design behind the experiment is then discussed at length. I discuss not only the intent of the vignette but also the rationale for having three treatments producing a total of five different survey forms. Subsequently, all variables are explained and operationalized. Third, to assess how different portrayals of candidates vary the 'ambition condition,' I undertake a battery of bivariate and multivariate analyses to determine how perceived ambition affects candidate evaluation. The results for both samples of the experiment are presented side-by-side for comparative purposes. The findings are discussed at length and additional efforts are made to answer some lingering questions. Finally, I end by noting a difference between "potential" and "certain" progressive ambition in the eyes of the public.

## **Why Experiments**

Over the last decade, experiments have become increasingly popular with both political scientists and journals, often being cited even more frequently than traditional methods in some cases (Druckman et al. 2006; Kam et al. 2007; McDermott 2002; Morton and Williams 2010; Rugeley and Murray 2011). Experimental research is defined as a quantitative method designed to determine causation. The central purpose is to alter some particular aspect to see how that affects something else; or more succinctly, experiments help uncover the effects of presumed causes. The primary advantage of using experiments is the strength in which a causal relationship can be inferred. Equally important, experiments enable scholars to control precisely the manipulation of defined variables by specifying the exact conditions to which they apply.

In this context, I contend experiments are especially pertinent for my dissertation considering the object at hand. Since my aim is to better understand how the public reacts to the act of progressive ambition, some may argue a large N survey would be the ideal method. However, this approach is problematic for a couple of reasons. First, the existing ANES (American National Election Studies) data furnishes no direct line of question(s) asking respondents about their feelings toward both political ambition in a general sense, or individual candidates and their bids for that matter.<sup>12</sup> Second, constructing an equivalent survey would be a supremely arduous project for just one person to undertake given the obvious time and financial constraints. Instead, an

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<sup>12</sup> ANES does provide responses to some prospective presidential candidates; however, their lists vary and are not all-encompassing.

experiment allows one to efficiently hone in and infer any transparent causation between progressive ambition and candidate evaluation.

Two concepts are of paramount concern when using experimental studies: reliability and validity. A reliable experiment always produces the same results, no matter when conducted. The fundamental goal of all experimental research is to produce results yielding both internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to the extent to which we can derive that the independent variable(s) produce an observable effect on the dependent variable (Christensen 2007). This process is not always smooth. One of the biggest concerns for maintaining internal validity is safeguarding against other variables that could potentially undermine the results. This is achieved primarily by using controls variables.<sup>13</sup> Common threats to internal validity include: the timing of the survey, maturation, and most notably selection bias. Conversely, external validity is where results from a sample study can be generalized to the larger population with confidence.

While experimental designs do offer an unprecedented amount of control with respect to internal validity, the “Achilles heel” for most experimentalists has always been external validity (Kam et al. 2007). The main concern has been over the ability to generalize these studies to the entire population.<sup>14</sup> According to two different studies conducted by Sears (1986) and Kam et al. (2007), over 70% of experimental studies rely on undergraduate students. Students are primarily used because they are a convenient

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<sup>13</sup> The most common variables controlled for in the American field include: party identification, age, gender, race, and socio-economic status. As such, I incorporate several of these in my experimental models.

<sup>14</sup> As Kam et al. (2007) note, no experimental study can claim to successfully generalize to all populations across space and time. Researchers must carefully select the population to which generalizations are both relevant and appropriate.

and cost effective option. The conglomeration of diversity found on a campus creates an ideally suited environment to perform experimental research. Using students as the principle subject of an investigation is not only a common practice but it is also highly appropriate under certain pretenses, such as when they: provide a more critical test of the hypothesis, are the population of interest, or the focus is on internal validity (Kam et al. 2007).

However, there are limitations for relying on student samples. Students have “less-crystallized social and political attitudes;” and more importantly, they have not accumulated the same number and type of life experiences found in a more adult sample (Sears 1986; Miller and Krosnick 2000). Given these scholars’ concerns over the ability of student samples to fully represent the adult population, I conduct the same experiment twice - with an additional sample. This second sample should help alleviate any concerns potential critics may have over internal and/or external validity.

Fortunately, Rugeley and Murray (2011) recently propose jury pools as a viable alternative source of experimental subjects. Jury pools are comprised of randomly selected citizens that have been summoned by law to appear for jury duty. According to them, prospective jurors as subjects present four additional advantages beyond merely the expansion of external validity: great similarity to desirable adult population, low cost, high response rates and a nearly unlimited sample size. Lastly, jury pool subjects also provide a probability sample, where the probability that an individual will be in the sample is known. Of course, jury pools are not without their own limitations. The biggest hurdle researchers likely have to overcome is gaining consent and cooperation

from the judges themselves.<sup>15</sup> In short, I perform the same experiment twice – first with undergraduate students and then with jury pool subjects to improve both the internal and external validity of my impending findings.

### **Data & Methods**

In the first sample, data are collected from a voluntary three-page pencil and paper survey presented to undergraduate students across several sections of the same introductory political science course at Texas Tech University. In total, the sample comprises 257 observations (N=257) and all respondents were randomly assigned a manipulation. This course is a requirement for all prospective university graduates, so the participants represent a broad sample of the entire student body. In terms of demographics, forty-seven percent of the participants are male while fifty-three percent are female. Seventy-five percent report their race as white, fifteen percent report their race as Hispanic, six percent report as African American, three percent report as Asian with two percent reporting it as other.

In the second sample, jury pool subjects summoned to the local county courthouse were given the same survey to complete while waiting further instructions from the judge. The total number of observations was slightly less for this sample (N = 181). This is mainly due to a lower response rate of 83 percent (181 out of 219) but that figure is still exceedingly high for a survey based study.<sup>16</sup> In terms of demographics, 50 percent

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<sup>15</sup> The author gained access by virtue of being part of a larger study involving other political science professors at Texas Tech University that received permission for our studies to be administered.

<sup>16</sup> Typical telephone survey response rate is 48%. Kam et al. (2007) report student response rates range between 50 to 90%.

of the participants classify themselves as male while 48 percent say are female.<sup>17</sup> 67 percent report their race as White, 27 percent report their race as Hispanic, two percent report it to be African American, two percent report as Asian with two percent reporting it as other.

Respondents begin by reading a brief vignette about a hypothetical U.S. House of Representative named John Harper seeking higher office in the U.S. Senate. Although short, the vignette is power-packed and supplies participants with ample background information on the candidate. For example, the vignette states Harper: is widely respected, has many achievements, has important committee service, and is responsible for leading and sponsoring recent key legislation. Furthermore, the vignette also references his previous occupation, marital status and how both sides of the political aisle agree that he is very articulate and possesses strong leadership qualities. All of this information is designed to convey to the respondents that Congressman Harper is a quality candidate on the merits.

The experiment addresses two different concepts yielding three total treatments spread out over five possible versions (Forms A – E). While it may sound intimidating, my approach is both simplistic and straightforward. The first study is a classic two-group experimental design with only one treatment. In Form A, students are simply told all the aforementioned background information and that Harper is running for the U.S. Senate. In Form B, students are informed the same facts but, in addition, are told Harper is viewed by many as an early presidential contender and could potentially seek his party's

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<sup>17</sup> A few respondents (2%) elected not to disclose their gender.

nomination for president two years from now. The participants are then asked to answer a series of questions addressing: their perceptions of the candidate, other feelings towards the candidate, and finally general demographics.

This classic control portion of the experiment serves as the focal point for testing my first two hypotheses. Here, my intent is to capture any noticeable change in the public's attitude based on how they answer upon learning the hypothetical ambitious candidate could potentially turn around and leverage the prospective senate office as a stepping stone to achieve even greater political heights (see Appendix A, pg. 131).

The remaining three forms assess a slightly different angle of political ambition in the second study. Now, two treatments are needed instead of one based on slight modifications to two key pieces of information. First, not only are respondents informed the hypothetical politician has already won the prospective senate seat but he now has definitively made clear his aspirations for the presidency. This subtle change creates the opportunity to juxtapose trends in voting behavior towards "*potential*" ambition versus "*certain*" ambition. This is an especially important theoretical distinction that will be a focal point throughout the remainder of this chapter. Second, the main treatment now becomes whether Congressman Harper will attempt this progressive ambition aggressively in just a two year time frame or if he adopts a more conservative, wait-your-turn approach that takes twenty years. Here, I'm testing to see if any temporal difference for when candidates run elicit different reactions by the public. Logically, aggressively running for higher office should demonstrate a stronger display of progressive ambition than the more conservative approach. But does this assumption have any bearing on the

effect by possibly causing the public to perceive some ambitious politicians more favorably than others? These three surveys aim to provide answers (See Appendix A, pg. 132).

Since the previous chapter focused on identifying the direction and magnitude of the public's reaction to ambition, this chapter aims to dig deeper in order to address the causal explanation behind why the public dislikes ambitious politicians. While we can easily see the loss in a candidate's two-party vote share across elections, the actual motive behind why fewer voters voted for a particular candidate upon displaying progressive ambition is much less obvious. I argued earlier that ambitious candidates must be concerned about changing voter expectations and also how they are perceived according to four key personality traits: leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest. Although progressive ambition should promote a candidate's leadership qualities in a positive manner, I speculate the remaining three traits are viewed negatively with respect to their evaluation. Research suggests there is a negativity bias where positive and negative traits do not cancel each other out; instead, the negative trait resonates more strongly. Therefore, this experiment contains a series of seven attitudinal measures designed to capture not only how the public generally feels about a candidate but especially with respect to: reliability, trust and self-interest. If the public reacts unfavorably toward ambitious candidates with respect to these three traits, then we have identified at least some of the important traits influencing their negative candidate evaluations.

## **Operationalization**

This experiment uses two primary dependent variables as depicted by respondent evaluations of the hypothetical ambitious candidate:

1. *Feeling thermometer*: the standard ANES (American National Election Studies) 100 point scale indicating respondent favorability toward the candidate. For this scale, ratings between 0 and 50 degrees indicate the participant feels unfavorably and colder toward the candidate while ratings between 50 and 100 degrees indicate the participant feels favorably and warmer toward the candidate. Accordingly, respondents select from a 0 to 10 scale with ten degrees increments.
2. *Likely Support*: a 7-point Likert scale is used to determine how likely respondents are to vote for the fictitious candidate where 1 indicates the respondent would be “very unlikely” to vote for the candidate and 7 indicates the respondent would be “very likely” to vote for the candidate.

The public’s perception towards the ambitious candidate is also measured by each participant’s 1 to 7 scale response to each of the following seven attitudinal questions:

*How well does each phrase describe Harper?*

3. *Is decent*
4. *Is moral*
5. *Makes you proud*

6. *Makes you angry*
7. *Really cares about people like you*
8. *Can be trusted by his constituents to do what is right*
9. *Puts self-interest before constituents' interests*

For each question, the responses are scored on a 7-point likert scale ranging from 1 for “not well at all” to 7 for “extremely well.”

The independent variable is the same for both portions of the experiment:

1. *Treatment*: whether or not respondents are informed about the hypothetical candidate's intent for higher office. This variable is treated dichotomously in study one for potential ambition and trichotomously in study two for certain ambition.

*where*

Study 1 - Potential Progressive Ambition:

*Form A: Control - no mention of presidential bid (coded 0).*

*Form B: Treatment – includes information about potential presidential bid (coded*

*1).*

Study 2 - Certain Progressive Ambition:

*Form C: Control – no mention of presidential bid (coded 0).*

*Form D: Treatment 1 – running for president 2 years after elected senator (coded 2).*

*Form E: Treatment 2 – running for president 20 years after elected senator (coded 1).*

This two-pronged approach allows for a data comparison of *potential* versus *certain* political ambition both individually and jointly. Visually, the two studies can be broken down as follows:

- Study 1:

Sample	Type	N
Students	Control, no ambition	49
Students	Treatment, potential ambition	65
Jury Pool	Control, no ambition	34
Jury Pool	Treatment, potential ambition	34

- Study 2:

Sample	Type	N
Students	Control, no ambition	60
Students	Treatment, certain ambition (2 yrs)	42
Students	Treatment, certain ambition (20 yrs)	41
Jury Pool	Control, no treatment	39
Jury Pool	Treatment, certain ambition (2 yrs)	36
Jury Pool	Treatment, certain ambition (20 yrs)	38

Finally, my experiment takes into account a series of controls. I start with a measure for *interpersonal trust* via a comparison of each participant’s response to two questions gauging their feelings towards the issues of trust and whether or not most

people try to be helpful. The responses are scored on a 7-point scale. The first question is scored from 1 for “can’t be too trusted” to 7 for “can be trusted.” While the second question is scored from 1 for “looking out for themselves” to 7 for “try to be helpful.” The scores for these two questions are then averaged to create a scale for modeling purposes. This scaled control is necessary because it addresses another potential explanation for the candidates’ scores. For example, if the public does not trust the candidate or views him as self-interested, that alone could be the prime reason rather than ambition. Hence, controlling for trust allows me to eliminate that possibility as a contributing factor embedded in the respondent’s scores.

When using Likert scales a common practice is to compute and report Cronbach’s alpha score. According to the general rule of thumb offered by George and Mallery (2003), the reliability of this measure is acceptable (Cronbach’s alpha = .60) for students and jury pool respondents (Cronbach’s alpha = .77).<sup>18</sup> *Gender* is coded dichotomously with 0 for female and 1 for male. *Party identification* is controlled by a 7-point scale ranging from 1 for “strong Democrat” to 4 signifying “Independent” to 7 for “strong Republican.” *Political interest* is controlled for in two ways. First, a 7-point scale for campaign interest ranging from 1 for “very uninterested” to 7 for “very interested.” Second, a 7-point scale for interest in government or public affairs is asked with scores ranging from 1 for “very uninterested” to 7 for “very interested.” These are the only other variables scaled across all of my models. The reliability of these two items is

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<sup>18</sup> Cronbach’s alpha is a reliability coefficient that normally ranges between 0 and 1. The closer Cronbach’s alpha is to 1 the greater the internal consistency of the items being scaled. For more information, see Gliem & Gliem (2003).

considered good for students (Cronbach’s alpha =.82) and just shy of excellent for jury pool subjects (Cronbach’s alpha = .89). *Race* is controlled initially by categorizing respondents onto a 6-point range from 1 for “White or Caucasian” to 6 for “other.” However, this variable is considered nominal data. Since being White does not constitute a higher value than Hispanic, this variable is subsequently recoded and measured dichotomously. *Age* is controlled for by requesting the participant’s year of birth. Lastly, the respondent’s *socio-economic-status* is controlled for by a 5-point scale with 1 representing “under \$25,000” to 4 representing “\$90,000 or more” with 5 for “decline to answer.”

**Bivariate Analyses**

In order to get a general sense of the direction of the data, I have presented the descriptive statistics for each sample in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Students**

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Undergraduate Students					
Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Thermometer	257	7.97	1.48	0	10
Support	249	4.96	1.26	1	7
Decent	257	5.26	1.21	1	7
Moral	257	5.17	1.19	1	7
Proud	256	4.65	1.22	1	7
Angry	257	1.92	1.10	1	7
Cares	255	4.35	1.20	1	7
Trustworthy	257	4.82	1.26	1	7
Self-interest	257	3.58	1.35	1	7
Gender	254	0.47	0.50	0	1
Party ID	256	4.84	1.70	1	7
Interpersonal Trust	257	3.69	1.43	1	7
Political Interest	257	3.98	1.73	1	7
Income	256	3.41	1.11	1	5
Age	256	19.59	1.11	18	45

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**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Jury Pools**


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<b>Jury Pool Subjects</b>						
Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max	
Thermometer	181	5.94	1.76	0	10	
Support	181	4.32	1.44	1	7	
Decent	169	4.69	1.26	1	7	
Moral	167	4.45	1.30	1	7	
Proud	168	4.30	1.25	1	7	
Angry	163	2.37	1.40	1	7	
Cares	169	3.98	1.35	1	7	
Trustworthy	168	4.29	1.37	1	7	
Self-interest	170	3.60	1.57	1	7	
Gender	177	0.58	0.85	0	1	
Party ID	178	4.89	1.91	1	7	
Interpersonal Trust	181	4.10	1.50	1	7	
Political Interest	180	4.64	1.82	1	7	
Income	180	2.86	1.21	1	5	
Age	179	45.20	1.21	18	71	

---

Real differences between the two samples are immediately recognizable. Jury pool subjects are more skeptical towards the hypothetical Congressman Harper than are students. I deduce this by looking at how the two primary dependent variables and most of the secondary attitudinal variables experience a decline in their respective mean scores. That is, the two main dependent variables (thermometer and support) plus five attitudinal measures (decent, moral, proud, cares and trustworthy) all receive lower scores from the jury pool sample. Only two of the attitudinal measures (angry and self-interested) receive higher scores from jury pool subjects. But intuitively, these two apparent exceptions are actually still consistent with the overall decline because they have a negative connotation which differs from all the other traits which are positive in nature. That is, those two questions asked respondents whether the candidate had made them feel angry and if they thought he was self-interested so higher scores given by jury

pool subjects for these two measures are not an indication of support but rather additional indictment against the candidate. In short, jury pool subjects react categorically more hostile towards the hypothetical ambitious candidate than do students.

Since most of my variables are classified as interval data, the mean is the most useful measure of central tendency for this experiment. Therefore, I compare differences of the means amongst variables in the five versions of the experiment utilizing a statistical procedure commonly known as a t-test. A t-test compares the means of the same variable between two groups and can either be two-tailed or one-tailed. In this instance, I use a one-tailed test due to the directional nature of my hypotheses. If you recall from chapter two, I derived two major hypotheses. One, voters react negatively towards progressively ambitious politicians using an office as a stepping stone. And two, voters are more likely to react negatively towards aggressive political ambition rather than conservative political ambition.

However, the real purpose behind the testing of hypotheses is to be able to reject null hypotheses. Null hypotheses are extremely important when empirically testing differences between treatments and the control group. If you are able to reject the null hypothesis based on the p-value, then you can say, traditionally with 95% confidence, that the results are statistically significant. Otherwise, the results could merely be the product of random chance. Here are my two hypotheses now with their respective null hypotheses (denoted as  $H_0$ ):

*H1: voters are likely to react negatively towards progressively ambitious politicians using an office as a stepping stone.*

*H<sub>0</sub>: voters do NOT react negatively towards progressively ambitious politicians using an office as a stepping stone.*

*H2: voters are more likely to react negatively towards aggressive political ambition rather than conservative political ambition.*

*H<sub>0</sub>: voters are NOT more likely to react negatively towards aggressive political ambition rather than conservative political ambition.*

Thus, the means between the treatment and controls groups for the two dependent and seven attitudinal variables are compared by way of an independent group t-test in Tables 4.3 and 4.4. This produces three different sets of t-scores and probabilities for each sample. In other words, I run the t-test between: Form A and B, Form C and D, and lastly Form C and E. Since I am predicting a negative directional effect, the p-values must be based off one of the two-sided alternatives, where  $H_a: \text{diff} > 0$  indicates the control group score is higher than the treatment. That is, respondents receiving the additional information about Congressman Harper possibly using the prospective senate office as a stepping stone for the presidency should give a less favorable candidate evaluation; conversely, participants left unaware in the control group should provide a more favorable candidate evaluation.

**Table 4.3: Difference in Means Test Results for Students**

<b>Potential Ambition</b>					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	T	P
Feeling Thermometer	114	0.04	0.14	0.14	.44
Support	114	0.41	0.24	1.70	.05
Decent	114	0.06	0.21	0.30	.38
Moral	114	0.14	0.21	0.66	.25
Proud	113	0.03	0.22	0.14	.44
Angry	114	-0.23	0.20	-1.17	.12
Cares	113	0.02	0.23	0.06	.47
Right	114	0.12	0.24	0.50	.31
Self-interest	114	-0.10	0.27	-0.37	.36
<b>Certain Ambition (2 Years)</b>					
Feeling Thermometer	102	-0.29	0.28	-1.04	.85
Support	94	-0.31	0.25	-1.24	.89
Decent	102	-0.25	0.27	-2.02	.97
Moral	102	-0.60	0.23	-2.61	.99
Proud	102	-0.12	0.24	-0.50	.69
Angry	102	0.10	0.21	0.48	.68
Cares	102	-0.41	0.24	-1.68	.95
Right	102	-0.40	0.24	-1.68	.95
Self-interest	102	0.10	0.26	0.41	.34
<b>Certain Ambition (20 Years)</b>					
Feeling Thermometer	101	-0.03	0.32	-0.10	.53
Support	93	0.10	0.26	0.39	.35
Decent	101	-0.25	0.27	-0.92	.82
Moral	101	-0.34	0.27	-1.24	.89
Proud	101	0.03	0.25	0.12	.45
Angry	101	0.15	0.24	0.65	.74
Cares	100	-0.19	0.26	-0.74	.77
Right	101	-0.37	0.25	-1.49	.93
Self-interest	101	0.14	0.27	0.52	.30

One-tailed test where  $P = \Pr(T > t)$ 

Note: estimates obtained by subtracting treatment group from control group.

**Table 4.4: Difference in Means Test Results for Jury Pools**

<b>Potential Ambition</b>					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	T	P
Feeling Thermometer	68	0.85	0.46	1.82	.03
Support	68	0.29	0.36	0.81	.20
Decent	63	0.07	0.31	0.24	.41
Moral	61	0.28	0.32	0.88	.19
Proud	62	0.47	0.32	1.47	.07
Angry	59	-0.39	0.37	-1.06	.15
Cares	61	0.73	0.35	2.10	.02
Right	61	0.48	0.35	1.36	.09
Self-interest	62	0.03	0.41	0.07	.53
<b>Certain Ambition (2 Years)</b>					
Feeling Thermometer	75	-0.28	0.33	-0.85	.80
Support	75	-0.40	0.33	-1.20	.88
Decent	70	-0.51	0.31	-1.64	.95
Moral	70	-0.42	0.33	-1.30	.90
Proud	70	-0.19	0.29	-0.63	.74
Angry	70	-0.06	0.34	-0.17	.43
Cares	70	-0.46	0.32	-1.43	.92
Right	70	-0.40	0.33	-1.19	.88
Self-interest	72	-0.58	0.36	-1.61	.06
<b>Certain Ambition (20 Years)</b>					
Feeling Thermometer	77	-0.34	0.38	-0.91	.81
Support	77	-0.34	0.32	-1.09	.86
Decent	71	-0.57	0.30	-1.91	.97
Moral	71	-0.61	0.32	-1.92	.97
Proud	72	-0.39	0.31	-1.27	.90
Angry	69	0.28	0.32	0.87	.81
Cares	72	-0.21	0.31	-0.66	.75
Right	72	-0.29	0.35	-0.95	.83
Self-interest	72	-0.75	0.33	-2.25	.01

One-tailed test where  $P = \Pr(T > t)$

Note: estimates obtained by subtracting treatment group from control group.

The substantive interpretation of the difference in means coefficients tells an interesting story. As respondents went from a state of unawareness to awareness about the candidate's aspirations, the difference in means results vary depending upon the type of ambition. With respect to potential ambition, respondents across both samples react less favorably towards the candidate potentially considering a run for president than do those left uninformed. To illustrate, respondents receiving the treatment in Table 4.3 rate the candidate less favorably for five of the seven attitudinal variables: decent, moral, proud, cares and right. In fact, the other two attitudinal variables, angry and self-interest actually only receive higher scores because they carry a negative connotation rather than a positive outlook. That is, it should be no surprise both student and jury pool respondents felt angrier and that the candidate was self-interested upon being made aware of his potential progressive ambition.

But with respect to certain ambition, the opposite occurs. Respondents across both samples rate the ambitious candidate more favorably upon learning he definitely is running for president. Moreover, there are also differences in preferences across the two samples. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 suggest students react more favorably towards aggressive, certain ambition by the candidate while jury pool subjects react more favorably towards conservative, certain ambition.

### **Multivariate Analyses**

The difference in means results provide an indication that voters do not always react in a uniform manner towards progressive ambition. As a result, I am now interested in determining how these differences affect the likelihood respondents perceive an

ambitious candidate negatively. To answer this question, I specify an ordered logit regression estimate of the public's perception of an ambitious candidate in this experiment. This type of model estimates the effects multiple independent variables have on ordinal dependent variables. In the case at hand, the ordered logit will calculate the coefficients of the log of odds for nine total dependent variables (feeling thermometer, support, decent, moral, proud, angry, cares, right, and self-interest). Aside from the two primary dependent variables, the first four emotion variables are designed to provide a general sense, or baseline, of the public's attitude towards the hypothetical candidate after reading the vignette. The last three emotion variables are far more critical to my theoretical argument because they specifically address some of the personality traits I contend cause the public to react negatively towards ambitious candidates: reliability, trust and self-interest. The model's specification also includes control variables for the respondent's: gender, party identification, race, income, age, interpersonal trust and interest in politics.

Using maximum likelihood estimation, the following set of tables report the statistical significance of the coefficients of log odds that the predictor variable has on each response variable. Hence, the interpretation for logit models is not the same as with a linear regression. With respect to "potential ambition," a one unit change from the control to the treatment group results in feeling thermometer scores decreasing by -0.38 for students and -1.01 for jury pools as shown in Table 4.5. However, only the latter relationship attains conventional levels of statistical significance. Since the feeling thermometer ratings in this survey are measured by every ten degrees, this equates to

roughly ten degrees less for jury pool respondents. On the other hand, both samples react more favorably towards the candidate with respect to “certain” ambition. That is, students and jury pool subjects actually react more favorably towards the candidate upon learning he is definitely running for higher office. However, the extent of the positive change varies between aggressive and conservative ambition. For example a one unit change from the control to treatment group for “certain” ambition two years later causes students to increase their feeling thermometer evaluation by a statistically insignificant 0.46 unit change in the log of the odds and jury pools by a statistically insignificant 0.53 unit change. On the other hand, a one unit change from the control to treatment group for “certain” ambition twenty years later only causes students to increase their feeling thermometer evaluation by a statistically insignificant 0.13 unit change in the log of the odds and a 0.44 unit change for jury pool subjects. In short, students favor “certain” aggressive ambition over “certain” conservative by a 0.33 unit increase in the log of the odds while jury pools favor the same by a 0.09 unit change.

As for the likely support variable, a one unit change from the control to treatment group causes a less favorable evaluation by a statistically significant -0.88 for students and -0.70 for jury pools respectively for “potential” ambition. Again, both samples give higher candidate evaluations for “certain” ambition. Although, this time there is disagreement over aggressive vs. conservative ambition. A one unit change from the control to treatment group for “certain” ambition two years later causes students to increase their support evaluation by a statistically significant 0.72 unit change in the log of the odds and jury pools by a statistically insignificant 0.45 unit increase in the log of

the odds. On the other hand, a one unit change from the control to treatment group for “certain” ambition twenty years later only causes students to decrease their feeling thermometer evaluation by a statistically insignificant -0.30 unit change in the log of the odds and increase by a 0.49 unit change for jury pools. Thus, students favor “certain” aggressive ambition over “certain” conservative by a 1.02 unit change in the log of the odds; conversely, jury pools actually favor “certain conservative ambition over “certain” aggressive ambition by a 0.04 unit change.

These effects on the response variable are indicative of a consistent pattern that the public could be reacting differently towards progressive ambition depending upon the context. Therefore, I try to delve in the psyche of voters by running additional logit regressions for each of the seven attitudinal variables in Tables 4.7 to 4.13. Surprisingly, the same pattern holds for six of the seven attitudinal variables as well. Both samples react less favorably to the idea of “potential” ambition and more favorably to “certain” ambition for the following variables: decent, moral, proud, angry, cares, and right. Only self-interest yields an alternative outcome but this is more likely due to problems associated with the lack of goodness of fit for that specific model. Here, jury pool respondents indicate the candidate appears more self-interested upon learning of his “certain” ambition. Hence, self-interest is the only variable to invoke a statistically significant negative response by either sample.

**Table 4.5: “Feeling Thermometer” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.38 (0.37)	0.46 (0.38)	0.13 (0.44)	-1.01** (0.55)	0.53 (0.59)	0.44 (0.47)
Gender	-0.35 (0.38)	-0.81** (0.40)	-1.15 (0.44)	-0.61 (0.66)	0.08 (0.11)	0.14 (0.31)
Party Identification	0.20** (0.10)	0.08 (0.13)	0.19 (0.15)	0.07 (0.15)	0.14 (0.12)	0.11 (0.14)
Race (White)	0.95 (0.59)	1.47 (0.58)	1.47*** (0.63)	0.42 (0.76)	0.78 (0.90)	-0.50 (0.70)
Income	0.53*** (0.19)	-0.03 (0.18)	-0.11** (0.18)	-0.35* (0.22)	0.13 (0.20)	0.18 (0.27)
Age	0.02 (0.04)	0.15 (0.12)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Interpersonal Trust	0.49*** (0.13)	0.07 (0.19)	0.39* (0.25)	0.38 (0.36)	0.10 (0.19)	0.18 (0.18)
Political Interest	0.05 (0.11)	0.32 (0.15)	-0.20 (0.18)	0.21 (0.20)	0.11 (0.18)	-0.05 (0.25)
Cut1	1.93 (1.22)	4.05 (2.36)	-2.44 (2.11)	-2.82 (2.46)	-1.08 (1.69)	-3.41 (1.42)
Cut2	4.11 (1.31)	4.77 (2.38)	-1.73 (1.98)	-2.38 (2.45)	-0.65 (1.77)	-2.70 (1.28)
Cut3	4.79 (1.35)	5.98 (2.39)	0.79 (1.96)	-1.81 (2.28)	2.70 (1.83)	-1.98 (1.41)
Cut4	6.08 (1.40)	7.62 (2.42)	1.63 (1.96)	-1.58 (2.25)	3.41 (1.85)	1.19 (1.44)
Cut5	7.70 (1.48)	9.99 (2.43)	2.83 (1.99)	-1.02 (2.29)	4.37 (1.88)	1.61 (1.44)
Cut6	10.20 (1.62)	-	4.66 (2.00)	1.52 (2.28)	6.15 (1.87)	2.18 (1.47)
Cut7	-	-	6.41 (2.05)	2.16 (2.29)	-	3.98 (1.51)
Cut8	-	-	-	3.03 (2.33)	-	-
Cut9	-	-	-	3.96 (2.38)	-	-
Observations	110	103	99	63	71	71
Prob > F	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.07

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.6: “Support” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.88*** (0.37)	0.72* (0.45)	-0.30 (0.46)	-0.70 (0.58)	0.45 (0.53)	0.49 (0.53)
Gender	-0.40 (0.38)	-1.03*** (0.41)	-0.50 (0.41)	-0.49 (0.63)	0.52*** (0.18)	0.23 (0.37)
Party	0.28*** (0.12)	0.05 (0.16)	0.03 (0.17)	-0.09 (0.22)	0.15 (0.17)	0.17 (0.20)
Race (White)	1.15* (0.79)	0.65 (0.79)	1.16* (0.86)	0.50 (0.81)	1.36 (0.55)	1.20** (0.76)
Income	0.18 (0.18)	-0.22 (0.19)	-0.09 (0.16)	-0.48** (0.26)	-0.09 (0.21)	0.03 (0.26)
Age	0.04 (0.03)	0.07 (0.11)	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.03** (0.02)
Interpersonal Trust	0.48*** (0.16)	0.27 (0.22)	0.54*** (0.19)	0.22 (0.35)	0.11 (0.22)	-0.05 (0.18)
Political Interest	-0.05 (0.10)	0.24 (0.13)	0.05 (0.16)	0.34*** (0.14)	0.11 (0.18)	-0.19 (0.18)
Cut1	0.80 (1.61)	-1.78 (2.70)	-2.79 (2.04)	-3.19 (3.16)	-0.31 (1.79)	-0.10 (1.57)
Cut2	1.11 (1.58)	-0.65 (2.51)	-0.99 (1.94)	-2.96 (3.13)	0.07 (1.70)	0.27 (1.52)
Cut3	2.23 (1.65)	-0.10 (2.46)	-0.61 (1.90)	-1.72 (3.06)	0.98 (1.69)	1.26 (1.58)
Cut4	3.62 (1.69)	2.40 (2.43)	1.72 (1.93)	0.33 (3.05)	3.21 (1.78)	3.14 (1.71)
Cut5	5.50 (1.77)	4.01 (2.43)	3.29 (1.98)	1.54 (3.05)	3.88 (1.80)	4.39 (1.79)
Cut6	7.17 (1.86)	5.44 (2.40)	5.09 (1.97)	2.77 (2.97)	5.72 (1.89)	6.22 (1.80)
Observations	110	93	91	63	71	71
Prob > F	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.10	0.06	0.05

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.7: “Decent” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.10 (0.37)	0.66** (0.40)	0.10 (0.43)	-0.13 (0.57)	0.73 (0.58)	0.61 (0.51)
Gender	-0.03 (0.38)	-0.92** (0.45)	-0.76** (0.40)	-0.66 (0.60)	0.07 (0.13)	-0.15 (0.35)
Party Identification	-0.17* (0.12)	0.11 (0.12)	0.10 (0.11)	-0.12 (0.19)	0.05 (0.15)	0.37*** (0.13)
Race (White)	1.75*** (0.61)	1.24* (0.76)	1.35** (0.64)	0.64 (0.98)	1.20** (0.62)	0.35 (0.68)
Income	0.10 (0.21)	-0.24* (0.17)	-0.40** (0.16)	-0.06 (0.27)	-0.29* (0.18)	0.00 (0.25)
Age	-0.06 (0.03)	0.12* (0.08)	0.03 (0.10)	-0.03** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)
Interpersonal Trust	0.36*** (0.16)	0.34* (0.22)	0.34** (0.19)	0.59** (0.31)	0.13 (0.20)	0.24* (0.17)
Political Interest	-0.07 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.15)	-0.10 (0.16)	0.03 (0.17)	0.01 (0.19)	-0.15 (0.24)
Cut1	-3.34 (1.74)	-5.40 (2.14)	-2.75 (2.78)	-4.80 (2.43)	-2.51 (1.64)	-1.23 (1.73)
Cut2	-2.63 (1.64)	-4.27 (1.94)	-2.03 (2.67)	-3.56 (2.05)	-1.76 (1.52)	-0.48 (1.52)
Cut3	-0.13 (1.54)	-3.14 (2.00)	-0.98 (2.61)	-2.68 (2.14)	-0.92 (1.35)	-0.00 (1.48)
Cut4	0.94 (1.54)	-1.39 (2.10)	0.40 (2.65)	-0.02 (2.19)	1.32 (1.44)	2.65 (1.52)
Cut5	3.07 (1.56)	-0.07 (2.09)	2.02 (2.63)	1.52 (2.22)	2.59 (1.52)	4.01 (1.58)
Cut6	- -	1.40 (2.10)	3.43 (2.64)	2.82 (2.24)	4.18 (1.66)	5.94 (1.81)
Observations	110	101	99	59	66	66
Prob > F	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.10	0.06	0.08

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.8: “Moral” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.53* (0.39)	1.10*** (0.40)	0.10 (0.43)	-0.33 (0.54)	0.62 (0.52)	0.71 (0.58)
Gender	-0.71 (0.39)	-0.73** (0.42)	-0.76** (0.40)	-0.38 (0.59)	-0.12 (0.10)	-0.13 (0.39)
Party	-0.07** (0.12)	0.18** (0.10)	0.10 (0.11)	-0.00 (0.16)	-0.11 (0.13)	0.13 (0.18)
Identification						
Race	0.43*** (0.86)	-0.22 (0.58)	1.35** (0.64)	0.37 (1.11)	0.88 (0.61)	0.15 (0.67)
(White)						
Income	0.34** (0.17)	-0.05 (0.17)	-0.40** (0.18)	-0.17 (0.23)	-0.22 (0.20)	0.12 (0.27)
Age	0.02 (0.06)	0.10 (0.09)	0.03 (0.10)	-0.04** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)
Interpersonal	0.41*** (0.14)	0.40** (0.23)	0.34** (0.19)	0.56** (0.31)	0.12 (0.20)	0.29* (0.23)
Trust						
Political	-0.03 (0.12)	0.10 (0.14)	-0.10 (0.16)	0.24 (0.17)	-0.09 (0.16)	-0.15 (0.23)
Interest						
Cut1	-2.80 (1.81)	-0.46 (1.95)	-2.75 (2.78)	-4.23 (2.45)	-3.88 (1.62)	-2.08 (1.61)
Cut2	-1.09 (1.66)	0.24 (1.91)	-2.03 (2.67)	-2.58 (2.17)	-2.94 (1.64)	-0.89 (1.57)
Cut3	1.19 (1.51)	0.98 (1.85)	-0.98 (2.61)	-1.50 (2.24)	-2.41 (1.59)	-0.15 (1.59)
Cut4	2.70 (1.52)	3.37 (1.96)	0.40 (2.65)	1.15 (2.31)	-0.16 (1.57)	1.95 (1.57)
Cut5	4.47 (1.57)	5.03 (1.96)	2.02 (2.63)	2.64 (2.38)	0.82 (1.57)	2.95 (1.57)
Cut6		6.77 (1.97)	3.43 (2.64)	4.05 (2.42)	2.30 (1.72)	4.63 (1.78)
Observations	110	101	99	58	66	66
Prob > F	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.04	0.05

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.9: “Proud” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.19 (0.38)	0.17 (0.44)	-0.15 (0.47)	-0.88* (0.62)	0.55 (0.52)	0.44 (0.58)
Gender	0.03 (0.39)	-0.75** (0.44)	-0.70* (0.47)	-0.63 (0.57)	0.36*** (0.11)	0.08 (0.35)
Party	0.01 (0.12)	0.12 (0.11)	0.01 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.18)	0.03 (0.10)	0.13 (0.14)
Race (White)	0.83 (0.56)	-0.01 (0.69)	0.60 (0.53)	1.41 (0.80)	2.29*** (0.78)	2.86** (1.08)
Income	0.02 (0.16)	-0.24* (0.15)	-0.14 (0.21)	-0.58*** (0.23)	-0.21 (0.21)	-0.05 (0.26)
Age	-0.02 (0.04)	0.20** (0.10)	0.01 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
Interpersonal Trust	0.42 (0.16)	0.20 (0.26)	0.66*** (0.22)	0.64** (0.28)	0.26 (0.24)	0.19 (0.21)
Political Interest	0.00 (0.12)	0.07 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.13)	0.18 (0.16)	0.09 (0.14)	-0.02 (0.17)
Cut1	-2.89 (1.76)	-0.31 (2.42)	-2.22 (2.14)	-4.92 (2.78)	-0.84 (1.68)	-0.25 (1.69)
Cut2	-1.02 (1.60)	0.39 (2.04)	-1.19 (2.10)	-2.77 (2.12)	0.43 (1.64)	1.04 (1.63)
Cut3	-0.24 (1.52)	2.42 (2.03)	0.01 (2.08)	-1.36 (2.08)	1.45 (1.49)	2.06 (1.55)
Cut4	1.89 (1.50)	4.48 (2.04)	1.99 (2.07)	1.15 (2.13)	3.63 (1.57)	4.04 (1.56)
Cut5	3.38 (1.53)	5.81 (2.07)	3.72 (2.10)	2.85 (2.16)	4.93 (1.65)	5.45 (1.54)
Cut6	4.88 (1.60)	7.01 (2.08)	5.05 (2.16)	4.20 (2.14)	6.79 (1.79)	6.49 (1.71)
Observations	109	101	99	58	66	67
Prob > F	0.16	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.03	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.17	0.06	0.04

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.10: “Angry” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	0.52 (0.41)	-0.20 (0.40)	-0.36 (0.51)	0.26 (0.67)	0.01 (0.49)	-0.79 (0.70)
Gender	0.47 (0.39)	0.72 (0.47)	0.06 (0.47)	0.81 (0.60)	-0.49 (0.23)	0.28 (0.75)
Party	0.08 (0.12)	-0.13 (0.14)	-0.02 (0.13)	-0.06 (0.17)	0.00 (0.13)	-0.00 (0.20)
Identification						
Race	0.02 (0.96)	-1.01 (0.64)	-0.91 (0.57)	-0.47 (1.88)	1.09 (0.78)	0.47 (0.93)
(White)						
Income	0.11 (0.19)	0.08 (0.14)	-0.04 (0.20)	0.37 (0.22)	-0.09 (0.20)	0.27 (0.23)
Age	0.11 (0.04)	-0.12 (0.14)	-0.00 (0.06)	0.02 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)
Interpersonal	-0.18 (0.17)	-0.01 (0.22)	-0.03 (0.21)	-0.72 (0.32)	-0.06 (0.18)	0.38 (0.10)
Trust						
Political	-0.06 (0.13)	-0.00 (0.23)	0.01 (0.16)	0.39 (0.21)	0.34 (0.19)	0.09 (0.24)
Interest						
Cut1	2.49 (1.96)	-3.72 (3.06)	-1.45 (1.93)	-0.24 (2.57)	1.59 (1.47)	2.89 (2.10)
Cut2	3.66 (1.99)	-2.25 (3.09)	-0.31 (1.97)	0.95 (2.53)	2.39 (1.47)	3.78 (2.12)
Cut3	4.78 (2.06)	-1.40 (3.12)	0.55 (2.03)	1.47 (2.50)	2.92 (1.48)	4.34 (2.12)
Cut4		1.36 (3.13)	3.27 (2.31)	4.43 (2.64)	4.74 (1.51)	6.81 (2.14)
Cut5	- -	- -	- -	5.16 (2.58)	6.45 (1.59)	- -
Cut6	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Observations	110	101	99	59	66	67
Prob > F	0.44	0.33	0.41	0.35	0.33	0.40
Pseudo R2	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.09	0.06	0.04

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.11: “Cares” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.31 (0.41)	0.55* (0.37)	0.03 (0.47)	-1.12** (0.61)	0.50 (0.52)	-0.02 (0.51)
Gender	-1.09** (0.43)	-0.28 (0.40)	-0.15 (0.41)	0.27 (0.59)	0.05 (0.14)	0.11 (0.31)
Party	0.04 (0.14)	0.19* (0.14)	0.09 (0.13)	-0.11 (0.18)	0.09 (0.12)	0.15 (0.13)
Race (White)	0.91 (0.86)	1.61*** (0.68)	1.71*** (0.77)	0.70 (0.56)	0.84 (1.01)	2.41** (2.27)
Income	0.14 (0.20)	-0.21 (0.18)	0.04 (0.19)	-0.59*** (0.25)	-0.12 (0.22)	-0.05 (0.25)
Age	0.04 (0.05)	0.22** (0.10)	-0.01 (0.06)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.04 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Interpersonal Trust	0.53*** (0.16)	0.25 (0.21)	0.52*** (0.24)	0.23 (0.29)	0.35 (0.22)	0.38 (0.18)
Political Interest	-0.07 (0.12)	0.16 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.11)	-0.03 (0.14)	0.02 (0.15)	-0.16 (0.17)
Cut1	-0.78 (1.91)	2.50 (3.07)	-0.14 (1.85)	-6.41 (1.98)	0.57 (1.85)	2.39 (1.34)
Cut2	0.12 (1.85)	4.56 (2.68)	1.08 (1.70)	-4.78 (2.07)	2.28 (1.81)	2.42 (1.08)
Cut3	1.16 (1.71)	5.64 (2.68)	2.09 (1.75)	-3.83 (1.98)	3.15 (1.83)	2.51 (1.04)
Cut4	3.66 (1.71)	8.13 (2.79)	4.02 (1.84)	-1.79 (1.97)	5.66 (2.01)	- -
Cut5	5.00 (1.72)	9.12 (2.84)	5.53 (1.93)	-0.06 (1.91)	6.30 (2.09)	- -
Cut6	7.21 (1.75)	10.8 (2.97)	7.31 (2.02)	1.18 (1.85)	7.98 (2.12)	- -
Observations	109	101	98	57	66	66
Prob > F	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.14	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.13	0.06	0.07

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.12: “Right” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	-0.54* (0.39)	0.90 (0.42)	0.64* (0.49)	-0.42 (0.60)	0.64* (0.50)	0.03 (0.48)
Gender	0.06 (0.41)	-0.56 (0.41)	-0.53 (0.43)	0.23 (0.55)	0.16* (0.12)	0.07 (0.36)
Party	0.15* (0.12)	0.23 (0.15)	0.22* (0.14)	0.13 (0.21)	0.30*** (0.12)	0.31** (0.17)
Identification						
Race	0.05 (0.82)	0.33 (0.75)	0.63 (0.64)	0.86 (0.88)	1.65** (0.72)	0.67 (0.55)
(White)						
Income	-0.11 (0.21)	-0.13 (0.20)	-0.21 (0.21)	-0.30 (0.27)	-0.34** (0.20)	-0.20 (0.28)
Age	0.02 (0.09)	0.12 (0.14)	-0.11* (0.07)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.03)	0.01 (0.20)
Interpersonal	0.60*** (0.17)	0.49 (0.21)	0.52*** (0.22)	0.48** (0.28)	0.65*** (0.22)	0.33** (0.18)
Trust						
Political	-0.05 (0.10)	0.04 (0.13)	-0.00 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.16)	0.30** (0.17)	0.79 (0.17)
Interest						
Cut1	-2.01 (2.41)	1.06 (2.85)	-2.94 (1.86)	0.39 (2.11)	2.36 (1.71)	-0.02 (1.89)
Cut2	-1.03 (2.41)	2.02 (2.65)	2.19 (1.72)	0.92 (2.14)	3.94 (1.44)	1.61 (1.79)
Cut3	-0.24 (2.31)	2.92 (2.69)	-1.27 (1.74)	2.71 (2.18)	5.25 (1.54)	2.75 (1.94)
Cut4	1.85 (2.22)	5.06 (2.76)	0.55 (1.75)	4.08 (2.21)	7.25 (1.72)	4.77 (2.08)
Cut5	3.13 (2.21)	6.69 (2.81)	2.25 (1.77)	5.67 (2.25)	8.65 (1.86)	5.85 (2.17)
Cut6	4.98 (2.21)	8.35 (2.88)	4.11 (1.75)	- -	10.40 (1.94)	8.10 (2.40)
Observations	110	101	99	57	66	67
Prob > F	0.00	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.15	0.08

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

**Table 4.13: “Self-Interest” Candidate Evaluation Model (O-Logit Estimates)**

	<u>Students</u>			<u>Jury Pool</u>		
	P	C (2)	C (20)	P	C (2)	C (20)
Treatment	0.16 (0.42)	-0.08 (0.38)	0.02 (0.45)	0.19 (0.60)	0.66* (0.51)	1.06** (0.50)
Gender	0.02 (0.39)	-0.01 (0.40)	-0.29 (0.41)	0.34 (0.56)	0.14 (0.13)	0.00 (0.29)
Party Identification	0.12 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.12)	-0.09 (0.13)	0.15 (0.18)	-0.06 (0.12)	-0.26** (0.15)
Race (White)	0.11 (1.01)	-0.88 (0.62)	-0.68 (0.57)	1.35* (1.05)	1.29** (0.61)	0.62** (0.65)
Income	0.17 (0.16)	-0.16 (0.18)	-0.04 (0.19)	0.23 (0.34)	-0.08 (0.20)	-0.07 (0.25)
Age	0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)
Interpersonal Trust	-0.15 (0.20)	-0.07 (0.21)	-0.12 (0.25)	-0.21 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.15)	0.03 (0.15)
Political Interest	-0.11 (0.14)	-0.07 (0.22)	-0.11 (0.12)	0.13 (0.21)	0.26** (0.13)	0.17 (0.14)
Cut1	-1.07 (1.68)	-4.04 (3.50)	-5.35 (1.99)	0.24 (2.56)	0.72 (1.50)	-1.39 (1.59)
Cut2	0.12 (1.61)	-3.03 (3.40)	-4.08 (1.89)	1.04 (2.51)	1.53 (1.44)	-0.72 (1.53)
Cut3	0.88 (1.60)	-1.82 (3.39)	-2.78 (1.86)	1.71 (2.54)	2.23 (1.40)	0.41 (1.51)
Cut4	2.79 (1.60)	0.06 (3.36)	-1.10 (1.80)	3.10 (2.62)	4.07 (1.43)	2.27 (1.55)
Cut5	3.54 (1.59)	1.43 (3.39)	-0.03 (1.81)	5.46 (2.78)	5.36 (1.51)	3.49 (1.67)
Cut6	5.25 (1.58)	2.58 (3.43)	1.03 (1.84)	- -	6.68 (1.60)	5.21 (2.09)
Observations	110	101	99	58	68	67
Prob > F	0.79	0.61	0.78	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pseudo R2	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.07	0.08	0.05

Note: Robust standard errors appear in parentheses; one-tailed test. Other race dummies not reported.  
 p<.1 = \*; p<.05 = \*\*; p<.01 = \*\*\*

An important underlying assumption when conducting ordinal logit regression analysis is that the relationship between each pair of possible outcomes remains the same throughout. For example, Table 4.5 assumes the coefficients for the response variable at

10 degrees is the same as the coefficients at 90 degrees. This is known as the proportional odds assumption. If this assumption does not hold true, then a different set of coefficients is required for each outcome. One way we can confirm the validity of the proportional odds assumption is by conducting a Brant test. This likelihood-ratio test determines the proportionality of odds across all response variable categories. Since the null hypothesis speculates there is no difference across coefficients, a non-statistically significant result is desired. While not reported here, the Brant test finds the proportional odds assumption has not been violated for most of the variables.

Fortunately, any concern about the remaining variables in question is quickly alleviated by transforming the previous parameter estimates into estimates of the marginal effects. Marginal effects measure the expected instantaneous change in the dependent variable as a function of a change in a certain explanatory variable while holding all other variables constant. Thus, marginal effects provide substantive meaningful interpretation of the coefficients and cannot be inferred directly from the log of the odds parameter estimates themselves. Tables 4.14 through 4.19 present the marginal effects for all of my ordinal dependent variables based on a change in the independent variable from 0 to 1.

**Table 4.14: Marginal Effects on Potential Ambition for Students (O-Logit Estimates)**

	Response Variable Outcome						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	0.01*	0.01	0.04**	0.10**	0.05*	-0.13**	-0.08**
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Decent	-	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Moral	-	0.00	0.01	0.08*	0.02	0.07*	-0.04*
	-	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Proud	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.0)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Angry	-0.13*	0.03	0.05	0.05*	-	-	-
	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	-	-	-
Cares	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.04	-0.04	-0.03	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.01)
Right	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.09*	-0.00	-0.08*	-0.04*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.01)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Self-Interest	-0.01	-0.01	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)

Note: Standard errors appear in parentheses. Control variables not reported.

**Table 4.15: Marginal Effects on Certain Ambition (2 Years) for Students (O-Logit Estimates)**

	Response Variable Outcome						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.13* (0.08)	0.01 (0.02)	0.09* (0.06)	0.06* (0.04)
Decent	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.09** (0.05)	-0.04* (0.03)	0.08* (0.05)	0.09* (0.05)
Moral	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.16*** (0.06)	-0.06** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.06)	0.10*** (0.04)
Proud	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.06)	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)	(0.01) (0.03)
Angry	0.05 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.00)	- -	- -
Cares	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.04* (0.03)	-0.06* (0.05)	0.05* (0.03)	0.06* (0.04)	0.02 (0.02)
Right	-0.01* (0.00)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.15** (0.07)	0.07** (0.04)	0.11** (0.05)	0.04** (0.03)
Self-Interest	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)

Note: Standard errors appear in parentheses. Control variables not reported.

**Table 4.16: Marginal Effects on Certain Ambition (20 Years) for Students (O-Logit Estimates)**

	Response Variable Outcome						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	0.06 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.02)
Decent	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Moral	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.00)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.07 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.06 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)
Proud	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.02)
Angry	0.09 (0.13)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.05)	- -	- -	-0.00 (0.00)
Cares	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.06)	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.01)
Right	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.10 (0.08)	0.05 (0.04)	0.08 (0.06)	0.03 (0.02)
Self-Interest	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)

Note: Standard errors appear in parentheses. Control variables not reported.

**Table 4.17: Marginal Effects on Potential Ambition for Jury Pools (O-Logit Estimates)**

	Response Variable Outcome						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.06 (0.05)	0.06* (0.04)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.06* (0.05)	-0.04* (0.03)
Decent	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.02 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.02)
Moral	0.00 (0.00)	0.01* (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.02)
Proud	0.00 (0.00)	0.04* (0.03)	0.09* (0.06)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.11* (0.07)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.02* (0.02)
Angry	-0.07 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.06 (0.11)	0.00 (0.00)	- (-)	0.00 (0.00)
Cares	0.03 (0.03)	0.10** (0.05)	0.08** (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.13** (0.06)	-0.04* (0.05)	-0.03* (0.01)
Right	- (-)	0.06 (0.06)	0.03 (0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.01)
Self-Interest	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.06)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.06)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)

Note: Standard errors appear in parentheses. Control variables not reported.

**Table 4.18: Marginal Effects on Certain Ambition (2 Years) for Jury Pools (O-Logit Estimates)**

	Response Variable Outcome						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.03)	0.06 (0.07)	0.02 (0.02)
Decent	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.12 (0.10)	0.05 (0.05)	0.09 (0.07)	0.04 (0.04)
Moral	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.05 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)	0.03 (0.02)
Proud	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.05)	0.06 (0.06)	0.04 (0.05)	0.01 (0.01)
Angry	-0.00 (0.12)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.07)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	- -
Cares	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.05 (0.05)	0.01 (0.02)
Right	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)	0.07 (0.06)	0.06 (0.05)	0.02 (0.01)
Self-Interest	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.05* (0.04)	-0.03* (0.03)	0.06* (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)	0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)

Note: standard errors appear in parentheses. Control variables not reported.

**Table 4.19: Marginal Effects on Certain Ambition (20 Years) for Jury Pools (O-Logit Estimates)**

	Response Variable Outcome						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.05)	0.05 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)	0.02 (0.02)
Decent	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.12 (0.10)	0.04 (0.04)	0.08 (0.07)	0.02 (0.02)
Moral	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.04* (0.03)	-0.09 (0.07)	0.05 (0.05)	0.09 (0.05)	0.03 (0.03)
Proud	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.05)	0.05 (0.07)	0.03 (0.04)	0.02 (0.03)
Angry	0.19 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.12 (0.11)	- (-)	0.02 (0.02)	- (-)
Cares	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.06)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.00)
Right	0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)	0.00 (0.01)
Self-Interest	-0.11** (0.06)	-0.06** (0.04)	-0.09** (0.05)	0.11** (0.05)	0.09* (0.06)	0.04** (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)

Note: standard errors appear in parentheses. Control variables not reported.

## Implications

The results obtained from bivariate and multivariate analyses in this chapter culminate in an unexpected empirical conclusion. These findings support my first hypothesis by suggesting the public does display some discontent towards the hypothetical ambitious candidate upon learning his senate seat is only a stepping stone for higher office. As a whole, students gave across-the-board higher evaluations than did jury pools. But contrary to my expectations, both samples clearly exhibit a more positive reaction in their candidate evaluation towards the candidate when he displays “certain” progressive ambition rather than “potential” progressive ambition. Put differently, respondents gave *less* favorable candidate evaluations when Congressman Harper

displayed “potential” progressive ambition but gave *more* favorable candidate evaluations when Congressman Harper showed “certain” progressive ambition. For the latter, students preferred the aggressive approach while jury pool subjects seemed slightly more fond of the conservative approach. It is also important not to lose sight of the magnitude of the reversal. A one-point swing on 11-point scale for feeling thermometer or a 7-point scale for support indicates a substantial change in voter attitudes. As shown in the previous chapter, this type of shift could make all the difference for close elections.

These results beg for answers to several questions. First, why did jury pool respondents give less favorable evaluations than students? A few potential explanations quickly come to mind: two offer support as to why undergraduate students gave the ambitious candidate higher scores while the third offers support as to why jury pool subjects gave lower scores.

The first explanation deals with the average age of each sample. The average student age is 18 while the mean jury pool respondent age is 45. This 27 year difference should not be understated. Moreover, the mean was not simply skewed because of a disproportionately high amount of elderly participants. Approximately 11 percent of the jury pool sample can be classified as young voters comprising of the 18-24 age range while less than one percent (3 respondents) were over the age of 70 and less than 20 percent were over the age of 60.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the younger student sample could have favored the ambitious candidate more so than the older sample simply due to their

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<sup>19</sup> Note: Texas does not require individuals to serve jury duty after the age of 70. This actually helps my argument by limiting the possible number of outliers.

novelty in the political world. While there has been considerable research done suggesting young adults form their political attitudes predominately based off socialization from their parents and to some smaller extent friends and school (see Hyman 1959; Jennings and Niemi 1974, 1981; Sears 1975 and Campbell 2006), these attitudes are based on party identification – not in terms of political ambition. The point is we know they are socialized with respect to party identification but that does not necessarily carry over to political ambition? Hence, the youth voting population could be more attracted to ambitious candidates because of their unfamiliarity with the concept and limited political experience.

Another possibility behind the disparity in candidate evaluation across the samples deals with the issue of priming. Perhaps the undergraduate students are inadvertently primed by virtue of simply being enrolled in a political science course. Generally speaking, political science professors naturally try to dissuade students from harboring cynicism towards politics. Since the survey was administered towards the end of the semester, students might feel more strongly about the candidate because they have been primed to perceive politics in a more positive light. Conversely, the public at large is likely not to be as primed and could be more cynical about ambition, and politics in general. In short, priming could account for why jury pool subjects give across-the-board lower candidate evaluations scores than students. Students enrolled in a political science course could potentially be primed to like politics and in this case, ambition more. Fortunately, my survey includes a scaled measure pertaining directly to political interest.

**Table 4.20: Comparing Political Interest across Samples**

		Undergraduate Students			
Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Political Interest	257	3.98	1.73	1	7
		Jury Pool Subjects			
Variable	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Political Interest	180	4.64	1.82	1	7

Yet surprisingly, students have *less* interest in politics than do jury pool subjects in this experiment based on the descriptive statistics in Table 4.18. Even though they gave more favorable candidate evaluations than jury pool subjects, students considered themselves less politically interested. The students' average score (3.99) is almost one point (-.66) less than jury pool subjects (4.64). Plus, this survey was administered only a few weeks after the 2010 midterm election at a time when students' political interest should be at its zenith. So the fact that students self-identified themselves as less politically informed is perplexing.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, perhaps this all makes sense when we look at the big picture with respect to voting behavior. Typically, more people vote when they are older in life rather than younger (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Young voters participate less in politics for a variety of reasons including: marriage, home ownership, leaving home, leaving school and finding a job (Converse and Niemi 1971; Strate et al. 1989; Abramson et al. 1998; Conway 2000; Highton and Wolfinger 2001). At the same time, older voters are more likely to provide lower candidate evaluations as a result of all the examples of

<sup>20</sup> These types of measures are imperfect. In hindsight, a more reliable way could have been to ask respondents a series of political knowledge questions to determine their level based on how many they answered correctly.

divided government, legislative gridlock, party polarization, and unfulfilled promises they have seen over the years.

It is worth noting this political exposure may not necessarily occur by choice today. The continuous stream of controversies, scandals and political ads fixated on by the media over the last couple of decades has made things difficult for the politically apathetic to completely escape the world of politics, especially with the rise in popularity of cable news and the internet. Even the world's most watched event, the Super Bowl, was preceded by a much anticipated interview between a top political pundit and the President of the United States.<sup>21</sup> In sum, jury pool respondents could find ambitious politicians less favorable than undergraduate students due to several differences in their political outlook based upon their age.

But more importantly from a theoretical perspective, these results also suggest a distinction in the public's eyes exists between "potential" ambition and "certain" ambition. That is, the public appears to have one attitude for ambitious candidates upon learning they are considering running for office; yet, once that consideration turns to decisive action, the public attitude changes in the other direction. Specifically, the results in this chapter suggest the public invokes a slightly more negative reaction towards ambitious politicians potentially considering an additional bid for higher office; yet, once the candidate makes the bid and officially enters the race, the public's attitude changes from slightly negative to slightly more positive. This notion could be a fascinating empirical discovery. Plus, the results are even more divided when split by sample.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0211/48913.html>

Students favored the aggressive candidate while prospective jurors favored the conservative candidate. Perhaps this is because the younger students are new to politics and unaware of the candidate expectations older voters already have. For now, I focus on the question: why is there a difference in the eyes of the public between potential and certain ambition? The remainder of this chapter offers a few explanations.

### **Potential versus Certain Ambition: A Closer Look**

The first explanation returns the focus to the critical discussion in chapter two about how changing expectations by running for higher office could cause voters to subsequently change their candidate evaluation in a more adverse way. I make the argument that if a progressively ambitious candidate decides to use an office as a stepping stone, it could change the public's expectations about the candidate, resulting in a more negative candidate evaluation. The underlying assumption is there is a difference in how the public views aggressive political ambition versus the more conservative alternative.

In theory, a more conservative progressively ambitious politician should be less concerned about running for higher office because he or she can fall back on their extensive list of accomplishments accrued while in office. Plus, the public has become acclimated to the more conventional wait-your-turn precedent politicians have essentially adopted throughout our political history. It has almost become expected that longtime congressmen or governors, who by definition have met expectations in order to stay in office that long, will throw their name in the hat for higher office at some point. In

contrast, an aggressively ambitious politician should be more concerned about running for higher office because he or she cannot rely on their record with such a short tenure in office. He or she has to convince the public that they have fulfilled their expectations in another way. Of course, this approach may not be uniformly bad either as aggressively ambitious candidates have been able to win over the hearts and minds of voters in several instances.

Another solution as to why both samples favor the certain ambitious politician over the potential candidate could result from their self-induced biased in favor of their own representative. Here, the initial argument about expectations remains the same. Voters are not thrilled about the idea of potentially losing the member of Congress they just elected. They want to see that particular candidate fulfill the expectations promised in the campaign. But once the candidate officially declares his or her intentions, the public is forced to react. Voters now have two options: one, they can harbor resentment from of a sense of betrayal and decide to no longer support the candidate, or two, they can adopt a rally effect by being overcome with a sense of pride, recognizing the importance of their politician's higher political calling. Although a third option exists, it is highly unlikely voters would simply abstain since they cared enough to exercise their civic duty by participating in a lower-level election. So in essence, once the aggressive newly elected candidate decides to run, the voter now has to decide what their most desired outcome is from a list that no longer includes the current office. As a result, when faced with these two options we'd logically expect more people to prefer the latter outcome yielding a higher utility.

A third argument is that the results are indicative of a halo effect. A halo effect is a cognitive bias in which our perception regarding one particular trait for someone influences our perception towards another trait for that same person. If this is true, we can expect the public has a tendency to become enamored with ambitious politicians. For example, Congressman Harper is running first for the senate in the experiments. Respondents willing to vote for him for the senate are just as likely to vote for him in his presidential campaign based on their perceptions established from the senate race. However, the strongest predictor of a halo effect is party identification. For example, one would expect to find partisans offer more positive candidate evaluations to candidates of their own party and offer more negative candidate evaluations to candidates of the opposing party. Unfortunately, my experiment is unable to account for this because the vignette starts by stating “Congressman John Harper of your party...”

A final point parallels my last argument in chapter two. If ambition itself is a difficult concept to measure, finding a suitable measure for “potential” ambition is an even infinitely more arduous task. While candidates often display signs, such as more public appearances, hinting they may run for higher office, we simply do not know until they make their intent clear. Furthermore, the candidates may not know themselves whether or not they will run until the proverbial dust settles. The field of candidates for the Republican nomination in the upcoming 2012 presidential election underscores this point. Some potential candidates such as Donald Trump and Mike Huckabee displayed signs they were going to run but ultimately decided against it for various reasons. If we had predicted they would run we would have guessed wrongly. On the other hand, Sarah

Palin appears content to sit back and see who else enters the race before making her decision.

Ideally, the best option for measurement of potential ambition entails interviewing candidates directly. However, setting aside the time and costs associated with such a project, there is no guarantee candidates will be completely honest and fully disclose their future intentions. Therefore, the best possible approach currently is to continue constructing experiments in order to gauge whether the public truly perceives potential ambition versus certain ambition any differently. I revisit this approach more closely as part of future research in the concluding chapter.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter began with a discussion about the definition, purpose and explanatory power experimental studies have in social science today. The primary advantage in utilizing experiments is the strength in which a causal relationship can be determined. Good experiments produce results that yield external validity allowing them to then be generalized to the entire population. More recently, experiments have become increasingly popular in the American field and have been responsible for contributing important findings. Since my dissertation's focus is on how the public perceives progressive ambition, I argue there is no better resource for examining these attitudes than to do so directly with experiments. Controlling the information respondents receive, also known as the treatment(s), allows me to quickly determine: what is in fact the casual relationship between public perception and politicians displaying progressive ambition?

I conduct an experiment with two different samples in order to test the public's attitude towards ambition. The first sample uses undergraduate students (N=257) while the second relies on jury pool subjects (N=181). Respondents read a brief vignette about a hypothetical Congressman John Harper with senate aspirations. The first half of the experiment involves only one the treatment where although Harper is currently running for the senate, he is also potentially considering running for president two years from now. In the other half, the treatments state Harper has already won his senate race and now is definitely running for president – adding a temporal element. Thus, respondents are informed that either he is running for president aggressively after just two years in the Senate or that he is running for president after twenty years in the Senate. My aim is to see how the public reacts to both “potential” ambition and “certain” ambition expressed either aggressively or conservatively.

In order to test these concepts, I have two primary dependent variables: feeling thermometer and likely support. Additionally, seven common ANES attitudinal questions are asked, along with a series of controls. Initial bivariate analyses reveal jury pool subjects are more skeptical towards the hypothetical candidate than are undergraduate students. I offer two possible explanations as to why this might be the case.

Difference in means tests combined with ordered logit regression estimates reach an unexpected finding. As hypothesized, both students and jury pool respondents seemingly elicit a negative reaction by offering a slightly less favorable candidate evaluation of the hypothetical congressman when he displays potential additional

progressive ambition. Jury pools offer lower candidate evaluations than do students. I suspect this stems from students being primed to higher levels of political interest but additional bivariate findings discredit this by showing jury pools actually self-identified a higher level of interest in politics. But more importantly and contrary to my hypotheses, both students and jury pools display a more positive reaction by offering a slightly more favorable candidate evaluation of the hypothetical congressman when he displays “certain” progressive ambition. As a result, I argue there is a clear difference in the public’s eyes between “potential” and “certain” political ambition. I then offer three possible explanations behind this result: age, self-induced bias, and a halo effect. Finally, I revisit the difficulty in measuring ambition while in pursuance of validity, especially now in the context of “potential” ambition.

## CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION

This study on political ambition has sought to differ from its predecessors in a major way. Existing research on the subject matter has been devoted almost entirely to understanding why ambitious politicians seek higher office when they do. Yet despite these scholarly advances, a central theoretical tenet has been overlooked inadvertently in the process. I argue today's conventional approach really has uncovered only half of the story. At the end of the day, all politicians are not completely in control of their own destiny because their fate rests solely on the voters at the ballot box. So in this sense, political ambition is really a two-way street. That is, nearly all attention has been paid to the decisions of political elites and not enough attention has been paid to the decisions of those with the final say in the matter, *the people*. Therefore, I contend investigating this unknown phenomenon provides the discipline with a much more complete perspective. As a result, my dissertation offers an innovative first look into how the public actually perceives political ambition.

This dissertation explores two critical hypotheses. First, I speculate voters are more likely to react negatively rather than positively towards progressively ambitious candidates. Second, voters are more likely to react negatively towards aggressive progressive ambition rather than conservative progressive ambition.

The first hypothesis is based primarily on two elements taken from the existing candidate evaluation literature. One, research suggests voters create different individual expectations for different candidates. As such, ambitious candidates should be concerned

about doing anything that might cause voters to alter these expectations in a negative manner. As such, I argue the pursuit of higher office could cause ambitious politicians in many instances not to fulfill the promises that got them elected into office to begin with. In turn, this causes voters to re-evaluate their current expectations towards the candidate which is more than likely to produce a less favorable candidate evaluation.

Second, other evidence strongly suggests certain personal characteristics matter greatly with respect to candidate evaluation. I build on this notion by conjecturing voter perceptions are influenced by how they evaluate four personal characteristics spotlighted by ambition: leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest. While leadership is likely to garner a favorable evaluation with respect to ambition, the other three characteristics should elicit less favorable evaluations. Devoting resources away from one's current constituents to concentrate on a new campaign could upset voter trust, an entity that is hard to obtain and even harder to keep. Voters also dislike leaders that come across as self-interested. Compounding matters, our natural disposition promotes a negativity bias. Since most people are genuinely happy with their life, negative information resonates more sharply. Hence, a positive and a negative trait together do not offset but rather cause a negative reaction.

In sum, I contend voters are more likely to react negatively to higher office seekers because displaying progressive ambition could potentially alter their own expectations and attitudes toward four key personal characteristics. Thus, the costs associated with running are no longer simply attitudinal but now behavioral as well.

## **Review of Empirical Findings**

Chapter three analyzes electoral results of ambitious candidates from 1972 to 2008. I find ambitious candidates lose substantially more of their two-party vote share compared against their non-ambitious peers up for re-election at both the presidential and senatorial level. Specifically, an overwhelming 77 percent of ambitious candidates lost vote share across elections at the presidential level and 87 percent lost at the senatorial level; conversely, only 44 percent of their non-ambitious peers lost vote share at both levels. In terms of the magnitude of the effect, bivariate results suggest ambitious candidates lose on average 3 percent vote share in their next election after running for higher office at the presidential level and 13 percent at the senatorial level while their non-ambitious colleagues actually gained one percentage for both levels. Multivariate analyses reinforce these results. I find ambitious candidates at the presidential level lose a statistically significant two percent of their vote share, controlling for other factors such as: partisan tides, tenure, political experience, campaign expenditures, and fixed effects. These findings offer support for my first hypothesis that the public is more like to react negatively towards progressively ambitious politicians.

Chapter four employs a different methodological approach to investigate further. I conduct an experimental survey using two different samples in an effort to explain the rationale behind voter perception while simultaneously testing my second hypothesis. The temporal nature of my second hypothesis necessitates splitting the experiment into two studies. The first study gauges how respondents react to “potential” progressive ambition. The second study tests whether voters react any differently to “certain”

progressive ambition when the hypothetical candidate runs aggressively for higher office in one instance and conservatively for higher office in the other.

As for the temporal element, I find consistent evidence from both samples that voters surprisingly react more favorably towards aggressive ambition rather than conservative ambition. In fact, conservative progressive ambition failed to receive an across-the-board higher evaluation than aggressive ambition for eight of the nine dependent variables in experiment. Jury pool subjects favor the conservative approach more so than the alternative only for the support variable, albeit by a slim margin (.04). Thus, these results do not support my second hypothesis. Instead of being turned off by the aggressive approach, voters seem to be drawn to it. This could help explain President Obama's rapid electoral success.

With a stroke of serendipity, I discover respondents perceive "potential" and "certain" ambition very differently. I find both students and jury pools react somewhat negatively towards "potential" ambition yet they react somewhat positively towards "certain" ambition. So generally speaking, it appears voters dislike the idea of a candidate potentially running for higher office but once the decision is made, they prefer a candidate that runs aggressively. This "go big or go home" mentality was clearly visible in early Republican primary favorability ratings. A noncommittal, potential candidate Sarah Palin saw her favorability ratings steadily decline over a series of months before finally opting not to run.

### **Impact on the Discipline**

This dissertation has strengthened the American discipline in a couple ways. First, it improves the extant ambition literature by calling attention to a critical overlooked factor, the public's perception. In doing so, I have identified not only the causal directionality but also the intensity of the loss in vote share ambitious candidates have encountered over a thirty-six year span. It is imprudent to simply dismiss this notion that ambitious candidates lose a convincingly higher percentage of their vote share relative to their non-ambitious peers. We can no longer simply view ambition only from the politician's perspective. Voters' perception of ambition clearly has important electoral consequences.

Second, these findings substantiate the existing candidate evaluation literature in suggesting certain personal characteristics do matter. Specifically, I make the case that four personal characteristics influence voters in their evaluation of ambitious candidates: leadership, trust, reliability and self-interest. The seven attitudinal measures all indicate respondents are more likely to view a candidate favorably with respect to "certain" ambition over "potential" and are more likely to react favorably to aggressive progressive ambition as well. Intuitively, this would seemingly counter my theoretical argument. If respondents prefer the aggressive mindset then that means they perceive those particular candidates not to be untrustworthy, unreliable or self-interested. However, this actually upholds the findings in chapter three because most of the ambitious candidates in the thirty-six year span adopted the conservative approach. Only a select few aggressively ran for higher office. As such, politicians would be wise to take this discovery to heart

and perhaps reconsider the timing aspect in their decision calculus. In this sense, this research bolsters both the individual and temporal categories of progressive ambition literature.

### **Future Research**

Even though this dissertation fills an important gap in the literature, it still has barely begun to scratch the surface in practice. This study's greatest strength may reside in its ability to serve as a strong theoretical building block for a plethora of future studies. Without question, there are a host of avenues still left for future research based on these preliminary findings, irrespective of one's modus operandi.

While my efforts here concentrate exclusively on the relationship between the public and ambition in a congressional context, several other aspects demand scrupulous attention in their own right. First, I only explore the two highest political offices so a logical starting point would be to extend the study to incorporate other political echelons. Does this significant, negatively correlated relationship tied between ambition and the public's voting behavior actually transcend downward to both the state and local levels of government as well? If so, a universal effect could potentially spark a voluminous new wave of voting behavior literature.

Second, even though I omit governors, other scholars might have more success at coming up with a compelling rationale meriting their inclusion in order to overcome their shortcomings from a case selection standpoint. This would not only increase the number of observations to generate a more refined estimation of the exact magnitude of the

effect, but it would also strengthen the theory's internal validity. This would serve to enhance the generalizability of this negative effect.

Third, does the effect hold for primaries as well or just in the general election? This is another interesting facet that I regrettably was not able to develop more thoroughly. During my data collection process, there were only a handful of candidates that lost in the primaries when seeking re-election. But that low total fails to necessarily capture just how close the other primary races could have been by candidates that made it to the general election. We assume most incumbents do fairly well in the primary process, but perhaps the inter-election vote share is much closer than our expectations. For example, an ambitious senator could have won re-election by a comfortable margin yet barely survived his own primary. Challengers from the same party could seek to capitalize on ambitious politicians neglecting attention to their own constituency just as much as challengers from the opposing party.

Fourth, continuing the recent scholarly focus on gender appears to be a worthwhile endeavor as well. Previous studies produced divergent conclusions with respect to the role gender plays in the decision calculus for ambitious politicians considering higher office. Some thought women candidates were less ambitious than men yet many found the opposite true. Hence, several questions remain unanswered. Specifically, does the public treat progressively ambitious male candidates any differently than progressively ambitious female candidates? And if so, who do they prefer more? Then if a pattern for gender does emerge, does it remain congruent across all local, state and federal elections or does it vary based on the political race?

Fifth, almost no studies have examined the conditions under which minority candidates seek higher office. Does race/ethnicity invoke a different reaction by the public towards progressively ambitious candidates? Now that we have a general sense of the public's reaction at the aggregate level, do minority candidates fare any better or worse than their white counterparts?

Finally, I have considered the possibility that ambition could also be subject to a threshold of vulnerability effect. In other words, one might expect this effect to become marginalized at both extreme ends of the political strata. If true, any public animosity towards ambitious politicians ultimately would not significantly influence the outcomes at the local and presidential levels. For example, ambitious politicians running in local races like city council or mayor do not have to worry much about the public being cognizant of them using the office solely as a means to a higher political ends. This stems from the conventional wisdom that most local races have extremely low voter turnout figures to begin with. By and large, local races don't matter much to the public as only political diehards typically turn out. While at the other end of the political spectrum, the sheer voting magnitude for the highest office in our political system aids ambitious politicians in their endeavor by offsetting any ill-will or apprehension the home state voters may have towards their ambitious politician. For example, Al Gore lost his own home state during the 2000 presidential election but went on to capture a majority of the country's popular vote. As a result, the most likely instance where ambitious politicians are vulnerable is at the congressional level. The strong negative correlation

found in the preliminary results offers some credence to this claim but future efforts must probe further.

The allure of each of these six doors for prospective research is that they can all be addressed in a multitude of ways. Unfortunately, one of ambition's biggest pitfalls is that it is its own worst enemy. Ambition imposes a big obstacle on itself self by virtue of being such a difficult concept to measure. To date, we can only observe the phenomenon in a post-hoc manner, making it difficult to fully understand all of its idiosyncrasies in the same way that we can other topics. This limitation severely hampers scholars because there is no feasible existing method for capturing other politicians that harbor ambition but elect not to run.

Perhaps intrainstitutional ambition, if developed more carefully, is on the right track towards offering a plausible solution. Although, a more concerted effort must be made to ascertain exactly what roles carry enough political clout to effectively quench ambitious politicians' thirst for higher office. The title of Speaker of the House may have been sufficient for Tip O'Neil but are there less obvious alternatives? Aside from majority leader, it would be prudent to explore committee chairships to see how many party leaders are willing to risk that position for higher office at some point in their political career. Clearly, ambition's complexity still poses quite the formidable challenge to contemporary scholars. So when Madison justifiably quipped, "ambition must be made to counteract ambition" over two centuries ago, it can also be said in this day and age that ambition must be made to *understand* ambition.

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## APPENDIX A

### Overview of the Five Different Forms Used in Experiments I & II

#### Study I: Exploring “Potential” Progressive Ambition

##### Form A

*U.S. Representative John Harper of your party is running for the U.S. Senate. He is a widely respected member of Congress. Like most national politicians, the congressman has a long list of achievements over his political career. For instance, he has: served on the House Armed Services committee for the last six years, is credited with leading congressional negotiations over a major tax reform bill, sponsored a popular bill that changed how public education is funded, and introduced legislation to significantly amend energy and environmental laws. Prior to being elected to the U.S. House, he practiced law for several years. Both supporters and opponents agree that Harper is intelligent and articulate with strong leadership skills. He has been married for 15 years and has two young children.*

##### Form B

*U.S. Representative John Harper of your party is running for the U.S. Senate. He is a widely respected member of Congress. Like most national politicians, the congressman has a long list of achievements over his political career. For instance, he has: served on the House Armed Services committee for the last six years, is credited with leading congressional negotiations over a major tax reform bill, sponsored a popular bill that changed how public education is funded, and introduced legislation to significantly amend energy and environmental laws. Prior to being elected to the U.S. House, he practiced law for several years. Both supporters and opponents agree that Harper is intelligent and articulate with strong leadership skills. He has been married for 15 years and has two young children. Additionally, there is widespread speculation by the media that Congressman Harper is considered an early presidential contender and likely will seek his party's nomination for president in two years. When asked about a possible presidential run, Congressman Harper was vague about whether he would complete his senate term if elected.*

Form A = Control

Form B = Treatment I

## Study II: Exploring “Certain” Progressive Ambition

### Form C

*U.S. Representative John Harper of your party ran for the U.S. Senate from your state and won. He is a widely respected member of Congress. Like most national politicians, the congressman has a long list of achievements over his political career. For instance, he has: served on the House Armed Services committee for the last six years, is credited with leading congressional negotiations over a major tax reform bill, sponsored a popular bill that changed how public education is funded, and introduced legislation to significantly amend energy and environmental laws. Prior to being elected to the U.S. House, he practiced law for several years. Both supporters and opponents agree that Harper is intelligent and articulate with strong leadership skills. He has been married for 15 years and has two young children.*

### Form D

*U.S. Representative John Harper of your party ran for the U.S. Senate from your state and won. He is a widely respected member of Congress. Like most national politicians, the congressman has a long list of achievements over his political career. For instance, he has: served on the House Armed Services committee for the last six years, is credited with leading congressional negotiations over a major tax reform bill, sponsored a popular bill that changed how public education is funded, and introduced legislation to significantly amend energy and environmental laws. Prior to being elected to the U.S. House, he practiced law for several years. Both supporters and opponents agree that Harper is intelligent and articulate with strong leadership skills. He has been married for 15 years and has two young children. After two years in the senate, Harper has decided to run for president and not complete his current senate term if elected president.*

### Form E

*U.S. Representative John Harper of your party ran for the U.S. Senate from your state and won. He is a widely respected member of Congress. Like most national politicians, the congressman has a long list of achievements over his political career. For instance, he has: served on the House Armed Services committee for the last six years, is credited with leading congressional negotiations over a major tax reform bill, sponsored a popular bill that changed how public education is funded, and introduced legislation to significantly amend energy and environmental laws. Prior to being elected to the U.S. House, he practiced law for several years. Both supporters and opponents agree that Harper is intelligent and articulate with strong leadership skills. He has been married for 15 years and has two young children. After twenty years in the senate, Harper has decided to run for president and not complete his current senate term if elected president.*

Form C = Control

Form D = Treatment I

Form E = Treatment II

**APPENDIX B**

**Complete List of Survey Questions for Study I (Potential Ambition)**

**A "feeling thermometer" measures your feelings toward someone. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean you feel unfavorably and cold toward someone; ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward someone. You would rate this person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward him.**

1. What is your feeling thermometer (in degrees) towards Harper?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
0°	10°	20°	30°	40°	50°	60°	70°	80°	90°	100°

2. How likely or unlikely are you to vote for Harper for the U.S. Senate?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Unlikely						Very Likely

3. How well does each phrase describe Harper?

	Not well at all						Extremely well
A. Is decent	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
B. Is moral	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
C. Makes you proud	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
D. Makes you angry	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
E. Really cares about people like you	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
F. Can be trusted by his constituents to do what is right	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
G. Puts self-interest before constituents' interests	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

4. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with this statement: according to the background information on Harper presented above, the media speculates he will run for president in two years.

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Completely Disagree						Completely Agree

**Now I have a few questions about you.**

5. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Can't be too trusted						Can be trusted

6. Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Looking out for themselves						Try to be helpful

7. What is your gender?      Female      Male  
ⓕ                      Ⓜ

8. Generally speaking, would you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strong Democrat			Independent			Strong Republican

9. Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How interested are you in the political campaigns when a major election comes around?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very Uninterested						Very Interested

10. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How interested are you in government and public affairs?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very Uninterested						Very Interested

11. Which racial or ethnic group best describes you?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
White or Caucasian	Hispanic or Latino/Latina	Black or African-American	Asian	American Indian	Other

12. What is the year of your birth? Please bubble in the last two digits of your birth year. As an example, if you were born in 1962, fill in the number 6 in the first column and the number 2 in the second column.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. In which of these groups did your total family income, from all sources, fall last year before taxes? Total income includes interest or dividends, Social Security, other pensions, alimony or child support, unemployment compensation, public aid, and armed forces or veteran's allotment.

Under  
\$25,000

\$25,000 to  
\$49,999

\$50,000 to  
\$89,999

\$90,000 or  
more

Decline to Answer

### Complete List of Survey Questions for Study II (Certain Ambition)

A "feeling thermometer" measures your feelings toward someone. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean you feel unfavorably and cold toward someone; ratings between 50 and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorably and warm toward someone. You would rate this person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward him.

1. What is your feeling thermometer (in degrees) towards Harper?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
0°	10°	20°	30°	40°	50°	60°	70°	80°	90°	100°

2. How likely or unlikely are you to vote for Harper for President?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Unlikely						Very Likely

3. How well does each phrase describe Harper?

	Not well <u>at all</u>						Extremely <u>well</u>
A. Is decent	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
B. Is moral	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
C. Makes you proud	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
D. Makes you angry	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
E. Really cares about people like you	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
F. Can be trusted by his constituents to do what is right	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
G. Puts self-interest before constituents' interests	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

4. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with this statement: according to the background information on Harper presented above, after two years in the senate Harper decides to run for president.

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Completely Disagree						Completely Agree

**Now I have a few questions about you.**

5. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Can't be too trusted						Can be trusted

6. Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Looking out for themselves						Try to be helpful

7. What is your gender?      Female      Male  
ⓕ      Ⓜ

8. Generally speaking, would you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strong Democrat			Independent			Strong Republican

9. Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How interested are you in the political campaigns when a major election comes around?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very Uninterested						Very Interested

10. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there is an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. How interested are you in government and public affairs?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Very Uninterested						Very Interested

11. Which racial or ethnic group best describes you?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
White or Caucasian	Hispanic or Latino/Latina	Black or African-American	Asian	American Indian	Other

12. What is the year of your birth? Please bubble in the last two digits of your birth year. As an example, if you were born in 1962, fill in the number 6 in the first column and the number 2 in the second column.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. In which of these groups did your total family income, from all sources, fall last year before taxes? Total income includes interest or dividends, Social Security, other pensions, alimony or child support, unemployment compensation, public aid, and armed forces or veteran's allotment.

Under  
\$25,000

\$25,000 to  
\$49,999

\$50,000 to  
\$89,999

\$90,000 or  
more

Decline to Answer

## APPENDIX C

### AMBITIOUS U.S. MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FOR PRESIDENT 1972-2008

Sources: Congressional Quarterly, Congressional Biographical Directory, and the Almanac of American Politics.

#### 1972

Sen. George McGovern (D - SD)  
Sen. Edmund Muskie (D - ME)  
Sen. Henry Jackson (D - WA)  
Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D - NY)  
Rep. Wilbur Mills (D - AR)  
Sen. Vance Hartke (D - IN)  
Sen. Fred Harris (D - OK)  
Rep. John Ashbrook (R - OH)  
Rep. Pete McCloskey (R - CA)

#### 1976

Rep. Morris Udall (D - AZ)  
Sen. Henry Jackson (D - WA)  
Sen. Frank Church (D - ID)  
Sen. Robert Byrd (D - WV)  
Sen. Birch Bayh (D - IN)  
Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D - TX)

#### 1980

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D - MA)  
Rep. John Anderson (R - IL)  
Sen. Howard Baker (R - TN)  
Rep. Phil Crane (R - IL)  
Sen. Bob Dole (R - KS)  
Sen. Lowell Weicker (R - CT)

#### 1984

Sen. Gary Hart (D - CO)  
Sen. John Glenn (D - OH)  
Sen. Alan Cranston (D - CA)  
Sen. Ernest Hollings (D - SC)

#### 1988

Sen. Al Gore (D - TN)  
Rep. Dick Gephardt (D - MO)  
Sen. Paul Simon (D - IL)  
Sen. Joe Biden (D - DE)

Sen. Bob Dole (R - KS)  
Rep. Jack Kemp (R - NY)

#### 1992

Sen. Bob Kerrey (D - NE)  
Sen. Tom Harkin (D - IA)

#### 1996

Sen. Bob Dole (R - KS)  
Sen. Phil Gramm (R - TX)  
Sen. Richard Lugar (R - IN)  
Rep. Bob Dornan (R - CA)  
Sen. Arlen Specter (R - PA)

#### 2000

Sen. John McCain (R - AZ)  
Sen. Orrin Hatch (R - UT)  
Sen. Robert Smith (R - NH)

#### 2004

Sen. John Kerry (D - MA)  
Sen. John Edwards (D - SC)  
Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D - OH)  
Rep. Dick Gephardt (D - MO)  
Sen. Bob Graham (D - FL)

#### 2008

Sen. Barack Obama (D - IL)  
Sen. Hillary Clinton (D - NY)  
Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D - OH)  
Sen. Joe Biden (D - DE)  
Sen. Christopher Dodd (D - CT)  
Sen. John McCain (R - AZ)  
Sen. Sam Brownback (R - KS)  
Rep. Duncan Hunter (R - CA)  
Rep. Ron Paul (R - TX)  
Rep. Tom Tancredo (R - CO)

N=57

**AMBITIOUS U.S. HOUSE MEMBERS FOR U.S. SENATE 1972 - 2008**

Sources: Congressional Quarterly, Congressional Biographical Directory, and the Almanac of American Politics.

**1972**

Fletcher Thompson (R - GA)  
William Hathaway (D - ME)  
Nick Galifianakis (D - NC)  
Ed Edmondson (D - OK)  
James Abourezk (D - SD)  
William Scott (R - VA)

**1974**

John Culver (D - IA)  
William Roy (D - KS)  
Louis Wyman (R - NH)  
Wayne Owens (D - UT)  
Richard Mallary (R - VT)

**1976**

Sam Steiger (R - AZ)  
Spark Matsunaga (D - HI)  
Paul Sarbanes (D - MD)  
Donald Riegle Jr. (D - MI)  
Marvin Esch (R - MI)  
John Melcher (D - MT)  
John McCollister (R - NE)  
John Heinz (R - PA)  
Alan Steelman (R - TX)

**1978**

William Armstrong (R - CO)  
William Cohen (R - ME)  
Paul Tsongas (D - MA)  
Thad Cochran (R - MS)  
Max Baucus (D - MT)  
Robert Krueger (D - TX)

**1980**

Chris Dodd (D - CT)  
Steven Symms (R - ID)  
Dan Quayle (R - IN)  
Charles Grassley (R - IA)  
Mark Andrews (R - ND)  
James Abdnor (R - SD)

**1982**

Toby Moffett (D - CT)  
David Emery (R - ME)  
James Collins (R - TX)  
Paul Trible Jr. (R - VA)  
Cleve Benedict (R - WV)

**1984**

Paul Simon (D - IL)  
Tom Harkin (D - IA)  
Al Gore (D - TN)  
Phil Gramm (R - TX)  
Ed Bethune (R - AR)  
Norman D' Amours (D - NH)

**1986**

John McCain (R - AZ)  
John B. Breaux (D - LA)  
Tom Daschle (D - SD)  
Wyche Flower Jr. (D - GA)  
Barbara Mikulski (D - MD)  
Harry Reid (D - NV)  
Richard Shelby (D - AL)  
Timothy E. Wirth (D - CO)  
James R. Jones (D - OK)  
Bob Edgar (D - PA)  
Thomas Kindness (R - OH)  
Ken Kramer (R - CO)  
W. Henson Moore (R - LA)  
Ed Zschau (R - CA)

**1988**

Connie Mack III (R - FL)  
Trent Lott (R - MS)  
James Jeffords (R - VT)  
Buddy MacKay (D - FL)  
Wayne Dowdy (D - MS)  
Beau Boulter (R - TX)  
Mike Lowry (D - WA)

**1990**

Hank Brown (R - CO)  
Larry Craig (R - ID)  
Robert C. Smith (R - NH)  
Patricia Saiki (R - HI)  
Lynn Martin (R - IL)  
Tom Tauke (R - IA)  
Bill Schuette (R - MI)  
Claudine Schneider (R - RI)

**1992**

Barbara Boxer (D - CA)  
Ben Nighthorse Campbell (D - CO)  
Byron L. Dorgan (D - ND)  
Les AuCoin (D - OR)  
Rod Chandler (R - WA)  
Wayne Owens (D - UT)  
Richard Stallings (D - ID)

**1994**

Jon Kyl (R - AZ)  
Olympia Snowe (R - ME)  
Rod Grams (R - MN)  
James M. Inhofe (R - OK)  
Rick Santorum (R - PA)  
Craig Thomas (R - WY)  
Thomas H. Andrews (D - ME)  
Bob Carr (D - MI)  
Jim Cooper (D - TN)  
Sam Coppersmith (D - AZ)  
Michael Huffington (R - CA)  
Dave McCurdy (D - OK)  
Alana Wheat (D - MO)

**1996**

Wayne Allard (R - CO)  
Sam Brownback (R - KS)  
Richard J. Durbin (D - IL)  
Tim Johnson (D - SD)  
Jack Reed (D - RI)  
Pat Roberts (R - KS)  
Robert G. Torricelli (D - NJ)  
Jim Ross Lightfoot (R - IA)  
Dick Zimmer (R - NJ)

**1998**

Michael D. Crapo (R - ID)  
Charles E. Schumer (D - NY)  
Jim Bunning (R - KY)  
Scotty Baesler (D - KY)  
John Ensign (R - NV)  
Robert Inglis, Sr. (R - SC)  
Linda Smith (R - WA)  
Mark Neumann (R - WI)

**2000**

Debbie Stabenow (D - MI)  
Tom Campbell (R - CA)  
Bill McCollum (R - FL)  
Bob Franks (R - NJ)  
Rick Lazio (R - NY)  
Ronald Klink (D - PA)  
Robert Weygand (D - RI)

**2002**

Saxby Chambliss (R - GA)  
John E. Sununu (R - NH)  
Lindsey Graham (R - SC)  
Greg Ganske (R - IA)  
John Thune (R - SD)

**2004**

Johnny Isakson (R - GA)  
David Vitter (R - LA)  
Richard M. Burr (R - NC)  
Jim DeMint (R - SC)  
Denise Majette (D - GA)  
Joe Hoeffel (D - PA)  
George Nethercutt (R - WA)

**2006**

Sherrod Brown (D - OH)  
Benjamin L. Cardin (D - MA)  
Harold E. Ford Jr. (D - TN)  
Katherine Harris (R - FL)  
Mark Kennedy (R - MN)

**2008**

Mark Udall (D - CO)

Tom Allen (D - ME)

Steve Pearce (R - NM)

Tom Udall (D - NM)

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