Thinking Outside the Quality Box: The Impact of Candidate Motivations on Election Outcomes

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Explanations for election outcomes have commonly included incumbency and candidate quality. While these explanations have been successful, they do not wholly explain who wins or loses. To move beyond the concepts of incumbency and quality, a typology of candidates is developed based on their motivations for running. Hierarchical cluster analysis is employed to examine open-ended responses from state legislative candidates in nine states. The resulting typologies are found to be connected to influences on candidate emergence and perceptions of factors that influenced the election outcome. They also prove to be statistically significant predictors of election victory even when controlling for incumbency, quality, spending, and campaign professionalism. The findings should encourage others to move beyond conventional explanations of election outcomes.

Political science research has long focused on the types of candidates running for office to explain why certain people are more likely to win elections. Measurements have centered on whether candidates already hold the office they are seeking and whether nonincumbents are "quality" candidates, typically operationalized as holding prior elective office. Such measures have been accurate predictors of election outcomes. While these measures clearly have utility in helping to understand election outcomes, they have their limitations.

As a result of our reliance on limited candidate typologies when examining electoral outcomes, we have an incomplete understanding of both who runs for office and the structure of electoral competition. We propose a new way to think about which types of candidates are more likely to win elections that is based on their motivations for running and the ways in which these motivations shape election campaigns and outcomes. Using a nine-state survey of candidates for the state legislature, we utilize cluster analysis to develop a typology of these candidates based on their motivations. The results suggest there are a variety of motivations for running for the state legislature that do not neatly correspond to typical notions of incumbency and quality. More importantly, the results indicate these motivations for running are related to the probability of victory, even when controlling for a

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number of other factors such as campaign professionalism, spending, and position in race.

Candidate Characteristics and Election Outcomes

It is widely accepted that incumbent candidates for office are more likely to win than any other type of candidate—remarkably high reelection rates are a testament to this fact. However, not all incumbents win; some are defeated. Why do they lose? And what explains victory in open seat races? Essentially, research has found that quality candidates are more likely to defeat incumbents and to win open seat elections than are non-quality candidates (Bond, Fleisher, and Talbert 1997; Jacobson 2001; Krasno 1994).

While incumbency can be quantified in a straight forward manner, it is more difficult to measure quality. Most commonly, quality has been operationalized as previous experience in elective office, fundraising prowess, or some combination thereof (Abramowitz 1988; Bianco 1984; Born 1986; Jacobson 1989, 2001; Jacobson and Kernell 1981). Others have included additional criteria in their measurement of quality. For instance, Green and Krasno (1988) rate as more qualified those with celebrity status, occupational status, previous experience running for office, and a history of party activism. Squire and Smith (1996) also seek to expand on the notion of candidate quality by breaking the measure into two components: profile and skill. Profile refers to the prominence of the candidate's previous experience in the new district, while skill refers to the personal characteristics that strengthen his or her appeal to new constituents, both of which are positively linked to candidate vote totals.

But such an exclusive focus on incumbency and quality has limitations. While useful predictors, they are far from perfect, and there is certainly room for other explanations. For example, congressional incumbents were very successful over the period 1960-1994, but they did lose 5.3 percent of the time.[1] And in 45 percent of these losses, they were beat by a non-quality challenger who had not held prior elective office. Moreover, when a non-quality candidate faced someone who held prior elective office in an open seat contest, the former won almost a quarter (24%) of the time. Quality, and especially incumbency, clearly help explain who wins elections, but they are not the whole story.

We believe it is time to move outside the candidate quality box and examine some additional, more nuanced explanations for election outcomes. One fertile source may be the candidate emergence literature, which has developed different ways to think about candidates based on why they decide to run for office. This literature has identified a number of factors that influence the entry decision of potential candidates, such as the political

opportunity structure and perceptions of that structure (Maisel and Stone 1997; Schlesinger 1966), the partisan and ideological interests of potential candidates (Fox and Lawless 2005), contact by political parties (Maestas, Maisel, and Stone 2005), and perceptions of one's personal qualities such as the grasp a potential candidate has on the issues and dedication to public service (Maisel, Stone, and Maestas 1999).

It seems logical to assume a connection between these motivations for running and the organization and eventual success of a campaign. The choices people make in any context are rooted in their motivations for action. Different motivations will lead candidates to behave differently and organize their campaigns in various ways. Candidates make numerous choices in organizing and running their campaigns (see Herrnson 1992 and Howell 1982). For example, drawing on the candidate emergence literature, people who are influenced by political opportunity structure and perceptions of that structure often seek to maximize their chances of winning by waiting until the conditions are optimal (Maisel and Stone 1997). Presumably such candidates will also seek to maximize their chances of winning by running a highly efficient and professional campaign. Contact by political parties bolsters a potential candidate's likelihood of running for office by signaling to these individuals that their chances of winning are greater and that they can expect more support from the party (Maestas, Maisel, and Stone 2005). Thus, persons motivated by contact from a political party may receive more resources from parties and from other sources due to their connection to party networks. Such candidates may have the ability to run more effective campaigns.

Fox and Lawless (2005) found that individuals who were motivated by a passion for issues were more likely to consider running for office. These types of candidates may resemble Canon's (1990) policy amateurs who are more interested in bringing a specific issue before the public or shaping policy than in winning. Surely, those motivated to run for office by a salient issue will focus campaign activities on communicating directly with voters about that issue. Candidates motivated by a sense of dedication to public service may not be willing to invest as much in their campaign and may be more akin to "sacrificial lambs." Those who are motivated by this sense of duty tend to be poorly funded and run against tremendous odds when they run as non-incumbents (Canon 1990).

It seems likely that the reasons candidates run for political office shape the choices they must make about how they are to run for office. These choices likely impact their chances of electoral success. So if those motivated by the opportunity structure or by political parties are more likely to act strategically, then they should have more resources. Challengers who have more resources available to them are more likely to win (Gierzynski

and Breaux 1991), while incumbents with more resources are more likely to deter challengers (Hogan 2001). Such strategic behavior should lead to increased chances of winning (Van Dunk 1997). Candidates motivated by issues tend to be less strategic in their behavior and are less concerned with electoral goals (Canon 1990) and so may be less likely to win. Duty motivated candidates, though, would seem to be least likely to win given that evidence suggests they are least strategic in their behavior (Canon 1990). In the end, motivations are likely to make a difference during the election campaign and on election day. If motivations are related to campaign organization and behavior and organization and behavior are related to outcomes, ultimately these motivations may be related to whether or not a campaign is successful. Moreover, these motivations are distinct from quality (though they may be related) and therefore represent a separate dimension of candidate characteristics.

Thus, we believe it is time to move outside the candidate quality box and examine the ways in which the emergence process—by reflecting motivations for running, campaign perspectives, and decisions about organization—ultimately influences prospects for victory. This is not to say that measures of candidate quality are unimportant in understanding election outcomes. Clearly, these measures have proven their utility. Yet, some of the variance in election outcomes is still unexplained in models including measures of incumbency and quality, and candidate motivations may help to explain who wins and who loses.

Data

We explore the connections between motivations and electoral results using data from the Election Dynamics Project (EDP), a nine-state survey of state legislative candidates in the 1996 general election cycle. Major party candidates from Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin were asked a variety of questions about their candidacy and campaign as well as about their personal beliefs and background. While these states do not represent a random sample of the U.S. states, they were chosen because there is a good deal of variation on key political characteristics, such as political competition, party control of the legislature and legislative professionalization. In this election cycle, surveys were sent out in three waves to 1,686 candidates and approximately 53 percent (887 candidates) responded.[2]

As part of the survey, candidates were asked about their motivations for running for office in that particular election cycle. Specifically, candidates were asked, "Our next question is more open-ended. We are interested in your own views on running for office in 1996. What is it about 1996 that

makes it an important or opportune time to run for the state legislature?" Respondents were then asked to offer their comments on this question on the survey and 446 respondents completed the open-ended question.

Because not all respondents completed this question, it is important to assess whether they are representative of the full sample. The balance between Democrats and Republicans is very similar in the sample and the subsample; the full sample was 51.4 percent Democratic, while the subsample was 52.7 percent Democratic. The major difference seems to be that the subsample has fewer incumbents (35.6% in the subsample versus 45.7% in the full sample) and more challengers (40.7% in the subsample versus 34.3% in the full sample)—and these differences likely account for the divergence in election outcomes, as the subsample contains more losing candidates (8.4% more). While these differences are apparent, they are not great. Moreover, there are certainly adequate numbers in each of the different categories to assess covariation with the other variables in the study.

The open-ended question allows us to examine the differing motivations of candidates and how these motivations relate to their success. The very specific reference to 1996 in the question was intended to elicit responses that were very concrete and that related to that particular bid for office (as opposed to framing the question about running for political office in general). As with any cross-sectional sample, peculiarities of the time period may affect the patterns in the data. The 1996 election followed the unusual 1994 election in which Republicans made major gains in many state legislatures and in the U.S. Congress. If the 1996 election stands out in any way, it is likely to be the extent to which candidates perceived their races in light of a generally recognized shift toward the Republicans in the wake of 1994.

A Typology of Candidate Motivations

As it is possible for candidates to be motivated by several factors, our method for coding the responses allowed for more than one motivation per candidate, and many expressed more than one in their responses. In fact, close to half (44%) expressed more than one motivation and some as many as four. As a result, the raw data coded from this open-ended question comprise seven dummy variables rather than a single categorical variable. Two coders read the open-ended responses and used an additive procedure for identifying motivations (i.e., if coders identified different motivations in a case, both motivations were coded for that respondent). The coding process began with no firm ideas about what motivations would be found. After some preliminary testing, the coders agreed that seven basic motivations adequately captured almost all of the content in the candidates' responses. This rubric was then used to code all of the responses. The motivations are

presented below, along with the percentage of the valid respondents who expressed that motivation.

1. *ideology*: candidates discussed their basic ideological principles and their interest in realizing those principles (18.4%).
2. *issues*: many candidates cited some specific issue (or issues) that was of great concern to them and about which they felt is was important to do something (44.6%).
3. *party*: references to the party and a willingness to use it or shape it were common (28.3%).
4. *opportunity*: many candidates simply expressed the notion that the time was right or that some set of circumstances was favorable to their running (31.2%).
5. *duty*: a sense of obligation was often expressed as a reason for running (24.7%).
6. *representation*: the need to fight for a group or interest to which the candidate belonged or identified was expressed by some (6.3%).
7. *term limits*: some candidates mentioned term limits as a reason to run, both as creating an opportunity—though no states in our sample had termed-out legislators in 1996—and as a particular issue about which they felt it was important to get involved (5.4%).[3]

Because many candidates expressed multiple motivations, they cannot be sorted into a typology based simply on a single motivation. To create a typology, we utilized hierarchical cluster analysis.[4] Cluster analysis assigns cases to groups, or clusters, by assessing the similarity (or difference) among cases on some set of variables. Unlike factor analysis, in which each case gets a score on each factor, cases in cluster analysis are assigned to only one group. The procedure produces a cluster membership variable indicating in which group each case belongs. In hierarchical cluster analysis, clusters nestle within higher order clusters that include several smaller clusters. Thus, there are several cluster-membership variables—one for each of the *k*-cluster solutions.

This analysis uses a between-groups, or group average, linkage function, which is appropriate for binary data (Everitt, Landau, and Leese 2001).[5] In this agglomerative method, cluster distance is defined by taking the average distance between all pairs of cases across the clusters. Roughly speaking, the procedure seeks to form clusters that minimize the distance within clusters and maximize the distance between them.

The major choice in the analysis was which measure of similarity, or proximity, would be employed to capture the distance between cases. There are numerous proximity measures that are appropriate for binary data. The

main difference amongst these is whether they count as a match two cases that both do not have a particular characteristic (i.e., coded 0, 0). In our data, it is not sensible to count as similar two cases that *lack* a large number of common motivations, especially given the open ended nature of the responses. Rather, we are seeking to cluster candidates whose *expressed* motivations are similar. As a result, we use the Jaccard coefficient, which excludes co-absences from its calculation (Everitt, Landau, and Leese 2001).[6]

The results from the cluster analysis are presented in the dendogram in Figure 1. Each tick along the bottom represents a single case, and the vertical height of the horizontal bars that joins the sets of cases together represents the degree of proximity among the cases or groups of cases. Cases or groups of cases that join at lower points are more similar than those joined higher up. The dendogram reveals a relatively clear structure with little evidence of chaining.[7] The clusters map out the motivations to run in very clear ways. The hierarchy reveals seven discernable clusters that sort nicely into a set of five clusters; these five nest clearly into a set of three clusters. We will focus on the five-cluster solution first.

At the far left are cases that belong to a *party* cluster. As Table 1 shows, all of these candidates expressed a party motivation, though many expressed additional motivations. The next cluster is the *opportunity* cluster. Again, all of these candidates expressed opportunity as a motivation to run (see Table 1). Following from the previous research, we expect that candidates who fall into the party or opportunity clusters to be the most likely to win as they are expected to act the most strategically. The next cluster is defined by *duty*. At the far right of the duty cluster, there is a set of cases that merges with the main duty cluster at a relatively high level. These cases, which constitute one of the additional clusters in the seven-cluster solution, all expressed representation as a motivation for running. The number of cases is really too small for analytical purposes, and so it is reasonable to fold them into the larger duty cluster. Moreover, the cluster analysis suggests their profiles, aside from the representation motivation, are similar to those in the duty cluster. Their inclusion in the duty cluster, however, means that only 94.6 percent of the cases in the duty cluster actually expressed duty as a motivation (see Table 1). We believe these candidates will be the least likely to win as Canon (1990) notes these types of candidates tend not to be very strategic and often run against large odds. The *ideology* cluster is next, in which 100 percent of the candidates expressed an ideological motivation. On the one hand, these candidates may resemble the issue motivated, discussed below, and may be expected to have moderate electoral success as a result. On the other hand, their ideological motivations may cause them to position themselves too far to the left or right, a decision that usually harms

Figure 1. Motivations for Running: Dendogram for Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

Note: The hierarchical cluster analysis utilized Jaccard's measure of proximity and between-group (group average) linkage.

Table 1. Profiles of Clusters Drawn from Hierarchical Cluster Analysis

	N	Ideology	Issues	Opportunity	Duty	Party	Representation	Term Limits
Party Cluster	84	17.9	32.1	3.6	14.3	100.0	1.2	0.0
Opportunity Cluster	98	0.0	7.1	100.0	3.1	36.7	0.0	4.1
Duty Cluster	92	4.3	27.2	23.9	94.6	1.1	13.0	1.1
Ideology Cluster	62	100.0	54.8	11.3	12.9	0.0	4.8	6.5
Issues Cluster	110	0.9	96.4	8.2	0.0	4.5	10.9	13.6
All Cases	446	18.4	44.5	31.1	24.6	28.2	6.3	5.4

Note: Values are percentage of cases in each cluster expressing the given motivation to run. Because respondents could express more than one motivation, neither rows nor columns sum to 100 percent.

candidates (Erikson and Wright 2005). Finally, the *issues* cluster completes the five-cluster set. As Table 1 shows, 96.4 percent of the cases in this cluster expressed issues as a motivation. The lack of unanimity is due to the inclusion of a discernable sub-cluster at the far right containing candidates who discussed term limits in their motivation to run. This cluster is the seventh cluster in the seven-cluster solution. But like the representation cluster, there are too few cases to be useful. And, again, their profiles resemble those in the issues cluster, even when they do not explicitly discuss issues in their responses.[8] We expect the issue-motivated candidates to fall between the party and opportunity clusters on one hand and the duty cluster on the other in terms of the probability of winning. Their interest in promoting an issue agenda may undercut their willingness to create a purely efficient campaign, but they are likely more politically savvy than the duty motivated.

We believe it is also useful to look at the candidates using a three-cluster solution. In this typology, the party and opportunity clusters are merged to form an *external* motivation cluster. The motivation for these candidates comes from an outside source. Likewise, ideology and issues are combined into an *internal* motivation cluster. These candidates are motivated by their own personal beliefs and attitudes. The duty cluster contains the same cases as in the five-cluster solution. As the analysis below will make clear, important differences emerge among those who are motivated primarily by the external environment, those who are driven by their own internal beliefs and values and those who run out of a sense of duty.

Explaining Who Wins and Loses

Because different types of candidates may vary in how they think, organize their campaigns, attract support from different sectors and appeal to voters, it seems reasonable to expect that the clusters we have uncovered might explain patterns of victory and defeat. To explore this possibility, we construct a multivariate model of election victory.

The first independent variable we include is the *candidate's position* in the race. This variable is based on traditional measures of candidate type, namely incumbency and quality, measured as previous elected experience. We construct a set of dummy variables from a five-category position variable to code each possible position: incumbents, experienced open seat candidates, inexperienced open seat candidates, experienced challengers, and inexperienced challengers. The excluded category comprises incumbents, so the remaining dummies indicate the effect of each position relative to incumbents.

Position does correspond somewhat to the clusters in explicable ways, with incumbents tending to be internally motivated, open seat candidates tending to be externally motivated and challengers tending to be duty motivated and, to a lesser extent, externally motivated (depending partly on experience). However, the relationships are not that strong. The relationship between the three-cluster variable and the five-category position variable produces a Cramer's V of only .22. So, clearly, the clusters are capturing more than the traditional measures of candidate type.

The second variable we include, again well documented, is *campaign spending*. Because absolute spending levels can vary from state to state and even district to district, we standardize this variable by taking each candidate's proportion of total major-party expenditures in the race.[9] Because so much of the persuasion and mobilization processes critical to campaigns require money, spending is a good measure of campaign effort. Imbalances in effort, reflected in one candidate spending a larger proportion of the money in the election, should correspond to more lopsided election outcomes. As noted above, previous research tends to operationalize quality as some combination of previous experience in office and campaign spending, so with both of these variables in the model, we are controlling for most commonly utilized indicators of candidate quality. Thus, any effect we find for our motivations variables comes over and above the effect of "quality." Spending does correlate with the clusters, but we expect at least part of that covariation reflects the clusters' association with position in the race.

Next, we have added into the model a measure of *campaign professionalism*. This variable, based on a measure created by Herrnson (1992), records the number of campaign services (0-8) for which the candidate used hired staff or paid consultants.[10] While the ability to run a professional campaign is definitely related to the ability to raise campaign funds, we find only a moderately strong correlation with total campaign spending (r = .60) and percentage spending (r = .22), indicating it is a different dimension of campaign effort. We do find a statistically significant, though weak, correlation between campaign professionalism and victory (r = .13).

We ran the logit model predicting election victory with both the *five-cluster* and *three-cluster motivation-to-run* variables. We have coded these clusters as a set of deviation dummy variables.[11] The coefficient for each dummy therefore represents its effect relative to the mean effect for all cases. The excluded categories for the five-cluster and three-cluster variables are ideology and internal, respectively.

The results are presented in Table 2. First, it is clear that position is a strong predictor of victory. The logit results produce a test of statistical significance for the set of dummies as a whole (identified as Position), which is easily significant at the .001 level. Each of the individual dummies is

Table 2. Explaining Election Victory: Logistic Regression Using the Motivations Variable

	Five-Cluster Variable			Three-Cluster Variable		
	B	Standard Error	Signifi-cance	B	Standard Error	Signifi-cance
Constant	-1.878			-1.713		
Position (Incumbent Excluded)			.000			.000
Experienced Open Seat Candidate	-1.942	.705	.006	-1.917	.692	.006
Inexperienced Open Seat Candidate	-2.522	.715	.000	-2.194	.638	.001
Experienced Challenger	-3.018	.693	.000	-2.880	.651	.000
Inexperienced Challenger	-5.216	.857	.000	-5.047	.820	.000
Campaign Spending	8.665	1.279	.000	8.743	1.253	.000
Campaign Professionalism	-.240	.140	.087	-.237	.139	.088
Five-Cluster (Ideology Excluded)			.017			
Party	-.880	.495	.075			
Duty	1.527	.512	.003			
Issues	.543	.481	.259			
Opportunity	-.221	.410	.590			
Three-Cluster (Internal Excluded)						.011
Duty				1.164	.417	.000
External				-.788	.316	.013

Note: For Five-Cluster, N = 368; Nagelkerke R^2 = .84; -2LL = 142.368. For Three-Cluster, N = 368; Nagelkerke R^2 = .84; -2LL = 146.418. The categorical variable "Position" is coded as a set of indicator comparisons such that each variable represents its effect relative to the excluded category, Incumbent. The categorical variable "Cluster" is coded as a set of deviation comparisons, such that each variable represents its effect relative to the mean effect of all cases (the excluded category is represented by "-1" on all of the dummies instead of "0" as is done with traditional indicator comparisons). Campaign Spending is the candidate's proportion of the two-party total expenditure. Campaign Professionalism is the number of services (0-8) for which the candidate used hired staff or paid consultant.

significant as well. As expected, candidates in each category are less likely than incumbents to win, and there is a clear monotonic decrease down the list of dummy variables. Open seat candidates are more likely to win than challengers, and experienced candidates more likely than the inexperienced. The results are very similar in both the five- and three-cluster models.

Campaign spending also has a clear, statistically significant effect on victory in both models. The campaign professionalism variable, on the other hand, is actually negative, suggesting more professionalized campaigns are less likely to win, but the variable is not statistically significant. Whatever covariation existed between professionalism and victory clearly results from professionalism's connection to other variables in the model.

Finally, the models reveal that the motivation-to-run typology is a statistically significant predictor of election victory. A candidate's motivation to run predicts who wins or loses, even after controlling for position in race, campaign spending and campaign professionalism. The overall set of variables (identified as Cluster) is significant at the .05 level in both models.

In order to understand which clusters are more or less likely to win, and how big the differences are, we computed predicted probabilities of victory for the five-cluster model and graphed these probabilities. Figure 2 displays the probability of victory for each of the five clusters within each of the positions, while holding campaign spending and campaign professionalism at their means. Clearly, incumbents are highly likely to win, no matter what cluster they fall into. The probabilities are above .75 for all incumbent-cluster combinations. Moreover, there is a clear drop-off from left to right in the probability of victory, with inexperienced challengers in any cluster highly unlikely to win.

However, the impact of motivation-to-run on chances of victory appears to be almost as powerful as position in race. Within each position, there are clear differences in the probability of victory across the motivation types. Contrary to our expectations, the duty motivated are clearly more likely to win than any other cluster, even controlling for position in race. The issue motivated are next most likely to win, followed by opportunity. Then there is a considerable drop to the party and ideology clusters. The differences across the clusters are impressive. The difference between the duty motivated and ideology motivated amongst inexperienced open seat candidates is .553, which is similar to the differences amongst experienced open seat candidates and experienced challengers. The differences amongst incumbents and inexperienced challengers are smaller, but certainly not negligible. Among incumbents, the duty motivated are almost assured of victory (p = .976), while among inexperienced challengers, the duty motivated are the only cluster to have a better than a one-in-ten shot of winning (p = .183).

Figure 2. Probability of Victory, Holding Campaign Spending, and Campaign Professionalism at their Means
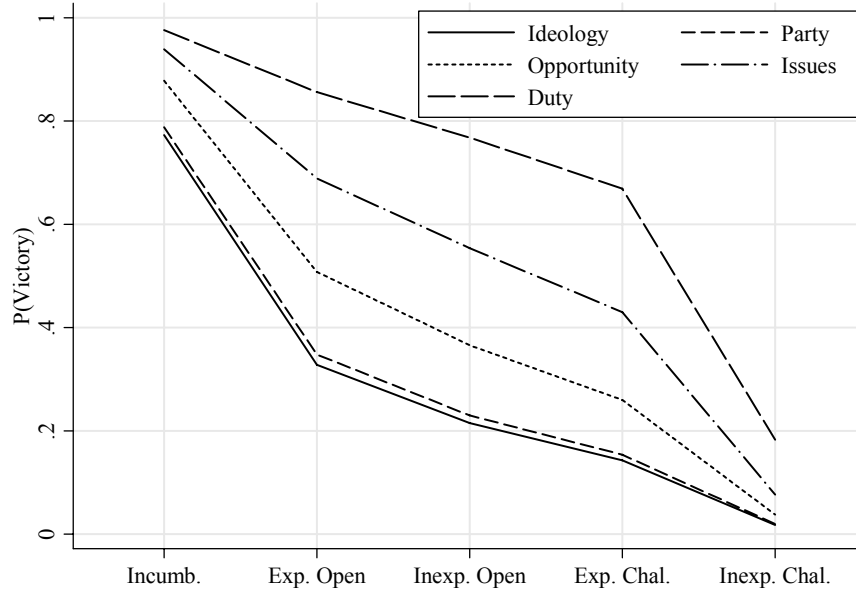
Note: Predicted probabilities are based on logistic regression equation in Table 2.

One possible objection to these probability calculations is that the combination of variables representing each data point is uncommon in some cases. For instance, if duty motivated candidates do not typically raise much money or have very professionalized campaigns, the calculated probability of victory will be artificially inflated by setting spending and professionalism at their means for the entire population of candidates. To check for this possibility, we have recalculated the probabilities holding spending and professionalism at the means *for each cluster*. Figure 3 displays these probabilities. The probability of success for the ideology motivated rises somewhat, while the probabilities for the party cluster drop. The opportunity cluster changes minimally, rising slightly, while the issue cluster is much more likely to win than it first appeared. Finally, the chances of victory among the duty motivated drops noticeably, though it is still higher than all other clusters except the issue motivated, who clearly stand out. The change in the predicted probabilities for the issue motivated is due to the fact that they are particularly well funded. While the average share of spending for the entire sample is 49.9 percent, it is 61.9 percent among the issue motivated. Finally,

**Figure 3. Probability of Victory, Holding Campaign Spending,
and Campaign Professionalism at their Means for each Cluster**
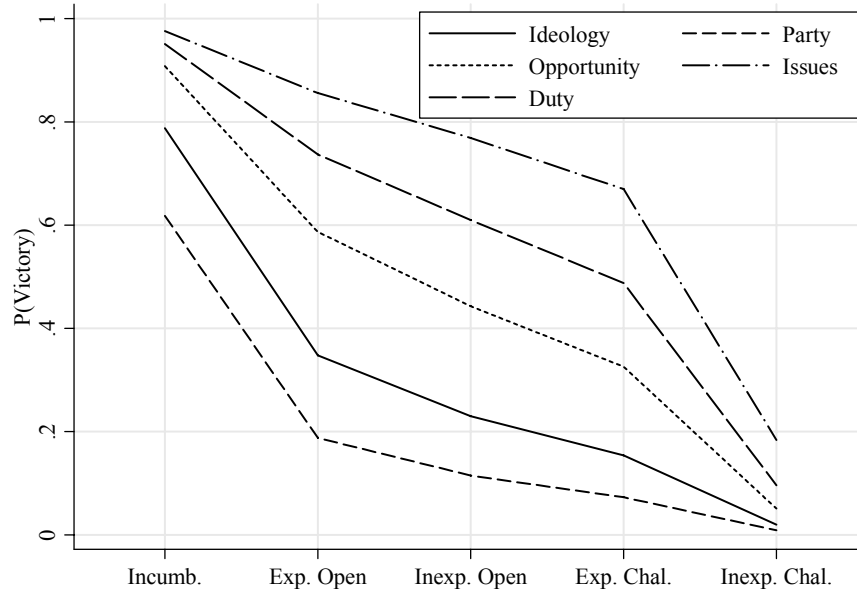
Note: Predicted probabilities are based on logistic regression equation in Table 2.

it must be noted that although the relative success of the clusters changes, the differences across the clusters are still very large. The magnitude of the differences is almost as large as those for the position variable. Clearly, motivation to run helps to predict the winners and losers in state legislative elections.

Motivations and Campaigns

This analysis has utilized a new typology of candidates based on their motivations for running. We have shown that candidates have different reasons for running for office and that these motivations are related to their ability to win elective office. In this section, we explore how motivations might be reflected in campaign structure and decision making in ways that explain the connections between motivations and election outcomes.

Our expectations have not been wholly supported. While we hypothesized candidates driven by opportunity would be more strategic and thus more effective than those driven by issues, the data suggest a different portrait. The opportunity motivated have only a moderate probability of

success, all other things equal, while the issue motivated are among the most successful. What accounts for these counterintuitive findings? One clue might be found in the types of factors that push candidates to emerge, which provide more contextual information about both motivations and campaign operations. In the decision to run, we find that externally-motivated candidates are significantly more likely than other candidates to report being influenced by the state political party, the state legislative campaign committee and PACs (Table 3). Thus, these candidates emerge because of notable external influences from major players in the electoral arena. Additionally, these candidates more than others rate highly the importance of statewide and national political and partisan trends as influences on the election outcomes (Table 4). These candidates seem to be particularly reliant on external forces to orient their campaigns. In some ways, these candidates resemble the professionals in the amateur-professional typology of party activists (see, for example, Conway and Feigert 1968). It is natural to expect that their campaigns would draw heavily from group and party support and that they would use a traditional strategy of outreach to the established political actors.

In contrast, the internally motivated have many of the characteristics of the amateur activists. As Table 4 shows, the data indicate the internally motivated, and particularly those motivated by issues, are more likely to see issues and the candidates' images and personalities as being more important in determining election outcomes. It seems likely their campaigns focus more on ideas and impressions and rely less on linkages with traditional electoral actors like parties.

These differences may explain the variation in electoral success across these groups. As the prominence of media-centric, candidate-centered campaigning has filtered down to the state legislative level, it is likely that those running slick, image- and message-driven campaigns will have an advantage over those relying on decreasingly relevant political organizations. In this light, the outstanding success of the issue motivated and the relatively poor showing of the party motivated makes sense.[12] On the other hand, the ideology motivated, while seemingly sharing many perceptions about the election with the issue motivated, do much worse. As we hypothesized, this may result from the problems ideologically extreme candidates have winning voters. This dynamic may have been exacerbated by the unique circumstances surrounding the 1996 election. After 1994, many ideologues may have been emboldened by the halcyon era of Gingrich conservatism and sought office in 1996 despite a lack of political or electoral acumen.

The major puzzle that emerges from this analysis is the relative success of the duty-motivated candidates. Previous characterizations of this type of candidate suggested ineffective, sure-to-lose underdogs. The results here

Table 3. Influences on Candidate Emergence: Mean Comparison Analysis

Cluster	Family & Friends	County Party	State Party	Office Holders	State Leg. Comm.	National Party	Labor Unions	Other Groups	PACs
Party	3.68	2.50	2.42	2.51	2.15	1.30	1.75	1.85	1.65
Opportunity	3.80	2.29	2.25	2.56	2.23	1.20	1.76	1.82	1.70
Duty	3.89	2.10	1.93	2.35	1.78	1.25	1.69	1.81	1.53
Ideology	3.87	2.42	2.03	2.68	2.05	1.21	1.60	2.03	1.45
Issues	3.79	2.12	2.03	2.31	1.90	1.15	1.48	1.75	1.40
Sig.	.837	.207	.103	.365	.133	.498	.359	.660	.173
Internal	3.82	2.23	2.03	2.45	1.96	1.17	1.52	1.86	1.42
Duty	3.89	2.10	1.93	2.35	1.78	1.25	1.69	1.81	1.53
External	3.74	2.39	2.33	2.53	2.19	1.25	1.75	1.84	1.67
Sig.	.641	.239	.031	.560	.040	.420	.141	.960	.047
All Cases	3.80	2.26	2.13	2.46	2.01	1.22	1.65	1.84	1.55

Note: Candidates were asked, "How important do you believe the following groups were in influencing your decision to run for the state legislature in 1996?" The response options were: 1) Not Important; 2) Slightly Important; 3) Moderately Important; 4) Very Important; 5) Extremely Important. Cell entries are mean responses for candidates in each cluster. Significance levels are p values drawn from F tests.

Table 4. Perceptions of Factors that Determined Election Outcome: Mean Comparison Analysis

Cluster	Candidates' Images & Personalities	Candidates' Party Affiliations	Issues	Incumbent's Advantages	Targeting by Own Party	Targeting by Opposition Party	Statewide Political/ Partisan Trends	National Political/ Partisan Trends
Party	3.32	4.16	2.58	3.89	2.34	2.77	2.93	2.80
Opportunity	3.32	3.87	2.88	3.41	2.36	2.58	3.06	2.83
Duty	3.57	3.74	2.70	3.73	2.43	2.69	2.70	2.70
Ideology	3.67	3.79	2.97	3.54	2.12	2.67	3.11	2.60
Issues	3.86	3.83	3.31	3.58	2.16	2.33	2.57	2.34
Sig.	.011	.107	.000	.210	.552	.322	.033	.066
Internal	3.79	3.81	3.18	3.56	2.14	2.46	2.77	2.43
Duty	3.57	3.74	2.70	3.73	2.43	2.69	2.70	2.70
External	3.32	4.01	2.74	3.65	2.35	2.67	3.00	2.82
Sig.	.002	.105	.000	.653	.224	.357	.151	.026
All Cases	3.55	3.87	2.90	3.63	2.29	2.59	2.85	2.65

Note: Candidates were asked, "How important do you believe the following factors were in determining the outcome of the election?" The response options were: 1) Not Important; 2) Slightly Important; 3) Moderately Important; 4) Very Important; 5) Extremely Important. Cell entries are mean responses for candidates in each cluster. Significance levels are p values drawn from F tests.

reveal they have a very high probability of electoral success. It is important to note, first of all, that our coding of duty does not necessarily capture one common image of the duty-motivated: the faithful organization candidate stepping up to the plate for the local party simply so there would be a name on the ballot. Such a candidate would probably have been coded as party motivated and may or may not be coded for duty, depending on the nature of the response. Even if both duty and party were coded, this candidate may have ended up in the party cluster, depending on their overall profile (14.3% of the party cluster also expressed duty as a motivation—see Table 1). It is interesting to note that the party motivated have one of the worst probabilities of electoral success, perhaps reflecting the inclusion of this kind of sacrificial-lamb candidate in the cluster. In contrast, many duty-motivated candidates talked about abstract notions of obligation such as the importance of getting involved in the political process or the desire to make a difference. These comments do not necessarily reflect electoral futility. On the other hand, they do not suggest any reasons to expect great electoral success, as the evidence indicates they enjoyed.

The data suggest they are not particularly distinguishable from other candidates in terms of the influences on their decision to run or their perceptions of factors that determined the election outcomes. Who are these candidates? Why do they win more than other types? No definitive explanation emerges from our data. Their races are no less competitive than other candidates. We do find the nonincumbents in this cluster are more likely than other clusters to have run for office before, which suggests the duty motivated may be more experienced in the campaign process. While 84 percent of internally motivated and 80 percent of externally motivated nonincumbents had never run, only 75 percent of the duty motivated were running for the first time. The differences are small, and not statistically significant, but it may be part of the explanation. The duty motivated, in being drawn to run more than once, may simply make fewer rookie mistakes.

The success of the duty motivated may also be connected to the circumstances of this particular election year. Canon (1990, 35) argues that those motivated by a sense of duty may be more likely to be swept into office during periods of electoral upheaval; such candidates frequently run as citizen politicians above politics. Given that our analysis occurs in the election cycle immediately following the impressive gains by the Republican party in 1994, it may be that these duty-motivated candidates were successful because they were less connected to political parties and politics as usual. This is, of course, only speculation, but it may help explain why those whom we expected to be least successful were in fact the most successful.

Discussion

By measuring candidates' motivations for seeking office, we have attempted to create a new way of understanding the differences among candidates that moves beyond incumbency and prior elective office. Our analysis suggests these motivations are related to the probability of running a successful campaign, even after controlling for position in race, campaign spending, and campaign professionalism.

Fundamentally, the results suggest it is useful to start thinking about the types of candidates running for office more broadly. Clearly, there is variation among candidates for political office beyond that described by measures of incumbency and quality that is yet to be explained. Our measures explain some of this additional variance, but we imagine there could be others, too.

We believe it would be fruitful for election scholars to focus more effort on describing the differences among candidates and how these relate to the structure and outcomes of campaigns and elections. While our measure is limited in that it comes as part of a survey of state legislative candidates, there are other, more widely available measures that could be utilized to broaden our understanding of electoral competition. For example, congressional candidates are required to report expenditure data to the FEC. Such data could be used to examine whether candidates who spend more on mailings or TV, who pay more to consultants, or who rely more on parties are more or less likely to win. Data on the timing of contributions could be examined to see if early money from party sources matters. Ultimately, we believe it is time to start thinking outside of the quality box to understand why candidates win or lose.

NOTES

[1]The data on candidate type and quality are those compiled by Gary C. Jacobson.

[2]In general, methodologists agree that mail survey response rates above 50 percent are adequate (Babbie 2004; Manheim, Rich, and Willnat 2002). There is some evidence, however, that mail surveys of elite populations may have lower response rates. Asch, Jedrziewski, and Christakis (1997) reviewed 321 mail surveys published in medical journals and found that while general population surveys averaged 68 percent response rates, mail surveys of physicians averaged 54 percent. In this light, the EDP response rate seems typical for this type of population. It is difficult to assess whether response bias is a problem as characteristics of the population—both winning and losing candidates—cannot easily be measured. However, responses were relatively evenly distributed between Democrats and Republicans and those who won and lost. Moreover, the characteristics of winning candidates who completed the survey and became state legislators can be compared to the full population of state legislators, for whom much data are available. A prior analysis (Jenkins 2006) using the EDP data found no significant differences

between the samples and the full legislatures in terms of partisanship, voting records or competitiveness of the races.

[3]Given the salience of term limits during this time period and the relatively high frequency this issue was mentioned in the responses, we decided to code term limits separately from the issues or opportunity cluster. Such a decision would allow us to fold these cases into either of those clusters at a later time or to examine them separately; we would not have had this option had we coded these mentions in either of the above categories.

[4]It is possible, of course, to simply use the seven dummy variables or scores from a factor analysis of them rather than creating a clean typology as we have done. Our decision to use the clusters rests in part on its coherence with other measures of candidate characteristics that sort them into clear types (incumbents, quality challengers, etc.). In addition, when the electoral outcomes model is run with the seven original dummies, the goodness of fit is inferior to the results using the clusters. The hierarchical cluster approach used here, unlike factor analysis, has the additional benefit of uncovering the ways in which motivations are related by describing the ways smaller clusters nestle together within larger clusters.

[5]This method is also known as the unweighted pair-group method using the average approach (UPGMA) (Everitt, Landau, and Leese 2001).

[6]Jaccard's coefficient is calculated for a pair of cases by dividing the number of matches (1, 1) on the seven variables by the sum of the matches (1, 1) and mismatches (0, 1 and 1, 0) (again, paired absences are ignored). We attempted the cluster analysis using a variety of different proximity measures, but none revealed the clustering in the data as clearly as Jaccard's.

[7]Chaining, in which a set of small, relatively unrelated groups are connected simply because they are adjacent, may appear in hierarchical cluster analysis.

[8]In many cases, the responses dealing with term limits treated term limits like an issue. That is, candidates wanted to do something about term limits (implement them, revoke them, etc.). In fact, it would have been reasonable to have simply coded these responses as having an issue motivation. As noted above, the decision to separate the term limits responses reflected our expectation that emergence motivated by this issue may have been unique, given the clear implications term limits have for the structure of electoral competition. As it turns out, there are too few cases to examine this possibility.

[9]Measuring spending as a proportion instead of total dollars is also justified by its much stronger bivariate correlation with victory: .77 vs. .18. Additionally, this approach avoids the problems of measuring spending's variable impact for incumbents and challengers. Incumbents may do worse when they spend more in total dollars, but incumbents (like any candidate) do the best when they spend the greatest share of the money.

[10]The EDP asked candidates whether they used a number of particular campaign services (campaign management, media advertising, voter registration, door-to-door canvassing, polling, fundraising, legal advice, accounting) and, if so, who provided the service (hired staff, paid consultants, party workers, other volunteers, the candidate).

[11]Practically speaking, the excluded category is represented by "-1" on all of the dummies instead of "0" as is done with traditional indicator comparisons.

[12]Interestingly, there is no statistically significant difference across the clusters in campaign professionalism, at least as it is measured here (use of professional services). A better measure of professionalism might reveal a relationship. The lack of association in these data hint that motivations may shape the content of the campaign more than professionalism does.

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