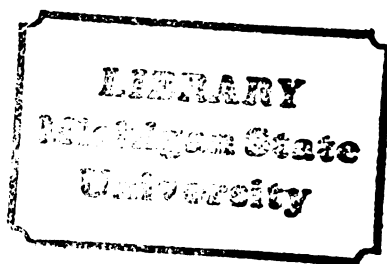




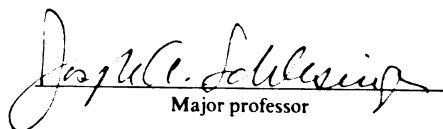
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PROBABILITY MODELS OF CONGRESSIONAL  
CAREER DECISIONS

by

Paul Brace

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

PROBABILITY MODELS OF CONGRESSIONAL  
CAREER DECISIONS

By  
Paul Brace

Underlying the analysis presented here is the assumption that the motivations of elected officials, whether assumed or discovered, play an important role in shaping interpretations of the activities of representative bodies, and understanding of representation. This thesis seeks to enhance the understanding of representative bodies by evaluating the career decisions made by members of the United States House of Representatives.

These decisions are placed in two categories. Decisions by members of the House to pursue higher office manifest progressive ambition. Alternatively, those deciding to leave the House voluntarily rather than seek reelection or election to higher office constitute a second category or class of decisions.

Both types of decisions were assumed to be the result of a rational choice calculation. Hence, these decisions were held to be a function of the utilities, risks, and costs that were operative at the time of the decision.

Beyond these factors, personal attributes such as age and risk taking propensities were posited to influence these decisions.

Hypotheses concerning each category of decisions were derived and tested using decisions of members of the House between 1950 and 1976. These hypotheses were first evaluated using crosstabular analysis and were then further scrutinized using multivariate probit models.

One of the most substantial influences upon decisions to seek higher office was the presence or absence of an incumbent seeking reelection. Also influencing these decisions were the degree of electorate the House member shared with the higher office, and the type of higher office. These factors point to the importance of understanding the nature of the contest and the resulting prize in understanding decisions to seek higher office.

Among factors found to influence retirement decisions, advanced age was found to be one of the most substantial contributors to an increased likelihood of retirement. The influence of age, however, was found to be conditioned by the age at which a member entered the House for the first time and thus pointed to the role variable seniority has upon retirement decisions.

For Klaudia

For Klaudia

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This project was my responsibility, but many others have been instrumental in its completion. Joseph A. Schlesinger, my chairman, instilled in me an interest in political careers and shared with me his wealth of insight into American politics. The other members of my committee, Paul R. Abramson, John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rohde all contributed guidance and channeled my thinking during the course of this endeavor.

Four other persons were of immense help in this project. For technical aid and editorial assistance I thank Dolores Siefert. Harriet Dhanak provided assistance in manipulating and maintaining my data set. For assistance in solving an immense computer task and for providing support, refuge, and comic relief I thank my fellow graduate student and friend, Rob Hymes. Special thanks also to Phil Baumann whose constant presence in our office provided me with the incentive to finish.

The data utilized in this dissertation were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1980 that

were merged into one file by the Consortium was further merged by me with Candidate and Constituency Statistics of Elections in the United States, 1788-1978, another Consortium data set. The Consortium bears no responsibility for the analysis or interpretations presented here.

To my typist, companion, and wife, Klaudia, I am forever grateful.

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## Chapter I

Congress is a unique organization. The Constitution authorized the body to organize itself as it saw fit. Over time it elected to follow principles of organization such as rules, hierarchy, and division of labor that make it correspond quite closely to the Weberian image of bureaucracy in many respects. A distinctive feature of Congress as an organization is the body's inability to control who is and who is not a member. The ultimate authority for determining membership lies outside the organization. As Anthony Downs has stated, "[e]very man's self interest leads him to be most responsive to those who decide whether he shall retain his primary position..." and "persons elected by constituents outside of the organization employing them have a primary 'loyalty' to those constituents rather than to the organization itself."<sup>1</sup> The incentive system that the member confronts resulting from this arrangement and the ways members respond to this incentive system are at the heart of the question of the nature of representation and the characteristics of representative institutions.

Differing views on the motivations of elected representatives have had an impact on Congressional research. For example, David Mayhew has placed primary emphasis on the

goal of reelection as a motivation of congressmen. By assuming this to be the preeminent goal of congressmen, he argues that the members of Congress have organized the institution in a manner that allows them to fulfill their reelection needs remarkably well. Congressmen, in pursuit of reelection, use various means to satisfy their constituents; and the institution, to Mayhew, becomes less an instrument for public policy decision making than it is a vehicle for their reelection, ultimately rendering it incapable of coming to terms with important national issues.<sup>2</sup> Morris Fiorina has also used the reelection goal as a foundation for a broad argument concerning Congress.<sup>3</sup> The motivation to be reelected has led Congress to establish and finance massive federal programs in an effort to appeal to the demands of their constituents. Once established, these massive endeavors have not always functioned well; and, according to Fiorina, congressmen have seized this as an opportunity by shifting their role to that of ombudsman, helping their constituents cope with the massive bureaucracy. Congress, then, in its narrow interest with reelection, created a monster and now does battle with this monster, again helping to ensure reelection and, furthermore, doing so without having to engage in the potentially disadvantageous (to them) practice of making decisions on controversial and important national issues.

While few, if any, students of Congress would argue that the reelection goals of congressmen are unimportant,

some give them less prominence in their interpretations of legislative behavior than do the above authors. Richard Fenno, for example, acknowledges the reelection goal but also evaluates the roles desire for influence in the House, good public policy, and a career beyond the House plays.<sup>4</sup> He found that members' giving prominence to the goal of reelection, influence in the House, or good public policy leads to distinct patterns that serve as a basis for predicting gross similarities and differences in committee behavior. These differences, combined with differing environmental constraints, lead each committee to adopt sets of strategic premises designed to achieve their members' goals. The output of committees, and of Congress (these being the decisions they reach), are explainable in terms of differing member goals and their interaction with environmental constraints.

Lawrence C. Dodd is another Congressional scholar willing to ascribe goals to congressmen other than reelection. As Dodd states, were members solely preoccupied with reelection, we would expect them to spend little time in Washington and devote their personal efforts to constituent speeches and district casework. If this were the case, "one would expect Congress to be run by a centralized, efficient staff who, in league with policy-oriented interest groups, would draft legislation, investigate the issues, frame palatable solutions, and present the members with the least controversial bills possible."<sup>5</sup> To Dodd, reelection is only the first orientation

in a four-tiered career path congressmen climb in their quest for power. Although the first tier is never fully completed, many members are capable of shoring up their electoral base through casework and move on to a second stage in which they broaden their horizons and seek service on key committees. Some move on to a third stage and seek service on power committees; and a very few move on to a fourth stage in which they seek party leadership. Dodd believes that the members of Congress have actively sought to design a congressional structure and process that would maximize their ability to exercise personal power within Congress, this structure being the committee system. Committee government, while attempting to satisfy members' individual desires for personal power, also serves in Dodd's view to disperse internal Congressional authority so widely "that the resulting institutional impotence cripples the ability of Congress to perform its constitutional roles..." and leaves Congress "with the inability ... to make national policy or ensure policy implementation."<sup>6</sup>

As these works suggest, how you view the motivations of Congressmen ultimately has a tremendous impact upon how you interpret the activities and outputs of the body as a whole. It would appear that the degree to which one emphasizes reelection as a motivation for congressmen ultimately shapes one's interpretation of the function and disfunctions of Congress and, ultimately, politics. Elections are, of course, important to both interpretations of Congressional behavior; for, even in views that do not emphasize reelection as a

sole or even primary motivation, it remains a necessary condition for the fulfillment of other goals. Hence, an implicit assumption underlying each perspective is that elections matter, although disagreement may remain as to their ultimate impact upon congressmen's behavior. That elections matter in any meaningful way presupposes that a representative's constituents will vote for or against him on the basis of their opinion of his performance in Congress. Roughly three decades of scholarly examination of voting behavior have cast serious doubt on the assumption that the electorate votes in an informed manner on the performance of elected representatives. Miller and Stokes, for example, stated that the electorate sees very little altogether of what goes on in the national legislature.<sup>7</sup> Their research suggested how little is known about the two parties' legislative records among constituents, and even less is known about the part played by their own congressman.

The general lack of information held by the electorate, as well as the substantial degree of apathy demonstrated by the general public concerning most public issues, presents a substantial challenge to normative democratic theories that suggest that elected representatives will act in the public interest because of the existence of elections that can be invoked as sanctions against elected officials whose performance in office does not correspond to the public's wishes. As has been noted, "the individual voter was not all the theory of democracy requires of him."<sup>8</sup> The question of the relationship between leaders and those led is at the heart

of democratic theory as well as a key feature of how one interprets the activities of representative bodies and of politics itself.

That representatives are responsive at all to the public's wishes in the absence of widespread political participation is one of the more enigmatic features of American democracy. The key to this enigma has been provided by Joseph A. Schumpeter in his Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. To Schumpeter, "the Democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."<sup>9</sup> The crucial element is competition for office. Schumpeter suggests that leaders will naturally attempt to mobilize public opinion to ensure election. Once elected, leaders are immune from popular pressure unless they choose otherwise. As Schumpeter states, "Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them."<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, then, "rule by the people" merely means deciding on rulers, not necessarily government by or for the people.

Within this conception of democracy, it is the threat of a potential challenge and the electorate's ability to remove them that induce the elected official to be cognizant of the public's interest. For this inducement to function, it is necessary for elected officials to wish to retain their position. If they are not motivated to retain their position, there is no necessary reason for them to respond to their



constituents' wishes. As Joseph Schlesinger has stated, "Representative government, above all, depends upon a supply of men..." driven by ambition for "the desire for election and, more important, for reelection becomes the electorate's restraint upon its public officials."<sup>11</sup> A fundamental condition for the functioning of democracy is the presence of office holders who are motivated by the desire to retain their position.

Motivations, or goals, are difficult to measure realistically. We typically make assumption about the goals of individuals and evaluate their behavior in light of the assumptions we make about their goals. More specifically, we evaluate the decisions individuals make in light of goals we assume them to hold. As noted at the outset, the assumptions one makes about the goals of members of the United States House of Representatives greatly influence the explanations one forwards for the operating characteristics of that body. A necessary condition for fulfilling any of the postulated goals of the members was reelection, while the differences between the perspectives seem attributable to the degree of sufficiency they attach to the reelection goal. In each case behavior is evaluated in terms of the decisions individuals make in light of goals they are asserted to hold.

The decisions of elected representatives in light of goals we postulate them to hold are important to the understanding of the institution they labor in and the nature of representation. An important decision to all of the above

is that individuals should decide to try to retain office. The explanations of Congress would all fail if the predominant decisions of elected representatives were not to seek reelection. Of course, the decision to seek reelection is in contemporary times the most common career decision manifested by members of the House. As Morris Fiorina points out, "[s]ince World War II nearly 90 percent of all incumbents have sought reelection in any given election, and approximately 90 percent of all those who ran were successful."<sup>12</sup> These figures certainly testify to the veracity of reelection as a prominent and perhaps a sufficient goal of members of the House. Nonetheless, in a given year between roughly six and thirteen percent of the members decide to leave the House voluntarily, and it would appear that fuller understanding of these decisions could greatly enhance our picture of the House and of representation in general.

The decisions to leave the House are not, of course, all for the same apparent reasons. Some decide to leave to pursue higher office; some leave for state, local, or federal office; and, finally, some leave to return to private life. For analytical purposes it would seem reasonable to delineate these decisions into two basic categories. The first, seeking higher office, concerns those decisions that are oriented to the pursuit of what is clearly a higher office. Specifically, decisions to seek a Senate seat or governorship are placed in this category while other offices, such as judicial, federal, or state and local, are deleted due to their conjectural status

as being higher of lower than the United States House. The other category concerns decisions to leave the House either to return to private life or to pursue some lower political office. The former category could be said to contain members of the House who exhibit progressive ambition while the latter might be classified as those who chose "opting out," a term applied by Stephen Frantzich to members who left the House for another career or relaxation, but here extended to include members who sought lower offices as well.<sup>13</sup> At this point it would prove useful to examine some of the findings of past research on progressive ambition and retirement.

#### Progressive Ambition

The logical starting point for the consideration of progressive ambition is the work of Joseph Schlesinger. Schlesinger created a threefold categorization of ambition: those seeking higher office were classified as having progressive ambition; those seeking to maintain their current position were classified as having static ambition; and those whose ambition was limited to serving a current term before retiring were classified as having discrete ambition.<sup>14</sup> "The central assumption of ambition theory," writes Schlesinger "is that a politician's behavior is a response to his office goals."<sup>15</sup>

Schlesinger thus points to the importance of motivation, but this tells only part of the story. Ambition interacts and is conditioned by the situation the

individual finds himself in and the opportunities he confronts. Although a politician may desire a higher office, his situational status may lead him to attenuate his ambition to retaining his current office or leaving public life altogether. The opportunity structure serves to condition ambition. Schlesinger finds a multitude of outlets for political ambition in the great number of offices contested. This opportunity structure is an open system, with lines of advancement unregulated legally and with few prerequisites for most offices. However, offices are held by fixed terms which ensures a constant possibility of turnover which works both to increase opportunities and at the same time serves to create risks for the politician; especially in the case where one office must be sacrificed to seek a higher one.<sup>16</sup>

Schlesinger's theory of ambition points to the importance of evaluating a politician's behavior, not so much in terms of where he has been or where he is currently, but in terms of where he wants to be. The actions a politician takes today are assumed to be oriented toward the electorate he seeks to appeal to in the next election. Schlesinger's work serves to underscore the importance of the politician's ambition, and how the ambition interacts with the politician's situation and the political opportunity structure in shaping his behavior. As Kenneth Prewitt argues, ambition theory adds another dimension to research on leadership and

representation by holding that expectations of the future shape current behavior.<sup>17</sup>

What are the specific factors that shape ambition and how do they operate? Schlesinger provided initial investigations and suggestions that served to guide subsequent research. One dimension of ambition Schlesinger acknowledged but did not investigate was the influence that social background and personality traits might have upon ambition.<sup>18</sup> John Soule explored these dimensions in his study of 97 of 110 Michigan state legislators.<sup>19</sup> In terms of social background, Soule found that legislators with progressive ambitions were more likely to have had an early socialization to politics and were more likely to report family or school as the agents of their initial political socialization. In terms of personality traits, the progressively ambitious were found to be more likely to value leadership or power and less likely to value doing things for other people, being treated with understanding, or doing what is socially correct. Soule also found that ambition was related to the legislator's representational role orientation. Ambitious members were found to be more likely to use their own judgments in decision situations than to take instructions from their constituents. He also found that the ambitious were more likely to base their decisions on what they believed best for the entire state than for their constituency. This finding led Soule to conclude that,

"Edmund Burke's classical conception of a worthy legislator is most closely reflected by legislators who hold progressive ambition."<sup>20</sup>

David Rohde has provided insight into another psychological aspect of progressive ambitions.<sup>21</sup> Rohde assumes, in his study of the members of the United States House of Representatives, that if upon their first day in that chamber they were offered a Senate seat or governorship without cost or risk, they would take it. To Rohde, it is the costs and risks associated with opportunities that shape progressive ambitions. Cost and risks do not tell the whole story, however, Rohde contends that two members could be confronted with identical opportunities, in terms of costs and risks, and one member might take the opportunity while the other does not, because it is still possible that they differ in their intensity or preferences for risky alternatives. Rohde thus invokes the concept (or psychological trait) of risk-taking to explain differences in the numbers of opportunities taken for higher office by members of the House. He categorizes as high risk-takers those members who, when they first ran for the House, challenged an incumbent or ran in a district substantially favorable to the other party. He finds that high risk-takers are indeed proportionately more likely to seek higher office than are the lower risk-takers. Risk-taking and its relation to progressive ambition could, it would seem,

have a notable impact upon the nature of a politician's representational posture. Riker and Ordeshook contend that risk-taking is a component of leadership.<sup>22</sup> They feel that leaders may have a higher propensity to seek risky prospects than do followers, who prefer the costless alternative of doing nothing. Perhaps Burke's worthy legislator was possessed of the characteristic of being willing to bear the risks associated with ignoring the immediate and narrow interests of his constituency in pursuit of broader solutions to national concerns. Burke himself must have been willing to bear substantial risks, since in the first election after giving his now famous speech to the electors of Bristol, he was voted out of office.<sup>23</sup>

Another important influence upon ambition suggested by Schlesinger is age. He stated that the age cycle restricts a person's political chances; reasonable expectations in one period of life are unreasonable at another. The individual politician, according to Schlesinger ". . . constantly faces the problem of reconciling two everchanging schedules, the timetable of office and the timetable of age."<sup>24</sup> Age operates in two ways. On the one hand, Schlesinger as well as Harvey Lehman<sup>25</sup> and David Walker<sup>26</sup> all argue that age in recruitment is a factor that affects the professional outlook of a politician. In Schlesinger's opinion, "the younger a man is when he enters politics, the

greater the range of his ambition and the likelihood of his developing a career commitment to politics."<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, advancing age either in recruitment or in office can work to diminish expectations concerning higher office. Jeff Fishel, for example, presents evidence that age is related to the career commitments of congressional challengers.<sup>28</sup> Paul Hain, in an examination of state legislators, found that "the older a politician is the less likely he is to express ambitions to advance, to seek advancement, or to advance."<sup>29</sup> Hain argues that the attenuation in ambition resulted from what he labeled a "middle'age crisis," with the resulting decline in ambition being abrupt as opposed to gradual or continuous. A similar pattern between age and ambition is provided by Kenneth Prewitt in his examination of city councilmen.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, however, Prewitt's subjects from this lower level of government were proportionately less likely to express progressive ambition across all age categories, suggesting the potential importance of locational factors in further conditioning ambition.

Locational or structural determinants of ambition were examined by Gordon Black.<sup>31</sup> Schlesinger had earlier asserted that some offices were substantially more likely to promote political advancement than other offices, and he characterized these as the "opportunity structure" of the political system. Black, in his study of 435 city



councilmen in the San Francisco Bay area, elaborates a model of political ambition based upon the principles of utility theory. Within this framework, Black suggests that politicians tend to make decisions on the basis of the costs, benefits, and probabilities that operate at the time of their decisions. He is led to conclude that the structural characteristics of systems of political offices can shape both the risks that politicians face and the investments that are required to reach political office. To Black, structural variations within systems of offices create barriers that aspiring politicians must overcome. The difference in ambition found by Hain and Prewitt would be explained by Black as the result of differential investments in political activity between state legislators and city councilmen. Black asserts that "as a politician invests in one office, even if he has little desire at the time to seek higher office, he is altering his evaluation of other offices in the political career sequence."<sup>32</sup> To Black, as the politician's investment increases, his evaluation of political alternatives is likely to become more positive while his evaluation of nonpolitical alternatives remains about the same.

As Schlesinger's original work suggested, and as subsequent research has supported, ambition is an important explanatory factor in understanding the behavior of politicians. Ambition has been shown to vary as a

function of age, structural arrangements, and psychological traits. Ambition and factors influencing it, can work to shape how a politician views his representational role. To understand variations in the motivation of politicians and the nature of representation, we would do well to attempt to understand the independent influences upon ambition and relate their impact to the political process. Before considering the impact of ambition on the political process, however, we need to consider another type of decision or behavior manifested by some politicians.

### Retirement

Retirement, or more specifically, voluntarily leaving a legislative body as opposed to being defeated, is at the heart of a number of important issues. The question of representation itself could be influenced by retirement. For an election to serve as a potential sanction that can be invoked by the electorate, it must exist as a potential threat to take from the officeholder something he wants. This something is the office he holds; and for the representative who has decided to retire, the election poses a hollow threat. If a representative has decided to retire, there is no necessary reason to expect him to be responsive to his constituents or to act in what he perceives to be the public's best interest.

Retirement also speaks to the nature of service. High turnover in a legislative body could indicate one of two things. If such turnover were a function of defeat, we might conclude that a high degree of competition were present. Such competition would suggest that a high value is placed upon service. On the other hand, a high degree of turnover due to retirement might also suggest that service was worth attaining but not worth retaining, a career structure resembling "a fast game of musical chairs."<sup>33</sup>

While retirement might not speak to the exact motivations of retirees, it does suggest very strongly that continued service was not their primary motivation. In the contemporary House efforts at reelection are the norm and success is very high. This, however, has not always been the case. Douglas Price, in examining two nineteenth century periods, (1811-1820 and 1887-1896) finds that both were marked by very high turnover. In the earlier period, however, only 49 of 465 departures could be attributed to electoral defeat, while in the latter period defeat accounted for 309 of 750. He asserts that "what the early House lacked was not safe seats, but a desire and incentive to retain one's seat."<sup>34</sup>

Price points to the realignment of the 1890s and other factors as reducing two-party competition. The high degree of competition prior to this realignment suggests that a high value was in fact placed upon House

service by the end of the nineteenth century. He concludes that "as the possibility of winning repeated elections went up . . . the desire to pursue a career in the House also went up."<sup>35</sup>

Nelson Polsby considers the decline in turnover to have resulted from the institutionalization of the House of Representatives. By institutionalization, Polsby means that over time it has become noticeably more bounded, more complex, and more universalistic and automatic in its internal decision making. In terms of voluntary retirement, Polsby believes institutionalization led to increased membership stability; and this increased stability worked to produce a more stable and attractive institution for its members, presenting more of an incentive to stay.<sup>36</sup>

Fiorina, Rohde, and Wissel, in their extensive analysis of congressional turnover from 1789 to 1973, conclude that the level of party competition characteristic of each party system helps to explain the secular decline in congressional turnover.<sup>37</sup> In terms of retirement, the authors contend that a member's decision on whether or not to voluntarily retire depends on the value of the House seat to him and the likelihood of defeat if he chooses to run again. Although finding support for the latter proposition, the authors could not, either due to the weakness of the measure or because of counteracting effects, find substantial influence

upon retirement attributable to the value of the House seat.

Samuel Kernell discounts the role played by declining competition. He found that the percent of incumbents running for reelection increased in districts where there had been recent party turnover as well as in those where there had not.<sup>38</sup> Kernell feels that forces in addition to declining competition were converting the House into a body of professionals. He believes ambition to be the primary source of declining turnover. The primary force for membership stability, Kernell believes, can be found in the men who ran for office. He asserts that the "musical chairs of the early nineteenth century were replaced by a tacit consensus among politicians about appropriate career development."<sup>39</sup> A hierarchy emerged, and no longer was every politician eligible and equally likely to seek every other office. With the emergence of hierarchy and the limitations it imposed upon options and probability, congressional careers became "static" in Schlesinger's terminology.

While rates of turnover, and the characteristics of that turnover (i.e., defeat or retirement) are an important component of these and other explanations of the development of careerism and the institutionalization of the House around the turn of the century, they have also been a concern for students of the contemporary House. Charles Bullock, for example, examines patterns

of attrition and longevity in the House in the forties, fifties, and sixties.<sup>40</sup> He found that defeat caused few of the senior members to leave the House during the 1940s (15.2 percent) and 1950s (12.3 percent). During these decades, voluntary departure was the most frequent reason for career termination. This pattern was greatly altered during the 1960s, when primary and general election defeats came to account for more departures than either death or retirement among what he defines as careerists.<sup>41</sup> Bullock attributes this change to redistricting, newly mobilized groups pushing new issues, and the increasingly national character of two party competition.

Contemporary Congresses have witnessed an increase in voluntary retirements. A recent piece by Joseph Cooper and William West provide figures showing that in every Congress except one since 1966, voluntary retirement has increased.<sup>42</sup> The authors explore some traditional explanations for retirement; specifically, age, political vulnerability, and political ambition, and find none of these satisfactorily explain the increase. In terms of age, they find that for the period they examine (1957-1979) the average age of voluntary retirees declined along with the decline in the general age of House members. They also find that there was a somewhat greater dispersion of voluntary retirements across age cohorts.

In terms of political vulnerability, the authors note that most voluntary retirees come from safe districts. They also point out that the proportion of safe retirees has increased during the period they examine. They also dismiss redistricting, because the pace of redistricting does not correspond to the increase in retirement.

Finally, the authors dismiss political ambition as an explanation for the increase in voluntary retirements. (Note: The authors include the progressively ambitious among voluntary retirees.) They find only a modest increase in members' leaving the House to pursue or be appointed to higher office during the 1970s as compared with earlier periods in their study. They also note that the success rate of those pursuing another office had declined in the 1970s, leading the authors to conclude that something other than high expectations for another office was responsible for leading members to leave.

The authors posit disaffection with House service as the predominant factor influencing the recent increase in voluntary retirement. They cite numerous retirees' quotations appearing in newspapers, magazines, and the like that point to the increasing demands placed on House members' time, the strains put on their family lives, the diminishing utility derived from chairmanships, the proliferation of single issue groups, and other comments that point to increasing costs and diminishing

rewards of House service. They also note that retirement has grown among members under sixty-five who have achieved leadership positions. This increase among members who should be most resistant to retirement serves, the authors believe, to substantiate the notion that disaffection is a primary factor in increasing retirement.

To Cooper and West, voluntary exits are a function of disaffection, and this disaffection stems from growing costs of service stemming from increased workloads as well as decreasing benefits in the form of less powerful chairmanships, salaries that have not kept pace with inflation, and other factors. The authors believe that this alteration of benefit-cost ratio of House service has had an impact upon the norms and structure of the House. They assert that as disaffection for continued service grows, so too will reluctance to accept formerly dominant norms such as seniority, reciprocity, and civility, characteristic of the House when members wanted long and stable careers.

Stephen Frantzich examines data concerning members who left the House between 1964 and 1974; and, although he doesn't address the temporal issues cited by Cooper and West, his choice of years to examine was fortuitous in that it provides further insight into retirements during this period.<sup>43</sup> Like Cooper and West he also dismisses the political vulnerability hypothesis, finding that the electoral record of retirees is generally quite



strong. Also, although voluntary retirement is found to increase with age, Frantzich notes that over half those retiring were under the traditional retirement age of 65. He also finds that a major influence upon those who decided to leave the House was job frustration.

In a subsequent article, Frantzich goes into more depth in exploring the basic notion that diminishing job desirability leads to most voluntary retirements.<sup>44</sup> He finds that disability associated with age is an important component of some retirement decisions, but fails to tell the whole story of retirement. Vulnerability, not in objective terms, but in terms of the member's perceptions, is another component of retirement for some members. Redistricting, causing some members to face other incumbents in a combined district or making them face a drastically altered and largely new electorate, according to Frantzich, explains why retirees come disproportionately from recently redistricted constituencies. Finally, declining desirability of House service, stemming from dissatisfaction with the opportunities House service provides, and outside opportunities constitute a third factor in some retirement decisions. Frantzich believes the decision to retire results from an amalgam of influences but that disability (age), desirability, and vulnerability are important.

The contentions of Cooper and West, and of Frantzich are supported by the results of interviews conducted by

John Hibbing with a majority of House retirees in 1978.<sup>45</sup> Hibbing delineates the causes of retirement into two categories: direct costs and opportunity costs. Among direct costs of House service he finds to influence retirement decisions are familial sacrifices, constant public scrutiny, disrespect for public officials, the lack of security inherent in having to seek reelection every two years, and the distastefulness with which retirees viewed the fund raising process. Among opportunity costs, he finds that the congressmen's salary compared with what they perceive they could be earning outside of politics, and legislative frustrations stemming from the inability to accomplish tasks in the post-reform House are both antecedents of many retirement decisions.

Another reason for at least some of the more frequent retirements in the 1970s has been presented by Albert Cover.<sup>46</sup> He suggests that the growing careerism of the fifties and sixties had to give at some point. Growing careerism led to a large number of individuals in the group most prone to retire - the elderly. The result, declares Cover, is a "greening" of the Congress as relatively junior members flow into the House.

While most authors testify that electoral vulnerability is not a primary cause of retirement, some authors assert otherwise. Hibbing, for example, contends that when the effects of age are controlled for, "we

find that those who are not as safe as we would expect on the basis of their age are indeed more likely to retire 'voluntarily.'<sup>47</sup> James L. Payne examines the margin of victory of members who retired between 1968 and 1976. He finds that retirees serving more than three terms, on average, experience a net decline in electoral margin between their next to last and last elections. This result suggests that long term electoral performance may very well be related to retirement decisions.<sup>48</sup>

#### The Importance of Career Decisions

As the discussion to this point suggests, the motivations of elected representatives, as manifested in their career decisions, play an important role in our understandings of the operating characteristics of representative institutions. At this point it might do well to address the implications progressive ambitions and retirements have upon the legislative process. We can begin by examining past research upon the impact of progressive ambition.

Perhaps the most important implication of progressive ambition stems from a major tenet of Schlesinger's ambition theory. He states that "the constituency to which a legislator is responding is not always the one from which he has been elected, and that it is more important to know what he wants to be than how he got to be where he is not . . . a politician's behavior is a

response to his office goals."<sup>49</sup> This fundamental tenet has led numerous authors to evaluate the effect differing ambitions have upon the roles politicians assume.

Prewitt and Nowlin, in a manner consistent with the major tenet of Schlesinger's theory mentioned previously, hypothesize in their study of San Francisco Bay area city councilmen that ambitious councilmen are more likely to have broader policy perspectives that reflect their orientation toward the level of government to which they aspire.<sup>50</sup> They find that an ambitious office holder will take on characteristics "he perceives to be those of incumbents in more elevated posts and will take stands on issues which reflect their views."<sup>51</sup> They also hypothesize that incumbents who aspire to and expect to gain a higher political office will be more favorable to politics which expand the powers of the higher office. They found that those who had expressed ambitions toward federal, state, and regional offices were more favorable toward expanding the prerogatives of those offices.

Just as the above authors found ambition to shape governmental orientation, John Soule found a relationship between the ambitions of officeholders and their representational orientations.<sup>52</sup> As mentioned previously, he found that progressively ambitious state legislators were more oriented to the state as a whole, or were more likely to try to balance the interests of their district and the state than were the state legislators who were

not progressively ambitious. The less ambitious were found to attach greater importance to the interests of their districts. Soule argues that the less ambitious are more likely to assume the role of delegate, while the progressively ambitious are more likely to assume politico or trustee orientations.

Prewitt and Eulau evaluated the interplay between the public's power to select those who govern and the existence of responsible behavior toward the public on the part of elected officials.<sup>53</sup> Their findings suggest that the electoral sanction can serve to keep legislators responsive to the public. They find that responsiveness as a function of the electoral sanction is based upon ambition. Members who attach little importance to a political career tended to use their own preferences as a guideline for policy making. Also characteristic of such officeholders was turnover by resignation rather than electoral defeat. In situations where electoral defeat was more common, members tended to exhibit a heightened concern for public opinion. To the authors, the ability of council members to follow their own views without electoral retribution is a function of the level of community support. When community support for councilmen is high, they can follow their own judgment without fear of electoral retribution.

In another piece, Prewitt examines the presence of volunteerism, or more specifically, the situation

where the movement into and out of office is regulated by self-selection and self-elimination patterns rather than electoral challenges.<sup>54</sup> He feels that this volunteerism in the city councils he examined is a function of four characteristics. First is appointment rather than election. Second is low voter turnout. Third is the infrequency of electoral defeat; and fourth are high rates of voluntary retirement. Prewitt feels that volunteerism undermines accountability. Furthermore, he believes that volunteerism in political recruitment, trusteeship in political representation, and ritualism in political elections form a compatible package. He concedes that volunteerism only impacts upon electoral accountability and not on whether representatives consult the preferences of their constituents. He believes that the degree to which such consultation takes place when there is volunteerism, "is for reasons other than accountability forced by electoral sanctions."<sup>55</sup>

As the above research serves to emphasize, ambition bears an important influence upon modes of representation and the content of politics. While the impact of progressive ambition is relatively clear, the role of discrete ambition or retirement is less clear. Prewitt's work suggests that retirement, as opposed to electoral defeat, is a component of volunteerism; and he views this to be compatible with a trustee orientation. This is indirectly compatible with Davidson's finding

that the proportion of congressmen who perceive themselves to be trustees is higher among senior members than among junior and freshmen members.<sup>56</sup> It is also compatible with Bullock's notion that as the number of senior members in the House swells, "the likelihood is greater that congressional decisions will be based on legislator preference rather than on perceived constituent desires."<sup>57</sup> These are compatible, since long service necessarily suggests the absence of electoral defeat and frequently entails low voter turnout in the respective careerists' elections; and careerists often engage in self-elimination, although Bullock did notice an increasing trend toward defeat in the 1960s.

The research concerning retirement basically examines it in two ways: one as the result of other processes, the other as a causal factor in its own right, influencing other processes. Our knowledge concerning the former is much fuller than that concerning the latter. Schlesinger provides us with perhaps the most general notion of what widespread retirement could indicate for a political system. He notes that "a political system unable to kindle ambitions for office is in as much danger of breaking down as one unable to restrain ambitions."<sup>58</sup> While it would be unrealistic to suggest that our political system, and the United States House in particular, was unable to kindle ambitions, the 1970s did witness increased retirements from that

body, suggesting that for an increasing number that institution did not provide sufficient conditions for the kindling of their office ambitions.

There is little empirical evidence concerning the impact of retirement upon the House, although some authors have supplied conjecture as to its impact on that body. Stephen Frantzich provides some findings concerning the influence of retirement. He contends that "retirement removes from Congress some definine types of representatives, and allows their replacement with others."<sup>59</sup> He finds some support for the notion that retirees reduce their effort prior to leaving the House. He also finds that retirement in the period he studied (1966-1974) clearly removed some of the most conservative members from the House, opening the door to potential change through turnover.<sup>60</sup> His findings suggest that when ideological change does occur (although a minority of the time), it is in the liberal direction. He contrasts this pattern with the tendency for successors for non-retirees to be more conservative in the cases where ideological change occurs, although the tendency is minimal. It should be stressed that what Frantzich observes, minimal as it is, could well be timebound phenomena and the result of long term trends leading up to the periods he studies and not necessarily a function of retirement itself.



Other authors, without empirical support, are willing to speculate as to the likely impact of retirement. Cooper and West feel that if the trend toward increased retirement continues, it will result in new types of members being recruited into the House, members "more attuned to the benefit-cost ratio that now prevails."<sup>61</sup> They feel this new type of member is more likely to be self-oriented and their presence will serve to intensify the current tendencies toward fragmentation, fractiousness, and exploitation of position. Albert Cover believes increased retirements will have an impact external to the House as well as an impact within the House.<sup>62</sup> Externally, he believes increased retirements will reduce the number of well-entrenched incumbents who owe nothing to the President by virtue of the latter's coattails and could lead to a more favorable atmosphere in which the President can operate. Also enhancing the President's position will be the concomitant replacement with less secure junior members who might be more susceptible to Presidential persuasion. In terms of representation, retirement necessarily leads to more contests in which no incumbent is running, which to Cover could lead to a Congress more responsive to shifts in public opinion.

Internally, Cover contends that the trend toward increased retirements, with its corollary depletion of senior ranks will serve to reinforce the undermining of the seniority system. With this, he contends, will come

heightened internal conflict as automatic rules for committee leadership give way to open contests. He also believes the induction of more junior members will further reduce the socialization of new members, expediting the collapse of established norms. This opinion is, of course, shared with Cooper and West.

### Conclusion

This chapter was begun with the assertion that the motivations of elected representatives, whether assumed or discovered, play an important role in shaping our interpretations of the activities of representative bodies, and our understanding of representation. Joseph Schlesinger's ambition theory provided a foundation upon which to interpret the behavior of elected representatives by pointing to the benefit of viewing this behavior in terms of where the elected representative wants to be rather than where he is at present. Subsequent research has shown that differential office goals and different factors influencing office goals have an important impact upon political processes.

Also examined in this chapter is research concerning discrete ambition. Retirement, it was seen, suggests something about the degree of competitiveness as well as the utility derived from holding office. Furthermore, the increasing frequency of retirement from the House is held by some authors to be a potentially important influence upon the operating characteristics of that body

as well as a potential factor influencing the body's responsiveness to the public and its susceptibility to Presidential influence.

Clearly, understanding the career decisions of elected representatives can aid our understanding of representation and of representative bodies. These decisions, it must be assumed, are manifestations of underlying attitudes and processes that impact upon the representatives' behavior and ultimately upon the operating characteristics of the institutions in which they serve. In the chapters that follow, a theory concerning career decisions will be developed. The propositions will be evaluated in light of empirical evidence. Conclusions will be forwarded as to the factors influencing these decisions and by inference influencing the motivations of members, the nature of representation and some of the operating characteristics of the House of Representatives.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Anthony Downs. Inside Bureaucracy. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>David R. Mayhew. Congress: The Electoral Connection. (New Haven: Yale, 1974).

<sup>3</sup>Morris P. Fiorina. Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment. (New Haven: Yale, 1977).

<sup>4</sup>Richard F. Fenno, Jr. Congressmen in Committees. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1973).

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence C. Dodd. "Congress and the Quest for Power" in Congress Reconsidered, vol. 1, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. (New York: Praeger, 1977), pp. 269-307.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>7</sup>Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. "Constituency Influence in Congress," American Political Science Review 57 (March 1963). See also, Stokes and Miller, "Party Government and the Saliency of Congress," Public Opinion Quarterly (Winter 1962).

<sup>8</sup>Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee. Voting. (Chicago: University Press, 1954).

<sup>9</sup>Joseph A. Schumpeter. Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1950), p. 269.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph A. Schlesinger. Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States. (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966), p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>Fiorina, Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup>Stephen Frantzick. "Opting Out: Retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives, 1966-1974," American Politics Quarterly 6 (July 1978).

<sup>14</sup>Schlesinger. Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States, pp. 9-10.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-20.

<sup>17</sup>Kenneth Prewitt. The Recruitment of Citizen Politicians. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).

<sup>18</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, pp. 172-174.

<sup>19</sup>John W. Soule. "Future Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent State Legislators," Midwest Journal of Political Science 13 (August 1969).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 452.

<sup>21</sup>David W. Rohde. "Risk-Bearing and Progressive Ambition: The Case of Members of the U.S. House of Representatives," American Journal of Political Science 23 (February 1979).

<sup>22</sup>William H. Riker and Peter C. Ordeshook. An Introduction to Positive Political Theory. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 75-77.

<sup>23</sup>Alfred Cobban. Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1962), p. 61.

<sup>24</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, pp. 16-20.

<sup>25</sup>Harvey Lehman. Age and Achievement. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

<sup>26</sup>David B. Walker, "The Age Factor in the 1958 Congressional Elections," Midwest Journal of Political Science (February 1960), pp. 1-26.

<sup>27</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 176.

<sup>28</sup>Jeff Fishel. Party and Opposition: Congressional Challengers in American Politics. (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973).

<sup>29</sup>Paul Hain. "Age, Ambition and Political Careers: The Middle-Age Crisis," Western Political Quarterly 27 (June 1974), p. 274.

<sup>30</sup>Kenneth Prewitt, The Recruitment of Citizen Politicians.

<sup>31</sup>Gordon S. Black. "A Theory of Political Ambition: Career Choices and the Role of Structural Incentives," American Political Science Review 66 (March 1972).

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>33</sup>Samuel Kernell. "Congressional Careerism and the Emergence of a Political Career Structure," paper presented at the meeting of the Social Science History Association, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup>H. Douglas Price. "Careers and Committees in the American Congress: The Problem of Structural Change," in The History of Parliamentary Behavior, ed. William O. Aydelotte. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 36.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>36</sup>Nelson Polsby. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives," American Political Science Review 62 (1968).

<sup>37</sup>Morris P. Fiorina, David W. Rohde, and Peter Wissel. "Historical Changes in House Turnover," in Congress in Change, ed. Norman J. Ornstein. (New York: Praeger, 1975).

<sup>38</sup>Samuel Kernell. "Toward Understanding Nineteenth Century Congressional Careers: Ambition, Competition and Rotation," American Journal of Political Science 21 (November 1977).

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 692-693.

<sup>40</sup>Charles Bullock. "House Careerists: Changing Patterns of Longevity and Attrition," American Political Science Review 66 (1972).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 1297. Bullock defines careerists as members victorious in ten or more elections.

<sup>42</sup>Joseph Cooper and William West. "Voluntary Retirement, Incumbency and the Modern House," Political Science Quarterly 96 (Summer 1981).

<sup>43</sup>Stephen E. Frantzich. "De-Recruitment: The Other Side of the Congressional Career Equation," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1977.

<sup>44</sup>Frantzich, "Opting Out".

<sup>45</sup>John R. Hibbing. "Voluntary Retirement from the U.S. House: The Costs of Congressional Service," Legislative Studies Quarterly 7 (February 1982).

<sup>46</sup>Albert D. Cover. "The Greening of Congress: Patterns of Congressional Retirement," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 1981.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>48</sup>James L. Payne. "Career Intentions and Electoral Performance of Members of the U.S. House," Legislative Studies Quarterly 7 (February 1982), p. 97.

<sup>49</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup>Kenneth Prewitt and William Nowlin. "Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent Politicians," Western Political Quarterly 22 (June 1969).

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>52</sup>Soule, "Future Political Ambitions and the Behavior of Incumbent State Legislators," p. 452.

<sup>53</sup>Kenneth Prewitt and Heinz Eulau. "Political Matrix and Political Representation: Prolegomenon to a New Departure from an Old Problem," American Political Science Review 63 (June 1969).

<sup>54</sup>Kenneth Prewitt. "Political Ambitions, Volunteerism and Electoral Accountability," American Political Science Review 64 (March 1970).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>56</sup>Roger Davidson. The Role of the Congressman. (New York: Pegasus, 1969)p. 136.

<sup>57</sup>Bullock, "House Careerists." p. 1300.

<sup>58</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup>Frantzich, "Opting Out," p. 267.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>61</sup>Cooper and West, "Voluntary Retirement, Incumbency and the Modern House," p. 299.

<sup>62</sup>Cover, "The Greening of Congress".

## Chapter II

In this chapter, a theory of progressive ambition developed by David Rohde will be illustrated and evaluated. Some of the hypotheses he derives from his theory will be examined, and other hypotheses that stem from his theory will be derived. After examination of this theory of progressive ambition, attention will be turned to retirement decisions. A decision calculus will be posited concerning retirement that is in many ways similar to the one Rohde posits for decisions concerning higher office. From this, hypotheses concerning retirement decisions will be developed.

David Rohde has provided a deductive theory concerning progressive ambition: a priori reasoning about the relationship between variables influencing progressive career decisions of members of the United States House of Representatives. His theory is grounded in the rational choice tradition. As such, it carries with it the traditional assumption that the subjects of his inquiry are rational, in that they are assumed capable of ranking alternatives and of selecting the alternative that yields the highest expected utility. Beyond this, Rohde explicitly assumes that progressive ambition is held by all members of the House except those who begin service in the House with the intent of simply filling out the present term (i.e., the discretely ambitious).



Specifically, Rohde assumes that "if a member of the House, on his first day of service, were offered a Senate seat or governorship without cost or risk, he would take it."<sup>1</sup> This assumption carries with it a number of important implications. First, it suggests that upon entering the House all members are equal in terms of ambition. Second, by assuming this to be true only upon entering the House, it implies that additional service in the House can alter this equality, indirectly paraphrasing Sam Rayburn's admonition to Lyndon Johnson that "nobody who ever amounted to anything in the House ever left here for the Senate."<sup>2</sup> Third, it shifts the orientation away from the individual to the opportunities he confronts. Specifically, it implies that progressive and static ambition is behavior manifested because of the risks inherent in the opportunity structure in which the individual finds himself and his willingness to bear those risks.

Rohde assumes a particular decision calculus for his subjects. It is a variant of the decision calculus first developed by Riker and Ordeshook.<sup>3</sup> The calculus has the following form:

$$E(a_1) = P_1(O_1)U(O_1) + P_1(O_2)U(O_2) + P_1(O_3)U(O_3) - C(a_1)$$

$$E(a_2) = P_2(O_1)U(O_1) + P_2(O_2)U(O_2) + P_2(O_3)U(O_3) - C(a_2)$$

where:

$E(a_i)$  is the expected utility of choosing alternative  $i$

$P_i(O_j)$  is the probability that outcome  $j$  will occur if  
alternative  $i$  is chosen

$U(O_j)$  is the utility the actor receives if outcome  $j$   
occurs

$C(a_i)$  is the direct cost incurred by choosing alternative  $i$

and where specifically:

$O_1$  = no office is occupied after the election

$O_2$  = the presently held office is occupied after the election

$O_3$  = the higher office being considered is occupied after the election

$a_1$  = the actor runs for the presently held office

$a_2$  = the actor runs for the higher office

The outcomes are mutually exclusive (i.e.,  $P_1(O_3) = P_2(O_2) = 0$ ) which is to say that an actor cannot occupy the present office if he runs for higher office, nor occupy the higher one if he runs for reelection. Rohde further assumes that occupying no office after the election is the least preferred outcome and arbitrarily sets the value of that outcome to zero (i.e.,  $U_1(O_1) = 0$ ). This simplifies the original equation concerning decisions to seek higher office to:

$$E(a_2) = P_2(O_3)U(O_3) - C(a_2)$$

and that concerning reelection decisions to:

$$E(a_1) = P_1(O_2)U(O_2) - C(a_1)$$

Assuming, as he does, that representatives are rational maximizers of expected utility, a representative will run for higher office only if  $E(a_2) > E(a_1)$ . Rohde limits consideration to members who had an opportunity to run for higher office; an opportunity in this context is when no incumbent is running for higher office or, if an incumbent is running,

he is not of the representative's party. He also excludes from consideration opportunities for governorships in states with odd year gubernatorial elections, since an explicit component of the decision calculus is the sacrifice of the currently held House seat, which would not be necessary in these states.

Rohde considers four basic categories of factors influencing decisions to seek higher office. At this point, it will prove useful to evaluate each of these categories. Furthermore, within these categories, Rohde's original hypotheses will be restated. To these will be added hypotheses that are believed to be logical extensions of the theory.

## I. Decisions to Seek Higher Office

### The Value of the Higher Office

Utilizing the results of extensive surveys he and others had conducted with members of the House, Rohde notes the greater attractiveness perceived in a Senate seat as compared to a governorship. One dimension of this was the Senate's smaller size and greater potential for influence. The other dimension was the relative security a six-year term promised. He also notes Schlesinger's original contention about the similarity of function between offices being an important manifest tie.<sup>4</sup> This leads him to his first hypothesis.

H<sub>1</sub>: Among House members, the proportion of opportunities to run for the Senate that is taken will be greater than the proportion of opportunities to run for governor.

Rohde's next area of concern is the difference among governorships. He expects a difference in attractiveness to exist on the basis of differential power but acknowledges the lack of data concerning the governor's power during the period he studies. In the absence of such data, he is left with a more obvious difference between governorships, this being length of term. He posits the following hypothesis:

- H<sub>2</sub>: Among House members, the proportion of opportunities to run for governorships with a four-year term that is taken will be greater than the proportion of opportunities taken to run for governorships with a two-year term.

#### The Probability of Winning the Higher Office

In this category, attention turns to factors posited to influence the  $P_2(O_3)$  term in Rohde's calculus. The first hypothesis in this category is reflective of the widely accepted advantage incumbents have in securing reelection.<sup>5</sup>

His third hypothesis is thus:

- H<sub>3</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities to run for higher offices that is taken in situations where no incumbent is seeking reelection will be greater than the proportion of opportunities taken in situations where an incumbent is seeking reelection.

This hypothesis, it is believed, can be extended to include differences in incumbency. Schlesinger suggests that there very well might be electoral differences between senators and governors. In terms of senators, he suggests that they may accumulate electoral support with increasing years of service.<sup>6</sup> This implies that senators become less vulnerable over time. This, in fact, was asserted by Donald Matthews, who stated that "if the senator survives the first challenge

to his position, then he becomes more secure than before."<sup>7</sup>

These assertions suggest the following hypothesis:

- H<sub>3A</sub>: Among House members, for Senate races only, the proportion of opportunities taken when an incumbent is seeking reelection will be greater when the incumbent is running for reelection for the first time than the proportion of opportunities taken when the incumbent is seeking a third or greater term.

In terms of governorships, there is a different expectation. While senators accumulate electoral support with increasing years of service, Schlesinger suggests that governors accumulate grievances which produce the rejection of incumbents.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that with increasing tenure a governor may become more vulnerable, unlike senators who become less so. This notion is forwarded by Stephen Turrett who contends that "[d]elay for a governor may be tantamount to defeat, while time is a senator's ally."<sup>9</sup> Thus, the following hypothesis is:

- H<sub>3B</sub>: Among House members, for gubernatorial races only, the proportion of opportunities taken when an incumbent is seeking reelection will be greater when the incumbent is running for reelection for the second or greater time than the proportion of opportunities taken when the incumbent is seeking reelection for the first time.

The next hypothesis Rohde develops concerns the partisan bias of the electoral situation. The likelihood of a candidate's winning in a state that is "safe" for the other party is expected to be less than in competitive situations or when the state is "safe" for the representative's party. Because of this, Rohde posits the following:

- H<sub>4</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities to

run for higher office that is taken in states which are "safe" for the opposition party will be less than the proportion of opportunities taken in states which are competitive or "safe" for their own party.

The basic logic of this hypothesis is obviously sound. However, an extension or amendment is in order. The competitiveness of a state not only tells us something about the likelihood of winning the eventual election for higher office but also suggests something about the nature of the competition for a party's nomination for the higher office. V.O. Key, for instance, has shown that the incidence of primary contesting is related to the strength of parties within districts at the congressional level. For example, in districts in which the Republican party was strong and victory in the general election seemed certain, Key found that there were often two or more candidates bidding for the parties' nomination (unless an incumbent was running). On the other hand, in districts in which the Democratic party's prospects in the general election were slight, there was ordinarily much less interest in capturing the Democratic nomination, and hence there are fewer contests for the party's nomination. Finally, he found that in highly competitive districts there were likely to be contests in the primaries of both parties.<sup>10</sup> Thus, while degree of safeness suggests something about the ultimate likelihood of winning the higher office, it also suggests something about the degree of difficulty in securing a party's nomination to run for that higher office. In the case of the safe seat, we may expect a higher proportion of opportunities to be taken because of the near certainty of

obtaining the office if the nomination battle is won. On the other hand, in states that are relatively safe for the other party we may expect a fairly high proportion of opportunities to be taken because, although the eventual likelihood of winning may be rather low, the likelihood of obtaining the party's nomination is high. It is expected here that the lowest proportion of opportunities will be taken in the competitive situation because of the relatively high degree of uncertainty surrounding both the nomination for higher office and the eventual electoral outcome. Hence:

H<sub>4A</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office in states whose partisan bias is either favorable or unfavorable to the representative's party will be greater than the proportion of opportunities that are taken in competitive states.

The next factor Rohde considers as influencing the probability of obtaining higher office stems from one of Schlesinger's contentions about manifest ties that link offices together. In this case, it is the degree of shared electorate that is of concern.<sup>11</sup> Stephen Frantzich had previously argued that congressmen from small states, where congressional districts include either all or a substantial portion of the state-wide electorate, would be more likely to exhibit progressive ambitions than would congressmen from large states. His data confirm this notion.<sup>12</sup> Rohde acknowledges the possibility that for governorships there may be an inverse relationship between the power and assumed attractiveness of a governorship and the likelihood of winning that governorship. An examination of Schlesinger's index of the powers of

governors<sup>13</sup> in 1969 suggests that in 1969, at least, large states had governorships with relatively more power while smaller states had relatively weaker ones. Because of this, Rohde restricts his hypothesis concerning the degree of shared electorate to the Senate. Thus, he hypothesizes:

H<sub>5</sub>: Among House members, for Senate races, the probability that a House member will run will be directly related to the proportion of the state's population that the population of his House constituency comprises.

While it is agreed here that the attractiveness of a governorship and the probability of winning, in all likelihood, does interact, leading to an attenuation of the relationship between the degree of shared electorate and decisions to seek governorships, it is also felt that power is only one dimension of the value of a higher office. A four-year governorship would still relieve the more frequent electoral effort required by the two year term characteristic of the House. Furthermore, a governorship might make an eventual transition to the Senate more likely than one from the House to the Senate. As Schlesinger has noted, "the speculation about a sitting governor is almost universal: will or will he not make a try for the Senate."<sup>14</sup> Schlesinger, as well as Donald Matthews, provides data that suggests that governors are indeed a major source of Senate candidates.<sup>15</sup> The reduction in electoral frequency promised by a four-year governorship, as well as the potential utility a governorship may hold for an ultimate transition to the Senate, suggests that, although not as strong, the relationship between shared electorate and decisions to seek governorships should be in the same direction



as that with decisions to seek the Senate. Hence:

H<sub>5A</sub>: Among House members, for gubernatorial races, the probability that a member will run will be directly related to the proportion that the population of his House constituency comprises of the state's population.

### The Value of the House Seat

In this category, factors are considered by Rohde that influence the  $U(O_2)$  term. Specifically, these are factors that would influence the amount that would be sacrificed if a higher office were pursued. The discussion will begin at this point but will consider factors considered to influence  $P_1(O_2)$ , the probability of retaining the House, and the way that changes here could alter the magnitude of the expected utility of seeking reelection.

Rohde notes that power in the House rests largely in committees and that the way to power in committees is through the seniority system.<sup>16</sup> Although not a direct measure of power, seniority provides a useful surrogate if it is assumed that the more senior a member is, the more powerful he becomes. If it is further assumed that members derive utility from power, seniority and the value of the House seat should be positively correlated. This leads Rohde to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>6</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the probability that a House member will run will be inversely related to his seniority.

The inverse relationship posited to exist between seniority and proportion of opportunities taken to seek higher office suggests that the first-term member is more likely to seek higher office than is the second-term member, and the second

more likely than the third, and so on. This proposition seems disagreeable for a number of reasons. The first-term representative has had little time to acclimate himself with either Washington or his district. Granted that after one term the value of his House seat is no doubt less than that of seats held by his senior counterparts, the first-term representative also has not had enough time to engage in activities that would gain for him the name recognition and prominence useful in seeking higher office. Thus, while in agreement with the notion that the value of the House seat increases with increased seniority, it is also believed that seniority interacts with the probability of obtaining higher office. Thus:

H<sub>6A</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races the probability that a House member will run will increase with increased seniority over the early portion of his House career but will then diminish with increasing seniority.

If we may assume that seniority leads to increased power in the House, we need not look far for another factor that enhances power and thus the attractiveness of a House seat. Party is a factor Rohde acknowledges but does not test. The minority party in the House has less power than the majority party. Since 1950 the Republicans have been in the minority in the House in every Congress with the exception of the Eighty-Third (1953-55). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>6B</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will be greater for Republicans (the minority party) than the proportion of opportunities taken by Democrats (the majority party).

Another factor posited to influence the expected utility of returning to the House is the probability a member attaches to that outcome. Something that could be expected to influence this subjective probability is the member's margin of victory in his last House election. Although a crude indicator, since it ignores intervening factors since the last election, it still seems plausible that a member with a narrow margin of victory would estimate a lower expected utility on returning to the House than would a member with a wide margin of victory, other things being equal. Of course, a diminishing  $P_1(O_2)$ , the estimate of the probability of returning to the House, could very well lead to the representative's lowering his estimate of  $P_2(O_3)$ , the probability of obtaining the higher office. Nonetheless, the following hypothesis would seem worthy of evaluation:

H<sub>6C</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will be greater for members who had narrow margins of victory in their last election than the proportion of opportunities taken by members who had wide margins of victory in their last election.

As noted, margin of victory suffers from being retrospective. What would be more useful is some prospective indicator of the probability of returning to the House. This would be quite difficult to obtain for all members. We do have something that could serve as an indicator for some members, however, and this is how they fared in redistricting. Albert Cover quotes one member as saying the only thing that would have hurt them more than redistricting would have been to have a certain part of their vital anatomy laid on a

stump and hit with a mallet.<sup>17</sup> This candid and colorful account suggests that members who are harmed by redistricting may indeed attach a lower probability to returning to the House. Another aspect of redistricting is a party's effort to help a member obtain a nomination for higher office when they are forced to alter or remove that member's district. An insightful case is that of former Michigan Representative James J. Blanchard. The Michigan legislature, in the control of the Democratic party, was forced, due to the declining relative population of the state, to eliminate a Congressional district. A Congressman from the Detroit area was a logical choice because of the area's severe decline in population during the 1970s. Unfortunately for the Democrats, all of the Congressmen in the Detroit area were Democrats, forcing them to commit "cannibalism." James Blanchard was encouraged to run for governor with pledges of support and resources. He eventually decided to seek the governorship, making the job of state representative Mike Griffin, chairman of the legislative redistricting committee "easier."<sup>18</sup> The moral is that redistricting and the underlying political processes it generally entails may have the effect of lowering the probability a member attaches to returning to the House, raising the probability he attaches to obtaining higher office, or both. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>6D</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will be greater among members who have been hurt substantially by redistricting than among members who were hurt only slightly, not affected, or helped by redistricting.

### Risk Acceptance and Progressive Ambition

The final concern of Rohde, and perhaps his most innovative, is risk-taking. Before considering his utilization of the concept, a brief review of the topic is in order.<sup>19</sup> The notion of risk in economic literature is actually quite old.<sup>20</sup> Contemporary treatment of risk has its origins in the work of Milton Friedman and L.J. Savage. Their concern was with the application of expected utility theory to risk-taking. They sought to explain why low-income consumer units would buy insurance (thus taking a certain small loss to avoid a very small probability of a large loss) and also purchase lottery tickets (gambling on a small chance of a large gain against a great chance of a small loss).<sup>21</sup> Their concern was whether there was any consistency among choices in different risk situations. Friedman and Savage found that these differences in choice could be explained if those selecting insurance were posited to have utility functions that were convex from above, while those selecting the lottery had utility functions that were concave from above.

Riker and Ordeshook extend the concept of risk-bearing to their consideration of political participation. They assert that "some people are more likely to select risky alternatives than others."<sup>22</sup> They contend that differential risk-taking propensities would allow a risk taker to have a rational motive to participate and a risk averter to have a rational motive to reject participation. Rohde applies the concept of risk bearing to decisions to seek higher office by noting that costs and risks inherent in such a decision do not tell the

whole story. It is possible, with two individuals with identical preference orderings concerning higher office, for one of them to seek higher office and the other not because, as Rohde states, "[p]eople with the same preference orderings will differ in the intensity of those preferences."<sup>23</sup> Rohde further contends that it is "differences in intensity of preference, and thus willingness to take electoral risks in seeking office, that distinguishes the ambitious politician from the nonambitious."<sup>24</sup>

This belief leads Rohde to posit the following:

H<sub>7</sub>: If two House members are presented with similar opportunities to seek higher office, and one is a "risk taker" and the other is not, then the "risk taker" will have a greater probability of running for higher office than the other.

### Age

A central concern of Schlesinger, but one not addressed by Rohde, is the role age plays in shaping ambition. Schlesinger contends that the age cycle restricts a person's political chances; reasonable expectations in one period of life are unreasonable at another. The individual politician, according to Schlesinger ". . . constantly faces the problem of reconciling two everchanging schedules, the timetable of office and the timetable of age."<sup>25</sup> The research of Paul Hain serves to substantiate this notion. Hain states that ". . . of the many variables affecting a politician's ambitions, age is central."<sup>26</sup> In his study of state legislators, Hain found support for the hypothesis ". . . that among occupants of a given office the older a person is the less likely he is to advance."<sup>27</sup> He went on to conclude that

" . . . age greatly affects the political ambitions and careers of American politicians."<sup>28</sup>

Rohde suggests that it is the costs and risks associated with seeking higher office, and the risk-taking propensities of the individual, that distinguishes the ambitious politician from the non-ambitious. Schlesinger and Hain provide compelling evidence that suggests age plays an important role in distinguishing the ambitious from the non-ambitious politician. How can these differing perspectives be reconciled? On the one hand, one could reasonably assume that relative youth or relatively advanced age could substantially reduce the probability a member attaches to obtaining higher office, thereby reducing the expected utility of that alternative. On the other hand, age may be related to risk-taking propensities. For example, J.S. Slotkin describes early middle age as " . . . the testing stage . . . [a] . . . period in which the individual examines his career to determine the extent to which he has obtained the gratification he has hoped to gain from his life course."<sup>29</sup> Such introspection may lead members of early middle age to be less satisfied with their current career status quo and lead them to have more intense preferences for the risky alternative of higher office.

Whether we posit members' ages to influence the probabilities they attach to obtaining higher office, or to influence their risk-taking propensities over the course of their lives, or some combination of both, the expected relationship between age and decisions to seek higher office would be the same in each case: the relatively young and the relatively old will

be less likely to seek higher office than members of middle years, other things being equal. This reasoning leads to the following hypothesis:

- H<sub>8</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will increase with age up to some point in middle age after which the proportion of opportunities taken will decrease with decreasing age.

## II. Decisions to Retire

Up to this point we have relied heavily upon Rohde's theory of progressive ambition. We now move into an area for which no formal theory has yet been formulated; this concerns decisions to leave the House for reasons other than seeking higher office.

Although no explicit formal theory of retirement has yet been developed, Joseph Cooper and William West, in their consideration of the trend towards increasing retirement in the 1970s, suggest that the benefit-cost ratio of service in the House has declined.<sup>30</sup> John R. Hibbing also examines retirements from a cost-benefit perspective.<sup>31</sup> Previously, Fiorina, Rohde, and Wissel had analyzed voluntary retirement in benefit-cost terms.<sup>32</sup> Their notion of a benefit-cost ratio of service implies that some type of rational choice calculus underlies these decisions, but they do not go so far as to formalize the characteristics of the calculus. It should prove useful, at this point, to attempt to formalize a decision calculus concerning retirement decisions to see what this decision calculus leads us to expect about retirement decisions.



We may begin by assuming again that our actors are rational maximizers of expected utility. Next, we may posit a decision calculus that is assumed to underlie retirement decisions. This calculus is similar to that employed by Rohde concerning decisions to seek higher office but has some notable differences. The terms in the calculus are as follows:

$O_0$  = no office occupied after the election: actor retires

$O_1$  = no office occupied after the election: actor defeated

$O_2$  = the currently held office is occupied after the election

$a_0$  = the actor retires

$a_1$  = the actor runs for the currently held office (i.e., reelection)

$P_1$  = the probability of defeat

$1 - P_1$  = the probability of reelection

Let us assume, as Rohde does, that occupying no office after the election is the least preferred outcome, and arbitrarily set  $U(O_0) = U(O_1) = 0$ . Let us further assume that retirement is an act chosen with certainty and involves no costs per se. Hence:

$$E(a_0) = U(O_0) = 0$$

Let us begin by considering two extremes concerning reelection and see how they might relate to retirement. Our rationality assumption implies that a rational actor will retire only if

$$E(a_1) < E(a_0) = U(O_0) = 0$$

The first extreme we may evaluate is when the probability

of defeat approaches being a certainty (i.e.,  $P_1 = 1$ ,  $1 - P_1 = 0$ ). Under this condition

$$E(a_1) = 1(O_1)U(O_1) + 0(O_2)U(O_2) - C(a_1) = -C(a_1)$$

Assuming there is some direct utility cost incurred by seeking reelection, the actor under this extreme condition would clearly retire since

$$E(a_1) = -C(a_1) < E(a_0) = U(O_0) = 0$$

Research concerning the incumbency advantage enjoyed by members of the House would suggest that this extreme is not realistic for many, if not most, retirements from the House. This extreme does, however, point to the theoretical importance to the understanding of retirement decisions of the probability of defeat in relation to the utility costs incurred in seeking reelection.

Let us now evaluate another extreme and see what it suggests about the conditions under which we might expect retirement. Consider the case where the probability of reelection is a certainty (i.e.,  $P_1 = 0$ ,  $1 - P_1 = 1$ ). In this case

$$E(a_1) = 0(O_1)U(O_1) + 1(O_2)U(O_2) - C(a_1) = U(O_2) - C(a_1)$$

At this extreme we would expect a rational actor to retire only if

$$C(a_1) > U(O_2)$$

Only when the cost incurred in seeking reelection is greater than the utility derived from reelection, at the extreme when the probability of obtaining reelection is a certainty would our decision rule,  $E(a_1) < 0$ , hold. This latter extreme suggests that for some, even though they may return

to the House with certainty, either the costs they incur in retaining their House seat or the utility they derive from holding that seat is not sufficient to lead them to seek reelection.

The extremes outlined above taken independently embrace only a narrow range of retirement decisions. In combination, however, it is believed they can provide a more general understanding of retirement decisions. In other words, retirement can be viewed as a function of some combination of relatively low probability of reelection, relatively low utility derived from House service, and/or relatively high costs incurred in seeking reelection. For the sake of simplicity, it is assumed here that there is an inverse relationship between the probability of reelection and the costs incurred in seeking reelection. By so doing we can narrow our discussion to factors hypothesized to influence the utility of House service, and those hypothesized to influence the probability (and conversely costs) associated with returning to the House. Each will be considered separately below.

#### The Utility of House Service

In this category, we may examine many of the same factors that were considered to impact upon the value of the House seat and hence the degree of sacrifice in seeking higher office. Many of the expectations will be the same.

As noted previously, power in the House rests largely in committees, and the way to power in committees is through seniority. If we again assume that members derive utility

through power and that power is a function of seniority, we are led to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>9</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be inversely related to seniority.

As is apparent, there is a problem with this hypothesis. This problem stems from the fact that members with very high seniority no doubt come from safe districts. This is a problem in that, for a member from a very safe district, defeat is unlikely; and retirement becomes the only way short of death that he can leave the House. This being the case, it is quite possible that members with relatively high seniority will be as likely to retire as those with relatively low seniority. There is a way around this problem. The age at which a member enters Congress ultimately determines the upper limit of seniority which that member could accumulate. The member who enters the chamber at 65 certainly has different expectations from the member who enters at 35 concerning seniority. Thus, the age at which a member enters Congress shapes both the potential and the ultimate value of a House seat, assuming this value to be a function of seniority.

This leads to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>10</sub>: For members of the House, the probability of retirement will be positively related to the age at which the member entered Congress for the first time contiguous to the session in which retirement is considered.

We may also expect age to have another influence upon retirement. Stephen Frantzich notes that a number of the retiring members he examined revealed an acute awareness of age and disability. Their comments are informative:

It seemed like a good time to quit. This feeling was motivated in part by observing some of my elderly colleagues . . . forcing themselves to continue their congressional duties despite physical incapacities. I determined not to let myself get into that category. 33

There are just too many people who stay around too long. I didn't want people looking at me from the gallery and whispering, "He used to be Congressman \_\_\_\_." 34

As with any career, life expectancy places an upper limit upon its ultimate length. For members of Congress, increasing age does not necessitate retirement but the statements above suggest that for at least some members it is an important factor. Thus, we have the following hypothesis:

H<sub>11</sub>: For members of the House, the probability of retirement will be positively related to their age.

As in the case with decisions to seek higher office, we would expect a member's political party to have an influence upon the utility he derived from House service. The minority party has less power in the House than the majority party. We would expect members from the minority party to derive less utility from House service than do the majority members, other things being equal. Hence:

H<sub>12</sub>: For members of the House the probability of retirement will be greater for Republicans (the minority party) than for Democrats (the majority party).

It is believed here that risk-taking propensities should bear a relationship to retirement decisions. When evaluating the alternatives, seeking reelection or retiring, the member confronts a risky alternative and a certain alternative. As mentioned previously, Riker and Ordeshook note, "some people are more likely to select risky alternatives than are others." 35

Each attempt at reelection involves risk; and as in the case of decisions to seek higher office, where two members may have identical preference orderings but may differ in the intensity of their preferences, it is believed that in retirement decisions the inherent risks in seeking reelection tell only part of the story. Some members will be more likely than others to bear the risks of seeking reelection. This suggests the following hypothesis:

H<sub>13</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be less for the high risk taker than for the less risk acceptant.

Perhaps one of the most explicit benefits derived from service in the House is salary. It would be unrealistic to assume that members of the House serve in that body primarily for the remuneration represented by their salary; an examination of member biographies suggests that many, if not most, could earn more elsewhere. Nonetheless, it would seem that salary, for members without an outside source of income, would represent their primary source of income; and its decline in real dollar terms might make it relatively difficult for them to maintain lifestyles their qualifications warrant. Furthermore, while congressional salaries may decline in real dollar terms, this has not been the case for many alternative occupations for which congressmen are frequently qualified. The following comments by retirees serve to illustrate this point.

Private industry salaries are so much higher it's ridiculous. <sup>36</sup>

The relationship of the congressional salary to private industry salaries has done a reversal. When I entered Congress, the salary was \$10,000. At that time there weren't but two or three lawyers in all of my hometown making \$10,000. Now the salary is \$60,000, but there must be two hundred lawyers in this town making that, maybe more.<sup>37</sup>

Seeking my tenth term in Congress next year would too severely limit my opportunities in the private sector for my remaining active years.<sup>38</sup>

In an indirect manner, it appears that the congressional salary represents an opportunity cost. As it climbs slowly, or even declines, in real dollar terms, outside opportunities have increased rather rapidly; that which is foregone increases in magnitude and the cost of House service increases. It would be exceedingly difficult to estimate each member's potential earning power outside the House and develop an indicator of opportunity cost to predict retirement. In the absence of such an indicator, congressional salary in real dollars would serve as a crude but useful surrogate for assessing the relative monetary rewards of service in the House. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H<sub>14</sub>: Among members of the House, there is an inverse relationship between the proportion of members retiring and congressional salary measured in constant (1967) dollars.

The final area of concern with regard to the utility of House service is related to the proposition that the nature of House service has changed in the 1970s. As mentioned previously, Cooper and West have asserted that a number of mutually reinforcing trends have led to increased dissatisfaction during the 1970s. These and other authors

point to changes in or around 1970 that have diminished the utility of House service or made retirement more attractive. Among these factors are improved pensions for retired members, House provisions limiting outside incomes and requiring financial disclosure, declining reliance upon seniority for the distribution of rewards for House service, increasing difficulties in getting legislation passed and the increasingly demanding nature of the job of congressmen, as well as other influences. We would expect, and in fact find, that more members are retiring after 1970. The following hypothesis is forwarded, not to restate the obvious, but as a proposition to test while other factors are controlled in the multivariate analysis to be discussed later. Hence:

H<sub>15</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be greater after 1969 than it was prior to 1970.

### The Probability of Reelection

In this section we will consider factors posited to influence the  $P(O_2)$  term in our retirement calculus. The most obvious influence would be some indicator of prospective vulnerability. This, of course, would be virtually impossible to develop. In the absence of a prospective indicator of vulnerability, we are left with a retrospective indicator, margin of victory in the last election. This indicator is problematic for a number of reasons. First, it ignores intervening influences that could drastically alter a member's estimate of the probability of being re-elected. Second, much as in the case of members with high



seniority, for members from safe districts retirement becomes the only way short of dying that they can leave the House. With this being the case, we might find members from safe districts over time to be more likely to retire than members from more marginal districts. However, since the turnover of members from safe districts is low, we might also expect that proportionately more retirements come from marginal districts. Thus, although our expectations are confounded by the above factors, the following hypothesis nonetheless seems worthy of evaluation:

H<sub>16</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be an inverse function of the margin of victory in their last election.

As noted, margin of victory in the last election ignores the prospective aspect of the probability of reelection. For some members, however, we do have a means by which to evaluate the impact of electoral prospects upon retirement decisions. As noted with decisions to seek higher office, we would expect members who were harmed by redistricting to attach a diminished probability of returning to the House. This leads to the following and final hypothesis:

H<sub>17</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be greater for those hurt substantially by redistricting than for those who were hurt only slightly, not affected, or helped by redistricting.

### Plan of Analysis

In the preceding pages I have restated the hypotheses David Rohde derived from his theory of progressive ambition

and provided extensions or amendments that flow from his theory. I have also developed a formal calculus underlying the cost-benefit ratio of service in the House and have derived hypotheses concerning retirement decisions.

Chapter Three will begin by considering the frequency of attempts for higher office by members of the House. From there, the hypotheses concerning progressive ambition developed in this Chapter will be evaluated in light of tabular results. Then, having examined the tabular results, these hypotheses will be evaluated in light of the separate variable influences when incorporated into multivariate probit models in Chapter Four. This will allow for the evaluation of the relative independent influence of these factors as well as to discount the possibility of spuriousness. In Chapter Five the pattern of analysis will be much the same as that in Chapter Three except that attention will be turned to decisions concerning retirement. In Chapter Six retirement decisions will be further scrutinized using probit.

Within each of these chapters, the relevant concepts will be operationalized and the method of analysis will be more fully explored. The data by which these hypotheses are to be evaluated consist of all members of the House elected between 1950 and 1974. The origins of the data concerning these members will also be detailed in these chapters.

In Chapter Seven, conclusions will be drawn in light of the results obtained in Chapters Three through Six.

It is hoped that through the use of a multivariate technique, the relative influences of each of the theoretically derived variables can be disentangled, providing a better picture of the factors influencing the career decisions of members of the House. From this picture a better understanding of the motivations of representatives can be obtained that ultimately may contribute to a better understanding of the operating characteristics of representative bodies and of the nature of representation itself.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Rohde, "Risk Bearing and Progressive Ambition," p. 3.
- <sup>2</sup>Houston Chronicle, May 31, 1981.
- <sup>3</sup>William H. Riker and Peter C. Ordeshook. An Introduction to Positive Political Theory. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973).
- <sup>4</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, pp. 99-100.
- <sup>5</sup>See, for example, Barbara Hinckley, "Incumbency and the Presidential Vote in Senate Elections: Defining Parameters of Subpresidential Voting," American Political Science Review 64 (1970) and Warren Lee Kostroski, "Party and Incumbency in Postwar Senate Elections: Trends, Patterns and Models," American Political Science Review 67 (December 1973).
- <sup>6</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, pp. 68-69.
- <sup>7</sup>Donald R. Matthews. U.S. Senators and Their World. (New York: W.W. Morton and Company, Inc., 1973), p. 242.
- <sup>8</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 69.
- <sup>9</sup>Stephen J. Turrett. "The Vulnerability of American Governors: 1900-1969," Midwest Journal of Political Science 15 (February 1971), p. 109.
- <sup>10</sup>V.O. Key, Jr. American State Politics: An Introduction. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956). See also William H. Slanding and James A. Robinson, "Inter-Party Competition and Primary Contesting: The Case of Indiana," American Political Science Review 52 (December 1958).
- <sup>11</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 99.
- <sup>12</sup>Frantzich, "De-Recruitment: the Other Side of the Congressional Career Equation".
- <sup>13</sup>Joseph Schlesinger. "A Comparison of the Relative Positions of Governors," in The American Governor in a Behavioral Perspective, eds. Thad Beyle and J. Oliver Williams. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).
- <sup>14</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 103.
- <sup>15</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, found that 22 percent of all individuals elected to the Senate between 1914 and 1958 were formerly governors. Donald Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World, found that 22 percent of senators between 1947 and 1957 came to that office via a governorship.

<sup>16</sup>Rohde, "Risk Bearing and Progressive Ambition," p. 11.

<sup>17</sup>Cover, "The Greening of Congress, " p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Detroit Free Press, September 8, 1981.

<sup>19</sup>Decision making under risk, as opposed to uncertainty, occurs under the assumption that an individual has an a priori probability distribution over the states of nature, while under certainty the states of nature are assumed finite and have no a priori probability assignments over the states. See, R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, Games and Decisions: Introductions and Critical Survey. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1957), p. 325.

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, F.H. Knight, Risk, Uncertainty and Profit. (New York, 1921).

<sup>21</sup>Milton Friedman and L.J. Savage. "The Utility Analysis of Choices Involving Risk," The Journal of Political Economy 56 (August 1948), p. 294.

<sup>22</sup>Riker and Ordeshook, An Introduction to Positive Political Theory, p. 75.

<sup>23</sup>Rohde, "Risk Bearing and Progressive Ambition," p. 11.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>25</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 174.

<sup>26</sup>Hain, "Age, Ambition and Political Careers," p. 269.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 274

<sup>29</sup>J. A. Slotkin, "Life Course in Middle Age," in Problems of the Middle Aged. (Springfield: Thomas Publishers, 1965), p. 44.

<sup>30</sup>Cooper and West, "Voluntary Retirement, Incumbency and the Modern House," p. 288.

<sup>31</sup>Hibbing, "Voluntary Retirement from the U.S. House," p. 65.

<sup>32</sup>Fiorina, Rohde, and Wissel, "Historical Changes in House Turnover," p. 39.

<sup>33</sup>Quoted in Frantzich, "Opting Out," p. 259.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>35</sup>Riker and Ordeshook, An Introduction to Positive Political Theory, p. 75.

<sup>36</sup>Hibbing, "Voluntary Retirement from the U.S. House," p. 65.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

### Chapter III

In this chapter, hypotheses concerning decisions to seek higher office, developed in the first part of Chapter Two will be examined. In the process, questions concerning the operationalization of concepts embodied in these hypotheses will be addressed. Before turning attention to these hypotheses, however, it will first prove useful to examine the frequency of these decisions and their outcome in the period under study (members elected between 1950 and 1974).

Table 1 displays the number of congressmen deciding to seek higher office by the office they sought, outcome, and year. Perhaps the most striking initial impression is the relatively high failure rate among high office seekers. Overall, 95 of 157 (60.5 percent) lost in their bid for higher office. If we ignore primary losers and concentrate only upon those who made it to the general election, the success rate improves appreciably, with 62 of 125 (49.6 percent) winning. In general elections in the period studied, higher office seekers had almost an exactly even chance of success.

Overall, it appears that for many members these decisions were made with much less than certainty about the

TABLE 1  
HOUSE MEMBERS SEEKING HIGHER OFFICE BY YEAR, OFFICE SOUGHT, AND ELECTION OUTCOME

Year:	Office Sought:								Overall
	SENATE		GOVERNOR				TOTAL		
	Won	Lost Gen. Prim.	Won	Lost Gen. Prim.	Won	Lost Gen. Prim.	Won	Lost Gen. Prim.	
1951-52	7	3 0	2	1 0	9	4 0	15		
1953-54	5	5 0	1	0 0	6	5 0	11		
1955-56	0	2 0	0	1 0	0	3 0	3		
1957-18	6	2 0	0	1 0	6	3 0	9		
1959-60	2	2 1	0	1 0	2	3 1	6		
1961-62	3	6 3	1	0 1	4	6 4	14		
1963-64	2	4 1	1	1 0	3	5 1	9		
1965-66	1	3 0	1	1 1	2	4 1	7		
1967-68	4	2 3	1	1 1	5	3 4	12		
1969-70	6	8 2	2	3 4	8	11 6	25		
1971-72	5	5 1	2	0 0	7	5 1	13		
1973-74	2	3 1	2	3 3	4	6 4	14		
1975-76	5	5 9	1	0 1	6	5 10	21		
Total	48	50 21	14	13 11	62	63 32	157		



eventual outcome. The relatively high rate of failure suggests that for many the transition from the House to a higher office is a transition characterized by substantial risk.

In terms of different offices, governorship seekers appear to be slightly more successful than Senate seekers (52 percent to 40.3 percent). Relatively few Senate seekers lost in the primary election (17.65 percent), tentatively suggesting that decisions to seek the Senate are predicated upon a fairly good chance of at least securing a nomination for the bid. Those seeking governorships did not fare nearly so well in the primary elections, with 29 percent being defeated. A plausible explanation for this differential in primary success might be derived from Schlesinger's notion of manifest ties that link offices together. In the case of Senate primaries, a member of the House would have the strongest functional tie (i.e., legislative) of any candidate except perhaps another House member. In the case of gubernatorial primaries, a House member has no such functional advantage and, in fact, would be at a disadvantage if running against a lieutenant governor or other office seeker with executive or administrative experience.

If, once again, we ignore those who lost in the primaries and concentrate only on general election results, it appears that those seeking governorships are slightly more successful (52 percent) than those seeking Senate

seats (40.3 percent). Once the nomination is obtained, those seeking governorships have in the aggregate enjoyed slightly better than even chances of victory. For the Senate, while the primaries are more easily surmounted, members have enjoyed slightly less than an even chance of victory, on average.

Over time, the most attempts for higher office were made in 1970, with 25 attempts. 1970 was also the year with the most attempts made for governorships, with nine attempts, while 1976 was the year with the most attempts made for the Senate, with 19. In terms of successful attempts, 1952 was clearly the most successful year. Proportionately, 70 percent of those seeking Senate seats and 66 percent of those seeking governorships emerged successful in 1952. Proportionately, 1956 was the worst year in terms of unsuccessful attempts for higher office, when all seeking higher office (two for Senate seats, one for governor) lost. 1976 was also a bad year for Senate seekers, with 14 of 19 losing (74 percent). 1970 was equally bad for governor seekers with seven of nine (77 percent) losing. In general, no clear patterns in the frequency of victory, or of seeking a particular office appear to be present in the data presented in Table 1. In terms of seeking higher office in general, however, it appears that beginning in 1968 the frequency of these decisions increased and remained comparatively high through 1976. This increasing frequency will be

dealt with in detail later, when consideration is made of arguments positing a heightened disaffection with House service in the 1970s.

In general, decisions by members of the House to seek higher office are rather infrequent. This is especially so in the case of governorships. If we assume that in any given two-year period roughly 25 governorships are up for election, in most years less than 10 percent of these races involve members of the House. 1970 and 1974 appear to be exceptions, with roughly a third of the races involving House members. For the Senate, about 33 seats are up for election in any two-year period. Members of the House, in general, tend to be involved in about a third of these races in any given year, with 1956 being notably low with only two members running, and 1976 being high with 19 members running. Of course, in cases of the proportion of involvement in these races, it has been implicitly assumed that in a given year each member is involved in a separate race. By and large, this is true; but there are instances when members are pursuing the same office.<sup>1</sup> Ignoring this, we can see that in terms of governorships, decisions by House members to seek this office are rare and House members are involved in a relatively small proportion of these races. In terms of decisions to seek the Senate, members making this decision are a relatively small proportion of all House members; but, in general, House members appear to make

up a substantial portion of candidates for the Senate.

Having examined the general frequency of members of the House seeking higher office, we may now turn to the specific hypotheses concerning these decisions that were developed in Chapter Two. These hypotheses are listed in Table 2. Before evaluating these hypotheses, some clarifications should be made about our method of analysis. The tabular analysis follows the same procedures utilized by David Rohde: members are considered to have an opportunity if an incumbent from their own party is seeking reelection. Excluded from consideration as opportunities are those for governorships in states with odd-year gubernatorial elections,<sup>3</sup> since such races do not necessitate the sacrifice of the House seat, an explicit and important component of the decision calculus.

Excluded from analysis are members who were elected to the House in special elections, terms of members in which they resign or retire, and members who sought offices other than Senate seats or governorships. As Rohde did, risk taking is measured on the basis of past behavior. A high risk taker was a member who, when he ran for the House for the first time (whether successful or not) either challenged an incumbent or, if no incumbent was running, ran in a district where the other party had averaged 57 percent or better in the previous three elections. Persons

TABLE 2

HYPOTHESES CONCERNING DECISIONS TO  
SEEK HIGHER OFFICE

- H<sub>1</sub>: Among House members, the proportion of opportunities to run for the Senate that is taken will be greater than the proportion of opportunities taken to run for governor.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Among House members, the proportion of opportunities to run for governorships with a four-year term that is taken will be greater than the proportion of opportunities taken to run for governorships with a two-year term.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities to run for higher office that is taken in situations where no incumbent is seeking reelection will be greater than the proportion of opportunities taken in situations where an incumbent is seeking reelection.
- H<sub>3A</sub>: Among House members, for Senate races only, the proportion of opportunities taken when an incumbent is seeking reelection will be greater when the incumbent is running for reelection for the first time than the proportion of opportunities taken when the incumbent is seeking a third or greater term.
- H<sub>3B</sub>: Among House members, for gubernatorial races only, the proportion of opportunities taken when an incumbent is seeking reelection will be greater when the incumbent is running for reelection for the second or greater time than the proportion of opportunities taken when the incumbent is seeking reelection for the first time.
- H<sub>4</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities to run for higher office that is taken in states which are "safe" for the opposition party will be less than the proportion of opportunities taken in states which are competitive or "safe" for their own party.
- H<sub>4A</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office in states whose partisan bias is either favorable or unfavorable to the representative's party will be greater than the proportion of opportunities that are taken in competitive states.

TABLE 2  
(cont.)

- H<sub>5</sub>: Among House members, for Senate races, the probability that a member will run will be directly related to the proportion that the population of his House constituency comprises of the state's population.
- H<sub>5A</sub>: Among House members, for gubernatorial races, the probability that a member will run will be directly related to the proportion that the population of his House constituency comprises of the state's population.
- H<sub>6</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the probability that a House member will run will be inversely related to his seniority.
- H<sub>6A</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the probability that a House member will run will increase with increased seniority over the early portion of his House career but will then diminish with increasing seniority.
- H<sub>6B</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will be greater for Republicans (the minority party) than the proportion of opportunities taken by Democrats (the majority party).
- H<sub>6C</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will be greater for members who had narrow margins of victory in their last election than the proportion of opportunities taken by members who had wide margins of victory in their last election.
- H<sub>6D</sub>: For both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will be greater among members who have been hurt substantially by redistricting than among members who were hurt only slightly, not affected, or helped by redistricting.
- H<sub>7</sub>: If two House members are presented with similar opportunities to seek higher office, and one is a "risk taker" and the other is not, then the "risk taker" will have a greater probability of running for higher office than the other.
- H<sub>8</sub>: Among House members, for both Senate and gubernatorial races, the proportion of opportunities taken to run for higher office will increase with age up to some point in middle age after which the proportion of opportunities taken will decrease with increasing age.

who ran for the first time under conditions other than these just mentioned are classified as "others" since running for Congress generally involves at least some risk and, hence, labeling them as "risk averters" would be inappropriate.<sup>4</sup>

### The Value of the Higher Office

In Table 3, Rohde's original results have been replicated. From this Table, Hypotheses 1 and 2 may be evaluated, controlling for risk taking. It can be seen that House members in general are roughly three and one-half times more likely to seek a four-year governorship than a two-year governorship. This same pattern holds when we control for risk taking. Between risk takers and others, risk takers are only slightly more inclined to seek a two-year governorship than are the less risk acceptant, slightly better than twice as likely to seek a four-year governorship, and one and one-half times as likely to seek a Senate seat.

Table 3 certainly lends credence to Hypotheses 1 and 2. Nonetheless, it ignores the possibility that some decisions to seek a governorship might be due to a lack of opportunity for a Senate seat. Perhaps a more refined way of evaluating the differential value placed upon these seats would be to evaluate the decisions of members who were simultaneously confronted with an opportunity for both a governorship

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE,  
CONTROLLING FOR RISK TAKING AND TYPE OF OFFICE

Office:	Member is:		Total
	Risk Taker	Other	
Two-Year Governorship	0.62 (159)	0.49 (410)	0.50 (569)
Four-Year Governorship	2.90 (451)	1.33 (979)	1.81 (1430)
Senate Seat	7.36 (652)	4.35 (1357)	5.33 (2009)
Total	4.90 (1262)	2.69 (2746)	3.39 (4008)



and a Senate seat. Such members are categorized in Table 4. When no incumbent is running for either office, members confronted with simultaneous opportunities were almost five times more likely to seek a Senate seat than a governorship. If an incumbent senator was running and no incumbent governor was running, members were still just as likely to seek a Senate seat. Under the opposite condition, with an incumbent governor and no incumbent senator, all members opted for the Senate seat. Finally, when an incumbent was running in both races, members were three times more likely to seek a Senate seat than a governorship. These results serve to further substantiate the differential values members attach to Senate seats and governorships implied in Hypothesis 1.

#### The Probability of Winning the Higher Office

Within this category we consider factors that are posited to influence the  $P_2(O_3)$  term in our calculus. The first hypothesis is provided by Rohde ( $H_3$ ) and it assumes that the presence of an incumbent seeking reelection lowers the probability of attaining higher office. Results that reflect upon this proposition are presented in Table 5. In general, members were one and one-half times more likely to seek higher office if an incumbent was not running. When risk taking is controlled for, however, it can be seen that this difference is less pronounced for the less risk

TABLE 4

OFFICE SEEKING WHEN CONFRONTED WITH  
SIMULTANEOUS OPPORTUNITIES

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	GOVERNOR			
	No Incumbent		Incumbent	
No Incumbent	(284)*		(165)	
	Member sought:		Member sought:	
	Senate	Governor	Senate	Governor
	6.69**	1.41	7.27	0.00
SENATE				
Incumbent	(286)		(118)	
	Member sought:		Member sought:	
	Senate	Governor	Senate	Governor
	2.45	2.45	2.54	0.84

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\*Number of opportunities

\*\*Percent of opportunities taken

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR RISK TAKING AND INCUMBENCY STATUS OF OPPOSITION

Opposition is:	Member is:		
	Risk Taker	Other	Total
Incumbent	3.88 (619)	2.35 (1108)	2.89 (1727)
Not Incumbent	5.91 (643)	2.93 (1638)	4.21 (2281)
Total	4.90 (1262)	2.69 (2746)	3.39 (4008)

acceptant, they being only one and one-quarter times more likely to run if no incumbent was running. For the risk taker there is a somewhat more pronounced difference in office seeking, depending upon whether or not an incumbent is running. We can also see that high risk takers are more likely to seek higher office when an incumbent is running than the low risk takers are when no incumbent is running, underscoring their willingness to bear risks and more substantial risks, at that.

All incumbents do not possess the same electoral advantage. Ideally, we might like to compile some index of each incumbent's electoral formidability. In the absence of such detailed information, Hypotheses 3A and 3B stem from expectations about differential electoral support for governors and senators. Examination of Table 6 shows that, as anticipated by Hypothesis 3A, there is a tendency for members of the House to be more likely to challenge Senate incumbents seeking their second term as opposed to those seeking greater than their second term. This suggests that senators may pick up electoral support over time and that prospective challengers in the House are aware of this advantage. The expectation concerning incumbent governors, as articulated in Hypothesis 3B, was just the opposite; and further examination of Table 6 shows that for the

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE AGAINST  
INCUMBENTS, CONTROLLING FOR INCUMBENT'S TENURE AND OFFICE

Office:	Incumbent is Seeking:		Total
	Second Term	> Second Term	
Governorship	.76 (395)	1.20 (245)	.90 (640)
Senate Seat	4.52 (642)	3.40 (445)	4.04 (1087)
Total	3.1 (1937)	2.60 (690)	2.89 (1727)

the period studied, there was a tendency for House members to be more likely to challenge governors seeking beyond their second term than to challenge those seeking reelection for the first time. The differences noted suggest that there are distinctions between governorships and Senate seats that impact not only upon the value House members attach to these offices, but also upon the probability members attach to attaining these offices over time when incumbents are seeking reelection.

Our next area of concern centers on the partisan bias of a state in which a member is contemplating pursuit of higher office. As an indicator, average statewide vote margin for Senate and gubernatorial races over the four years preceeding the member's opportunity for higher office were computed.<sup>5</sup> It should be acknowledged that this is a rather crude indicator in that it does not take into account trends or national events, such as presidential elections, that could very well impact upon a member's estimate of the electoral climate of his state. Although crude, this indicator should still allow us to evaluate the more blunt manifestations of partisan bias upon decisions to seek higher office. Hypothesis 4 provides our first expectations: members should be less inclined to run for higher office in states substantially favorable to the

the opposition party. Table 7 provides data relating to this hypothesis. For both governorships and Senate seats, members are less inclined to run when the partisan bias favors the opposition party. However, this Table does not take into account another major factor influencing the probability of attaining higher office, the incumbency status of the opposition. Table 8 controls for both partisan bias and incumbency status. As can be seen, a different pattern emerges. When no incumbent is running in a state favoring the other party, members are most likely to seek higher office. The notion embodied in Hypothesis 4 holds only when an incumbent is seeking reelection. When no incumbent is running, members are more likely to seek higher office in situations where the partisan bias is unfavorable. How can this be?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the partisan bias of a state tells only part of the story concerning the probability of attaining higher office. A necessary, but not sufficient, condition for attaining higher office is securing one's party nomination to run for the higher office. Recalling Table 1, members were by and large successful in making it to the general election: 82 percent of those seeking Senate seats and 71 percent of those seeking governorships were successful in attaining their party's nomination. Members seeking higher office are quite successful

TABLE 7

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
COMPETITIVENESS OF STATE AND OFFICE

Office:	Average Statewide Vote:		Total
	>10% Unfavorable	<10% Unfavorable	
Governorship	.97 (206)	1.50 (1793)	1.45 (1999)
Senate	4.80 (269)	5.40 (1740)	5.33 (2009)
Total	3.10 (475)	3.40 (3533)	3.39 (4008)



TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR COMPETITIVENESS OF STATE AND INCUMBENCY

Opposition is:	Average Statewide Vote:		Total
	>10% Unfavorable	≤10% Unfavorable	
Not Incumbent	4.15 (303)	3.70 (1978)	4.21 (2281)
Incumbent	1.16 (172)	3.10 (1555)	2.89 (1727)
Total	3.10 (475)	3.40 (3533)	3.39 (4008)

in securing nomination. This success may be related to the nature of primary contesting, first articulated by Key.<sup>6</sup> They may, in fact, be so successful in securing nomination, at least in part, because in cases where no incumbent is running, they are pursuing the nomination in a situation with the least competitive primaries: states that favor the other party. As noted in Table 7, the second highest proportion of members seeking higher office is where no incumbent is running and the partisan bias is less unfavorable. In this circumstance, we might suspect that the primary contest is more heated, causing proportionately fewer members to run, but still a relatively high proportion due to the high value of the nomination. The fewest members run where there is an incumbent seeking reelection in a state whose partisan bias is unfavorable to the member. Here the nomination might be relatively easy to obtain, but the incumbent's advantage perceived by the member leaves the nomination to be of little value. Overall, it appears that there is a tradeoff between the attractiveness of a nomination and the ability to secure that nomination.

Hypothesis 4A suggests something about the nature of this tradeoff. The expectation is that a member will be most likely to seek higher office in situations where the combined expectations about securing the nomination and

winning the general election are high. Table 9 displays data that relate to this hypothesis. When no incumbent is running, or when an incumbent is running, members are least likely to run in the competitive situation. In such situations, primary contesting could be very high and the general election outcome uncertain. Members are somewhat more likely to run when the partisan bias is favorable, a situation where the nomination is highly contested but the eventual electoral outcome would yield favorable expectations. Members are most likely to run when the partisan bias is unfavorable; although when an incumbent is running, there is only a very slight difference between this category and that when the partisan bias is favorable. This similarity in magnitude is suggestive because in both we might anticipate the combination of expectations concerning primary and general election outcomes to be similar: high primary expectations and low general election expectations in the one case, low primary expectations and high general election expectations in the other. When no incumbent is running, substantially more opportunities are taken for higher office in the unfavorable situation than in either the favorable or competitive situations. Under this condition we might suspect that members derive the highest combined expectation of success in attaining higher office; the nomination may be easier to secure and the opposition would have only the favorable partisan bias of the state, not incumbency, as an advantage.



TABLE 9

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR COMPETITIVENESS OF STATE AND INCUMBENCY

Opposition is:	>5% Unfav.	5% Unfav. to 5% Fav.	>5% Fav.	Total
Not Incumbent	4.76 (608)	3.07 (750)	3.68 (923)	4.21 (2281)
Incumbent	3.18 (377)	2.61 (805)	3.11 (545)	2.89 (1727)
Total	4.16 (985)	2.83 (1555)	3.47 (1468)	3.39 (4008)

The notions forwarded above are tentative. We would do well to evaluate these decisions in light of partisan bias controlling for other factors. For example, partisan bias would certainly suggest something about the degree of risk inherent in a potential bid for higher office. In Table 10, risk taking is controlled for. Interestingly, the more risk acceptant are most likely to run in the favorable situation while the less risk acceptant are most likely to run in the unfavorable situation. If we continue to assume that competitiveness impacts upon primary contesting, it appears that the high risk takers are more willing to risk their House seats for an uncertain nomination, while the less risk acceptant will make this sacrifice more often for a more certain nomination but with a less certain eventual outcome. Party is controlled for in Table 11, and it is evident that differing patterns exist between the two parties. For Democrats there appears to be an inverse relationship between the favorableness of partisan bias and the proportion of members seeking higher office. Republicans, on the other hand, are slightly more likely to run in the favorable situation than in the unfavorable situation; but in each case they are substantially more likely to run than in the competitive situation. These differences tentatively suggest that there may be differences in nominating patterns within the two parties, but without further evidence this remains as no more than speculation.

Our discussion of competitive bias suggests that its effect upon decisions to seek higher office is much more

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR COMPETITIVENESS OF STATE AND RISK TAKING

Member is:	Average Statewide Vote:			Total
	> 5% Unfav.	5% Unfav. to 5% Fav.	> 5% Fav.	
Risk Taker	5.26 (323)	3.54 (537)	6.47 (402)	4.90 (1262)
Other	3.62 (662)	2.45 (1018)	2.34 (1066)	2.69 (2746)
Total	4.16 (985)	2.83 (1555)	3.47 (1468)	3.39 (4008)

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR COMPETITIVENESS OF STATE AND PARTY

Member is:	Average Statewide Vote:			Total
	>5% Unfav.	5% Unfav. to 5% Fav.	>5% Fav.	
Democrat	3.21 (498)	2.95 (745)	2.60 (998)	2.86 (2241)
Republican	5.10 (487)	2.72 (810)	5.32 (470)	4.07 (1767)
Total	4.16 (985)	2.83 (1555)	3.47 (1468)	3.39 (4008)



complex than the relationship suggested in hypothesis 4. In every instance except one, members were shown to be least likely to run in the competitive situation, lending support to hypothesis 4A. This suggests that decisions to seek higher office may be not only a function of partisan bias but also a function of the relative certainty of nomination which has been assumed here to interact with partisan bias. In the absence of more detailed information about the characteristics of primary contesting, the nature of this relationship and its impact upon decisions to seek higher office will remain only speculative. It is hoped, however, that the multivariate analysis to be performed in the next chapter might shed further light upon the relationship between partisan bias and decisions to seek higher office by systematically controlling for the influence of other variables, allowing us to disentangle the influence of this particular factor.

Attention is now turned to hypothesis 5. Recalling the discussion in Chapter Two, we initially limit our consideration of degree of shared electorate to Senate seekers only because of the assumed tradeoff between size of state and value (i.e., power) of governorships. Examination of Table 12 shows that there is indeed a very strong linear decline in attempts for Senate seats as the size of state (or number of Congressional districts) increases. This, of course, has been demonstrated before. But what of governorships? Again, examining Table 12, we can see that hypothesis 5A is at least partially incorrect. Members in the

TABLE 12

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
OFFICE AND SIZE OF STATE

Number of Congressional Districts	Office:		
	Governorship	Senate Seat	Total
1 or 2	3.10 (129)	31.00 (107)	15.68 (236)
3 to 6	4.50 (290)	10.80 (176)	6.87 (466)
7 to 10	1.10 (357)	4.60 (351)	2.82 (708)
11 to 19	.72 (416)	4.10 (418)	2.40 (832)
20 or more	.62 (807)	2.30 (957)	1.53 (1764)
Total	1.40 (1999)	5.30 (2009)	3.39 (4008)

states with the smallest number of congressional districts are less likely to seek a governorship than are those from states with three to six districts. Furthermore, the relatively high proportion of members seeking governorships in the smaller states could stem from the inclusion in this category of members with at-large districts in larger states.<sup>7</sup> At the extreme of the smallest state, there does appear to be a tradeoff between the value of a governorship and the probability of attaining that office as measured by degree of shared electorate. However, ignoring this extreme, we can also see that there is an inverse relationship between size of state and proportion of members seeking governorships. Although not as pronounced as in the case of Senate races, within limits the shared electorate hypothesis would also appear valid for attempts at governorships in spite of the assumed differences in power among governorships in states of different sizes.

#### The Value of the House Seat

We now turn our attention to factors posited to influence the  $U(O_2)$  term in the decision calculus. These factors are important in that they reflect the degree of sacrifice a member must make to pursue higher office.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, it was assumed that the utility derived from a House seat was a function of power; and this power was shaped by a member's seniority. Hypothesis 6, provided by Rohde, suggests that there is an inverse relationship between a member's seniority and the likelihood of his

seeking higher office. Examining Table 13, we can see that when we combine categories of seniority, there is a linear decline in the likelihood of seeking higher office as member's tenure in the House increases. However, as noted in Chapter Two, the notion embodied in hypothesis 6 seems disagreeable, for it leads us to expect the first term member to be most likely to pursue higher office. This seemed disagreeable because the first term member may more often than not be relatively unknown outside his district. More time in the House might allow him to overcome this. This would, admittedly, increase the value of the House seat but would also serve to increase the probability of attaining a higher office. Looking at Table 14, we can see in the column totals that when members are disaggregated into individual terms, first term members are less likely to run than second term members, lending credence to hypothesis 6A. Further examination shows, however, that there remains a problem in that taken as a whole, fifth term members were the most likely to seek higher office. This may be more easily explained if we consider hypothesis 6B which incorporates another dimension of power, and hence value, of a House seat. Members of the minority party have less power in the House and derive less utility, in terms of power, from increased seniority. We would expect more Republicans than Democrats to seek higher office, and the row totals of Table 14 show that they were almost one and one-half times more likely to run than Democrats, lending support to hypothesis 6B. Reexamining the proportion of opportunities taken within categories of seniority, it can

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE,  
CONTROLLING FOR SENIORITY

	Number of Terms Member has Served in the House				Total
	1-3	4-6	7-9	≥10	
Total	4.40 (1648)	3.60 (1119)	2.50 (665)	.74 (540)	3.39 (4008)

TABLE 14

## PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING FOR SENIORITY AND PARTY

Member's Party:	Number of Terms Member has Served in the House:									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Democrat	2.87 (314)	5.70 (316)	4.08 (245)	2.56 (191)	2.62 (234)	2.12 (189)	3.92 (153)	1.68 (119)	1.90 (105)	0.53 (175) 2.86 (2241)
Republican	4.57 (306)	4.32 (278)	5.33 (225)	4.52 (199)	7.50 (160)	2.74 (146)	0.85 (117)	5.10 (98)	1.40 (73)	1.21 (165) 4.07 (1767)
Total	3.70 (620)	5.05 (594)	4.68 (470)	3.46 (433)	6.77 (251)	2.39 (335)	2.59 (270)	3.22 (217)	1.68 (178)	.74 (540) 3.39 (4008)

be seen that Democrats correspond quite closely to the curvilinear expectation embodied in hypothesis 6A. Republicans, on the other hand, display a more dispersed pattern. Democrats, it appears, are more constrained by seniority, owing to their majority status and the additional power that it entails within the House. Republicans demonstrate a heightened willingness to pursue higher office over a much wider range of seniority. In sum, the relationship between seniority and the proportion of opportunities taken to seek higher office is not linear, but curvilinear, and is conditioned by the majority status of the member's party; the minority party member does not correspond to an inverse linear or curvilinear function.

Another factor that, theoretically at least, would seem likely to impinge upon the value of a member's House seat would be the probability he attaches to returning to the House. The probability a member attaches to returning to the House within the decision calculus impacts upon the expected utility a member attaches to that alternative and should, within our theory, influence decisions to seek higher office. In the absence of any prospective measure, we are left with the retrospective and crude indicator embodied in the member's margin of victory in his last election. Our expectation, as articulated in hypothesis 6C, is that members with large margins of victory will be less likely to pursue higher office than members who had narrower margins of victory. As in the case of partisan bias, this indicator fails to take into account intervening trends,

and the potential influence of presidential elections on the member's estimate of chances at reelection. We also have the confounding influence of members increasing their margin of victory and, perhaps, transferring this momentum into a bid for higher office.<sup>8</sup> In spite of these problems, the data presented in Table 15 suggests that vulnerability does bear some relationship to decisions to run for higher office although this relationship is by no means clear cut. We can see that members who enjoyed less than a five percent advantage in their last election were somewhat more likely to pursue higher office than all but one other category of victory margin (15 to 17.4 percent). To get a more coherent picture of this relationship, let us define as marginal any congressman winning with 60 percent or less, thus having a margin of victory of 20 percent or less.<sup>9</sup> The column totals of Table 16 show that overall there is a slight tendency for members from marginal districts to be more inclined to take opportunities for higher office. When we control for risk-taking, however, an interesting difference emerges. The less risk-acceptant are almost one and one-half times more likely to seek higher office if they are in a marginal, as opposed to a safe, district. Just the opposite is true for the high risk takers; they are somewhat more likely to pursue higher office from a safe district than a marginal district. Although this Table ignores the characteristics of the destination office (such as differential value and probability of attaining it), greater willingness of the high risk takers to sacrifice a safe seat would appear



### PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING FOR VULNERABILITY

Total	5.68 (176)	4.92 (203)	2.40 (208)	2.93 (205)	4.02 (224)	4.73 (190)	6.00 (150)	2.30 (219)	2.08 (2433)	3.39 (4008)	102
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TABLE 16

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE,  
CONTROLLING FOR MARGINALITY AND RISK TAKING

Member is:	$\leq 20\%$	$> 20\%$	Total
Risk Taker	4.34 (738)	5.74 (524)	4.90 (1262)
Other	3.47 (836)	2.36 (1910)	2.69 (2746)
Total	3.87 (1574)	3.08 (2434)	3.39 (4008)

to be a further manifestation of their heightened intensity of preference for higher office. The less risk acceptant are more unwilling to sacrifice the safe seat, choosing instead to seek higher office when the probability of their returning to the House is less certain.

As noted, the retrospective nature of marginality leaves much to be desired as an indicator of the prospective probability a member attaches to securing reelection. We would ideally like to have a more sophisticated and comprehensive indicator of all members' prospects for reelection. In the absence of such a refined measure, I have turned to how members fared in redistricting to assess how at least some members responded to lowered or heightened prospects of reelection. To compile this, Congressional Quarterly's Pre-Election Reports from 1958 to 1976 were examined. Members were categorized as being harmed if the narrative account of the member's district alteration was basically unequivocal. In a similar manner, members were categorized as being helped if the description of redistricting left no doubt as to its beneficial (to the member) effects. Cases not mentioned and those covered in speculative terms were categorized as being affected minimally or not at all. Although subjective, this method is quite conservative in that some members who may very well have been harmed or helped by redistricting were nonetheless relegated to the middle category in the absence of an absolute commitment one way or another by the reporter commenting on the impact of redistricting.

In spite of the conservative nature of the coding scheme, Table 17 provides compelling evidence for the notion embodied in hypothesis 6D. In the period studied, members who were harmed by redistricting were almost three and one-half times more likely to pursue higher office than members who were affected minimally or not at all. Furthermore, members who were harmed were almost five times more likely to seek higher office than those who benefited from redistricting. These results are important for two reasons. First, while not hitting at the center of the debate on the effects of redistricting, these results nonetheless provide evidence that redistricting does influence some members' careers. Second, these results suggest that the  $P_1(O_2)$  term in our decision calculus exerts an important influence upon the career decisions of at least some members of the House. This evidence is encouraging in that it suggests that further examination of prospective vulnerability, as opposed to retrospective, might ultimately help us understand the role assessments of reelection success have upon the decisions of all members to seek higher office.

When office is controlled for, an interesting difference emerges in the relationship between redistricting and decisions to seek higher office; the impact of redistricting on those decisions is isolated to Senate candidacies as can be seen in Table 18. Certainly the small number of opportunities available to those affected one way or another renders only cautious speculation about this difference. A tentative explanation for this difference, however, might

TABLE 17

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE,  
CONTROLLING FOR REDISTRICTING

Member's District was Altered:			
Adversely	Minimally or not at all	Favorably	Total
11.54 (52)	3.43 (3914)	2.38 (42)	3.39 (4008)

TABLE 18

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR REDISTRICTING AND OFFICE

Office:	Member's District was Altered:			
	Adversely	Minimally or not at all	Favorably	Total
Governorship	0.00 (24)	1.47 (1965)	0.00 (10)	1.45 (1999)
Senate seat	21.40 (28)	5.10 (1949)	3.10 (32)	5.32 (2009)
Total	11.54 (52)	3.43 (3914)	2.38 (42)	3.39 (4008)

be that incumbent governors, who generally have some input on redistricting, might be inclined to see that potential challengers from Congress are not provided with an additional incentive to mount a campaign for the governorship. Without more information, this difference remains a mystery; but the fact that one in five members hurt by redistricting who have opportunities will seek a Senate seat, while none of the members so affected will pursue a governorship, at least suggests that something systematic may be involved.

### Age

We now turn to one of Schlesinger's central concerns: the impact of age upon ambition. His work and others' leads us to expect a curvilinear relationship between age and decisions to seek higher office. This notion is embodied in hypothesis 8. It is assumed that the relatively young and the relatively old have attenuated expectations concerning higher office compared to those in middle years. Turning to the column totals presented in Table 19, it can be seen that in general the likelihood of seeking higher office does peak in the category of 36 to 45 years, although these categories are basically arbitrary. Members in this category are almost one and one-half times more likely to seek higher office than are those less than 35 and those 46 to 55. Furthermore, members in this age group are almost three and one-half times more likely to pursue higher office than are those over 55.

Table 19 also shows that when risk-taking propensities are controlled for, a difference emerges. The high risk takers appear more likely to run for higher office with

TABLE 19

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE,  
CONTROLLING FOR AGE AND RISK TAKING

Member is:	Member's Age				Total
	$\leq 35$	36-45	46-55	$\geq 56$	
Risk Taker	5.26 (76)	6.23 (369)	6.32 (443)	1.87 (374)	4.90 (1262)
Other	2.25 (89)	4.74 (633)	2.72 (991)	1.45 (1033)	2.69 (2746)
Total	3.64 (165)	5.29 (1002)	3.83 (1434)	1.56 (1407)	3.39 (4008)



increasing age up to age 55, although this increase is minimal. The less risk acceptant, on the other hand, correspond to the curvilinear relationship posited in hypothesis 8. The high risk-takers appear to be less constrained by the assumed disadvantages of relative youth or relative old age. We might once again attribute the differential behavior of the high risk taker to the assumed higher intensity of preference for higher office. This higher intensity of preference appears to lead them to be willing to pursue higher office over a wide span of the life cycle, while the less risk acceptant, with less intense preferences, appear to have their expectations shaped more by their age. This difference is interesting. A question concerning ambition is whether it develops within office or, as Rohde suggests, it is constant with the decisions to seek higher office shaped by the inherent costs and risks in the opportunities confronting the member. The results in Table 19 suggest that for the high risk taker, ambition is almost constant through roughly age 55, although we must again acknowledge that these categories are arbitrary. On the other hand, for the less risk acceptant, it appears that ambition, as manifested in decisions to seek higher office, does heighten and then diminish with age, providing support for the notion that ambition develops and then diminishes with increasing age.

Another distinction emerges in Table 20. Although the relationship between age and decisions to seek higher office remains curvilinear, Republicans appear to be much less

TABLE 20

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING  
FOR AGE AND PARTY

Member's Party:	Member's Age:				Total
	$\leq 35$	36-45	46-55	$\geq 56$	
Democrat	2.25 (89)	4.98 (562)	3.47 (807)	.77 (783)	2.86 (2241)
Republican	5.26 (76)	5.68 (440)	4.31 (627)	2.56 (624)	4.07 (1767)
Total	3.64 (165)	5.29 (1002)	3.83 (1434)	1.56 (1407)	3.39 (4008)

constrained in their office seeking by age. Perhaps because of their minority status within the House, Republicans are more willing to sacrifice their House seat over a wider range of age categories. Another reason for this might be differences between parties in the age at which their members first attain office. Numerous authors have noted that Republicans tend to attain office at an older age than Democrats.<sup>10</sup> If this holds for members of Congress studied here, it might help to explain why Republicans are less constrained by age in their decisions to seek higher office. For the young Republicans there is little current power in the House and, due to their minority status, little hope for power in the future. For the Republican entering at an older age, prospects for power in the House are just as dim, and decisions to seek higher office will, of necessity, come at a later age. Examination of Table 21 shows that almost 58 percent of Republicans entered Congress after age 40 while only 52 percent of Democrats did so. In terms of decisions to seek higher office, for both parties there is an inverse relationship between age at entry and proportion of members pursuing higher office, although the relationship is quite weak. For Republicans, the decisions to seek higher office begin with members who enter between ages 30 and 35 and extends to members who enter between 61 and 65. Decisions by Democrats begin with members who entered under age 30 and extend only to the 56 to 60 category. For both parties, the probability of seeking higher office is highest among members entering at earlier ages, but the decline with higher entry age is less

TABLE 21

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RUNNING FOR HIGHER OFFICE, CONTROLLING FOR  
AGE AT WHICH THEY FIRST ENTERED CONGRESS AND PARTY

Member's Party:	Member's Age at Entry:									
	< 30	30-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	> 65	Total
Democrats	7.1*	4.2	2.5	3.2	2.0	1.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	2.8
	(56)	(379)	(638)	(527)	(341)	(205)	(78)	(4)	(10)	(2242)
	2.5**	17.0	28.5	23.5	15.2	9.1	3.5	.2	.4	100.0
Republicans	0.0	5.2	4.6	4.1	4.7	1.5	2.5	2.7	0.0	4.07
	(28)	(310)	(412)	(337)	(359)	(197)	(79)	(37)	(10)	(1767)
	1.5	17.5	23.3	19.1	20.3	11.1	4.5	2.1	.5	100.0
Total	4.8	4.6	3.3	3.6	3.4	1.2	2.5	2.4	0.0	3.4
	(83)	(689)	(1050)	(864)	(700)	(402)	(159)	(41)	(10)	(4008)
	2.1	17.2	26.2	21.5	17.5	10.0	4.0	1.0	.2	100.0

\*Proportion of opportunities Taken

\*\*Row percentage

pronounced for Republicans. Republicans enter later than Democrats and are more willing to pursue higher office over a wider range of entry ages. The tendency for Republicans to establish a career outside of politics before running for office may be forwarded as an explanation for their later entry age; while their minority status, and the attenuation of power in the House that it entails, would account for the dispersion of opportunities taken for higher office across categories of entry age. We can be less certain about which Republicans will pursue higher office inasmuch as they have generally had to sacrifice less, whereas for Democrats our attention is turned to the members who entered Congress at younger ages.

### Conclusion

Based upon the preceding analysis, some tentative assertions may be forwarded. Members were found to respond differently to opportunities for different offices; they were most likely to seek a Senate seat, less likely to pursue a four-year governorship, and least likely to seek a two-year governorship. Members were found to be more likely to run when no incumbent was running. In the case of the Senate, when an incumbent was seeking reelection, members were somewhat more likely to challenge incumbents seeking their second term than those seeking a third or greater term. In the case of governorships the opposite was true, with members more likely to challenge the second or greater term incumbent as opposed to the first term incumbent.

The results concerning the impact of a state's partisan bias on decisions for higher office were mixed. In general, members appeared least likely to run in the very competitive situation. For the most part, members were most willing to run when the partisan bias was unfavorable, suggesting that the nature of primary contesting may be playing a role. The combined or conditional expectation of the prospects for nomination and election appears to be exerting a more important influence than does the expectation about the general election alone.

In terms of factors influencing the value of the House seat, seniority was found to bear a curvilinear relationship to the likelihood of seeking higher office. Although by assumption the first term member derives less utility from House service than does a second or third term member, he also has had less time to engage in the activities that might increase the probability of securing higher office. In terms of party, Republicans were in general more likely to pursue higher office and were less constrained than Democrats by seniority. The results concerning the impact of vulnerability were mixed. High risk takers were more likely to run from a safe seat while the less risk-acceptant were more likely to run from a marginal district. Considering that high risk takers were members who emerged in districts that had previously favored the opposition party, their tendency to run from safe districts suggests that they may be improving their margins over time. Although involving only a few members, redistricting was found to exert a substantial influence on

decisions to seek a Senate seat but not governorships. Although only suggestive, due to the small number of cases involved, one explanation for this might be that incumbent governors work to steer harmful redistricting plans away from the districts of potential challengers.

As expected, the influence of age was found to bear a curvilinear relationship to decisions to seek higher office. High risk takers were found to be less constrained by age in their decisions to pursue higher office. In a similar manner Republicans appeared to be less influenced by age, either because of a tendency for later entry into the House or due to the lessened power in the House that minority status entails.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The following are instances of members competing for the same office:

<u>Year</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Type of Election</u>	<u>Members</u>
1954	New Jersey	Senate	General	Charles R. Howell (D) Clifford Case (R)
1960	Montana	Senate	Primary	Lee Metcalf (D) LeRoy Anderson (D)
1964	Tennessee	Senate	Special	Ross Bass (D) Howard H. Baker (R)
1969	New Jersey	Governor	Primary	William Cahill (R) Charles Sandman (R)
1970	California	Senate	Primary	John V. Tunney (D) George E. Brown (D)
1970	Connecticut	Governor	General	Emilio Daddario (D) Thomas J. Meskill (R)
1970	New York	Senate	Primary	Richard Ottinger (D) Richard D. McCarthy (D)
1974	Connecticut	Governor	General	Ella T. Grasso (D) Robert H. Steele (R)
1976	Arizona	Senate	Primary	Sam Steiger (R) John B. Conlan (R)
1976	Hawaii	Governor	Primary	Spark Matsunaga (D) Patsy Mink (D)
1976	Michigan	Senate	Primary/ General	James G. O'Hara (D) Donald W. Riegle (D) Marvin L. Esch (R)
1976	Missouri	Senate	Primary	James Symington (D) Jerry Litton (D)
1976	Pennsylvania	Senate	General	William Green III (D) H. John Heinz (R)

<sup>2</sup>Rohde, "Risk-Bearing and Progressive Ambition," p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia.



<sup>4</sup> Risk taking propensities, as operationalized, were compiled by examining the conditions under which each member first attempted to enter the House. These conditions were found in Guide to U.S. Elections. (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> V.O. Key, Jr., American State Politics. See also, William H. Standing and James A. Robinson, "Inter-Party Competition and Primary Contesting: The Case of Indiana," American Political Science Review 52 (December 1959).

<sup>7</sup> In fact, two of the members, Neil Stabler (D), Michigan, 1964 and Carlton R. Sickles (D), Maryland, 1966, sought governorships from at-large districts in states with greater than two districts. Hence, the proportion of members seeking governorships in states with only one or two districts is actually 1.55.

<sup>8</sup> James Payne, "Career Intentions and Electoral Performance of Members of the U.S. House," has found for the period 1968-1987 members who sought higher office were, on average, increasing their margin of victory while retiring members were suffering from declining margins.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Cover and David Mayhew, "Congressional Dynamics and the Decline of Competitive Congressional Elections," in Congress Reconsidered, eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 55. The authors declare winning under 55 or 60 percent to be customary indicators of marginality.

<sup>10</sup> Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World. Also, Lester G. Seligman, et. al., Patterns of Recruitment: A State Chooses Its Lawmakers. (Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Co., 1974), and Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics.

## Chapter IV

In the last chapter, the results of crosstabular analysis were suggestive and at many points promising, but in most cases inconclusive. While this analysis provided general directions for the theoretically specified variables, the analysis also opened as many questions as it answered. While the primary advantage of crosstabular analysis is its simplicity and understandability, it carries with it some fundamental problems. First, many of the results contained in the previous chapter begged for introduction of additional variables as controls. For example, Republicans and risk takers appeared less constrained by age. The obvious question becomes how much of this difference was due to other variables such as number of congressional districts in the state, whether or not an incumbent was running, the office available, or redistricting, among others. While it would be technically possible concurrently to introduce all of these variables as controls, this would lead to an enormous number of cells that would be difficult both to display and to interpret. Furthermore, with such disaggregation would come many cells with only a few or no observations. Small or empty cells substantially reduce the reliability of estimated behavior for any given characteristics and make comparison among cells difficult. Clearly, technical

difficulties such as these provide inherent limitations upon the complexity of the model that can be considered.

Another problem with crosstabular analysis is that it cannot provide adequate information concerning the magnitude of the effects of a given variable. In the case at hand, we might wonder whether risk-taking or party exerts a greater influence upon decisions to seek higher office, for example. Contingency tables, furthermore, do not require any explicit consideration of causal structure. Finally, this technique requires the delineation of continuous variables into categories; and this can introduce error that affects the magnitudes attached to different cells.

Clearly, what is needed is a multivariate technique that would allow us to disentangle and summarize the effects of the predictor variables. Ordinarily, one might employ Ordinary Least Squares regression. From this method could be derived estimates of the change in the dependent variable for a unit change in one of the independent variables, with the values of all the other independent variables held constant. Unfortunately, standard regression analysis assumes an unlimited, continuous dependent variable. In the case at hand, we have a dichotomous dependent variable: to seek higher office (1) or to remain in the House (0). The application of OLS regression in cases with a dichotomous dependent variable has been demonstrated to result in residuals that will be correlated with the independent variable and variance of residuals that will vary systematically with the independent variable. In the language of

econometricians, we will have bias and heteroskedasticity which severely weaken our interpretation of individual coefficients and render standard hypothesis tests invalid.<sup>1</sup> Concomitantly, if we assume that we are trying to predict the probability that an individual is in one category or another, OLS regression can lead to nonsensical results, with probabilities greater than one or less than zero. For these reasons, the widely used and relatively tractable method of OLS regression is inappropriate for the inquiry at hand.

Fortunately, students of microbehavior have borrowed a model first developed by biometricians<sup>2</sup> that gets around the problems mentioned above. This method is probit analysis. Unlike OLS regression, which assumes that the dependent behavior is linear, probit assumes that the observed behavior corresponds to the normal distribution function, and this is posited to be a linear function of the parameters of the independent variables. Estimation of these parameters is via the maximum likelihood technique which selects as estimates of the true parameters those values which have associated with them the highest probability of having the observed sample data. The only shortcoming of probit lies in the difficulty of interpreting the parameters and their relative impact. In OLS the regression coefficient represents the amount of change in the dependent variable for a unit increase in an independent variable, with the other independent variable held constant. In probit, the dependent variable is assumed to correspond to the cumulative

standard normal distribution which is curvilinear, and hence the impact of an independent variable depends upon the values taken by the other variables in the equation (or, more specifically, where these other variables locate the estimate on this curve). Hence, with probit, the coefficient is an estimate of the amount of change on the cumulative standard normal distribution that would result from a change in one unit in the independent variable, with the other variables held constant. Thus, in probit, the impact of a given variable is a function of its associated coefficient, but this impact varies depending upon the levels of other attribute variables.

Having justified the technique to be employed, we may now turn our attention to the model to be estimated. The conditional probability of seeking higher office is defined here as

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Pr}(\text{SHO} = 1/B_0 + B_1\text{Age} - B_2\text{Age}^2 + B_3\text{CO} + B_4\text{Rt} + \\ B_5\text{Party} - B_6\text{Stcomp} + B_7\text{Redis} + B_8\text{Office} - B_9\text{Twoyr} + \\ B_{10}\text{Margin} - B_{11}\text{Firstsen} - B_{12}\text{Secsen} - B_{13}\text{Firstgov} - \\ B_{14}\text{Secgov} + B_{15}\text{Change}) \quad (\text{See Appendix I}) \end{aligned}$$

The results of estimating this model appear in Table 22. As can be seen, our goodness of fit measure, estimated  $R^2$ , indicates that the model taken as a whole explains almost half of the variance in decisions to seek higher office ( $R^2 = .4847$ ).<sup>3</sup> In the absence of alternative specifications for comparison, little more can be said on the basis of  $R^2$ , but considering the rarity of the behavior being studied, this level of

explanatory power would, at least on its face, seem promising.

In terms of the individual coefficients, let us at this point scrutinize only those that appear problematic and reserve discussion of others. In terms of directional plausibility, only two variables yield coefficients that are problematic, and problematic only if considered in extreme values of their variables. As noted in the previous chapter, there was reason to believe that the relationship of the competitiveness of a state and the probability of winning higher office might not be straightforward because of the intervening effects of levels of primary contesting. Examination of Table 22 shows that the coefficient associated with competitiveness of state is negative, although small in magnitude. Within limits, this does not seem implausible. At extremes, however, it suggests that members would be most likely to run for higher office in states where the opposition party carried statewide elections by 100 percent over the previous four years. This problem could be the result of two things. First, as mentioned previously, the measure used does not account for trends or national influences and thus represents a very crude indicator of partisan bias. Second, the relationship is specified here as being linear. Theory suggests it should approximate linearity and be positive rather than negative. In reality, the possible influence of levels of primary contesting may cause the underlying relationship to be curvilinear.<sup>4</sup>

The other variable whose corresponding coefficient is suspect in terms of plausibility is that associated with the member's vulnerability and it, too, is implausible only in the extremes. Within limits, it suggests that the member member is more likely to pursue higher office than the vulnerable member. At the extreme, however, it suggests that the member from a one-party, safe district, winning by a 100 percent margin in his last election is, other things being equal, the most likely candidate for higher office, a disagreeable projection, both theoretically and empirically. As in the case of competitiveness of state, margin of victory suffers from deficiencies in measurement, ignoring as it does trends and intervening factors that could affect the member's estimate of his vulnerability. It could also suffer from a specification problem in that the relationship might be curvilinear, with marginal members running, by virtue of their vulnerability and safer members running by virtue of some heightened electoral performance reflected in increasing margins.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of statistical significance, we can further note that the coefficient associated with margin does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of its value being zero at any acceptable or reasonable level of significance. This, combined with the low magnitude of its coefficient, leads to the contention that, at least as measured and specified, retrospective vulnerability as operationalized by margin in last election has little, if any, impact upon

decisions to seek higher office. The other coefficient falling short of statistical significance is that associated with Party, but it falls just barely short and could reject the null hypothesis at the less demanding level of significance of  $\alpha = .10$ . Furthermore, the coefficient is in the theoretically anticipated direction, suggesting that Republicans (the minority party) are more likely to run than Democrats (the majority party). For these reasons, this variable does not seem overly problematic.<sup>6</sup>

With these exceptions, all other variables in the model are statistically significant and in directions anticipated by theory. As noted previously, the direct interpretation of probit coefficients is not straightforward, for their impact upon the dependent variable (now assumed to be of a curvilinear form) depends upon the levels taken by other variables in the equation. They remain like OLS estimates in that they represent the effects of a given variable, holding all other variables constant. To ease interpretation and to aid understanding of substantive implications, the following method has been utilized. Solution of the probit equation in Table 22 for given levels of independent values yields not a probability, but an estimate  $z$  (the normal deviate), of which the probability of the dependent behavior is a function. The transformation of increasing values of  $z$  is not a constant function. A change in  $z$  from 0 to .5 will yield a larger change in probability than a change in  $z$  from 2.5 to 3. Hence, the estimated change in probability associated with a given variable depends upon the value of



TABLE 22  
RESULTS OF PROBIT ESTIMATION

Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Expectation	MLE/SE	Significant at $\alpha =$
Constant	-3.85	$B_0 < 0$	-2.68	.004
Age	.0984	$B_1 > 0$	1.768	.038
Age <sup>2</sup>	-.0012	$B_2 < 0$	-2.18	.014
Constituency Overlap	2.15	$B_3 > 0$	10.59	.0001
Risk Taking	.21	$B_4 > 0$	2.08	.019
Party	.16	$B_5 > 0$	1.56	.059**
Competitiveness of State	-.007	$B_6 > 0$	-2.84	.002
Redistricting	.78	$B_7 > 0$	2.83	.002
Office	.33	$B_8 > 0$	2.90	.002
Twoyr	-.92	$B_9 < 0$	-3.73	.0001
Margin	.002	$B_{10} < 0$	.798	.212**
Senate-1st Reelection	-.56	$B_{11} < B_{12} < 0$	-4.76	.0001
Senate - > 1st Reelection	-.86	$B_{12} > B_{11} < 0$	-6.05	.0001
Governor-1st Reelection	-1.20	$B_{13} < 0$	-5.34	.0001
Governor- > 1st Reelection	-1.07	$B_{14} < 0$	-3.28	.0005
Change	.211	$B_{15} > 0$	1.98	.024

\*\*Not statistically significant at the commonly accepted level of significance of  $\alpha = .05$   
Estimated  $R^2 = .4847$ ;  $N = 3231$

z yielded by the constellation of values of the other variables. One means to evaluate the estimated effect of a given variable would be to introduce an infinite number of values for the other variables and then evaluate the change in probability elicited by the variable of interest, given these other values. The number of combinations, of course, is technically infinite; and this method would not go far in aiding our interpretation of the model. Rather than do this, a technique has been employed similar to one used by Rosenstone and Wofinger.<sup>7</sup> Let us assume that the constellation of all variables leads each member to have a certain predisposition, or probability, to seek higher office. By this assumption, we can evaluate the change in probability in seeking higher office associated with a given variable, at given levels of predisposition assumed to be a function of all other variables, which are held constant. The discussion that follows will employ this method to our four categories of theoretical interest: the value of the higher office, the probability of winning, the value of the House seat, and personal attributes (risk-taking and age).

#### The Value of the Higher Office

In the extreme left hand column of Table 23, the assumed probability of seeking higher office generated by all other variables is displayed. The probability of seeking a four-year governorship is assumed to be the same as the values in the extreme left-hand column because this is our referent.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 23

THE EFFECT OF THE VALUE OF THE HIGHER OFFICE UPON THE  
 LIKELIHOOD OF A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE SEEKING HIGHER  
 OFFICE

Likelihood of a member seeking higher office (%)	Increase in likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to an oppor- tunity for a Senate seat	Decrease in likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to an opportunity for a 2-year governorship
10	6.85	-8.60
20	10.50	-16.10
30	12.50	-22.50
40	13.20	-27.90
50	12.93	-32.12
60	11.90	-34.80
70	10.23	-35.50
80	7.90	-33.20
90	4.74	-22.57

This provides us with a means of comparison. In terms of Senate seats, opportunities for this office generate a substantially higher probability of seeking higher office than opportunities for the other two offices. Looked at another way, a member with other attributes leading to a 40 percent probability of seeking higher office would not run when confronted with an opportunity for a four-year governorship, while the same member confronted with a Senate seat opportunity would run ( $P = .532$ ). This difference in offices is clearly estimated to be enough to tip the balance in favor of running for members who would otherwise not run. Just the opposite is true for two-year governorships in more extreme terms. All other conditions might yield members with an 80 percent likelihood for running; but, if their only opportunity were for a two-year governorship, they are estimated not to run ( $P = .468$ ). Only in the very extreme case where all other factors led a member to have a 90 percent prior likelihood of running would the member confronted with an opportunity for a two-year governorship pursue it.

With the effects of all other variables controlled for, the value of the higher office is seen to be a substantial influence upon the office-seeking behavior of members of the House. These differential values can be seen to be determining factors for a wide range of prior likelihoods; those otherwise unlikely to run might do so if presented with an opportunity for the Senate, while under almost no condition would a member seek a two-year governorship. Of course, these assertions could have been made without such

a sophisticated technique. However, we have isolated here the specific effect of differential office value and on the basis of these results can dismiss the possible influence of other variables in the model shaping the differences in decisions among offices. As examination of other variables will demonstrate, the magnitude of change in probability associated with differential office values is among the more substantial of all variables considered; and this serves to underscore its importance in understanding decisions to seek higher offices.

#### The Probability of Winning

We now turn to factors posited to influence a member's estimate of securing higher office. An initial concern was with the effects an incumbent's pursuing reelection would have upon a member's decision. In Table 24 are displayed the influence of different types of incumbents upon a member's running for higher office. Taken as a whole, the presence of an incumbent can be seen to substantially reduce the probability that a member seeks higher office. Although less so for the Senate, in all cases other conditions would have to contribute substantially to the probability of a member's seeking higher office before he would challenge an incumbent. In the case of a first term senator seeking reelection, members who would run with a 70 percent probability with no incumbent would not run against a first-term incumbent ( $P = .484$ ). As expected, the difference is even greater with the more senior incumbent, leaving the member

with only a 36.7 percent likelihood of running. Clearly, incumbency makes a substantial difference; and in the case of the Senate, the tenure of the incumbent works to further diminish the likelihood of a member of the House challenging the incumbent. The effect of an incumbent governor is even more pronounced. A member otherwise likely to run, with no incumbent, with a probability of .80 would not run against the first term governor ( $P = .3594$ ). With increasing tenure, there does appear to be a slight increase in the probability that a member of the House would challenge the incumbent, which serves to substantiate the expected difference between Senate and gubernatorial incumbents. In terms of magnitude, incumbency has one of the largest impacts upon decisions by members of the House to seek higher office. Although more so in the case of governors, in all cases the model suggests that the constellation of values of all other variables would have to yield a substantial probability to outweigh the influence of the presence of an incumbent. Stated differently, we would expect a member to challenge an incumbent only under extreme conditions.

As noted above, the coefficient associated with the competitiveness of state was problematic at least in the extremes. Displayed in Table 24 are the estimated effects that partisan bias has upon the probability of a member's seeking higher office. In general, its effects are minimal over the range 10 percent favorable to 10 percent unfavorable. The results suggest that members are more likely to run in states where the partisan bias favors the opposition party.

TABLE 24

THE EFFECT OF PROBABILITY OF WINNING UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF  
A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE SEEKING HIGHER OFFICE

Likelihood of a Member Seeking Higher Office (%)	Decrease in likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to an incumbent senator seeking his:		Decrease in likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to an incumbent governor seeking his:	
	1st Reelection	1st Reelection	1st Reelection	1st Reelection
10	-6.80	-8.42	-9.36	-9.10
20	-11.92	-15.54	-17.90	-17.20
30	-15.99	-21.60	-25.70	-24.40
40	-19.10	-26.65	-32.60	-30.66
50	-21.20	-30.50	-38.50	-35.77
60	-22.17	-32.90	-42.90	-39.40
70	-21.60	-33.30	-45.10	-40.88
80	-18.97	-30.80	-44.06	-39.09
90	-13.00	-23.36	-36.40	-31.30

TABLE 24  
(cont'd.)

Likelihood of a Member Seeking Higher Office (%)	Influence of partisan bias on the proba- bility of seeking higher office		Increase in likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to the degree of shared electorate			
	Avg. Statewide Margin was:		Number of Congressional Districts in State:			
	10% Unfavor.	10% Favor.	1	5	10	25
10	1.12	-1.31	70.50	9.50	4.12	.56
20	2.06	-1.86	70.49	14.00	6.60	1.18
30	2.60	-2.20	64.80	16.40	8.00	1.56
40	2.80	-2.50	57.30	17.14	8.60	1.68
50	2.80	-2.80	48.40	16.64	8.50	1.60
60	2.50	-2.80	39.18	15.17	7.90	1.40
70	2.20	-2.60	29.60	13.00	6.90	1.20
80	1.86	-2.06	19.86	9.80	5.43	1.06
90	1.31	-1.10	9.90	5.73	3.38	.82



As mentioned in Chapter Two, there is reason to believe that levels of primary contesting could lead to this type of relationship, but due to problems in measurement and specification these results remain inconclusive.

The next area of concern is with the effect shared electorate has upon pursuing higher office. Unlike the variables considered up to this point, it makes no sense to consider the absence of this variable, for all members share at least some of their state's electorate. Hence, this variable will always have a positive influence, and it is the difference in magnitude that is of interest. Consider members who, based on the influence of other factors, would have a 40 percent likelihood of seeking higher office, ignoring the size of their state. A member from a state with 25 congressional districts would have a 41.68 percent likelihood of running and hence would not run. Similarly, the member from a state with 10 districts would have a probability of .486 and also would not run. However, the member from a state with five districts would run with a likelihood of 57.14 percent, and the member from an at-large or single district state would run with a likelihood of 97.13 percent. Clearly the member from a small state or an at-large district exists in one of the extreme conditions necessary to overcome the disadvantage to candidacy posed by incumbency. The advantage of shared electorate for members from the single district state or at-large district is estimated here to consistently outweigh the disadvantage posed by incumbent senators or governors of any tenure. A completely shared electorate

appears sufficient to outweigh all other negative factors which is to say members in such situations may be impervious to other influences. Members in larger states, depending upon their size, are more subject to other influences; and in the largest states their decisions are based almost entirely upon the influence of other factors.

#### The Value of the House Seat

In examining Table 25, the estimated effects of factors posited to influence the  $U(O_2)$  and  $P(O_2)$  terms can be seen. (The reader may note the absence of seniority; see Appendix II.) The influence of being in the minority party can be seen to contribute to the probability of seeking higher office, although its effect is relatively small. Other factors would have to contribute rather substantially to the prior probability of seeking higher office before minority party status could play a determining role. Although not of tremendous magnitude, it is at least suggestive of the role lessened power in the House has upon a member's willingness to leave that body. Thus, while Congress does not possess sufficient means to retain its membership, the means by which it allocates authority within that body does appear to have an influence upon who leave of their own volition.

Another dimension of this argument can be seen by examining the change that occurred after 1969. As mentioned previously, a number of authors have pointed to reforms and other changes that increased disaffection with House service among members. Increasing workloads, reduced value of

TABLE 25

THE EFFECT OF PROBABILITY OF WINNING UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF MEMBERS  
OF THE HOUSE SEEKING HIGHER OFFICE

Likelihood of a Member Seeking Office (%)	Influence of party on the likelihood of seeking higher office		Increase in likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to member's margin of victory in his last election		Increase in like- lihood of seeking higher office attributable to being harmed substantially by redistricting		Increase in likelihood of seeking higher office attri- butable to being in the House in the 1970s	
	Member was a: Democ.	Repub.	Member's Margin was: 10%	40%				
10	0	2.90	.2	1.13	20.50		4.03	
20	0	4.82	.6	2.36	27.60		6.47	
30	0	5.94	.8	2.99	30.30		7.87	
40	0	6.40	.9	3.25	30.20		8.44	
50	0	6.30	.7	3.18	28.20		8.35	
60	0	5.90	.6	2.90	24.80		7.76	
70	0	5.17	.5	2.60	20.30		6.76	
80	0	4.10	.5	2.12	14.74		5.34	
90	0	2.65	.4	1.46	8.10		3.30	

seniority, and other factors have been posited to reduce the utility members derived from service and were expected, via theory, to lead more members to pursue higher office. This effect has been estimated in the far right hand column of Table 25. Controlling for all other factors in the model, members in the House from 1970 to 1976 (at least) were in general more likely to pursue higher office. Much like the influence of party, the impact of being in the post 1970s House would only exert an influence upon decisions under conditions when other factors were contributing substantially. Furthermore, this operationalization is a weak approximation of the underlying dimension we wish to tap and requires a large inferential leap to conclude that changes in the House necessarily increased the likelihood of its members' pursuing higher office. Nonetheless, if we accept the numerous accounts of increased disaffection, it is reasonable to conclude that the manner in which the House organizes itself plays an important role in determining which members stay and which members leave.

Perhaps the best way to see this difference is to consider extremes. For example, a Democrat before 1970 with all other factors contributing a 40 percent likelihood would not pursue higher office. If that member were a Republican after 1969 with all other factors the same, it is estimated he would run with a probability of .5484. Although crudely operationalized, institutional factors influencing the utility a member derives from service in the House are estimated here

to play a determining factor in some members' decisions to seek higher office.

The results concerning factors posited to influence the member's likelihood of returning to the House are mixed. As noted previously, Margin suffers in measurement. Its estimated effect is minimal, as can be seen in Table 25. Furthermore, its direction suggests that members from the safest districts are most likely to run. At this extreme, this result seems disagreeable. Recent research has shown that members who have intentions for higher office in general are increasing their vote margins in their districts, so within limits this result is plausible. It suggests that, in general, electorally weak members are less likely to run than are the electorally strong. Although plausible, this does not correspond to theoretical expectation which suggests that members who have low estimates of returning to the House derive a lower expected utility from that alternative and, *ceteris paribus*, should be more likely to seek higher office. Based upon the measure and its specification, however, no conclusive verdict can be rendered on this expectation.

The failure of the estimated effect of vulnerability to increase the likelihood of seeking higher office is even more perplexing when one considers the influence of being harmed by redistricting. This prospective measure of vulnerability can be seen to contribute substantially to the probability that a member would seek higher office. A member with a probability of seeking higher office of only .30 is estimated here to be likely to seek higher office if

he were harmed by redistricting ( $P = .603$ ). This suggests that a member's estimate of the probability of returning to the House can play a substantial role in shaping his decision to seek higher office. However, conclusions about this should be cautious. Underlying redistricting may be pledges of support and other deals that might heighten the member's estimate of the probability of attaining higher office. Since this interaction has not been controlled for, the nature of the influence of redistricting upon the member's estimate of returning to the House has not been isolated, and thus its influence upon decisions to seek higher office remains unclear. What is clear is that members harmed by redistricting, although few in number, are substantially more likely to pursue higher office.

In terms of magnitude of influence among variables posited to influence the value of the House seat, redistricting is clearly the most substantial. In the aftermath of *Baker v. Carr* (369 U.S. 186, 1962), we might expect waves of candidacies for higher office every 10 years, with each reapportionment. By inference, it appears that institutional changes within the House occurring around 1970 also contributed, but to a lesser extent, to members' pursuing higher office. Less important, but not inconsequential, is minority party status, whose effect is also assumed to reflect the impact of institutional arrangements in the House. Finally, vulnerability as operationalized is seen to have the least influence among these factors upon decisions to seek higher office.

### Personal Attributes

A fundamental notion underlying risk taking is that two persons in objectively similar situations could make different choices based upon their risk-taking propensities. Multivariate analysis such as the one presented here allows for the statistical control of other influences; therefore this very question can be addressed. Recalling Table 22, the coefficient associated with risk-taking was statistically significant and in the anticipated direction. Risk takers are thus significantly (in the statistical sense) more likely to pursue higher office than are the less risk acceptant. The question becomes, how much more likely? Examining Table 26, it can be seen that risk taking propensities can exert a determining influence but only if the constellation of other influences yields a prior probability of running of over .40. Indeed, risk takers are more likely than others to pursue higher office, but this influence is only sufficient to outweigh the more minimal negative influences upon higher office decisions. Nonetheless, it is a significant predictor of higher office decisions, and more refined measurement of its underlying dimensions may divulge a more substantial impact attributable to risk-taking propensities.

In considering the impact of differential age upon the likelihood of seeking higher office, it makes no sense to consider the probability of seeking higher office in the absence of age: everyone has some. Instead, comparisons can be made among different ages to examine this variable's influence. Age was incorporated into the model as a

TABLE 26

THE EFFECT OF RISK-TAKING PROPENSITIES UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF  
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE SEEKING HIGHER OFFICE

Likelihood of a Member Seeking Higher Office (%)	Member was a:	
	High Risk Taker	Other
10	4.00	0
20	6.43	0
30	7.82	0
40	8.40	0
50	8.32	0
60	7.72	0
70	6.73	0
80	5.31	0
90	3.32	0



curvilinear function. The assumption underlying this specification is that the highest probability of seeking higher office is in middle years with lower probabilities for the relatively young and relatively old. The coefficients resulting from this specification correspond to this expectation. The resulting curve has a global maximum of approximately 41. Because the estimate is based upon the member's age at the beginning of the session prior to the opportunity for higher office, the curve indicates that members about 43 years old are the most likely to seek higher office. We can now employ this global maximum as a referent to gauge how deviations in age influence the probability of seeking higher office.

Let us assume that the extreme left hand column of Table 27 represents the probability that a 43-year-old member would seek higher office. In the age category are displayed the differences in probabilities of other ages from the estimated maximum age of 43. Let us begin with the case of the 43-year-old who is in a situation that leads him to have a probability of seeking higher office of .60. The 32-year-old under the same circumstances would have only a 54.2 percent likelihood of running, and the 42-year-old a 56.1 percent likelihood. As we move to the older categories the estimated effects of age become more substantial. Staying with our referent of the 43-year-old with a 60 percent likelihood of running, the 62-year-old under the same conditions would have only a 42.73 percent likelihood and the 72-year-old only a 31.2 percent likelihood of candidacy for higher office,

TABLE 27

THE EFFECT OF AGE UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF MEMBERS OF THE  
HOUSE SEEKING HIGHER OFFICE

Likelihood of a Member Seeking Higher Office (%)	Decreases in the likelihood of seeking higher office attributable to being younger or older than the estimated global maximum age of 43 years.			
	Member's age is:			
	32	52	62	72
10	-2.40	-1.73	-5.80	-8.93
20	-3.80	-2.57	-2.98	-16.80
30	-4.70	-3.20	-12.98	-16.80
40	-5.40	-3.60	-15.30	-29.60
50	-5.80	-3.88	-16.76	-34.36
60	-5.80	-3.90	-17.27	-37.60
70	-5.40	-3.60	-16.60	-38.80
80	-4.40	-2.81	-14.20	-36.70
90	-2.80	-1.65	-9.58	-28.85

Clearly, not all members are equally likely to pursue higher office within age categories. As Schlesinger suggested, "(i)f major offices could be assaulted by men of all ages with equal chances of success, the effect of ambition would be diffuse and far less effective as a political control."<sup>9</sup> However, the process portrayed here suggests that the controlling influence of age, at least for the period studied, may not be as strong as we might expect. In a vertical organization, where formal controls on promotion exist, age might be employed effectively as a control upon members by reserving promotion to the highest positions for older members of long and loyal service. Leo Snowiss found this to be the case for inner-city Chicago Democrats, where the party was in complete control and had elaborate organizational structure. In more competitive suburban districts, where party organization was more open and unstructured, he found the youngest candidates emerging.<sup>10</sup> The age curve presented here suggests the most likely age of attempted transitions to higher office is the relatively early age of 43. This relative youth suggests that for the period studied, party control over the nominating process was quite weak, if we assume it is in the parties' interest to confer nominations to members of long and loyal service. The most substantial impact of age estimated here is the manner in which it diminishes the probability of seeking higher office of members over 60. In the period studied, attempts at promotion are not reserved for members of long

and loyal service, but in general are taken by members of relative youth.

### Conclusion

The primary reasons for undertaking the multivariate analysis presented here were to allow for the control of different factors simultaneously, to isolate their individual influence, and to gauge each variable's relative magnitude. At this point, we may summarize the findings by considering the variables in descending order of magnitude.

In general, one of the most substantial influences upon the decisions of members to seek higher office is the presence or absence of an incumbent seeking reelection. The presence of an incumbent presents a formidable threshold that requires relatively extreme positive values of other factors to surmount. The degree of shared electorate, at least in the extreme of the single district state or at-large district, was found to be sufficient to outweigh almost all detrimental factors. The type of office available was shown to exert considerable influence on these decisions with a Senate seat generating roughly a 10 percent greater likelihood of candidacy than a four-year governorship, and a two-year governorship diminishing the likelihood by as much as 35 percent. Taken together, the magnitude of these factors point to the primary importance of the nature of the contest and the resulting prize in understanding decisions to seek higher office. The opportunity structure and the nature of competition emerges as the most important determinants of progressive ambition.

Risk-taking propensities have been found to be a moderate, but nonetheless significant, influence upon decisions to seek higher office, increasing the likelihood of candidacy by as much as six points. In and of itself, risk taking as measured here would only be a determining factor for members in otherwise favorable circumstances. Age, in the extreme of advanced years, has been found to exert a quite substantial negative influence upon candidacy for higher office.

The influence of membership in the minority party was found to exert a moderate (but statistically significant) influence upon higher office decisions, tentatively suggesting that factors internal to the House can play a role in shaping candidacies for higher office. Similarly, factors within the House appear to have contributed to the probability that members would seek higher office in the 1970s.

Redistricting, although affecting relatively few members, was found to contribute as much as 30 points to the likelihood that a member would seek higher office. The magnitude of this factor suggests the potential importance of prospective vulnerability and also points to the impact external political activities can have upon decisions to seek higher office.

The least consequential variables were found to be the member's margin of victory in his last election and the partisan bias of the member's state. In each case, the underlying process may be more complex than the linear function employed. More detailed investigation, taking into account trends in margins and partisan bias, as well as the potential

influence of primary contesting, would be necessary before a reasonable judgment can be made on these factors.

## APPENDIX I

Where:

Pr(SHO)	= the probability a representative seeks higher office
Age	= the representative's age
Age <sup>2</sup>	= the representative's age squared
CO	= 1/ the number of districts in the representative's state
Rt	= 1 if, when he first ran for the House he challenged an incumbent or ran in a district carried by the other party by 57 percent or more in the previous three elections = 0 otherwise
Party	= 1 if representative was a Republican = 0 if representative was a Democrat
Stcomp	= the average electoral margin of the representative's party in races for governor and senator over the previous four years
Redis	= 1 if representative was hurt substantially by redistricting = 0 otherwise
Office	= 1 if opportunity was for Senate = 0 if opportunity was for governor
Twoyr	= 1 if opportunity was for a two-year governorship = 0 otherwise
Margin	= the difference between the representative's proportion of the vote in his last election and that of his closest competitor
Firstsen	= 1 if incumbent senator was seeking reelection for the first time = 0 otherwise
Secsen	= 1 if incumbent senator was seeking reelection for the second or greater time = 0 otherwise

Firstgov = 1 if incumbent governor was seeking re-  
election for the first time  
= 0 otherwise

Secgov = 1 if incumbent governor was seeking re-  
election for the second or greater time  
= 0 otherwise

Change = 1 if year greater than 1969  
= 0 otherwise



## APPENDIX II

The Problem of Age and Seniority

While we might anticipate that age and seniority exert conceptually distinct influences upon decisions to seek higher office (that is, as age increases our theory suggests that the individual's expectations decline, while as seniority increases our theory suggests the value of the House seat increases and the cost of sacrificing this seat to pursue higher office becomes higher), the variables are not meaningfully different in the manner in which they are measured.<sup>11</sup> The problem is one of multicollinearity. Of course, the question of multicollinearity is seldom whether it is present or absent (for it is almost always present in any multiple regression), but the extent to which it is a problem.<sup>12</sup> The presence of severe multicollinearity presents three basic problems. First, the precision of estimates falls, leading to difficulty in disentangling the relative influences of the independent variables. The loss of precision has three aspects: specific estimates may have very large errors; these errors may be highly correlated; and the sampling variances of the coefficients may be very large. Second, large standard errors can lead to erroneously dropping variables from the equation because they are not significantly different from zero, even though the variable may have an effect that the sample data has not divulged. Third, the estimates of the coefficients become very sensitive to particular sets of sample data.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, these problems

reduce to informational and inferential problems that in the end are related to theory. Multicollinearity is thus a function of the sample and a high degree of multicollinearity is simply a feature of the sample that contributes to the unreliability of the estimated coefficient.

In the present case we are dealing with a population and not a sample. However, our choice of variables may be viewed as a sample in that we have chosen to measure certain attributes of the population in certain ways out of an infinite universe of possibilities. For instance, while we measure age in years, what is of theoretical interest is the differential perceptions of the costs and probabilities associated with seeking higher office over the course of the representative's life. Similarly, while we measure seniority in terms, what is assumed is that increased seniority increases the perceived value of the currently held House seat to the representative, and what we would really like to measure is the representative's estimate of the value he attaches to the House seat. Due to limitations of time and resources we are left to measure these underlying relationships with the admittedly crude indicators of age and seniority.

At issue is the extent of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity may be a function of the zero-order correlation between two independent variables of the occurrence of two or more subsets of variables, the members of which are strongly correlated with variables in their own subset but are relatively independent with respect to variables in the

other subset. Our interest here really narrows to the zero-order correlations between age and seniority, since the presence of a large correlation here would indicate a high degree of collinearity and is therefore a sufficient indicator of serious multicollinearity.<sup>14</sup>

The zero-order correlation between age and seniority is .64. We wish to examine whether this bivariate correlation is statistically significant. To do this, we compute a t-statistic as:

$$t = \frac{.64 \sqrt{3231 - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - .415}} = 47.55$$

which is significant at  $p = .001$  and strongly contributes to the unsurprising conclusion that age and seniority are collinear.

What we ultimately would like to discern are the distinct influences of age and seniority on decisions to seek higher office. Theoretically, we might expect that persons of relatively young age with relatively high seniority would be less likely to seek higher office than those with lower seniority for their age (that is, the relatively old with relatively low seniority). What we wish to evaluate are extremes of seniority (high and low) relative to age. One means by which to do this would be to examine the residuals from the regression of seniority on age. The equation has the following form:

$$\text{Seniority} = -16.86 + .483\text{Age} + e$$

(.534)      (.01)

where  $e$  represents the residual variation in seniority outside of that estimated via age.  $e$  has the following characteristics: it is positive if seniority is high based upon what one would estimate via OLS for a given age; it is zero if seniority does not differ from its estimate for a given age; finally, it is negative if seniority is low relative to what we would estimate via OLS for a given age.

As noted in previous discussions, theory suggests that those with high seniority relative to age would be less likely to seek higher office than those with low seniority relative to age. We would expect the relationship between the probability of seeking higher office and the error term mentioned above to be negative (i.e., as seniority relative to age increases, the probability of seeking higher office decreases).

To evaluate this hypothesis, we construct the residual as a variable in the following manner:

$$e = \text{Seniority} + 16.86 - .483 \text{ Age}$$

We now employ  $e$  as an independent variable in an attempt to predict decisions to seek higher office using probit. This results in the following equation:

$$P(\text{SHO} = 1) = 1 / (1 + \exp(-1.727 - .00492 e))$$

The hypothesis of interest is that the coefficient associated with  $e$  is negative. Hence,

$$H_0: b_e \geq 0$$

$$H_1: b_e < 0$$

As can be seen, the coefficient is in the expected direction. However, the associated  $e$  computed as the maximum likelihood estimate ( $b_e$ ) over its standard error equals  $-.708$  which is

substantially less (in absolute terms) than a  $t$  of 1.645 which would allow us to reject the null hypothesis. The lack of statistical significance, the relatively minute value of the coefficient associated with  $e$ , as well as the lack of statistical significance of the quadratic function based on seniority in relation to decisions to seek higher office (and alternatively the statistical significance of the quadratic function of age in relation to those decisions) lead me to conclude that while the concepts underlying the use of seniority as an explanatory variable may be important, those concepts as operationalized in the relatively crude form of terms in office do not predict decisions to seek higher office significantly; nor does the incorporation of seniority contribute informationally to the overall model of these decisions in a statistically significant manner beyond that provided by the incorporation of age. Due to this redundancy, seniority has been left out of the overall model while I acknowledge the potential importance of the concepts it embodies (if only crudely) and I reserve judgment on these concepts until further research can contribute to more refined and distinct measurement of them.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The error variance is not constant across all observations. The variance of the residuals will be small for predicted probabilities close to either 0 or 1, while it will be much larger for predictions between .4 and .6. See, John Aldrich and Charles Cnudde, "Probing the Bounds of Conventional Wisdom: A Comparison of Regression, Probit and Discriminant Analysis," American Journal of Political Science 19 (August 1975), p. 579.

<sup>2</sup>D. J. Finney, Probit Analysis. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

<sup>3</sup>In probit, neither the residuals about the regression plane nor the deviations of the dependent variable about its mean can be observed. Because of this, both the sum of squared residuals and the total sum of squares are estimates. Consequently,  $R^2$  is also an estimate of the true  $R^2$ . See Richard McKelvey and William Zavoina, "A Statistical Model for the Analysis of Ordinal Level and Dependent Variables," Journal of Mathematical Sociology 4 (1975), p. 112.

<sup>4</sup>An attempt to specify the relationship as a cubic function was made. The results of this estimation was even more implausible than the linear specification, and the coefficients were all very far from statistical significance.

<sup>5</sup>A quadratic function was estimated and the same difficulties as above were encountered.

<sup>6</sup>We are dealing with a population: all members of the House who had certain opportunities for higher office between 1952 and 1976. The use of hypothesis tests is usually employed to make an inference from a sample to a population, and their use here might initially appear inappropriate. However, a population is technically defined as the set of all possible outcomes. My interest is in decisions by members to seek higher office, and I have recorded all instances of these decisions in the period studied. However, each decision is only one outcome from the set of all possible outcomes. Thus, although we have the population of individuals, each decision, or the probability of each decision, is only one value from the possible set of probabilities for that person. The presumption in relating these decisions to certain attribute variables is that the distribution of possible probabilities for these decisions varies for each individual, and that these variations in distributions are related to the attribute variables. The purpose of applying inferential statistics, then, is to use the set of observed outcomes (decisions) for each individual to estimate how these variations are related to the attribute variable. As such, the hypotheses presented are simply statements about the underlying population of possible outcomes. Failure to reject a null hypothesis suggests that the observed outcomes have an underlying distri-

bution of possible outcomes whose effect upon the dependent variable is not statistically different from zero. See Eric A. Hanushek and John E. Jackson, Statistical Methods for Social Scientists, (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 325.

<sup>7</sup>Steven J. Rosenstone and Raymond E. Wolfinger. "The Effect of Registration Laws on Voter Turnout," American Political Science Review 72 (1978).

<sup>8</sup>The coding of dummy variables left this category as zero. The coefficients for Senate seat and two-year governorship thus represent the difference between each of these respective offices and the four-year governorship.

<sup>9</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 193.

<sup>10</sup>Leo M. Snowiss. "Congressional Recruitment and Representation," American Political Science Review 60 (1966), pp. 627-639.

<sup>11</sup>Robert A. Gordon. "Issues in Multiple Regression," American Journal of Sociology 73 (March 1968), pp. 592-616.

<sup>12</sup>See John H. Aldrich, "A Two-Step Procedure for Analysis in the Presence of Multicollinearity," paper presented at the 1977 annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

<sup>13</sup>A fuller discussion of the problems presented by multicollinearity may be found in J. Johnston, Econometric Methods, Second edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972).

<sup>14</sup>Aldrich, "A Two-Step Procedure for Analysis in the Presence of Multicollinearity," p. 10.

## Chapter V

We now turn our attention to retirement decisions. We will begin with an initial evaluation of hypotheses concerning these decisions developed in Chapter Two in light of cross-tabular results. In Chapter Six we will evaluate these hypotheses in light of multivariate analysis.

Before evaluating these hypotheses, some aspects of the decisions being addressed should be acknowledged. In the case of decisions to seek higher office, we addressed specific alternatives: to seek higher office or to stay in the House. Furthermore, differences between higher offices were controlled in order to see how these differences shaped responses to opportunities for different offices. In the present case, we are again dealing with decisions between two alternatives: to seek reelection or to retire (voluntarily exit). Retirement, however, is comprised of many different potential alternatives. Examination of Table 28 shows that both defeated and retired members pursued a great diversity of activities after their service in the House. The point is that the utility of retirement cannot be addressed even within broad categories without exhaustive evaluation of all the possible extra-House opportunities confronting each member.

In the absence of such detailed exploration of the alternatives confronting members, retirement decisions must



TABLE 28

## FIRST OCCUPATION OF MEMBER BY MEANS OF LEAVING HOUSE

Occupation:	Means of Leaving:		
	Defeated*	Retired	Total
Business	13.35 (53)	10.70 (27)	12.30 (80)
Law	21.15 (84)	22.10 (56)	21.50 (140)
Non-business Occupation	9.31 (37)	6.30 (16)	8.10 (53)
Other political office	13.85 (55)	10.30 (26)	12.50 (81)
Retired	8.60 (34)	26.00 (66)	15.40 (100)
Died	.20 (1)	.40 (1)	.30 (2)
Unknown	34.0 (135)	24.1 (61)	30.6 (199)
Total	100.00 (397)	100.00 (253)	100.00 (650)

\*Includes both those defeated in primary as well as those defeated in general elections.

be evaluated in light of factors influencing the expected utility of House service. It is assumed that there is some level of rewards and minimization of costs that would lead all members to view occupying no office as their least preferred alternative. It is believed that changes in rewards and costs of service lead members to retire rather than seek reelection. This assumption ignores the very real possibility that members may be presented with opportunities outside the House that are sufficient to draw them away from that institution. Therefore, predictions of these decisions will no doubt be weakened in relation to predictions of decisions to seek higher office. Nonetheless, the assumption is retained due to the analytic simplicity it provides and because it hits upon the cost-benefit nature of House service.

Before beginning to evaluate propositions concerning retirement, a few words should be included as to how these decisions are to be evaluated. Concern is not with the overall number of retirements, per se, but with the situations under which retirements occur. In the case of decisions to seek higher office, we examined members in differing situations who had opportunities to run. In the case of retirement, every member has an opportunity for this alternative. Hence, we wish to evaluate conditions under which members retired rather than sought reelection. Members were classified as having retired if they resigned or retired from the House but did not pursue either a Senate seat or a governorship. Members were classified as having sought reelection if they ran in either primary or general elections.

We may now turn our attention to the hypotheses developed in Chapter Three. These are restated in Table 29. The consideration of these hypotheses will be divided into three sections: the utility of the House seat, the probability of reelection, and personal attributes.

#### The Value of the House Seat

Hypothesis 9 reflects the notion that utility of the House seat is at least in part a function of power and this power is largely shaped by seniority. It is thus assumed that members with more seniority derive more utility from service in the House and by virtue of this should be less inclined to voluntarily forsake House service via retirement. Examination of Table 30, however, shows that this expectation is far from correct. In the period studied, members with the greatest seniority (over nine terms) were the most likely to retire. The members with the least seniority were the least likely to retire. Clearly, hypothesis 9, as stated, is overly naive.

The above results are not that surprising. When one considers the advantages of incumbency as well as the relative lack of competition that long tenure normally corresponds to, retirement for some senior members becomes the only way they can leave the body, short of death. In the absence of viable competition, members of long service who wish to leave the House before they die can do so only via retirement. In the absence of controls for factors such as age and competitiveness of district, little can be said about the relationship between seniority and retirement decisions.

TABLE 29

## HYPOTHESES CONCERNING DECISIONS TO RETIRE

- H<sub>9</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be inversely related to seniority.
- H<sub>10</sub>: For members of the House, the probability of retirement will be positively related to the age at which the member entered Congress for the first time contiguous to the session in which retirement is considered.
- H<sub>11</sub>: For members of the House, the probability of retirement will be positively related to their age.
- H<sub>12</sub>: For members of the House, the probability of retirement will be greater for Republicans (the minority party) than for Democrats (the majority party).
- H<sub>13</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be less for the high risk taker than for the less risk acceptant.
- H<sub>14</sub>: Among members of the House, there is an inverse relationship between the proportion of members retiring and congressional salary measured in constant (1967) dollars.
- H<sub>15</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be greater after 1969 than it was prior to 1970.
- H<sub>16</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be an inverse function of the margin of victory in their last election.
- H<sub>17</sub>: Among members of the House, the probability of retirement will be greater for those hurt substantially by redistricting than for those who were hurt only slightly, not affected, or helped by redistricting.

TABLE 30

### PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING, CONTROLLING FOR SENIORITY

Member decided to:	Number of Terms Member has Served in the House:										Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>10	
Seek Reelection	98.1 (1600)	97.1 (624)	96.6 (535)	94.3 (464)	97.2 (414)	93.3 (348)	93.2 (275)	96.5 (245)	88.7 (181)	89.2 (551)	95.4 (5237)
Retire	1.9 (31)	2.9 (19)	3.4 (19)	5.7 (28)	2.8 (12)	6.7 (25)	6.8 (20)	3.5 (9)	11.3 (23)	10.8 (67)	4.6 (253)
Total	29.7 (1631)	11.7 (643)	10.1 (554)	9.0 (492)	7.8 (426)	6.8 (373)	5.4 (295)	4.6 (254)	3.7 (204)	11.2 (618)	100.0 (5490)

Although not addressing seniority directly, hypothesis 10 embodies a notion that is at least peripheral. Members who enter the House at a young age may have expectations of long service and increased power within that body. Members who enter at a later stage in life no doubt have attenuated expectations concerning their power in the House. Table 31 shows that, in general, the older a member is when he enters the House, the more likely he is to exit that institution via retirement. A minor exception is the somewhat greater likelihood of members who entered the House before the age of 30 to retire than members entering up to age 50. Members entering at this age may be from uncompetitive situations that leave only retirement and death as a way for them to exit.<sup>1</sup>

As in the case of decisions to seek higher office, we would expect party to exert some influence upon the value members attached to their House seat. As hypothesis 12 suggests, Republicans, being in the minority party, have less power in the House, leading them to value their House seats less, *ceteris paribus*, and in turn leading them to be more inclined to retire. Examination of Table 32 shows that for the period studied, Republicans were almost one and one-half times more likely than Democrats to retire. Based upon these results and those concerning decisions to seek higher office, it appears that the minority party might have a more difficult time retaining its incumbent members. Although of only moderate influence, these factors might contribute to the minority party's remaining the minority party.

Another factor posited to influence members' power in

TABLE 31

## PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING BY AGE AT ENTERING CONGRESS FOR THE FIRST TIME

	Member's Age at Entry:									
	< 30	30 - 35	36 - 40	41 - 45	46 - 50	51 - 55	56 - 60	61 - 65	> 65	Total
Member decided to:										
Seek Reelection	94.7 (126)	97.5 (880)	96.4 (1373)	96.1 (1120)	95.2 (895)	92.2 (520)	90.4 (236)	87.7 (57)	88.2 (30)	95.4 (5237)
Retire	5.3 (7)	2.5 (23)	3.6 (52)	3.9 (45)	4.8 (45)	7.8 (44)	9.6 (25)	12.3 (8)	11.8 (4)	4.6 (253)
Total	2.4 (133)	16.4 (903)	26.0 (1425)	21.2 (1165)	17.1 (940)	10.3 (564)	4.8 (261)	1.2 (65)	.6 (34)	100.0 (5490)

TABLE 32

## PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING, CONTROLLING FOR PARTY

Member decides to:	Member is:		
	Democrat	Republican	Total
Seek Reelection	96.1 (3098)	94.4 (2139)	95.4 (5237)
Retire	3.9 (126)	5.6 (127)	4.6 (253)
Total	57.8 (3224)	41.2 (2266)	100.0 (5490)



the House and other dimensions of the value derived from House service were reforms enacted in the House around 1970. These reforms reduced the importance of seniority, limited outside incomes, and required financial disclosure. Also, at about this time, were improvements in pensions for retired members. Furthermore, the nature of the job of congressmen was said to change in the 1970s, placing increasing demands on members' time and making them more visible to the public. As stated in hypothesis 15, we would expect these changes to lead more members to retire. As seen in Table 33, retirements increased substantially in 1970 and remained high for the rest of the period studied. Although far from conclusive, it appears that internal changes in the House contributed to the retirement decisions of members in the 1970s. Further scrutiny via multivariate analysis will allow us to better assess the validity of this proposition.

Hypothesis 14 provides a final expectation concerning factors influencing the value members attach to House service. It is expected that as salary decreases in real dollar terms, some members will be more inclined to retire. This is not meant to suggest that the primary incentive of House service for many members is monetary remuneration in the form of salary. Many members could undoubtedly surpass their congressional salaries in the private sector. This, however, is the point. By virtue of their House service, members must bear the opportunity cost which is equivalent to their highest foregone alternative outside the House. As the discrepancy between their House salary and the foregone salary outside the

TABLE 33

## DECISIONS TO RETIRE BY YEAR

Year	Number Retiring
1950	27
1952	11
1954	14
1956	24
1958	18
1960	15
1962	22
1964	15
1966	13
1968	8
1970	29
1972	29
1974	28

House increases, some members might be inclined to retire. Furthermore, for the members who are not independently wealthy and for whom the House salary is the major source of income, the failure of that salary to keep pace with inflation may lead them to suffer a decline in their quality of life sufficient to lead them to retire.

Table 34 provides evidence bearing on this question. Although not conclusive, some patterns appear to exist between retirements and congressional salary. Generally, when salary is declining, retirements increase or remain relatively high. This is apparent in 1950, 1956, 1962, and throughout the early part of the seventies. Alternatively, when salaries are raised, there is a tendency for the number of retirements to decline. This is true in 1954, 1964, and especially in 1968 when salary in constant dollars was increased by over 27 percent.

Although the patterns evident between salary and retirement are sketchy, salary does appear to have some influence upon retirement decisions. Congressmen are not altruists. Declining spending power combined with increasingly attractive alternatives outside the House may indeed contribute to some retirement decisions. Unlike in most occupations, the House exercises a great deal of control over its salary. Hence, although the House as an organization cannot control who enters that body, it can collectively exercise some influence upon which members stay. By increasing salaries, the House may well be retaining some members who otherwise might have left. Certainly voting themselves a raise is not

TABLE 34

RETIREMENTS PER YEAR AND CONGRESSIONAL  
SALARY IN 1967 DOLLARS

Year	Retirements	Salary (in 1000s)
1948	-	17.4
1950	27	15.9
1952	11	15.6
1954	14	27.8
1956	24	26.3
1958	18	25.6
1960	15	25.0
1962	22	24.4
1964	15	31.3
1966	13	29.4
1968	8	37.6
1970	29	34.5
1972	29	30.3
1974	28	26.9

a matter taken lightly; it is an issue that seems to stir the passions of even the most politically disinterested citizens. As the pace of inflation picked up in the 1970s, the need to secure raises to keep up with inflation became more acute. In the face of economic crisis for the nation as a whole, it would seem that supporting a raise in salary may have become a politically untenable position in most members' districts. With the exception of a 6.4 percent increase in salary (in constant dollars) in 1977, the seventies were marked by a continual decline in members' spending power. The point is that increased retirements from the House in the seventies may be at least in part, a function of declining spending power, the political difficulties of remedying this decline, and the increased attractiveness of alternative occupations outside the House. In other words, members' spending power declined relative to all occupations during the seventies and probably declined even more in relation to the occupations, such as law, for which many members are qualified.

#### Probability of Returning to the House

We now address the question of vulnerability and its impact upon retirement. Hypothesis 16 suggests that fear of electoral difficulty or defeat motivates members to leave the House. Although as previously stated, for members from safe districts retirement is the only means of leaving the House short of death, it is still anticipated that members in marginal situations may be more inclined to retire than safer

members. Table 35 shows that there is indeed a linear decline in retirements as margin of victory in the last election increases. Members who won by less than five percent in their last election were almost one and one-third times more likely to retire than were members who had won by over 10 percent. Although these comprise only a relatively small proportion of all retirees, these results suggest that vulnerability may indeed be a contributing factor to some retirement decisions.

As in the case of decisions to seek higher office, margin of victory as an indicator of vulnerability suffers in that it is retrospective rather than prospective. A more refined prospective indicator of vulnerability might yield a more substantial relation to retirement decisions than the retrospective measure employed here.

Redistricting is another linkage between vulnerability and retirements. As suggested in hypothesis 17, it is expected that members who were harmed substantially by redistricting would be more likely to retire than members who were either helped, affected minimally, or not affected at all. Table 36 shows that redistricting contributes substantially to some members' retirement decision. Members whose districts were altered adversely were almost four times more likely to retire than members who were affected minimally, favorably, or not at all. Clearly, the adverse effects of redistricting are substantial contributors to some members' retirement decisions.

A word of caution should be inserted here about interpreting the role played by redistricting. To infer that

TABLE 35

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING, CONTROLLING FOR  
MARGIN OF VICTORY

Member decides to:	Margin of Victory in Last Election			Total
	< 5%	5-10%	> 10%	
Seek Reelection	94.3 (478)	94.8 (603)	95.6 (4156)	95.4 (5237)
Retire	5.7 (29)	5.2 (33)	4.4 (191)	4.6 (253)
Total	9.2 (507)	11.6 (636)	79.2 (4947)	100.0 (5490)

TABLE 36

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING, CONTROLLING FOR  
REDISTRICTING

Member decided to:	Member's District was Altered:		
	Adversely	Minimally or not at all + Favorably	Total
Seek Reelection	82.9 (58)	95.6 (5179)	95.4 (5237)
Retire	17.1 (12)	4.4 (241)	4.6 (253)
Total	1.3 (70)	98.7 (5420)	100.0 (5490)



redistricting caused some retirement decisions requires at a minimum that redistricting temporally preceded these decisions. While in some cases this is no doubt true, an alternative scenario may be evident in some cases. A member's intentions of retiring may be known within a state before a redistricting plan is drawn. This knowledge could make the state legislature's job much easier. Rather than harm the electoral chances of either party's incumbents, by drastically altering their districts, they could instead choose to make drastic changes in a district of a member who has previously announced his retirement, allowing them to make more minimal changes in other incumbents' districts. In this sense, a retirement decision may act as a magnet that attracts adverse alteration of a member's district.

In all, vulnerability does appear to influence the retirement decisions of some members. As the threat of electoral sanctions becomes clear, it appears that some members are unwilling to bear the burden of the additional costs of a close race and instead choose to voluntarily relinquish their positions. It appears that, although relatively few in number, some members are incapable of securing or maintaining a reliable reelection coalition; rather than become more responsive, a condition normally assumed of marginal districts,<sup>2</sup> some choose to retire. In the absence of a desire to retain their position, there is no necessary condition for assuming they will be responsive to their constituency's wishes in their remaining days in office. This is even more apparent when a member's reelection coalition is disrupted by

redistricting. Unable to identify or appeal to a reelection coalition within the confines of an altered district, a fairly high number of members opt out and in the process have rendered the responsiveness inducing effects of the electoral sanction inoperable. Vulnerability may produce a burden that is too great for some members to carry and leaves them attaching their primary goals to something other than the interests of their constituents.

### Personal Attributes

In this final category we examine the effects of differing personal attributes upon the likelihood of retirement. We turn our attention first to risk-taking propensities. As suggested in hypothesis 13, it is expected that high risk takers will be less likely to retire than less risk acceptant members. Seeking reelection involves costs and risks. Willingness to bear risks should influence whether a member decides to pursue the risky alternative of seeking reelection or of doing nothing and retiring from the House. One might suspect that the high risk taker, emerging in a district previously favored by the other party or gaining office by defeating an incumbent, would be more susceptible to defeat and because of this fewer would be retiring. However, although they may emerge originally in a competitive situation, results concerning vulnerability suggest that this might lead them to be somewhat more likely to retire, other things being equal. Furthermore, seeking reelection is a conscious decision; and even if defeat were the ultimate

reason for the high risk takers to leave the House, they still could have chosen retirement. Retirement is an alternative open to all members. The expectation is that high risk takers will be less inclined to pursue this alternative.

Table 37 provides evidence in support of hypothesis 13. Less risk acceptant members are over one and one-third times more likely to retire than are high risk takers. Although lending support to hypothesis 13, these results should be interpreted cautiously due to the possible presence of other explanatory factors. One plausible alternative explanation for the differential retirement rates between groups is that high risk takers enter Congress at a proportionately younger age. As operationalized, the high risk takers emerged from districts where more cautious, and perhaps older, candidates may have been less likely to tread. To challenge an incumbent or run in a district favored strongly by the other party may be characteristics that identify not only risk taking propensities but also relative youth. Table 38 shows that indeed members categorized as risk takers were proportionately more likely to enter Congress at younger ages than were the less risk acceptant. Where 43.04 percent of the less risk acceptant entered Congress by age 40, 49.47 percent of high risk takers entered by this age. The tendency to enter younger may leave the high risk takers with higher expectations concerning power in the House and lessen their likelihood of retirement. This age difference is moderate, however, and more sophisticated multivariate analysis will be required to disentangle these separate influences.

TABLE 37

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING, CONTROLLING FOR  
RISK TAKING

Member dedided to:	Risk Taker	Other	Total
Seek Reelection	96.4 (1469)	95.0 (2768)	95.4 (5237)
Retire	3.6 (55)	5.0 (198)	4.6 (253)
Total	27.8 (1524)	72.2 (3966)	100.0 (5490)

TABLE 38

PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS ENTERING CONGRESS AT AGE OF ENTRY  
BY RISK TAKING

Age at Entering Congress for First Time:	Member was:		
	Risk Taker	Other	Total
<u>&lt; 40</u>	49.47 (754)	43.04 (1707)	94.83 (2461)
41-55	43.04 (656)	50.76 (2013)	48.61 (2669)
<u>≥ 56</u>	7.49 (114)	6.20 (246)	6.56 (260)
Total	100.00 (1524)	100.00 (3966)	100.00 (5490)

The final variable of concern is the member's age. Advanced years and retirement go hand in hand in virtually any occupation. In many cases this is the result of formal mandatory requirements. Members of the House face no such requirement. They do, however, face the disabilities of advanced years. Furthermore, the members' estimate of their probability of returning to the House or the utility they derive from House service may both decline with advanced years. In either case, it is expected that the likelihood of retirement should increase with advancing years. Table 39 shows, not surprisingly, that this is in fact the case. From ages 30 to 55, retirement is very rare, accounting for no more than 2.2 percent of the career decisions in any given category. Beginning with the 56-to-60 category, retirements pick up, and this group is better than twice as likely to retire than any of the younger categories. In the 61-to-65 category, retirements increase even more, this group being at least four times more likely to retire than any group under age 55. Finally, we have the 65-and-over category which, not too surprisingly, is the most likely to exit the House via retirement. Over one in ten members in the 65-and-over category choose retirement rather than a reelection attempt.

Another way of looking at the impact of age is to evaluate how differing age categories account for the total of retirements in the period studied. Members 55 and under constitute 60.24 percent of the opportunities to seek reelection or retire, yet this group accounts for only 27.7 percent of all retirements during the period. Conversely, members over 55

TABLE 39

## PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERS RETIRING BY AGE

Member decided to:	Member's Age:						
	<30	30-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	Total
Seek Reelection	100.0 (16)	97.9 (188)	98.5 (472)	97.9 (792)	97.8 (925)	97.8 (934)	95.3 (790) 91.1 (553) 86.3 (567) 95.4 (5237)
Retire	0.0 (0)	2.1 (4)	1.5 (7)	2.1 (17)	2.2 (21)	2.2 (21)	4.7 (39) 13.7 (90) 4.6 (253)
Total	.3 (16)	3.5 (192)	8.7 (479)	14.7 (809)	17.2 (946)	17.4 (955)	15.1 (829) 11.0 (607) 12.0 (657) 100.0 (5490)

account for 39.76 percent of the opportunities to seek reelection, but account for 72.3 percent of all retirements. The over-65 group, accounting for only 11.9 percent of opportunities for decision, accounts for 35.6 percent of retirements. Clearly, and not too surprisingly, we should turn out attention to the elder members in anticipation of retirement. Nonetheless, the patterns manifested are not extreme if viewed from another perspective. If, as Harold Sheppard asserts, the perceived value of retirement is at least in part a function of the degree of satisfaction derived from a job,<sup>3</sup> and as Douglas Price suggests the proportion of incumbents seeking reelection is a useful indicator of career satisfaction,<sup>4</sup> members of the House, unconstrained by a mandatory retirement age display a substantial tendency to pursue continued service in spite of age. This is no doubt a function of a high degree of career satisfaction during the period studied. Although accounting for a disproportionate share of retirements, members of the 56-to-65 category still seek reelection better than 91 percent of the time. Even members over 65 sought to remain in the House more than 86 percent of the time.

### Conclusion

In this Chapter, factors influencing the utility of House service and the probability of returning to the body have been found to correspond quite well to expectations concerning retirement decisions. Seniority was problematic; increasing retirements with increasing seniority were no doubt a function of the corresponding age and lack of vulnerability that normally corresponds to advanced seniority. When the notion



of seniority is addressed via a member's expectations in relation to the age he entered the House, there was correspondence between lowered expectations (i.e., later entry age) and increased likelihood of retirement. Furthermore, differences in retirements between parties helped to further support the notion that the value of the House seat influences retirement decisions. Accepting the notion that the 1970s were a period of increasing disaffection with House service, increasing retirements during the early part of the seventies contained in this analysis again point to the importance of the utility of service in evaluating retirement decisions. Finally, and by no means concrete, it appears that some retirements may be influenced by declines of members' spending power as measured by members' salaries in constant dollars. Conversely, it appears that the number of retirements may be reduced in years when the House is successful in securing a salary increase.

In terms of the probability of returning to the House, the members' margin of victory in their last election was found to correspond to expectations; marginal members are somewhat more likely to retire than are safer members. The effects of vulnerability were even more apparent when examining the influence of adverse redistricting plans upon retirement decisions. Members harmed by redistricting were seen to be substantially more likely to retire than members who were not. As noted, however, problems of the temporal sequence of retirement and redistricting make any conclusions about this factor's influence tenuous.

In terms of personal attributes, it was seen that the highly risk acceptant were less likely to retire than were the less risk acceptant. On the surface, this supported the expectation that members with higher intensity of preference for risky alternatives would be less inclined to pursue the more or less riskless alternative of retirement. Further examination showed that high risk takers had a tendency to enter the House at a somewhat earlier age than the less risk acceptant, and their lower likelihood of retirement may in part be a function of having higher expectations concerning seniority in the House. Age, not surprisingly, was related to retirement, with members of advanced years accounting for the lion's share of retirement decisions. In spite of this, even members of advanced years were found to have a substantial tendency to try to retain their position in the House.

As in the case of decisions to seek higher office, results obtained through the examination of tables leave many issues unresolved because of limitations the technique places upon the complexity of the model being evaluated. To control for the independent influence of these differing factors and to estimate their relative influence upon retirement decisions, a multivariate analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Joseph A. Schlesinger and Mildred Schlesinger, "Aging and Opportunities for Elective Office," in Aging: Social Change, James March, ed. (New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1981). The authors find that one-party southern politics favored the young careerist (p. 224). Although not evaluated here, it is suspected that the relatively high propensity of these young entrants to retire is a function of such a situation.

<sup>2</sup>Fiorina, Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment, p. 13. "The existence of marginal districts builds necessary responsiveness into the electoral system."

<sup>3</sup>Harold L. Sheppard, "Work and Retirement, in R.H. Binstock and E. Shanas, eds. Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences. (New York: VanNostrand Reinhold Co.), p. 300.

<sup>4</sup>H. Douglas Price, "Careers and Committees in the American Congress: The Problem of Structural Change," in The History of Parliamentary Behavior, William A. Ayodelotte, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 37.

## Chapter VI

In the last chapter, the value of the House seat, the probability of returning to the House, and personal attributes were found to bear some influence upon the retirement decisions of members of the House. Tabular analysis, however, reduces the complexity of the model that can be estimated and left us unable to discern the independent influence of these factors or their relative magnitudes. In this chapter probit analysis will be employed to address these issues.

The conditional probability of retirement is defined here as:

$$P(\text{Ret}) = 1/B_0 + B_1\text{Age} + B_2\text{Rt} + B_3\text{Party} + B_4\text{Redis} + B_5\text{Margin} + B_6\text{Realsalary} + B_7\text{Change} + B_8\text{Entryage} \quad (\text{See Appendix III})$$

The results of estimating this model appear in Table 40. The reader will note the absence of seniority in this model. As we would suspect, age and seniority are highly correlated with a correlation coefficient of .656. This collinearity is reflected when both age and seniority are included in the model: neither variable is statistically significant.<sup>1</sup> When the model is estimated with each variable separately, however, they bear a statistically significant relationship to retirement decisions. There is an obvious problem with multicollinearity, and we are faced with an inability to disentangle the

TABLE 40

## RESULTS OF PROBIT ESTIMATION

Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Expectation	MLE/SE	Significant at
Constant	-3.340	$B_0 < 0$	-14.190	.0001
Age	.034	$B_1 > 0$	11.592	.0001
Risk Taking	-.149	$B_2 < 0$	-1.949	.0256
Party	.152	$B_3 > 0$	2.227	.0129
Redistricting	.809	$B_4 > 0$	4.202	.0001
Margin	-.0014	$B_5 < 0$	-1.252	.10*
Real Salary	-.015	$B_6 < 0$	-2.611	.0045
Change	.384	$B_7 > 0$	5.078	.0001
Entry Age	.0289	$B_8 > 0$	7.305	.0001

Estimated  $R^2 = .151$

N = 5490

\*Not significant at  $\alpha = .05$

separate influences of these two variables. Seniority was dropped from the equation because it was estimated to have a positive relationship to retirement decisions. This is disagreeable for a number of reasons. First, there is no reason to expect advanced seniority, per se, to lead to increased likelihood of retirement. This positive relationship is no doubt a function of advanced age that corresponds to high seniority. Second, by incorporating entry age it is felt that the effects seniority embodies are at least partially captured; the greater the entry age, the lower the expectations concerning seniority and the greater the likelihood of retirement. Due to the implausibility of its estimated coefficient, its concomitant collinearity with age, and the ability to capture the underlying theoretical concept it embodies with a surrogate variable, seniority was deleted from the equation.

In evaluating the overall model, we can see that the estimated  $R^2$  is quite low at .151. This relatively low value, it is believed, is the result of the lack of specificity of the dependent variable. As mentioned previously, retirement as an alternative embodies many diverse possibilities. Without knowledge of these alternatives, it is more difficult to predict a member's decision. In the case of decisions to seek higher office, a great deal of information about the alternatives confronting the member was incorporated into the model and, not surprisingly, that model performed much better. Nonetheless, considering the relative rarity of the dependent variable and the lack of specificity it embodies, the model

performs reasonably well.

Taking each coefficient independently, it can be seen that they all correspond to theoretical expectation. Furthermore, with only one exception, all the coefficients are statistically significant with the level of Type I error less than .05. The exception is the coefficient associated with the member's margin of victory in his last election. However, even this coefficient is significant at the somewhat less acceptable and less stringent, but not unreasonable, level of  $\alpha = .10$ . All in all, the model corresponds well to theoretical expectations.

To fully evaluate the influence of the factors in the model requires the implementation of the procedure utilized in Chapter IV. Because of the assumed curvilinear function of the underlying dependent behavior, the estimated influence of the independent variables depends upon the levels taken by other variables in the equation. As in Chapter IV, the levels of the other variables are set at prespecified levels, and the influence of the independent variable of interest will be evaluated at each of these different levels. The discussion that follows will be divided into factors influencing the value a member attaches to House service, the probability of returning to the House, and personal attributes of the member.

#### The Value of the House Seat

We begin our consideration of value of the House seat and its impact upon retirement decisions by evaluating the

influence of the age at which a member enters the House. The estimated effects of this variable are presented in Table 41. For the sake of comparison, the effects of entry age are presented with the average entry age of House members as a referent. Thus, the figures presented represent the differential probability of retirement for members entering below and above the average entry age for the period studied.

Beginning with the relatively young entrants of age 30, we can see that they display a substantially lower likelihood of retirement than members entering at the average age of roughly 43. While the average member in a situation that would lead him to retirement with a probability of .60, the member who entered at age 30 in an otherwise equal situation would have an estimated probability of retirement of .4541, and it is thus estimated that he would not retire. The member who enters at 40, being close to the mean entering age, does not differ substantially from the average; but as we move to the member who enters at 50, the effect of increased entry age on retirement can be seen. While the member who entered at the average entry age might be in a situation where he was teetering on retirement with a probability of .50, the member in the same situation who entered at age 50 is estimated here to retire with a probability of .5842. Finally, we turn to the member who enters at age 60. Entering the House at this later age is estimated to substantially increase the likelihood of retirement. Whereas the member entering at the average age in a situation with a probability of retirement



TABLE 41.  
THE EFFECT OF UTILITY OF HOUSE SERVICE UPON THE LIKELIHOOD  
OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE RETIRING

Likelihood of a Member Retiring (%)	Differences in the likelihood of retiring attributable to entering Congress below or above the average entry age of 42.64				Member Entered at Age:		Influence of party on the likelihood of retirement	Increase in likelihood of retirement attributable to being in the House in the 1970s	Differences in the likelihood of retirement attributable to salary (1967 dollars)	Differences in Real Salary -4000 +12,000
	30	40	50	60	Dem.	Repub.				
10	-5.11	-1.40	4.07	11.53	0	2.76	8.24	.93	-2.92	
20	-8.60	-2.03	6.52	16.76	0	4.57	12.42	1.77	-4.61	
30	-11.20	-2.45	7.93	19.30	0	5.64	14.59	2.30	-5.80	
40	-13.08	-2.79	8.51	19.94	0	6.09	15.33	2.50	-6.64	
50	-14.26	-3.05	8.42	19.21	0	6.40	14.95	2.40	-7.14	
60	-14.59	-3.10	7.82	17.40	0	5.61	13.70	2.20	-7.20	
70	-13.85	-2.86	7.68	14.65	0	4.92	11.70	1.90	-6.70	
80	-11.75	-2.26	5.38	11.01	0	3.94	8.95	1.60	-5.50	
90	-7.76	-1.24	3.35	6.34	0	2.53	5.30	1.15	-3.30	

of .40 would not retire, the member entering the House for the first time at age 60 under otherwise similar circumstances is estimated to retire with a probability of .5954.

The age at which a member enters Congress clearly bears an important influence upon whether or not he decides to retire from that body. The member who enters at 60 has as much as 33 points greater likelihood of retirement than the member who enters at age 30. As Schlesinger has stated, the age at which a man enters public office is relevant to the type of career he has in office.<sup>2</sup> He states that the younger members, if successful, can expect to become true careerists. These notions are apparent in the results concerning entry age. Members who enter Congress at a young age appear much more committed to trying to retain membership in that institution.

Entry age is also considered here as a surrogate for seniority. The member entering at a young age is capable of having much higher expectations concerning his ultimate position and power in the House than does the member who enters at an older age. The careerist orientation of the younger member pointed to by Schlesinger, and the expectations about seniority the younger members are posited to have are believed to go hand in hand. A member entering at a young age, other things being equal, can be assumed to have cultivated fewer extra-House activities than has the older entrant. There are, it might be assumed, fewer potential endeavors outside the House that could work to draw the younger entrant

away. We might conclude that the younger entrant suffers less of an opportunity cost by virtue of his House service than older entrants who may have been capable of developing substantially greater outside interests. Coupled with this lower opportunity cost is the higher expected utility the younger member may derive from his House service by virtue of his higher potential for seniority, and hence power, in the House. In sum, it may be that the younger entrant is sacrificing less to serve in the House and can at the same time expect more from that service than the older entrant.

Turning our attention to party, Republicans are estimated to have a greater likelihood of retirement. This difference, however, could play a determining role only if other factors contributed rather substantially to a member's predisposition to retirement. Nonetheless, this difference between minority and majority parties in likelihood of retirement serves to underscore the importance of how the House organizes itself in relation to the institution's ability to retain membership. The relatively moderate differences between parties suggests that the Republicans were perhaps not too disadvantaged by their minority party status. Perhaps because of benevolence, institutional norms of fairness, or some other factors, Republicans were only marginally more likely to retire than Democrats. One could envision a situation in which the minority party were placed at such a disadvantage and utility of service would be so low that minority party members would have a much greater likelihood of

retirement. In spite of the relatively low difference, the differential points to an added difficulty minority party members may have. The minority party, less capable of retaining its membership in the House, runs the constant risk of becoming an even smaller minority. In both decisions to seek higher office and retirement decisions the Republican party has been found to be more in danger of losing members than has the Democratic party. Although ignoring the issue of who replaces these members, the lessened ability of the Republican party to retain its members in the House might be at least a partial contributing factor to that party's remaining a minority. This, of course, ignores the electorate's role in determining who shall replace members who voluntarily forsake their seat in Congress, depriving their party of one very important advantage in retaining control of that seat, and that is the advantage of incumbency. The chance for party turnover of a district, other things being equal, is no doubt greatest when there is no incumbent seeking reelection.

When considering the difference between pre- and post-1970, a relatively marked increase in the likelihood of retirement characterized the latter period. A member prior to 1970 who was in a situation that led them to have a relatively low probability of retirement of .40 would, in an otherwise similar situation after 1969, retire with an estimated probability of .55. Although not all conceivable factors are controlled for in this model, some salient and believed to be

important ones are. The post-sixties increase in retirement remains statistically significant with these other salient factors controlled, suggesting that, although these other factors might have contributed to the trend toward increasing retirement to some extent, there remains a significant difference in this period not captured by the other variables in the model. Thus, although not operationalized directly, there does appear to be some underlying process going on in the 1970s independent of the other factors in the model that led to increased retirements. This result, although only indirectly, lends further credibility to the notion that the 1970s were marked by increasing disaffection with House service on the part of members of that body.

Finally, we turn to the impact of changing salary and its relationship to retirement decisions. The value of salary change upon which the probability estimates are based are rough approximations of changes in salary that actually occurred.<sup>3</sup> As can be seen, a decline in salary of 4,000 constant dollars results in a slight increase in the likelihood of retirement. The estimated effect of this decrease in salary would lead only those with otherwise high predispositions to retire. Going in the other direction, it can be seen that a salary increase of 12,000 dollars is estimated to reduce the likelihood of retirement by as much as over seven points. Although these results must be interpreted cautiously, they do point to one means by which Congress as an organization may influence who leaves the body voluntarily. Furthermore,

these results suggest that if Congress is incapable of keeping its salaries from being depleted by inflation, over time, increasing retirements would be the likely result. This result is not surprising. Congress has shown itself willing to vote itself pay increases, and these votes are no doubt a political liability for at least some members. More recently, greater flexibility concerning outside earnings has been displayed, and Congress has engaged in some rather creative legal maneuvers to gain tax exempt status. Clearly, the members of Congress have in general been at least partially motivated by concerns over their own financial security. For some members this is a more salient concern, and the results suggest that salary level might play a determining factor in a small group of retirement decisions.

#### The Probability of Returning to the House

We now turn our attention to one of the traditional explanations for some retirements: vulnerability. We begin with a consideration of retrospective vulnerability as measured by the members' margin of victory in their last election. In Table 42, estimates of differing probabilities of retirement for different margins of victory are presented. The differences presented use a 20 percent margin as a referent, and hence the figures represent the difference in probability of retirement for a given margin from a member with a 20 percent margin.

TABLE 42

THE EFFECTS OF PROBABILITY OF RETURNING TO THE HOUSE UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF MEMBERS OF  
THE HOUSE RETIRING

Likelihood of a Member Retiring (%)	Differences in the likelihood of retirement attributable to margins of victory greater or less than 20%					Increase in likelihood of retirement attrib- utable to being harmed substantially by redistricting
	Member's Margin of Victory in Last Election:					
	5%	10%	30%	40%	50%	
10	.22	.09	-.30	-.63	.86	21.52
20	.64	.44	-.32	-.73	-1.12	28.80
30	.90	.64	-.33	-.82	-1.30	31.37
40	.94	.67	-.41	-1.00	-1.49	31.39
50	.84	.56	-.56	-1.17	-1.68	29.07
60	.70	.41	-.67	-1.22	-1.76	25.52
70	.60	.33	-.64	-1.10	-1.63	23.43
80	.54	.32	-.44	-.84	-1.53	15.04
90	.51	.30	-.09	-.45	-.80	8.21

In evaluating Table 42 it can be seen that, although the influence of vulnerability is in the anticipated direction, it does not substantially alter the probability of retirement, even at the extremes. For example, a member who won by only five percent in his last election is less than one percent more likely across all categories of predispositions to retire than the member who received a 20 percent margin in his last election. Going to further extremes, the greatest estimated difference in probability of retirement for a member with a five percent margin of victory and a member with a 50 percent margin of victory is that the former is estimated to be 2.52 percent more likely to retire.

As noted previously in this analysis, this indicator of vulnerability suffers in that it is retrospective and that it fails to take into account trends in the member's electoral performance as well as national trends or events that could influence a member's estimate of the probability of returning to the House. As such, it serves as much less than a definitive test of the impact of vulnerability on retirement decisions. Nonetheless, it is believed that this operationalization serves as a reasonable, if crude, indicator of the influence of vulnerability. As such it can be concluded that although statistically significant (at the .10 level), the impact of margin even at the extremes could play a determining role in retirement decisions only in cases of members who were in situations that led them to otherwise be nearly predisposed to retirement. Outside of this narrow range, vulnerability,



as measured by margin of victory in last election, is not a substantial predictor of retirement decisions.

In turning to our prospective measure of vulnerability, redistricting, it can be seen that this variable has a much more substantial influence upon retirement decisions. A member in a situation that led him to have a probability of retirement of .30, if harmed substantially by redistricting, is estimated to subsequently have a probability of retirement of .6137. Although only affecting a few members, the estimated influence of redistricting presented here suggests that it can take a member who is quite unlikely to retire and turn him into a member with a high predisposition toward retirement. We should acknowledge once again the temporal problem inherent in this operationalization. Prior knowledge of a member's retirement intentions on the part of state legislatures might lead them to choose that member's district for substantial alteration in an effort to avoid harming incumbents who wish to stay in the House. Hence, in some cases pre-announced retirement decisions might attract drastic district alterations. It is believed here that these constitute only a relatively small proportion of cases involving redistricting and that in general the temporal order is such to lead us to conclude that redistricting contributes to retirement.

#### Personal Attributes

In this final category, attention is turned to the impact of differing personal attributes upon retirement decisions.

The estimated influence of these factors are displayed in Tables 43 and 44.

Beginning with risk-taking propensities, high risk takers are significantly less likely to retire than the less risk acceptant. This result holds even when the influence of the possibly confounding influence of entry age is controlled for. Depending upon the constellation of values taken by other variables, high risk takers are as much as almost six points less likely to retire than are the less risk acceptant. Although not a tremendous difference, this results lends support to hypothesis 13. Seeking reelection involves risks. Retirement, although not costless, is an alternative that has a certain outcome. In the case at hand, conditions have been statistically controlled for; and members assumed to have a higher inclination to bear risks are, as expected, found to have a higher probability of seeking reelection than are those less inclined to bear risks. Just as Rohde suggested that willingness to take risks distinguishes the progressively ambitious from the statically ambitious, the results presented here suggest that risk-taking propensities might further serve to distinguish the statically ambitious from the discretely ambitious.

Finally, we turn our attention to age. Not too surprisingly, it is estimated to have a substantial impact upon retirement decisions. In Table 44 the average age of roughly 53 for members of the House for the period studied is taken as a referent, and the figures presented represent the

TABLE 43

THE EFFECT OF RISK-TAKING PROPENSITIES UPON THE LIKELIHOOD  
OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE RETIRING

Likelihood of a Member Retiring (%)	Risk Taking	Other
10	-2.50	0
20	-3.57	0
30	-4.83	0
40	-5.51	0
50	-5.93	0
60	-5.98	0
70	-5.50	0
80	-4.48	0
90	-2.70	0

TABLE 44

THE EFFECT OF AGE UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF MEMBERS OF THE  
HOUSE RETIRING

Likelihood of a Member Retiring (%)	Differences in the likelihood of retirement attributable to ages greater or less than the average age of 52.66				
	Member's age is:				
	30	40	50	60	70
10	-8.03	-5.75	-1.62	4.92	14.20
20	-14.63	-9.80	-2.40	7.76	20.13
30	-20.15	-12.90	-2.91	9.36	22.80
40	-24.61	-15.17	-3.31	10.00	23.31
50	-27.93	-16.64	-3.60	9.87	22.24
60	-29.85	-17.14	-3.64	9.15	19.95
70	-29.87	-16.41	-3.36	7.93	16.65
80	-27.21	-14.10	-2.66	6.21	12.36
90	-20.15	-9.49	-1.51	3.82	6.99

differences in probability of retirement for the different age categories from the referent age. A member of average age who is in a situation leading him to have a probability of retirement of .70 would retire, while a 30-year-old in an otherwise similar situation would not retire with an estimated probability of .4015. Similarly, while the member of average age has a probability of retirement of .60, the 40-year-old member would have a probability of retirement under the same circumstances of only .4286. For the older member, the probability of retirement increases. In the likelihood of retirement, a 60-year-old member differs from the member of average age by as much as 10 points. Similarly, the 70-year-old member differs by as much as over 23 points from the member of average age.

Clearly, even in an organization such as the House where there is no mandatory retirement age, age nonetheless emerges as one of the most salient predictors of retirement. More elderly members, whether because of increasing disability corresponding to their advanced years or because of the perception on the part of the electorate of their disability, have a substantially higher probability of retirement. This result flies in the face of a stereotype many hold concerning Congressmen, this being that the only way some might leave the House is feet first. Certainly age is an important determinant of retirement decisions, but we must also consider the combination of age and seniority that might work to make some very old members continue to pursue House service. The

probability of retirement conditioned on current age of 70 and entering ages of 30 and 50 are presented in Table 45.<sup>4</sup> As can be seen, when we compare two 70-year-olds, there is estimated to be a tremendous difference in likelihood of retirement attributable to the age at which they entered the House. It is estimated that while a 70-year-old member who entered at age 50 could be in a situation leading him to a probability of retirement of .70, a member in the same situation who entered the House at age 30 would have a probability of retirement of only .4874. Clearly, the impact of age on retirement decisions, although important, cannot realistically be evaluated without considering the impact of the member's entry age and hence seniority.

### Conclusions

At this point, we may consider the influence of different factors in terms of their magnitude in an effort to identify the major determinants of retirement decisions.

Advanced age was found to be one of the most substantial contributors to increased probability of retirement. However, as was just mentioned, the influence of advanced age upon retirement is largely conditioned by the age at which the member entered the House for the first time. Although disability associated with advanced years may play some role in retirement decisions, a more important factor would appear to be the degree of career commitment the member has as evidenced by the number of years he has spent in the body. In this case there is clearly an interaction or trade-off between the

TABLE 45

ESTIMATED IMPACT OF AGE, CONDITIONAL UPON SENIORITY,  
ON RETIREMENT DECISIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

Likelihood of Retirement: 70-year-old member who entered Congress at age 50 (%)	Likelihood of Retirement: 70-year-old-member who entered Congress at age 30 (%)
10	.82
20	4.88
30	10.87
40	17.69
50	27.05
60	37.59
70	48.74
80	62.87
90	80.24

additional utility derived by more senior members and the heightened cost and/or diminished probability associated with the advanced age such seniority necessarily entails.

Another large contributor to the probability of retirement was that of being harmed substantially by redistricting. This, however, impacts upon only a very small number of members. Furthermore, the causal influence of redistricting is suspect in at least some retirement decisions.

The increase in probability of retirement attributable to internal House changes in the 1970s is a statistically significant and relatively large contributor. The 1970s were marked by increases in retirement that were independent of marginality, redistricting, advanced age, salary decreases, or any of the other variables, and strongly suggest that something did indeed change about House service in the 1970s, offering a career that was somehow less attractive.

Salary changes, at least at extremes, were found to exert a rather large influence upon the probability of retirement. It is believed that while monetary remuneration is not the primary motivation for service of many, if not most members, the level of salary does at least partially and indirectly reflect the opportunity costs many members must bear. For some, it is believed, these opportunity costs become too high as salary decreases, and they choose to exit the House of their own volition.

Party and risk-taking propensities exert roughly equivalent influences upon the probability of retirement. The



minority party, having less control over the perquisites of service, is less capable of retaining its members. Willingness to bear risks was found to diminish the likelihood of retirement and pointed to a potential distinction between the statically and discretely ambitious. The variable found to exert the smallest influence upon the probability of retirement was vulnerability. Although its influence was statistically significant and in the theoretically specified direction, its substantive impact was minimal. Although this seems at least a reasonable operationalization, the failure of this indicator to tap prospective evaluations of vulnerability as well as trends in a member's electoral performance or those in national politics may mean that a more conclusive proposition about the impact of vulnerability must await further research.

## APPENDIX III

Where:

Pr(Ret)	= the probability a representative retires
Age	= the representative's age
Rt	= 1 if, when he first entered the House he challenged an incumbent or ran in a district carried by the other party by 57 percent or more in the previous three elections = 0 otherwise
Party	= 1 if representative was a Republican = 0 if representative was a Democrat
Redis	= 1 if representative was hurt substantially by redistricting = 0 otherwise
Margin	= the difference between the representative's proportion of the vote in his last election and that of his closest competitor
Realsalary	= Congressional salary in 1967 dollars
Change	= 1 if year is greater than 1969 = 0 otherwise
Entryage	= the member's age at entering Congress for the first time contiguous to the term in which the likelihood of retirement is estimated

## NOTES

$$^1B_{AGE} = .0055, \quad MLE/SE = .260$$

$$B_{SENIORITY} = .0537, \quad MLE/SE = 1.561$$

<sup>2</sup>Schlesinger, Ambition and Politics, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup>Between the Ninety-Second and Ninety-Third Congresses, Congressional salary decreased by 4.2 thousand 1967 dollars. In the Eighty-Fourth Congress, salary was increased by 12.2 thousand 1967 dollars.

<sup>4</sup>These figures were computed in the following manner:  
 $P(\text{Ret}) | \text{Age}_{70} | \text{EA}_{30} - P(\text{Ret}) | \text{Age}_{70} | \text{EA}_{50} = \text{Differential}$   
 retirement probability attributable to different entry age (EA). The probability of retirement for the member who entered at 50 was arbitrarily set to even values 10 through 90, and the differential for members entering at 30 was subtracted providing estimates of the lowered probability of retirement attributable to earlier entry age (or advanced seniority).

## Chapter VII

In the preceeding pages the decisions of members of the United States House of Representatives have been evaluated in some detail. The question now is how can this aid our understanding of representation, representative bodies, and the political process in general. In this, the concluding chapter, these questions will be addressed by speculating about the implications of the results contained herein, as well as evaluating prospects for future research.

### The Nature of Representation

To whom is the representative to respond: the narrow interests of his constituency or the broader interests of his state or the nation as a whole? The preceeding analysis has found that the career decisions of members of the House are shaped to a large degree by the situations in which they labor, characterized by differing degrees of opportunity, risks, costs, and benefits. Certain combinations of these factors were found to lead some members of the House to leave that body and thus played a substantial role in shaping at least one aspect of their behavior. It does not seem unreasonable to suspect that differing combinations of these factors may also work to shape the behavior of members who decide to stay in the House.



Hence, although the decision to stay in the House is discrete (it is either taken or it is not) it may be assumed that a continuous dimension similar to the one in the probit analysis contained herein is underlying each member's calculations about his career. Thus, although only a few members decide to seek higher office or retire, many other members labor in situations where they approach but do not meet a probability sufficient to lead them to leave. Conversely, many other members exist in situations that lead them to have a very low probability of leaving.

It might be expected that members approaching or surpassing the probability sufficient to leave the House might take on the characteristics of Burke's worthy legislator. For members who are close to, or who take, a decision for higher office, we would expect them to attempt to appeal to the broader interests of their state as a whole in their legislative behavior. Members retiring or approaching a retirement decision are less threatened by the possibility of the electoral sanction, and might be expected to be more inclined to vote their conscience in the Burkean sense.

At the other extreme, it can be anticipated that members with very low probabilities of seeking higher office or retiring will correspond more closely to a delegate orientation. These members labor in situations where expectations concerning higher office are low, or the value they attach to the House seat is very high, or both. These members place primary emphasis on retaining their House

seat and their legislative behavior should correspond more closely to the interests of their district than to the interests of their state or their own preferences if a difference between these interests exists.

It is thus believed that by taking into account a dynamic picture of the contextual situation of members of the House, as well as individual attributes, a better picture of the motivations and behavior of representatives can be obtained. This could be accomplished by categorizing and matching roll call votes of representatives in the period studied with the individual probabilities of leaving to seek higher office or to retire. It is believed that a better understanding of legislative behavior may be provided by evaluating that behavior in light of the opportunity, cost, and risk environment each member confronts.

#### The House: Longitudinal Comparisons

In the period studied in the present analysis, certain factors emerged as dominant influences upon career decisions. In terms of decisions to seek higher office, the nature of the opportunity confronting the member emerged as a dominant influence. Whether or not an incumbent was running, the extent of shared electorate, and the type of office available were found to have the most substantial impact upon the likelihood of a member seeking higher office. Less important, but nonetheless significant, were risk-taking propensities, party, post-sixties changes in House organization

and redistricting. In terms of retirement, advanced age was found to be one of the most substantial predictors. The effect of advanced age, however, was conditioned by the age at which the member entered the House for the first time and thus seniority was found to play a role in retirement decisions. The way the House organizes itself, in terms of changes in the 1970s, salary, and minority/majority party status, was found to play a smaller but still important role in shaping retirement decisions. Redistricting was found to play a substantial role in the relatively few cases where it was present. Finally, the impact of risk-taking propensities was found to exert a moderate influence upon retirement decisions.

The question becomes, how does the contemporary House compare with the House of other periods in American history? It is believed that the models developed herein can serve as heuristic devices that would be very useful in evaluating numerous arguments concerning the evolution of the House. Differing relative magnitudes of the factors in the models contribute to a better understanding of Congressional careers and the nature of service at different points in time.

In terms of decisions to seek higher office, the period after the ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment (1913) could serve as a starting point for over-time comparisons. Certain differences would be anticipated. In terms of the value of higher office it is reasonable to expect that opportunities for governorships might have



been taken more frequently in this earlier period owing to the position's greater importance prior to the expansion of the federal government's role following the New Deal. In terms of the probability of seeking higher office, we might expect that incumbents enjoyed less of an advantage, at least in the Senate, than they enjoyed in the period analyzed in this study. The value attached to the House seat in the earlier period is expected to be lower than in the post-World War II period. This is because the seniority system was not as well developed and few incumbent representatives enjoyed the widely acknowledged electoral advantage of most modern representatives.

Although the factors pointed to above lead to the expectation that more opportunities for higher office would have been taken, there remains one factor that could work to diminish the number of opportunities pursued; this being the role party played in controlling nominations for higher office. In the period examined here, higher offices were assailed most frequently by the relatively young with relatively few years in the House. In this period, primaries were the dominant means of obtaining nominations and candidacy was largely self-initiated with the party having little or no control over who ran for higher office under the party label. Although it is likely that they were never in complete control of nominations, parties in the early part of this century, before the proliferation of primaries, may have played an important role in shaping

candidacies that was not apparent in the period examined herein.

In terms of retirement, the model developed here could be applied to any Congress to evaluate and to better understand increases and decreases in turnover in the House over time. The debate concerning the decline in the level of turnover toward the end of the nineteenth century, centering on the level of competition, the degree of institutionalization, the value of the House seat, and the level of ambition of members of the House, might be resolved by evaluating House service in cost-benefit terms with the model developed here. By so doing, a better picture of the influence of marginality, seniority, party, and other factors upon retirement decisions may be gained, and a further contribution made to our understanding of the nineteenth century's decline in turnover and to the nature of service in various eras.

#### Cross-National Comparisons

The United States' system of government is unique in many ways. The organization of offices, the particular role of party and the electoral arrangements contribute to the form of the opportunity structure and to the nature of a political career in this country. Perhaps the best way to evaluate the influence of these factors is by comparison with other electoral democracies.

Countries such as Australia, France, and Japan, with bicameral national legislatures, could serve as useful referents in gauging the influence of various factors. In terms of seeking higher offices, it would be useful to evaluate how differing terms of office, differing electoral systems, and multiparty systems can contribute to or retard the expectations of representatives concerning higher office. Furthermore, the differences in power afforded to the upper houses in other countries might contribute to a better understanding of the influences of the value of the higher office on the progressive ambitions of members of these various legislatures. Similarly, in terms of retirement, the influence of differing modes of legislative organization and allocation of power within these bodies could be evaluated. Through the evaluation of these factors, as well as such factors as multiple candidacies, proportional representation, and various nominating systems, among others, a better picture of the costs and benefits of legislative service might be obtained which contributes to a better understanding of both the American situation as well as the situation in other countries.

### Conclusion

As the above discussion suggests, as we conclude this, the final chapter, we are at the beginning rather than the end. The real work is only initiated by the research

presented here. It is believed that this is a promising beginning in that it points to fruitful avenues for future research. By utilizing the period studied here as a referent, and by applying the models developed here as heuristic devices to other periods and places, a heightened understanding of the motivations of representatives and how these interact with the context within which representatives labor can be obtained, and this in turn can further enhance our picture of the organization and operating characteristics of representative bodies.

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