MESSAGE MANIPULATIONS IN COMMUNICATION OF A COMPLEX POLITICAL ISSUE

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D. MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY BARBARA EVERITT BRYANT 1970





This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

MESSAGE MANIPULATIONS IN COMMUNICATION

OF A COMPLEX POLITICAL ISSUE

presented by

Barbara Everitt Bryant

has been accepted towards fulfillment of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Communication

Talla Major professor

June 9, 1970

O-169



2 228 80-071 FOS1 Q312 Am 60355 NOV BOT

a an an an an an an a



ABSTRACT

MESSAGE MANIPULATIONS IN COMMUNICATION OF A COMPLEX POLITICAL ISSUE

Ву

Barbara Everitt Bryant

Persuasive messages about a complex political issue were constructed in various ways by manipulation of three message variables: Source Label (Republican/Neutral), Amount of Use of Slogan (No Slogan Repeat/Slogan Repeat), and Format (Question-Answer/Straight Descriptive). These produced eight (2x2x2) message versions. The purpose was to determine if changes in any of these variables would influence either attitude change toward the issue or comprehension of the message among voters who read messages containing the same content and arguments.

Printed brochures with the eight message versions were utilized in a field survey of a statewide sample of registered voters in Ohio, 300 in the experimental group and 50 in a control group. The issue of the messages was one which affected these voters in their real-life situations: state support of education by the 1969 Ohio legislature.

Each voter in the sample was categorized on the basis

of his recent past voting <u>behavior</u> as Republican, Democrat, or Ticket Splitter, rather than by the more customary selfdesignation categories of Republican, Democrat, and Independent. Ticket Splitters formed a broader group between strong Republicans and strong Democrats, only 36% of the Ticket Splitters self-identified as Independents.

Subjects were interviewed in their homes to determine demographic characteristics, past voting behavior, and prereading attitude toward the issue. Attitude was measured with four statements, two worded positively and two worded negatively, to which subjects responded on a five-point agreedisagree scale. Subjects in the experimental group were given one of the eight message versions to read. A sevenquestion multiple choice test on facts of the issue was administered to experimental and control groups. Following this, those in the experimental group received a post-reading attitude test identical to the pre-reading test.

The messages used produced favorable attitude change at a significant level, producing positive change in 51% of the sample. Attitudes for the eight groups which received different message versions ranged from means of 0.7 to 1.3 <u>above</u> pre-reading attitudes which had a mean of 13.1.

The prediction was made and confirmed that valencing the source with a Republican label would result in more positive attitude change among Republicans and less favorable attitude change among Democrats than if they received the same message from a neutral source. Democrats' attitudes

Barbara Everitt Bryant

dropped more than Republicans' attitudes gained as the result of the Republican label. The prediction that Ticket Splitters would be unaffected by source label, because it had no valence for them, was not confirmed. They moved more positively as the result of receiving a Republican rather than a neutrallylabeled message.

Predictions that importance of the issue to the subjects, and repeated use of a slogan would enhance favorable attitude change were not confirmed. In fact, repetition of a slogan, though it produced no significant main effects, had a significant interaction effect with Source Label and Voting Behavior Type on attitude change and the result was less overall attitude change from repeated slogan versions.

As predicted, the amount read of a message had a significant effect upon comprehension. Of interest was that those who read <u>all</u> of a message had more comprehension gain compared to those who read <u>part</u> of it than those who read <u>part</u> of it had compared to those who read <u>nothing</u>. Importance of the issue to the voter did not affect comprehension.

The Question-Answer Format was hypothesized to increase learning of facts over the Straight Descriptive Format. However, Format showed no significant effect on comprehension.

Correlates of attitude change toward the issue and comprehension of the message were summarized, as well as characteristics of the Ticket Splitter voters.

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Communication, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Director of

Guidance Committee

Chairman

Randallo Harrison John J. Gullahom Bradley Greening

MESSAGE MANIPULATIONS IN COMMUNICATION

OF A COMPLEX POLITICAL ISSUE

by

Barbara Everitt Bryant

A THESIS

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Communication

G - <u>'</u>, ', ', ', /

Copyright by

BARBARA EVERITT BRYANT



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have had personal contact with four generations of my family and all, directly or indirectly, have contributed to the accomplishment this dissertation represents.

Most immediately, my husband John H. Bryant is in large part responsible for giving me the motivation and the tangible and psychological support to pursue graduate study. My daughters, Linda and Lois, and my son, Randal, have displayed interest and patience, knowing that some of the time for my study was at their expense. As they embark on their college years, I hope they will benefit from my experiences as I have received inspiration from the social awareness and lack of hypocrisy of their generation and the individual achievement and high good humor of the three of them personally.

I thank my parents, Dorothy and William L. Everitt, for showing me that, since change is both necessary and inevitable, education is a lifelong quest to be pursued both inside and outside the classroom. My parents, my parentsin-law Cordie and John P. Bryant, and before them Benjamin H. Everitt, have demonstrated so forcefully in their lives that age is an attitude not a number. I am the beneficiary of their youthful and active attitudes toward learning and living.

ii

In the research and writing of this dissertation, and more importantly in the research project which is its subject, I have had the supervision and personal tutorial help of my advisor, Dr. Verling C. Troldahl. I realize better in retrospect than I may have at the moment, how much he has done to prod me into thinking through a problem, recognizing what is important and what is extraneous. I thank him for his concern, his knowledge, his dynamic and imaginative approach to research. I also thank the members of my advisory committee, Dr. Bradley S. Greenberg, Dr. Randall P. Harrison, and Dr. John T. Gullahorn, from whose courses, informal conferences, and questioning I have gained much.

Finally, this study was made possible by Market Opinion Research, Detroit, Michigan, which sponsored the field survey in Ohio utilizing professional interviewers to obtain the 350 interviews in this sample. I am indebted for the interviews and for the counsel and training given to me by Mr. Robert Teeter of Market Opinion Research and others of that organization's staff.

iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS

																					Page
- ACKNO	WLEDGM	ENTS	•••	•	٠	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	ii
LIST	OF TAB	LES.	••	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	v
LIST	OF FIG	URES	• •	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	vii
LIST	OF APP	ENDIC	CES.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	viii
Chapt	er																				
I	THE	RESE	ARCH	PF	ROE	BLE	M	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1
	Intr	oduct	tion	:	Th	e	Gr	ow	in	g	Us	e	of	E	°0]	.it	ic	al			٦
	, rie	ssage	25.	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	٠	
	The	Need	for	Re	ese	ar	ch	•	•	•	•	•	٠	٠	٠	•	•	٠	٠	٠	3
	Sign	ifica	ance	of	t t	:he	S	tu	dy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		4
	Back	arour	nd av	nd	Re	la	te	d	Li	te	ra	tu	re								5
	Stud		cian		ne		or	-+	-i-	nc					-	•	-	•	•	•	36
	Juu	y Dea	sign		/112	510	CT.	au		113	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	41
	Limi	tatio	ons.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	٠	٠	•	٠	٠	٠	41
	Нуро	these	es .	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	41
II	RESE	ARCH	DES	IGN	A I	ND	M	ET	'HC	DO	LO	GY	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	52
	Purp Choi Gene Samp Data	ose. ce ar ral S le .	nd Og Study	per y [at Des	io ig	na n	1i	.za	ti	• • •	•	• • •	Vā		.at)le	• • •	• • •	•	52 53 66 67
III	FIND	INGS		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	70
	Doog	~i n k i		~ F	с -		1.0														70
	Desc	T T D C T			50	unp	16	•	• •	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	70
	ALLI	tuae	Chai	nge	3 1	.ow	ar	a	TS	su	e	•	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	٠	70
	Comp	reher	nsio	n c)f	Me	SS	ag	e	Co	nt	en	t	٠	٠	•	•	٠	٠	٠	81
	Slog	an Re	ecal	1.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	٠	٠	86
	Furt	her H	Explo	ora	nti	on	S	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	88
IV	SUMM	ARY A	AND I	DIS	SCU	ISS	10	N	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	۰	94
	Summ	arv																			91
	Dia-	wry.	•••	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	100
	DISC	ussic	• 11	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	•	٠	٠	•	٠	•	•	TOO
	Cont	ribut	tion	s t	0	Th	eo	ry	•	•	•	•	•	•	٠	٠	•	٠	٠	٠	109
	Impl	icati	ions	fc	r	Fu	tu	re	R	es	ea	rc	h	•	•	٠	•	•	•	•	116
APPEN	DICES.	• •	••	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	۰	•	•	122
BIBLI	OGRAPH	Y	•••	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Description of Sample	71
2	Incomplete and Non-returned Interviews Dropped from Sample	72
3	Mean Attitude Change for Message Manipulation Versions	73
4	Mean Attitude Change for Voting Behavior Type vs. Source Label of Message	74
5	Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Depend- ent Variable, "Attitude Change Toward Issue" (Independent Variables: Voting Behavior Type, Source Label, Format, Amount of Slogan Use)	76
6	Mean Attitude Change for Variables which Pro- duce Interaction Effect	77
7	Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Depend- ent Variable, "Attitude Change Toward Issue," Using No Slogan Repeat Messages	79
8	Mean Comprehension of Message Content Score for Message Manipulation Versions	81
9	Mean Comprehension of Message Content by Amount of Readership and Importance of Issue to Voter.	82
10	Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Depend- ent Variable, "Comprehension of Message Con- tent" (Independent Variables: Readership, Importance of Issue)	84
11	Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Depend- ent Variable, "Comprehension of Message Con- tent" (Independent Variables: Voting Behavior Type, Source Label, Format, Amount of Slogan Use)	85
12	Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Depend- ent Variable, "Comprehension of Message Con- tent," with Education Level as Covariate	87
13	Slogan Recall vs. Amount of Use of Slogan	88



Table		Page
14	Correlates of Attitude Change Toward Issue of Messages	90
15	Correlates of Comprehension of Message Score	92
16	Mean Attitude Change for Voting Behavior Type vs. Source Label of Message (No Slogan Repeat Versions)	101



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Heider p-o-x triads in balanced state	10
2	Newcomb A-B-X triangle in balanced state	10
3	Illustrative model of Cartwright and Harary graphs	12
4	Feather Communication Model: Signed digraphs represent the eight possible communication structures in which all semicycles involving attitudinal and unit relations are completely balanced	15
5	Conditions set up by the experiment in the communication model	37
6	Initial communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with his own political party	4 2
7	Balanced post-communication situation for re- ceiver who receives communication identified with his own political party	43
8	Initial communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with the opposition political party	45
9	Balanced post-communication situation for re- ceiver who receives communication identified with the opposition political party	45
10	Post-communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with his own political party	110
11	Post-communication situation for Ticket Splitter	111
12	Post-communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with oppo-sition political party	112



LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix																	Page
I	Message	Version	1.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	122
II	Message	Version	2.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
III	Mess age	Version	3.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
IV	Mess age	Version	4.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	125
v	Message	Version	5.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	126
VI	Message	Version	6.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
VII	Message	Version	7.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	128
VIII	Message	Version	8.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	129
IX	Survey (Questionr	nair	e	fc	or	Ex	pe	eri	.me	ent	al	. 0	Gro	bur		130
x	Survey (Questionr	nair	e	fc	or	Co	ont	rc) 1	Gr	ou	ıp	•	•	•	135
XI	Question Disserta	ns from E ation Exp	Prec	ed .me	lir. ent	ig :•	Su •	rv •	'ey •	, l	Jse •	ed •	ir •	1 •	•	•	138



CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

I. INTRODUCTION: THE GROWING USE OF POLITICAL MESSAGES

Political messages are intended to persuade whether they appear as advertisements, in speeches, in candidate interviews with reporters, in promotional literature and handouts, or in conversations among the supporters of an issue.

As mass society becomes more and more complex, its issues become more complicated: problems of population control, pollution, conservation, racism, educational opportunity. An increasing number of the decisions which affect the quality of life in the whole society become political decisions, made by large numbers of voters either indirectly in choosing the candidate who becomes one of the decision makers of the society, or directly by deciding referendums on a broad variety of issue proposals. The voter is the target of political messages of fact and opinion directed at him by proponents and opponents of candidates, political parties and issues; by those who seek change and those who resist it.

In the United States, political communication is a recurring phenomenon to which increasingly large amounts of money and media resources are allocated. "Spending in all campaigns for all offices at stake in 1968, from county



commissioner to the presidency, totaled at least \$300 million. That was a 50 percent increase over the \$200 million spent in 1964, which was itself a record breaker."¹ A large percentage of this massive expenditure goes into the production and distribution of political messages.

A generation ago political communications reached the interested and could be avoided by the apathetic.^{2, 3} Today avoidance of political messages is hardly possible during major campaigns, though still can be managed at the level of local, county, and issue contests in which proponents of candidates or issues cannot afford extensive media use. Even here, increasing use of electronic media paralleled with growing and more varied use of print media are delivering messages even to those who care little. Campaign emphasis is shifting toward appealing to the voter directly through the mass media.⁴

¹Herbert E. Alexander and Harold B. Meyers, "A Financial Landslide for the G.O.P.," <u>Fortune</u>, March, 1970, 104-105, 186-189.

²Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, <u>The People's Choice--How the Voter Makes Up His</u> <u>Mind in a Presidential Campaign</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944).

³Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, <u>Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a</u> <u>Presidential Campaign</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

⁴James M. Perry, <u>The New Politics, The Expanding</u> <u>Technology of Political Manipulation</u> (New York: Potter, 1968), p. 7.



II. THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

Little is known about how the voter reacts when he receives a political message about a candidate or issue. Does he learn the facts of the message, weigh those facts, identify the intent or bias of its source, allow the message to change or reinforce his attitudes about the issue or candidate it concerns? Or does he interpret the message only in terms which do not upset the attitude he had, or voting decision he would have made, if the message had never reached him? This study explores some of these questions.

Despite the large number of political messages issued in the United States each year, no field studies have been made in which political messages have been manipulated and tested for their differential effects on a sample drawn from a population of registered voters.⁵ There is, however, a significant body of research on attitude change, the results primarily of experimental studies with student subjects. There is also a large body of survey and polling studies of the voting population in the U.S. These studies cover the period 1940 to date and identify variables in the audience for political messages, not message elements themselves.

⁵A literature search for articles relevant to political communication was made by the experimenter in the following journals for the years 1959-early 1970: <u>Public</u> <u>Opinion Quarterly</u>, <u>American Political Science Review</u>, <u>Social</u> <u>Forces</u>, <u>Journal of Communication</u>, <u>Journalism Quarterly</u>. The search also included books and articles referenced in any of the articles on political communication in the above. A key word search of theses from 1950 to 1970 by University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, showed no references under the key words Message and Political and Communication; Message and Political; Manipulation and Political and Message, Communication.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is that it attempts to relate existing knowledge of attitude change and the voting audience to the important, but largely untested, field of political message effects. The study uses messages about a typical issue, manipulated and tested upon those whom the issue affects in real life. The issue itself, a bill providing state support for education, is typical of many complex issues which are debated and acted upon by political bodies: it affects many; it contains a mixture of both widely and long agreed upon proposals plus new and highly controversial proposals. It is the end product of compromises; it is expensive. Some of its details are familiar to some voters-only specialists understand the whole package. Despite the multiple number of elements in the bill, it must ultimately be judged as a single unit by the voter. Thus the political messages used in this study are realistic compared to those typically administered in laboratory settings.

The experimenter selected three message variables from among many possibilities; presented them to a statewide sample of 300 registered voters (plus 50 non-readers in a control group); and then measured comprehension and attitude change effects among readers. Additionally, voters were interviewed both before and after reading the messages to ascertain characteristics about them--demographic, attitudinal, and voting behavior--which might influence their perceptions of the messages.

IV. BACKGROUND AND RELATED LITERATURE

1. Theories of Attitude Change and Attitude Stability

Political communications have two goals: (1) to change the attitudes of those who do not agree with the communicator's stand and (2) to reinforce the attitude of those who already agree with the communicator.

Theories contributing to an understanding of attitude change and attitude stability are classified under the general heading of balance or consistency theories. All are in agreement that people change their attitudes to eliminate some inconsistency and make no changes when cognitions are consistent.⁶

a. Congruity and Dissonance

Consistency theories have been explicated in a number of ways. Osgood and Tannenbaum⁷ say in their congruity principle that the existence of an incongruity directly generates the pressure toward change. Their theory is worked out from the standpoint of a receiver who holds initial attitudes toward both a source and a concept. Source and concept are then linked by an assertion (a message or statement).

⁶R. Brown, "The Principle of Consistency in Attitude Change," <u>Social Psychology</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 549-609.

⁷C. E. Osgood and P. H. Tannenbaum, "The Principle of Congruity in the Prediction of Attitude Change," <u>Psycho-</u> <u>logical Review</u>, 62 (1955), 42-55.



If the assertion results in a situation which is incongruous to the receiver, his evaluation of both source and concept will change to make the situation congruous to him.

The experimental study reported in this dissertation examines the initial attitude and attitude change of the receiver of a message toward the political issue of that message. Tannenbaum illustrates the application of the congruity theory to such political attitudes:

The fundamental homeostatic mechanism attributed to congruity theory is perhaps most apparent in the generalization studies where changes in evaluation of an object of judgment occur without any direct manipulation of that object. It is more than likely that many of our "real-life" attitudes are formed and modified along just such lines. Political attitudes constitute a prime example. Most of us rarely have any direct contact or experience with a political personality, but we often develop quite intense attitudes for or against him as a result of the stands he assumes on a number of issues toward which we already have some well-defined attitudes. Once formed, such attitudes toward this politician become factors around which other opinions are developed as he continues to take positions pro or con a number of novel political issues. To be sure, such opinion formation does not always take place in a complete vacuum of factual information, but quite often such information considerations occupy a secondary role.⁸

Turning from congruity to another approach, the consistency theory which has generated the most research is

⁸Percy Tannenbaum, "The Congruity Principle Revisited: Studies in the Reduction, Induction and Generalization of Persuasion," <u>Advances in Experimental Social Psychology</u>, Vol. 3, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz (New York: Academic Press, 1967), p. 317.

Festinger's Theory of Cognitive Dissonance.⁹ where dissonance is defined as nonfitting relations among cognitive elements. Festinger sees dissonance as the inevitable consequence of making a decision, its magnitude dependent upon the importance of the decision and the comparative attractiveness and overlap of cognitive elements between the alternatives. Prior to making a decision an individual is in a state of conflict, a state in which Festinger and his colleagues¹⁰ have experimentally demonstrated he weighs alternatives fairly objec-_tively. After decision, and only if the decision commits - the individual to the chosen alternative, he is in an immediate post-decision period of regret when dissonance is salient. Within a short time, however, dissonance reduction processes begin. It is these processes which bring about attitude change. More partiality and bias enter evaluations, bringing about a divergence in the attractiveness of alternatives with the chosen one becoming more favorable. There is a tendency to look more at consonant than dissonant information, though Festinger has found this is easily overcome if the dissonant information is potentially useful to the individual.

What is the specific application of dissonance to

⁹Leon Festinger, <u>A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance</u> (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

¹⁰Leon Festinger, <u>Conflict</u>, <u>Decision</u>, <u>and Dissonance</u> (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964).



the subject of political attitude change? Festinger does not discuss how recently a decision must have been made, but requires only that there have been one. In regard to political attitudes, it appears that an individual who consistently and always votes with a particular political party is in a post-decision situation (even though he may have made the decision at the time of his first vote after age The theory would then anticipate that he would attend 21). more to consonant information from his own party, and avoid that from the opposition. The individual who votes a split ticket, or who switches party vote from one election to another, is not in the post-decision state. Rather, as each election approaches, he is in the predecision or conflict situation where he weighs alternatives more impartially. He should thus be regarded by political proponents as a prime target for political messages.

These two explications of balance or consistency theory have been described briefly because they bear on the shaping of political attitudes through political messages. A relevant communication model based on balance theory has been developed, however, which deals even more directly with the effects of communication about an issue upon the receivers of the communication. The model is that of N. T. Feather^{11,12}

¹¹N. T. Feather, "A Structural Balance Model of Communication Effects," <u>Psychological Review</u>, 71 (1964), 291-313.

¹²N. T. Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach to the Analysis of Communication Effects," <u>Advances in Experi-</u> <u>mental Social Psychology</u>, Vol. 3, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz (New York: Academic Press, 1967), pp. 100-165.

and is built upon the early work of Heider¹³ and the elaboration of Heider's ideas through the use of graphs by Cartwright and Harary.¹⁴ To understand the model it is first necessary to review the earlier work on which it is based.

b. Heider

The earliest explication of balance theory was made by Heider who distinguished two types of relations, attitude (evaluating or sentiment) and cognitive unit formation (similarity, possession, causality, proximity, belonging). The unit relations concept stems from Gestalt psychology. Attitude relations are liking, L (positive), and not liking ~L (negative). Unit relations are U (there is a relation) and ~U (there is no relation).

Two entities, for example, two people, are in a balanced state if the relation between them is positive or negative in all respects (all meanings of L or U). Heider organized three entity relations, two people and an object or concept, into p-o-x triads from the point of view of person p. Here p and o are the persons and x is the object or concept. A balanced state exists if all three relations are positive or two are negative and one is positive.

¹³F. Heider, "Attitudes and Cognitive Organization," Journal of Psychology, 21 (1946), 107-112.

¹⁴Dorwin Cartwright and Frank Harary, "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory," <u>Psycholog</u>-<u>ical Review</u>, Vol. 63, No. 5 (Sept., 1956), 277-293.


Fig. 1.--Heider p-o-x triads in balanced state

If two relations of a potential triad exist, and there is pressure toward the establishment of a third relationship, Heider predicts the relationship "induced will be one which produces a balanced triad." Heider, like those who have followed him, says there is a tendency for cognitive units to achieve balanced states. If change is not possible, imbalance will produce tension.

c. Newcomb

Heider's p-o-x triangles are somewhat similar to the A-B-X triangles of Newcomb¹⁵ except that, whereas Heider's triads were from the point of view of person p, Newcomb considers the point of view of both persons, A and B.



Fig. 2.--Newcomb A-B-X triangle in balanced state

¹⁵T. M. Newcomb, "An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts," <u>Psychological Review</u>, 60 (1953), 393-404.

Newcomb observes the interplay of forces among individuals tending to consistencies among them for all of them. Newcomb assumes a "strain toward symmetry" with symmetry being the similarity of A's and B's orientation to X (an impersonal entity).

Of interest in Newcomb's work is that he stresses the part played by communication in carrying out the dynamic operations of moving imbalanced situations toward balanced ones.

d. Cartwright and Harary

Cartwright and Harary extend Heider's theory through the use of graphs, directed graphs and signed graphs which permit them to deal with more than three elements.

The communication model to be discussed shortly utilizes Cartwright and Harary's signed-directed graphs, called s-digraphs.

In these, Heider's attitude relations are shown as arrows with both sign and direction. Here, if the receiver likes or has a favorable attitude toward the source, the graph shows a solid arrow in the appropriate direction.

S - R

If the receiver dislikes the source or considers the source counterattitudinal, a dashed arrow is used.

S <---- R

Heider's unit relations are shown as brackets with sign but not direction. Thus, if the communication is



perceived as belonging to or caused by the source, the relationship would be a positive unit relation shown by a solid bracket.



There can also be dissociative unit relations, as when the source denies responsibility for a communication, shown by dashed brackets.



Cartwright and Harary define paths, cycles, and semicycles to explain s-digraphs and the conditions for balance. Fig. 3 is an illustration which will be used to explain paths, cycles, semicycles and balanced structures.



Fig. 3.--Illustrative model of Cartwright and Harary graphs

The path from A to D could be \overrightarrow{AB} , \overrightarrow{BD} or \overrightarrow{AC} , \overrightarrow{CD} . A <u>cycle</u> is any path which may be taken through a set of relations with beginning and end occurring at the same entity and with no relations traversed more than once. Thus a cycle can go from A and return to it through B and D or through C and D. A semicycle is a collection of lines



obtained by taking one from each pair in a cycle. Thus there are two semicycles in the ABD cycle: \overrightarrow{AB} , \overrightarrow{BD} , \overrightarrow{DA} and \overleftarrow{AB} , \overrightarrow{BD} , \overrightarrow{DA} .

A semicycle or cycle is balanced if the product of all of its lines is positive (lines have a value of +1 or -1). Thus here the ABD semicycles and cycle are balanced as all of the lines are positive. The ACD cycle, however, is imbalanced: $(+1) \times (+1) \times (-1)=-1$. Also, since the use of s-digraphs allows dealing with more than three elements, the semicycles and cycles ABCD are imbalanced: $(+1) \times (+1) \times (+1) \times (+1) \times (-1)=-1$.

An s-digraph is balanced if, and only if, <u>all</u> of its semicycles are positive. Cartwright and Harary also recognize the possibility that some unbalanced s-digraphs are more unbalanced than others. They define the degree of balance as the ratio of:

Number of positive semicycles Total number of semicycles in structure

In the structure of Fig. 3 there are six semicycles: (1) $\overrightarrow{AB},\overrightarrow{BD},\overrightarrow{DA}$; (2) $\overleftarrow{AB},\overrightarrow{BD},\overrightarrow{DA}$; (3) $\overrightarrow{AC},\overrightarrow{CD},\overrightarrow{DA}$; (4) $\overrightarrow{AB},\overrightarrow{BD},\overrightarrow{DC},\overrightarrow{AC}$; (5) $\overleftarrow{AB},\overrightarrow{BD},\overrightarrow{DC},\overrightarrow{AC}$; and (6) $\overrightarrow{AB},\overrightarrow{BA}$. Three of these are negative. Thus the degree of balance is 3/6=1/2. No effects are postulated according to the degree of balance but the concept is useful for comparing structures.

Cartwright and Harary also allow for two other aspects of partial balance in a structure. A structure is <u>N-balanced</u> if all cycles of length not exceeding N are



positive. In Fig. 3, for example, the structure is <u>not</u> 3balanced as one of the cycles of length three is not balanced. A structure is <u>locally balanced</u> at any point p if all cycles passing through p are positive. In Fig. 3 the structure is <u>not</u> locally balanced at any of the four points as all have the unbalanced cycle ABCD passing through them. In more complex structures, however, it is possible to have some points of local balance in an overall unbalanced structure.

> e. Feather's Communication Model Based Upon Balance Theory

Feather uses Heider's attitude and unit relations, plus Cartwright and Harary's s-digraphs, as the basis for a communication model which is particularly appropriate for considering attitude change resulting from communication about an issue. This is exactly the situation for which the model was developed and for which it has been empirically tested with laboratory groups.

l. Structure of the Model. The model is comprised
of a source (S), a communication (C), and issue (I), and
a receiver (R). The communication (C) takes some stand on
the issue (I).

Heider's relations, attitude and cognitive unit, link the four elements and can be diagrammed with s-digraphs, which represent the cognitive structure of either source or receiver. Fig. 4 shows the eight possible communication structures involving the four elements of the model which would be completely balanced in both attitude and unit relations. In Fig. 4 the solid arrows are positive attitude relations, L, the dashed arrows are negative attitude relations, ~L. The solid and dashed brackets are respectively positive unit relations, U, and negative unit relations, ~U.



Fig. 4.--Feather Communication Model: Signed digraphs represent the eight possible communication structures in which all semicycles involving attitudinal and unit relations are completely balanced.¹⁶

It is not necessary that there be an attitude relation linking every pair of elements in the model in both directions. For example here, in Fig. 4, while the people S and R can hold attitudes toward the issue and toward each other, the issue cannot hold attitudes toward them. Thus no arrow points from I either to S or R. The communication, though inanimate, can express an attitude toward the issue and the

¹⁶Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach," p. 108.

C to I arrow is shown. The issue cannot reciprocate with an attitude about the communication.

Similarly, there is not always a unit relation linking elements. In Fig. 4 the issue is not owned or possessed by S, R, or C nor are S, R, or C responsible for the existence of the issue. Thus no brackets indicating a unit relation link them with I.

Feather and his colleagues¹⁷ ran a series of experiments to demonstrate the model and found that subjects given information about some of the attitudes and asked to predict others tended to give responses which would result in a balanced model. They have made a series of findings related to use of the model, five of which will be listed here in brief though are described in full in the referenced article:

(1) In the absence of contrary information, a receiver tends to see a source as having the same attitude toward the issue as the communication he presents and as agreeing with the communication he presents. Even under conditions of source coercion, the receiver tends to see the communication as belonging to the source. This suggests that the receiver will see a positive unit relation linking source and communication.

(2) When an interpersonal relationship is given,such as the attitude of source to receiver, it is a dominant

¹⁷Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach."

influence in predicting the opposite attitude relation of receiver to source, particularly when a balanced solution is impossible.

(3) In an experiment, Feather and Jeffries found support for the hypotheses that when the stand of a communication is in the same direction as the receiver's attitude toward the issue, the receiver will show both stronger agreement with the communication and more positive evaluation of the source as the stand comes closer to the receiver's attitude. Conversely, when the stand of a communication is opposite to the receiver's attitude, the receiver will show both disagreement with the communication and a more negative evaluation of the source as the communication stand becomes more removed from the receiver's attitude. This is similar to the assimilation and contrast effect investigated by Hovland, Harvey, and Sherif.¹⁸

(4) Subjects rate the source of a more extreme communication as less valued, less credible, more potent and more active than the source of a moderate communication (extremity effect). Feather's experimental set up for this kind of finding is to use pre-communication questionnaires to determine subjects' attitudes toward an issue. He then

¹⁸C. I. Hovland, O. J. Harvey, and M. Sherif, "Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Reactions to Communication and Attitude Change," <u>Basic Studies in Social Psychology</u>, ed. by H. Proshansky and B. Seidenberg (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), pp. 186-196.

gives them communications from a source about the issue. Post-communication he measures the subjects' attitudes toward the source.

Feather and Armstrong explored the communication model with strengths of attitudes (strong, weak, moderate), as well as their signs, specified and again found support for the Feather and Jeffries hypotheses and for the extremity effect.

(5) Feather and Jeffries also found a bias toward evaluating the source positively. Thus they suggest other cognitive biases, such as extremity and positivity, besides the tendency toward balance, may impose limitations on balance theory. Rosenberg and Abelson¹⁹ have identified, for example, that subjects seek the most pleasant solution to imbalance.

2. Limitations of the Model. Feather's communication model based on balance theory does not account for strength of relations. Although he and Armstrong did explore the model with one experiment involving attitude relations of varying strengths, Feather suggests that strength of relations is a subject for future research. The model at present deals only with positive and negative relations.

¹⁹M. J. Rosenberg and R. P. Abelson, "An Analysis of Cognitive Balancing," <u>Attitude Change and Organization</u>, ed. by C. I. Hovland and M. J. Rosenberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), pp. 112-163.

Of the theories, only congruity attempts to handle magnitude, and then only between receiver and source, and receiver and concept (the issue). Like the model, it has only a sign linking source and concept, and no evaluation by the receiver of the assertion (comparable to the communication in the model).

Feather's model has no way of handling the importance of the issue to source or receiver. Festinger has said the importance of cognitive elements involved in a decision is a factor influencing the magnitude of dissonance.²⁰

Finally, the model does not suggest which particular mechanism an individual will choose to restore balance, or account for individual differences in tolerance of imbalance. In this it is like most explanations of balance theory. Although alternative modes of reducing inconsistency are suggested by all, little prediction is made of which mode will be used in a given situation, or by a particular type of individual.

3. Use of the Model. Even with these limitations, all of which Feather has suggested as fruitful areas for exploration, the model does offer the most suitable framework of any suggested to date for exploring the effects of a situation in which a receiver perceives a communication which emanates from a source and concerns an issue. Most

²⁰Festinger, <u>A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance</u>.

of the other explanations of the drive toward balance or consistency do not lend to the handling of four elements, allowing for receiver attitudes toward the communication as well as toward the issue and the source. Furthermore, Feather²¹ has demonstrated that findings based on other theories (congruity, dissonance) can be interpreted in terms of his structural balance model. This model is also particularly applicable to the forced exposure situation of this study. In a forced exposure situation some of the predictions of dissonance theory are not allowed to operate, for example, the prediction that an individual will actively avoid information which increases dissonance.

4. Dissertation Study Interests. This dissertation focuses interest on attitude change toward the issue, but also considers comprehension of the message and attitudes toward that communication. While a communication is intended to persuade, communicators would not anticipate that a single communication would change a voter's decision from one in opposition to a candidate or issue to one in favor. At best a single communication will only slightly increment or decrement an attitude.

Hypotheses about attitude change will be based on Feather's model, but not tied exclusively to it. This is an exploratory study and interest also includes exploring

²¹Feather, "A Structural Balance Model."

strength of relations and importance of issues which the model is not equipped to handle.

Before stating these hypotheses, however, consideration will be given to the receivers of a political message. Feather's model can be elaborated from the point of view of either the source or the receiver. Since interest here is in the effects of the message on the attitudes and comprehension of the receiver; further use of the model will be from the viewpoint of the receiver. Much has been studied about receivers in the voting audience. Thus hypotheses about message effects must draw from this body of research as well as from balance theory.

2. Studies of the Voting Population in the U.S.

Political messages are introduced into a population of voters. There has been considerable study of this population via both polls and surveys. From voter studies have come some predictors of voting behavior, but little study of message effects on this behavior. The only communication variable measured quantitatively has been "media usage."

a. The Two Classic Study Groups

The two classic study groups are Paul Lazarsfeld-Bernard Berelson and their colleagues, and the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. Lazarsfeld and Berelson examined the presidential campaigns in depth

in two communities, Erie County, Pa., in 1940²² and Elmira, N. Y., in 1948.²³ The Survey Research Center has made campaign studies of a nationwide sample of voters before and after national elections from 1948 to date.^{24,25,26,27,28} Both study groups have put considerable emphasis on demographic characteristics of the voting population, but have also explored campaign interest, participation, media use, feelings of political efficacy, and candidate and issue perceptions.

All reports on the voting population cite <u>Voting</u> and <u>The American Voter</u>, the principle publications of these two groups, because no studies as comprehensive have been

²²Lazarsfeld, <u>The People's Choice</u>.
²³Berelson, <u>Voting</u>.

²⁴Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, <u>The American Voter</u> (New York: John Wiley, 1960), also <u>The American Voter</u> (An Abridgment) (New York: John Wiley, 1964). Page numbers cited hereafter are from the Abridgment.

²⁵Philip Converse, Angus Campbell, Warren E. Miller, and Donald Stokes, "Stability and Change in 1960: A Reinstating Election," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LV, No. 2 (June, 1961), 269-280.

²⁶Philip E. Converse, Aage Clausen, and Warren E. Miller, "Electoral Myth and Reality: The 1964 Election," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LIX, No. 2 (June, 1965), 321-336.

²⁷Donald E. Stokes, "Some Dynamic Elements of Contests for the Presidency," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LX, No. 1 (March, 1966), 19-28.

²⁸Robert Bartley, "Did 1968 Win Forecast GOP Era?" Wall Street Journal, Sept. 10, 1969. published since. It should be kept in mind that both books predate the use of TV to the extent this medium has been used since 1964, particularly for political spot messages. Even the Survey Research Center updating articles do not touch upon the new omnipresence of media messages which changes the message environment of all potential voters and most particularly that of the low interest voter.

What these classics demonstrate is that though the theory of democracy is based upon (1) a public having enough information to make a rational choice between policy alternatives, and (2) an election presenting the electorate with recognizable party alternatives, ²⁹ in practice both ideas operate poorly. They operate poorly because in the public there is widespread lack of familiarity with issues and even among those who know something about issues there is only limited consensus as to which party advocates which policy,³⁰

People tend to stay in politically homogeneous personal environments where family, friends, fellow members of groups, and coworkers agree on perceptions of politics. Political discussion is most often with these people of like predisposition.³¹ This, of course, conforms to the idea of consistency theories which claims people seek balanced situations.

> ²⁹Campbell, <u>The American Voter</u>, Chap. 17. ³⁰<u>Ibid</u>., Chaps. 7 and 8. ³¹Berelson, <u>Voting</u>, Chap. 6.

Elections do vary in their results and so some attitude shift must take place in the total electorate from one election to another. The Survey Research Center group identifies six dimensions of partisan attitude and demonstrates how these have influenced the outcome of elections.^{32,33} The dimensions are: (1) Attitude toward Democratic candidate as a person; (2) Attitude toward Republican candidate as a person; (3) Attitudes toward the parties and candidates which relate to the benefit of various groups; (4) Attitudes toward the parties and candidates which relate to domestic policy; (5) Attitudes toward the parties and candidates which relate to foreign policy; and (6) Attitudes which relate to the general performance of the parties in national affairs. It is the information relating to these dimensions which can become the subjects of political messages.

In line with the assumption of this study that the effect of a political message is at most to increment or decrement an attitude, <u>Voting</u> points out that "voting trends during the campaign are made up of a large number of small shifts over short distances of the political continuum."³⁴

The Berelson group's study identified the homogeneous political milieu in which most voters move, but also

³²Campbell, <u>The American Voter</u>, Chap. 3.
³³Stokes, "Dynamic Elements."
³⁴Berelson, <u>Voting</u>, p. 33.

identified those voters most likely to change. They are the voters, of course, for whom their personal environments cease to be homogeneous, those who come under cross-pressures from conflicting demographic factor pulls, those who talk more with members of the opposition party. Their party choice will follow the weight assigned to issues (such as seeing domestic issues more important than foreign policy issues.)

Appeals of the campaign, delivered by media exposure or personal contacts, become one cross-pressure on the voter. "But in general, media exposure gets out the vote and solidifies preferences. It crystallizes and reinforces more than it converts."³⁵

Both classic studies agree that those most exposed to the media are those who are more interested, more partisan and least likely to change. Those most likely to change are those with lower interest and less issue knowledge. Neither the Berelson or the Survey Research Center groups see this as all bad:

Low interest provides maneuvering room for political shifts necessary for a complex society in a period of rapid change . . . an important balance between action motivated by strong sentiments and action with little passion behind it is obtained by heterogeneity within the electorate.³⁶

³⁵Berelson, <u>Voting</u>, Chaps. 2 and 7. Quotation from p. 248.

³⁶<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 314-315.

A characteristic of those low interest voters who determine political shifts is "lack of partisanship." Survey Research Center finds the voter who identifies himself as an "independent" is less involved in politics, has a poorer knowledge of the issues of a campaign, a fainter image of its candidates, and relatively slight concern about its outcome as compared with those with some partisan attachment.³⁷ This confirms what Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee found in Elmira that both interest and voting intention relate positively to degree of partisanship.³⁸

b. Studies Using Public Opinion Poll Data

Polls on candidate choice and issue opinions are the most popularly distributed of the voting population studies because their results are published in the mass media. The polls have become a valuable resource for documenting past voting behavior. Most of the national polling organizations in recent years have sent their old IBM cards to the Roper Public Opinion Research Center in Williamstown, Mass.

 A Computer Simulation. In 1960 data at the Roper Public Opinion Research Center were used by the Simulmatics Corporation to give parameters for a computer

³⁷Campbell, <u>The American Voter</u>, p. 83.
³⁸Berelson, <u>Voting</u>, Chap. 2.

simulation which could make predictions of electoral behavior in the U.S.³⁹ The simulation was based on the idea that candidates have alternatives upon which issues they stand. While the classic studies have shown other things such as social milieu and party of the voter are more important than issues in determining the voter's decision, these are things about which the candidate can do little. "He controls the issues he talks about. He has much less control of who he is and who the voters are."⁴⁰

For the simulation, data about how voters responded to past issues were treated as 52 issue clusters. The computer simulation was based on categorizing members of the electorate into 480 groups by socioeconomic status, size of community, regions of the country, religion, sex, ethnicity, and whether they named party preference as Republican, Democrat or Independent. Data were used from 65 fairly comparable national surveys, 130,000 individuals. The number of voter types in each state was estimated, to set up 48 synthetic states without local politics. Formulas stating how voters would behave in a given situation were set up subjectively based on <u>hypotheses about behavior under</u> cross pressure, and the data on what had happened previously

40_{Ibid}., pp. 8-9.

³⁹Ithiel de Sola Pool, Robert Abelson and Samuel Popkin, <u>Candidates, Issues and Strategies: A Computer Simu-</u> <u>lation of the 1960 and 1964 Presidential Elections</u> (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1964).

in similar situations. Party loyalty and habit measured by past Congressional vote was taken as the most important factor in determining the vote and other factors treated as leading merely to deviations from that base.⁴¹ In 1960 the only issue which had a significant nationwide net effect on the vote was religion. The simulation showed that one voter in ten shifted for a net cost to Kennedy of 2.3% of the total vote. However, while he lost in popular votes he gained in electoral votes on the religious issue.

The product moment correlation between the Kennedy index on the simulation and the actual Kennedy vote in the election was .82. The simulation was based on data, none of which was newer than 1958. The correlation between the state-by-state result of 1958 polls and the actual outcome was .53. "The simulation, in short, portrayed trends that actually took place between the time the data were collected and election day two years later."⁴² The simulation model was tested again in the 1964 campaign and proved capable of simulating the outcome on the basis of cross-pressure theory as well as it had in 1960.

2. Studies of Party Choice. Another study which used poll data was that of V. O. Key, $Jr.^{43}$ who disagrees

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 57.

^{42&}lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 165.

⁴³V. O. Key, Jr., <u>The Responsible Electorate--Ration-</u> <u>ality in Voting 1936-1960</u> (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard, 1966).

with the classic studies which depict voters as largely poorly informed on issues.

Key did a secondary analysis of data accumulated from 1940-1960 by the Gallup Polls, Roper Polls and National Opinion Research Center Polls. He concluded that man is rational and the political institutions he has developed for election of the president are rational. He said that the electorate judges retrospectively, either approving or throwing out incumbent administrations. He demonstrated with more than 50 tables that those who switch parties on presidential vote from election to election, and those who remain with the same party choice, do so as the result of opinions on party handling of policies.

Key categorized each voter as a Standpatter, a Switcher, or a New Voter according to whether his vote was for the same party or not as the last time he voted. Unlike the Independent whom Survey Research Center finds poorly informed and disinterested, Key's Switcher is no less interested, informed, or involved than the Standpatter. "Those who switch do so to support governmental policies or outlooks with which they agree, not because of subtle psychological or sociological peculiarities."⁴⁴ The Switchers move toward the party whose Standpatters they resemble in their policy views.⁴⁵

> ⁴⁴<u>Ibid</u>., p. ix. ⁴⁵<u>Ibid</u>., p. 55.

The Standpatters do not have to behave as mugwumps to keep their consciences clear; they are already where they ought to be in the light of their policy attitudes.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, no data about the Switchers have been studied below the presidential vote level and Key, who analyzed them, died in 1963.

Goldberg⁴⁷ agrees with Key that the voter is not merely the victim of sociological and psychological factors. He explains why party choice remaining the same as for the parents for three-fourths of all voters is a rational choice for them, and why switching allegiance is rational for the rest. The offspring will retain the party identification of the parent if the norms proffered by the parent are substantively rational for the self-interest of the offspring.

c. Professional Political Management Studies

In recent years a new type of polling, in-depth image and issue polling, has come into use in political campaigning. Its use is part of what Perry⁴⁸ describes as "the new politics":

There are two essential ingredients of the new politics. One is that appeals should be made directly to the voters through the mass media. The other is

⁴⁷Arthur S. Goldberg, "Social Determinism and Rationality as Bases of Party Identification," <u>American Political</u> <u>Science Review</u>, LXIII, No. 1 (March, 1969), 5-25.

⁴⁸Perry, <u>The New Politics</u>.

^{46&}lt;sub>Ibid</sub>., p. 53.

that the techniques used to make these appeals-polling, computers, television, direct mail--should be sophisticated and scientific.⁴⁹

In-depth polls tell the candidate what are relevant issue structures, his standing with the public (the distance to the goal); and polls suggest the campaign pledges and requirements needed to develop candidate image.⁵⁰

The new politics is practiced by the professional political management organizations which link social science with campaign techniques. One such organization is Market Opinion Research of Detroit--predominantly a polling organization--which has handled polling for gubernatorial, senatorial and congressional candidates in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and elsewhere.

Market Opinion Research credits the Ticket Splitter with being the decisive voter in contemporary campaigns. Whereas Survey Research Center, and most of the polls, identify voters as party members or Independents, Market Opinion identifies them as "Strong Party Voters" or "Ticket Splitters."

Ticket Splitter is a behavioral definition based on past voting behavior rather than on self identification as having, or not having, partisan leanings. It refers to one who--on the same ballot--votes for candidates of more than one party.

Market Opinion Research surveys show the Ticket

⁴⁹<u>Ibid</u>., p. 7. ⁵⁰<u>Ibid</u>., p. 79.

Splitter may identify himself as a member of a party (T-S respondents in Ohio self-identified as 21.2% R, 38.9% D and 36.3% Independent in this study). He may be active in his party but wants to maintain his integrity as an independent voter and doesn't vote a straight party ticket. Demographically, he is <u>slightly</u> better educated and has <u>slightly</u> higher income than the average of the electorate. He is younger but apt to be in his 30's rather than 20's. He perceives himself as extremely issue-oriented but in fact is influenced greatly by a candidate's personal characteristics. His media usage is high compared to the average of the electorate. Increasingly, the Ticket Splitters are the voters who determine the outcome of elections.^{51,52} These statements are confirmed by the demographics in this sample.

Ticket Splitters, like Key's Switchers, are the ones who cause the Republican candidate to win one election and the Democrat the subsequent one. They are decidedly the ones who result in a state's going Democratic for President and Republican for governor in the same election.

As a practical campaign tactic, Market Opinion Research considers anyone who ticket splits, whatever the direction of his predominant partisan leaning, as more open

⁵¹Robert Teeter, Market Opinion Research, Detroit, Mich. Personal interview, April 2, 1969.

⁵²Stephen Stockmeyer, Market Opinion Research, Detroit, Mich. Personal interview, April 2, 1969.

to persuasion than the Strong Party Voters. To have positive effects, this persuasion must take the form of relating the political candidate to real issues relevant to the voter's issue structure.

> d. Who Attends to Political Messages and Who Is Influenced by Them?

Who attends to political messages? All of the studies agree that the consistently and highly partisan do--the strong Republican or Democrat of Survey Research Center, the Standpatter of Key, the Strong Party Voter of Market Opinion Research--the disinterested do not. Survey Research Center finds most of those who self classify as Independents are less interested than the partisans. Their apathy makes them a poor audience for political messages.

While the highly and consistently partisan attend to political messages, they remain relatively unmoved by those not in accord with their own partisan direction. Thus it is the "others" in the electorate who are the audience possibly influenced.

Why is there discrepancy between studies in the findings on political media usage, political activity and interest among those "others" who are not highly partisan? The answer is in definition. As Key has pointed out, and study questionnaires confirm, ⁵³ Survey Research Center's Independent

⁵³Survey Research Center, Pre-Election Study and Post-Election Study questionnaires 1964 Project 473; 1968 Project 45523.

is a product of its definition:

"Independent" came to be defined as one of several categories of voters arrayed along a scale of party identification. Some persons proclaim themselves to be strong Democrats or strong Republicans. Others apprise themselves as not such strong partisans and thereby permit themselves to be categorized as weak Democrats or weak Republicans. Of those who claim that they are "Independents," some will concede that they lean Democratic or Republican. A few remain--5 to 10% of the electorate--who stubbornly insist that they are "Independents" with no leanings in either partisan direction. This group of genuine "Independents" is not an impressive lot.⁵⁴

Many Switchers and Ticket Splitters are thus categorized as party members under a self-identification-by-party scheme.

Market Research and Key define fewer people in the partisan categories. Their Ticket Splitters or Switchers form a broader band between the Republicans and Democrats.

In the study which is the subject of this dissertation, only 36% of Ticket Splitters self-classified themselves as Independents. These may include the apathetic. The remaining 64% of Ticket Splitters are the target audience probably most open to considering political communications. Before many elections they could be considered to be in the predecision stage where Festinger finds they will weigh alternatives objectively.

Since this study is concerned with political communication and <u>particularly with those receivers whose attitudes</u>

⁵⁴Key, <u>Responsible Electorate</u>, p. 92.

may be most affected by political communication, subjects in the survey sample will be classified as Republicans (those who vote straight or mostly Republican for state and national offices), Ticket Splitters (those who divide their vote between parties) and Democrats (those who vote straight or mostly Democrat). Key's Switcher classification is not used because it has not been studied since 1963 and never below the presidential vote level. Also, evidence suggests many of the Switchers may be Ticket Splitters.

One group not included in this study is the non-voter. As dropouts from the political process non-voters do not affect political decision making. In this sample of registered voters they numbered 14 out of 321 usable interviews.

Balance theory seems to provide a reasonable explanation for the findings on the behavior of the subsets of voters in the voting population. The Standpatter, Strong Party Voter is in a condition of consistency under no pressure for attitude change. The voters who experience imbalance-perhaps because of disagreement with an incumbent administration, their own changing personal environment, or the salience of a particular issue--become the cross-pressured Switchers and Ticket Splitters who may be influenced by political messages. Two other studies further demonstrate the applicability of the balance theory in explaining voter behavior.

Sigel⁵⁵ demonstrated that partisans see their preferred candidate so as not to experience imbalance. The images Republicans, Democrats and Independents had of an ideal president in 1960 Detroit sample correlated highly. The image Democrats had of ideal president correlated positively with their image of Kennedy ($\rho = .697$, p $\langle .04 \rangle$; similarly for Republicans' ideal and Nixon image ($\rho = .870$, p $\langle .02 \rangle$. But the Democrats' ideal and Nixon dropped to a correlation of $\rho = .273$ and the Republicans with Kennedy to $\rho = .164$. Independents had less highly differentiated candidate images.

Greenberg⁵⁶ reported upon a survey in a local election situation in which voters who thought their own side would win were exposed to significantly more campaign information than those who thought their side would not win. More voters with consistent cognitions used bulletins and leaflets easily screened by selective processes.

V. STUDY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The absence of any published work on the effectiveness of political messages in achieving attitude change among

⁵⁵Roberta S. Sigel, "Effect of Partisanship on the Perception of Political Candidates," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXVIII, No. 3 (Fall, 1964), 483-496.

⁵⁶Bradley S. Greenberg, "Voting Intentions, Election Expectations and Exposure to Campaign Information," <u>Journal</u> of Communication, XV, No. 3 (Sept., 1965), 149-160.

registered voters prompted the design of this exploratory
study of message effects.

1. Relation of Experimental Situation to Communication Model

Feather's model is used to describe the cognitive structure of the receiver when he receives a message which makes a positive presentation of action on a political issue. A political body, described in the communication as the source of that action, is the institutional source of the message. Interest is in any change in attitude toward the issue and in comprehension of the facts presented about the issue.

Fig. 5 illustrates the conditions set up by the experiment before the receiver attends to the message. In line with Feather's finding that the receiver perceives the communication as belonging to the source, a positive unit relation is shown between S and C.



Fig. 5.--Conditions set up by the experiment in the communication model: Positive unit relation between source and communication; positive stand of communication on issue; positive attitude of source toward issue.

The solid arrow \overline{SI} represents the positive attitude

of the source toward the action it took on the issue. The solid arrow \overrightarrow{CT} represents the positive presentation the communication makes of the issue.

2. Voting Types and Attitude Relations

The findings of the voting population studies suggest a way to consider the attitude relation \overrightarrow{RS} , prior to receipt of the communication. Voters are classified by past behavior as Republican, Democrat, or Ticket Splitter. When the source is identified by a political party label, positive or negative attitudes are assumed for the Strong Party Voters and no R to S attitude for the Ticket Splitters. When the source is not identified with a political party, no R to S attitude is assumed for all voters.

3. Importance of Issue

The choice of issue gave a way to determine the relative importance of the issue to the voter-receiver. The issue, state support for education in Ohio for 1969-71, was one on which action had already been taken. The issue has a tax cost to all voters in the state but brings direct benefits only to those with a family member in school (from kindergarten to university). A pretest of questionnaires with a small sample in Toledo suggested that those with children in school attached more interest and importance to education and its financing. The elderly and those with no children tended to be disinterested rather than negative. Of course, it can be anticipated there are some negative attitudes toward the issue in both groups simply because of tax cost. However, because of the benefits to schools and students, it seemed a safe assumption that in the aggregate those with students in the immediate family could be classified as attaching <u>relatively</u> more importance to the issue as compared with the voters with no students. The information in the message would also have more utility for those with family members in school. This definition of more importance could also be carried to sub-issues of the issue, such as assuming that Roman Catholics and those with children in nonpublic schools would attach greater importance to state aid for nonpublic schools, those with university students would attach relatively more importance to financing higher education, etc.

4. Comprehension of Message

One other fact is relevant to communication effects in a field situation: comprehension of the message. When experiments are run on college students, as most message effect studies have been to date, the experimenter does not need to concern himself about a wide comprehension-reading level differential. Such is not the case with a statewide sample of voters ranging from those with little education to those with graduate degrees. In fact, two subjects who were blind had to be dropped from the sample.

Comprehension of message content was measured as a dependent variable in this dissertation study.

5. Selection of Message Variables

Finally, it was necessary to select the message variables and determine which of these could be held constant and which manipulated. A survey of political messages showed variables frequently used were: choice of issue, use of party label, candidate vs. issue orientation, explicit detail vs. highly ambiguous presentation, emphasis on youth vs. maturity of a candidate, attack on the handling of an issue vs. offering specific proposals for solution of issue; redundancy, and an infinite number of style and format variables.

Determination was made to use a positive presentation of action completed on a complex issue as the communication content, constant across all message versions and to hold wording (hence facts and attitude presentation) constant. Eight message versions were produced by manipulating three message variables selected from among the possibilities in the categories above. Two of these variables were hypothesized to affect the attitude changes the message would produce and one was hypothesized to affect comprehension of the message. The variables were: (1) giving the source either a Political Party Label or a Neutral Label, (2) varying the amount of repetition of an ambiguous political slogan, and (3) presenting information in a question-answer vs. straight descriptive format.

VI. LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the study were that it could only test a selected few message variables from among many available. Three seemed to be the maximum given the size of sample (300 in experimental group). The sample was drawn from Ohio voters and so findings are limited to statements about registered voters in Ohio in early 1970. The experimental situation involved forced exposure and no conclusions can be drawn about how the same messages would have been perceived under conditions of voluntary exposure. Beforereading and after-reading attitude measures were not far apart in time. Some respondents may have recalled their before-reading responses with the recall tending to bias their after-reading responses in the direction of not changing attitude. The message was written at a readability level requiring approximately completion of 8th grade. Thus some respondents, though not many, were excluded by their reading level from adequately attending to the message. Finally, the questionnaire used for data gathering came at the end of an interview which took from 50 to 80 minutes per respond-There may thus have been some respondent fatigue. ent.

VII. HYPOTHESES

1. Hypotheses About Attitude Change

H₁ A political party label attached to the source of a persuasive message will lead to more positive attitude change among voters favorable toward this party label, and less positive change among voters unfavorable to

this label, as compared to a neutral label message. Attitude change among voters for whom the party label has no valence will be unaffected by whether the source has a political party label or not.

Interest here is in the attitude change difference according to whether the receiver reads a Republican or neutral label message containing the same content and arguments. The attitude resulting from the message with neutral source label is the base line for comparison, rather than initial attitude toward the issue. Fig. 5 has shown the conditions set up by the message experiment with a positive unit relation between source and communication, and positive attitude relations between source and issue, and communication and issue.

The voter who consistently votes Republican, upon receipt of a Republican message, will add a positive attitude toward the source to the structure set up in Fig. 5. Fig. 6 shows this addition.



Fig. 6.--Initial communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with his own political Party

Clearly, the model for him is most easily balanced if he finds both the communication and the issue positive, Fig. 7.


Fig. 7.--Balanced post-communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with his own political party

Making attitudes toward communication and issue positive, causes no pressure to change his attitude toward the source, though the positive nature of the communication might strengthen the already positive \overrightarrow{RS} attitude. As pointed out previously, the model does not allow for strength of relations, and the +l attitude, for example, cannot be graphed by the model's rules to a +2. It can only demonstrate the conditions for balance. From consideration of the balanced situation, the hypothesis is made that the positive attitude the receiver holds for the source, plus the positive attitude expressed by the communication about the issue results in a positive attitude toward the issue.

One also must consider, however, that the receiver in this and all later situations may have come to the communication situation with <u>some</u> previous attitude about the issue as well as the source. If this attitude were highly negative, the distance between receiver attitude and that expressed in the communication would be so great that the contrast effect described by Hovland <u>et al</u>.⁵⁷ or the extremity effect Feather and Jeffries⁵⁸ have demonstrated would occur. In the opposite direction, if the receiver came to the situation with a highly positive attitude toward the issue, there is less room for his attitude to become more positive. Thus it is possible that a previous attitude other than the one toward the source may modify the attitude change the model predicts on the basis of attending to the message.

The form of presentation of the issue has been set up to try to make the attitude toward the issue more positive whether the receiver reads either the neutral or Republican label versions. However, it is important to state again that the <u>best expectation for a single communication</u> would be that it would increment an attitude. It is not likely to cause a major attitudinal shift.

Turning now to the Democrat, for him the initial attitude toward a Republican-identified source is negative, Fig. 8 and he can readily achieve balance by regarding both issue and communication negatively, Fig. 9. Thus the perception of the source as counterattitudinal should counteract or modify the positive presentation of the message. If on attending to the message, the receiver finds facts or ideas in it with which he agrees, his negative attitude

⁵⁷Hovland, "Assimilation and Contrast."
⁵⁸Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach," Expt. VI.

toward the communication should be reduced. If, for example, his attitude toward the communication shifted to positive the model would then be unbalanced to a degree of 4/7. The numbers in this degree of balance are obtained by considering that the model is made up of seven semicycles. These follow paths connecting: (1) SRCS, (2) SICS, (3) RICR, (4) SRIS, (5) SRICS, (6) RSICR and (7) SIRCS. If the receiver regards the source and issue negatively, but becomes positive toward the communication, semicycles (1), (3), (6) and (7) then have uneven numbers of negative relations.



Fig. 8.--Initial communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with the opposition political party



Fig. 9.--Balanced post-communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with the opposition political party

It should be noted that in use of the model here semicycles and cycles are synonymous. Opposite attitudinal relations, such as source toward receiver, are not operationalized here, nor are combinations of unit and attitude relations linking elements. Only regarding the communication and issue negatively, however, will result in a balanced model, Fig. 9.

Turn now to the Ticket Splitter who receives a Republican communication. No pre-communication attitude is predicted for him toward the source. Thus the model is balanced on the basis of the conditions set up by the experiment, with the receiver left to form his attitude toward the issue and the source on the basis of the attitude he first forms toward the communication itself. If he has a megative reaction, he balances the model by reacting as in Fig. 9. If he has a positive reaction he balances the model by reacting positively to source and issue as in Fig. 7. Feather and Jeffries⁵⁹ have demonstrated a bias for evaluating a source positively. The message used in this experiment purposefully attempts to create positive attitudes toward the issue. Thus, it is anticipated that the tendency to balance the model positively as in Fig. 7 will outweigh the tendency to evaluate issue, communication and source negatively as in Fig. 9. This reaction will be the same for either the Republican or neutral label message.

⁵⁹Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach."

While a tendency to balance the model positively is anticipated because of the attitude in the communication toward the issue, no predictions can be based on the model for those who have no receiver-to-source attitude. The model allows only for +1 and -1 relations, not null or neutral ones. Identifying the source as Republican or neutral should not serve to valence it for those with no strong receiver-tosource attitude, the state assumed for the Ticket Splitters.

H₂ Repetition in a persuasive political message of a slogan which is ambiguous enough to be broadly interpreted, and serves to link the receiver with the issue of the message, will cause more attitude change than use of the slogan once.

Political slogans are typically ambiguous. The one used here is "The door to education is open to your child."

An ambiguous slogan about an issue can accomplish several things: First, it can serve to make the issue relevant to the voter by suggesting how it affects him. Secondly, its ambiguity makes it easier for the voter to be in agreement with it. Wilson^{60,61} has recently engaged in a series of experiments demonstrating that greater agreement is found with ambiguous than with explicit statements. Lazarsfeld et al.⁶² much earlier found a certain degree of ambiguity

⁶²Lazarsfeld, <u>The People's Choice</u>.

⁶⁰Gary B. Wilson, "Purposeful Ambiguity: An Exploratory Investigation," Unpublished ditto manuscript, Dept. of Communication, Michigan State University, Spring, 1968.

⁶¹Gary B. Wilson, "The Use of Ambiguity as a Message Strategy," Unpublished ditto manuscript, Dept. of Communication, Michigan State University, June, 1969.

apparently increased the effectiveness of appeals by rendering them susceptible of various interpretations. Repetition of the slogan was operationalized here with some variation. The cover design on all test messages carried a variation of the slogan. Inside the full slogan was used <u>once</u> in half the versions and <u>three times</u> in the others. Klapper⁶³ has summarized a variety of studies which show that repetition with variation serves to remind the receiver of the goal of the persuasion, and simultaneously to appeal to several of his needs and drives.

H₃ A voter for whom an issue is important will have more positive attitude change toward the issue after reading a persuasive message favorable to the issue than a voter for whom the issue is less important.

The voter who considers an issue important more likely will be one who receives or expects direct or indirect benefits if particular action is taken on the issue. In the experimental situation here, the messages tell of educational benefits as the result of action on the issue, and specifically which levels of education receive benefits. Thus it is anticipated that those with family members in schools in Ohio--and this is used as the operationalization of attaching high importance to the issue--would have relatively more positive attitude change toward the issue than those who pay the same taxes but receive no direct benefits.

⁶³Joseph Klapper, <u>The Effects of Mass Communication</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 119-120.

Canon⁶⁴ in a further experiment based on dissonance theory has shown that potential usefulness of information has a marked effect on interest in reading either supportive or non-supportive information.

2. Hypotheses About Comprehension of Message Content

H₄ The more a voter reads of a political issue message, the higher comprehension score he will get, especially if the issue is important to him.

A message is a stimulus and here the hypothesis is advanced that some learning will take place in response to this stimulus. The further hypothesis is made that the voter who considers the message topic of importance or utility will be more motivated to learn the facts of the message because the message is more salient to him.

H₅ A voter will learn facts about a political issue better when he reads a message which asks questions about the issue and answers the questions with facts, than when he reads a message which only presents the facts.

Berlyne⁶⁵ has demonstrated that curiosity can be intensified simply by putting questions to subjects.

Some quests for knowledge start out with an explicit question, either put to the subject by another person or formulated to himself as a consequence of his own thoughts or observations. But this does not always seem to be the case. There are even instances of divertive epistemic curiosity, when somebody is eager to learn something new without caring

⁶⁴Festinger, <u>Conflict</u>, Canon Expt.

⁶⁵D. E. Berlyne, <u>Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity</u> (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 296-299. much what. All specific epistemic behavior must, however, be launched by the equivalent of a question.⁶⁶

In an experiment, Berlyne gave an experimental group a prequestionnaire, a list of statements which answered the questions which had been raised, and a postquestionnaire. A control group received only the statements and postquestionnaire. The experimental group could answer significantly more questions on the postquestionnaire correctly than could the control. Berlyne took this as evidence that questions heighten curiosity, facilitating the retention of facts that answer the questions when they are subsequently encountered.

Herrick,⁶⁷ however, reviewed the programmed learning literature on problem setting questions and found no conclusive results demonstrating that questions could affect either rate or amount of learning. He did point up the <u>wide usage</u> <u>of the question-answer format</u> in textbooks, films and filmstrips.

The hypothesis here is based on Berlyne's findings. The wide usage of the question-answer format makes it of interest to test further.

^{66&}lt;u>Ibid</u>., p. 289.

⁶⁷Merlyn C. Herrick, "The Effect of Problem-Setting Questions on Rate and Amount of Learning in Programming Teaching Machines," Unpublished (mimeograph) research report (Bloomington: Audio Visual Center, Extension Division, Division of Educational Media, School of Education, Indiana University, May, 1962).

3. Slogan Recall Hypothesis

H₆ Repetition of a slogan in a political message will make that slogan better recalled.

In this dissertation experiment the interest in using a repeated slogan or a single slogan was to test effect of this message variable on attitude change. Learning theory would suggest, however, that the more a stimulus is repeated the more it would be learned. Thus an appropriate addition to the experiment seemed to be a test of slogan recall to see if the additional repeats increased learning of the slogan.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the experiment was to test variations of a message about a political candidate or issue on a sample of registered voters drawn from a large enough population to represent a wide spread of socioeconomic characteristics. Interest was in determining:

Does attending to political messages have <u>any</u>
 effect either attitudinally or in comprehension of facts
 on the entire population of voters?

2. Does attending to political messages have <u>dif</u>-<u>ferent</u> effects, either attitudinally or in comprehension of facts, on <u>various segments</u> of the voting population?

3. Do specific variations of a message containing exactly the same factual content have <u>different</u> effects either attitudinally or in comprehension of facts upon the <u>entire</u> population of voters?

4. Do specific variations of a message containing exactly the same factual content have <u>different</u> effects, either attitudinally or in comprehension of facts, on various segments of the voting population?

II. CHOICE AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

1. The Experimental Tool: Message Content, Channel, Source

The decision was made to use facts about a political issue, rather than a candidate, the subject matter for message content. This avoided the problem of determining relevant personality characteristics of a candidate or assessing unmeasurable "charisma." Choice of an issue also made it possible to run the experiment at any time, rather than being limited to a campaign period.

Specific criteria were determined for choosing the issue. First, it must affect a broad segment of the voting population. Second, it must be either a new issue upon which recent action had been taken or a long-standing issue upon which recent action had been taken appreciably different from previous actions on the same issue. Thirdly, the issue must be one which was identified with a political body to which, or official to whom, a partisan party label could be attached. Finally, the issue must be one about which accurate factual information, and partisan viewpoint information could be obtained.

The decision to use a printed brochure as the channel of communication was made on the basis of (1) cost; (2) ease of delivery to subjects; and (3) greater control. With a printed brochure the experimenter could be certain of the exact message a subject had received without any interviewer bias.

The choice of source was determined by access to information on a political issue. In the fall of 1969 the Republican State Central and Executive Committee in Ohio was willing to supply information on actions of the 1969 session of the Ohio legislature which had a 64:35 Republican majority in the House; 21:12 Republican majority in the Senate. The experimenter was given access to a summary report of the legislature prepared and issued by the Republican State Central and Executive Committee.⁶⁸ This presented the partisan viewpoint on actions of the legislature, and emphasized that the major accomplishment of the 1969 session was passage of a \$2.277 billion education bill for elementary, secondary and higher education, HB 531. A review of newspaper clippings for the major cities of Ohio on the three days following the close of the session confirmed that HB 531 was considered the highlight of the session.

Legislative action on education was selected as message topic for an additional reason. Interviews of a statewide sample of voters in Ohio in September, 1969, had shown voters considered education one of the major problems facing Ohio. To the open-ended question, "What do you think are the most important problems facing Ohio at the present time?"

⁶⁸Republican State Central and Executive Committee of Ohio, "Highlights of the 108th General Assembly (First Session)" (Unpublished mimeographed report, Fall, 1969).

respondents had named a cluster of financial problems as number one, number two was schools need improvement, need better teachers (27.2% of respondents). Next in order were air/water pollution (18.2%) and racial problems/civil rights (15.7%). To the succeeding question, "What do you think is the <u>single</u> most important problem facing Ohio at the present time?" they responded with financial, racial, education, pollution in that order.

Reviewing the action of the 1969 legislative session showed that education was the only one of the first four problems on which significant action had been taken.

The importance of education to voters was further demonstrated in the current survey. Prior to reading the experimental message, voters were given a list of issues and asked to rate "how important a problem you think that issue is in Ohio at this time." The rating scale ran from O (extremely unimportant) to 10 (extremely important). The mean rating of education across the entire sample was 8.2.

To obtain both a partisan and non-partisan view of the education bill enacted by the legislature the experimenter interviewed Mr. Howard Collier, Director of Finance, State of Ohio, who gave the viewpoint of the Ohio Executive Branch which was instrumental in developing and backing the bill as part of a thrust toward better state financing of education over the period of the eight year administration of Governor James Rhodes, Republican. An interview with



Mr. John H. Hall, Assistant Executive Secretary, Governmental Services, Ohio Education Association, gave perspective on criticisms of the bill as well as approval of some of its provisions. Besides newspaper clippings and editorial comment, the literature prior and post-passage of the non-partisan League of Women Voters was read. Mr. Harold Duryee and others on the staff of the Republican State Central and Executive Committee, as well as Mr. Collier, answered the experimenter's numerous questions on the many details of the bill.

All of this, including a review of Republican past brochures on state aid to education, was used as background for writing a message about the education bill passed by the legislature. The message emphasized new provisions of the bill, as well as its basic provisions. New were: greatly increased appropriations for vocational education to allow 67% more courses, a 50% increase in funds for higher education, aid to non-public schools in the form of paying part of the salaries of lay teachers, a doubling of extra aid to districts with many students on welfare, and increased classes for the handicapped. Basic, but relatively unchanged, was state support for kindergarten through high school education at a level of about one-third of total costs.

The message was composed by the experimenter as if it were a promotional piece for the Ohio legislature. This

was accomplished by using some of the actual words and phrases of Mr. Collier and of the Republican report on the legislature. Brochure content was approved as accurate to them by officials in the Republican State Central and Executive Committee. Like most political messages, there was thus no direct attribution of source in the "authorship" sense. The source was instead the <u>source of action on the issue</u>, i.e., the Ohio Legislature. One variable manipulated in the experiment was to give the source a <u>valence</u> or not. To give it a valence, in half the messages, the source was identified with a Political Party Label as Republican legislature or Republican-controlled legislature. In the other half of the messages the source was given no valence. The Neutral Label was to call it the Ohio legislature or the state legislature.

Feather has demonstrated that a receiver tends to see a source as having the same attitude toward the issue as the communication he presents and as agreeing with the communication he presents. 69

To satisfy an Ohio law which requires that political literature carry the name and address of an individual responsible, a very finely printed return address with the dummy name Legislative Support for Schools Committee and the name and address of an Ohio resident was carried on the

⁶⁹Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach," p. 119.

back of the brochure. This was not noticed by receivers during the reading and interviewing portion of the experiment.

To make the reading level as easy as possible, considering the complexity of the bill which was the subject matter, the final version was edited down twice, once by Dr. Verling Troldahl, Department of Communication, Michigan State University, and once again by the experimenter, both of whom have had journalistic training and experience. This editing involved substitutions of simpler words and shortening of sentences. The final result was a message of 687 words, blocked in eight sections. It had a Flesch Difficulty Score of 3.33⁷⁰ which rates as "Standard." Standard score gives a potential audience of anybody who has completed 7th to 8th grade and includes 75% of U.S. adults. By Flesch's revised formula⁷¹ its Reading Ease score was 52. According to the average sentence length the average of 16.4 words made it easier than "Standard," but the average syllables per 100 words, at 162.5 pulled it up to the next higher category, "Fairly Difficult." The syllable count was largely attributable to such words as "educational," "vocational,"

⁷⁰Rudolph Flesch, <u>The Art of Plain Talk</u> (New York: Harper and Bros., 1946), pp. 195-204.

⁷¹Rudolph Flesch, "The Formula for Readability," <u>Mass Communications</u>, ed. by Wilbur Schramm (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 419-420.

and "legislature," which have high syllable counts although they are fairly common words. Given the issue, they were necessary words to use.

For interest, the brochure was designed as if it were a promotional piece dependent for readership upon selective exposure by the audience. A commercial graphic artist designed the cover using bold arrows, indicating stimuli which Berlyne has shown serve to arouse attention and curiosity.⁷² The Gestalt pattern of the design moved the reader towards opening the brochure cover. A headline "In Ohio the door is open" was intended to arouse a need for closure in the reader and be sufficiently ambiguous not to be rejected on the basis of selective exposure because of predispositions about the topic of education. The same cover was used on all eight versions.

The criteria for maximum legibility were met: black type on white paper, 10 point type for body, bold headlines.⁷³ <u>2. Message Variables (Manipulated Independent Variables)</u>

A large number of message variables which are manipulated in actual campaign communications have been identified. The practicable limit on the number which would be manipulated in an experimental situation appeared to the

⁷²Berlyne, <u>Conflict</u>, pp. 63-64.

⁷³Miles A. Tinker, <u>Legibility of Print</u> (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1963).

experimenter to be three. This gave eight (2x2x2) versions of the basic message. The problem was to choose three variables of sufficient interest and variety.

Decision was made not to select variables which changed the factual content of the message or its orientation as a positive presentation of the 1969 education bill passed by the Ohio legislature. The variables selected and the manner in which they were operationalized were:

a. Political party label

In half of the versions (Appendices I, II, III, IV) the legislature was described as the Republican legislature or the Republican-controlled legislature. In the other half (Appendices VI, VI, VII, VIII) of the versions it was neutrally identified as the Ohio legislature or the state legislature. As pointed out earlier, this was to give a valenced and a non-valenced (control) source. This variable was chosen as one for which voters have some value orientation which might affect their attitudes toward the source and hence toward the message itself.

b. Question and answer versus straight descriptive format

Berlyne⁷⁴ has demonstrated that questions preceding an informational message increase learning of the facts in the message. This variable was chosen as one which might

⁷⁴Berlyne, <u>Conflict</u>, pp. 296-297.

affect receiver's comprehension. So as not to alter factual content, the wordings of the messages were identical except that the question-answer version (Appendices I, II, V, VI) had questions before each subject matter item, whereas the straight descriptive version (Appendices III, IV, VII, VIII) had only labeling heads. The answers to the questions were the same wording as the straight descriptive paragraphs.

c. Slogan repetition

The slogan "The door to education is open to your child," was used once in half the versions (Appendices I, III, V, VII) and repeated for a total of three exposures in the other half (Appendices II, IV, VI, VIII). Additionally a variation of it was used on the cover and in the opening paragraph on all versions. Slogans--sufficiently ambiguous as to be broadly interpreted--are so frequently used in campaigns it was a matter of interest to see if the extra repetition could cause attitude change and whether the extra repeats would make the slogan better recalled in a postexposure test.

<u>3. Audience Variables</u> (Measured Independent Variables and Control Variables)

The messages were presented to registered voters. Interest was in seeing what message effects were obtained with the total audience and whether the effects occurred differentially with subsets of the audience. The following were chosen as audience variables to be measured for use as independent variables. Measurement was by the questionnaires

shown as Appendix IX (experimental group) or X (control group)
and XI (experimental and control).

a. Voting Behavior Type

This was operationalized by asking the respondent, "In the last <u>General</u> election in which you voted, which answer on this card (HAND CARD) best describes how you voted for state and national offices such as Senator and Congressman?"

The card contained the answer choices:

- () Straight Democratic
 () Mostly Democratic
 () Few more Democrats than Republicans
 () About equally for both parties
 () Few more Democrate than Democrate
- 5 () Few more Republicans than Democrats
- 6 () Mostly Republican
- 7 () Straight Republican
- 8 () Don't know

Categories 1 and 2 were collapsed into Strong Democrat, Categories 3, 4, 5 into Ticket Splitters and 6 and 7 to Strong Republican. Respondents in Category 8 were discarded.

b. Party Self Identification

This was operationalized by asking the voter, "Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or what?" Answers were coded: Republican, Democrat, Independent, Don't Know. Later answers were used only for determining the self-identification of the Ticket Splitters.

c. Importance of Education Issue

This was operationalized by asking the respondent,

"Is anyone in your immediate family--children, husband/wife, or yourself in school <u>in Ohio</u> now?" (NOT grandchildren, brothers, sisters). Answers were coded Yes or No. A pretest interview with nine voters in Toledo in late November, 1969, showed that grandparents did not follow what was happening in the schools or with school financing, but several mentioned that they "used to when my children were in school." Following pretest, the question was narrowed to include only the immediate family. The importance of particular types of education was similarly defined as having someone in the immediate family in school by succeeding filter questions:

"Is that public or nonpublic (parochial, Catholic, private) school?" Answers were coded Public and/or Nonpublic, with Yeses in Public coded as more importance to public education and Yeses in Nonpublic coded as more importance to nonpublic education. A demographic question, "What is your religion," was also used as another measure of attaching more importance to nonpublic education if the respondent answered Roman Catholic.

Respondents with family members in school were asked, "What level of school?" to determine the relative importance to them of K-12, vocational and higher education.

d. Demographic Variables

Audience variables, which were measured for use in comparing the control group and experimental groups, were largely demographic:

Age Last grade of school attended Religion Sex Income

Last grade of school attended was used as the control variable Education Level, collapsed to two categories:

> Did not complete high school High school graduate or above

4. Message Effect Variables (Dependent Variables)

a. Attitude change toward the educational bill passed by the Ohio legislature

Before reading the message brochure, respondents were read four statements about the legislature's efforts to improve education and its financing in Ohio. Two statements worded positively were alternated with two worded negatively. Respondents were given a scale card: Strongly Agree--Agree--Don't Know--Disagree--Strongly Disagree. The 1-5 scores were coded in the direction that a five was most favorable toward the legislative action on education and 1 was least.

The same attitude statements were administered again after reading the brochure. Attitude change was computed as the difference between the total score of the four before and the four after statements.

The statements were:

- Here is the first statement: In general, I think the legislature did a good job in trying to improve education in Ohio this year.
- 2. In my opinion, the legislature put the extra money they gave to education this year in the wrong places.

- 3. I think the legislature did a better job of trying to solve the education problems in Ohio than most earlier legislatures have done.
- 4. In my opinion, the legislature did NOT improve educational opportunities in Ohio.

The six inter-item correlations on the attitude questions administered before reading and to the control group ranged from .219 to .496, and the median was .416.

b. Comprehension of facts of the message

Comprehension was measured by administering a sevenquestion multiple choice quiz on facts about the 1969 education bill which were presented in the message brochure. Possible comprehension scores thus ran 0-7. The quiz was administered to a control group who did not read the brochure, and to the experimental group, each of whom read one of the eight versions of the brochure. Comprehension gain resulting from reading was considered as the difference between means of the experimental and control groups. Comprehension differences from different versions of the brochure were the difference in mean scores of those who read the various experimental versions.

c. Attitude toward the message

Immediately after reading the message brochure, readers were asked: "What do you think of this brochure?" After their first answer one probe, "Anything else?" was asked. The open ended responses were coded in six categories, with multiple responses allowable.

1. Informative, gave facts, learned a lot (these replies concerned only the message brochure).



- Good, liked, positive, believed, true, agrees (these replies concerned both the message brochure and the education bill action).
- 3. Negative, disliked, disagrees about education.
- 4. Questions truth and accuracy.
- 5. Political propaganda, Republican, one-sided, slanted, public relations piece, advertisement.
- Not interested, couldn't understand, too much reading, blind.
- d. Slogan recall

Slogan recall was operationalized by giving the respondent a list of four slogans and asking him, "Would you check whether you have read or heard any of these slogans about education." Three of the slogans were made up by the experimenter and the fourth (third on the list) was "The door to education is open to your child," used in the message brochure. Answers were coded as to whether the respondent recalled the correct slogan only, the correct slogan plus others, or did not recall the correct slogan.

III. GENERAL STUDY DESIGN

Subjects in the sample were interviewed in their homes using the questionnaires of Appendices IX (experimental group) or X (control group) and XI (experimental and control). Audience variables and message effect variables were measured according to the procedures discussed under operationalization. Members of the control group received no message brochure. Members of the eight experimental groups each were asked, midway in the interview of Appendix



IX, to read one of the eight versions of the brochure. These brochures were the tool for the message variable manipulations. Interviewers were professionals employed by Market Opinion Research, Inc., Detroit.

Data were coded for analyses by frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviations, chi squares, and factorial design analysis of variance. Analyses were made with programs run on the Michigan State University CDC 3600 computer. Coding of questionnaires, computer programming, and interpretation of results was made by the experimenter.

IV. SAMPLE

The counties within the state of Ohio were stratified by whether or not they were a county in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical area. The metropolitan counties were ordered by the number of households they contained, as were also the non-metropolitan counties.

A probability-proportionate-to-size sample of voters was drawn.

A total of 100 sample points were selected in the state. The number of areas per county fell according to the number of households in a given county.

Within each of the counties where the sample points fell, the interviewing areas were selected by systematically listing household figures for cities and townships and randomly choosing per probability-proportionate-to-size sampling procedures. After the city or township was chosen, the same

method was used within the city or township to choose the given areas and blocks to work.

Maps of each interviewing area were made showing the starting point, skip interval pattern and route to walk. The starting point and skip interval were chosen randomly from the Random Digit Book to avoid any bias on the interviewer's part in selecting households. If no registered voter was home at the selected household, the interviewer was allowed to substitute the house next door on either side. If nobody was at home at any of the three households, he skipped the interval from the original household and continued until his interviewing quota was filled. The person to interview in a household was controlled by an equal split between male and female respondents.

Questionnaires for this interview were attached to questionnaires for another study involving 1000 interviews. The questionnaires for the experimental group in this study were attached to those for the first, second and third interviews in each of the 100 sampling points. The questionnaires for the control group were attached to those for the fourth interview in every other sampling point.

After all data were punched, the sample was checked against up-to-date household statistics. The completion rate in the rural counties was significantly less than in the metropolitan areas. Since no hypotheses of this study were concerned with size of community, no weighting of the sample was made.



V. DATA COLLECTION

The message brochure used to operationalize message composition variables was written and approved in October, 1969, following interviews the experimenter conducted in Columbus, Ohio, October 6, 7, 8. Printing was done in early November. Interviewing, originally scheduled for mid-November, was delayed until winter, 1970, for reasons extraneous to this study. This delay had no effect upon the timeliness of the message content as the education bill described provides support for education in Ohio from 1969-71.

Interviewing was done between February 15 and March 3, 1970, by professional interviewers employed by Market Opinion Research, Detroit, Michigan. The interviewing questions came at the end of an interview made by Market Opinion Research for a client interested in candidate and issue perceptions. Nothing in the earlier interview biased respondents toward regarding the interview as representing a partisan political group. Those in this experiment who received the Republican labeled brochures had received nothing partisan until that point.

Coding and data analysis followed in March and April, 1970.



CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS

I. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Table 1 gives descriptive information about the total sample and about those within each of the eight experimental groups and one control group. Also shown are scores for before-reading attitudes toward the issue.

There are no statistically significant differences between the eight experimental groups in regard to sex, education level, age, voting behavior, or having family members in school in Ohio. Chi-Square values are shown in Table 1.

Table 2 lists interviews not completed or dropped from the analysis and the reasons for exclusion.

II. ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD ISSUE

Attitude change toward the issue was measured as the sum of four after-reading attitude questions about the educational issue (possible range of scores, 4-20) less the sum of four before-reading attitude questions (range 4-20).

All eight versions of the experimental messages produced attitude change favorable toward the issue, as shown in Table 3. A t-test for difference between (1) the mean attitude change of the experimental groups of 1.03 and (2) a mean of 0 (no attitude change) was significant, t=7.1, df=261, p $\langle .001$.



TABLE 1

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Message Version	Control	r:	()	ę	4	ى ا	9	Ĺ	8	2 + (df)	Total sample
2	45	30	30	32	31	34	37	33	35		321••
Sex (%) Male Female	53、3 46、7	43,3 56,7	63.3 36.7	375 62.5	45、2 54.8	61 8 38 2	45 9 54 1	57.6 42.4	31.4 68 6	12.3 (7)	4 9.8 51.2
Educ, Level (%) Below HS HS grad +	31 1 68 9	33.3 66.7	50 0 50 0	50 0 46,9	35 5 64 5	50 U 50 0	35 I 64 9	39 4 60 6	34.3 65.7	5,9 (7)	39.3 60.4
řge (%) 18-39 40-64 64 ě up	51.1 62.22	40.0 43.3 16.7	30 0 50 0 20 0	28 1 46 9 25 0	41.9 41.9 15 1	38 2 50 0 11 8	32.4 48 6 18 9	39 4 42 4 18 2	48,6 37,1 14 3	60 (14)	38-9 44-9 16-2
Voting Behavior(; Democrat Ticket Splitter Republican	5 1	33 3 46 7 16 7	43 3 33 3 20.0	35 5 38 7 25 8	43 .3 26 7 26 7	29 4 35 3 23 5	8 r- 0 8 r- 0	30 3 45 5 18 2	34 3 40 0 20 0	6.7 (14)	37 6 35 4 22 6
Have family (%) in school	62.2	2 93	66.7	46.9	48.4	38-2	37.8	45 5	57.1	9 0 (7)	51,1
Before reading attitude toward issue	13.0	13,2	12.6	12,4	J. 3 - 7	12.8	13. Ŗ	13.9	12.0		12,9
•There were no	signifi	cant d	li.£fer€	suces }	hetween	the co	ontrol.	and e	xperim	ental (groups

on the six variables listed on the basis of chi square tests.

Total N includes 14 for whom message version not recorded.
+Significant ², df = 7; .05 level is 14.0 df = 14; .05 level is 23.7

TABLE 2

INCOMPLETE AND NON-RETURNED INTERVIEWS DROPPED FROM SAMPLE

Interview quota: 350	
Not returned from field	13
Incomplete on study questionnaire which preceded this	
study so interviewer terminated	2
Page missing from questionnaire	1
Blind, could not read message	2
Respondent ill in mid-interview and interviewer	
terminated	1
So unable to comprehend message that interviewer	
terminated	T
Refused to read message, not interested	4
Refused to "take a test"	5
Total loss	29
Usable interviews:	321
Less 14 for which interviewer failed to record	
reader analysis but not for other analyses)	-14
TOTAL FINAL SAMPLE	307

Sec.


	Question-Ans	wer Format	Straight Des	criptive	Format
	No Slogan Repeat	Slogan Repeat	No Slogan Repeat	Slogan Repeat	
Republic Labellec	can 1 +1.1	+0.7	+1 3	+0.8	1.0
	N=30	<u>N=30</u>	n=32	<u>n=31</u>	
Neutral Labellec Source	d +1 ,2	+1 2	+ ⁻ -	+1.0	1.1
	n=34	n = 37	n=3.3	n=35	N-262

MEAN ATTITUDE CHANGE FOR MESSAGE MANIPULATION VERSIONS

Two hypotheses were devised to guide analyses of the influence of two of the message strategies on attitude change:

- H₁ A political party label attached to the source of a persuasive message will lead to more positive attitude change among voters favorable toward this party label, and less positive change among voters unfavorable to this label, as compared to a neutral label message. Attitude change among voters for whom the party label has no valence will be unaffected by whether the source has a political party label or not.
- H₂ Repetition in a persuasive political message of a slogan which is ambiguous enough to be broadly interpreted, and serves to link the receiver with the issue of the message, will cause more attitude change than use of the slogan once.

H₁ predicts an interaction between Voting Behavior Type and one of the message manipulations. Source Label. Looking at the mean attitude change for cells formed by charting the two variables (Table 4) shows that for Democrats, who should have had a previous negative-receiver-to-source attitude for a Republican source, attitude change was as predicted. Valencing the source with a Republican label caused the otherwise identical message to produce less attitude change than when it had a neutral label. For Republicans, attitude change was practically the same for Republican and neutral messages, rather than being greater when the source was identified as Republican. Ticket Splitters, whose previous receiver-to-source attitude was considered neutral, were affected by valencing the source, contrary to the hypothesis. Their attitude change was greater for the Republican than neutral version. This will be considered further after first looking at another of the message manipulations.

TABLE 4

MEAN ATTITUDE CHANGE FOR VOTING BEHAVIOR TYPE VS. SOURCE LABEL OF MESSAGE

Voting Behavior Type	Republican Label Source	Neutral Label Sourc	e
Republican	1.14	1.19	
Ticket Splitter	1.34	.73	
Democrat	.53	1:43	
	.97	1.09	N=249

 $\rm H_2$ predicts a main effect for the variable Amount of Use of Slogan, whereby attitude change would increase with slogan repetition. This did not occur. In fact, attitude change for Slogan Repeat versions had a mean of .85 whereas for No Slogan Repeat versions it was 1.23, the reverse of what was hypothesized.

A four-factor analysis of variance was used to test the effects of each of the three message manipulation variables and the variable Voting Behavior Type upon attitude change toward the education issue. Results are shown in Table 5 where Factor A is Voting Behavior Type (Democrat/ Ticket Splitter/Republican), Factor B is Source Label (Republican/Neutral), Factor C is Format (Question-Answer/Straight Descriptive) and Factor D is Amount of Slogan Use (No Slogan Repeat/Slogan Repeat).

The analysis shows that the effect of Factor D, Amount of Slogan Use, is not significant and so H_2 is not confirmed.

The analysis also shows that the interaction effect predicted in H_1 , AB, falls slightly short of achieving significance. The probability that there was no effect was .07. A significant effect is achieved, however, in the ABD interaction at the p=.04 level. Thus one should not discuss the AB interaction without considering the interference of D.

In Table 6, the results shown in Table 4 for the AB interaction are separated out to show the influence of the Amount of Slogan Use, Factor D. This latter variable has interfered with attitude change, with the repeated slogan depressing the effect of the valenced source overall. The repeated slogan was, "The door to education is open to your child," a slogan that did <u>not</u> have a partisan valence. As such, it may have neutralized the effect of the partisan label for Republicans. For Democrats, repeating the slogan

Factor AVoting E Factor BSource I Factor CFormat (Factor DAmount o	<pre>%ehavior Type (Der abel (Republican) Question-Answer/? %f Slogan Use (No</pre>	mocrat/Tick /Neutral) Straight De Slogan Rep	et Splitter/Re scriptive) eat/Slogan Rep	publican) eat)	
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	£	Sig
Factor A	1.05	2	.53	.10	.91
Factor B	1.87	1	1.87	.35	.56
Factor C	.39	1	.39	.07	.79
Factor D	10.08	J	10.08	1.88	.17
Interaction AB	29.59	2	14.79	2.76	.07
Interaction AC	12.31	2	6.15	1.15	.32
Interaction AD	28.09	2	14.05	2.62	.08
Interaction BC	. 78	1	. 78	.15	.71
Interaction BD	.00	l	.00	.00	.99
Interaction CD	.06	l	.06	.01	.92
Interaction ABC	5.52	2	2.76	.52	• 60
Interaction ABD	34,96	2	17.47	3.26	.04
Interaction ACD	6.25	2	3.13	•58	.56
Interaction BCD	.12	-	.12	.02	.88
Interaction ABCD	16.82	2	8,41	1.57	.21
Within cells (error)	1206:29	225	5、36		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE, "ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD ISSUE"

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

depressed attitude change for the neutral version only, possibly the repetition took the neutral message out of the informational category and made it appear more as propaganda.

TABLE 6

	No Slogan	Repeat	Slogan R	Repeat	
Voting Behavior Type	Republican	Neutral	Republican	Neutral	
Republican	1.86	1.43	.46	1.00	
Ticket Splitter	1.42	.18	1.22	1.32	
Democrat	.52	2.55	.54	. 58	N=249

MEAN ATTITUDE CHANGE FOR VARIABLES WHICH PRODUCE INTERACTION EFFECT

Consideration of the No Slogan Repeat versions only, offers an opportunity to look at the AB interaction without the interference of Factor D. For the No Slogan Repeat versions, the means of attitude change for Republicans and Democrats are as predicted in $\rm H_1$. The valenced message causes somewhat more attitude change among those of like party and considerably less attitude change among those of opposite party than a neutral message causes.

The Ticket Splitters, however, have more attitude change when exposed to the Republican version than when exposed to the neutral version, whereas the hypothesis anticipates that valencing the source will not affect them. Is there anything about the Ticket Splitters in this sample which suggests that they actually lean Republican and behave more as Republicans? First, consider that they come from Ohio. a state in which more voters claim to be Democrats than Republicans but which in recent elections has elected a Republican senator, governor, both houses of the legislature, and gone Republican in the vote for president. A check of the voting behavior of the 114 Ticket Splitters in this sample shows, however, that with regard to their last vote at state and national level most (47%) report having voted about equally for Republican and Democratic candidates. For those who report voting for a few more of one party than the other, the edge is toward Democrats (32%) rather than Republicans (21%). On self identification the Ticket Splitters in this sample report themselves as 21% Republican. 39% Democrat and 36% Independent. On education level Ticket Splitters were higher than Democrats but lower than Republicans, similarly with income. On age they had more in the 18-39 bracket percentagewise than did the Republicans but fewer than the Democrats. Thus only the voting results in Ohio offer any real evidence that they are biased Republican so this does not satisfactorily explain their attitude change being greater with the valenced version.

The analysis of variance for the AB interaction of Voting Behavior Type and Source Label is shown in Table 7, when the 122 subjects who received only the No Slogan Repeat version are used as the sample.

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE "ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD ISSUE" USING NO SLOGAN REPEAT MESSAGES

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

Factor A--Voting Behavior Type (Democrat/Ticket Splitter/ Republican) Factor B--Source Label (Republican/Neutral)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig
Factor A	18,22	2	9.11	1.75	.18
Factor B	.41	1	.41	.08	. 78
Interaction AB	63.58	2	31.79	6.11	.003
Within Cells (error)	603.75	116	5.20		

The interaction between Voting Behavior Type and Source Label is highly significant, even for a sample half the size of that considered in the previous analysis.

Looking again at the mean attitude change, Republicans have attitude change of 1.86 with a source valenced positively to them; 1.43 when the source is given no valence. Democrats, for whom the source when valenced is negative (Republican), have a positive attitude change of .52. This apparently means the message was strongly persuasive even with negative source valence. With neutral valence, however, it caused much stronger attitude change, +2.55. Thus the first major premise of H_1 is confirmed, "A political party label attached to the source of a persuasive message will lead to more positive attitude change among voters favorable toward this party label, and less positive change among voters unfavorable to this label, as compared to a neutral label message."

The prediction of H₁ that party label would have no effect on the attitudes of those for whom party label would have no valence is not evidenced here where Ticket Splitters-assumed to be neutral in regard to party--show attitude change of +1.42 with the Republican source and +.18 with the neutral.

Since all subject groups, including Democrats, experienced attitude change positively toward the issue as a result of any version of the message, Republican or neutral, there is indication that the message had a stronger influence on voter attitude toward the issue than did source perceptions. The wording of the basic message, and the facts and attitudes presented in the body of the text were identical in all versions. The message elements manipulated operate chiefly to cause deviations from an overall positive effect.

A third hypothesis about attitude change as influenced by perceived importance of the issue was tested.

H₃ A voter for whom an issue is important will have more positive attitude change toward the issue after reading a persuasive message favorable to the issue than a voter for whom the issue is less important.

Mean attitude change for those to whom the issue was important (operationalized here as those having family members in school in Ohio) was +0.9 while for those without family members in school it was +1.2. The difference in means is not significant at the .05 level, and is in the opposite direction to the prediction of H_3 . Thus H_3 is not confirmed.

Additionally, "importance" was operationalized by the way the respondent rated education as an issue in Ohio on a 0-10 rating scale (10 extremely important). Correlation of importance rating and attitude change was not significant, r=.02.

III. COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE CONTENT

The issue described in the test messages was an education bill providing state financial support for a variety of educational programs. Comprehension of the content of the messages was measured by seven questions about the described support of, and increases in, specific programs. These questions were administered in multiple choice form with four possible choices for each answer. Comprehension scores for subjects who received each experimental message version and for the control group (which took the test but did not read a message) are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8

MEAN COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE CONTENT SCORE FOR MESSAGE MANIPULATION VERSIONS

	Question-An Format	swer	Straight Des Forma	scriptive at
	No Slogan Repeat	Slogan Repeat	No Slogan Repeat	Slogan Repeat
Republican Labeled Source	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.8
	n=30	n=30	n=32	n=31
Neutral Labeled Source	3.2 n=34	3.8 n=37	3.7 n=33	3.2 n=35

MEAN COMPREHENSION: 3.5

N = 262

SCORE ON SAME TEST FOR NON-READERS (CONTROL): 2.2

N = 45

The difference in mean comprehension scores for the experimental (mean 3.5) and control (2.2) groups is significant, t=4.3, df=305, p \leq .001.

H₄ The more a voter reads of a political message, the higher the comprehension score he will get, especially if the issue is important to him.

Readers were those who were given any version of the brochure message to read. Interviewers were asked to check if the respondent did not finish reading the message. Thus readers were categorized as Read Part and Read All. Non-readers are the control group. Again, those who had family members in school in Ohio were put in the high importance group and those without family members in school in the low. Means for each cell in the analysis are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9

MEAN COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE CONTENT BY AMOUNT OF READER-SHIP AND IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE TO VOTER

	Read None	Read Part	Read All
High Importance	2°1	2.6	3.7
	n=28	n=22	n=114
Low Importance	2.4	2.7	3.7
	n=17	n=43	n=96
			N=320

A two-way analysis of variance was run to test the effects of amount of readership and importance of the issue on comprehension of the message content. Results are shown

in Table 10 in which Factor A is Readership (Read None/Read Part/Read All) and Factor B is Importance of Issue to Voter (High/Low).

As an interaction hypothesis, H_4 is not confirmed as importance of the issue to the voter had no effect upon his comprehension. Amount of readership had a highly significant effect on his ability to answer questions about the educational bill correctly, p ζ .0005. It is worth noting that comprehension is increased more by reading all of the message, rather than part of it, than it is by reading part over reading none.

H₅ A voter will learn facts about a political issue better when he reads a message which asks questions about the issue and answers the questions with facts, than when he reads a message which only presents the facts.

The Format variable (Question-Answer vs. Straight Descriptive) was one of the message manipulations of this experimental survey. Mean comprehension for subjects who received the Question-Answer versions was 3.55. For those who received the Straight Descriptive versions it was 3.50.

A four-factor analysis of variance was run with comprehension of message content as the dependent variable. Format is Factor C of the analysis of variance shown in the summary, Table 11. None of the message manipulations nor Voter Behavior Type had any effect upon comprehension.

The correlation between comprehension scores and education level was significant, r=.30, p \langle .01 so a second

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig
Factor A	105.57	2	52.79	15.70	0.0005
Factor B	1.03	I	1.03	.31	.59
Interaction AB	• 73	2	•36	.11	06.
Within cells (error)	1055.58	314	3.36		

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE, "COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE CONTENT"

Factor A--Readership (Read None/Read Part/Read All)
Factor B--Importance of Issue (High/Low) INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

er -

A Sugar

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE, "COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE CONTENT"

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

Factor A--Voting Behavior Type (Democrat/Ticket Splitter/Republican) Factor B--Source Label (Republican/Neutral) Factor C--Format (Question-Answer/Straight Descriptive) Factor D--Mount of Slogan Use (No Slogan Repeat/Slogan Repeat)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	Ĺų	Sig
Factor A	10°74	2	5.37	1.44	.24
Factor B	°00	1	•00	00°	66°
Factor C	.01	1	.01	•00	.96
Factor D	1.83	1	1.83	.49	.49
Interaction AB	1.85	2	.92	.25	.78
Interaction AC	3.73	2	1.86	.50	.61
Interaction AD	4.65	2	2.33	.62	°54
Interaction BC	.27	1	.27	.07	• 79
Interaction BD	4.62	1	4.62	1.24	°27
Interaction CD	۰ 66	1	.66	.18	.68
Interaction ABC	8.92	2	4.46	1.20	.31
Interaction ABD	7.30	2	3.65	.98	.38
Interaction ACD	6.51	2	3 ° 25	.87	.42
Interaction BCD	1.18	1	1.18	.32	.57
Interaction ABCD	10.16	2	5.08	1.36	.26
Within cells (error)	839 ° 44	225	3.73		

analysis was run with education level controlled as a covariate. Results, shown in Table 12, were very little different from those of the analysis of variance without education level controlled.

H₅ is not confirmed since the use of Question-Answer format did not significantly affect comprehension.

IV. SLOGAN RECALL

H₆ Repetition of a slogan in a political message will make that slogan better recalled.

Recall of the slogan, "The door to education is open to your child," was tested by asking respondents to check any slogans they had read or heard in a list of four. The third slogan in the list was the message slogan; the others were dummies made up by the experimenter. About 44% of respondents checked several slogans, the same percentage whether they had received a No Slogan Repeat or Slogan Repeat version. The percentage who checked <u>the correct slogan only</u> is shown in Table 13.

Using as correct answers only those who recalled the correct slogan and checked none of the dummy slogans, a Z test has a value of 1.2, not significant at the .05 level. Thus H_6 is rejected on the basis of a rather strict test of recall.



C 1
Ч
ш
L.
щ
4
E

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR DEPENDENT VARIABLE, "COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE CONTENT" WITH EDUCATION LEVEL AS COVARIATE

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

Factor A--Voting Behavior Type (Democrat/Ticket Splitter/Republican)
Factor B--Source Label (Republican/Neutral)
Factor C--Format (Question-Answer/Straight Descriptive)
Factor D--Amount of Slogan Use (No Slogan Repeat/Slogan Repeat)

		J			
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	Ы	Sig
Factor A	11.62	2	5.81	1.57	.21
Factor B	•04	1	.04	-01	.92
Factor C	،03	1	.03	.01	.93
Factor D	1,24	1	1.24	.34	.56
Interaction AB	1.34	2	.67	.18	.83
Interaction AC	3.23	2	1.62	.44	.65
Interaction AD	4.23	2	2.12	.57	.57
Interaction BC	.81	1	.81	.22	.64
Interaction BD	3.86	1	3.86	1.04	.31
Interaction CD	1:42	1	1.42	.38	.54
Interaction ABC	7.41	2	3.70	1.00	.37
Interaction ABD	6,98	2	3.49	.94	.39
Interaction ACD	6.71	2	3.36	.91	.41
Interaction BCD	, 6 4	1	.64	°17	.68
Interaction ABCD	8.98	2	4.49	1.21	.30
Covariate (Educ. leve.	1) 6.34	1	6.34	1.71	.19
Within cells (error)	824.92	223	3.69		

		e version/
	Received Message With No Slogan Repeat	Received Message With Slogan Repeat
Recall Correct Slogan Only	23.0%	29.5 %
Recall Correct Slogan and Dummy Slogans, or No Slogan Recall	77.0%	70.5%

N = 262

SLOGAN RECALL VS. AMOUNT OF USE OF SLOGAN (% of those receiving message version)

V. FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

1. Other Findings on Attitude Change

This experiment has shown that a significant amount of attitude change can result from a persuasive message giving facts on a political issue. It has demonstrated that, using essentially the same message, manipulation of some message variables will produce interaction effects which change the persuasive qualities of the message for some voters. It has demonstrated the complexity of predicting, for every type of voter, how these interactions will operate.

In the persuasion situation, interest is as great in <u>how many</u> people are influenced as in <u>how much</u> they are influenced. In this study, 51% of the experimental subjects showed a positive change in attitude toward the issue of the persuasive messages. Thus the mean positive attitude change was not the result of a relatively few who changed to a great degree. Of the remainder, 34% had no attitude change and 15% had attitude change in the negative direction.

a. Correlates of Attitude Change

Attitude change toward the issue correlated significantly negatively with before-reading attitude toward the issue (r=-.42) and positively with after-reading attitude (r=.440). Only a few of the other variables which were examined correlated significantly. The correlations are given to show the variables explored (Table 14).

2. Other Findings on Comprehension

Not surprisingly, the study has demonstrated that those who read a message about an issue can score higher on a test of knowledge of the issue as presented in the message. A finding of special interest, though, is that merely getting an individual to attend to a message <u>in part</u> will increase his comprehension far less than when he can be made to attend to the <u>entire</u> message. In this experiment, those who attended to a message in part increased their mean scores only .5 in a score range 0-7 over those who did not read the message. Those who read the entire message jumped 1.5 over non-readers, and 1.0 over the partial reading group.

a. Importance of Subissues of Education Issue

Questions in the comprehension test concerned different subissues of the overall education issue, such as support of higher education, increases in vocational education,

Variabledirection of scoring highest at right category shown	Correlation with attitude change toward issue	
Before reading attitude toward issue (Highest score=most favorable)	42**	
After reading attitude toward issue (Highest score=most favorable)	+.44**	
Comprehension score (No. of correct answers to quiz)	+.10	
Readership (Read part/read all)	+.12*	
Have family member in school in Ohio (No/Yes)	07	
Have family member in public school in Ohio (No/Yes)	07	
Have family member in nonpublic school in Ohio (No/Yes)•••	+.11	
Before reading attitude toward all or any actions of Ohio legislature (source) (Disapprove/Don't Know/Approve)	05	
Age	+.03	
Education level (Below HS grad/HS grad or above)	02	
Religion (Noncatholic/Roman Catholic)***	+.12*	
Sex (Female/Male)	02	
Income	06	

CORRELATES OF ATTITUDE CHANGE TOWARD ISSUE OF MESSAGES

•p 🗸 .05

••p < .01

***Issue of messages included new aid to nonpublic schools. aid to nonpublic schools, etc. Respondents were scored as giving relatively more importance to the subissue if a member of their family were enrolled in the level or kind of school of the subissue question. Importance of Subissue (High=2; Low=1) was correlated with Answer to Question on Subissue (Correct=1; Incorrect=0). No significant correlations were found.

There was a significant correlation, however, with the Answer to Question on Aid to Nonpublic Schools, and Religion (Noncatholic=1; Roman Catholic=2), r=.17, $p \lt .01$.

b. Correlates of Comprehension

A larger number of the variables explored correlated with comprehension than had correlated with attitude change. These are shown in Table 15.

3. Reaction to Brochure Message

Overall reaction to the brochures used as experimental messages was much more favorable than unfavorable, as judged by responses to the open-ended question, "What do you think of this brochure?" This may explain some of the persuasive effects the messages had. Typical responses were, "Very informative," "I'm all for vocational schools and according to the brochure they are now going to build them," "It tells where the taxpayer's money is going," "I think it's a lot of truth in what they got written...I do think they could improve their lunch program...the boy who goes to Kennedy (school) complains his milk is sour."

Variabledirection of • scoring highest at right category shown	Correlation with comprehension of message score
Before reading attitude toward issue (Highest score=most favorable)	+.09
After reading attitude toward issue (Highest score=most favorable)	+.17•
Attitude change toward issue	+.10
Readership (Read none/Read part/Read all)	+.31**
Voting Behavior (Democrat/Ticket Splitter/ Republican)	+.12*
Have family member in school in Ohio (No/Yes)	+.05
Have family member in public school in Ohio (No/Yes)	+.04
Have family member in nonpublic school in Ohio (No/Yes)	+.11
Age	16*
Education Level (Below HS grad/HS grad or above)	+.30**
Religion (Noncatholic/Catholic)	+.08
Sex (Female/Male)	05
Income	+.31**

CORRELATES OF COMPREHENSION OF MESSAGE SCORE

•p **〈** .05 ••p **〈** .01 Responses were coded into two positive categories and four negative categories (see page 65). Some respondents made multiple responses and some none. Overall favorable comments numbered 188 while unfavorable ones numbered 71.

Among the unfavorable responses, one in particular illustrated the mixed reaction to a legislative bill encompassing a variety of provisions:

I think it stinks. I think today's kids get an excellent education. I think a lot of the programs mentioned in the brochure are unnecessary. I think the vocational schools are a good idea if they are run right. This is such an "if" thing. If you aren't black and <u>if</u> you are not on welfare, then very little is done for you. I am not antiblack but I think there are poor whites too that need help.

In particular, only 18 unfavorable responses fell in the category "political propaganda, Republican, one-sided, slanted, public relations piece, advertisement." Of these 11 were from respondents who saw the Republican version and 7 from those who saw the neutral.

CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

I. SUMMARY

1. Purpose

Persuasive messages about a complex political issue were constructed in various ways by manipulation of three selected message variables. The purpose was to determine if changes in any of these variables would influence either attitude change or comprehension gain among voters who received messages containing the same content and arguments.

Interest was in relating existing knowledge of attitude change, as explained by balance theories, and knowledge about the voting population in the U.S., to the important, but largely untested, field of political message effects.

2. Method

The exploratory study utilized a field survey and printed brochures in which three message variables were manipulated: Source Label (Republican/Neutral); Amount of Use of Slogan (No Slogan Repeat/Slogan Repeat); and Format (Question-Answer/Straight Descriptive). These produced eight (2x2x2) message versions.

The audience was a statewide sample of registered voters in Ohio. The issue was one which affected them in their real-life situations: state support of education in

Ohio and new programs provided by an education bill passed by the 1969 Ohio legislature. That legislature became the institutional source of the messages.

Voters were categorized on the basis of their past voting behavior at the last state and national election. Those who had voted a straight party ticket or mostly for candidates of a particular party were designated as Republicans or Democrats. Those who had voted for a few more Democrats than Republicans, about equally for both parties, or for a few more Republicans than Democrats were designated as Ticket Splitters. This means of categorization was based on voting behavior rather than the more customary selfdesignation as Republican, Democrat, or Independent. The reason for using this behavioral definition was to explore the effects among both strong partisans and those who switch parties and split tickets. Whereas Independents have been identified in voting audience studies as being politically more apathetic than partisans, Ticket Splitters form a broader group between Republicans and Democrats. Thev include many who are interested in, and whose shifts and choices affect, election outcomes. Voters were also asked to self-identify by party. Only 36% of the Ticket Splitters considered themselves Independents while the rest identified with one or the other political party.

Subjects were interviewed in their homes to determine demographic characteristics, voting behavior, and



pre-reading attitude toward the issue. Attitude was measured with four statements, two worded negatively and two positively, to which subjects responded on a five-point agreedisagree scale. During the interview, subjects in the experimental group were given one of the eight experimental messages to read. A comprehension test using multiple choice questions about facts of the issue was administered to subjects in a control group of non-readers as well as to subjects in the experimental group. Those who had read the messages then received a post-reading attitude test identical to the pre-reading test.

The two criterion variables were attitude change toward the issue and comprehension of the message. Attitude change was the difference in the total score of the preand post-reading attitude measurements. Comprehension was the score on the test on facts of the message. Comprehension gain was the difference in mean scores between the experimental and control groups.

3. Findings

a. Attitude Change

The basic message which gave explicit facts about provisions of the education bill passed by the legislature made attitude toward that issue more favorable among all three types of voters. This result was irrespective of the message versions they received. All message versions conveyed the same facts and made an overall positive presentation

of the bill as having improved educational opportunity for all students in Ohio. Attitude change for the eight versions ranged from +0.7 to +1.3 above pre-reading attitudes which had a mean of 13.1. Fifty-one percent of the sample experienced immediate positive attitude change, and only 15% showed negative change.

The first hypothesis (H₁) was that attaching a political party label, "Republican," to valence the source would result in more positive attitude change among Republicans than if they received the same message from a neutral source. Conversely, Democrats were expected to have less favorable attitude change for Republican source versions as compared to what they would have from neutral versions. Ticket Splitters would be unaffected by labeling the source since a partisan label would not create a valence on the source for them.

Predictions of attitude change as a result of valencing the source were based on a communication model developed by N. T. Feather.⁷⁵ This model is comprised of four elements: Source, Receiver, Communication and Issue. Relationships between the elements are shown by the signed, directed graphs used by Cartwright and Harary⁷⁶ to extend Heider's⁷⁷ explication

⁷⁷Heider, "Attitudes and Cognitive Organization."

⁷⁵Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach" and "A Structural Balance Model."

⁷⁶Cartwright and Harary, "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory."



of balance theory.

The interaction effect the two variables Voting Behavior (Republican/Ticket Splitter/Democrat) and Source Label (Republican/Neutral) had on attitude change was highly significant (p = .003). When the source was identified as Republican, mean positive attitude change increased for Republicans and decreased for Democrats compared to the attitude change produced by a neutral label message. Only for Ticket Splitters were results not as predicted; their attitude change increased for the Republican valenced versions. Thus H₁ was supported for those with pre-reading receiver-to-source attitudes, positive or negative, but not for those assumed to have no-receiver-to-source attitude.

Other hypotheses about attitude change were that: (H_2) repetition of a slogan in a political message would cause more attitude change than its use once, and that (H_3) voters to whom the issue was more important would have more attitude change than those to whom it was less important. Neither of these last two hypotheses were supported.

The Amount of Use of Slogan had no significant main effect. However, when the variables Source Label and Voting Behavior Type were operating with it, there was a significant interaction (p = .04). When all three were operating, attitude change was in the direction of being <u>less</u> for the versions with the repeated slogan. The interaction of Source Label and Voting Behavior Type then failed to produce a

significant effect upon attitude change (p = .07).

Attitude change favorable toward the issue correlated significantly positively with amount of readership but not significantly with comprehension score. It had no significant correlations with demographic variables except religion, the latter possibly because of new aid to nonpublic schools which was part of the education issue.

b. Comprehension

 H_4 hypothesized that amount of readership would determine comprehension score, especially if the issue was important to the voter. Amount of readership of the messages did have a significant effect upon comprehension (p $\leq .001$). Those who read the entire message showed a mean comprehension gain of 1.5 (on a 0-7 scale) over non-readers in the control group. Those who read part of the message gained only .5. Importance of the issue to the voter did not affect comprehension gain. Thus H_4 was supported as to main effect, but the predicted interaction did not occur.

The Question-Answer Format was hypothesized to increase learning of facts (H₅); however, manipulation of Format showed no significant effect on comprehension.

Comprehension score correlated significantly with education level, income, age (negative), voting behavior (arrayed Democrat/Ticket Splitter/Republican), and afterreading attitude toward the issue.



c. Slogan Recall

Of interest in relation to learning was that the slogan repeated an additional two times was not recalled significantly better than the slogan used once. H₆ which predicted increased recall with repetition was not supported. Repetition acted as only a slight aid to learning of the slogan.

II. DISCUSSION

1. Attitude Change

No hypotheses were advanced as to the amount of attitude change messages would produce or the percentage of subjects who would experience it. Studies of persuasion suggested that a single message could only increment or decrement attitude a small amount. The messages used, however, were successful in producing positive attitude change at a significant level, and producing it in 51% of the sample.

The message was written with the express intention of explaining to the voter the specific ways in which a complex bill benefited particular groups of students or types of schools. There was also an effort to make these benefits seem to affect the receiver personally by the use of personal references, "your child," "your school district," etc. The attitude change achieved suggests that these efforts were effective. Thus, effects of the message manipulations must be looked at in light of their <u>producing deviations above</u> or below the overall strong positive effect created by the



Table 16 shows the effect of the interaction of Source Label and Voting Behavior Type upon attitude change toward the issue. It repeats that portion of Table 6 which showed this interaction for message versions in which there was No Slogan Repeat. Slogan repetition was found to interact with the effects of Source Label and Voting Behavior Type upon attitude change. Interest now is in considering the two-way interaction without the interference of slogan repetition.

TABLE 16

MEAN ATTITUDE CHANGE FOR VOTING BEHAVIOR TYPE VS. SOURCE LABEL OF MESSAGE (NO SLOGAN REPEAT VERSIONS)

Voting Behavior Type	Republican Source	Neutral Source
Republican	1.86	1.43
Ticket Splitter	1.42	.18
Democrat	.52	2.55

As Table 16 shows, the group which showed the greatest amount of attitude change was Democrats who received a neutral label message. A check of pre-reading attitudes showed Democrats' and Ticket Splitters' attitudes were about .5 below Republicans' initially. Their attitudes could thus have had more room for change. However, none of the attitude means approached the ceiling for initial attitude which would have acted as a cut-off on change scores. It is also
possible that Democrats might previously have given less attention to news from a state legislature and administration controlled by the Republicans. In this case, the neutral message about benefits of the education bill would constitute more news to them than it would to the Republicans and thus might cause more attitude change.

Turning now to the model upon which attitude change was predicted, Feather's communication model proved to be adequate for predicting the direction of deviation when the source had a valence whose sign could be identified for receivers. The model gave no way of predicting the amount of change. The increase in mean attitude for Republicans was somewhat greater when they received a message from a Republican source while for Democrats it was far less than when the source was neutral.

Ticket Splitters had more attitude change for the Republican than neutral source. This was unexpected as their attitudes were assumed to be null or weak so that the party label would not have created a valence. A check of the identified characteristics of the Ticket Splitters showed nothing which would indicate they had a Republican bias. On the contrary, their stated past state and national vote and their self-identification by party was somewhat in the Democrat direction. However, statistics on election outcomes in Ohio show that, whereas more voters in Ohio claim to be Democrats than Republicans, recent major elections have been won, often narrowly, by the Republicans. It is the Ticket Splitters

who have given the Republicans this margin of victory. Demographically the Ticket Splitters are between the Democrats and Republicans: slightly better educated and with more income than the former, but with less education and income than the latter. Percentagewise more are in the younger age group, 18-39, than are the Republicans, while a smaller percent are in it than among Democrats. Not checked in this study, but found relevant in some others, is social mobility. Are these voters in transition between the groups traditionally allied with one or the other party? If so, Barber⁷⁸ has confirmed that their political attitudes and loyalties tend to change in the direction appropriate to their new status, resulting in political behavior intermediate between that typical of their old and new status. This can only be speculated about here.

In addition to the significant interaction effect between Source Label and Voting Behavior Type on attitude change, the other significant effect was when Amount of Use of Slogan interacted with these two (see Table 6). The repeating of the slogan <u>reduced</u> attitude change overall, particularly among Republicans who received the Republican version and among Democrats who received a neutral version. These were the cells with the highest attitude change when

⁷⁸James A. Barber, Jr., "Social Mobility and Political Behavior," unpublished dissertation, Stanford University, 1965.

the slogan was not repeated.

The slogan was, "The door to education is open to your child." This wording was intended to remind the reader of the main goal of the legislature's action on education. It obviously was <u>not</u> valenced in any partisan sense. Possibly, when used often, the slogan's lack of valence may have tended to reduce the salience of the Republican source label to Republicans.

For Democrats, for whom the neutral message was so effective with a single slogan, the repeated slogan may have changed the message from one which appeared informational to one which appeared to be propaganda or hard sell.

Then, too, for all groups the repeated slogan may have crossed a line which delimits a message from one which is persuasive to one which is repetitious and boring. As operationalized in the single slogan messages there was some use of variations of the slogan. Brochure covers featured a graphic design of arrows and the title "IN OHIO THE DOOR IS OPEN." Inside the single use of the slogan served as a headline and the message began with a repetition, "The door to education is wide open to your child." For the repeated version the full slogan was interspersed twice <u>more</u> in the copy in capital letters. There was no significant main effect from the slogan use. However, when combined with Source Label and Voting Behavior Type, the interaction changed the amount of attitude change differentially among



the 12 cells into which the sample is divided. Such a division, of course, reduces cell n's to approximately 20 so means are considerably less stable than those of the 125 in each treatment for the main effects of manipulated variables.

The lack of effect of importance of the issue on attitude change may be due to this being a forced exposure experiment. Importance of the issue may be more a determinant of <u>who will attend</u> to a message--as Festinger has shown⁷⁹--than of how much an individual will be influenced once he attends.

Attitude change had no correlation with demographic variables with the single exception of religion. Religion, dichotomized into Catholic and non-Catholic, is explainable as a correlate for this particular issue which provided new aid to nonpublic schools. Only one correlation with attitude change was significant. That was the one with amount of readership (.12) in the direction that those who read more of the brochure had more attitude change. Attitude change was not measured for non-readers as there was no reason for it to change over the time of the interviews.

Reviewing the results on attitude change shows that H_1 , concerning the interaction of Source Label and Voting Behavior Type, was supported for those whose receiver-to-source attitudes were known. Neither the model, nor a

4.

⁷⁹Festinger, <u>Conflict, Decision and Dissonance</u>, Chap.

sufficient body of data, provided a base for adequately predicting message effects upon Ticket Splitters.

Amount of Use of Slogan produced no significant main effect, and means were in the opposite direction of the prediction, H_2 . In retrospect it appears the amount of slogan repeat may have been poorly operationalized. The No Repeat versions included slogan redundancy and the Repeat versions may have thus become too repetitious. This could only be examined by a repeat experiment with a third version in which the slogan was used once with no redundancy.

The lack of support of H₃ regarding importance of the issue suggests that importance may not be an appropriate hypothesis for a forced exposure experiment. Another possibility is that this issue, which affected all taxpayers, had sufficient importance to all to make messages relevant to them and that a difference would have been found if those in the "low" importance group had really been those in a "no" importance group.

2. Comprehension

Comprehension score on facts of the issue as presented in the message was significantly affected by the amount read of the message. This is in line with the findings of many studies on learning and knowledge gain and according to the prediction of H_4 . Again, the lack of the predicted interaction between importance of the issue and readership may be an artifact of the forced exposure situation and would



not be true if amount of reading in turn were influenced by the receiver's interest in exposing himself to the message.

It was hypothesized here (H_5) that a Question-Answer format would be more effective than a descriptive one, both because it would give a mental set for learning, and would profit from the redundancy of the answers to the questions. Contrary to Berlyne's finding,⁸⁰ this was not the case. In a review of literature on this much-used format, Herrick⁸¹ found, however, no reports of significant results from using questions and answers (Herrick did not reference Berlyne). There is reason to speculate whether this message variable would operate differently among samples drawn from student populations than among a sample of adults. Students may have a mental set toward learning answers to questions because they have the expectation of being asked questions to which they will need to feed back answers.

The correlates of comprehension scores were not surprising: education level, age (negative), and income. Age and income have been found in many studies to correlate with education. A correlation with voting behavior is probably in large part a correlation with education. (In this sample 77.8% of Republicans had an education level of high

⁸⁰Berlyne, <u>Conflict</u>, <u>Arousal and Curiosity</u>, pp. 296-297.

⁸¹Herrick, "The Effect of Problem Setting Questions."

school graduate or above; 61.1% of Ticket Splitters and 50.8% of Democrats were at this level). The Republicans here, as in all of the classic voting population studies, show to have higher education level than the Democrats while the Ticket Splitters are between the two.

3. Measurement Methods

Responding on a five-point agree-disagree scale to attitude statements appears to have been an adequate means of assessing attitudes in this adult sample. Inter-item correlations on before-reading attitude statements had a median of .42. Feedback from several of the interviewers suggested that there was some indication that responses to the before-reading attitude measures were still recalled at the time of the after-reading measures. This may have served to depress attitude change if respondents did not wish to appear influenced. An alternate method of measuring change would be to enlarge the control group so that it could be divided into the same voting behavior type subgroups as the experimental groups, then use the means of these subgroups as the before-reading attitude for each. Comparable attitude for each group would be measured on after-reading only for the experimental groups and differences compared. In this experiment, attitude change was figured for each individual before mean changes were calculated for each subgroup.

A seven-question multiple choice test used to check comprehension showed respondents could answer a mean of 2.2

questions before reading the messages. This represented their basic knowledge of the facts level. After reading they scored a mean of 3.7. No check was made of the familiarity of this type of test across the sample, but there is reason to think respondents who have attended school in the past 20 years may be more familiar with this type of test than older respondents. Comprehension scores dropped as age increased, the correlation was negative and significant. This could have been due to test form as well as to a lower education level among the older respondents.

This type of message research requires large samples because of the relatively small amounts of change anticipated in the criterion variables. Here there were 249 usable interviews in the experimental group with full data on all variables.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY

1. Theory of Attitude Change

The experimental design was based on balance theory and on the findings of studies of the voting population. Predictions of attitude change were made using a balance theory model developed by Feather⁸² comprised of source, receiver, communication, and issue. Reviewing the findings in relation to the theoretical model gives an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the model.

⁸²Feather, "A Structural Balance Approach" and "A Structural Balance Model."



For the valenced communication, that is, the one with an identified Republican source, attitudes moved positively toward the issue for all types of voters. For the Republican voter, this was anticipated and the model ended as predicted, if one assumes that favorable reaction toward the issue represents also a favorable attitude toward the communication.



Fig. 10.--Post-communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with his own political party and forms positive attitude toward communication and issue

The Ticket Splitter, too, reacted positively toward the issue. No predictions were made for him from the model, but some relationships can now be shown, Fig. 11. It is assumed his positive attitude toward the issue is the result of a positive attitude toward the communication which took a favorable stand on the issue. While his receiver-to-source attitude still is not known, obviously the model balances best if this becomes positive.



Fig. 11.--Post-communication situation for Ticket Splitter receiver who forms positive attitude toward communication issue

The Democrat who received the message from the Republican source, also reacted positively though to less degree. On the basis of the model, prediction was <u>not</u> made that the Democrat would move positively toward the issue. The model has served, however, to differentiate the differences for the Democrat and the Republican between the messages from the valenced and neutral sources. <u>In comparison</u> with the attitudes resulting from the neutral source, the Republican's attitude has moved positively and the Democrat's negatively when the message comes from a Republican source.

The fact that the Democrat's attitude has moved positively, even though in lesser amount, for the negatively valenced source means the model does not balance for him. If one assumes he regarded the communication positively, the model for him is unbalanced to the degree of 4/7 on the basis that four of the seven semicycles in the model are

unbalanced.* (Fig. 12a) However, if the negative source causes him to regard the communication negatively, the model is unbalanced to a lesser degree (3/7) for the same shift of attitude positive toward the issue. (Fig. 12b Note that semicycles containing two negative relations become balanced.)



Fig. 12a

Fig. 12b

Post-communication situation for receiver who receives communication identified with opposition political party and forms positive attitude toward issue. Attitude toward communication is either positive (a) or negative (b).

Where the model is weak as a predictive tool is in being unable to handle strength of relations, or relations which are neutral. For example, the model allows only a +1 or a -1 relationship and so no use could be made of it for showing the neutral and hence unsigned receiver-to-source attitude of the Ticket Splitter.

[•]Semicycles link: (1)SRCS, (2)SICS, (3)RICR, (4) SRIS, (5)SRICS, (6)RSICR and (7)SIRCS. A semicycle is balanced if the product of all of its relations is positive (relations have +1 and -1 values). The model is balanced if all of its semicycles are positive.

In this experiment the evidence is that the stand the communication took on the issue \overrightarrow{CT} , was a stronger relationship than either the Democrat's negative, or Republican's positive, attitude toward the valenced source. This is demonstrated by attitude toward the issue having become more favorable for all types of voters, whatever message version they received.

It appears that relationships designated simply as valenced positive or negative are not sufficient to explain attitude change which occurs in increments. Here persuasive communication had more influence in causing small shifts in attitude than did prior receiver-to-source attitudes. To explain the direction and amount of attitude change requires some measure of magnitude.

Forces operating on the receiver's attitudes need to be vectored (amount and direction) rather than merely valenced. In physical terms, attitude could be considered as existing in a field with many forces operating upon it. The attitude is at an equilibrium point (balance) when all forces operating on it are equal and opposite. Here we have considered a few of those forces and found one of them \overrightarrow{CT} of greater magnitude than \overrightarrow{RS} , as evidenced by the fact that even those with negative \overrightarrow{RS} attitudes became more favorable toward the issue. In real life situations, multiple numbers of forces operate on a given attitude and the problem becomes that of identifying the relevant ones and assigning them



some relative magnitude. Field strength is more readily measured for magnetic and electric fields than for human attitudinal fields.

Thus Feather's model has been shown to be useful here (1) as a way of describing the communication situation and (2) as a predictive tool for the relative differences in attitudes which will result from two communication situations in which oppositely signed relations between source and receiver are known to exist. Its weaknesses for any other predictions are that: (1) it has not yet been extended to describe relative strengths of relations and (2) it assumes all relations can be given a sign, whereas in a communication situation there are often weak or neutral relations.

With regard to the voting audience, this study has added more evidence to the already large body of research which shows that political party label is highly salient to those who vote straight party tickets or mostly for those of a single party. It also contributes evidence to the growing body of information about Ticket Splitters that (1) they can be influenced and (2) they can be influenced by partisan communications. This study has also demonstrated, however, that even the highly partisan can be influenced by factual, explicit, material presented on an issue by the opposite party, when these partisans can be made to attend.

The effect of repetition of a political slogan went

counter to what political and advertising usage suggest. It may be that as a persuasive technique repeated slogans have been worn out by over use. It may also be that slogan repeat was overdone here and that message writers need to be aware that readers may have a threshold. Below this threshold redundancy or repetition may serve to persuade, and above it repetition becomes annoying.

Findings on lack of effect of importance of the issue to the reader on either his attitude change or comprehension suggest that some variables may operate differently in a forced than in a voluntary exposure situation.

Finally, what do these findings on attitude change add to the body of knowledge about persuasion? They demonstrate that manipulation of message variables which are relatively minor can change the effects of the message differentially among different groups of receivers. Remember that none of the message manipulations here changed the wording of the arguments of the message or its positive presentation of the issue. The basic message--facts, writing style, actual sentences used--was held constant. Yet the manipulating of either Source Label or a combination of Source Label and Amount of Use of Slogan interacted with an audience variable, Voting Behavior Type to significantly alter the amount of attitude change produced by the message.



2. Theory of Comprehension Gain

There are no surprises in the findings of this study on comprehension of the message and therefore no major contributions to knowledge about comprehension of print material or the learning of facts from it. Confirming that comprehension scores correlate with amount of readership, education, and with other demographics such as age, income, and political party known to correlate with amount of education, is not news.

The one point of interest here is that, even in the forced exposure situation, there are levels of attendance which greatly influenced comprehension. Those who read <u>all</u> of the message had more comprehension gain compared to those who read <u>part</u> of it than those who read <u>part</u> of it did compared to those who read nothing.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Further Development of the Model

This study suggests that Feather's model for situations involving communication of an issue is worth further development. This development needs to be directed toward finding a way to describe relationships by a range of values, rather than merely by +1 or -1. Osgood and Tannenbaum⁸³ did give a range of values in the congruity principle but

⁸³Osgood and Tannenbaum, "The Principle of Congruity."



limited that range to being applicable only to two relations: receiver to source and receiver to issue.

Now it would be of interest to test the model with relations the strengths of which could be ranked, and see if these in turn have differential effects on another relation. For example, in this experiment it appears that the communication-to-issue relation was stronger than the receiver-to-source attitude. One could compose a message which was less forcefully positive toward the issue and see if a communication situation was then created in which the receiver-to-source attitude would have more influence on the receiver-to-issue attitude. Alternatively, the message could be held constant, using the same one here, but test it on subjects identified to have more extreme receiver-to-source attitudes (for example, those highly involved in campaigning for the two parties). Again the receiver-to-source attitude might have more influence than the message stand \overrightarrow{CI} upon the receiver-to-issue attitude.

Does a neutral or null attitude leave the model unusable for prediction, as was assumed here with the Ticket Splitters? Or should prediction be based on the remaining semicycles in the model, ignoring the ones made incomplete by not being able to assign a + or - value to a relation?

Feather tested his model by giving subjects statements about some of the relations ("S likes R," "S does not believe in I," etc.) and asking them to predict the remaining



ones. The suggestion here is that the model be developed through further message studies testing communications about issues on audiences to whom the issues are relevant. These studies should be directed toward finding ways to assign magnitude, either absolute or relative, to relations so that the incrementing or decrementing of other relations in the model could be predicted.

2. Further Research on Attitude Change

There still is much to be learned about message effects and their contribution to attitude change. Berelson and Lazarsfeld⁸⁴ used repeated panel studies to follow shifts of opinion over the period of an election campaign. However, no use was made of specific messages in their studies. A panel study in which interviews followed at some interval after successive persuasive messages would explore several things: First, can attitudes be built up step by step, or will the first message have the most effect and later ones less? Second, does attitude toward an issue build differently among those with no previous attitude toward the source than among those with a positive or negative one? Third. if attitude towards an issue increments, how does this reflect in attitudes toward the source? A time lapse with no message could be built into a repeated panel study to explore the persistence of attitude change. Is it immediate

⁸⁴Berelson and Lazarsfeld, <u>Voting</u>.

only, long lasting, or long lasting but at a reduced level?

Learning more about opinion formation among those with no strong source attitudes, such as the Ticket Splitters, would be of particular interest both in political and nonpolitical areas. More could be learned from experiments similar to the one used here but using messages on other issues.

3. Research on Voluntary Exposure to Messages

Message research is easier to do with forced exposure than with voluntarily exposed audiences, for the reason that sample size is greater for the same number of messages delivered. However, if interest is in how people form attitudes toward political and social issues, message research depending upon voluntary exposure is the only kind comparable to the real life situation.

How much attention would the messages used in this experiment have received if they had been dependent for readership upon selection by receivers? The hypothesis is suggested that valencing the message would have a gatekeeping effect such that those to whom the valence is positive would attend more and those to whom it is negative would attend less, than if the source had no valence. Again, prediction for the Ticket Splitters is hard to make--further evidence that this group would make worthy subjects for more message effects research. Would importance of the issue to the receiver influence attention? It failed to influence

attitude change.

If the same short message were delivered by a television spot or by a printed brochure, would the audience for the television spot be more like that in the forced exposure situation? Message effects research can extend into other than print media and into comparisons of media as channels.

4. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that message effects can be obtained and measured among adults who vary widely in educational level, age, and socio-economic variables. It has utilized a pre-reading interview, forced exposure to a message, reactions to attitude statements, a multiplechoice test, and post-reading interview. This study is set apart from previous ones because it measures message effects upon a broad sample of adults in a non-classroom situation, and concurrently measures certain characteristics of the subjects which influence their source attitudes.

Such an experiment, manipulating only a few message variables, is a start on field study of message effects, but a start only. What would be the theoretical or practical utility of more such experiments each of which requires large samples and can examine only a few variables among a vast number of available variables? The utility would be in developing a better picture of how attitudes toward social issues are formed or changed via communication.

The studies of voting in the U.S. over the past 30

years have built up some body of knowledge about dimensions of partisan attitude; about which forces play the largest role in determining the voter's choice; and which forces serve to cause deviations from a choice pattern. This body of knowledge has been accumulated step by step and bit by bit from many surveys. It is not yet fully adequate as a basis for predicting election results, yet it is approaching such adequacy.

Now a comparable body of information needs to be built up on how attitudes toward social issues are formed and influenced. The evolution and change of attitudes over the past decade toward only two issues, racial relations and environmental problems, serves to underscore the role communication plays in altering attitudes or making them salient to the individual. In retrospect, one realizes that attitudes incremented and decremented many times have accumulatively added up to near revolutionary change. Message effect studies are one path communication scientists can take toward better understanding the process by which communication has wrought such change. APPENDICES



APPENDIX I

MESSAGE VERSION 1 Republican Label Question-Answer Format No Slogan Repeat



IN OHIO THE DOOR IS OPEN

APPENDIX II

MESSAGE VERSION 2 Republican Label Question-Answer Format Slogan Repeated



IN OHIO THE DOOR IS OPEN



APPENDIX III

MESSAGE VERSION 3 Republican Label Straight Descriptive Format No Slogan Repeat





APPENDIX IV

MESSAGE VERSION 4 Republican Label Straight Descriptive Format Slogan Repeated





8

.
APPENDIX V

MESSAGE VERSION 5 Neutral Label Question-Answer Format No Slogan Repeat



IN OHIO THE DOOR IS OPEN

APPENDIX VI

MESSAGE VERSION 6 Neutral Label Question-Answer Format Slogan Repeated





MESSAGE VERSION 7 Neutral Label Straight Descriptive Format No Slogan Repeat





APPENDIX VIII

MESSAGE VERSION 8 Neutral Label Straight Descriptive Format Slogan Repeated



.



APPENDIX IX

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

NOW, WE WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT ANOTHER OHIO ISSUE WITH YOU.

I am going to read you four statements about the 1969 Ohio State Legislature and the bill it passed to give state support for grade school and high school education and for education beyond high school. Here is a card (HAND YELLOW CARD λ)--After I read each statement, tell me the answer on this card which best describes your feeling about the statement.

 Here is the first statement: In general, I think the legislature did a good job in trying to improve education in Ohio this year.

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Don't Know (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

In my opinion, the legislature put the extra money they gave to education this year in the wrong places.

(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Don't Know (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree

 I think the legislature did a better job of trying to solve the education problems in Ohio than most earlier legislatures have done.

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Don't Know (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

 In my opinion, the legislature did NOT improve educational opportunities in Ohio.

(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Don't Know (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree

 Is anyone in your immediate family--children, husband/ wife, or yourself in school <u>in Ohio</u> now? (NOT grandchildren, brothers, sisters)

2 () Yes 1 () No



(IF YES, ASK:)

a. Is that public or nonpublic (parochial, Catholic, private) school?

1 () Public 2 () Nonpublic

b. What grade type of school--elementary, jr. high, high school, technical institute, college or university? (Multiple answers OK)

(HAND BROCHURE) (RECORD BROCHURE NUMBER FOUND IN RED ON BRO-CHURE) here:

Now, we would like you to take a couple of minutes to read a brochure about state support of education in Ohio. It tells you what our legislature is doing this year for schools. Some of the things in the brochure you probably know about. Some may be news to you.

(READ BROCHURE. INTERVIEWER ALLOW TIME FOR RESPONDENT TO READ WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. IF RESPONDENT GUITS READING, DO NOT FORCE FURTHER READING. WHEN RESPONDENT FINISHES, <u>TAKE</u> BROCHURE BACK--if he wants it to keep, it may be returned when interview is completed.) IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT READ ENTIRE BROCHURE CHECK HERE ()

6. What do you think of this brochure? (PROBE)

I'm going to hand you two sheets of paper with some short questions. For each question a choice of answers is listed. Check the answer you think is best. If you are not sure of the answer, feel free to make a guess. HAND RESPONDENT THIS PAGE AND NEXT. SHOW START

7. What percentage of jobs in Ohio require a college education?

<u>10%</u> (1 of every 10) <u>25%</u> (1 of every 4) <u>50%</u> (1 of every 2) <u>75%</u> (3 of every 4)

8. What is the Ohio Legislature doing for vocational education?



	Giving state aid for vocational education only to high schools Making the two-year "technical institutes" part of the higher education system and adding more vocational courses in high schools Giving state aid only to two-year "technical institutes" for after high school Keeping the same number of vocational courses as last year in high schools and technical institutes
9.	Do you think colleges, universities and technical insti- tutes are being supported by the state for the next two years with:
	Less money than in the last 2 years About the same money as for the last 2 years A little more money than for the last 2 years A lot more (half again as much) money as for the last 2 years
10.	What part of the cost of running local schools (kinder- garten through high school) is paid by state aid voted by the legislature?
	one-tenth (10%)one-third (33%)one-half (50%)three-fourths (75%)
11.	School districts which have lots of children on welfare (ADC) get extra state aid to help these children catch up. What amount of extra aid will these depressed districts get the next two years?

Depressed districts get a "cost of living" increase Extra aid for educating welfare children will be nearly doubled

12. What did the Ohio legislature decide to do about support for nonpublic schools (Catholic, parochial)?

Not to give any new aid to nonpublic schools Pay part of salaries of "lay" teachers in these schools Pay all of the salaries of "lay" teachers in these schools Pay only for the books students use in nonpublic schools

13. The number of classes for handicapped children (blind, deaf, mentally retarded, etc.) are being:



____Increased by a few classes Decreased by a few classes _____The number is being increased by one-third The number is being held the same

Here is a list. Would you check whether you have read or heard any of these slogans about education.

14.	"Ohio: A great state for	schools"	Yes	No
15.	"Schools today are better	than ever"	Yes	No
16.	"The door to education is child"	open to your	Yes	No
17.	"From kindergarten to coll leads the nation"	lege, Ohio	Yes	No

-GIVE QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO INTERVIEWER-

Now that you have read about what the legislature did for education, I'm going to read again the four statements about their action. I'll give you the agree - disagree card again. (HAND CARD A) and you can tell me which answer on it best tells how you feel now.

18. In general, I think the legislature did a good job in trying to improve education in Ohio this year.

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Don't Know (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

19. In my opinion, the legislature put the extra money they gave to education this year in the wrong places.

(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Don't Know (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree

 I think the legislature did a better job of trying to solve the education problems in Ohio than most earlier legislatures have done.

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Don't Know (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

 In my opinion, the legislature did NOT improve educational opportunities in Ohio.

(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Don't Know (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree

Thank you for your cooperation.



I have reread this completed questionnaire and certify that all questions requiring answers have been recorded in the respondent's exact words, and that all boxes and spaces requiring an "X", a number, or a letter are filled in. This bona fide interview has been obtained according to quota and all interviewing specifications.

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

February, 1970



APPENDIX X

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONTROL GROUP

NOW, WE WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT ANOTHER OHIO ISSUE WITH YOU.

I am going to read you four statements about the 1969 Ohio State Legislature and the bill it passed to give state support for grade school and high school education and for education beyond high school. Here is a card (HAND YELLOW CARD A)--After I read each statement, tell me the answer on this card which best describes your feeling about the statement.

 Here is the first statement: In general, I think the legislature did a good job in trying to improve education in Ohio this year.

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Don't Know (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

In my opinion, the legislature put the extra money they gave to education this year in the wrong places.

(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Don't Know (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree

 I think the legislature did a better job of trying to solve the education problems in Ohio than most earlier legislatures have done.

(5) Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Don't Know (2) Disagree (1) Strongly Disagree

 In my opinion, the legislature did NOT improve educational opportunities in Ohio.

(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Don't Know (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree

 Is anyone in your immediate family--children, husband/wife, or yourself in school <u>in Ohio</u> now? (NOT grandchildren, brothers, sisters)

2 () Yes 1 () No

(IF YES, ASK:)



a. Is that public or nonpublic (parochial, Catholic, private) school?

1 () Public 2 () Nonpublic

b. What grade type of school--elementary, jr. high, high school, technical institute, college or university? (Multiple answers OK)

I'm going to give you a sheet of paper with 7 short questions. For each question a choice of answers is listed. Check the answer you think is best. If you are not sure of the answer, feel free to make a guess. (HAND RESPONDENT PAGE 2 TO FILL OUT. EXPLAIN IT.)

7. What percentage of jobs in Ohio require a college education?

<u>10%</u> (1 of every 10) <u>25%</u> (1 of every 4) <u>50%</u> (1 of every 2) 75% (3 of every 4)

- 8. What is the Ohio Legislature doing for vocational education?
 - _____Giving state aid for vocational education only to high schools
 - __Making the two-year "technical institutes" part of the higher education system and adding more vocational courses in high schools
 - _____Giving state aid only to two-year "technical institutes" for after high school

Keeping the same number of vocational courses as last year in high schools and technical institutes

Do you think colleges, universities and technical institutes are being supported by the state for the next two years with:

Less money than in the last 2 years About the same money as for the last 2 years A little more money than for the last 2 years A lot more (half again as much) money as for the last 2 years

10. What part of the cost of running local schools (kindergarten through high school) is paid by state aid voted by the legislature?



____one-tenth (10%) ___one-third (33%) ___one-half (50%) ____three-fourths (75%)

- 11. School districts which have lots of children on welfare (ADC) get extra state aid to help these children catch up. What amount of extra aid will these depressed districts get the next two years?
 - All extra aid for depressed districts was voted down Depressed districts get the same increase all districts get

____Depressed districts get a "cost of living" increase

- Extra aid for educating welfare children will be nearly doubled
- 12. What did the Ohio Legislature decide to do about support for nonpublic schools (Catholic, parochial)?

Not to give any new aid to nonpublic schools
Pay part of salaries of "lay" teachers in these schools
Pay all of the salaries of "lay" teachers in these schools

- Pay only for the books students use in nonpublic schools
- 13. The number of classes for handicapped children (blind, deaf, mentally retarded, etc.) are being:
 - ____Increased by a few classes
 - ____Decreased by a few classes
 - The number is being held the same
 - The number is being increased by one-third

Thank you for your cooperation.

(GIVE QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO INTERVIEWER)

I have re-read this completed questionnaire and certify that all questions requiring answers have been recorded in the respondent's exact words, and that all boxes and spaces requiring an "x", a number, or a letter are filled in. This bona fide interview has been obtained according to quota and all interviewing specifications.

INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

February, 1970



APPENDIX XI

THE DISSERTATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY A SURVEY WHICH INCLUDED SOME QUESTIONS OF USE IN THE DISSER-TATION EXPERIMENT. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE USED FROM THE PRECEDING SURVEY:

8. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the actions the Ohio legislature has taken during the past vear?

2 [] Approve 1 [] Disapprove 0 [] Don't know

a. Why? (PROBE)

15. Now, I'm going to mention several issues to you and as I mention each one. I would like you, using this scale card (HAND CARD) to rate how important of a problem you think that issue is in Ohio at this time?

ll issues were listed, one of which was education. Only the education rating was of interest to the dissertation experiment. The scale card showed 10 intervals anchored by 0=Extremely Unimportant and 10=Extremely Important.

- 55. In the last General election in which you voted, which answer on this card (HAND CARD G) best describes how you voted for state and national offices such as Senator and Congressman?

 - 1 [] Straight Democratic
 2 [] Mostly Democratic
 3 [] Few more Democrats than Republicans 3 [] Few more Democrats than Republicans 4 [] About equally for both parties 5 [] Few more Republicans than Democrats 6 [] Mostly Republican 7 [] Straight Republican

 - 0 [] Don't know
- 56. Now, how do you normally vote for offices such as Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General ... for those offices below the level of Governor?

3	E]	Republican	1[]	Democratic	
2	[]	Ticket-splitter	4 []	Did not vote	
0	C]	Don't know	5 []	Other	



57.	Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or what?
	3 [] Republican 2 [] Democrat 1 [] Independent 0 [] Don't know
Now	, a few questions for statistical purposes.
61.	What is your occupation?
	a. (IF RESPONDENT IS NOT HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD:) What is the occupation of the head of this household?
62.	What is your approximate age? (SHOW AGE CARD)
	1 [] 18-20 years 5 [] 50-59 years 2 [] 21-29 years 6 [] 60-64 years 3 [] 30-39 years 7 [] 65 years & over 4 [] 40-49 years 0 [] Refused
63.	What is the <u>last grade</u> of school completed by you?
	<pre>1 [] Grade school or less (Grades 1-8) 2 [] Some high school 3 [] Graduated high school (Grades 9-12) 4 [] Some college 5 [] Graduated college 6 [] Post graduate work 0 [] Refused</pre>
64.	What is your religion?
	1 [] Jewish 3 [] Roman Catholic 2 [] Protestant 4 [] Other(Specify)
67.	Sex: 2[] Male 1[] Female
68.	(SHOW INCOME CARD) Which classification includes your Total Family Income before taxes?
	1 [] \$0-\$2,999 5 [] \$7,000-\$9,999 2 [] \$3,000-\$4,999 6 [] \$10,000-\$14,999 3 [] \$5,000-\$5,999 7 [] \$15,000-\$24,999 4 [] \$6,000-\$6,999 0 [] Refused



BIBLIOGRAPHY



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Book Chapters

- Backstrom, Charles H., and Gerald Hursh. Survey Research. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963.
- Banfield, Edward C. <u>Political Influence: A New Theory of</u> Urban Politics. New York: The Free Press, 1961.
- Berelson, Bernard R., Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee. Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.
- Berlyne, D. E. <u>Conflict</u>, Arousal and Curiosity. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960.
- Bettinghaus, Erwin P. <u>Persuasive Communication</u>. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.
- Brown, R. "The Principle of Consistency in Attitude Change," <u>Social Psychology</u>. New York: The Free Press, 1965, pp. 549-609.
- Campbell, Angus, Gerald Gurin and Warren E. Miller. <u>The Voter</u> Decides. White Plains, N.Y.: Row, Peterson, 1954.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. <u>The American Voter</u>. New York: John Wiley, 1960.
- Cohen, Arthur R. <u>Attitude Change and Social Influence</u>. New York: Basic Books, 1964.
- Cronkhite, Gary. <u>Persuasion--Speech and Behavioral Change</u>. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969.
- Feather, N. T. "A Structural Balance Approach to the Analysis of Communication Effects," <u>Advances in Experi-</u> <u>mental Social Psychology</u>, Vol. 3, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz. New York: Academic Press, 1967, pp. 100-165.
- Festinger, Leon. <u>A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance</u>. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957.



- Festinger, Leon. Conflict, Decision, and Dissonance. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- Freedman, Jonathan L., and David O. Sears. "Selective Exposure," Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Vol. II, ed. by L. Berkowitz. New York: Academic Press, 1965, pp. 58-98.
- Hovland, C. I., O. J. Harvey and M. Sherif. "Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Reactions to Communication and Attitude Change," <u>Basic Studies in Social Psychology</u>, ed. by H. Proshansky and B. Seidenberg. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965, pp. 186-196.
- Hovland, Carl I., Irving L. Janis and Harold H. Kelley. <u>Communication and Persuasion</u>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.
- Key, V. O., Jr. <u>The Responsible Electorate--Rationality in</u> <u>Voting 1936-1960</u>. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard, 1966.
- Klapper, Joseph. <u>The Effects of Mass Communication</u>. New York: The Free Press, 1960.
- Lang, Kurt, and Gladys Engel Lang. <u>Politics and Television</u>. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet. <u>The People's Choice--How the Voter Makes Up His</u> <u>Mind in a Presidential Campaign</u>. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944.
- Lipset, S. M., <u>et al.</u> "Psychology of Voting: an Analysis of Political Behavior," <u>Handbook of Social Psychology</u>, II, ed. by Gardner Lindzey. Cambridge, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1954, Chapter 30, pp. 1124-1170.
- MacNeil, Robert. <u>The People Machine: The Influence of</u> <u>Television on American Politics</u>. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.
- McGinniss, Joe. The Selling of the President 1968. New York: Trident, 1969.
- Perry, James M. The New Politics, The Expanding Technology of Political Manipulation. New York: Potter, 1968.



- Pool, Ithiel de Sola. "The Effect of Communication on Voting Behavior," <u>The Science of Human Communication</u>, ed. by Wilbur Schramm. New York: Basic Books, 1963, pp. 128-138.
- Pool, Ithiel de Sola, Robert Abelson and Samuel Popkin. <u>Candidates, Issues and Strategies: A Computer Simu-</u> <u>lation of the 1960 and 1964 Presidential Elections</u>. <u>Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1964</u>.
- Robinson, John P., Jerrold G. Rusk and Kendra B. Head. <u>Measures of Political Attitudes</u>. Ann Arbor: Survey Research Center, 1968.
- Rosenberg, M. J., and R. P. Abelson. "An Analysis of Cognitive Balancing," <u>Attitude Change and Organization</u>, ed. by C. I. Hovland and M. J. Rosenberg. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960, pp. 112-163.
- Rubin, Bernard. <u>Political Television</u>. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1967.
- Tannenbaum, Percy. "The Congruity Principle Revisited: Studies in the Reduction, Induction and Generalization of Persuasion," <u>Advances in Experimental</u> <u>Social Psychology</u>, Vol. 3, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz. New York: Academic Press, 1967, pp. 272-320.
- White, Theodore. The Making of the President 1960. New York: Atheneum, 1962.
- <u>The Making of the President 1964</u>. New York: Atheneum, 1965.
- _____. The Making of the President 1968. New York: Atheneum 1969.

Articles

- Abelson, Robert P., and Alex Bernstein. "A Computer Simulation Model of Community Referendum Controversies," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXVII, No. 1 (Spring, 1963), 93-122.
- Alexander, Herbert E., and Harold B. Meyers. "A Financial Landslide for the G.O.P.," <u>Fortune</u>, March, 1970, 104-105, 186-189.

American Political Science Review, 1959-1969.



- Bartley, Robert. "Did 1968 Win Forecast GOP Era?" Wall Street Journal, Sept. 10, 1969.
- Becker, Jerome D., and Ivan L. Preston. "Media Usage and Political Activity," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring, 1969), 129-134.
- Campbell, Angus. "Surge and Decline: A Study of Electoral Change," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXIV, No. 3 (Fall, 1960), 397-418.
- Cartwright, Dorwin, and Frank Harary. "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory," <u>Psychological</u> Review, Vol. 63, No. 5 (Sept., 1956), 277-293.
- Clausen, Aage R. "Response Validity: Vote Report," Public <u>Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXXII, No. 4 (Winter, 1968-69), 588-606.
- Converse, Philip, Angus Campbell, Warren E. Miller and Donald Stokes. "Stability and Change in 1960: A Reinstating Election," <u>American Political Science</u> Review, LV, No. 2 (June, 1961), 269-280.
- Converse, Philip E. "Information Flow and the Stability of Partisan Attitudes," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXVI, No. 3 (Fall, 1962), 578-599.
- Converse, Philip E., Aage Clausen and Warren E. Miller. "Electoral Myth and Reality: The 1964 Election," American Political Science Review, LIX, No. 2 (June, 1965), 321-336.
- Feather, N. T. "A Structural Balance Model of Communication Effects," Psychological Review, 71 (1964), 291-313.
- Glaser, William A. "The Family and Voting Turnout," <u>Public</u> <u>opinion Quarterly</u>, XXIII, No. 4 (Winter, 1959-60), 563-570.
- Goldberg, Arthur S. "Discerning a Causal Pattern Among Data on Voting Behavior," <u>American Political Science</u> <u>Review</u>, LX, No. 4 (Dec., 1966), 913-922.
- Goldberg, Arthur S. "Social Determinism and Rationality as Bases of Party Identification," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LXIII, No. 1 (March, 1969), 5-25.
- Greenberg, Bradley S. "Voting Intentions, Election Expectations and Exposure to Campaign Information," <u>Journal</u> of Communication, XV, No. 3 (Sept., 1965), 149-160.


- Heider, F. "Attitudes and Cognitive Organization," Journal of Psychology, 21 (1946), 107-112.
- Hooper, Michael. "Party and Newspaper Endorsement as Predictors of Voter Choice," <u>Journalism Quarterly</u>, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Summer, 1969), 302-305.

Journalism Quarterly, 1959-early 1970.

- King, Robert, and Martin Schnitzer. "Contemporary Use of Private Political Polling," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXXII, No. 3 (Fall, 1968), 431-436.
- McClosky, Herbert, and Harold E. Dahlgren. "Primary Group Influence on Party Loyalty," <u>American Political Sci</u>ence Review, LIII, No. 3 (September, 1959), 757-776.
- McCombs, Maxwell. "Editorial Endorsements: A Study of Influence," Journalism Quarterly, 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1967), 545-548.
- McDowell, James L. "The Role of Newspapers in Illinois' At-Large Election," Journalism Quarterly, 42, No. 2 (Spring, 1965), 281-284.
- McGrath, Joseph E., and Marion F. McGrath. "Effects of Partisanship on Perceptions of Political Figures," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXVI, No. 2 (Summer, 1962), 236-248.
- Newcomb, T, M. "An Approach to the Study of Communicative Acts," Psychological Review, 60 (1953), 393-404.
- Osgood, C. E., and P. H. Tannenbaum. "The Principle of Congruity in the Prediction of Attitude Change," <u>Psy-</u> chological Review, 62 (1955), 42-55.
- Pool, Ithiel de Sola, and Robert Abelson. "The Simulmatics Project," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXV, No. 2 (Summer, 1961), 167-183.

Public Opinion Quarterly, 1959-early 1970.

Sigel, Roberta S. "Effect of Partisanship on the Perception of Political Candidates," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXVIII, No. 3 (Fall, 1964), 483-496.

Social Forces, 1959-1969.

Stacey, Barrie. "Inter-generation Mobility and Voting," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXX, No. 1 (Spring, 1966), 133-139.

- Stokes, Donald E. "Some Dynamic Elements of Contests for the Presidency," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LX, No. 1 (March, 1966), 19-28.
- Willis, Charles R. "Analysis of Voter Response to School Financial Proposals," <u>Public Opinion Quarterly</u>, XXXI, No. 4 (Winter, 1967-1968), 648-651.
- Wilson, James Q., and Edward C. Banfield. "Public Regardingness as a Value Premise in Voting Behavior," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LVIII, No. 4 (December, 1964), 869-875.

Unpublished Reports

- Barber, James A., Jr. "Social Mobility and Political Behavior." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1965.
- Haney, Roger D. "Cross-Pressures, Communication Behavior and the Hereditary Vote." Unpublished master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1967.
- Herrick, Merlyn C. "The Effect of Problem-Setting Questions on Rate and Amount of Learning in Programming Teaching Machines." Unpublished (mimeograph) research report. Bloomington: Audio Visual Center, Extension Division, Division of Educational Media, School of Education, Indiana University, May, 1962.
- Republican State Central and Executive Committee of Ohio. "Highlights of the 108th General Assembly (First Session)." Unpublished mimeographed report, Columbus, Ohio, Fall, 1969.
- Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Pre-Election Study and Post-Election Study questionnaires 1964 Project 473; 1968 Project 45523.
- University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. Key word search of dissertations 1950-1970 showed no references under key words "Political Communication," "Political Message," "Message."
- Wilson, Gary B. "Purposeful Ambiguity: An Exploratory Investigation." Unpublished ditto manuscript, Dept. of Communication, Michigan State University, Spring, 1968.



Wilson, Gary B. "The Use of Ambiguity as a Message Strategy." Unpublished ditto manuscript, Dept. of Communication, Michigan State University, June, 1969.

Personal Interviews

- Collier, Howard, Director of Finance, State of Ohio. Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 8, 1969.
- Duryee, Harold, Republican State Central and Executive Committee. Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 6, 7, 8, 1969.
- Hall, John H., Assistant Executive Secretary, Governmental Services, Ohio Education Association. Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 6, 1969.
- Teeter, Robert, Market Opinion Research. Detroit, Michigan. Frequent interviews, April, August, September, 1969; January-March, 1970.
- Stockmeyer, Stephen, Market Opinion Research. Detroit, Michigan, April 3, 1969.







