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Political Ambitions And Recruitment On A College Campus

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POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND
RECRUITMENT ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS

by
Michael G. Shields

A Thesis
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Helena, Montana
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DEDICATION

For my parents, two Irish Democrats who have done much to encourage my love of politics, in appreciation of the immeasurable sacrifices they have made for me.

M.G.S.
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"Political Science has always attempted to come to terms with the nature of man, the political animal. Plato (Republic) dealt with the problems of instilling in youth the qualities of character necessary for effective citizenship; Aristotle (Politics) remarked on the necessity of fitting the constitution of a city state to the character of the people, and Hobbes (Leviathan) dealt with the question of national character and personality."¹

This study deals with political ambition and recruitment. It is a limited investigation into the reasons why certain individuals run for public office. Why does a person become a politician? What factors, motivate an individual to enter politics? This will be the focus of my study. I believe that it is imperative that we ask and seek solutions to these fundamental questions.

In our society, the political profession offers an individual nearly unlimited opportunity for correcting the ills and meeting the needs of society. Yet, simultaneously, politics and politicians are looked upon with increasing suspicion and cynicism by the general public. In our recent national experience we have been the victims of wide-scale corruption and illegal activities which have been perpetrated by some of our public officials. Many people are sincerely asking; can our system of government continue to endure in light of these unpresidedent events. I believe that these activities are only the

superficial effects of a much more complex dilemma. We as a people are ignorant of our governmental process. We comprehend how governmental structures and institutions function but we have failed to recognize the significance of the vital roles played by public officials within our system of government. This ignorance has created uncertainty, fear, and suspicion toward many public officials on all levels of government.

Perhaps by attempting to arrive at some conclusions as to why certain people enter politics we will attain a better understanding of our political process. What are the opportunities offered by the American political system? What are the functional-structural incentives and deterrents which encourage or restrict individuals from seeking office? What values do individuals pursue through political offices. Are they motivated by a quest for power? Do they seek affection or well-being? Do they strive for wealth or respect? Do they run in order to serve the public good? It is my conviction that by attempting to answer these rudimentary questions we will begin to comprehend the consequences of elected public service. If we begin to recognize the capabilities and the limitations inherent in elective office we may begin to dispell the uncertainty, fear and suspicion which presently shrouds our political system.

John Stuart Mill once stated:

"...political machinery does not act of itself. As it is first made, so it has to be worked by man, and even ordinary men. It needs not their single aqusesence, but
their active participation; and must be adjusted to the capacities and qualifications of such men as are available."  

By analyzing what motivates a politician to do the things he does, we will comprehend, to a greater degree why our governmental system functions the way it does. Traditional political scientists have labored to describe the functions of the political process. In their traditional approach they explored governmental institutions with little regard or interest in the individuals who made those institutions function. Recently more and more students of political science have begun to recognize the importance of the individual personality in the political process. Under the behavioral approach, the political scientist attempts to, "understand a phase of the process of government by a systematic study of human behavior in political situations."  

There is still a need for the descriptive institutional approach, but the behavioral approach can help to supplement our understanding of the entire political process. 

In the course of this study, I will review and analyze some recent inquiries into political motivation, ambition and recruitment. I will attempt to incorporate and improve upon the findings of these studies in my own investigation. My study will center around political motivation on the college campus.

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2 John Stuart Mill; "REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT" in UTILITARIANS LIBERTY AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT; (New York, Dutton, 1910, EMEYNIAN ed); p. 177.

3 SAMUEL J. ELDERSVLD; "RESEARCH IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR" AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW. Date not given p.1004.
Hopefully, I will arrive at some conclusions as to why certain people run for public office. By gaining a fuller understanding of what motivates a person to seek office, perhaps we will be better able to understand why our governmental systems function in the manner in which they do.

"There is little dispute any more that we live under a government of men as well as laws. Yet we have only begun to find out what public office means, in human terms, to those who govern. In a time of might and malaise such questions have a special urgency."\(^4\)

CHAPTER 1
A SURVEY OF FOUR RELEVANT STUDIES

In our society, minor forms of political participation such as voting, discussing political issues, and being informed about contemporary political developments are looked upon as desirable and good by most citizens. But, what happens when an individual decides to seek elected public office? Running for public office has positive and negative connotations. It is true that the public accords remarkable high marks to certain public officials and public office holders are invariably over-represented in polls for the "most important" and greatest men. At the same time there is in the public mind the dark side of political involvement; getting on the public payroll, and taking part in political "deals". No one has to explain why he votes but every candidate will, at one time or another, have to explain to those who know him why he is getting involved in politics. James Barber contends in The Lawmakers, that, "running for office is not normal - that is expected of and valued for everyone. Running for public office is not for everyone. Running for public office is seen as a marked shift in an individual's regular commitments and activity." As an individual seeks to gain more influential public office, his motives for attempting to advance become subjected to greater public scrutiny. Often

a candidate is described as too ambitious or that he is attempting to gain excessive power. "Although politics is frequently concerned with power, blatantly power-hungry individuals are distrusted in a democratic system." Yet, with all the public concern about excessive ambition, political ambition has not been the primary research topic of many students of political science. Until recently, very little, if any, research evidence existed concerning the motivations of political candidates.

In the early 1960's, some notable exceptions began to appear as more studies were conducted to determine the motives of individuals who run for public office.

In 1961, James Barber in The Lawmakers asserted that an individual's self image is a vital factor in the development of political candidacy. The Barber study focused upon the recruitment and adaptation of freshman state legislators. Barber concludes this study by maintaining that generally, individuals with either very low or very high self-esteem will venture into politics. Joseph Schlisinger in Political Ambition, published in 1966, conducted an exhausting survey of political careers and suggested a rudimentary ambition theory. Schlisinger contends that political office structure within a community plays a key role in the development of political candidacy. Gordon S. Black in 1970 published, Career Choices and the Role of Structural Incentives. In this study Black asserts that the level of individual political commitment will be determined by the amount

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^6^ROBERT E. LANE, POLITICAL LIFE; p. 130.
of electoral competition and the size of the community.

In an innovative study of power motivation, Rufus Browning and Herbert Jacob concluded that politicians, in general, are not excessively motivated by a quest for power. There are numerous other studies of political motivation and their number grows with the passage of time. I will refer to many of these studies in the course of my investigation. I have isolated these four principle studies because of their pertinence to the scope of my study and because of their availability. The increase in the quantity and quality of research information concerning political ambition only gives credence to the fact that more and more students of political science are becoming aware of the significance of this previously ignored facet of the political process.

The study of political ambition and recruitment has been approached in at least three principle and distinct methods. Under the more traditional methodology, political scientists have focused primarily on the functions of political organizations in a constituency. For example, what effect, if any, does competition within the ranks of a political party have upon the channeling of talent into political office? The second approach is one which political scientists have borrowed, to a great extent, from sociologists. By means of this process, political scientists have described the background characteristics of individuals recruited into the political system.
By employing this means of investigation, political scientists have concentrated upon such elements as social environment, economic status, educational levels, religious preference, and national origin in an effort to determine if the political candidate is significantly different from the population at large. Many political-background studies have been conducted to ascertain why certain occupations dominate certain political offices. A third and relatively new approach has been developed by psychologists and modified by political scientists to meet their research needs. Through the use of various projective tests, political scientists have attempted to tap the intensity of numerous personal motivations of political leaders. By distinguishing what motivational characteristics are common among certain individuals political scientists have sought to determine why personal motives stimulate them to seek public office.

To varying degrees the central research studies referred to in this paper have utilized one or a combination of all three method approaches mentioned above.

James Barber's area of interest is somewhat different than my own. The major portion of his inquiry deals with adaptation of novice legislators to the legislative process and environment after their election. In the course of his study, Barber has devoted much time and effort in an attempt to determine why and by what functional means the legislators entered the political arena. Some of the interviewing tech-
iques employed by Barber will be incorporated into my study in modified forms.

Barber begins his study by asking three basic questions. He maintains that every candidate, at one time or another, asks himself the following: "Do I want it? (motivation), 2) Can I do it? (resources), 3) Do they want me? (opportunity)." The first question is perhaps the most fundamental. Why does a person choose a political career rather than some other occupational interest or vocation? Barber believes that the potential candidate will answer this basic question in terms appropriate to the office he initially seeks. If the position being sought is appealing to the individual, for any of a variety of reasons, the individual will seek candidacy. The second fundamental question must be answered in terms of the demands of the position sought. This is accomplished by the individual taking a personal accounting of his own resources. Barber states, "the qualifications for office are not easy to specify." It is extremely difficult to specify what qualities are needed to be an effective office-holder. The problem is compounded by the fact the same qualities will not necessarily be applicable to all public offices. In addition the potential candidate must assess the requirements or demands of candidacy in terms of time, money, and effort which must be expended in order to gain office. "It is the cost in comparison with his anticipated reward that is

\[7\text{JAMES BARBER: THE LAWMAKERS; p.11.}\]

\[8\text{IBID; p.11.}\]
significant. Here as in the marketplace, the demand for the product is a function not simply of prices and income (opportunities and resources), but also of the utilities of the particular products for consumers (motivation)."¹⁰

Political opportunity will be determined by numerous environmental factors. What is the supply of potential candidates in the community? It is small or large? Is the electoral community competitive or not? These environmental factors will, by in large determine the political opportunities and the quality of the candidates within the community. Barber contends, "In theory, then, motivations, resources and opportunities are the three fundamental elements of political recruitment."¹⁰

Barber collected his data from verbatim transcripts of tape recorded interviews with twenty seven first term members of the Connecticut legislature. The interviews lasted between forty minutes to about two and one half hours, averaging ninety minutes. He also used a mail questionnaire from 83 of the 150 term legislators before the session and from 96 post-session respondents.

He concluded his analysis by making the following assumption. "political candidacy is more likely to be taken by two types of people: those who have such high self-esteem that they can manage relatively easily, the threats, strains and anxieties

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⁹ JAMES BARBER; THE LAWMAKERS; p. 12.

¹⁰ JAMES BARBER; THE LAWMAKERS; p. 221.
involved in running for public office; and those who have such low self-esteem that they are willing to do this extraordinary thing to raise it."\(^{11}\) Barber asserts that coupled with either low or high self-esteem is a predisposition to candidacy. "One kind of predisposition to candidacy, then, may develop out of certain features of a person's basic self-image, an image of the political world that facilitates his recruitment. Whether or not he participates in any active way, he may take an observer's interest in certain facets of politics."\(^{12}\) Barber maintains that this is a life long development and that when the opportunity (candidacy) is manifest certain individuals because of their interest in politics and their personal self-image will seek election to public office.

Rufus P. Browning and Herbert Jacob conducted a study of power motivation in the political personality. Their primary results were first released in 1966. The subject of their research was the importance of the desire for power in the quest for political office. It has been commonly held that the search for power propels many into politics and is the most likely explanation for much of a politician's activities. Browning and Jacob discovered very little evidence existed regarding the motivational factors which stimulate political candidacy. They attempted to prove empirically the level of political power motivation by analyzing two distinct and

\(^{11}\) JAMES BARBER; THE LAWMAKERS; p. 225.

\(^{12}\) JAMES BARBER; THE LAWMAKERS; p. 227.
diverse groups of political personalities. They examined the intensity of power motivation (as measured by the test) displayed by politicians in two widely separated localities. The questions they asked were: 1) How strongly are politicians motivated to seek power, achievement, and friendship (affiliation) as compared to non-politicians? 2) To what extent do characteristics of the political system—specifically, the kinds of positions available and the opportunity structure of the community—make a difference in the motivations of the individuals attracted to politics?"\textsuperscript{13}

The test employed by Browning and Jacob is a refined version of the Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T.). This test has been administered to experimental groups, students, businessmen, military personnel, and to a nationwide sample. The T.A.T. assumes that the respondents will reveal deeply rooted impulses in their imaginative responses to pictures. The test consisted of six pictures which illustrated individuals engaged in various activities. These pictures sometimes evoked descriptive stories with political content. The scoring system of the T.A.T. does not depend upon the content of the plot but rather of the actions and feelings depicted. When a story involves attempts to control others, it is scored for power motivation. Stories are scored in a like manner for achievement motivation when stories concern individuals trying to do well in an activity and for affiliative motivation when stories

\textsuperscript{13}RUFUS P. BROWNING, HERBERT JACOB; "POWER MOTIVATION AND THE POLITICAL PERSONALITY." PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY, 1966, p. 77.
involve attempts to win or maintain friendly relationships with other individuals. This test has been well validated in numerous ways. 14

Browning and Jacob administered the test to politicians at the beginning of an hour long interview of their political careers.

The T.A.T. was introduced as a test of imagination with no hint that the purpose of the test was a measure of motivation. Jacob and Browning tested politicians in two locations: a middle-sized eastern city and two parishes (counties) in Louisiana. The Louisiana sample was made up of 50 elected officials who represented 67% of all the elected officials in the parish. In the eastern city, respondents were a random sample of 23 businessmen who had been ward chairmen, had held elective office both (local and state) in the city; or who had held appointed patronage positions. In the Eastern city the test was also given to 18 politically inactive businessmen who matched 18 of the businessman-politicians with respect to size of business, career level and specific occupation, religion, ethnic background, urban residence, average education and age.

In the course of their investigation Jacob and Browning supposed that all politicians have at least some basic traits in common, among them a concern for power. The results of their study are in many respects surprising. "Our evidence does nothing to support the image of the power motivated politician.

14 Browning and Jacob; p. 78. Power Motivation.
In short, the politicians we tested, did not uniformly have any particular level of power motivation, and they are not clearly different in power motivation from non politicians of similar occupation and status."\(^{15}\)

Browning and Jacob as a result of their study make the following observation in relation to the structural environment and its affect upon power motivation;

Simply being a politician does not entail a distinctive concern for power or for achievement or affiliation. For the communities studied, our data show that businessmen in local politics do not differ in motivation from politically inactive businessmen. However, patterns of political and non political opportunities in different communities and distribution opportunities among political offices are related to the motivational make-up of the office holder. The data from the eastern city and the Louisiana parishes are consistent with the propositions that relatively plentiful opportunities for power and achievement in the economic arena, channel strongly motivated men into economic rather than political activity; that in communities where politics and political issues are the center of attention and interest, men attracted to politics are more strongly power and achievement-motivated than in communities where politics commands only peripheral interest; the political systems that offer upward political mobility attract men with relatively strong achievement and power motivation; and that concentration in a political system on matters of strictly party or factional organization and power, to the near exclusion of public policy concerns, tends to keep men with strong affiliative needs out of politics. Similar relationships hold for specific offices within the communities studied. Offices with high potential for power and achievement are occupied by men who are more strongly power and achievement motivated than politicians in low potential offices."\(^{16}\)

The implications of the Browning-Jacobs study are obvious.

\(^{15}\) IBID; p.89.

\(^{16}\) BROWNING AND JACOB; p.89-90. POWER MOTIVATION
Rather than being motivated by excessive need for power, achievement, or affiliation, the motives of the individuals who seek public office will to a great degree be determined by the structure of the political community. Individuals who seek high potential (positions of power and influence) will most likely have strong achievement and power motives. The office structure of the community and the resulting opportunities it accords for seeking office will funnel various individuals with distinct motives into political offices with corresponding power and achievement levels.

Gordan S. Black conducted an investigation into political recruitment and advancement of local politicians. His data is based upon a study of city councilmen in the San Francisco Bay Area. 437 councilmen were interviewed from 87 cities. Black asserts that it is imperative to identify the immediate factors which contribute to political candidacy rather than events in the individual's distant past. "It is important to look at the circumstances immediately surrounding the politicians decision (to run) not factors in his childhood."\(^{17}\) Black concurs with Barber in his belief that, "(the politician tends to make his decision to seek office on the basis of cost, benefits and probabilities that operate at the time of his decision."\(^{18}\) Secondly he states, "the risk of running for public office is an increasing function of the size of the


\(^{18}\) GORDAN S. BLACK; P.886. PROFESSIONALISM
political unit and the degree of electoral competition within the political unit. ¹⁹ As the risk of running increases, ones committed to a political career will either increase or diminish. Consequently, political ambition develops in part as a result of investments that individuals make in their political activity. The more politically committed individuals will seek advancement while those less committed will be discouraged from running. Black states, "two factors which would seem to be related in rough fashion to the relative investments that these councilmen have made to politics is the size of the city and the extent of competition in the city from which they were elected. Size is important because the larger the city the larger the electorate to which the councilmen must appeal and the more costly his campaign. In a competitive area the harder one must campaign." ²⁰

It is important to keep in mind that the main purpose of the Black study was to ascertain why certain individuals seek advancement within the political system and why others either remain in one certain position or do not seek re-election. Black arrives at the following conclusions; that the political environment, in terms of the risks necessary to gain elective office will in part determine the commitment of individuals toward a career as a politician. If those risks become too great the individual with weak political commitment will not

¹⁹ GORDAN S. BLACK; p. 871.

²⁰ GORDAN S. BLACK; p. 872.
seek advancement within the political system. He will either retire from the system entirely or remain in the same position. Black maintains, "the system (political environment) does not cause ambition or success in a direct sense; what it does is to determine indirectly the kind of men whom we find in various types of offices."\(^{21}\)

An individual who is faced with a decision to seek political office will rationally weigh the costs and benefits to be derived from the office before he makes a commitment to run. Black believes that, "a rationalistic explanation for career choice process (in politics) may prove to be the road to an adequate theory of political ambition."\(^{22}\) A potential candidate must first have some inclined interest in the political process or political issues. He will weigh the costs, risks, time, and money against the anticipated benefits of gaining office. He will continue to follow the same rationalistic approach as he decides to continue, retire, or advance within the political system. Thus, each step in a political career sequence alters one's evaluation of the other step. As a politician's investment in a political career increases, his evaluation of political alternatives is likely to become more positive while his estimate of non-political alternatives remains the same. The result is academic, as a


\(^{22}\) GORDAN S. BLACK; p. 159.
politician advances there is a development of a higher level of ambition, as his investment increases. The Black study implies that ambition is developed as one's investment in politics increases; rather that being a constant motivational force throughout a politician's career.

"This description of the development of ambition differs markedly from the view that sees the politician as a man driven who decides his course early and plans his whole life accordingly. Perhaps there are such men, but we suspect they are a distinct minority. The tides of politics are too great to permit men to chart an unwavering route through the uncertain and troubled waters of politics." 23

Joseph A. Schelesinger analyzed the structure of political opportunities within the United States. His study was based primarily on the office careers of major party candidates for governor and United States Senator. Schelesinger feels, "We can learn more from the careers of political leaders than who they were or where they came from." 24 He first establishes the positions of the states in a national career sequence structure and compares the states with respect to their national career opportunities. He examined each major office, measured the impact of party competition on political opportunities, and investigated the differences between the parties in each state.

Schelesinger adamantly maintains that ambition within politics is a positive and vital component of the political process. He takes issue with those who are critical of

23 GORDAN S. BLACK; p.873.

24 JOSEPH A. SCHELESINGER; "AMBITION IN POLITICS: POLITICAL CAREERS IN THE UNITED STATES" (RAND McNALLY, CHICAGO, ILL. 1966); p. vii.
politicians for being ambitious. "To slight the role of ambition in politics, then or treat it as a human failing to be surprised is to miss the central function of ambition in political systems. A political system unable to kindle ambitions for office is as much a danger of breaking down as one unable to restrain ambitions. Representative government, above all, depends on a supply of so driven; the desire for election, and more important for re-election becomes the electorates restraint upon its public officials. No more irresponsible government is imagined that one of high-minded men un-concerned for political futures."25

Schelesinger assumes that men's ambitions are stirred by opportunities and, to the extent that experience brings order to opportunity, opportunity will guide men's ambitions. He has attempted to empirically analyze the political opportunities offered by the American political structure. The study categorizes every major political office (state and federal) in terms of the opportunities each office offers to its aspirants. Schelesinger asserts that certain offices or political positions are conducive to advancement in politics while others are not. Politicians act in a manner which they consider appropriate to the achievement of office. Therefore, the political office structure within our system of government does much to direct the ambitions of politicians.

"Within a nation, political ambitions are directed by the structure of political opportunities. Ambitions provide the energies and decide the policies of individual leaders. Ambitions also provide the means by which leaders can influence others. The entire network of political decisions is held together by the interlocking of ambitions through the structure of opportunities."26

25 JOSEPH SCHELESINGER; p. 100.

26 JOSEPH SCHELESINGER; p. 182.
The Schelesinger study is an in depth survey of the American political office structure. Schelesinger believes by analyzing the opportunities which the framework offers potential political candidates, we can better understand why they act in the fashion which they do. He concludes;

"My data imply that the tensions of ambition are likely to be greater as one rises in pyramid of office: the timetable of age and office have narrowed the field and intensifies the competition. We can infer, therefore that the impact of ambitions upon the behavior of public officials will be greater on those in higher office than in low office; greater upon congressmen than upon state legislators, greater upon United States Senators than upon United States Representatives. Such an arrangement is surely felicitous in a democracy for it provides progressive controls over public officials as their power to do good or evil increases." 27

Schlesinger has assumed that politicians will respond to their office goals. As a consequence they will tend to act in a manner which they consider advantageous to their election and advancement. The political office structure will simultaneously encourage and check political ambition.

REFLECTIONS:

The findings of the preceding studies are limited and callow. "The virtue of theory is that it allows crude and tentative efforts to point the way to unexposed areas and to suggest new approaches to existing knowledge." In each of these studies, the investigators have attempted to determine what induces an individual to seek public office. No one claims to have discovered the complete answer. At the present

27 SCHELESINGER; p. 142.
time we possess only a limited, partial view of the vast and complex factors which stimulate political candidacy. It is apparent that no exclusive element dictates political candidacy. There are multiple factors; the environment, in terms of office structure, competition and the opportunities which it accords potential candidates, does much to facilitate political candidacy. The individual's view of himself and the political reality will have an effect upon his willingness to venture into politics. The search for friendship, power and success may propel some into the political arena. We must be cognizant of all these factors when attempting to arrive at a rational, complete and sincere assessment of political motivation.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL AMBITION AND RECRUITMENT ON A CAMPUS

In light of the findings documented in the previous chapter it is evident that these are multiple factors which stimulate political candidacy. During the course of my investigation I will focus upon three principle areas. First, the social and economic background of the respondents. Do the responding candidates share common economic and social characteristics which distinguish them from the remainder of the community. Secondly, I hope to determine why an individual is motivated to seek a certain political office. Browning and Jacob contend that the political office structure within a community will offer diverse political opportunities for candidates who seek them. They conclude, "patterns of political and non-political opportunities in different communities, and the distribution of opportunities among political offices are related to the motivational make-up of the candidate who seeks a specific office." What motivates an individual to run for one particular office rather than another? Why does a potential candidate decide to run for vice-president rather than president? Do the opportunities offered by the political office structure in a community have an effect upon political candidacy? It is my contention that the political office structure will effect the level of political commitment demonstrated by a candidate. The more committed individuals will seek office which are more

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28 BROWNING-JACOB PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY; p. 90.
demanding in terms of responsibility, time and effort. The less committed candidate will run for an office with less responsibility which require less accountability and energy. Finally, I will analyze the parental political background of the respondents. I believe that the level of political activity displayed by the parent will effect the child's view of political reality. If the parent is politically active the child will tend to take a more active role in politics.

By analyzing the demographic characteristics, assessing the candidates reasons for seeking a specific office and the level of his parents political activity, I hope to obtain a clearer understanding concerning the effects of these factors upon political candidacy.

The Setting of the Investigation:

It is important to note that the respondents in my interviews were students who had previously been candidates for student government positions on a small college campus. The length of the campaign was 4-6 weeks and if elected, the individuals served for a period of one year. Each candidate in order to be eligible to run was required to be a full-time undergraduate student. Because of this requirement, candidacy for each individual was a part-time endeavor. The part-time nature of student candidacy is somewhat different than the individuals studied in the previous investigations mentioned. The respondents in this study are students and they were not seeking full-time, long term positions as were the respondents in the Black or Barber studies.
The individuals interviewed in this study were fifteen undergraduate students who had been student government candidates at Carroll College in Helena, Montana between 1971-1973. The college is a private, co-educational, four-year liberal arts institution directed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena. The college had an average enrollment of 1,050 students during this three year period. The Associated Students of Carroll College is in essence the official student government at Carroll. The Associated Students membership is composed of all full time students enrolled at Carroll College. Structurally, the Associated Students is composed of a twenty member student congress. The members of the Congress are elected at large by the student body. The Congress is vested with the legislative powers and control over the affairs and activities of the Associated Students. The executive administrative functions of the association are directed by five executive officers who are elected annually. The purpose of the Associated Students, as documented in its constitution is, "to provide for an authorized representative channel of student thought in a most effective and creditable manner to assure a voice in academic, social, and disciplinary undertakings of the College."29

The Associated Student Constitution prescribes the qualifications for executive office as follows, "Each candidate must have completed at least three (3) semesters of college and be,

29 PREAMBLE; CONSTITUTION OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF CARROLL COLLEGE.
at the time of his candidacy, in good academic standing."\textsuperscript{30}
The President of the Associated Students is the chief executive officer and is, "the official representative of the Associated Students."\textsuperscript{31} The president is the presiding officer of the Associated Student Congress. The president is currently paid an annual salary of $850.00. The vice-president, "performs the functions of the President in his absence and serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member of all Boards and Committees."\textsuperscript{32} The social vice-president, "co-ordinates all of the social functions sponsored by the Associated Students Congress."\textsuperscript{33} The secretary must, "attend all student Congress meetings and record all minutes and minutes thereof."\textsuperscript{34} The treasurer, "must receive and disburse all funds of the Associated Students."\textsuperscript{35} The four subordinate officers are paid $700.00 per year. The executive officers are given office space, and free postage for official correspondence. The officers are paid travel expenses for any travel they make in the course of their official duties. The president is given the use of a private phone for the length of his term.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30}CONSTITUTION; ASSOCIATED STUDENTS CARROLL COLLEGE, SECTION 2 CLAUSE 1.
\item \textsuperscript{31}IBID; SEC. 2. CLAUSE 2
\item \textsuperscript{32}SEC. 3 CLAUSE 2
\item \textsuperscript{33}IBID; SEC. 4 CLAUSE 2
\item \textsuperscript{34}IBID; SEC. 6 CLAUSE 2
\item \textsuperscript{35}IBID; SEC. 7 CLAUSE 2
\end{itemize}
Interest in the affairs of the Associated Students by the majority of students is nominal at best. In recent annual elections, as many as two executive office positions have been uncontested. Voter turnout varied from 60% in 1971 to 35% in 1973. The campaigns are personal and in many instances petty. Issues stressed by the candidates are vague or non-existent. In recent years there has been a marked decline in the number of party slates and an increase in candidates seeking office independently. To a limited degree there is a system of public finance. Each candidate is given $25.00 from the Associated Student General Fund to conduct his campaign. In recent elections the number of younger candidates has increased. While there is no constitutional provision which prohibits any officer from succeeding himself, no recent incumbents have elected to seek re-election. Because there is no carry over in leadership from one administration to another, there is little continuity in manner of leadership or policy proposals from one year to the next.

Some will question the wisdom of selecting student candidates as the subjects for a study of political motivation. Any college community is by its nature select. The issues and problems which confront a college are, many times, provincial. There are numerous differences between the college and the larger community. To the candidates who will be the subject of this study the costs, tensions, and expected benefits of candidacy are real -- very real. Perhaps by analyzing the motives of
candidates on a low, elementary, and seemingly insignificant level of political involvement we can arrive at a fuller understanding of what motivates politicians on a local, state and national level.

Methodology:

I collected my data during the course of personal interviews with fifteen former successful and unsuccessful A.S.C.C. candidates. The interviews were conducted in a quiet study on the college campus. The structure of the interview was informal and followed a refined version of the "focused interview" described by Merton, Fiske and Kendall. This method was employed by James Barber in his study of freshmen state legislators. Under this method the interviewer refers to some political event in which the respondent has been involved. The respondent is asked to describe his behavior in this event: what did he actually do? This is followed by questions on his reactions, choices, feelings and thoughts about the particular political event. For Example: The Day of the election what were you thinking about? The aim of the interview is to discover more precisely what personal associations come into play and what personal associations come to mind. In the course of the interview I was attempting to discover what factors had a bearing on the individual's decision to seek an A.S.C.C. position. The questions asked during the interviews are contained in a separate

\[36\text{ROBERT K. MERTON, MAJORIE FISKE, AND PATRICIA L. KENDELL,}\]
\[\text{THE FOCUSED INTERVIEW (GLENCOE, ILL.; FREE PRESS 1956); pp. 280-84.}\]
appendix. Each interview lasted between 40 and 75 minutes averaging about one hour in length. Each interview was tape-recorded in its entirety. I also recorded the respondents' answers in long-hand during the interview session.

At the beginning of each interview the respondent was informed about the general topic of the interview; mainly his or her decision to run for an A.S.C.C. position. The respondents were told that there was no time limit to the interview and they were asked to be as candid as possible in their responses. It is important to note at this juncture my own service as an A.S.C.C. officer. I have been associated to varying degrees with many of the individuals interviewed. This association may have had an effect upon the frankness of some of the respondents' replies. To what extent this effected the course of the interviews cannot be determined. Each respondent was given as much time to answer each of the questions as he felt was necessary. The interviews were conducted from one to three years after the individual was a candidate depending upon the year of his candidacy.

At the conclusion of the interview, the respondents were asked not to relate the substance of the interview to any other former candidates who would be interviewed at a future time. During the course of this study I have relied heavily upon my own experiences as an A.S.C.C. officer. This experience has been beneficial in comprehending some of the capabilities and limitations inherent in A.S.C.C. candidacy which was
described by the respondents. In some instances, some of my own viewpoints and prejudices may have clouded some of my interpretations. I can only state that I have attempted to be as objective in the development, administration, and interpretation of each of the interviews.

Nearly half of the interview questions were concerned with demographic information about the candidate. This information will be beneficial in attempting to determine if the background characteristics of the candidates are in any way distinct from the remainder of the student body. This information will be compared with social and economic information compiled by the college Office of Placement and Testing for the years 1971-1973. These generalized summaries document the make-up of the Carroll student body by tapping such background factors as: parental income, racial background, parental education, secondary school achievements and grade averages of the students. The summaries also contained weighted normative data of 230 comparable institutions in a national survey.

A third series of questions were asked concerning the political activity of the respondent and his immediate family on the local and state level. These questions are incorporated into the interview in order to determine what effect, if any, the political activities and preferences of the parent had upon the student's political activity.

By means of the focused interview I will attempt to tap the background characteristics of the respondents, the level
of their previous political activity and the reasons why they sought an A.S.C.C. position. If the interviews are effective in exposing this information I should be able to determine if the respondents are drastically incongruous, in terms of social and economic characteristics, when compared with the remainder of the student body. Secondly, after analyzing the respondents' reasons for seeking a specific position, I should be able to assertain the effect, if any, of the political office structure upon political candidacy. After reviewing the level of parental political activity I should be able to assess its influence upon the degree of the respondent's political undertakings.
CHAPTER III

FINDINGS:

4.1 Demographics: The demographic information collected during this study does not conclusively segregate the respondents of the study from the remainder of the student body. As a result of the small sample size it is difficult to make a definite assessment regarding the demographic characteristics of the individuals interviewed. It is apparent that certain keen deviations do exist between the demographic composition of the A.S.C.C. candidates and the remainder of the student population.

One of the most glaring distinctions between the candidates and non-candidates is a marked difference in the annual parental income. The parental income of the A.S.C.C. candidates, on the whole, is substantially larger than the annual family income of the non-candidates. Based upon the data compiled nearly 66% of the A.S.C.C. candidates interviewed came from families which made at least $20,000.00 or more per year. Only 15.6% of the entire student body came from families making $20,000.00 or more annually. Figure 4.1 details the parental income distribution of the candidates, the Carroll student body and the weighted national norms for comparable four institutions.
Based upon the results of the interviews a second demographic distinction is apparent in the comparison of paternal educational level of the three groups. The percentage of paternal high school graduates was significantly greater among the A.S.C.C. candidates than that of the student body or the national average. Strangely, the number of fathers who were college graduates was radically lower in the candidate group than either of the comparison groups. The percentage of fathers who had earned post-graduate degrees was considerably greater among the candidate group. The levels of paternal education are documented in figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2  
Paternal Education Level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>A.S.C.C. Candidates</th>
<th>Carroll College</th>
<th>4 Yr. Colleges Nationally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar School or less</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The larger percentage of fathers in the candidate group who had gained a post graduate degree may account for the reduction in the college degree level within the group. The increased level of formal education of the candidate group may partially explain the substantial increase in estimated family income among the candidate group families. There was no marked difference in the maternal educational level in the comparison of the three groups.

40% of the respondents' were not residents of the state of Montana. This compares with a total non-resident population of the Carroll student body of 21%.

The candidates considered themselves liberal in political preference to a greater degree than either of the comparison groups. 53% of the candidates interviewed selected the liberal category when asked to select their current political preference. This compares with a student body average of 33.2% and a national average of 35.9% who selected the liberal category.
Figure 4.3
Current Political Preference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A.S.C.C. Candidates</th>
<th>Carroll College</th>
<th>National Norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Far Left</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-of-the-Road</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far Right</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I attempted to measure the academic performance of the A.S.C.C. candidates and compare their level of achievement with the remainder of the Carroll student body. Unfortunately no information was available which pertained to the mass academic performance of the student body. Documentation did exist relevant to the generalized high school academic performance of all the students who enter the college in a given year. In comparing the high school grade averages of the respondents with this generalized data, the A.S.C.C. candidates fair somewhat lower in academic performance. One-third of the A.S.C.C. candidates maintained a "C" average during their high school career. This compares with a college average of 8.9 and a nation average of 7.7 "C" students. Interestingly enough, every A.S.C.C. presidential candidate interviewed maintained a "B+" average or better in high school. Figure 4.4 reveals the high school academic performance of the three comparison groups.
Because of the limited size of the interview sample the inferences which can be made concerning the data collected is far from conclusive. The information gained from this study does allow us to make a few crude and primary assessments concerning the demographic characteristics of the groups studied. The A.S.C.C. candidates tend to come from families with somewhat higher annual incomes than the rest of the student body. The fathers of the interview respondents are inclined to have attained a higher level of formal education than the comparison groups. The A.S.C.C. candidates tended to be more liberal in political preference that the student body and students nationally. There is evidence that a greater proportion of non-resident students seek A.S.C.C. positions than resident students. The A.S.C.C. aspirants tended to perform at a lower level of achievement in high school than either of the comparison groups. The demographic information gained from this study would be somewhat more valid if there was a comparison to similar group of student candidates. The original intent of this study was
to determine if the background characteristics of the A.S.C.C. candidates were significantly different than those of the entire student body. There is vague and fragmentary data which seem to document a distinction between the two groups. Because of the limited scope of this study, it would be inappropriate to conclude that this information is definitive or absolute.

4.2 The Effects of Office Structure:

As detailed in the preceding chapter the four subordinate A.S.C.C. executive positions have rather specific and limited constitutional duties. These positions to a great extent are task-oriented offices. In contrast, the President is the official spokesman of the Associated Students. He is vested with broad, nebulous constitutional powers and is responsible for co-ordinating the functions of the Association and the actions of his subordinates.

Black asserts that the political office structure within a community has an effect upon the types of men who run for the diverse offices within a system. "The political office structure determines indirectly the kind of men whom we find in various offices." Based upon the responses given by the candidates concerning their reasons for running for a specific office I conclude the individuals can be separated into two distinct groups: the presidential and non-presidential candidates. Schlesinger maintains, "Within a nation, political

37 GORDAN BLACK; p. 158.
ambitions are directed by the structure of the political opportunities." The presidency of the Associated Students offers its occupant extensive opportunities to direct his interest in numerous areas, such as: curriculum, student-faculty relations, social and cultural endeavors of the Association. The president is the one individual, above all others, who sets the tenor and tempo of a given administration. The office of the president is held responsible for the major portion of the Association's activity. The subordinate offices being limited in their duties are consequently confined to specific areas of responsibility.

Cognizant of this structural distinction it is interesting to review the responses given by the Presidential and non-presidential candidates concerning their reasons for seeking a particular office. When asked why he ran for the presidency one respondent quickly answered, "It was the office with the most influence and I wanted to get things done." Another presidential candidate retorted, "In the past (high school and service organizations) I never ran for anything but president. I never considered the other offices." A third presidential aspirant answered, "It was a challenge and I honestly thought I could do the best job." In stark contrast were the responses given by the subordinate candidates. "I couldn't make all the decisions the president has to make."

38 JAMES SCHLESINGER; p. 208.
One candidate for treasurer answered, "I couldn't take on all the responsibilities of the President." Nearly every respondent interviewed answered in similar fashion. The presidential candidates expressed confidence in their own capabilities. They were certain that they could meet the responsibilities of the office. The subordinates expounded upon their personal shortcomings and seemed willing to take on only limited responsibilities. Browning and Jacob concluded their study by stating, "Offices with high potential for power and achievement are occupied by men who are more strongly power and achievement motivated than politicians in low-potential offices." As a result of this study, I believe there is a strong positive correlation between the findings of Browning and Jacob and the responses given by the individuals who were the subjects of this study.

In light of the findings of this study I believe: for the group interviewed, that the political office structure does to a significant degree filter the political aspirations of the candidates into diverse and specific political offices. The findings of this investigation document a distinct difference in the reasons given for seeking an office parallel to the structural differences of the political offices. The presidential candidates displayed a greater degree of self-confidence in their personal abilities. Both successful and unsuccessful presidential candidates prior to the election were personally

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39 BROWNING-JACOB; p. 91.
more certain of victory than the subordinate candidate. This study, in rather crude fashion, has revealed similar evidence as found in the other previously mentioned studies concerning the effects of the political structure upon political candidacy. The political office structure, even on this level, directs the political aspirations of the candidates within the community.

4.3 Parental Political Influence:

"Party loyalties, interest in politics, sense of political efficiency and even positions on specific issues appear to be strongly influenced by ones parents."40

It is commonly held that the political preferences, of a parent will, for the most part, be adopted by the child. Is there any direct correlation between the political activities of the parent and the political actions of the child? For the most part, the political activity of the parents of the non-presidential candidates could be termed low. The parents of this group of respondents were described as being well informed about current local and national issues. None of the parents in the non-presidential group had ever sought election to a political office. The parents of the presidential candidates interviewed revealed that their fathers had been extremely active in local or state politics at one time in their lives. The father of one presidential candidate had once been elected mayor of his hometown and was still active politically on the local level. Another presidential

40 JAMES BARBER; THE LAWMAKERS; p. 181
respondent stated his father was an unsuccessful candidate for state treasurer. A third candidate related that his father was an administrator of a state agency and therefore could not actively participate in partisan politics. Prior to his government employment he had been extremely active in party politics. In each instance the father of the presidential candidates had displayed significantly more political activity than the non-presidential group. It is apparent the size of the interview sample is small but based upon the evidence gained in this study, there is a correlation between the political activity of the father and the political activities of the son. Each presidential candidate responding stated that there was a strong possibility that he would at sometime in the near future be a candidate for political office. Only 20% of the other respondents felt that they would one day seek political office. The data compiled in this study strongly supports the contention that the level of political activity of the parent may have a strong effect upon the child's estimation of the political reality and therefore be a factor in his decision to seek public office.

4.4 What has been accomplished in the course of this investigation? It has produced some fragmentary evidence pertaining to the effects of demographic factors, parental political activities and the structure of the political
system upon political candidacy. It is apparent that even on this level of political activity many similar factors shape the development of political candidacy. The opportunities offered by a political system will shape the political ambitions of individuals even on a college campus. We are only beginning to comprehend what it means, in personal terms, to be a political candidate on any level.

During the course of this study fifteen individuals have related candidly and openly their fulfillments, frustrations and experiences as political candidates. In my estimation this is the most valuable result of political motivational study. Only by comprehending, in personal terms what it actually means to seek public office can we begin to dispell the misconceptions and false generalizations so often associated with politics. With this new approach we may become more aware that politicians are human, like each of us. Perhaps with a more authentic and realistic representation of the consequences of political candidacy more individuals will enter political service who otherwise would not. In the wake of recent political events the need for this understanding has become more obvious and urgent.

If democracy succeeds in the United States, a very large portion of the credit must go to those activists, opinion leaders and especially public officials who make the hard, intricate, fateful decisions of governance. To discover how and why they do should be a central concern of political science."
This is the challenge which confronts us, perhaps making the public aware of the personal consequences of political candidacy, we may improve the political process, only time will tell. The only certainty is: we must.
Appendix A.

The following is a sample of the "focused interview" questions employed in the course of this study:

1. Age:
2. Age at the time of your candidacy?
3. Fathers Educational background?
4. Mothers Educational background?
5. Racial Background?
7. Religion Reared?
8. Religion Preference?
9. Father's Occupation?
10. Marital Status at the time of Candidacy?
11. Distance From Home to College
12. Average Grade in High School
13. Average Grade In College
14. Rank in Class - High School
15. Rank in Class - College
16. Secondary School Achievements
17. College Achievements and Activities: (Description)
18. Was Concern about financing your college education a factor in your decision to run for an A.S.C.C. position?
19. Have you ever held a part time job while a full time college student?
20. Did your A.S.C.C. duties force you to curtail part time job or other related activities?
21. What are your major sources of financial support for college?
22. What is your major field of study?
23. What is your Career Occupation Objective?
24. What is your current Political Preference?
25. Did you vote in the 1972 Presidential election?
26. How did you first become interested in running for an A.S.C.C. office?

27. Did you run independantly or did you run with a party?

28. When you finally decided to run how did you assess your chances of winning?

29. The following are often given as reasons why persons run for campus office. How important, in your case, do you consider each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Not very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Make social contacts and friends</td>
<td>b. An opportunity to serve the student body.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Enjoy campaigning</td>
<td>d. Able to influence with campus policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Service as an A.S.C.C. officer would be advantageous in the future when applying for graduate school and long term employment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Other?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. How did you assess the A.S.C.C. as a student government institution before the election? Was it viable? Did you think it was important? Could the organization accomplish very much in terms of the issues that you deem important to a college campus?

31. In making up your mind about running, what factors did you take into account? What were the pros and cons?

32. What was the reaction of your family and friends about your running?

33. What factor contributed the most to your decision to run?

34. How did you feel about running?

35. How active in politics were your parents? Have they ever held political office?

36. What is the population of your home town? Where is it located?

37. What are some of the things which you liked or disliked about the campaign?
38. Have you been active in local or state politics? If so when did you first get involved?

39. The day of the election what were you thinking about?

40. What is your general feeling about politics in your future?

41. If you had it to do over would you run for A.S.C.C. again?

42. In the future will you be active in political affairs?

43. In your campaign, what, if any issues did you emphasize?

44. Generally speaking were the voters interested in your campaign?

45. Do you think that the average student considers the A.S.C.C. an important student institution?

46. Pause for a minute – what did the experience (the campaign) mean to you personally? What stands out in your mind?

47. If you were successful, would you describe for me your experience as an A.S.C.C. officer? – pro and con-

48. How would you describe the role of an A.S.C.C. officer? – that is the main duty or function? What is the most important thing an officer can do?

49. Considering the role which you just described—tell me how you think you did.

50. Why did you run for a certain office? i.e. why President or secretary?
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