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POLITICAL POLLING AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

City University of New York

PH.D.

1980

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POLITICAL POLLING AND PRESIDENTAL ELECTIONS

By

Bruce E. Altschuler

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1980


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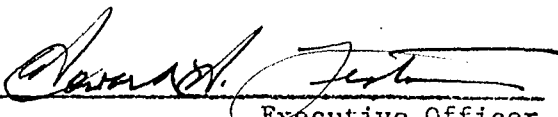
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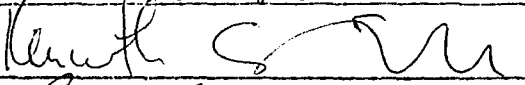
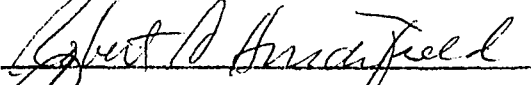

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL POLLING AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

by

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Adviser: Professor Edward Schneier

This dissertation examines the role played by private polls in presidential elections. It uses a decision-making analysis of several campaigns to do so. The three Democratic aspirants in 1968 were Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy, and Hubert Humphrey. How important private polls were for them and how these polls were used is seen by use of accounts of the campaign, studies of campaign memoranda, and interviews with top aides to the candidates. In addition, two more recent campaigns, those of George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter in 1976 are studied using secondary sources.

Seven major uses of polls are examined--the decision to run, candidate image, issues, subgroup breakdowns, resource allocation, leaks, and measuring the campaign's progress. I also attempt to discover why some campaigns make more use of polls than others. Finally, I ask whether private polls have added to or subtracted from election rationality and look at the few attempts by Congress and the pollsters themselves to regulate polls.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks must go to the participants in the three 1968 campaigns who provided answers to the numerous questions I asked them. They are too numerous to mention here but will find themselves acknowledged in footnotes throughout the text. Special thanks are due to those who saved documents from the campaign and kindly provided them, often along with helpful explanations, to me. Jeane and Evron Kirkpatrick, Gerald Hursh-Cesar, Charles Tyroler II, the Minnesota Historical Society, and Mrs. Muriel Humphrey gave me such access without which this dissertation would be much poorer.

I would also like to thank Edward Schneier and Kenneth Sherrill, my dissertation advisers, for their helpful advice. Most notably, I thank my family for their constant prodding without which I would probably still be working on my research. I only wish I had finished a little faster so my father could have lived to read this.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	The Perils of Studying Polls	1
2	The Humphrey Campaign of 1968	20
3	The McCarthy Campaign of 1968	82
4	The Kennedy Campaign of 1968	121
5	The McGovern Campaign of 1972	158
6	The Carter Campaign of 1976	192
7	The Polls: Uses and Consequences	229

CHAPTER I

THE PERILS OF STUDYING POLLS

In 1975, the Minnesota Republican Party was faced with a dilemma not unlike that of many other state parties. Party registration was declining and more and more new voters identified themselves as independents. Rather than reevaluating their policies or candidates, the Minnesota Republicans commissioned a poll. The poll told them a change of name would make voters more willing to identify with the party. The Republicans voted to change their name to Independent Republicans.

Shortly before his inauguration, Jimmy Carter received a "political strategy" memorandum from his influential campaign pollster Patrick Caddell urging him to stress style over substance. "Too many good people have been beaten because they tried to substitute substance for style," wrote Caddell in his 56 page memo which urged such symbolic actions as fireside chats, town meetings, and the reduction of the use of limousines by the presidential staff. These¹ recommendations were quickly adopted.

Political polls do not necessarily have to lead to such cosmetic changes. Like so much of modern technology, they are a tool that can be used for good or ill. Polls are the closest we have come to instant referenda on all political issues. At the same time, they can be used to deceive or manipulate or to "sell" candidates as if they

were simply another product.

Modern technology has completely changed the nature of the political campaign. Formerly, candidates worked through the party organization which provided the grass roots organization necessary to turn out favorable votes. Today it is possible to bypass the party by running a media oriented campaign which appeals directly to the voters. Some critics of current elections would argue that the elimination or curtailment of groups such as political parties and organized interests which mediate between the candidate and the electorate can lead to an atomized unstructured mass politics which divorces people from larger social purposes, making them highly susceptible to manipulation. They argue that this is made even worse if, as discussed below, today's campaigns also pay little attention to substantive issues. We will attempt to see just how much private polls have displaced the more traditional sources of political intelligence gathering as a means of discovering how best to appeal to voters.

Although we will focus on private polls in our study, we cannot view them in isolation from the rest of the campaign. We must therefore look at the purposes of elections, especially presidential elections. Gerald Pomper suggests four major purposes served by elections. These are as a linkage between official policies and the desires of voters, as a means of recruiting public officials with desired characteristics, as a way of developing competence and awareness among citizens, and as a means of promoting stability. For our study, the first two can be seen as most important for, if the public feels that their concerns are being discussed and the best qualified candidates selected, they are

likely to participate and to accept the results. We can therefore say that a presidential election should feature a discussion of the issues of most interest to the voters as well as an examination of those characteristics of the candidates most relevant to the presidency. For the voter to be able to make a rational choice, he must be able to determine the differences between candidates and assess how these differences would affect the realization of his most important politically related goals. Using this information, he can then vote for the candidate he believes most likely to help him achieve these goals.

However, what is rational for the voter is not necessarily rational for the candidate whose major goal is to win the election. If blurring distinctions and avoiding issues will help to win the election, the successful candidate will do so. This is where polls come in. They can provide the information which will tell the candidate whether to pursue such a strategy. We will therefore not only look at how private polls are used in presidential campaigns but at what effect they have on the information provided to the voter. If the voter is not given a meaningful choice, the result will be an ignorance of the issues that can only induce candidates to pay even less attention to these issues. As V. O. Key put it in an oft-quoted statement, "Fed a steady diet of buncombe, the people may come to expect and to respond with highest predictability to buncombe. And those leaders most skilled in the propagation of buncombe may gain lasting advantage in the recurring struggles for popular favor." Do polls lead candidates to pursue a strategy which frustrates the purposes

of presidential elections? We will look at this question in our concluding chapter.

In order to judge this better, we also must look inside the campaign at how decisions are formulated. How does the staff seek to achieve the goal of election? What role is played by polls? The role of polls should show up more clearly in internal campaign discussions than in simply looking at their results. Here we may see how rational behavior by the candidate makes elections less rational for the voter. We may also discover yet another rationality, that of the campaign staff. Some campaign aides may be interested in expanding their own influence, a goal different from that of the candidate as well as that of the electorate. We will examine what effect polls have on these three, possibly conflicting, sets of goals. As explained below, a decision-making analysis is the best way to approach these questions.

Why have I chosen to concentrate on private polls? While the use of both private and public polls has been growing by leaps and bounds, studies of the former are quite hard to find. Most general works about polling concentrate on the public polls. They discuss how polls affect the electorate (the so-called "bandwagon effect" being the most popular topic), explain polling and sampling techniques, and examine the possible abuses of polls. The better books discuss the possibilities and limits of the polls in measuring public opinion. Private polling has been dealt with in essentially three ways.

The first approach is the discussion of their work by the pollsters themselves. Thomas Benham, for example, has described the methods he used during the 1964 Goldwater campaign, but he does not describe what was done with the results.⁷ Louis Harris has also briefly described his experiences as a private pollster (he switched to public polling in 1963).⁸ According to Harris, polls are used primarily in three different ways:

1. Key group breakdowns. These show the possible make-up of a majority vote and indicate to a candidate where he is not meeting his goals.
2. Candidate image. This provides a measure of what the electorate thinks of a candidate, including such factors as name recognition, knowledge of his record, and deficiencies in his performance. Harris believes that, in this way, polls are able to provide negative information when advisers may not. "In the course of our wanderings through the political hinterlands," he writes, "we have had to tell the candidates that they were considered spineless, arrogant, stuffed shirts, loudmouths, cold, poor speakers, or were just plain unknown."⁹
3. Definition of issues.

Harris claims that while polls may influence which issues a candidate concentrates on, no poll he is aware of has made a candidate change his position on an issue. Although most pollsters would agree with the thrust of that statement, some would find exceptions. According to Lloyd Free, a

poll he took for the then Governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, in May 1967, showed overwhelming public support for joint development of nuclear power by private interests and a public authority. As a result, Rockefeller modified his earlier position in favor of private ownership.¹⁰ The line between changing ones emphasis and changing position can often be a narrow one. Thus, in 1966, when Joseph Napolitan told Congressman Henry Helstoski that 70% of the voters in his district favored continuing the bombing of North Vietnam, the latter dropped all mention of a bombing halt from his campaign, narrowly winning the election.¹¹

Harris claims that polls can change the results of an election by as much as four percent by telling a candidate where to channel his resources, which issues work best, and how to campaign. They are especially important in deciding how to use the media.

The second approach is as part of the above mentioned general studies of polling or of campaign techniques. Although such sections are often too short to do more than introduce the subject and frequently have an anecdotal or how-to flavor, some do provide insight into the way political campaigns use polls. Rather than repetitively summarize all such accounts, I have selected a representative sampling to illustrate their main points.¹²

Xandra Kayden writes that in the last few years, polling "has become one of the most important tools a campaign organization uses to alleviate uncertainty." She cites four major uses of polls:

1. Resource allocation--where to advertise, use volunteers, and schedule the candidate.
2. Fund raising. Using favorable poll results to gain credibility among donors.
3. Follow-up to test

the effect of the campaign on voters. 4. Determining which issues are important. Here she cites Birch Bayh's 1974 senate campaign in which he was largely able to ignore a right-to-life petition campaign¹³ because of polls showing the issue had little impact on most voters.

Brown and Seib write of both the uses and dangers of polls. For them, the uses include: 1. Determining important issues. Issues come up from the electorate not down from politicians so a candidate must know what concerns his constituency. 2. Resource allocation. 3. Name recognition is a good indicator of progress made as the campaign proceeds. 4. Image. Like Harris, Brown and Seib believe that negative views of the candidate are most important for these rarely reach him by other means. Also important are the opponent's negative characteristics. 5. Key groups. The ones to locate are those already favorable and likely switchers. For all of the above, continuous polling is useful to spot trends.

On the other hand, Brown and Seib warn of pitfalls to avoid. Polling must be carefully planned with an eye toward the specific information sought, the accuracy desired, and cost. Trial heat polls should be discounted because challengers do poorly due to less recognition and the ignoring of potential protest votes. Often good candidates may be discouraged by such results but "there is no way yet discovered to measure the potential strength of an unknown." Also risky is the tactic of leaking polls. These have little influence on voters but can affect press coverage, staff morale, and fund raising.¹⁴

Other works tell us less. Stephen Shadegg suggests two general areas where polls should be used--candidate image and iden-

tifying the voters' major concerns--then shows how to draw up and
15
use a questionnaire. In a study of presidential campaigns, Stephen
J. Wayne writes of targeting the campaign--"where to concentrate, what
to emphasize, how to couch the appeal"--and of the ethics of leaking
polls. He believes that leaking poll results is unethical if the
conclusion is based on an unrepresentative poll or if partial release
results in a misrepresentation of the whole. As an example, he cites
a 1967 Democratic National Committee poll which showed President
Johnson ahead of potential Republican challengers in New Hampshire.
Those who leaked the poll failed to point out that it was taken in
16-
a single Democratic county. Wayne does not mention that the
pollster, Archibald Crossley, then felt it his obligation to release
this information to the press.

By far the most thorough discussion is in Roll and Cantril's
17
Polls: Their Use and Misuse in Politics. They cite the following
uses of polls: 1. Deciding whether or not to run. They too warn
against the reliance on trial heats, especially for primaries.
2. Leaking polls. Like the other authors, they mention such goals
as raising campaign morale, helping to raise funds, and the effect
on news coverage. 3. Discovering the concerns of the electorate.
Like Brown and Seib, they feel recent issues have come up from the
public. 4. Maximizing potential strength. This would include dis-
covering which subgroups are the best targets, spotting trends, and
finding the most effective arguments in support of the candidate's
position. 5. Targeting opposition weakness. Polls can help a can-
didate identify his or her opponent's least popular positions and
areas of dissonance, i.e., conflicts between the beliefs of voters

and the opposing candidate. 6. Candidate image. 7. The impact of a third or fourth candidate.

The third approach has been to send questionnaires to a selected group of politicians asking them about their use of polls. Such studies suffer from two difficulties, an unpredictable response rate and a lack of the depth and probing possible in direct interviews. A study of senators by Crespi and Mendelsohn¹⁸ was answered by only twenty-nine of a possible one hundred. Their findings that 27 of the 29 conducted polls and that these polls were used more to select good campaign issues than to influence votes on legislation must therefore be treated with caution. In a similar study of the 1966 elections, King and Schnitzer found that 41 of 45 governors and senators and 69 of 135 congressmen used polling, 85% of it professional. The fact that freshmen were more likely to use polls (there was no significant variation in use by party) may indicate a growing use in the future or it may simply demonstrate that their more senior colleagues often face less difficult opposition. The main reason given for not using polls was their cost, but some members of congress cited past inaccuracies and a lack of need.¹⁹

From the above, there are seven major areas where private polls may be used. These are: 1. Deciding whether to run. The consensus is that using trial heat polls as a basis for this decision is generally a poor idea. 2. Image. Discovering the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and his opponent. 3. Issues. Discovering which issues are most important to the voters seems to be the crucial aspect. 4. Key subgroup breakdowns. 5. Resource allocation. 6. When to leak? This raises ethical questions as well as the prac-

tical problems of the effects of leaked polls on fund raising, the morale of staff and supporters, and press coverage. 7. Measuring progress. In our concluding chapter we will try to gauge the importance of each of these and what problems the candidates faced in each area. We will also see if there are any important uses of polls not mentioned in the literature we have examined.

Private political polling has been so little studied not because of its lack of importance but due to the difficulty of getting information. In order to meet this difficulty, I will conduct my research in two ways--studies of the three major Democratic candidates for the Democratic nomination in 1968 and shorter studies, using primarily published sources, of two subsequent presidential campaigns, those of George McGovern in 1972 and Jimmy Carter in 1976.

Although I have included three general election campaigns, most of this study looks at presidential prenomination campaigns. Because of their size and scope, presidential campaigns can be expected to have a greater use of private polls than state and local campaigns. Before engaging in my own research, I discovered, from published accounts, several crucial decisions in 1968 alone, based significantly on polls: George Romney's withdrawal from the Republican race after poor New Hampshire poll results; Nelson Rockefeller's strategy at the Republican convention based on polls demonstrating that only he could win the November election; and Robert Kennedy's decision to enter the race when he did based partly on a California poll.

The prenomination campaign is emphasized because the mediating influence of party identification is greatly reduced. Although its

importance has declined in recent years, partisanship remains an im-
portant determinant of election outcomes. ²¹ Because a substantial
portion of the vote is determined before the campaign begins, the can-
didates are competing for a limited share. The absence of party labels
in a primary enhances the importance of such factors as candidate
image and issues at the same time that it increases the prospect of
gathering votes by campaigning. Candidates search for the best ways
of making themselves known to potential voters and political polling
has become a key aid in this search.

In order to study private polling in more depth, the case study
method seems appropriate. I have selected the 1968 Democratic cam-
paign partly because it is far enough in the past to be viewed some-
what dispassionately but recent enough to be quite relevant to the
current situation. In addition, there were three very different
campaign organizations competing.

The importance of political polling can only be evaluated
if it is examined in the context of the entire campaign. In order
to do this, I have adopted a decision-making approach. I have
selected key decisions in each campaign so as to determine what led
to each.

It is important to clarify the meaning of decision-making analy-
sis and why it seems appropriate for this particular study. Snyder,
Bruck, and Sapin define decision-making as "a process which results
in the selection from a socially defined, limited number of alter-
native projects of one project intended to bring about the particular
future state of affairs envisaged by the decision-makers." ²² This
definition is sufficiently murky to require three pages of explanation
by the authors. I shall try to summarize that explanation

briefly in order to adapt their definition to the requirements of this study.

Decision-making is a process which leads to a course of action. For analytical purposes, however, the sequence of activities must be broken into an event or series of events. Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin suggest predecisional activities, choice, and implementation. Choice involves assigning weights and priorities to alternatives in order to evaluate them in terms of a particular frame of reference.

Using the decision-making approach for the analysis of campaigns has several advantages. The point of final decision and the primary objective of the decisional unit are well defined from the outset, thus eliminating much of the arbitrariness from the definition of the event. The primary goal of all decisions should be the gaining of at least enough support to win the nomination. There are a series of deadline dates which force the candidates to make a decision by a certain time. Because delegate slates for the California primary had to be named by April 5, Robert Kennedy had to decide whether or not to run before that date (he announced March 16). The dates on which primaries or caucuses are held force each candidate to make final decisions on strategy by a set deadline.

Nevertheless, certain cautions must be kept in mind. Not all "decisions" are the result of conscious effort. Chance, habit, inertia, and organizational confusion may also lead to results and ought not to be ignored. Complicating matters still further is the fact that deciding which decisions to make and when to make them is also a decision. For these reasons I will often speak of events or

decision-points rather than decisions when I examine the campaign.

We can now define a decision as the selection of one or more of a series of alternatives in order best to achieve a particular goal. In our case, the goal is the Democratic nomination followed by victory in the election. We must remember that the interests of the members of each campaign organization may diverge. Such selfish interests must be at least somewhat submerged to the overall goal if there is to be a chance of success, but the observer must be aware of possible conflicts of interest.

In order to determine which decision-points to examine, we need somewhere to start. Nowadays, campaigns seem to begin the day after the previous election and, as we shall see, sometimes even before. Fortunately we are not obliged to look into someone's head the first moment he begins dreaming of becoming President.

The most useful conceptual scheme was developed by Donald
23
Matthews who has identified three stages in the nominating process. The first stage is the emergence of "possibilities." Not every potential candidate is taken seriously by those who count--the media, financial backers, interest groups, and political leaders. The process by which an aspirant for the presidency becomes a "serious" possibility is a very mysterious one, a thorough study of which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Whatever the exact nature of this process, it is clear that public opinion polls play an important role. In order to gain support and gather the resources needed to run a campaign, a potential candidate must demonstrate some appeal. One method of showing such appeal is by means of "trial heat" polls, showing how popular the candidate

would be compared to other possible contenders. Such polls have a number of defects, including: 1. A tendency to measure primarily name recognition which reduces the standing of a less wellknown candidate who could become known during a campaign if he had the resources to run one; 2. The volatility of opinion during this stage; and 3. The frequency of temporary biases against candidates who have recently taken unpopular actions. In spite of these serious deficiencies, however, trial heat polls have become crucial to the aspiring candidate.

In 1968, however, we find one candidate who was not as dependent upon being taken seriously solely on the basis of his own personal attributes. The candidacy of Eugene McCarthy was started because of an issue, the Vietnam War. Democrats who opposed President Johnson's conduct of the war searched the country for a candidate willing to run on a platform of reversing the escalation of the war. A number of candidates were approached before Eugene McCarthy agreed to run. The importance of this issue made Eugene McCarthy a "possibility" in spite of his original low showings in the polls and lack of previous media attention. Unexpectedly good early primary results were thus made possible after which Senator McCarthy was taken seriously as a presidential possibility.

The second stage defines the competitive situation. This stage has continually lengthened and is threatening to eclipse the first. For the party in power, the key figure is the incumbent. When it seemed as if Lyndon Johnson would run, other possible candidates were eclipsed. When an incumbent does not run, either by choice or because of the two-term limitation, his support is usually crucial, but the early

front-runner does not always win.

The final stage is the formal nominating process including the primaries and caucuses and culminating in the national conventions. The final decision is usually made before the start of the convention. Between 1936 and 1972, only four of twenty-four national conventions actually made the final decision--the Republicans in 1940 and 1948 and both parties in 1952.

The 1968 Democratic contest is in many ways exceptional. The presence of an incumbent president deterred other "possibilities" from running. The crucial question for Robert Kennedy was not whether or not he would be taken seriously, but whether to face the risks of opposing an incumbent president of his own party. This resulted in indecision which was surely harmful to his eventual candidacy. Similarly, Hubert Humphrey, who would surely have been considered a "possibility" in the absence of Lyndon Johnson, could not even consider running as long as the latter was in the race.

An examination of the 1968 Democratic contest must therefore focus on the second and third stages. We can begin with McCarthy's announcement of candidacy on November 30, 1967. At approximately the same time, Kennedy is deciding whether or not to run, a decision that was not finally made until early March of 1968. The Humphrey campaign, on the other hand, does not begin to exist until after the withdrawal of President Johnson.

The decisions studied will be outlined in the following chapters. For each one, I sought to discover whether the description was accurate; why it was made; who was most important in making it; and what role, if any, was played by private polling. In order to

understand the nature of the polling operation and the content of the polls, I asked those interviewed the following about those polls which they were aware of:

1. Who took the polls? When?
2. What were the data and how were they understood?
3. How much credibility was given to the polls?
4. What advice was given on the basis of the data?
5. Who chose the questions and cross-tabs and on what basis?
6. Were any decisions made primarily or largely on the basis of the surveys?
7. Compare this campaign with others you have worked on.

Those interviewed for the 1968 case study include formal and informal national advisers, pollsters, and those involved in state campaigns who played a part in the decisions under study. Incomplete recollections, rationalizations, and the refusal of some participants to respond completely, or, in some cases, at all, made complete answers to these questions impossible but enough material was gathered to illuminate most of the major decisions of these three campaigns. For the Humphrey campaign, some of the participants and the Minnesota Historical Society retained campaign memoranda, thus allowing the most accurate look at decisions as they were made.

In order to evaluate how representative the events of 1968 were and to see what changes have occurred since, I also analyzed major decisions in the 1972 McGovern and 1976 Carter campaigns. Because only published accounts were used, these accounts are less thorough than the 1968 studies but provide a great deal of useful information. The fact that presidential elections occur only once

every four years and that numerous changes occur in the interim means that no one case can be considered "typical," that each campaign is sui generis. Lengthening the time span by adding two more campaigns will give us a bit more confidence in our generalizations although the history of recent presidential elections is littered with erroneous generalizations. It is with some caution that we approach our case studies, after which we will return to the questions presented in this chapter.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER TWO

1968--THE HUMPHREY CAMPAIGN

For the Democratic Presidential candidates, 1968 was a year of constant surprise and organizational confusion. Eugene McCarthy's surprisingly good showing in the New Hampshire primary, Robert Kennedy's entry into the Presidential race, and Lyndon Johnson's abrupt withdrawal unexpectedly thrust Hubert Humphrey into the center of a suddenly heated contest for the Democratic nomination. Because of this lack of time for preparation and the nature of the campaign itself, private political polls played a smaller role in the Vice-President's pre-nomination campaign than in most such campaigns, smaller even than in his general election effort of the same year as we shall see.

Political polls require some time to set up. Pollsters must be hired, decisions made about what types of polls to take and where, samples and questions drawn up, and interviews conducted. Perhaps most important, money must be raised for good polls are not cheap. Ordinarily, candidates know well in advance that they are going to run for a particular office so that they make these arrangements early enough to obtain poll results before beginning their campaigns. Then polls are used as an aid for drawing up campaign plans. Time, however, was one resource that Hubert Humphrey did not have. He had one general issue poll taken in late 1967 for his Vice-Presidential campaign¹ (and hence of limited use for his Presidential race) but had

to be more concerned with the immediate need of putting together an organization to gather delegates than with commissioning polls for future use. In addition, unlike his opponents, Humphrey was not running in any of the primaries. Thus, he did not need very thorough analyses of voter preferences in the primary states as his electorate was the party organization and the delegates, among whom he had considerable support for several reasons - his previous record; the backing of President Johnson and much of organized labor; and the hostility of party traditionalists, especially in the South, to his two opponents. Humphrey's strategy was quite simple--while his opponents got the headlines by contesting the primaries, he would get the delegates by behind the scenes maneuvering. 1968 was the last year in which such a strategy was possible as approximately two-thirds of the delegates now come from the primary states whereas in that year less than one third were selected by primaries. In fact, the success of Vice President Humphrey's strategy was a major cause of the changes in delegate selection procedures for the 1972 and subsequent Democratic conventions.

The public polls (of which the Gallup and Harris polls are the best known) were used in place of extensive private polls. Ordinarily they would be inadequate for gathering information for a candidate since they do not break the data down, ask the questions, take the samples or time their interviews to suit his needs. But for the Humphrey campaign they had to do. Norman Holmes regularly sent memoranda analyzing the Gallup polls to Humphrey. A bit later in the campaign, Dr. Gerald Hursh was hired to coordinate survey research. Dr. Hursh regularly distributed detailed summaries of published poll results. Typical was a July 25 memo which used results of nine national and

three state (California, New York, and Texas) polls to rank issues by importance. Complicated methods were avoided and the issues were simply ranked by the number of polls in which each was mentioned. This was followed by a seven page discussion of the findings concerning the two leading issues, civil rights and racial conflict and crime and law enforcement. Such analyses seem to have had little direct impact on the campaign.

More important were the "trial heat" polls, hypothetical races between potential candidates. Because the bulk of the party organization supported him, Humphrey did not have to show he was way ahead of the other candidates. He merely had to demonstrate that he was as popular as Senators Kennedy and McCarthy or that he would do as well in the election. The April 14 Gallup poll showing him slightly behind Robert Kennedy (35-31%) but well ahead of Eugene McCarthy (by 23%) was satisfactory, but it was important to prevent either of his rivals from moving so far ahead that delegates afraid of backing a losing candidate in the general election would switch their votes. Robert Kennedy's assassination eliminated this possibility and polls taken shortly before the convention showed Humphrey considerably ahead of McCarthy. These polls were used to try to sway delegates still not committed to Humphrey.

All of the above seems to indicate that private polls had little or no influence on the campaign for the nomination. To verify this I have selected some of the most important events from the campaign and tried to see what factors affected these decisions and to what extent private polls did or did not play a role in them.

1. Deciding when to enter the campaign

Although Lyndon Johnson withdrew on March 31, Hubert Humphrey

did not formally announce his candidacy until April 27. Why the delay? According to Ted Van Dyk this announcement was preceded by several weeks of informal soundings to make certain of the availability of funds and organizational support. "The Vice President did not make his decision to seek the nomination on the basis of any poll," claims Van Dyk, "although we were aware of polls that showed he was a strong favorite of most Democrats." Published accounts support this. After Johnson's withdrawal, Humphrey was urged by many friends, politicians, and labor leaders (including AFL-CIO President George Meany) to announce his candidacy immediately but Humphrey's unsuccessful and underfunded candidacy in 1960 had made him cautious. Before running he had to be certain this experience would not be repeated. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. further delayed him. And he also had to make certain that Robert Kennedy had not yet clinched the nomination.⁷ These factors seem to have been decisive in his decision.

2. Avoiding the primaries

Humphrey's late entry into the race made it impossible to enter most primaries, but the filing deadline had not yet passed in New Jersey, South Dakota, and the District of Columbia when President Johnson withdrew. In addition, Johnson stand-ins Thomas Lynch in California and Roger Branigan in Indiana would surely have become Humphrey stand-ins if asked. In a May 23 speech, the Vice President⁸ stressed the timing factor as his explanation and other aides such as Van Dyk agree. Leo Bogart, however, has written that the Lynch slate in California was not endorsed because of poor poll results. This seems quite plausible in light of a poll taken for Jesse Unruh and Robert Kennedy showing that a Kennedy

slate led that of California Attorney General Lynch by better than
10
two to one. William Connell also cited pragmatic considerations,
stressing that the primaries would not determine the nominee and that
Humphrey's strength lay in the support of the party organization,
11
especially in the non-primary states.

On this decision the evidence appears to be mixed. Humphrey's late entry into the campaign made contesting the major primary states impossible. The possible entry into the few primary states whose filing deadlines had not yet passed would have been at odds with the strategy of the campaign. Perhaps if polls and/or other indicators had shown the likelihood of overwhelming victories in those states, it might have made sense to enter, but this was clearly not the case. Whether Bogart is correct or not, it seems extremely unlikely that Humphrey would have entered the remaining primaries. Polls may have reinforced this decision but they don't seem to have been a crucial factor.

3. The decision to concentrate on Robert Kennedy as the main opponent

From the beginning of the campaign Robert Kennedy was viewed as the main opponent. As mentioned above, one reason Humphrey delayed announcing his candidacy was his fear of the possibility that a sudden blitz by the Kennedy campaign would effectively end his campaign before it began. The early Gallup polls coupled with Kennedy's victories over McCarthy in Indiana and Nebraska primaries certainly confirmed this view. I found no evidence that private polls were a factor.

4. What, if anything, to do in the Oregon primary

Because of Kennedy's early successes, the Humphrey campaign had to decide whether or not to try to slow him down in the Oregon primary. Five possibilities

presented themselves: 1) Support McCarthy; 2) Try to get as many votes as possible for Johnson who remained on the Oregon ballot; 3) Try for a large vote for Vice-President where Humphrey was the only candidate listed; 4) A write-in campaign, or 5) Do nothing.

The Humphrey campaign had hired the Waterhouse Firm to take polls in Oregon at a cost of \$4,500. The first taken the Friday after Johnson's withdrawal covered 1,500 people who had voted in the previous two primaries.¹² This was done to include the most likely voters but it would seem to underrepresent younger voters and previous primary non-voters who were suddenly mobilized by the Vietnam War issue. The data include not only statewide totals but also breakdowns for Multnomah County which contained one-third of the Democratic vote; Lane County, which included Eugene; and Jackson County, identified by Waterhouse as a southern bellweather country. Totals were as follows:

	<u>Johnson</u>	<u>McCarthy</u>	<u>Kennedy</u>	<u>Undecided or Don't Know</u>
Statewide	36.7%	29.3%	26.9%	7.1%
Multnomah	41.4	30	24	4.3
Lane	29	30.5	28	12
Jackson	34	26	32	7.3

A later poll, taken approximately two weeks before the primary using 743 people in Portland and Multnomah County showed McCarthy in front with 33%, followed by Kennedy with 30.8%, Johnson 29.3, Humphrey (write-in) 2.3, and 4.6% undecided. Waterhouse felt that Kennedy's situation was getting desperate. They were also quite surprised by the continuing Johnson support despite his withdrawal.¹³ This skepticism seems warranted in light of the fact that Johnson

actually received only 12.4% of the vote.

This leaves open the question of which strategy was actually used. The third strategy seems not to have been considered, taken by itself, for neither of the polls asked about Vice-Presidential preferences. Similarly, a write-in campaign would seem to have been doomed to failure according to the final poll. This leaves the possibilities of supporting either McCarthy or Johnson (the latter perhaps along with a Humphrey Vice-Presidential vote) or staying out of the campaign entirely.

Putting the question in this fashion, however, makes it practically impossible to understand what actually happened. The Humphrey campaign was not a single cohesive group but a number of groups, often working at cross purposes. As a result, for this event, as for several others, there was not one decision but several. The "official" campaign stayed out of the Oregon primary.¹⁴ The state AFL-CIO had a large-scale telephone drive, asking 50,000 union members to vote for Johnson and Humphrey "to show your support for them in the peace talks in Paris."¹⁵ In addition, a number of Kennedy aides (who did not wish to be quoted) felt that Humphrey supporters had secretly provided financial support to the McCarthy campaign but were unable to provide any evidence.¹⁶ If this is true, it would be unlikely to be admitted publicly and so cannot be verified.

Any attempt to show whether the Waterhouse polls had an effect on the actions taken in Oregon must be speculative, for I was unable to discover any recommendations made which specifically cited them. Nevertheless, they certainly seem to have doomed strategy number four but it was probably not seriously considered to begin with. Since

no questions about strategy three were asked it had probably been eliminated at the outset. The polls themselves would seem to provide considerable support for supporting McCarthy (because of his slight lead in the second) or for supporting Johnson or even for staying out because McCarthy might easily stop Kennedy on his own. As with so many polls, the crucial factor was how each of those who saw the results interpreted them.

5. South Dakota Strategy

This is another example of the decentralized nature of the campaign. State Democratic Chairman Robert Chamberlain led a slate of delegates originally pledged to Johnson which had switched its allegiance to Humphrey. The question was whether or not to support it. Once again, the "official" campaign organization decided not to. Humphrey, as in Oregon, did not come to South Dakota (his birthplace) to campaign nor was there any allocation of funds for advertising. However, some campaign aides felt that some action was necessary. The result was that a series of advertisements appeared in South Dakota promoting the Chamberlain slate as pledged to support Humphrey but not mentioning Johnson. I found no evidence that polling entered into this decision. Certainly the official position was quite consistent with the general plan and also seems to have been correct in light of the results--Kennedy 49.7%, Chamberlain Slate 29.9%, McCarthy 20.4%.

6. California Strategy

California presented the same problem again but in a slightly different guise. At this point it was quite clear that the Lynch slate had no chance of winning. Once more Humphrey avoided campaigning

in the state. This time Harris wrote a letter formally disavowing
support of any members of the Lynch slate ¹⁹ while news accounts
suggested that Humphrey had not only rejected public endorsement of the
Lynch slate but had also rejected supporting McCarthy in order to stop
Kennedy. ²⁰ Once more, a series of advertisements appeared, this time
stressing the fact that only the Lynch slate contained supporters of
all three candidates. ²¹ It is clear that these ads were sponsored by
Humphrey supporters but not clear whether elements in the "official"
campaign had encouraged them. If the goal of the advertising was to
deny either Kennedy or McCarthy a majority, it succeeded. Private polls
do not seem to have played a significant role in this decision.

7. The effect of the Kennedy assassination

The death of his main rival meant that Humphrey had the nomina-
tion effectively won. While his opponents had been contesting the pri-
maries, Humphrey's campaign was methodically wooing delegates. On
April 29, he was endorsed by Governor Hulett Smith of West Virginia who
predicted his delegation would give Humphrey 26 votes. ²² (He actually
got 34 of 38). On May 11, Louisiana Governor John McKeithen, a Humphrey
supporter, was named as a favorite son to lead the Louisiana delega-
tion. ²³ This methodical approach also yeilded a unanimous vote of the
49 Maryland delegates, sixteen of the twenty-two Delaware delegates,
ten of the twenty-two votes from Vermont (only seven went to Kennedy
despite the proximity of his home states of New York and Massachusetts,
a personal appeal from Edward Kennedy, and the support of Vermont Govern-
nor Philip Hoff), and an endorsement by Tennessee Governor Buford Elling-
ton who hoped to deliver all fifty-one votes (Humphrey eventually got
49 1/2). ²⁴ He was even able to outpoll McCarthy at the Pennsylvania

caucus by a vote of 83-21 (the remaining 56 delegates were either uncommitted or absent) despite the fact that McCarthy had received more than 71% of the vote in the April 23 primary. The fact that delegates were either elected separately or appointed gave Humphrey 135 of the 160. By mid-June, according to the New York Times, Humphrey had 300²⁵ more delegates than he needed.

Although the campaign continued to woo delegates, it was now time to begin considering the general election. In May, Gerald Hursh was hired to supervise polling through November and began formulating proposals for future polls, including a national survey on the effects²⁶ of the Kennedy assassination. Connell proposed a small working group²⁷ to discuss the polls and two of the proposed members, Jeane and Evron Kirkpatrick, suggested tying together pre- and post-convention polling. Data would be used in planning advertising, scheduling and resource²⁸ allocation. Estimated cost was \$250,000-\$500,000.

Because many of the contributions to the Humphrey campaign had been from those whose main desire was to stop Kennedy, the assassination²⁹ resulted in reduced funding. Thus such grandiose plans as the above and numerous others had to be shelved. The remaining pre-nomination decisions show even less use of private polls than those up to now. The only poll that mattered from here to convention time was the poll of the delegates to the national convention.

8. The New York Primary

The New York Primary in 1968 consisted of separate elections of delegates in each Congressional district with no mention of Presidential candidates on the ballot. The election of a significant number of pro-Humphrey delegates, even if a minority, would be very embarrassing to Robert Kennedy in his home State. Humphrey's private polls,

although rather fragmentary and only indirectly measuring his chances, backed up a decision to compete in New York. Those who ranked Humphrey's job performance as excellent or good was 62%, compared to 52% for Kennedy. In a hypothetical Presidential election, both easily defeated Nixon but Humphrey got 78% to 72% for Kennedy. It is not clear how much influence this poll had but 75 pro-Humphrey delegates were entered. The memo discussing the poll provides no information about other questions, sample size, or who took the poll and the numbers seem a bit suspicious, (both hypothetical Presidential races contain no undecided voters--a rather strange fact several months before the election). Nevertheless, it seems to have reinforced the decision to enter this primary.

When Kennedy was shot, however, Humphrey declared a two week moratorium. McCarthy's moratorium was only one week. Cynics have suggested that Humphrey's extra week was an attempt to avoid the New York primary which occurred exactly two weeks after Kennedy's death. The significant minority that would have been seen as a victory against Kennedy would now be seen as a defeat against McCarthy. As one account puts it, "the moratorium gave Humphrey a welcome excuse for his almost certain defeat." But it does seem clear, as both Humphrey and his aides insisted, that the moratorium was caused by personal grief. In his autobiography, Humphrey writes that Robert Kennedy's death not only demoralized and depressed him, but also, because of the moratorium, caused him to lose momentum that was only regained late in the campaign. The moratorium seems the result of genuine emotion not calculation.

9. Abolishing the unit rule

In order to maximize their bargaining power, some states agreed to vote as a unit rather than to

split their individual votes among candidates. Reformers had sought to abolish this practice for some time because it stifled minority voices and smacked of political boss rule. By supporting this reform and by other procedural battles, the desperate McCarthy forces had some hope of splitting Humphrey's conservative Southern supporters from his liberal Northern backers.

On tactical matters of this sort, polls are of no help, for the average person has little knowledge of or concern about convention procedures. Thus, I have used this decision to represent all such tactical matters except those concerning the platform. Important decisions also had to be made on credentials challenges, especially to the Mississippi and Georgia delegations but, for similar reasons, polls would not be a factor.

On the subject of the unit rule, Humphrey vacillated. According to Robert McCandless, who was in charge of wooing delegates, the campaign was originally pressing as many favorable delegations as possible to unitize, but attacks from liberal writers and others made it tactically wiser to avoid the unit rule, especially since there were enough votes without it. The candidate himself wavered. On July 29, he called for abolition of the unit rule, informing each delegation bound to him under the unit rule that individual delegates were now free to vote their preferences. ³⁴ Southerners, led by Texas Governor John Connally, then a Democrat, argued that it was unfair to change the rules in the middle of the game so that, if the unit rule was to be abolished, it should not be until 1972. Different Humphrey aides seem to have given delegates contradictory information. Connally was led to believe that Humphrey agreed with his position but on August 21,

Humphrey headquarters released a letter recommending immediate abolition of the unit rule. Southers were so angry at this that they threatened to switch their allegiance to a draft-Johnson movement. Humphrey tried personally to smooth things over, telling Connally that it was a terrible mistake and that he would try to fix things up. This did smooth things over even though the convention, by a vote of 1350 to 1206 eliminated the unit rule for 1968 and future conventions.

10. The Vietnam plank in the party platform

This was one convention issue where polls might have been important. Financial difficulties, however, meant that there were no polls. ³⁶ Even if there were, the decision was removed from the Humphrey campaign which had hoped to negotiate a compromise with the McCarthy and Kennedy supporters. Lengthy negotiations seemed to yield success until President Johnson intervened with his own plank, obviously unacceptable to negotiators for McCarthy and Kennedy delegates. He called Platform Committee Chairman Hale Boggs, Permanent Convention Chairman Carl Albert, and Committee member Senator Jennings Randolph to the White House for a briefing on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and warned them of the dangers to national security of any compromise that seemed to vary from his Vietnam policy. The negotiations over a Vietnam plank were thus killed, leaving Humphrey no choice but to support the pro-Johnson position. 37

11. The Vice Presidential nominee

When nominated, Humphrey had narrowed the choice to Senator Edmund Muskie of Maine, New Jersey Governor Richard Hughes, former Governor Terry Sanford of North Carolina, and Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma. Of course, had Senator Edward Kennedy been willing he would have been the leading candidate

but he had ruled himself out and opposition from the Kennedy family had eliminated Sargent Shriver. Polls had been taken which indicated considerably more support for Humphrey with Ted Kennedy as his running mate. Eugene McCarthy would be viewed favorably by 23% of those questioned but would also make 15% less likely to support the ticket while Republicans Nelson Rockefeller and John Lindsay also provided a net gain. These latter three were never seriously considered, however. Those being considered by Humphrey actually reduced support for the ticket slightly, leaving little to choose between them on this ground. Thus, whatever, his reasons for choosing Senator Muskie as his running mate, Humphrey did not rely on polls.

An analysis of these eleven decisions shows little influence of private polls. In none of them did private polls have a decisive influence. In several, they supported decisions that would probably have been made identically in their absence. The reasons for this lack of importance are: 1) The late start of the campaign and consequent lack of time for planning, 2) Funding difficulties especially after the Kennedy assassination; and 3) The nature of this campaign, especially its avoidance of the primaries, reducing much of the need for detailed analysis of potential voters. Complicating our analysis was the fragmented nature of this campaign. Calling some of the above events "decisions" stretches the meaning of the word considerably. The picture of a monolithic campaign methodically planning strategy is at odds with the different factions of the campaign pursuing their own strategies in Oregon, South Dakota, and California. Sometimes this may be a way of publicly saying one thing while privately doing another but more often it reflects competing interests and or-

ganizational confusion. Perhaps it is time to study political cam-
paigns using a model akin to Graham Allison's governmental politics. 39

Ordinarily, we would expect the general election campaign to be more reliant on polls than the Humphrey prenomination campaign had been. Extensive campaigning culminating in a national election makes knowledge of the preferences of voters essential. Although Humphrey could avoid the primaries, he could hardly avoid contesting the November election. Furthermore, this time the fact that he would be a Presidential candidate would hardly be a surprise to him. Unlike the campaign for the nomination, the opportunity for advance planning was available.

A look at most accounts of the post-convention campaign, however, modifies this view. The Chicago convention had left both the party and the Humphrey campaign in a state of disarray. The first post-convention Gallup poll showed Humphrey 12 percentage points behind Nixon compared to an insignificant two point margin prior to the party conventions. This margin, which grew to 15 points by the end of September, took away much of the enthusiasm the campaign might have had and made fund raising extremely difficult. The lateness of the convention, originally scheduled to coincide with President Johnson's birthday, reduced the time available to recover. According to Joseph Napolitan, one of the campaign's chief strategists, as of August 31 the campaign lacked 1) A post convention plan, 2) Media ads of any sort ready or in production; 3) Polls, except for a few being taken, and 4) Funds, 40

Although this view provides some needed realism, the polling operation turns out to have been surprisingly sophisticated. Early proposals, as suggested above, were more ambitious than funding would

permit. In a June memo Jeane and Eyron Kirkpatrick suggested a national post-convention poll, 20-30 state polls with follow-ups, and a series of "quickie" telephone polls to be taken in October. Gerald Hursh proposed a national poll, two national stratified polls which could be broken up by region, seven key state polls, and ten metropolitan area polls with a total cost of \$292,000.

By mid-August a decision as to the scope of the polling operation had still not been made. At a meeting on August 15 a somewhat smaller budget than those proposed by Hursh or the Kirkpatricks was agreed upon as an absolute minimum effort although some felt that \$500,000 would be a more reasonable allocation. Hursh and Charles Tyroler argued for the larger program. "Unlike most successful businessmen," they wrote to campaign manager Lawrence O'Brien the next day, "we are willing to make multi-million dollar decisions without testing the wisdom of the strategy. We might well reconsider the strategy of a) telephone panels and contingency samples for continuing information, and b) relatively brief polls in more of the large industrial states." Because three weeks lead time was needed to work out details and actually take the polls an immediate decision was necessary.

The actual polling operation, although considerably scaled
41
down, was still quite extensive with a cost of at least \$282,000.

42
According to Hursh, "For the first time, the Democrats had a central office and a management strategy for the design, contracting, coordination and interpretation of surveys undertaken on behalf of the candidate." Five commercial pollsters were hired to do surveys of 18 states which were selected according to considerations such as geographic location, the number of electoral votes and the chances of

victory. A follow-up interview with the same respondents was planned and, in those areas where this was done the response was excellent (72% in North Carolina, for example).⁴³ The pollsters were given exact directions on the methods to be used. Each state was to have a sample of 800 people, considerably larger than normal so as to allow statistically valid subgroup analysis. The questionnaire was also furnished by the Humphrey campaign. Questions included the respondent's party identification, voting history, demographic characteristics, likelihood of voting, candidate preference, listing of the most important issues, and the standard types of questions about candidate performances, image, and issues. In addition, those questioned were asked their perceptions of the candidates' stands on issues and to compare those perceptions with their own issue positions.

Each poll was to be delivered with 15 copies of an interpretive report and five copies of a large tabular report which would contain all questionnaire items run against all demographic characteristics, political characteristics, and special indexes including sex, race, age, education, income, occupation, religion, residence, ethnic background, union membership, area of state, party affiliation (and its strength), candidate choice (and its strength), cross-party support, and a specially developed Negro backlash index. Such a detailed report would allow the Humphrey campaign to analyze the data on its own. The pollsters were to organize their reports around a summary of their most important findings along with conclusions and recommendations.

Even the scaled down plans ran into financial difficulties.⁴⁴ Two pollsters withheld their reports until they were paid, a planned national telephone poll was cancelled, and polling was halted in mid-

October because funds were urgently needed for advertising, especially
45
television. Nevertheless, the polling operation was extremely sophisticated. Results were reported to a large committee. Weekly meetings were held with campaign chairman O'Brien and daily ones with an issues and research group led by Orville Freeman. Memos from Hursh (and occasionally from others) summarizing the results were distributed throughout the campaign.

But the most sophisticated polling techniques and analysis can only be important if they are read and heeded. As we have already seen, it is quite difficult to establish just how much influence poll results have. Campaign organizations are not single rational actors but consist of different individuals, often with differing ideas and goals. The individual himself may not be aware of why he decided in favor of a certain kind of action. Even if aware, he may prefer to explain (rationalize) it in a way he thinks will make him look better. But we cannot throw up our hands and forget the problem simply because it is difficult.

First, we have to look at the findings of the polls and the recommendations made by those who analyzed them. I have divided these into 1) State-by-state results and analyses, 2) Issues; 3) Candidate image; 4) Groups to target, and 5) Countering the public polls. Although I have not seen all the polls and analysis, I was able to locate a large enough cross-section to discuss the results with confidence.

State-by-state Results and Analysis

Florida - Hursh's analysis of a survey of 799 likely voters taken September 7-15 emphasized the following:

1. George Wallace leads with 38% compared to Nixon's 33%,

24% for Humphrey and 5% undecided.

2. The old coalition of blacks and urban and traditional Democrats has broken down completely with nearly half of Humphrey's support coming from black voters.

3. Wallace is very strong in Florida, but if he were to fade, Nixon would win. The low undecided figure makes it practically impossible for Humphrey to win. If he tries to it would hurt him elsewhere.

4. The key issues of law and order and Vietnam work against Humphrey who trails the rest of the Democratic ticket.

5. Recommendations--attacking Nixon might help the rest of the ticket and give Humphrey a very slight chance of victory.

Illinois -Oliver Quayle and Company reported that their September 7-14 poll showed Nixon ahead with 48%, Humphrey 32%, Wallace 9% and 11% undecided. Their conclusions can be summarized as follows:

1. Issues. Most important are the Vietnam War and law and order which favor Nixon. Humphrey should take a strong stand. Other issues such as taxes and spending and race are of much less importance but state issues such as jobs, slum clearance, housing, wages, poverty, and education favor Humphrey and should be stressed. Reaction to the Chicago convention should be ignored.

2. Image. Nixon's image is very positive, especially his experience and intelligence but he is also seen as too political and evasive. Humphrey should attack him as lacking in conviction and willing to do anything to become President. On the other hand, Humphrey is seen by potential voters as warm and friendly, a hard worker, and dedicated but equally as too political, indecisive, and run by

others. He should be firm and stress what he will do.

3. Muskie does very well compared to Spiro Agnew.

4. Campaign in Chicago as often as possible in both ghetto and blue collar neighborhoods.

5. State candidates for Governor and Senator are far behind so Humphrey should not tie his campaign to theirs.

Kentucky - Independent Research Associates' poll of September 14-22 reported a close race in Kentucky with 34% for Nixon, 30% for Wallace, 29% for Humphrey and 7% undecided. Their report suggested:

1. Wallace's support is less solid here than in other states. Because most Humphrey and Nixon support is based on party loyalty, Democratic identifiers who support Wallace are the best target. Other important groups are union affiliated voters and blacks.

2. Vietnam and law and order are not good issues and should be dropped. Economic prosperity and social welfare are good issues and should be stressed.

3. A trip through northern and northwestern Kentucky ending in Louisville and including a major speech on economic issues would give Humphrey "an excellent chance of carrying Kentucky--as good as or better than he has of carrying Maryland."

Maryland - A poll taken September 13-21 by IRA showed a slight Nixon lead with 40% to 38% for Humphrey, 19% for Wallace and 8% undecided. They recommended:

1. Appeal to Democratic identifiers as one in five is still undecided but Nixon has an overwhelming majority of the independent vote.

2. Humphrey's best subgroups are older (50 plus) and retired

people, skilled and semi-skilled workers, residents of the Washington suburbs, and business and professional people.

3. A majority (54%) are hawks so the Vietnam issue should be avoided.

4. The table below shows the position of voters on the rioting issue.

TABLE I

Stop rioting, by shooting if necessary	36%
Use all force short of shooting	20
Improve slum conditions but oppose rioting	36
Rioting is justified	3
Don't know	5

IRA recommend that Humphrey make a statement deploring riots then drop the issue.

5. Secondary issues work well especially job training, providing opportunities, and the urban issue. Medicare, however, is tricky. Although a majority opposes more spending for it, the elderly vote is important to Humphrey.

6. Nixon has a slight edge on image with many seeing Humphrey as lacking independence, too political, and weak and indecisive. However, one of four Nixon supporters have some favorable comments about Humphrey.

7. Muskie is an asset among older voters, the undecided, and residents of Washington suburbs but not a net asset.

8. Humphrey's best areas are Baltimore and the Washington suburbs.

9. Humphrey has an excellent chance to win in Maryland.

Michigan - This poll, taken September 7-14 by Quayle showed Humphrey ahead of Nixon by 38-36%, with Wallace at 15% and 11% undecided, a virtual tie. Their analysis:

1. Vietnam is the number one issue but should be avoided as most voters place Nixon closer to their own position. Hawks outnumber doves by 2-1.

2. Civil rights can be a good issue provided it is separated from law and order, the number two issue, which favors Nixon. For the rioting question shown in the Maryland results, 39% would favor all means including shooting and 20% all but shooting, the two strongest alternatives.

3. Few people blame the police (6%) or Mayor Daley (15%) for the violence during the Chicago convention. 50% blame "agitators and radicals." Ignore this issue.

4. Humphrey has only half the 1960 and 1964 Democratic vote. He is supported by 65% of Democrats compared to Nixon's 76% of Republicans.

5. Muskie does very well compared to Agnew.

6. A pivotal state. Humphrey must campaign in Detroit, but avoid its suburbs, emphasizing civil rights, job training, and education and in northern Michigan emphasizing education. Souther Michigan has little potential.

Hursh's analysis was somewhat different. In two memos he suggested :
46

1. On Vietnam over half the voters are hard-liners but Humphrey supporters and the undecided less so than others. Humphrey

is generally seen as a moderate, Nixon as hard-line. Humphrey should simply say he will end the war.

2. Because there is such a close division on the riots issue, Humphrey should also emphasize his desire to end riots and maintain law and order, avoiding too many specifics.

3. Wallace gets 36% more union members' support than expected.

4. The most popular government programs involve law and order, crime prevention, pollution, social security, and aid to education. Least popular are foreign aid and aid to farmers.

5. Party identification is 51% Democratic, 37% Republican, 9% Independent, and 3% no answer. This is after asking non-identifiers how they are leaning."

Minnesota - A poll taken September 7-18 by Mid-Continent Surveys, Inc., showed a Humphrey lead of 46-41% over Nixon with Wallace at 9% and 4% undecided. They wrote:

1. Vietnam is the number one issue. When given five choices, a majority favors a more severe policy, but when given only three (withdraw, negotiate, use greater force) they divide equally. This is equally true of supporters of all three candidates.

2. A majority favor using force to stop riots. This is equally true of Nixon and Humphrey supporters. Wallace supporters favor shooting, if necessary (for the alternatives see the Maryland analysis).

3. A majority supports all federal programs asked about except foreign aid (44%).

4. When asked who is most responsible or next most respon-

sible for the violence outside the Democratic Convention, responses were: agitators, and radicals 77%, youthful demonstrators 60%, Mayor Daley 18%, Reporters 17%, Police 9%, the Democratic Party 5%.

5. Humphrey was viewed as experienced, qualified, effective, intelligent, and trustworthy. Neither major candidate was viewed as weak-willed, indecisive, changes his mind too easily, or run by others. 25% felt both were too political.

Missouri - A Quayle survey of September 7-14 gave Humphrey 38% to Nixon's 33%, Wallace's 22%, and 7% undecided, observing that this margin would be hard to hold. They suggested:

1. Vietnam is the number one issue. Although a majority is hawkish, they are somewhat confused and have a strong desire to see the war ended. This should be emphasized.

2. Next most important is law and order. This is not a racial issue as more blacks than whites are concerned. Humphrey should be for it.

3. The race issue is not linked in the minds of voters to law and order. Humphrey should be for equal opportunity but avoid mentioning integration.

4. Taxes and spending is a bad issue but not an important one.

5. Nixon's image is viewed positively by 63% of the voters. He is viewed as honest, intelligent, and courageous but a significant number see him as too political, out for himself, an opportunist, and indecisive.

6. Wallace is too strong to ignore. He should be tied to Nixon and attacked as a rabble rouser.

7. Humphrey's image is viewed positively in the areas of his views, experience, and dedication. He is, however, seen by many as weak, indecisive, and run by others.

8. Best groups to aim at are: women, blacks, those earning less than \$7,000 (56% of voters), labor--especially unskilled workers and union families, farmers, and Catholics.

9. Muskie is little known here but statewide candidates Warren Hearnes and Thomas Eagleton should be used as they are quite popular.

10. Campaign in St. Louis city and county emphasizing civil rights, the economy, and pollution and in Western Missouri.

In a September 22 memo to Humphrey about these three states (Michigan, Minnesota, and Missouri) Hursh, perhaps to give the candidate grounds for optimism during a bad period, stressed the positive. He explained how they had nearly always gone with the winner, making Humphrey's leads in all three reason to believe he would win the election. Because the interviews were done during a low period in the public polls, over 70% of the undecided in Michigan and Missouri were Democrats, and there had been a 10% gain in Minnesota over the last month, things should get even better. We can see a use of polls not frequently mentioned--improving the morale of the candidate and his organization.

New Jersey - An October 3 memo from Hursh to Orville Freeman gave results as Humphrey 40%, Nixon 36%, Wallace 11%, and 13% undecided. An October 16 memo to speechwriter Douglas Bennett gave a brief summary:

1. A majority favor a "hard line" and see Nixon as agreeing with them. 37% see Humphrey that way with an equal number seeing him

as a moderate.

2. Nearly half of those questioned favor improving social and economic conditions as the best way to stop riots.

3. The undecided are: half Democratic identifiers who will vote Democratic for Congress, Catholics, high school graduates, urban residents, 35-49 year olds, and those earning \$7-\$10,000.

New York - An October 14 memo from Hursh to Bennett gave Humphrey a slight lead with 41% to Nixon's 38% with 8% for Wallace and 13% undecided. It summarized the findings briefly:

1. There is an equal division between hawks and doves. Nixon and Wallace supporters favor a resumption of bombing or going all out for military victory while a majority of the undecided are "soft" liners.

2. Half of those questioned say the best way to handle riots is to improve social and economic conditions. These numbers are even larger among Humphrey supporters and the undecided. Humphrey is seen as favoring a "soft" policy, Nixon "soft to moderate."

3. Image. Dislikes--Humphrey is indecisive, not his own man; Wallace's civil rights position. Nixon and Humphrey are seen as honest and experienced by most.

4. Two-thirds of the undecided are Democrats, one-third will vote for Democrats for Congress, and half preferred McCarthy as the Democratic nominee.

North Carolina - An IRA poll taken September 7-15 showed Wallace ahead with 38% to Nixon's 29%, 26% for Humphrey, and 7% undecided. The pollsters felt that campaigning here would be a waste of time as Humphrey had little chance of overcoming voters' very strong

preferences for Wallace. Law and order was seen as the top issue by 7 of 10 voters. North Carolina voters favored strong measures on this issue but saw themselves as disagreeing with Humphrey. On the number two issue of Vietnam, voters tended to be hawkish while perceiving Humphrey as more dovish than they.

In view of this, one wonders why a second wave was ordered. Nevertheless, 578 of the original 810 respondents (72%) were questioned again on October 16-19. Wallace's considerable lead had now disappeared. He and Nixon were preferred by 35% of those interviewed to 30% for Humphrey. (We might note the lack of undecided voters. The report does not explain). William Hamilton of IRA recommended:

1. Most of Wallace's losses have gone to Nixon. Humphrey's position has changed little except for some gains among black voters. A real effort must be made to get blacks to vote. At least as many must support the Democrats as in 1964.

2. Best other groups are women, older voters, and low income voters, although Nixon does surprisingly well among this last group.

3. Campaign one whole or half day in the state in Asheville or Charlotte not the "Black Belt" in East Carolina where Wallace is very strong. Humphrey should speak only about job training and economic prosperity not social disorders, Vietnam, foreign aid, medicare, or federal aid to education. "Some additional resources could be allocated to North Carolina. Personally we feel that the probabilities of winning North Carolina are still not great, but at least now there is a chance."

Texas - A poll taken in Texas by Belden Associates (no date is given but it was apparently taken in early September) showed Hum-

phrey slightly ahead with 35% to Nixon's 33%, 26% for Wallace, and 6% undecided. They concluded:

1. Humphrey's backers are nearly all Democrats (60% of Texas voters are Democratic). Humphrey is running behind the ticket.

2. Humphrey's best groups are strong Democrats, blacks and Latins, unskilled labor, those earning less than \$7,000 per year, the less educated, Catholics, and union members.

3. Image. Of 15 attributes, Nixon is ahead on 11, including the most important ones; Wallace on three; Humphrey only on "warm and friendly." Humphrey must portray himself as independent, decisive, courageous and a take charge leader.

On Vietnam, Texans prefer the hawkish responses. This is true even of Humphrey supporters who are only slightly less hawkish than average.

5. Texas voters are also strong on law and order. They feel the police acted correctly at the Chicago Convention and blame "agitators and radicals" and "youthful demonstrators." Very few blame the Democratic party.

Apparently a follow-up was done, but I was only able to obtain the trial heat results which showed Humphrey increasing his lead to 47% with 37% to Nixon's 33%, Wallace's 21%, and 9% undecided.

Wisconsin - A Wisconsin survey taken September 7-14 by Quayle showed Nixon way ahead with 50% to Humphrey's 33%, Wallace's 9%, and 8% undecided. They recommended spending as little time here as possible unless the 12 electoral votes were deemed essential. Their analysis continued:

1. Best groups--women, blacks (a small group in Wisconsin),

those 25-45 years of age, middle income, labor including non-union, Catholics, Jews, and liberal Republicans.

2. Vietnam is the number one issue. Voters want to end the war but are not sure how this can be done. They see Nixon as hawkish which reflects their own position. Humphrey should simply emphasize that he is for peace.

3. Law and order, the next most important issue, is also good for Nixon. The voters are not for a "Marshall Plan" for the cities. "The people here are clear. Stop it. Period."

4. Race is the number three issue. It is not identical to law and order. There is some sympathy for black people but no great cry. Humphrey should run against Southern segregation.

5. Other issues. Taxes and spending is a Republican issue but not very important so it should be avoided. Farm parity and Medicare are good secondary issues. The Chicago Convention should not be discussed.

6. Nixon's image is 66% positive. He is seen as experienced, dignified, able in foreign affairs, dedicated, and intelligent but too political and an opportunist. Humphrey does less well. His prime negatives are that he is run by others, too political, talks too much, and is loudmouthed. Mention of President Johnson should be avoided in this state.

7. Vice-Presidential candidate Muskie does very well.

8. If campaigning is done here, it should be in Milwaukee, discussing law and order, civil rights, Medicare, Social Security, education, housing and pollution, and in the West, speaking of peace and farm issues.

These summaries cover thirteen of the eighteen states polled, so we can draw some conclusions with reasonable confidence in them. Those who analyzed them for the campaign prepared recommendations drawing upon combined results so we will not examine all the details of the state-by-state recommendations at this point. A number of recommendations seem common to most of the polls. Vietnam and law and order are the top two issues and voters perceive Nixon as closer to their own positions on them. Humphrey has considerable image difficulties as well. He is seen by many as too political, indecisive, and run by others.

In order to see how closely Humphrey's campaign resembled these recommendations, I compared coverage in the New York Times of the actual campaign to the recommendations listed above. The campaign began with a Labor Day parade on September 2 and ended with the November 5 election, leaving about 64 possible days of campaigning although even the most energetic of campaigners needs some time to rest. Because Humphrey spent several days resting at his home in Waverly, Minnesota, I did not include the Minnesota recommendations in my comparison as it was sometimes difficult to separate "rest" from campaigning.

Of the remaining twelve states, Humphrey campaigned in ten of them, appearing only briefly in Florida and avoiding Wisconsin where his polls had given him virtually no chance. He made two appearances in Illinois, one in Springfield and another in Chicago. Quayle had suggested campaigning in Chicago as often as possible so his only appearing once seems to contradict this advice. Still, the poll had him trailing Nixon by 16% so perhaps a high priority was not justified.

The fact that the Chicago Convention had been so disruptive, that relations with Mayor Daley created problems, and that Nixon had attracted a huge crowd in an early visit to Chicago made Humphrey's late (November 1) visit to Chicago understandable. In Illinois he only partly followed the recommendations. He briefly mentioned the President's "courageous" decision to halt the bombing then dropped the subject of Vietnam. Also, as recommended, he stressed such secondary issues as employment, the Peace Corps, aid to the cities and education, civil rights, and poverty. On the other hand, he praised the idealism of dissenters contrary to the recommendation to avoid the subject.

IRA's Kentucky recommendations suggested a swing through northern Kentucky ending in Louisville which is exactly what Humphrey did on September 20. His attack on Nixon for evading the issues and refusing to debate seems in line with the recommendation to aim at Democratic identifiers but avoid the issues of Vietnam and law and order. However, he made the visit prior to the poll, so it could not have been an influence.

Maryland is considerably more difficult to evaluate. Despite the fact that Humphrey made only one visit to the state for a Baltimore fund raiser, the considerable amount of time he spent in Washington issuing statements, attending to his official duties, and campaigning (four appearances) had a significant impact on Maryland. Thus, his campaign appearances do follow the analysis that Baltimore and the Washington suburbs were his strongest Maryland areas and that he had an excellent chance to carry the state.

In Michigan Humphrey did follow the recommendation to campaign in Detroit although he did not spend as much time there as sugges-

ted by Quayle. He avoided the traditional Labor Day Opening in Detroit preferring New York City, but made a speech in Flint September 11, devoted all of October 17 to Michigan primarily in Detroit, and attended a rally in Southgate long enough to make a speech on November 1. The content of his speech closely followed the recommendations listed above, although the Flint speech was made during the period the poll was taken, so it could not have been influenced by Quayle's recommendations. In Detroit he emphasized such secondary issues as employment, the minimum wage, Social Security and Medicare, aid to education, and urban renewal. He promised law enforcement and social justice at the same time, contrasting his record and willingness to debate with Nixon. At his Michigan stops he either avoided the Vietnam issue or simply mentioned his desire to end the war.

Although Humphrey's speeches in Missouri were not quite what Quayle recommended, they were consistent with the poll results. In addition to a September 21 ceremonial visit to former President Harry Truman in Independence, Humphrey travelled two days in mid-October throughout the state but concentrating on St. Louis and Kansas City. He strongly attacked Nixon as "Richard the Chicken Hearted" for his failure to debate or to speak out on the issues. Wallace, Quayle had said, was too strong to ignore so Humphrey attacked him in terms calculated to appeal to labor by characterizing Alabama as a state with low wages, a high sales tax, little aid to education, and a high crime rate. Attack Wallace as a rabble rouser, said Quayle. Humphrey urged Americans to "put down the voices of bitterness and hatred that divide us."

How much attention should have been given to New Jersey is a

question that provoked considerable second guessing after the election. Those connected with the polls claim that more campaigning should have been done there but that they were unable to convince party leaders to do so. Instead, resources were diverted to California, a state that Napolitan and the Kirkpatricks felt was not promising and New Jersey's seventeen electoral votes were lost even though, as Napolitan put it, "we won four states in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania--all the states around New Jersey." Napolitan himself had done the polls of New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, but was so occupied by his numerous other responsibilities in the campaign that he prepared no reports, planning media strategy directly from the computer printouts. ⁴⁸ Except for a two day visit in mid-September, Humphrey's only New Jersey stop was a half-day in Teaneck, Newark, and Elizabeth on October 31. The first appearance preceded any poll results but the latter was quite consistent with Hursh's analysis. He attacked Nixon on the "issue" of trust, applying this theme to jobs, prosperity, Medicare, a racial reconciliation, and domestic peace. On the subject of the Vietnam War, he simply said he had been hoping for President Johnson's just announced bombing halt "for months," then said no more.

New York was clearly a crucial state and, the polls indicated, a closely contested one. Humphrey did more campaigning here, especially in New York City, than in any other state. As for the content of his speeches, the limited data we have about what was recommended make comparisons difficult, but a few can be offered. The dislike of many for Wallace's civil rights position is reflected in an October 9 attack on the Alabama governor for "playing on fear and hate," coupled

with an attempt to tie in Nixon, who, according to the same Humphrey speech, "cloaks that same appeal but he invokes it." Hursh's report that two-thirds of the undecided were Democrats makes Humphrey's appeals to traditionally Democratic groups such as Jews (an October 21 speech to the New York Board of Rabbis) and union members, (an October 18 speech to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) a very sensible course. Speaking at an International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union rally on October 30, the Vice-President "wasted little time on detailed policy speeches. Instead of expounding or explaining, he exhorted," citing past Democratic tradition.⁴⁹

The first North Carolina poll held out little hope of victory in that state, but Humphrey did speak in Charlotte on October 2. According to the IRA report, 7 of 10 voters felt that law and order was the top issue. They favored strong measures to counter them but saw Humphrey as disagreeing. Humphrey's claim in his speech that he was a better law and order candidate than Wallace (who led in the poll) is in line with their findings.

Texas was another large pivotal state. During the last two weeks, Humphrey spent all or parts of three days here attempting to maintain the narrow lead his polls had given him. The pollsters had recommended partisan appeals, pointing out that 60% of Texas voters were Democrats and that Humphrey trailed the rest of the party ticket. Humphrey was greeted at the airport for his October 22 arrival by Governor John Connally and Senator Ralph Yarborough, symbols of the conservative and liberal wings of the party. Later, Mrs. Johnson appeared. At a November 3 Astrodome rally, Lyndon Johnson completed the roster of party leaders by appearing with his wife. Humphrey's

best groups included minorities, so his October 23 appearances in San Antonio and El Paso before largely Mexican-American crowds were very logical.

Campaign scheduling and the content of many of the speeches in the Humphrey campaign seem strongly related to the recommendations in the polls. But causality cannot be inferred from this. Poll results and recommendations did not go directly to all involved in the campaign but were often filtered and reinterpreted by top campaign aides and by specialists such as Hursh. Hursh, an expert in survey research, felt himself to be primarily a researcher, ⁵⁰ but in this capacity he reanalyzed the data, sometimes making interpretations quite different from those of the commercial pollsters. He felt that those who took the polls did them well, but he and others in the campaign had less confidence in the political knowledge and recommendations of these firms. When circulating the reports, they sometimes went so far as to black out the recommendations. Furthermore, much of what the polls said could hardly have come as news to people as experienced in politics as O'Brien, Freeman, and Connell. Even a regular reader of newspapers knew that Vietnam was a crucial issue and a difficult one for Humphrey, that New York and Texas were pivotal states, and that Humphrey was seen by many as weak, run by others, and overly talkative. When we see a candidate acting as the polls advise that may mean that the poll results led to his decision but it may also mean that advisers used them to support a decision they were already planning to make or that the decision was made entirely independently of the polls.

The rest of the data in this chapter make our task easier. These recommendations come from within the campaign so one level

of interpretation is eliminated. Because they are in the form of memoranda, the thinking and intentions of those who wrote them are easier to judge. Although this by no means eliminates our methodological difficulties, it makes them more manageable.

Issues

The two most important issues were clearly Vietnam and law and order, but there was considerable disagreement within the campaign about how to approach them. Survey data on these issues was not completely clear, although it did indicate sharp divisions among the electorate. A September 27 memo from Connell to Orville Freeman summarized the findings on these issues from four of the state surveys:

TABLE II

What to do in Vietnam

	<u>Self</u>	<u>Nixon</u>	<u>Humphrey</u>
Withdraw	22	9	6
Protect cities only	6	7	8
Continue present policy	9	15	34
Set peace deadline then bomb	31	26	18
Step up the bombing	23	13	6
Don't know	9	30	28

TABLE III

	<u>Self</u>	<u>Nixon</u>	<u>Humphrey</u>
Rioting justified by slum conditions	2	3	6
Improve slum conditions <u>but</u> oppose rioting	31	27	40
Use all force short of shooting	25	27	21
Stop rioting, by shooting if necessary	39	17	9
Don't know	3	26	24

We can see some weaknesses in these surveys. The number of doves is probably underestimated due to the omission of the choice of a total bombing halt. As this was to become the focus of debate within the Humphrey campaign, a lack of specific data about it is surprising. I can only surmise that the fact that the polls had to be designed well in advance meant that those who wrote the questions were not then aware that this would be the major issue it turned out to be. The telephone polls originally planned could have filled in this gap but, as mentioned previously, lack of funds forced their cancellation. A second weakness is the method of presentation. From Table II we can see that a majority favored the two strongest choices. More people also placed Nixon than Humphrey in these categories, but we cannot tell from the data whether or not these are the same people. What was needed is a measure of the differences between the positions of each person interviewed and his perception of the positions of the candidates. Such measures were taken in the original

reports, but did not often get much further.

The above Table and the state reports, whatever their weaknesses, indicated to the campaign what they already knew, that Humphrey was in trouble on the Vietnam issue. They also indicated that more people selected the "hard-line" than the "soft-line" responses. A September 27 memo from Hursh to Freeman (later sent to Humphrey as well) analyzed the above data pointing this out and also emphasizing the large number of people who were unaware of positions of the candidates on both these issues.

The campaign was divided about what to do. Although the above Table suggests a hard line stance, the image questions showed that Humphrey's negative attributes included "run by others" i.e. President Johnson. The best way to change this, some argued, would be by means of a sharp break with the President including advocacy of an immediate bombing halt. ⁵¹ Still others pointed to the general confusion on Vietnam. What the public wanted was peace although most people were not sure how this could be done. The proper course, they urged, would be for Humphrey to say that he too wanted to end the war, then drop the subject.

The culmination of this debate was the nationally televised Salt Lake City speech on September 30. O'Brien and Harris urged a bombing halt, Connell and James Rowe opposed one. Connell hand carried a memo which summarized poll findings. Its main points were:

1. 62% of those questioned in a Minnesota poll expected no change in the war under Johnson. Nationally, disapproval of President Johnson's war policy was overwhelming.
2. "People are increasingly willing to accept virtually any

means to end the war with honor....For example, as late as one week before the Democratic Convention, 50% of the people did not know what McCarthy's stand was on the war. Polls in five mid-Western states find that 30% of the people do not know what Nixon's position is on Vietnam. Yet, both McCarthy and Nixon received broad public support for their Vietnam 'policies.'"

3. People consistently rate themselves as more hawkish than both major candidates, but also consistently rate Nixon's position as closer to theirs than Humphrey's. About 1/3 of the public see Humphrey as advocating "no change" a position rejected by nine of ten questioned in the five state polls.

4. Although nearly nine of ten people questioned favor a negotiated settlement, only one-quarter are confident the Paris peace talks will succeed while 50 to 70% think they are making no progress or will fail.

The speech itself went through draft after draft. Finally, after an all night drafting session, a compromise was agreed upon. Humphrey, if elected, would halt the bombing but only if North Vietnam showed some evidence it was willing to restore the demilitarized zones separating it from South Vietnam. He would also reserve the right to resume the bombing should the North Vietnamese show bad faith. It was not a substantial change from Humphrey's previous position, but had a large symbolic impact. The result, according to O'Brien, was more qualifiers, than he wanted but at least a bombing halt had been advocated. It had, he later wrote, an "immediate dramatic impact."
52

A measure of this impact was the appeal for funds tacked on

at the end. This had been suggested by several in the campaign. As Connell put it in his memo, "It's time to start waving the milkcan. No matter what he says or does, the Vice President is not going to win this campaign without money." O'Brien had expected this to raise less than \$25,000. It raised ten times that. Although the speech was much criticized by the press at the time, later observers have seen it as a turning point in the campaign. At most of his later speeches, Humphrey mentioned Vietnam only briefly, merely advocating peace. When pressed, he would simply refer the questioner to his Salt Lake City speech.

The second crucial issue, law and order, also worked considerably to Humphrey's disadvantage. Hursh's September 27 memo referred to above also briefly analyzed the data in Table III. It emphasized that a majority favored the hard line choices and the large number of people who did not know where the candidates stood on the issue of riots. Another poll, whose results appear in an undated memo from Hursh, asked about the causes of riots. The results, broken down by race, appear in Table IV below. The figures add up to over 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

TABLE IV

Causes of Riots

	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>
Organized groups hating the whites	71%	7%
Police brutality or mistreatment	12	66
Lack of decent housing	39	70
Lack of decent jobs and opportunities	34	67
Lack of general racial equality	30	70

These results also would indicate that whites, who are of course a large majority of voters, took a relatively hard line on riots. The state polls we looked at previously provide further confirmation of this.

Early advice from those who took the polls was, "Yes, take a hard line on lawlessness, but in the same breath do talk about social injustices and relieving poverty."⁵³ But the candidate, though hardly a foe of law and order, tended to make light of the subject. Speaking in upstate New York on September 17, he did emphasize his support of both aid to law enforcement and funds to fight poverty, but continued on to say, "I'm not running for sheriff. I'm running for President of the United States."⁵⁴ But the polls indicated that this was a subject not to be joked about. Connell's Salt Lake City memo, in addition to repeating some of the above findings added:

1. There is considerable evidence of "hardening attitudes against the Negro." One-third of whites say they have less respect and regard for blacks as people. 70% of whites feel blacks are not ready for equal rights and nearly half feel the government is moving too quickly on integration.

2. 83% of Americans oppose even non-violent demonstrations.

3. Blacks are nearly as much in favor of strong measures against rioters as whites.

4. People consistently rated themselves as more hard-line on this issue than either Nixon or Humphrey, but generally rated Nixon closer to their position.

Complicating the situation still further was the third party candidacy of George Wallace which tended to draw hard-liners on law

and order from both major party candidates. We will have more to say on strategy to combat this later on.

With the two major issues holding out so little promise, Humphrey could be expected to look to others for his appeals to voters. The polls could show which others might work. An October 6 memo from Hursh to Freeman summarizing the findings of nine state polls (Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin) about whether the federal government should do more, do about the same as now, do less, or eliminate each of sixteen government programs listed those in favor (the first two responses) as:

1. Crime prevention 97%
2. Law and order 94%
3. Social Security 91%
4. Pollution 91%
5. Education 88%
6. Medicare 85%
7. Job training 85%
8. Food to the needy 84%
9. Defense 82%
10. Slum Clearance 81%
11. Unemployment 80%
12. Improved Housing 79%
13. Civil Rights 71%
14. Aid to Farmers 67%
15. Racial Integration 64%

Only Foreign Aid was opposed by a majority, garnering a mere 38% support.

The Johnson Administration, however, was to be avoided at all costs. ⁵⁵ Nearly half of those questioned could not name a single positive accomplishment of the administration. Vietnam was rated a failure by 75-90% of the potential voters. The only accomplishment mentioned by significant numbers was benefits for senior citizens. Hursh recommended:

1. Don't talk about "The Johnson Administration."
2. Claim credit for Democrats and for Humphrey for specific programs.
3. Exploit positive feelings about the old age benefit record as Nixon does very well among those over 65 in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Michigan, where they are his best age group.
4. Issue concern about the Johnson Administration is generally low except about its Vietnam policies.

The prime alternative seemed to be economic issues. An October 25 memo from Hursh stated that job security and prosperity was the best Democratic issue, Connell's Salt Lake City memo stressed the relevance of economic issues and suggested that they offered a "meaningful diversion." Despite this, they would not be enough to overcome the disadvantages of the other issues. Therefore, he suggested, "Our party and the Republican threat to the future of this country must become the 'issue' of the campaign. If we stay hung-up on Vietnam, we're most likely going to lose--and badly."

Hursh's October 21 memo for the speechwriters describes this approach best:

"a. Use of issues:

1. To protect the 'take charge' leadership, strength,

and decisiveness of the Vice President.

2. To rally partisan sentiments--e.g., GOP obstructionism, Democratic progress, GOP threats to medicare, Social Security, etc., Wallace-Le May irresponsible threat to peace and economic security, HHH courageous leadership.
3. To compare the Democratic party, record, and leadership with the weakness, indecision, obstinance, short-sightedness, etc., of the Republican party and candidate.

b. The 'only' issue:

- is not Vietnam, crime, riots, poverty: the only issue is the threat of the Republican party to take over control of this country, brush aside the social progress achieved under the Democrats, and turn clock back 30 years."

In other words, with the most important issues going against Humphrey, he should stress partisan appeals, image, and general themes; this was reflected in what became the campaign's basic theme--the "issue" of trust. Although, for purposes of our analysis we have classified findings and recommendations into separate categories, for the campaign all were related. Humphrey's image problems could not be separated from his issue problems. It is important to keep this in mind to understand a political campaign.

All of those I interviewed insisted that polls had little impact on the presentation of issues. Humphrey had a long record in politics which gave him little chance to change positions which he had long espoused without appearing indecisive or dishonest. Furthermore, he was not someone who consulted the polls very much before taking positions. As Jeane and Evron Kirkpatrick told me, although his

disasterous 1960 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination had convinced him that some polling was necessary.

But the polls clearly had an impact on the emphasis of the campaign. Advisors used them to bolster their arguments to take a particular stand or emphasize or drop an issue, although the ambiguity of results often meant that those on both sides of an issue could cite poll results to support their positions. The final strategy of avoiding issues and stressing partisan appeals was confirmed, if not suggested, by survey results. Hursh sent a steady stream of recommendations to the speechwriters which seem quite consistent with the actual thrust of the campaign.

Candidate Image

This was another area of great concern. As a pro-Humphrey labor leader put it at the beginning of the campaign, "The polls clearly show he's been coming through to the people as a weak man, a stooge, We need to show him as a strong man, a man with ideas, a man who gets things done." ⁵⁶ Surveys taken for the campaign simply confirmed a problem all were aware of. Humphrey was perceived by many voters as "indecisive," "run by others" or "not his own man." Once again, we can turn to Connell's Salt Lake City memo for a summary of the results:

1. Enthusiasm for the candidates is lower and their negative ratings higher than at any time since measurements were begun in 1952. Nearly 3 of 5 voters would choose someone else than Humphrey, Nixon or Wallace for President.

2. Two of three voters feel strong leadership is the most important characteristic of a good president. Nixon is well ahead on the basic qualities of leadership, strength and decisiveness.

3. Humphrey is hurt by his ties to the administration.

4. Nixon does much better on image among the Republicans than Humphrey does among Democrats. Three-fourths of Republicans give Nixon top ratings on leadership qualities compared to only two-fifths of Democrats who rate Humphrey as highly.

Those taking the polls suggested an image of strength and simplicity. Hursh's October 9 memo to Freeman is merely one of many he and others sent. It recommended:

1. The use of words of strength--independent, strong, decisive, courage and leader.

2. Emphasize party and party leadership.

3. Do not change positions. "Don't qualify statements on issues; don't be too rational and judicious in citing pros and cons--show people his mind is made up."

4. Cite courageous decisive stands taken on issues--not the issues themselves.

5. Show that Nixon is afraid to take unpopular positions. The real Nixon is masked by his slick advertising.

6. Stress Nixon's fear of debates and Humphrey's willingness to pay for time.

7. Emphasize Nixon's indecision, his lack of independence, and his ties to big business and the Republican party.

This was essentially the strategy taken by the campaign. Humphrey's attacks on his opponent grew stronger and stronger. Nixon was "Richard the Chicken-Hearted," "Richard the Silent," "Richard the Worried." Humphrey bought television time which he offered to Nixon for a debate, but Nixon refused. At nearly every stop Humphrey

stressed this refusal and his opponent's alleged evasiveness on the issues. The polls seem to have played a confirming role here. One doubts that Humphrey's image would have been handled very differently without them.

Groups to Target

One of the most important elements in campaign planning is deciding which groups to appeal to and how. Given the very limited financial resources available, this was especially true for the Humphrey campaign which could not afford to waste resources in unproductive appeals. The documents I examined indicated that polls were most relevant in determining how best to appeal to Democratic identifiers, young voters, Wallace voters, and the undecided. Of course there is considerable overlap between these groups. Also included within these groups were such important subgroups as union members and black voters. The state polls contained larger than usual samples not for greater accuracy but for statistically valid analysis of subgroups so it is clear that such analysis was important to the campaign.

It has already been pointed out that partisan appeals were a strong component of campaign strategy. Survey research has indicated that party identification is a relatively stable and important factor in individual voters' choices. Humphrey, however, did relatively poorly among Democratic identifiers. An October 2 memo from Hursh to Freeman discussed findings from nine Mid-Western, Southern, and border states which identified respondents by strength of party loyalty and candidate preference. The expectation for each candidate would be that he should get the votes of nearly all his party's strong identifiers, a substantial number from weak identifiers and a few from the other

party's weak identifiers. In other words, his vote should exceed the number of his party's strong identifiers. Findings from the polls, however, showed that, except for his home state of Minnesota, this was not true for Humphrey but was for Nixon. Table V summarizes the results.

TABLE V
Candidate Support as a Percentage of the
Number of his Party's Strong Identifiers

<u>State</u>	<u>Humphrey</u>	<u>Nixon</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Humphrey</u>	<u>Nixon</u>
Ill.	81%	13%	Fla.	48%	111%
Mich.	84	109	Md.	68	179
Minn.	106	128	N.C.	50	346
Mo.	70	133	Texas	66	181
Wisc.	86	136			
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Average	85%	128%	Average	58%	204%

Clearly Humphrey was well short of his potential here. Nixon did especially well in the Southern and border states despite Wallace. The fifteen percent of Nixon's support which came from Democrats was approximately equal to his margin in the polls at the time.

Connell's Salt Lake City memo also stressed the importance of party, citing the Democrats' large advantage in party identification, its importance as a determinant of voting, the large number of undecided Democrats, and the substantial support for Nixon among Democratic identifiers. Once again, we can see that polls supported the logic of partisan appeals to regain Democratic support for Humphrey.

Poll results were somewhat helpful regarding young voters.

57

According to Napolitan, surveys indicated that young voters had little awareness of "Humphrey's great contributions in the area of civil rights, labor legislation, and social programs." As a result, a thirty minute documentary, "What Manner of Man," emphasizing this record was produced and shown frequently. More surprising, in view of the then prevalent stereotype of the young radical demonstrator was finding that 21-34 year olds were more pro-Wallace than any other age group. According to Hursh, this was because of his image as independent, decisive, courageous, and a strong leader. Because these factors were important to older groups as well there is no need for us to analyze them separately here.

58

1968 saw the emergence of a strong third party candidate in George Wallace. Gallup and Harris estimates of the Wallace vote went as high as 21%, raising the possibility that he could prevent either candidate from gaining an electoral majority. How to regain these votes was a problem facing both major party candidates. Hursh, in an October 21 memo to the speech writers suggested that Wallace be attacked not as a racist but as "an irresponsible threat to economic security and peace, he is inexperienced, anti-peace, anti-union, anti-employment, anti-progress, a loyal Democrat's vote for Wallace is a Republican vote." His and others' advice to portray Humphrey as strong and decisive would also be useful in countering Wallace's strength on these personal characteristics.

It is difficult to say how much effect this had, but Humphrey's speeches strongly attacked Wallace's record as Governor of Alabama on economic issues and social programs. Humphrey also began equating Wallace with Nixon in an October 9 speech in New York City in which he attacked Wallace for "playing on fear and hate" then charged that Nixon

"cloaks that same appeal but he invokes it." ⁵⁹ In addition labor unions, both national and local, flooded their memberships with pamphlets attacking Wallace's record in Alabama on economic and social issues and his alleged anti-unionism. ⁶⁰

Those in the campaign took considerable heart from Wallace's steady decline during the campaign. Hursh sent a memo to the speech-writers on October 26 pointing to findings that only 72% of those who "wanted" Wallace to be President actually planned to vote for him, compared to 93% for Humphrey and 92% for Nixon and that more than twice as many of these Wallace defectors planned to vote for Humphrey than for Nixon. Again we can see the use of polls as morale boosters. By this time, however, no money was being used for private polls so this data comes from a Sandlinger poll of October 22.

The most important group in a campaign is generally the undecided. Hursh distributed a profile of undecided voters based upon the Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. He found the following characteristics:

- Sex In some states two-thirds of those undecided are women.
- Age Over 60% are between 35 and 65, primarily 35-49 in the North, 50-64 in the South.
- Party More Democrats are undecided than expected. 95% of Republicans have already made up their minds.
- Education In eight of the nine states high school graduates are the largest group of undecideds. In seven of the nine those with less than a high school education are the larger proportion of the undecided

than those with some college.

Occupation One fourth to one half are blue collar workers. One sixth to one fourth are white collar workers. The third largest group is those who are either retired or with no occupation.

Income This generally follows the income distribution within the state itself. Altogether about three-fourths of the undecided have incomes under \$10,000.

Union In states where unions are strong (Illinois and Michigan) surprisingly large numbers of union members are undecided. In the other states most families are non-union, so the undecided are mostly non-union.

Residence Most undecideds come from urban areas.

Past Voting Over half the undecideds voted for Johnson in 1964. One-third either did not vote or don't remember how or whether they voted that year, while one-sixth voted for Goldwater.

Going into the final 10 days of the campaign, Hursh drew the following profile of the undecided ⁶¹ --69% women, 89% urban suburban residents, employed (95% of men), housewives (70% of women), 47% more than high school educated, 67% between 35 and 54 years old, 52% over \$10,000 in income, Eastern (43%) and Mid-Western (33%) residents. He does not account for the differences between these two profiles but we would especially point out the greater education and income of the second profile, probably due to the fact that these statistics

included more than Southern and Mid-western states. Hursh does emphasize the importance of economic issues as well as issues of interest to women--the cost of living, education, health care, consumer protection, job security, and pollution. An October 26 memo from Connell had much the same basic point.

Countering the Public Polls

After the convention the Humphrey campaign was in desperate shape. Because the Gallup and Harris polls put him so far behind, potential contributors were loath to give money. If money could not be raised then overwhelming defeat was certain. To break out of this self-fulfilling prophecy, the campaign had to show that victory was a realistic possibility. A small group, consisting of Connell, Hursh, Charles Tyroler and Jay Schwamm was assigned this task. The lack of resources left them unable to finance separate polls, so they used whatever data they could find including the state surveys taken for the campaign, public polls of all sorts, questions added to polls taken for others, and their own ingenuity. Their job was to convince the press, Democratic party leaders, the public, even those in their own campaign, but especially those who could contribute funds that the public polls were wrong, or, at least, being misinterpreted. They waged this campaign in several ways:

1. Because the public polls measured national samples, they were not necessarily correct if used to predict the results of a presidential election which is decided not by popular vote but by the Electoral College. Connell's group claimed that the large industrial states, where the electoral votes were, were toss-ups while Humphrey was way behind in the inconsequential small states. National figures

failed to disclose this. Connell planned an offensive centered around the October 7 Harris poll to show this and, as we will discuss below, that Humphrey was registering strong gains. O'Brien leaked some of the favorable state polls showing Humphrey ahead in eight states with 136 electoral votes to leading newspapers while Connell gave wider circulation to a memo with similar arguments. The result of this was considerable favorable coverage. A New York Times article by Max Frankel appeared on October 9, using figures provided by the Democratic National Committee explaining their belief that Humphrey could deny anyone a majority. Humphrey was ahead in states with 201 votes, Wallace in states with 92, according to this analysis which meant that even if Nixon carried all the remaining states he could not win. An October 23 article by Godfrey Sperling, Jr. of the Christian Science Monitor also consisted largely of the figures supplied by the Humphrey campaign.

2. Another approach emphasized the volatility of public opinion, there was a general lack of enthusiasm for all of the candidates. Connell's strategy for the October 7 Harris poll was to stress any improvement as "a remarkable change from Gallup." An October 9 memo, given wide circulation among reporters, and possible contributors was entitled, "Humphrey on the Upswing, Gallup or Not!" Others in the campaign found this an excellent strategy. Napolitan wrote on one of Connell's memos which he sent to O'Brien, "Not a bad memo. You should read."⁶²

Also pointed out was that Nixon's vote had remained relatively constant in the polls. Because his large lead came from Humphrey losses rather than his gains, the undecided could be convinced to

return to Humphrey. State polls indicated this was a real possibility,
63
it was claimed.

3. The historical analogy is a standard tactic for trailing candidates. When Nixon's lead in the Gallup poll was at its largest, a statement was drafted for O'Brien pointing out that Truman had trailed by the same margin at the same time in the 1948 campaign. O'Brien did not deliver it. 64 An October 22 memo from Connell stated in bold fashion "Gallup was Wrong. The Other Polls Showed It," pointing once again to the Truman analogy and also stressing differences between Gallup and Harris on whether Nixon or Rockefeller was the stronger candidate immediately prior to the Republican Convention. Another approach claimed that Wallace's support would decline as Election Day approached as had happened to all third party candidates. Again 65 1948 was the example, this time for Henry Wallace. Because these sorts of historical references had been used by so many failing candidates, they had little effect.

4. Various errors in sampling procedures or interviewing techniques were alleged. These generally concerned the under-representation of groups that could be expected to support Humphrey. According to Tyroler black people were under-represented in public polls. Connell's October 22 memo suggested that city residents were such a group. He also charged that Gallup's failure to make a second try to interview those not at home reduced the number of the young, the poor, the mobile, and those with two jobs. Furthermore, he argued, no adjustments were made for the high rate of refusal to be interviewed. Elsewhere, charges were made that Gallup interviewers did not always conduct the interviews they claimed they did, especially in high crime

66

neighborhoods.

5. The questions asked were also challenged. The California Poll had given Nixon leads of 17 to 9% when voters were asked how they would vote if the election were held today. The Humphrey campaign was able to get the pollster Don Muchmore, to change the phrasing to, "When the present campaign is over, and you finally get into the voting booth, which man--Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, or George Wallace--do you really think you'll vote for?" This change in an otherwise identical poll produced dramatically different results: Nixon 44%, Humphrey 42%, Wallace 6%, and 8% undecided. As a result, the Connell group could challenge the results of any poll using what they believed was the less realistic phrasing, which most public polls did.

They also argued that the exclusion of vice-presidential candidates from polls hurt Humphrey, pointing to a Sindlinger poll which put Humphrey and Muskie only one point behind Nixon and Agnew, a virtual toss-up.

67

6. Finally, any poll which differed from Gallup and Harris was given wide circulation. We have already discussed the distribution of state polls to the media and potential contributors. Telegrams were also sent to state party chairmen and Citizens for Humphrey coordinators telling them that private polls contradicted the public ones and to tell this to contributors in order to raise funds to put already produced television ads on the air.

68

Because Albert Sindlinger's polls showed a closer race than did the others, they were circulated by the Connell group. Several of those interviewed even claim that they "discovered" Sindlinger, who is now one of the best known public pollsters but was then best known

for his market research. They soon discovered, however, that the difference was due primarily to Sindlinger's failure to filter out likely non-voters, so they did not press the differences too hard. ⁶⁹

Taken as a whole, this operation can be considered only a modest success. Although it did generate some successful publicity, most people remained skeptical until the public polls showed some dramatic shifts. Perhaps if Humphrey had been able to raise more money, he might have been able to win the election. If so, the September Gallup polls might have been a prime cause of his defeat.

We can point to several ways in which private polls did affect the campaign. These include--resource allocation, raising the morale of the campaign organization, countering unfavorable public polls, providing reinforcement for decisions on issues and image, and helping to decide which groups to target. There is little evidence that issue positions were taken on the basis of polls. Despite the relatively sophisticated polling operation for the general election campaign, the influence of polls was quite limited. Reasons for this are--the lack of funds, campaign disorganization and frequent lack of planning, the personal inclinations of the candidate, and the fact that Humphrey's problems were so clear that polls were not needed to discover them.

The consensus of those interviewed was much the same. Few cited specific connections between polls and campaign decisions although there was some mention of advertising. When asked how much the recommendations of those involved with the polls were listened to, Hursh replied that early in the campaign little attention was paid. Too many people were trying to get the candidate's ear for the pollsters to be much noticed. After the disastrous decline of Humphrey's

support, his other advisors had few suggestions to offer and the advice given by Connell and Tyroler became more persuasive. Success of Connell's advice to ask for money after the Salt Lake City speech, much to O'Brien's surprise, gave their recommendations more weight.

Like all of those involved in a political campaign, Hursh had his own interests which must be weighed in evaluating his statements. They make clear what we have several times suggested, that a campaign consists of different people giving often conflicting advice. The influence of the polls in a campaign is very much affected by the influence those who take and analyze them have with the candidate.

FOOTNOTES

1

Interviews with William Connell, September 22, 1977 and Robert McCandless July 27, 1977.

2

Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson and Bruce Page, An American Melodrama, (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), pp. 142-145.

3

These and other memoranda referred to below have been gathered from several sources, including The Minnesota Historical Society, Jeane and Evron Kirkpatrick, Gerald Hursh-Cesar, and Charles Tyroler II.

4

The August 7 Gallup poll showed Democrats preferring Humphrey to McCarthy by a margin of 53-39%.

5

Letter from Ted Van Dyk to author, July 6, 1978.

6

Ibid.

7

Chester, Hodgson and Page, pp. 143-144.

8

Congressional Quarterly, XXVI (May 31, 1968), p. 1253.

9

Leo Bogart, Silent Politics: Polls and the Awareness of Public Opinion, (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1972), p. 33.

10

For more details about this poll see Chapter 4.

11

Interview with Connell.

12

This and the following data come from an April 16 memo from Connell to Richard Maguire.

13

May 24 memo from Norris Ellerston to Connell.

14

Interview with Fred Harris, March 3, 1977.

15

Jules Witcover, 85 Days: The Last Campaign of Robert Kennedy, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), p. 210. Congressional Quarterly, XXVI (May 31, 1968), p. 1259.

16

Perhaps this suspicion was caused by McCarthy's statements indicating that under certain circumstances he could support Humphrey, Chester, Hodgson, and Page, p. 301. Eugene J. McCarthy, The Year of the People, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1969), p. 124.

17

Interviews with Connell and Harris.

18

New York Times, June 4, 1968.

19

New York Times, May 17, 1968, p. 22.

20

Congressional Quarterly, XXVI (May 24, 1968), p. 1203.

21

New York Times, June 2, 1968, p. 31

22

Congressional Quarterly, XXVI (May 10, 1969), p. 1093.

23

New York Times, May 12, 1968, p. 59.

24

New York Times, May 12, 1968, p. 41, Congressional Quarterly, XXVI (May 31, 1968), pp. 1255-1256.

25

Congressional Quarterly, XXVI (May 31, 1968), p. 1255, Chester, Hodgson, and Page, p. 403.

26

June 6 memo to Connell.

27

June 5 memo to Harris, Walter Mondale, and Richard Maguire.

28

Undated memo entitled "Polling for a Presidential Campaign."

- 29
Chester, Hodgson, and Page, p. 404. Hubert H. Humphrey, Education of a Public Man, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1976), p. 375.
- 30
Memo from Hursh, May 1968.
- 31
Chester, Hodgson, and Page, p. 403.
- 32
Humphrey, p. 375.
- 33
Interview with McCandless.
- 34
New York Times, July 30, 1968, p. 1.
- 35
Chester, Hodgson, and Page, pp. 557-558. New York Times, August 24, 1968, p. 1.
- 36
Interview with McCandless.
- 37
For more complete accounts of these events see Chester, Hodgson, and Page, pp. 524-537; McCarthy pp. 210-121; Richard T. Stout, People, (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 341; Jeremy Lerner, Nobody Knows: Reflections on the McCarthy Campaign of 1968, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1970), p. 174 and Humphrey, 387-390.
- 38
Humphrey, p. 391. Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1968, (New York, Atheneum, 1969), pp. 304-305. July 1968 memo obtained from Jean Kirkpatrick.
- 39
Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), Chapter 5.
- 40
Joseph Napolitan, The Election Game, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1972), p. 34.
- 41
Herbert Alexander, Financing the 1968 Election, (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1971), p. 114. This seems a low estimate as a September 24 memo from the Democratic National Committee to Orville Freeman gives the cost of only seven state polls as \$93,900.

42

October 28, 1978 letter to author.

43

This and the following information come from an interview with Jean and Evron Kirkpatrick, October 2, 1978 and a September 18, 1968 memo from Hursh to the pollsters.

44

Interview with Jeane and Evron Kirkpatrick.

45

Alexander, p. 114.

46

September 30 to Orville Freeman, October 14 to Douglas Bennett.

47

October 12 memo from Hursh to Connell. The poll was completed October 3.

48

Interview with Jeane and Evron Kirkpatrick and letter from Joseph Napolitan to authorm February 12, 1978.

49

New York Times, October 31, 1968, pp. 1, 39.

50

Interview with Gerald Hursh-Cesar, February 13, 1978.

51

Napolitan, pp. 44-46 quotes a September 14 memo urging this. Charles Tyroler, in a September 22, 1977 interview, also suggested to me that polls reinforced the position of those who wanted to break with the President.

52

Lawrence O'Brien, No Final Victories, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1974), pp. 259-262; Chester, Hodgson, and Page, pp. 645-650; White, pp. 354-356; Humphrey, pp. 401-403.

53

August 16 memo from Hursh and Tyroler to O'Brien.

54

New York Times, September 18, 1968, pp. 1, 26.

55

The following comes from an October 12 memo from Hursh to Freeman summarizing findings from the state surveys.

56

Wall Street Journal, August 30, 1968, p. 1.

- 57
Letter to author, October 2, 1978.
- 58
October 8 memo to Freeman.
- 59
New York Times, October 10, 1978.
- 60
Chester, Hodgson and Page, pp. 706-710.
- 61
October 26 memo to speechwriters.
- 62
Chester, Hodgson, and Page, pp. 712-713.
- 63
Interview with Jay Schwamm, June 9, 1978.
- 64
Interview with Tyroler.
- 65
Interview with Schwamm.
- 66
For a more systematic version of similar charges see Michael Wheeler, Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1976).
- 67
October 30 memo from Connell.
- 68
Chester, Hodgson, and Page, p. 714.
- 69
Interview with Tyroler.

CHAPTER THREE

THE 1968 McCARTHY CAMPAIGN

If the Humphrey campaign hardly fits the picture of the well oiled machine working its way through a carefully planned program, the McCarthy campaign fits it considerably less well. Their ads even sought to capitalize on this. "McCarthy's Machine Needs Money," began one ad with a picture of a group of young people captioned "The Machine." It continued, "Senator McCarthy is backed by the most improbable machine in American history. It works for nothing, runs on peanut butter and soft drinks, and spends the night in sleeping bags or empty warehouses."¹ But the McCarthy campaign also had more than its share of competing advisors, each with his or her own strategy. Because of the decentralized nature of the campaign, different groups often pursued different, sometimes even conflicting, strategies simultaneously until the candidate intervened, if he did. One description of Blair Clark, the campaign manager, gives a good picture of this:

"In the end, Clark was probably the only kind of campaign manager McCarthy could have lived with. Clark was not much on decision, direction, or organization. He was, unavoidably, perhaps, a long suffering but amiable faineant. But as McCarthy noted in this period: 'Organization is not that important to the kind of campaign I plan to run because the issues are more important than the person'."²

When we speak of "the campaign" or "campaign strategy", this must be done with even more caution than in the previous chapter.

The organizational confusion of the campaign will become clearer as we examine its operation in more detail.

Senator McCarthy himself had little faith in polls. According to one of his speechwriters, "As far as I know, McCarthy preferred his own instincts to polls. They were never a factor in any discussion I took part in."³ McCarthy, in his account of the campaign, said that "if the issues are of major importance, poll taking is a waste of time and money...I have no objection to polls taken which deal with secondary or with less important aspects of a campaign, or the more generalized polls about the acceptability or unacceptability, the general strength or general weakness of a candidate..."⁴ In fact, McCarthy felt most candidates took too much advice. There were, for him, three types of decisions that had to be made during a political campaign. For "the important decisions about key issues," the candidate should need little advice. He should also make most practical political decisions himself, leaving only "decisions that are relatively unimportant or that cannot be determined with reasonable accuracy by anyone--such as whether one should travel by plane or by car or go to one town instead of another,"⁵ for his advisors. This lack of enthusiasm for polls, or even for advice, the disorganization of the campaign, and chronic fund shortages would lead us to believe that polls probably had little or not impact on this campaign. With this in mind we turn to our analysis of key decisions in the McCarthy campaign.

1. Deciding which primaries to enter.

The McCarthy campaign differed from the stereotype in more than its organization. Eugene McCarthy was as unlike the typical

presidential candidate as could be. He did not have a driving ambition to be President, he seemed to dislike campaigning, he preferred the company of poets to that of politicians, and he was not particularly well known to the public. Rather than speaking of running for President, he spoke of testing the democratic process. In his stump speech he would say that "in pursuing this office I am not fulfilling any boyhood dream of mine. You have some politicians who look at the White House and say, 'That's where I want to live.' I haven't said that. I never thought that. In fact, I think it should be made into a museum." ⁶ It is not surprising that during most of 1967, few people thought of McCarthy as a presidential candidate. The conventional wisdom was that Lyndon Johnson, as an incumbent, would have little trouble getting the Democratic presidential nomination. If he were to have trouble, it would only come from a challenge by Robert Kennedy.

Some Democrats, however, so vehemently opposed the Vietnam War that they felt President Johnson had to be challenged for the nomination. Led by Allard Lowenstein, they began to organize and to seek a candidate. Their first choice, Robert Kennedy, repeatedly turned down their requests, although he was eventually to change his mind. Others who were approached also declined, including Senators George McGovern, Frank Church, and Lee Metcalf, Congressman Don Edwards, and General James Gavin. Finally, Senator McCarthy, hardly an over-⁷whelming choice, agreed to the challenge.

McCarthy's first problem was deciding which primaries to contest. His original idea was to run a limited "educational" campaign with a budget of approximately one million dollars (he wound up spending more than \$8.6 million). ⁸ In his account of the campaign, McCarthy

writes that he originally planned to enter four: Massachusetts, Wisconsin,⁹ Oregon, and California. They were chosen for their geographic distribution, political importance, and favorability. It must be remembered that in 1968 the number of significant primaries was considerably less than now. In the end, McCarthy was to enter every primary of significance. Of these four, Massachusetts was chosen as a large eastern state with considerable antiwar sentiment. Wisconsin was a mid-western state with numerous advantages, including: 1) The state's independent and progressive tradition; 2) The similarity between its politics and those of neighboring Minnesota, McCarthy's home state. McCarthy was very well known in Wisconsin; 3) The existence of a strong antiwar and anti-Johnson movement, especially in Madison, the capital and site of the University of Wisconsin; 4) Support or even endorsement from two or three newspapers and the Progressive magazine, one of whose editors was to become active in the campaign; and 5) The possibility of Republican cross-over votes due to the state's open primary. This was enhanced when Nelson Rockefeller made a statement two weeks before¹⁰ this primary in which he ruled himself out of the race. Oregon was chosen for its strong antiwar sentiment and independence while California was too large for any serious candidate to avoid.

When McCarthy announced his candidacy on November 30, the list had expanded slightly. McCarthy said he would run in five or six primaries: Wisconsin, Nebraska, Oregon, California, and either New Hampshire or Massachusetts, perhaps both.¹¹ Nebraska, like Oregon, automatically placed all candidates on the ballot unless they stated in writing that they would not run, so its addition is not surprising. The key decision concerned the New Hampshire and Massachusetts primaries.

Massachusetts at first seemed the more likely of the two to run in. The April 30 date was four weeks after the Wisconsin primary which McCarthy felt was his best chance whereas New Hampshire's first in the nation primary ran the risk of destroying the campaign immediately. Massachusetts also provided a broader base of support in terms of organization and funds. The most serious danger was the opposition of the Kennedys but even this had its positive side for entry into the Massachusetts primary would go a long way toward disproving persistent assertions that McCarthy was a "stalking horse" for Robert Kennedy.¹² After a November meeting with Edward Kennedy, McCarthy hoped for a delegation which would represent all groups fairly but when the state committee, over Ted Kennedy's opposition, voted a resolution strongly supporting President Johnson, McCarthy decided to enter the primary. He was to be well rewarded for, to the amazement of most observers, no other candidate entered before the March 5 filing deadline.

New Hampshire looked much less promising. It had a reputation as a hawkish state, was dependent upon defense industries, and had a party organization which strongly supported President Johnson. The state's most important newspaper was the extremely conservative Manchester Union-Leader. Campaign manager Blair Clark, however, favored entering this primary to counter charges of "ducking" an important primary and to prevent too much of a lull in the campaign after McCarthy's declaration of candidacy.¹³ McCarthy agreed to meet with a group of New Hampshire activists on December 14. One of them suggested taking a poll to evaluate whether to enter, but McCarthy¹⁴ replied negatively, that it might prove too discouraging. The con-

trast with Robert Kennedy is striking, as one of his reasons for not entering was the fear that the race was hopeless. Thus, for a candidate challenging those in power and their policies, polls taken prior to a campaign will usually deter his entry even, as was the case in 1968, if there is considerable dissatisfaction with those policies. As we shall see in the next chapter, some of Kennedy's younger advisors made precisely this point.

After this meeting, David Hoeh and Gerry Studds, who would later become the state's campaign coordinators, drafted a memorandum¹⁵ urging McCarthy to enter. They cited the following reasons:

1. There was nothing to lose and much to be gained. New Hampshire's reputation as a hawkish state and the prediction by Senator Thomas McIntyre that McCarthy would get less than 10% of the vote meant that anything significantly better than that, which Hoeh and Studds were certain of, would be seen as a victory.

2. Entering against the odds would show the seriousness of McCarthy's campaign.

3. An organization and a large number of volunteers already existed.

4. A victory would have major national repercussions as the national media gave the New Hampshire primary considerable attention because it is the first.

5. New Hampshire and Massachusetts could be run as a package. Massachusetts television stations are seen throughout New Hampshire and many southern New Hampshire residents work in Boston.

6. A manageable campaign could be run at a relatively low cost. Hoeh and Studds included a possible plan with a budget of

\$50,000 (less than one-sixth of eventual expenditures) and a twelve ✓day schedule which took in three-fourths of the voters.

McCarthy was impressed by this enthusiasm as well as the urging of Blair Clark who, although not politically experienced, had lived in New Hampshire for two years. One account of the campaign, in discussing Clark's role, reinforces our main point. "He was not an expert--but then an expert would probably have polled New Hampshire and decided it was a dead loss from the outset." McCarthy also felt that although the arguments against entry were strong, they were "within the limits of what is called conventional political wisdom." As the Massachusetts primary became less important, New Hampshire became more so. In early January, McCarthy announced he would enter both these primaries.

Clearly polls played no role in these decisions. McCarthy's belief that they would only discourage the efforts of those who supported a littleknown Senator against an incumbent President was surely correct. It is impossible for us to tell how many potential candidates take a poll, see discouraging results, and then decide not to run. It is possible that some of these might have done well, had they actually campaigned. Certainly McCarthy did quite well, barely losing in New Hampshire and winning in Wisconsin. We can contrast that with George Romney who withdrew from the New Hampshire primary due to poor poll results or the short-lived 1979 campaign of Lowell Weicker, a casualty of poor polls two months after he had entered and nearly ten months before the first primary or untold others who never got as far as announcing their candidacy.

As of early January, McCarthy was entered in six primaries.

When Robert Kennedy entered the race, two more would be added. Excluding the uncontested Massachusetts primary, these would be the battleground of the campaign. Paradoxically, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the eventual nominee would compete in none of them.

2. The heavy reliance on canvassing

One of the most striking features of the McCarthy campaign was its heavy use of student canvassers. Hoeh and Studds, in their memo, had suggested that the student volunteers be used in some way but they were not certain how. At first they simply handed out literature but the excellent response led to a greater role. A largely successful attempt was made to reach every Democratic household in the state. The goals were to interest the voter in McCarthy, highlight the issues, and distribute literature. Canvassers were to feel out the voters' opinions before bringing up issues. They were instructed never to ask directly whether the voter would cast a ballot for McCarthy but to say they hoped he or she would do so. A card was filled out for each person interviewed, characterizing him or her as favorable, uncertain but possibly favorable to Johnson, or unfavorable. Those not at home were later telephoned, using a similar approach. The day before the election sample ballots were placed on all doorsteps. On election day, favorable voters were urged to go to the polls and provided with assistance such as transportation and baby sitters.

This direct approach to voters was hardly an innovation. The urban party machine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had used a similar approach. The McCarthy canvass, however, had some novel elements. The canvassers were, for the most part, college students. They tried to project an image of "Clean for Gene,"

cutting long hair, shaving beards and mustaches, dressing neatly and without jeans, and speaking in a calm and polite manner. This, coupled with McCarthy's cool rationality, was an extremely effective counter to the fears of some that those who opposed the war were all hippies and/or radicals. The canvass aimed to create rapport between the students and residents of New Hampshire and so to stimulate discussion. This establishment of rapport also meant that voters would be more likely to reveal their true feelings to the canvassers. The youth of the canvassers and their clean cut image led to numerous feature stories in the media, an important plus for a campaign which could only afford to buy television ads during the last four days.

The large size and scope of the canvass were also unprecedented. According to McCarthy, 2000 students worked full time and 5000 on weekends, covering, according to Curtis Gans, the campaign's director of operations (titles in the McCarthy campaign meant very little) who was to become the leader of the volunteers, every Democrat in the state twice over. Although the estimates of more disinterested observers are a bit lower, all agree that the operation was extremely large. In fact, ten busloads of volunteers were turned back during the final week.

As the canvass evolved, it became apparent to the campaign's managers that it could provide some of the information normally provided by polls. Ben Stavis, one of those involved, felt that the results were useful to channel canvassers and to cover areas where they showed weakness but that the results were unlike those of polls due to the large number of people who were not home or refused to talk and the differences in interpretation among the canvassers given

24

the lack of a single approach or set of questions. According to Curtis Gans, prior to President Johnson's withdrawal, the canvass provided better information than polls. This information was used to gauge McCarthy's standing and to decide where to utilize resources but not for issues. David Hoeh also found the information provided by the canvass useful in showing McCarthy's progress from an early 20% to near parity. In fact, by the time he was able to get some limited polling data, "our canvassing operation was producing useful management information."

25

26

3. Issues in New Hampshire.

Although some of the McCarthy campaign officials would have liked to commission polls, the money was simply not available. However, some data was made available by Robert Craig from surveys he had taken for the American Broadcasting Company. This consisted of two sets of interviews, one of 581 Democrats and Republicans (independents were excluded) taken February 12-17, the other of 562 taken a week later. Because the survey was not taken for the campaign, much of the data was of no use. For example, 733 of the 1143 respondents were Republicans who could not vote in the Democratic primary. Although the remaining 410 are a reasonable sample for a statewide survey, this is a bit small for subgroup analysis.

28

Nevertheless, the survey supplies some interesting data. A secret ballot gave McCarthy 26.3% of the vote to Johnson's 53.2%, far better than most commentators were predicting at that time. At first glance, however, McCarthy's positions on the issues seemed distinctly unpopular. An overwhelming 75.5% agreed with McCarthy that ending the Vietnam War was the most important problem facing the federal gov-

ernment but they hardly agreed with him on how to do so. Only 9.9% favored an American withdrawal compared to 43.5% who favored a stronger stand even if it meant invading North Vietnam. 19.2% favored either a temporary or permanent bombing halt but 35.4% would stop the bombing only if North Vietnam would surrender and 39.5% only after North Vietnam agreed to negotiate. This hardly seemed fertile ground for McCarthy's dovish position but a more careful look shows a deep dissatisfaction with President Johnson. When asked how often they believed the President, for example, only 30.9% said most of the time. Thus, when Craig combined a hawk-dove index with the credibility factor, he discovered that while an overwhelming majority of doves supported McCarthy no matter what their opinions on President Johnson's credibility, 87.2% of hawks who hardly ever believed the President supported McCarthy as well. In a post-election analysis he concluded that "The McCarthy vote was a protest against a Democratic administration which, having entered a war, neither fought it nor abandoned it and in the meantime left many to conclude that they could not look to a Democratic administration for other policy benefits either."

Most of those involved in the campaign had independently come to a similar conclusion. According to Gans, the original strategy was to attack President Johnson on the issue of trustworthiness. The Vietnam War should be made secondary, stressing only its "endless" quality. McCarthy's first speech in New Hampshire called for "a massive federal program" to provide housing. After some debate over whether to focus advertising on Vietnam or to take a broader approach, the latter was decided upon. The original advertising agency, Papert Koenig and Lois, was dropped because its ads were too strongly

33
against the war. A card designed to look like a tax return was
used to attack President Johnson's economic record while McCarthy
spoke against the income tax surcharge used to help finance the war. 34

The Johnson campaign seemed to be doing its best to give
ammunition to its opponents. Their use of three part numbered pledge
cards--one part sent to the Democratic State Committee, one to the
White House, and the third kept by the voter--was immediately pounced
upon by a McCarthy poster captioned "You Don't Have to Sign Anything
to Vote for Gene McCarthy" and displays of huge trash cans to throw
the pledge cards into. 35
Strident attacks on McCarthy's patriotism
and the assertion by Governor John King that a McCarthy victory would
be greeted by "cheers in Hanoi" boomeranged when contrasted with
McCarthy's calm demeanor. An advertisement by the McCarthy campaign
the day before the primary repeated every half hour on every radio
station told voters to "think how you would feel to wake up Wednesday
morning to find out that Gene McCarthy had won the New Hampshire Pri-
mary--to find out that New Hampshire had changed the course of American
politics." 36

The basic strategy was set and first implemented well before
the ABC poll was made available to the campaign. The poll may have
played, at most, a slight reinforcing role, confirming that the best
strategy had been chosen. One other survey was apparently taken
for the campaign in New Hampshire. It illustrates the problems which
were to plague the campaign in more serious form later on. Howard
Stein, president of the Dreyfus Fund and a leading McCarthy fund raiser,
and Russell Hemenway wanted a political-demographic survey of the state.
Although Blair Clark felt it was not needed, it was taken anyway. The

survey proved useless, containing suggestions such as supporting independence for Quebec to gain support from New Hampshire's large population of French-Canadian background. ³⁷ Thus, polls played almost no role in determining the issues of the campaign.

4. The entrance of Robert Kennedy and withdrawal of Lyndon Johnson

Between the New Hampshire and Wisconsin primaries, two events occurred which changed the contest completely. Shortly after the New Hampshire primary, Robert Kennedy announced his entry into the race. Much more shocking was President Johnson's late March withdrawal, two days before the Wisconsin primary. As Hubert Humphrey was to avoid all primaries, they had now become a contest between two vocal opponents of the war. As McCarthy put it soon after Kennedy's entry, "I think we're more or less agreed in terms of the issues. So the campaign becomes a question of personality and qualification." ³⁸

This new situation, one would think, should lead to great changes but it did not. According to campaign aide Meyer Frucher, "Basic campaign strategy pretty much remained the same, except that McCarthy obviously tried to distinguish himself from Kennedy, primarily by talking about his early entry into the race, and trying to paint Kennedy as more of an opportunist." ³⁹ Gans, in retrospect, feels that this failure to change strategy was a significant mistake. ⁴⁰ What worked when Johnson was the opponent proved less successful against Kennedy.

McCarthy's most important change was to announce, just before Kennedy's anticipated entry, that he would enter Indiana and South Dakota in response to requests from people in those states. Gans thinks this too was a mistake as he now feels that McCarthy never had

41

a chance in Indiana (the South Dakota primary, held the same day as California, proved of little significance). McCarthy, however, felt he would show a lack of courage by avoiding his first chance to stop Kennedy. He also thought that a single defeat would not be decisive.⁴²

A more conventional campaign would have taken polls before deciding whether to enter these primaries. It would have taken telephone polls assessing voter reactions to Kennedy's entry and Johnson's exit and searching for Kennedy's weaknesses. But a conventional campaign would also have taken polls before entering so it would never have begun. We can see both advantages and disadvantages of polls. They may discourage a potential candidate from finding the weaknesses of a seemingly powerful incumbent that only an actual campaign can reveal. In a more equal contest, however, they seem necessary for such tactical decisions as what primaries to enter, where to concentrate resources, and how and where to advertise.

The canvass also began to fail McCarthy. The coming states were larger and less receptive to student canvassers. The canvass began, according to Gans, to produce less accurate information. Also, as the campaign staff grew larger, more and more disputes broke out between national and local staff and between those with different strategies. The lack of central direction caused different factions to develop a technique called "bootlegging."⁴³ Each individual or faction would ask financial contributors to give directly to them so they could spend the money as they wished, thus making overall planning impossible.

All of this, together with a Kennedy campaign that was con-

siderably more active and effective than that of Johnson and a loss of their major issues of Vietnam and the President's credibility created a crisis for the McCarthy campaign, but it so concentrated on the more immediate problems of each individual primary that it overlooked the larger one.

5. The conflict over how to appeal to black voters in Wisconsin

As mentioned earlier, McCarthy was counting upon a victory in Wisconsin. For most of the campaign, things seemed to be going very well. Even though Wisconsin is six times the size of New Hampshire, canvassers were able to ring every doorbell in the state. Three days before the primary, the canvass showed more than 62% for McCarthy. A telephone check ordered by Gans after President Johnson's withdrawal showed a drop to approximately 57%, an extremely accurate prediction when compared to the 56.2% of the vote McCarthy was to receive.

Within the campaign, however, trouble was brewing over the black vote. There had been strong police action ordered by Milwaukee's Mayor Henry Maier against civil rights marchers led by the activist priest, Father Groppi. The primary was the same day as the mayoral election which Maier, as expected, won overwhelmingly. A number of those active in the campaign felt that Groppi and Walther (Maier's opponent) should be supported as a matter of principle. Others, including Gans and Wisconsin vice-chairman Ted Warshafsky, a Milwaukee attorney, felt that such involvement would detract from their main objective, electing McCarthy.

A more important long range question, which was argued at the same time, was what amount of energy and resources to devote to countering Kennedy's appeal in the black community. Given the rela-

tively small number of black voters in Wisconsin, a large effort would gain few votes in the primary and risk alienating white voters. At a meeting called to discuss these problems, Mark Siegel argued that combatting one of Kennedy's major constituencies would be more important in the long run than gaining a few thousand more white votes. Gans, who was more concerned with immediate problems, felt that, given the few prominent blacks who had endorsed McCarthy, and McCarthy's lack of working class appeal, devoting large resources to such an appeal was likely to be unproductive. ⁴⁶ The argument got quite heated, with opponents of Gans and Warshafsky charging that they opposed taking strong stands on civil rights and urban problems. ⁴⁷ The meeting broke up in failure, resulting in the resignation of press secretary Seymour Hersh and his assistant. The controversy was soon aired in the New York Times which stated that Hersh's resignation was caused by McCarthy's failure to discuss the problem of white racism and to develop an urban program. ⁴⁸ To counter this, McCarthy, who had always been a proponent of civil rights, quickly made a civil rights speech, arranged for two blacks to accompany him during the campaign, and made a hurried visit to the Milwaukee ghetto.

So far as I can tell, no polls were taken regarding this. It does not appear that they would have made any difference for this argument concerned matters of principle and long versus short term interests. Opponents of more ghetto campaigning would have been able to point to statistics showing how few black votes would be cast and how this would be outweighed by white votes lost but their adversaries already conceded this. Those who favored more campaigning in the ghetto could have produced surveys showing how heavily Kennedy scored among

black voters in the upcoming California primary but their adversaries, conceding this, would have argued that McCarthy could never counter Kennedy's emotional appeal. Though each side could use polls to support their arguments, in such matters of principle, neither was likely to convince the other. Nor would the candidate, reluctant to get involved in such disputes and averse to listening to polls on matters of principle, have been swayed to intervene by poll results. Thus, even if polls had been taken, they would probably have had no effect.

6. The decision to concentrate the Indiana campaign in small towns

After the victory in Wisconsin came the first direct confrontation with Kennedy in Indiana but it was complicated by the presence of Governor Roger Branigan in the race. Branigan had originally entered as a stand-in for President Johnson but decided to continue even after the President's withdrawal. The strategy, designed by Gans, was to concentrate McCarthy's campaigning in small towns. As McCarthy put it, "My schedulers seemed preoccupied with having me appear in every courthouse square in the state of Indiana." Judging by the results--McCarthy finished third with 27.4% of the vote--this strategy did not work particularly well. Why was it chosen?

Clearly it was not chosen because of polls. Gans does not feel the strategy was a mistake. It is his belief that the primary should not have been entered as no strategy could have succeeded. Clearly, as we have already pointed out, if Gans is correct, polls might have helped keep McCarthy out. If he is wrong they might have helped point out a more fruitful strategy.

The rural strategy seems to have been chosen because of past success. In the New Hampshire primary, McCarthy did best in the small

cities and towns while Johnson's strengths were in the blue-collar areas and large cities. Manchester, the state's largest city gave Johnson a 2-1 majority.⁵¹ Since Kennedy seemed to appeal primarily to minorities and blue-collar workers who would live in the larger cities, continuing this strategy seemed reasonable. It overlooked the fact that most rural areas in Indiana are Republican and that those Democrats who lived there were likely to support Branigan. Surveys would probably have pointed this out.

It also seems unfair to blame McCarthy's failure on the rural strategy alone. The canvass, so successful in earlier primaries, no longer seemed to work well, perhaps because people in Indiana were less receptive, perhaps because of the loss of the campaign's major issues.⁵² The local staff led by attorney Richard Grand-Jean and Notre Dame Professor James Bogle was less effective than the New Hampshire⁵³ and Wisconsin staffs had been while the national staff quarreled more than ever. Gans spent freely on grass roots operations with little accounting. This proved exasperating to campaign treasurer Stephen Quigley, McCarthy's brother-in-law, who sought to reduce and control spending. At the same time, contributors such as Arnold Hiatt and Howard Stein wanted more media campaigning. The result was more boot-⁵⁴legging and more confusion.

Producing radio and television proved equally contentious. McCarthy had brought in Bill and Kay Nee, on leave from their Minnesota ad agency but Carl Ally, a New York advertising man, had also volunteered his time. The Nees favored low-key issue ads which some ridiculed as a "Ma and Pa Kettle" approach. Ally favored a more hard hitting approach. At first, time was divided between the two but soon films

and tapes began to disappear before they could be distributed. Finally⁵⁵ the Nees won and Ally left the campaign. As we shall see, this was not to be the end of the advertising struggle. Although polls were not used in this dispute, they would play a part when it recurred in California.

In sum, polls played no part in these events. Perhaps their use might have avoided or mitigated the disastrous run in Indiana. Given McCarthy's feelings about polls, his belief that he had to take risks, his desire to fight Kennedy as soon as possible, and his earlier successes despite discouraging results of polls taken by others this seems a doubtful hypothesis. Perhaps in another campaign with a different candidate...

7. Withdrawal of support from joint Kennedy-McCarthy sales in the District of Columbia

On March 25, McCarthy announced his withdrawal from a previous agreement with Kennedy to run a joint slate of delegates in the May 7 Washington D.C. primary, saying he wanted to avoid "the impression⁵⁶ of an arrangement with Senator Kennedy for my campaign." McCarthy's explanation was that he felt the slate was unbalanced, did not like the way it was run, and disliked Kennedy's use of joint slate as evidence of cooperation in other primaries. He elaborated only on the last of these, claiming that he wished to make it clear that the two⁵⁷ campaigns were separate and that he had no plans to compromise. This last seems the most important reason. It was to become even more so when Lyndon Johnson withdrew from the presidential race a few days later.⁵⁸ Polls played no part in this. They would surely have shown Kennedy ahead among the predominantly black voters of the

District. In the actual primary, Kennedy's slate received 62% of the vote.

8. Issues in Oregon

After his defeats in Indiana and Nebraska, McCarthy had to win in Oregon to remain a serious contender. He reorganized his campaign by bringing in two seasoned professionals, Thomas Finney as coordinator for Oregon and California and Thomas McCoy as liaison between McCarthy and the reporters cornering him. Gans, feeling this to be an attack on him, resigned but held a joint press conference with Finney a few days later saying they would work together, Finney on scheduling, advance staff, and media, Gans organizing and directing field work. The campaign now consisted of five clearly identifiable groups, each with its own goals, methods, and often its own sources of money: 1) Gans and his aides, about 200 current or former volunteers; 2) Finney and McCoy and others they had added, including Tom Morgan and David Garth; 3) McCarthy's Senate staff led by administrative assistant Jerome Eller; 4) McCarthy's friends, including columnists Shana Alexander and Mary McGrory and poet Robert Lowell; and 5) Local staff. Lines of authority had become even less clear than earlier with a series of disputes to follow.

Fortunately for the campaign, however, the local staff in Oregon had started early and, by the time the other groups arrived was the best organized of all the primary states. Led by Howard Morgan, who had run in the 1966 Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, and his campaign manager, Blaine Whipple, they knew how to run a state-wide campaign. At their first meeting with McCarthy in early February, Whipple offered McCarthy demographic statistics and strategic advice

but McCarthy replied, "I should remind you that you are the people who asked me to run. I am what I am, and I won't be changing. You will have to make your decisions on what you will do in this campaign on what you know of me already."⁶⁰

Oregon was much more favorable territory for the canvass. In a study of the forty-seven precincts of the Eugene-Springfield area, John Orbell, Robyn Dawes, and Nancy Collins calculate that the volunteer rate was a more accurate indicator of the McCarthy vote than polls would have been, barring a much larger sample than would ordinarily be taken. A central card file was created to include the names, addresses, and areas of expertise of potential volunteers. Johnson's withdrawal necessitated a new file.⁶¹ The demographics of the state were also favorable--no significant minority populations and many middle class suburban voters.

Those who had been added to the campaign did some polling but its influence seems to have been minimal in Oregon. Early polls placed McCarthy four points behind, closer than in any other primary.⁶² What issues would be used to close the gap? According to Tom Morgan, there was some issue polling which was used by advisors as justification for their stands. Morgan and others favored linking the issues of the Vietnam War and the urban crisis which was eventually done to a limited extent in California.⁶³ Others, including McCarthy's speechwriters, were troubled by McCarthy's stating that he could support Humphrey in certain circumstances. They urged him to make a "fighting speech" attacking both Kennedy and Humphrey. He made such a speech at the Cow Palace in San Francisco a week before the Oregon primary and repeated it in Portland, Oregon the day before the primary.⁶⁴ Others,

including the Nees, urged a more general appeal, emphasizing McCarthy's independence, courage, and individuality.

This conflict was muted by the presence of one issue everyone could agree on--Kennedy's failure to debate. According to Gans there were some polls which supported this but more important were the rationality of McCarthy's appeal which he and most others felt would prevail in a debate over Kennedy's more emotional appeal and the Oregon tradition which favored debates. Events also seemed to work in favor of this issue. McCarthy arrived at the Portland zoo just as Kennedy was completing an appearance there. Kennedy left in a hurry, chased by irate McCarthy staffers yelling "chicken" and "coward." This made for some graphic television news film that night. Ads also stressed this failure to debate.

Although there were some polls taken in Oregon, their role seems only to have been a slightly reinforcing one. During debates about alternative courses of action, those who advocated a particular strategy would use poll results to back up their arguments but these seemed to sway no one. The debate issue seems to have been stressed because it was there and was, unlike other issues, agreeable to all.

9. The conflict between Gans and Finney over campaign strategy in California

We have previously mentioned the dispute between Gans and Finney but said little about its substance. Finney favored a change in strategy to a media oriented campaign emphasizing brief spot advertisements and trying to arrange scheduling to gain maximum free time on news broadcasts. He also favored a more aggressive stance (for more on this see decision 10 below) and a reduction of the national staff to lower the campaign's continuing deficit. Gans preferred half-hour programs and

the continued use of the field organization for canvassing and small storefront headquarters. ⁶⁷ The truce mentioned above papered over these differences rather than resolving them, although Gans claims that they were minor with the real differences concerning strategy after California. ⁶⁸

Finney's strategy would have required considerable polling. Although I have not been able to obtain any actual results, published accounts and my interviews show that Finney was able to have some polls taken. The next decision, in fact, turns on some poll results. His disagreement with Gans was over broad strategy i.e., to what extent should a modern media campaign be used in contrast to the grass-roots strategy the campaign had used to this point. Finney would have used polls to a much greater extent than they had been used in the campaign. As we shall see, this was not to be. According to Jeremy Lerner, ⁶⁹ "McCarthy didn't like to take advice from Tom Finney."

10. Advertising in California

In our discussion of the Indiana primary, we came across disputes over advertising strategy. These had been resolved in favor of the Nees' low-key advertisements. In California, the Nees, in order to show the candidate needed no "packaging," used entire speeches or excerpts from speeches as their ads. ⁷⁰ Finney now stepped in. He commissioned polls which showed that McCarthy trailed Kennedy by 16% and that although McCarthy was admired, he was not considered tough enough to be president. Finney had persuaded David Garth, who has since become the leading practitioner of the media campaign, to volunteer his services. Taking his cue from those poll results, Garth produced four or five hard hitting ads with an off camera announcer who

spoke about McCarthy's "guts" and emphasized that "this quiet man toppled the president." McCarthy's non-political friends (group four in decision eight above) and his wife Abigail were furious when they saw the ad. Mrs. McCarthy, with her husband's approval, sent Finney a letter ordering the ads withdrawn and forbidding the use of the word "guts" which had particularly offended her. Because there was too little time to produce a full set of ads, Garth was forced to use the Nees' ads together with those of his which remained. He left the campaign after the California primary. ⁷¹ Thus, although polls briefly had an effect on campaign strategy, that effect was quickly eliminated.

11. Strategy for the debate with Kennedy

After his defeat in Oregon, Kennedy could no longer avoid debating McCarthy. McCarthy's aides had prepared for the debate very carefully. A research team consisting of speechwriters Jeremy Lerner and Paul Gorman, Oregon campaign manager Arthur Herzog, and Tom Morgan prepared two booklets, one consisting of specific pieces of data McCarthy had requested such as a comparison of spending in the space program with that on public housing, the second outlining questions that might be asked together with possible answers and rebuttals. They proposed linking the issues of the Vietnam War and the urban crisis. According to Morgan, these were prepared because the authors believed in these positions but the limited poll results they had did support them. McCarthy was not impressed by the data and opinions, reading only the memo which accompanied the booklets, not the booklets themselves. Finney, however, was able to spend forty-five minutes with McCarthy the day of the debate, urging him to take an aggressive ⁷² stance. He pronounced himself happy with the results.

Between these preparations and the debate, McCarthy spent an hour with Blair Clark, Shana Alexander, Mary McGrory, and Robert Lowell. They joked and made fun of the preparations, urging McCarthy to "rise above the political."⁷³ Whether this took the edge off McCarthy or whether it relaxed him can never really be determined. Most published accounts as well as the people I interviewed feel that McCarthy did not perform very well in the debate.⁷⁴ According to Garth, the polls, which had shown McCarthy rising to within two points of Kennedy showed a drop in his standing the day after the debate. Larner says that Richard Goodwin, in a conversation with him, cited a telephone poll showing similar results.⁷⁵ No matter how one evaluates performance, it is clear that McCarthy followed his own path rather than the one laid out by his political advisors. Polls clearly had no impact on his decisions.

12. Strategy for the convention

Although the California defeat seemed to end McCarthy's chances for the Presidency, Kennedy's assassination suddenly changed the picture. Now McCarthy was the only alternative to Vice-President Humphrey who had been methodically wooing delegates while his opponents were fighting it out in the primaries. According to McCoy, he, McCarthy, and Finney flew back together after the California primary. McCarthy felt it was all over. Gans feels that McCarthy, after some reflection, decided he couldn't win, so he merely went through the motions, leaving the campaign even more a group of independent fiefdoms than before.⁷⁶

Once again, new professionals were brought in creating even more blurred lines of authority. Although Finney wanted sole control, Stephen A. Mitchell a former Democratic National Chairman, was brought

in to head the convention operation. Mitchell favored a strategy of confrontation at the convention, challenging as many delegations as possible and seeking to reform the rules of the convention. His hope was to split Humphrey's conservative Southern supporters from his more liberal Northern ones. Finney favored a more traditional operation with quiet persuasion of delegates and television appearances by McCarthy. He hoped to show that McCarthy could win the election but Humphrey could not. Such a strategy would, if fully implemented, necessitate a heavy reliance on polls to indicate McCarthy's appeal to voters. Clark and Gans favored a massive grass roots strategy to pressure delegates and reform the party.

McCarthy was never to commit himself fully to the fight. His supporters had difficulty getting him to campaign during the summer, although he did go to a few state conventions, asking delegates to keep an open mind, but generally refraining from attacking Humphrey. When Gans called a mid-June strategy conference, McCarthy neither came nor gave instructions. After McCarthy aides had made a deal for six delegates from Oklahoma, he came and asked for two or three. When Mitchell asked him to go to Little Rock, Arkansas for a possible thirty to forty delegates, McCarthy stayed home. McCarthy's own listing of his goals for the convention reveals his priorities clearly. He wanted first to begin reforming the party, second to obtain a platform plank advocating a change in Vietnam policy, and only third "To make the best possible challenge for the nomination." We might note that winning the nomination is not one of these goals.

The campaign had been so concerned with the primaries that no convention planning had been done until late spring when a staff

member suggested it. In a June 14 memo, a budget of nearly a million dollars was proposed but there was not enough money for such an operation. This was reduced to \$580,000 on July 7, then to \$250,000 a month before the convention. Actual expenditures were about \$60,000 less. Clearly the more grandiose plans would be shelved for financial reason.

There was never any decision reached over which strategy to use, except that Quigley, with McCarthy's consent, tried to keep costs down as the campaign was more than a million dollars in debt. Gans, as mentioned above, called a meeting June 19-20 to discuss strategy. There it was decided to have: 1) Large scale petition campaigns which had already been started in California and Maryland; 2) State-by-state delegate lobbying groups; and 3) A series of rallies and speeches.

This grass-roots strategy, however, was never to have much backing from the candidate and was only partially implemented. Only two of the large rallies were held, one with 45,000 people in Boston's Fenway Park on July 25, another with 25,000 in the rain two days later in Detroit's Tiger Stadium. Then, the rallies were abruptly stopped until the final ones held August 15 in thirty cities. The other components of the grass-roots strategy were also only partially undertaken. Petitions were circulated in a few states but little was done with them. A mock primary was held in Ohio with McCarthy outpolling Humphrey 50.7 to 23% among nearly thirty thousand voters but few similar efforts occurred.

Finney's more traditional strategy was allowed but not encouraged. At first McCarthy agreed to put Finney in charge then changed his mind so Finney faded from the campaign for a time but returned later. But lack of money and disorganization within the campaign meant that

Finney had only limited polling data to try to convince the delegates that only McCarthy could defeat Nixon. Oliver Quayle was hired to take a series of polls to show McCarthy's strength among Republicans and independents. Although Quayle sent the polls and was paid for them, two were returned in October by the post office as "undeliverable" due to a non-existent address. Amazingly, no one in the McCarthy organization had noticed. In addition to this abortive survey, a John Kraft poll was taken of ten primary states which showed McCarthy ahead of Humphrey in all of them:

<u>State</u>	<u>McCarthy Advantage</u>
California	15%
Illinois	17
South Dakota	10
Oregon	20
Massachusetts	5
New Hampshire	1
Nebraska	17
Indiana	16
Wisconsin	8
New York	5

Source: Congressional Quarterly XXVI (August 23, 1968) p. 2237. It also indicated that McCarthy could carry several of these states-- California, Illinois, South Dakota, Oregon, and Wisconsin--which Humphrey would lose.

The public polls at first provided some encouragement. In a mid-July Louisville, Kentucky speech, McCarthy leaked a Harris poll

(angering Louis Harris) a day before its release showing that only he would defeat Rockefeller and that he would defeat Nixon easily while Humphrey only led Nixon 37-35%. A pre-convention Gallup poll showed McCarthy five percent behind Nixon compared to Humphrey's sixteen point deficit but these encouraging results were negated by a late Harris poll showing both Democratic contenders six points behind.

Nor did other attempts have much more influence. Patrick Lucey showed Chicago Mayor Richard Daley an advance copy of a Chicago Sun-Times poll showing McCarthy carrying Illinois while Humphrey trailed Nixon by nine percent. Daley replied, "We've beaten polls before."⁸⁶

On August 19, the McCarthy staff released a study claiming that a ticket headed by McCarthy would enable the Democrats to retain nine doubtful governorships and gain one held by the Republicans, hold ten marginal Senate seats and perhaps add two or three, and retain thirty marginal House seats and recapture some of the forty-seven lost in⁸⁷ 1966.

But this strategy required a candidate who would vigorously pursue delegate votes himself, stressing his demonstrated vote getting ability and his record as a party man--dedicated to an open party and opposed to the Vietnam War, not the Democratic party. McCarthy, apparently feeling he could not win, made few such appearances. Those he made turned out very poorly. On June 30, he told the Michigan delegation that, under certain circumstances, he would consider backing Nelson Rockefeller. At an August 20 meeting with the Pennsylvania delegation, he refused to commit himself to supporting Humphrey against⁸⁸ Nixon despite sharp questioning. He appeared before a California caucus very reluctantly and gave a poor performance compared to his

opponents, Humphrey and the late entrant, George McGovern. But the biggest blows were yet to come. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Lerner drafted a statement attacking the Soviet Union, asserting that the Vietnam War had made it easier for them to invade. Although McCarthy approved the statement, when he delivered it he left out the criticism of the Soviet Union, beginning, "I don't see this as a major world crisis..." He received so much criticism that he had to issue a "clarifying" statement. Finally, in an interview with the Knight newspapers, he conceded that Humphrey was sure to win.

Not only were the grass-roots and traditional strategies pursued, if half-heartedly, so too was the confrontation strategy, despite the fact that it and Finney's strategy were incompatible. If you want to woo delegates, challenging them and their rules is surely not the best way to do it. But, just as Gans and Finney pursued their own strategies, so too did Mitchell. He hoped to split Humphrey's more liberal northern urban and labor backers from his conservative southern supporters by challenging southern delegations which inadequately represented blacks; challenging rules and procedures, especially the unit rule favored by the South; and forcing a vote on an antiwar plank for the platform.

In the previous chapter we discussed the friction caused by the challenge to the unit rule but, although southern delegations were offended, they did not desert Humphrey. The unit rule, however, was abolished, perhaps the biggest victory for the McCarthy forces at the convention.

Nearly all of the delegate challenges were lost. The Louisiana, Tennessee, North Carolina, Michigan, Alabama, and Texas dele-

gates were seated with the closest vote rejecting the Texas challenge 1368-955. Humphrey supported a compromise to split the Georgia delegation equally between the two sides. When a vote to seat only the challengers failed, 1413-1041 1/2, the compromise was accepted. Only the Mississippi challenge, which had been supported by Humphrey, succeeded. Again, the McCarthy forces had irritated southern backers of Humphrey but had failed to change anyone's position.

Finally there were negotiations between the McCarthy and Kennedy forces over an antiwar plank. For McCarthy to have any chance at winning, he had to capture most Kennedy supporters. Many, however, were suspicious of him. Some supported George McGovern, others remained undecided, while a surprisingly large number supported Humphrey. One way to capture some would be by agreeing with former leaders of Kennedy's campaign on a Vietnam plank. Such a plank could be brought to a floor vote as part of the confrontation strategy. At an August 23 meeting, McCarthy and Kennedy supporters agreed on a proposal which called for an unconditional halt in the bombing of North Vietnam, negotiations with North Vietnam on mutual withdrawal, encouraging the South Vietnamese to negotiate with the NLF, and a reduction of American military activity. In his account of the campaign, McCarthy says that he did not insist on the inclusion of the acceptance of a coalition government in South Vietnam because he felt it more important that opponents of the war present a united front. Others felt that he was unenthusiastic about it, citing the absence of a statement admitting President Johnson's policy was an error in the plank and McCarthy's coolness toward the proposal on a television interview. ⁹¹

Thus, no real decision in favor of one of these strategies

was ever made. Proponents of each, though limited financially, were allowed to go their own ways no matter what others did. Only one of the strategies, Finney's traditional delegate hunt, would have involved substantial use of polls. He was, however, limited by the candidate's attitude, the decentralized nature of the campaign and his lack of authority, and a shortage of funds. Thus, polls played a relatively small role at the convention. However, had McCarthy enthusiastically embraced Finney's strategy, he would most likely have also lost.

As we expected, polls played a small role in the McCarthy campaign. The main reasons were:

1. The candidate's attitude. McCarthy preferred to go his own way rather than take advice, especially from polls. Had this not been so, he would never have entered, but, once in, it led to a number of tactical miscalculations such as entering the Indiana primary.

2. The nature of the campaign. The campaign began as a matter of principle--opposition to the Vietnam War--so no polls were needed regarding whether to enter or, at least at first, what to say about the issues. When the campaign was transformed into a broader effort to capture the presidency, its decentralized nature and heavy reliance on the canvass also reduced the desire and need for polls as did the lack of professional politicians. Polls could be used to bolster one's case in a factional dispute but, as they were unlikely to be definitive enough to change minds, such use was limited.

3. Lack of funds. Polls are expensive and, given chronic shortages of funds, other matters usually had priority.

Although there was little use of polls in the McCarthy campaign,

it reveals a great deal about them--how their use may prevent the candidacy of those who challenge the status quo, how useful they can be for tactical decisions, what alternatives to polls can be devised, and some of the factors involved in how they can be in a campaign.

FOOTNOTES

- 1
Eugene J. McCarthy, The Year of the People, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1969), p. 84.
- 2
Richard T. Stout, People, (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 139.
- 3
Letter from Jeremy Lerner to author June 23, 1977.
- 4
McCarthy p. 63.
- 5
Ibid., pp. 172-173.
- 6
Jeremy Lerner, Nobody Knows: Reflections on the McCarthy Campaign of 1968, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1970), p. 56.
- 7
For more complete accounts see Stout pp. 58-77 and Chester Hodgson, and Page, An American Melodrama, (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), pp. 51-67.
- 8
Herbert Alexander, Financing the 1968 Election, Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1971), p. 37.
- 9
McCarthy pp. 61-63.
- 10
Ibid., pp. 89-90.
- 11
New York Times, December 1, 1967, p. 1.
- 12
Arthur Herzog, McCarthy for President, (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), pp. 84-85; Stout p. 146.
- 13
Interview with David Hoeh November 23, 1976.

14

Chester et. al. p. 84, McCarthy p. 64.

15

Chester et. al. pp. 85-86 has a long excerpt from the memo. Other information about it came from Stout p. 149 and the interview with Hoeh cited in note 13.

16

Chester et. al. p. 86.

17

McCarthy p. 64.

18

Interview with Hoeh.

19

Stavis pp. 27-33, Stout pp. 176-178.

20

According to Curtis Gans in an interview with the author, December 29, 1976, lack of money for such advertising was the biggest problem of the campaign.

21

McCarthy p. 69, interview with Gans.

22

See, for example, Stout, p. 163 who estimates that 1000 came for the final weekend and that 60,000 homes were canvassed.

23

Ben Stavis, We Were the Campaign, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 17.

24

Ibid., p. 42.

25

Interview with Gans.

26

Letter to author November 11, 1976, interview cited in note 13 supra.

27

Ibid. See also New York Times March 17, 1968, Section IV p. 1.

28

The data is available from the Institute for Social Research Monitor System, February 5, 1973.

29

Robert E. Craig, "'The Protest Coalition': Voting Behavior in the New Hampshire Democratic Presidential Primary, 1968," Paper delivered at the 1971 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, pp. 16, 23.

30

Interview with Gans.

31

New York Times, December 15, 1967, p. 33.

32

Stout, pp. 167-168.

33

Herzog, p. 95.

34

Stavis, pp. 29-30, New York Times March 17, 1968, Section IV,
p. 1.

35

Stavis, pp. 29-30.

36

Herzog, p. 97.

37

Stout, p. 176

38

New York Times, March 24, 1968, Section IV, p. 2.

39

Letter to author, May 21, 1979.

40

Interview with Gans.

41

Ibid.

42

Herzog, pp. 127-128.

43

For more specifics see Herzog, pp. 132-136.

44

Larner, p. 47, Chester et. al. p. 137, McCarthy, pp. 104-105.

45

Letter from Warshafsky to author, January 27, 1977.

- 46
Stavis, pp. 43-45, Interview with Gans.
- 47
Letter from Warshafsky.
- 48
New York Times, March 27, 1968, p. 33.
- 49
McCarthy, p. 132.
- 50
Interview with Gans.
- 51
New York Times, March 13, 1968, p. 33.
- 52
Stout, p. 222.
- 53
Ibid., p. 224, Stavis, pp. 59-60.
- 54
Herzog, pp. 132-136.
- 55
Ibid., p. 132, Larner, p. 79.
- 56
New York Times, March 26, 1968, p. 25.
- 57
McCarthy, pp. 101-102.
- 58
Interview with Gans.
- 59
Herzog, pp. 151-155, Stavis, p. 115, Stout, pp. 241-248.
- 60
Chester et al., pp. 298-299.
- 61
"Grass Roots Enthusiasm and the Primary Vote., Western Political Quarterly, XXV June 1972), pp. 249-259.
- 62
Interview with David Garth, March 16, 1978.
- 63
Interview with Tom Morgan, January 11, 1978.

64

Chester et. al., p. 303.

65

Interview with Gans.

66

Larner, pp. 99-102, Stout, pp. 261-262.

67

Stavis, pp. 107-110, Herzog, p. 152.

68

Interview with Gans. Finney died in 1978.

69

Letter from Larner to author. Larner continued, "Mr. Finney I believe will be frank about this if you ask him." Unfortunately Finney was terminally ill at this time, so I was never able to confirm this.

70

Stout, pp. 268-269.

71

Interview with Garth; Interview with Thomas McCoy, March 13, 1978; Herzog, pp. 177-179; Stout, pp. 268-269.

72

Interview with Morgan, Stout, p. 272.

73

Stout, p. 272, the quote was supplied by David Garth in the interview referred to in note 62 supra.

74

For accounts of the actual debate see Chester et. al., pp. 337-349, Herzog, pp. 184-188, Larner, pp. 110-117, New York Times, June 2, 1968, pp. 1, 64.

75

Interview with Garth, letter from Larner.

76

Interviews with McCoy and Gans.

77

Herzog, pp. 200-210, Stout, p. 347, Larner, pp. 140-146.

78

Larner, pp. 132-146.

79

McCarthy, p. 198.

80

Alexander, p. 41.

81

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82

New York Times, June 20, 1968, p. 20.

83

New York Times, August 14, 1968.

84

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Theodore H. White, The Making of the President, 1968, (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 313.

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New York Times, July 1, 1968, p. 1; August 21, 1968, p. 35.

89

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90

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91

McCarthy, pp. 204-206, Stout, p. 341, Larner, p. 174.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE KENNEDY CAMPAIGN

Because the 1960 Presidential campaign of John Kennedy, managed by his brother Robert, was the first national campaign to make systematic use of modern technology, we would, at first thought, expect that Robert Kennedy's 1968 campaign was more cohesive and made more use of polls than did those of his opponents which we have examined in the previous two chapters. This was only partially true. The most obvious reasons were the timing and short duration of the campaign. Although strongly opposed to the Vietnam War, Robert Kennedy, for reasons we will discuss, was reluctant to run, fearing it would do more harm than good. The long period he spent agonizing over this decision meant that when he finally did decide to run the primaries had already begun and he had not yet set up the necessary organization. Most early polls, both before the announcement of candidacy and afterward, were of the "trial heat" variety. By the time of the California primary, Kennedy's image was so well established that little could be done.¹ According to Stephen Smith, if the campaign had continued,² polls would have played a greater part, but its sudden start and brief duration meant that resources were devoted to more pressing problems.

Although the 1960 campaign had used polls more extensively³ than any before it, the results were less than a complete success. Louis Harris was both the official pollster and an important campaign

advisor. But, although John Kennedy felt his polls were generally accurate and worthwhile, there were some serious errors. Theodore Sorensen claims that they failed to show "the true depth and volatility" of anti-Catholicism and "they told us very little about issues-- except to report such profound conclusions as the fact that many voters were in favor of greater federal spending in their own state, lower taxes and a balanced budget, and were opposed to Communism, war and foreign aid." He points to two serious errors. Resources were shifted from one Wisconsin district which the polls said would be won easily, but was lost, to another which the polls claimed was close but which was actually hopeless. In a state in which Kennedy won fewer districts than had been predicted, this was important. Even more important was a Harris survey showing Kennedy with a 70-30% lead over Hubert Humphrey in West Virginia which led Kennedy to enter that primary. Soon afterward, however, a new Harris survey showed a 60-40% Humphrey lead.⁴ Harris' explanation, which most Kennedy aides were skeptical of, was that, prior to Kennedy's entry into the primary,⁵ West Virginia voters were unaware he was Catholic.

It was not simply erroneous results that led to Robert Kennedy's reluctance to rely upon a pollster as much as his brother had in 1960. After the election, Harris remained as an advisor to John Kennedy but differences quickly developed between Harris and other aides. After a few months, this estrangement led to Harris' return to full time polling.⁶ He soon left private polling entirely and is now, along with George Gallup, one of the leading public pollsters. The 1960 experience, however, had convinced Robert Kennedy that it was a mistake to have an official campaign pollster.

One of our most striking findings thus far has been the lack of cohesion in the campaigns we have examined. The Kennedy campaign, although hardly as fractious as that of McCarthy, did have its share of confusion and disagreement. Much of the former was due to lack of preparation and the need to work quickly to meet the deadlines imposed by the primaries. Had Kennedy not been assassinated, the period between the June California primary and the August convention might well have seen a tighter organization as only one important primary (New York) remained. Robert Kennedy himself felt the campaign to be disorganized and intended to reorganize it after California, putting his brother-⁷ in-law, Stephen Smith, in charge.

Within the campaign there were numerous conflicts. Local organizations, especially those for Oregon and California, were not always highly regarded by the national organization. There was also considerable rivalry between Robert Kennedy's Senate staff and the generally older, more cautious, and more traditional former John Kennedy loyalists. Even among this latter group, according to two participants in the campaign, "The Kennedy White House staff inevitably had developed personal strains and animosities, which their public responsibilities and their intense loyalty to President Kennedy had concealed....The only man to whom they would all subordinate themselves was Robert Kennedy, and he just could not take enough time from campaigning to mediate⁸ their differences of personality or advice."

Kennedy's indecision about entering the race exacerbated some of these conflicts. A group of his younger aides made known their intention to resign if he did not make the race. Richard Goodwin joined the McCarthy campaign but, when Kennedy entered the race, he

returned albeit on his own terms. "So for the rest of the campaign, Goodwin ran his own operation, producing television films for the campaign with John Frankenheimer, the gifted Hollywood director, disdaining any interference with his work, and insisting on dealing directly with the candidate." ⁹ Although this example is a bit extreme, it shows that the Kennedy campaign was afflicted with the same kinds of organizational strains as its rivals.

Keeping the above in mind, we turn to our analysis of key decisions during the campaign.

1. Deciding whether to run

Whether or not Robert Kennedy would oppose Lyndon Johnson in 1968 was a question that was discussed well before that year. The day after the 1966 election, Adam Walinsky urged Kennedy to run, citing referenda in several cities where withdrawal from Vietnam had received as much as 40% of the vote. Walinsky felt that this, together with people's distrust of Johnson and the race issue, indicated that the President would lose in 1968. ¹⁰ But Kennedy, although strongly opposed to Johnson's Vietnam War policy, feared that a challenge to the President would only be viewed in personal terms--the "ruthless" Robert Kennedy seeking to inherit the Presidency from his brother John--and would result in a defeat that would set back opponents of the war. He continually announced his support of Johnson's candidacy but was just as steadily urged to run. At an after dinner conversation in late September 1967, Allard Lowenstein, still looking for a candidate to oppose Johnson, and reporter Jack Newfield urged Kennedy to run. James Loeb and Arthur Schlesinger were opposed. Kennedy replied that, if he were the first to run against Johnson, "People would say that I

was splitting the party out of ambition and envy. No one would believe that I was doing it because of how I felt about Vietnam and poor people. I think Al is doing the right thing, but I think that someone else will have to be the first to run."¹¹

A more formal meeting was held on October 8. Adam Walinsky and Kennedy's other Senate aides, most of whom were in favor of running, were not invited. Most of those present opposed a Kennedy candidacy but they made the following recommendations, with which Kennedy agreed: 1) Be more politically active in general; 2) Make no more blanket endorsements of President Johnson; 3) Increase staff contacts with party leaders; and 4) Take a poll in New Hampshire.¹² In other words, do not run but scout the territory and be ready just in case. The New Hampshire poll showed 60% for Johnson, 28% for Kennedy, and 12% undecided,¹³ mildly discouraging but hardly fatal. A series of meetings and memos followed.¹⁴ Goodwin urged running in a long letter. Frederick Dutton, in a November 3 memo, urged Kennedy to ignore favorable public polls which, he claimed, showed Johnson weakness rather than Kennedy strength. The same day, Arthur Schlesinger wrote that he had changed his mind and now favored running.¹⁵ The Senate aides favored running but most other advisors, including Theodore Sorensen, Edward Kennedy, Stephen Smith, Frederick Dutton, Pierre Salinger, and William vanden Heuvel¹⁶ were against.

After McCarthy's entry, the situation began to change. It must be remembered that until early March most political "experts" felt that McCarthy would be trounced. The January Gallup poll showed McCarthy trailing Johnson 71-18% while Johnson led Kennedy 52-40%. Another poll taken in New Hampshire gave Kennedy only 9% of the vote,

reinforcing the position of those who opposed running. Walinsky argued that it was important to realize the limits of the polls. He again pointed to the 1966 referenda which showed substantial support for unilateral withdrawal in cities as different as Berkeley, California and Dearborn, Michigan despite polls showing overwhelming support for the Vietnam War. Commitment to a candidate and issue answers on a poll were not the same thing. The only way to see the real opposition to the war was to take the risk and run.

Such arguments have often been raised against polls. A poll can only measure opinion at a particular time. It cannot measure well what might happen if a candidate were to run and to emphasize a particular issue or set of issues. A person asked a question by a poll interviewer must respond quickly even if he has not really thought about the issue but a person who is voting has been exposed to news accounts and advertisements and knows when he will vote. 1968 demonstrated just how true this was for McCarthy, unknown and unheralded, was able to demonstrate in the New Hampshire and Wisconsin primaries, that there was considerable opposition to Lyndon Johnson.

Kennedy and his advisers gathered political intelligence as best they could. Most officeholders, even those who opposed President Johnson on Vietnam, did not favor a Kennedy candidacy. Governor Patrick Lucey of Wisconsin, for example, urged Kennedy not to run on the basis of a poll of Wisconsin showing that Johnson would defeat McCarthy 80-13%. Senator George McGovern, who had himself rejected Lowenstein's bid to run, called several antiwar Senators and Governors but found little support for an anti-Johnson candidacy. Doing his own checking in the Senate, Kennedy found fear that antiwar Senators would

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lose their seats outweighed any desire that he run. Kennedy even discussed the subject with Louis Harris. Kennedy, impressed by a Harris poll which gave him a 52-32% lead and showed Johnson losing to "even Percy and Lindsay," seemed to want to run but Harris advised against it because of Johnson's control of the nominating process. ²¹ This is a rather curious conversation--the politician is supporting his position with polling data while the pollster counters with a statement of the political limitations on public opinion. It shows the difficulty of trying to isolate polls as a single factor in a decision.

At a January 30 off the record breakfast, Kennedy told reporters he would not be a candidate "under any conceivable circumstances." Mankiewicz, himself in favor of a Kennedy candidacy, persuaded Kennedy to change the wording to "foreseeable circumstances" before releasing the statement for publication. Kennedy's Senate aides, including Walinsky, Peter Edelman, and Joseph Dolan, began to resign or ask for ²² leaves of absence to work against the war.

The situation now began to change rapidly. The Tet offensive convinced many, and strongly reinforced Kennedy's position, that the administration's claims of military success in Vietnam were wrong and that the war could never be won. On February 8, Kennedy called for a political role for the Vietcong in his strongest attack on Vietnam policy.

Political intelligence also began to give Kennedy more encouragement. John Kraft polls showed that, although Johnson was ahead in Indiana and Nebraska, Kennedy was not very far behind and the number ²³ of undecideds was large. Jesse Unruh, one of the few prominent politicians to support Kennedy, added questions about him to a survey

he was taking to assess his own chances of winning the California United States Senate seat then held by Republican Thomas Kuchel. Lyndon Johnson was not on the presidential primary ballot in California, but a pro-Johnson slate of delegates headed by State Attorney General Thomas Lynch was. Unruh was so excited by the results that he telephoned Kennedy at home on a Saturday night in early March with them. ²⁴ They showed a Kennedy slate ahead with 48% to only 27% for the Lynch slate and 9% for McCarthy. This was in spite of the fact that when the same voters were asked about the candidates themselves, Kennedy trailed Johnson 34-33% (with 13% for McCarthy). ²⁵ Salinger had a poll which he showed to Kennedy on February 17, predicting that McCarthy would get 40% in New Hampshire. On March 2 Lowenstein called Kennedy to tell him that McCarthy was doing well in New Hampshire and ²⁶ would win in Wisconsin.

After the Tet offensive, only Sorensen and vanden Heuvel were solidly against Kennedy's running. Smith, Salinger, and Edward Kennedy were ambivalent while Dutton and Kenneth O'Donnell were beginning to ²⁷ lean toward a challenge to Johnson. On March 3, Dutton argued in ²⁸ favor, citing the poll taken for Unruh. On March 7, Robert Kennedy told his brother Edward, O'Donnell, and Dutton that he had decided to run but accepted Dutton's suggestion to wait until after the New Hampshire primary to announce so as not to cut into McCarthy's vote ²⁹ or generate an embarrassingly small number of Kennedy write-in votes. On March 16, Kennedy announced his candidacy, giving five reasons for running: 1) As the New Hampshire primary had shown, the party was already split on the Vietnam War; 2) Secretary of State Dean Rusk's Foreign Relations Committee testimony had indicated no change

in Vietnam policy; 3) The likely Republican nomination of Richard Nixon meant a Johnson-Nixon contest would present the voters with no Vietnam policy alternative; 4) Johnson had done nothing to implement the Kerner Commission report on urban riots; and 5) His strong personal feelings about the issues.³⁰

What role was played by polls in the decision to run? Most of those I contacted felt that the polls mentioned above played at most a minor role. Dolan and Schlesinger thought they had no impact at all, Schlesinger recalling no mention by Kennedy of polls.³¹

Sorensen agreed with this judgment claiming that this was especially true of the New Hampshire polls as Kennedy never intended to enter that primary,³² although, if so, one wonders why he spent the money. Some, however, felt that the favorable polls had a reinforcing impact on the final decision. One of these is Seigenthaler who recalls some discussion of the Unruh poll but does not feel it was a controlling factor. Peter Edelman estimated that the Unruh poll had a 10-15% impact on the decision but believes that more important were the belief that it was important to defeat President Johnson, reports from Goodwin that McCarthy was doing well in New Hampshire, and Kennedy's dislike of McCarthy.³³

Lawrence O'Brien, however, claims that Kennedy "wasn't excited" by the Unruh poll because it was a "quickie telephone poll."³⁴ Walinsky believes that Kennedy had already decided to run when Unruh called him but that earlier discouraging polls had some effect on his delay in deciding to run.³⁵

Does this mean that polls had no effect on Kennedy's decision? Or that it is impossible for us to sort through these claims to discover what effect they did have? We can clarify the issues if we go

back to the beginning to examine Kennedy's dilemma. Kennedy's opposition to Johnson because of the latter's Vietnam policy and lack of attention to urban problems was so strong that he wanted to run. He feared two possibilities--that his candidacy would be misinterpreted as motivated by personal rivalry rather than policy and that he would have no chance of victory. If these fears were correct then his running would, rather than pressuring President Johnson to de-escalate the Vietnam War, do serious damage to those who opposed it. A complicating factor was the nature of the Presidential nominating procedure. Unlike nominations for other offices, Presidential nominations are not determined by a single primary but by a series of state primaries and caucuses, each with its own rules. Kennedy's potential constituency was not simply those who voted but also included those political leaders who had a voice in selecting delegates. Kennedy would run if his opposition to Johnson's policies was greater than his chance of overwhelming defeat together with the possibility of the personal conflict obscuring the political. Although this can be expressed mathematically ($O > P + P$), the terms cannot really be quantified. Yet this is what Kennedy had to do. Let us try to approximate how.

Kennedy's opposition to the war had been growing stronger steadily. During the period of decision the Tet offensive occurred. This, especially in light of his February 8 speech, seems to have increased the left side of our formula dramatically. Johnson's lack of action on the recommendations of the Kerner Commission, which he himself had appointed in July 1967 to investigate the causes of urban rioting, also increased the weight of Kennedy's opposition.

The right side is much more difficult to measure. What could

Kennedy use to gauge what might happen if he decided to run? The following seem most likely:

1. Asking other political leaders. Since a number of important political figures had been critical of President Johnson's Vietnam and domestic policies, one might have thought that Kennedy would get their support. But, when asked about a possible Kennedy candidacy, nearly all opposed it. They were making the same calculation as Kennedy but for them there was an extra element on the right side of the equation--the possibility Kennedy might not run. If they were to encourage him to run and he decided not to, they would have alienated an incumbent President and gained nothing for themselves or toward accomplishing the policies they favored. As Kenneth O'Donnell put it, "You can never tell what the reaction of a political leader will be until you announce, because if you say, 'Should I run?' they'll all say no. But if you announce you are a candidate and then ask them, ...they're put on a spot... You're going to get a different answer and a decisive answer." ³⁶ No doubt these negative responses had some effect on Kennedy's delay but after Tet they became less of a factor.

2. Advisor's perceptions. One should not underestimate this factor. Kennedy's Senate staff felt that the public would respond favorably if he ran but the negative views of the former John Kennedy men, who were seen as more politically experienced, more practical, and less ideological, carried more weight. As we have seen, their opinions began to change so that by the time Kennedy decided to run, most of them were, if not clearly in favor, at least not opposed.

3. The McCarthy candidacy. When, in December and January, most political experts expected McCarthy to do poorly, Kennedy's

decision not to run seemed correct. But, as Kennedy began to get reports from Goodwin, Lowenstein, New Hampshire national committeeman William Dunfey, and others that McCarthy was doing well in New Hampshire and might very well win in Wisconsin, it became obvious that a Kennedy candidacy could be successful. Certainly there was enough support to prevent an overwhelming defeat. This seems to have been a crucial factor.

4. Public Polls. These seem to have been of limited importance. The trial heats fluctuated wildly. Furthermore, the fact that they were based on a national sample meant that they were of limited use in gauging opinion in the important primary states. Nor could they tell much about what political leaders would do. The result was that each advisor could interpret them to support his own position. Walinsky could use the referenda to rebut Gallup and Harris' showing that hawks far outnumbered doves. Harris himself could argue that party procedures made the trial heats irrelevant. Dutton could argue that these same trial heats showed Johnson weakness that could be overcome not Kennedy strength, then change his mind a few months later. The public polls seem more like a Rorschach test than an objective indicator.

5. Private polls. Private polls can be quite expensive. Unless Kennedy was committed to making the race, it would be foolish to take polls in all of the primary states. Furthermore, as we have already pointed out, his constituency was not just the voters but also political leaders, although an overwhelming Kennedy vote in the primaries would certainly convert many. There was also the Walinsky argument against the polls, echoed by others, that you could only tell how a

campaign would affect voters by actually running.

Nevertheless, we have seen that some polling data was gathered, if not in a very systematic way. This included the two New Hampshire polls, neither particularly encouraging; the somewhat encouraging Indiana and Nebraska polls; and the very encouraging Unruh poll from California. We can see the effect these polls had if we imagine what would have happened had all of them been similar to the New Hampshire poll which gave Kennedy 9% of the vote. Surely in the face of such results, Kennedy would not have run. The more favorable polls, especially the California poll, provided reinforcement for those who had decided in favor of a race, although they do not seem a decisive factor. Private polls therefore seem more important for what they did not say than for what they did say.

Kennedy decided to run because his opposition to Johnson's policies had hardened and because there seemed some significant chance of success. Most important in measuring this latter was McCarthy's growing success as well as, to a lesser extent, changes in the views of Kennedy's advisors. Private polls played a reinforcing role, offering some support to those favoring a race. But waiting until McCarthy had laid the groundwork was to cause the loss of a significant number of those who opposed Johnson. Even if Kennedy had lived to contest the nomination at the convention, it is certain that lingering resentment over his cautious entry would have cost him considerable support among this constituency. The method used to measure public reaction to a possible Kennedy candidacy would have an effect on the success of that candidacy.

2. Formulation of Original Strategy

Running against an incumbent President meant that basic strategy was apparent. As Frank Mankiewicz put it, "The early strategy was dictated almost entirely by the timetable; we entered the primaries where the filing dates had not yet expired and the issues to stress and groups to appeal to had been fairly well defined by the war and by President Johnson as well as Senator Kennedy's own very public record."³⁸ The only way to take the nomination from an incumbent President was to show that Kennedy alone could win the general election. This meant winning a series of primaries at the same time that political leaders were wooed. It also meant trying to broaden Kennedy's appeal beyond the original constituencies of opponents of the Vietnam War and minorities. As Dutton put it in an early memo, "establish at the outset that you are addressing yourself to the middle-class and middle-aged voter at least as much as to young people and concerned Democrats."³⁹ This was easier said than done. Kennedy found himself opposed by traditional Democrats, much of organized labor, and most of the South. Kennedy told Jack Newfield, "We have to write off the unions and the South now, and replace them with Negroes, blue-collar whites, and the kids."⁴⁰ But, like all campaigns, this one tried to get support where it could find it. Attempts were made to get support from individual unions and party leaders. Tennesseean John Seigenthaler was sent out to round up Southern support and claims he put together enough delegates to have surprised most observers had the campaign continued to the convention.⁴¹ Exactly which groups to target would be a question that would spark periodic debates within the campaign.

Which primaries was a fairly simple question. Kennedy's late entry meant that the filing deadlines for some had already passed, including the next important test in Wisconsin. This even eliminated Kennedy's original home state, Massachusetts, which meant 72 sure votes lost to McCarthy. Some thought was given to a write-in effort there but it was felt that resources could be better used in the states where Kennedy would be on the ballot. ⁴² Oregon, South Dakota, and Nebraska automatically put all candidates on the ballot so there was no choice about them. Nor, as Senator from New York, could Kennedy skip that primary. This left only California and Indiana to make decisions about. Entering the California primary was never really in doubt, if for no other reasons than its size and the fact that there was some organizational support there already. The poll taken for Unruh had indicated that Kennedy's chances of winning there were excellent. This left only the Indiana primary as a question.

At first glance, Indiana hardly seemed fertile ground for the campaign. Not only did Kennedy have no organization there, the Indiana Democratic party was solidly behind Johnson stand-in, Governor Roger Branigan. Nearly every Indiana party leader and office holder had advised Kennedy to stay out. Even if Kennedy won the primary, the delegates, who would be chosen at a party dominated state convention held after the primary, would be bound to vote for him for only one ballot. Kennedy's staff estimated that at least 55 of the 73 delegates ⁴³ would follow Branigan's lead on subsequent ballots.

Nevertheless, there were reasons for entering. Kennedy felt that he had no choice but to run in as many primaries as possible. If he skipped the Indiana primary, he would have to wait another week

until May 14 for the primary in Nebraska, only three weeks before what nearly everyone felt would be the crucial test in California. Nebraska had a Democratic registration of only 300,000 which compared unfavorably to Indiana, the nation's eleventh largest state.⁴⁴

With the March 28 filing deadline fast approaching, a decision had to be made quickly. Two actions were decided upon. A poll was commissioned and former Massachusetts Democratic chairman Gerry Doherty was sent to Indiana to scout the territory and to gather petition signatures should Kennedy decide to enter. Doherty found so much enthusiasm that he recommended entry⁴⁵ while the John Kraft poll, delivered the day before the filing deadline, showed Kennedy only one point behind Branigan with McCarthy well behind.⁴⁶ As a result, Kennedy decided to enter this primary. We can contrast this careful decision, making full use of polls, with McCarthy's almost off-hand decision to enter the same primary. Although Kennedy's choices were limited, in the two primaries where there was a decision to be made, polls played an important role.

3. President Johnson's withdrawal

Until President Johnson's withdrawal, the issues had been clear. Kennedy, although not in favor of withdrawal, had stressed the Vietnam issue. The most enthusiastic reaction from audiences came on this issue, encouraging Kennedy to continue to stress it.⁴⁷ But Johnson's sudden withdrawal from the race meant that, for the moment, McCarthy, equally opposed to the Vietnam War, was his only opponent. It also meant that Kennedy could no longer argue that only he could stop Johnson. On April 3, Kennedy met with his top aides to assess

this new situation. There had not been time to take polls to help in this assessment. Some of those at the meeting felt Vice-President Humphrey might not run but the next day AFL-CIO President George Meany told Kennedy that Humphrey, backed by the major unions, would be a candidate. For the moment, however, the problem was to show how he differed from McCarthy. Until this time, Kennedy had largely ignored McCarthy. Now this could no longer be done. Kennedy told his staff, "We have to be specific about this. I have to stress my experience and my capacity to deal with Vietnam, the race problem, our cities." ⁴⁸ The specifics of how to do this were to prove quite controversial.

4. The emphasis on law and order and Kennedy's experience as Attorney General

Indiana was the first chance to show differences between Kennedy and McCarthy. But how? And what groups were the most likely Kennedy voters? Blacks were one obviously pro-Kennedy group but were only about 6% of Indiana's population. It was decided early that it was necessary to go all out for--in addition to blacks, doves, and the young (the last two groups were at least partly McCarthy's)--workers and so-called white ethnics. To do so Kennedy had to avoid going too far left or concentrating too much on Vietnam. It was decided, after considerable debate within the campaign, to stress the issue of crime and point to Kennedy's experience as Attorney General to demonstrate he was the candidate best able to handle it. This was mainly a matter of emphasis, not a change of position as many newspapers claimed at the time. ⁴⁹ Kennedy would generally follow his discussion of this issue with a call for an attack on the social and economic causes of crime as well as punishment for lawbreakers. However, the shift in emphasis caused a familiar split among Kennedy's aides. In favor

were the "professionals"--Sorensen, Lawrence O'Brien, Goodwin, Dutton, Salinger, Edward Kennedy, and Indianan John Bartlow Martin. Opposed were the Senate aides Walinsky and Edelman as well as speechwriter
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Jeff Greenfield and John Seigenthaler.

After the primary, Time magazine suggested that the shift in emphasis was due to a John Kraft poll which showed that the black
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vote was certain but blue-collar whites were in doubt. When I asked about this, I met with surprisingly indignant denials. Frank Mankiewicz put it emphatically, "I can assure you that the issue of lawlessness and violence raised early by Senator Kennedy in the Indiana primary was not in response to any poll or similar calculation. He was, after all, a former Attorney General and had made his reputation in substantial part on these issues. If there was any single factor that prompted that stress, it would have been repeated indications from the Black community of concern with crime and violence and a desire for
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more police." This last factor is cited in several published accounts

by participants in the campaign. According to William vanden Heuvel and Milton Gwirtzman, John Bartlow Martin, while scouting out areas Kennedy was to visit, found fear of violence an overriding issue in
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all, even the most rural. Arthur Schlesinger agrees, adding that Richard Wade reported that students circulating petitions got a good
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response on this issue in both black and white areas.

When asked about this, Martin offered a syllogistic response: "It simply seemed to us that one of the great problems at that time was the black-white division, that Robert Kennedy was the only candidate who would bring about reconciliation, that he had to demonstrate this, and that therefore he had to show his concern about the

the blacks and at the same time reassure the blue-collar whites about law and order; and he did both in each speech for a time, most notably, I believe, in the Gary area." 55

Joseph Dolan also disclaimed knowledge of polls, citing instead the conservative nature of the state as illustrated by its being the national headquarters of the American Legion and by the very conservative Indianapolis newspapers. 56 Only Seigenthaler remembers a half-hour television documentary which was developed in response to issues in a poll that he found distasteful because of the documentary's heavy emphasis on law and order. 58

Without access to internal campaign documents, it is impossible to resolve this question definitively. It seems as if, had there been no poll taken, the logic of Kennedy's situation--the conservative nature of the state, his need to differentiate himself from McCarthy, widespread concern among both blacks and whites about the issue, and his own background--would have led to use of the crime issue anyway. It is quite possible that the poll served as a catalyst, making Kennedy and his advisors aware of the potential of the issue more quickly than they might have been.

The reaction of those campaign participants I asked tells us a great deal about attitudes toward polls. Most Americans admire politicians who act on the basis of their own convictions rather than follow the twists and turns of public opinion as measured by devices such as polls. John Kennedy wrote a book, Profiles in Courage, about those who stood up for what they believed in in the face of constituencies who strongly believed otherwise. The problem, as the book showed, is that the public also generally votes against such admirable figures.

Thus, a smart politician seeks to cultivate the image of a decisive person of principle, while, at the same time, making sure he is aware of his constituents' needs and desires. This is not necessarily cynically done nor is it necessarily bad. The idea of a democracy, after all, is for the people to govern, in our case through their elected representatives.

The result of this is that politicians tend to overemphasize their principled stands and underemphasize or ignore actions taken on the basis of measurements as impersonal as polls. Certainly they do not wish to be seen as calculating which positions on issues will gain the most votes. The safest way to avoid this is to play down the importance of issue polling. This may not be done consciously. Because a number of factors go into a decision, it is often impossible for the decision-maker to determine retrospectively exactly why he made a particular decision. I am certain that all of those who responded to my questions about this decision answered honestly. What I cannot be as certain about is the degree to which they may have rationalized or selectively remembered events within their own minds.

5. Indiana advertising

With a folksy governor as his opponent and a reputation among some voters as a ruthless radical, Kennedy had to work to improve his image. The immediate need to produce advertisements left no time for in depth image polling. When asked about this, Stephen Smith compared Kennedy's 1964 New York Senatorial campaign which was able to do such polling. In those polls, voters associated a number of negative qualities with Kennedy--he was too ambitious, arrogant, he should wait for another time or place. As a result, it was made certain that questions

were asked of Kennedy about these subjects at Columbia University. His responses were run as short television spots. In Indiana, according to Smith and others, there was no time for such work.

One plan devised by Dutton to counter Branigan called for Kennedy to identify with Indiana as much as possible. Ads were filmed in Indiana settings and events were scheduled to emphasize Indiana and its history, e.g., a trip down the Lincoln Trail and a very successful whistle-stop tour of central Indiana on the Wabash Cannonball.

More serious to some was the image of the frantic Kennedy rallies with crowds feverishly seeking to touch him or even trying to grab pieces of his clothing as souvenirs. These advisors feared the contrast with McCarthy's cool rationality. To a limited extent, Dutton, who was in charge of scheduling, sought to balance these rallies with more quiet events but Kennedy who, like all presidential candidates save perhaps McCarthy, had an exhausting schedule, drew energy from the surging crowds. Furthermore, although television tended to exaggerate the emotionalism of these rallies, local politicians were very impressed. The logic of the situation led John Frankenheimer and Richard Goodwin to produce television ads which "sought to show the candidate at his mellow best, as a counter to the frantic street campaigning."

These ads were also aired, according to Frederic Papert, head of advertising for the campaign, for the simple reason that Kennedy was most genuine and appealing in a calm small group setting. Other ads were produced from rally speeches but the choice of ads was largely dictated by "a desire to disabuse voters of the idea that Kennedy was a tough, relentless punk--a former hit man for his brother--hence not

to be trusted. Kennedy's effectiveness stemmed from a zealous, totally committed approach to problems, but he was, in fact, a gentle, feeling, sympathetic fellow, and to the extent that commercials revealed those virtues (separate from the specific issues) we all believed they would be more effective." Papert recalls no polling which had any effect on these ads although "with half a heart we may have done some."⁶⁴

When we compare the 1964 and 1968 Senate campaigns we see that Kennedy's advertising was prepared without polls not because of any misgivings about them but because of lack of time and also because by this time Kennedy's image was too well set to change much and well enough known so that the problems no longer had to be discovered by polls.

6. Whether or not to debate in Oregon

In late April, vanden Heuvel was sent to Oregon to begin preparations for the May 28 primary. Polls there showed a slight lead for Kennedy who had 29.5% of the vote to McCarthy's 28% and 26% for Johnson and Humphrey. According to vanden Heuvel, "It was clear to me that the McCarthy forces had a spectacular chance of victory since the Humphrey campaign quickly decided that their purposes would best be served by defeating Kennedy through helping McCarthy."⁶⁵ As we saw in Chapter Two, the last part of this is not quite correct. Vanden Heuvel's appraisal, however, was accurate. Kennedy's one and half percent lead was well within the margin of sampling error and therefore statistically of no significance. While Oregon was McCarthy's best organized state by far, Kennedy had very serious problems there. The campaign was headed by Congresswoman Edith Green who had managed John Kennedy's successful primary effort against Senator Wayne Morse in

1960. This time she ran a more low-key campaign than the national staff wanted. In addition, her organization was concentrated in Multnomah County (Portland) with little of it in evidence in the rest of the state. Relations with organized labor, never very good during the campaign, were particularly poor in Oregon. Mrs. Green had not been endorsed by organized labor because of her proposal for exceptions to the union shop. Much more damaging was Kennedy's role in the 1957 McClellan Committee investigation of the Teamster's Union, the strongest in the state. As a result of the hearings, Portland's mayor, Terry Schrunk, had been indicted for perjury. After testifying at the trial, Kennedy walked to the bench where he shook the judge's hand. Not only was Schrunk acquitted, he was still mayor in 1968. As even Mrs. Green put it, "Schrunk and many, many of his friends believed he had been badly abused--and with some reason."

66

When Stephen Smith was sent to Oregon, he was unhappy with what he saw but other states had priority for the limited resources available. Smith now feels that Oregon was lost in the shuffle between primaries. Considerable manpower had been devoted to the Indiana and Nebraska primaries. In the latter, 80% of the vote was in the cities of Lincoln and Omaha so a very successful canvass was used but it diverted resources from Oregon's primary which was held only two weeks afterward. The crucial California primary was a week after Oregon, so resources were shifted there to the neglect of Oregon. But the victories in Indiana and Nebraska had caused Kennedy to surge ahead in Oregon and perhaps underestimate McCarthy. By a week before the vote, however, McCarthy had come back to within 38-35% with a very large number of undecided voters. The question of whether or not to debate

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68

now came to the fore.

Until this point, Kennedy's refusal to debate was the standard position taken by front-runners. He had defeated McCarthy twice, was better known, and led in the polls. Why give his opponent extra exposure?⁶⁹

In this perception of being ahead polls did play a part, but without them, the same perception would have still been there.

Kennedy's dislike for McCarthy may also have played a part in his decision not to debate.⁷⁰

But with time running short, the polls now said that he should debate. The Friday before the primary, McCarthy announced that he had bought television time for a debate the next night. Again, the campaign was divided along fairly familiar lines. Walinsky, Greenfield, Salinger, Lucey, and vanden Heuvel were for a debate, O'Brien was ambivalent, and the remaining "old pros" as well as Green were opposed. The final decision had to be made Saturday morning after a long day of campaigning and a late flight from California.⁷¹ Kennedy was simply too tired to debate that night.

This final decision was taken in opposition to what late polls showed and what a more careful reading of earlier polls (as well as other signs of problems) would have shown. This shows how polls are often looked at in a very superficial way. In deciding whether to debate, the only finding looked at was who was ahead. Polls not only showed many undecided voters, they also showed Kennedy scoring very high on negative qualities--impulsive, immature, and power-hungry.⁷² These and other trouble signs should have shown the campaign that Kennedy's lead was likely to melt away. It took a defeat in Oregon to force a debate in California.

7. Organization in California

The campaign in California had begun in a state of confusion. Although the date for listing a slate of delegates was April 5, 30 days prior to that a group of registered Democrats had to declare their desire to run such a slate. Dolan and Mankiewicz found some Democrats who were willing to file but Kennedy decided to leave it to Jesse Unruh who managed to beat the deadline by only ten minutes. Thus, almost by default, Unruh found himself in charge of the California Kennedy campaign. However, when Kennedy visited California in late April, he did not like what he saw. McCarthy was reducing Kennedy's lead in the published state polls and fund raising was proceeding poorly.⁷³ Nor was Unruh's organization appealing to as wide a spectrum of voters as Kennedy and his national staff wanted. Unruh's political contacts were primarily in Sacramento and Los Angeles with his greatest strength in the state assembly.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Unruh wanted to write off middle-class liberals to concentrate on more conservative suburbs.⁷⁵

In early May it was decided that a reorganization was necessary. Smith was brought in to work full time in Los Angeles, Seigenthaler to manage the campaign, especially in the north, and Mankiewicz⁷⁶ to work with the Jewish community. The most serious problem was trying to regain opponents of the war from McCarthy. A constant stream of well-known academic opponents of the war such as Schlesinger, Edwin Reischauer, and Daniel Moynihan were brought in to certify Kennedy's antiwar credentials on college campuses. Both Kennedy and his brother spent a great deal of time in the state as well.

Polls seem to have played a part in this reorganization only

as one indicator that Unruh's organization was not operating satisfactorily. As there were numerous other indicators--fund raising difficulties, lack of visible organization in important parts of the state, and disagreement over what groups to concentrate on--it is apparent that, unless the polls had shown a large or steadily increasing Kennedy lead, these changes would have been made. Polls played a secondary role but still one of some importance.

8. The debate with McCarthy

After the defeat in Oregon, the first ever suffered by a member of the Kennedy family, everyone in the campaign agreed that Kennedy had to debate McCarthy. At an airport press conference held the morning after the Oregon vote, Kennedy declared his willingness to debate. A June 1 special program of ABC's Issues and Answers was agreed upon and preparations begun by the campaign.

What was Kennedy's strategy for the debate? When I asked Walinsky which issues Kennedy sought to stress, he replied that in campaign debates it is more important to project an image than to discuss specific issues. Issues are, in his view, basically a means of getting this image across to the viewers. The image Kennedy wanted to project included:

1. Showing he was just as intelligent as McCarthy.
2. Emphasizing his experience in government. This would remind viewers of his ties to John Kennedy's presidency as well as being important in itself.
3. Showing he had a better grasp of specific problems than
78
McCarthy.

A memo accompanying the voluminous briefing papers supports

Walinsky's assertion. It told Kennedy that McCarthy's calm witty style would enable him to present "rather radical views in a way that sounds thoughtful and credible" but that this style failed to project commitment or leadership qualities and that he "has command of few facts to back up his philosophy." The memo suggested the following strategy:

- "1. To show a greater command of the facts.
2. Not to attack him. We are being told by reporters that he is saying he hopes you will go after him hard.
3. To nevertheless draw the differences in policy between yourselves sharply. The audience is hoping for a real contest with differences.
4. Make the point, without laboring it, that you have had experience in fields that he has only talked about."

The briefing papers then went on to specify the policy differences
79
between Kennedy and McCarthy.

In addition to the briefing papers, Kennedy held morning and afternoon preparatory sessions with Sorensen, Edelman, Goodwin, Mankiewicz, Schlesinger, Unruh, Dutton, Gwartzman, and Burke Marshall on the day of the debate. They discussed a number of issues. Presidential power was too abstract to use. Racial and urban problems were also much discussed. Kennedy had long been arguing for greater economic development of the ghetto as in the Bedford-Stuyvesant project in Brooklyn of which he had been the prime mover. A McCarthy position paper had argued that it was preferable to concentrate on integrating predominantly white areas. Unruh stated that in Los Angeles, the McCarthy program would mean that a large number of blacks would be moved into

80

conservative Orange County. Mankiewicz added, "Just to take people who are unemployed out of the ghetto and fill Orange County with them or Marin County isn't very helpful because they can't buy those houses anyway." ⁸¹

Polls indicated that urban and racial issues were not working well for Kennedy. 71% of those questioned disagreed with the statement, "Robert Kennedy is the man who can bring peace to the cities," while 61% agreed that "Robert Kennedy spends most of his time courting minority groups." Although vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman claim that ⁸² these poll results came too late to change California strategy, they did not come too late to affect planning for the debate. Certainly taking a position against large-scale integration of the suburbs would appeal to conservative and suburban Democrats who felt Kennedy was too close to minorities.

Three major issues were discussed in the debate. Kennedy declared that, unlike McCarthy, he opposed "forcing a coalition government on the government of Saigon before negotiations although he would allow the Vietcong a role in the post-settlement government, replace American troops with South Vietnamese, and demand reforms in the South Vietnamese government. McCarthy replied that he had said that the United States should accept a coalition government not force one. He also felt that because urging reforms on the South Vietnamese government had failed for five years it was unlikely to succeed then. The second major issue concerned a McCarthy ad claiming Kennedy was involved in the Dominican intervention. As Kennedy was not a member of the Johnson administration at that time, he demanded an explanation. McCarthy said he had stopped the ad. The third issue was the one we

discussed above--rehabilitation of the ghetto versus large scale suburban integration. Kennedy, in a clear exaggeration of McCarthy's proposals, claimed his opponent favored moving 10,000 blacks into conservative Orange County.
83

Why were these issues emphasized? Since we have already partially discussed the last, that seems the best place to begin. In addition to the factors we have already discussed, the fact that in the earlier primaries, McCarthy had done best in suburbs was also important. Kennedy's remark about Orange County seems to have been taken from Unruh's at the briefing. It is interesting to note that on the two most important issues in the primary, race and Vietnam, Kennedy tried to position himself somewhat to the right and therefore closer to the center than McCarthy as he had done in Indiana on the crime issue.

The Dominican intervention advertisement was the least important issue of the three but did provide an opportunity for Kennedy to separate himself from the Johnson administration and emphasize how it differed from its predecessor at the same time he demonstrated that the McCarthy campaign could also be "ruthless" too. This issue could not have been influenced by polls for it was of too little importance in itself to be of concern to most voters.

As for Vietnam, Walinsky claims that because this was the first question asked, Kennedy, to follow his strategy, had to show differences between himself and McCarthy, so he brought up a relatively marginal one. I was unable to discover any polls that influenced Kennedy's use of this issue.

If Walinsky is correct, and the main goal of the debate was to create a particular image for Kennedy, then polls played only a

limited role. Kennedy's difficulties were so well known by this time that there was no real need to consult polls to discover them. He would have to show he was intelligent, calm, experienced, not ruthless, and not too radical. Polls, such as the one mentioned in connection with the racial issue, may have helped clarify how to do this but I doubt the debate would have been handled differently in any significant way without them.

Kennedy's use of polls was summed up best by Federic Papert, who wrote to me that, "...it seems to me, almost a dozen years and a number of campaigns later, that Kennedy used polls infrequently and warily, and wisely so." Most of those I contacted basically agreed with this. Most important in the campaign were trial heat polls which were used for resource allocation--which primaries to enter (note especially Indiana), where to campaign, which speakers to send where, where to spend money and so on.⁸⁴ They were also one of the factors used in measuring public opinion in deciding whether or not to run. However, failure to heed problems a careful analysis of the polls in Oregon, along with other warning signs, would have revealed what may have been a significant factor in Kennedy's only primary defeat.

More sophisticated uses of polls were less in evidence during this campaign. Image polling was not really necessary as Kennedy's image advantages and disadvantages were well known from his Senate campaign and wide public exposure. The issues were also well set at first, although Johnson's sudden withdrawal changed the situation dramatically. Polls may have played a role in the use of the crime issue in Indiana but the suddenness of the withdrawal and the brevity

of the campaign meant that issue polls were used less than they might have been in a more "typical" campaign.

Finally, we might compare Kennedy's attitude to that of his opponents. Although he was far more comfortable with a modern media oriented campaign, he was somewhat suspicious of the utility of polls as a result of his experience in 1960. All of these factors combined to limit the importance of polls in the 1968 Kennedy campaign.

FOOTNOTES

- 1
Interview with John Seigenthaler, September 14, 1978.
- 2
Interview with Stephen Smith, June 13, 1978.
- 3
Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965),
p. 106.
- 4
Ibid., pp. 106-108.
- 5
Lawrence F. O'Brien, No Final Victories, (Garden City, N.Y.:
Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 67.
- 6
Interview with Seigenthaler. For an account that is more
critical of Harris see Michael Wheeler, Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics,
(New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 63-68.
- 7
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times,
(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978), p. 871.
- 8
William J. vanden Heuvel and Milton Gwirtzman, On His Own,
(Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1970), p. 318.
- 9
Ibid., p. 340.
- 10
George Plimpton (ed.), American Journey: The Times of Robert
Kennedy, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), p. 223.
- 11
Schlesinger, p. 825.
- 12
Vanden Heuvel and Gwirtzman, p. 279.
- 13
Ibid., p. 291.

14

For accounts of some of the meetings see Jules Witcover, 85 Days: The Last Campaign of Robert Kennedy, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), pp. 33-34; Jack Newfield, Robert Kennedy: A Memoir, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969), pp. 192-194; and Chester, Hodgson, and Page, An American Melodrama, (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), pp. 114-115.

15

Schlesinger, pp. 829-831, and Newfield, p. 193.

16

Newfield, p. 194.

17

Interview with Adam Walinsky, August 18, 1977.

18

Ibid.

19

Chester et. al., p. 117.

20

Schlesinger, p. 837.

21

Louis Harris, The Anguish of Change, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1973), pp. 206-207.

22

Schlesinger, p. 840.

23

Interview with Stephen Smith and vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 350.

24

Letter from Joseph Dolan to author, August 1979.

25

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 302. Other sources give slightly different figures but the essence is the same. See Witcover, p. 53, Newfield, p. 210, and the New York Times, March 16, 1968, p. 24.

26

Witcover, pp. 51-53.

27

Newfield, p. 210.

28

Chester et. al., p. 118.

29

Vanden Heuvel, and Gwartzman, p. 302.

30

Witcover, pp. 68-69.

31

Letter from Dolan, note 24 supra, and letter from Schlesinger to author, July 26, 1979.

32

Interview with Theodore Sorensen, August 9, 1978.

33

Interview with Peter Edelman, March 29, 1977. That dislike for McCarthy was an important factor is confirmed by many. See, for example, Harris, pp. 206-207.

34

O'Brien, pp. 217-218.

35

Interview with Walinsky.

36

Schlesinger, p. 839.

37

See, for example, Schlesinger, p. 839.

38

Letter to author, June 25, 1979.

39

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, pp. 314-315.

40

Newfield, p. 253.

41

Interview with Seigenthaler.

42

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, pp. 335-336.

43

Ibid., pp. 340-343.

44

Ibid. See also Chester et. al., pp. 160-162.

45

Ibid.

46

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 336, and Witcover, p. 124. Newfield says (p. 254) that the poll reported a 3% margin but the difference between the two figures is statistically insignificant.

47

Interview with Walinsky.

48

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, pp. 333-336.

49

See, for example, the New York Times, April 28, 1968, Section IV, p. 1.

50

Witcover, pp. 152-158, Newfield, p. 255, vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, pp. 344-345, O'Brien, p. 238, and interview with Seigenthaler.

51

"Do Polls Help Democracy," Time XCI (May 31, 1968), p. 19.

52

Letter from Mankiewicz, note 38 supra.

53

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 344.

54

Schlesinger, p. 880.

55

Letter to author, August 10, 1979.

56

Letter to author, note 24 supra.

57

Interview with Walinsky.

58

Interview with Seigenthaler.

59

Interviews with Smith, Edelman, and Walinsky.

60

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 344.

61

Ibid., pp. 328-329.

62

Interview with Walinsky.

- 63
Witcover, p. 138.
- 64
Letter from Frederic Papert to author, August 27, 1979.
- 65
Letter from William vanden Heuvel to author, July 11, 1979.
- 66
Letter from Edith Green to author, June 21, 1979.
- 67
Interview with Smith.
- 68
Letter from vanden Heuvel.
- 69
Letters from Mankiewicz, Green, and vanden Heuvel.
- 70
Letter from Schlesinger, note 31 supra.
- 71
Interview with Walinsky, Chester et. al., p. 305, and Witcover
pp. 213-214.
- 72
Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, pp. 367-368.
- 73
Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 372, and interview with
Seigenthaler.
- 74
Interview with Seigenthaler.
- 75
Newfield, p. 278.
- 76
New York Times, May 10, 1968, p. 32; Newfield, pp. 274-278;
and vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 372.
- 77
Interview with Seigenthaler.
- 78
Interview with Walinsky.
- 79
Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 375.

80

Ibid., pp. 376-377.

81

Schlesinger, p. 910.

82

Vanden Heuvel and Gwartzman, p. 373.

83

Jeremy Larner, Nobody Knows, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1970), pp. 110-117, and the New York Times, June 2, 1968, pp. 1, 64, and June 3, 1968, p. 40.

84

Interview with Sorensen.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE 1972 McGOVERN CAMPAIGN

Those who sought the presidency in 1972 hoped that they had learned from the efforts of those who ran in 1968. In none of the campaigns was this more evident than in that of George McGovern. The situation he faced, however, was very different from that of his predecessors. Reacting to criticism that its delegate selection process was not open and democratic enough, the Democratic party, after its turbulent 1968 convention, decided on reform. A commission, headed by none other than George McGovern, at that time considered a likely future presidential contender only by himself, was chosen to perform this task. As a result, McGovern became more knowledgeable about the new rules than any other candidate and was able to recruit some of the people who drew them up when his own campaign began.

The new rules effectively prevented a candidate from following the strategy used by Hubert Humphrey to gain the nomination in 1968. In 1972 there were to be 22 primaries in which more than two thousand of the 3016 delegates would be chosen, so, unless there was a deadlocked convention, no candidate could gain a majority of the delegates without contesting at least a few of the primaries. The large number of primaries and caucuses, each with its own procedures, meant that effective organization would be rewarded. None of the other candidates could approach the McGovern organization, which had specialists in every state under the supervision of Richard Stearns.

Perhaps, we may think, the McGovern campaign, unlike those we have examined so far, resembles the picture of the unified campaign, single-mindedly pursuing the goal of electing its candidate. This does not seem to have been the case. According to Gary Hart, who was at least nominally the national campaign manager, the McGovern campaign sought to overcome the problems of other presidential campaigns by decentralizing their organization. The country was divided into five regions, each focusing on one or more important primary states. The field organizers were to be people who lived and worked in their states but belonged to the national staff.² This organization worked very effectively, especially because the people in the field, although young, proved extraordinarily able. But there were strains as well as the usual quota of rivalries. The fact that all funds were sent to Washington before they were allocated to states and regions caused resentment in states such as New York and California where large amounts of money were raised only to be sent to other states such as New Hampshire and Wisconsin which were accorded a higher priority. There was also a conflict over whether advertising should be locally or nationally directed. After two weeks of confusion, McGovern finally intervened in favor of the former.³

Nor did the candidate help matters. Because McGovern had run his own campaigns in South Dakota, Hart claims that he found it difficult to delegate authority. "It was next to impossible to make a decision stick so long as almost everyone--staff member, contributor, or media consultant--knew that there was an automatic appeal on almost every question to the candidate himself....Rarely did an appellant inform the candidate that the campaign manager had already ruled on

the matter. And often the candidate didn't bother to ask. Thus, on many occasions I had the extremely uncomfortable experience of learning that I had been overruled on a particular question before I knew it was even under debate."⁴ When the more experienced Frank Mankiewicz and Ted Van Dyk joined the campaign, they urged McGovern to replace Hart with someone more experienced but Hart, hearing about this, appealed directly to the candidate who "told me to continue as campaign manager and, frustrated with the complexities of the problem, told me to return to Washington as quickly as possible and 'work it out with the others.'"⁵ Similar conflicts continued to occur throughout the campaign.

Despite such difficulties, the field operations worked with reasonable efficiency until the convention. From this time on, as it became more and more obvious that McGovern would not only lose the election but that the defeat would be overwhelming, dissension among his staff rushed to the surface. Lawrence O'Brien, who had been named by McGovern as titular head of the campaign while Hart was put in charge of the state organizations and Mankiewicz traveled with McGovern as his chief advisor, found this arrangement unsatisfactory. On August 31 he told this to reporters and announced he would quit if changes were not made. Despite his public criticism and lack of real influence,⁶ he stayed on. Two weeks later, Congressman Frank Thompson, who headed the campaign's voter registration drive, resigned with a blast at the campaign. Everyone in the campaign seemed to be searching for someone or something to blame for their poor situation. No one seemed to be in charge. Although Hart, Mankiewicz, and O'Brien each had a title that made it seem as if he was in charge, none were. As Theodore White put it, "no one coordinated the ideas of the campaign, the themes of

the campaign, the travels of the campaign." ⁷ None of the campaigns we have studied were in such a hopeless situation for so long but we should not be surprised at the McGovern campaign organization's steady deterioration after the convention. A presidential campaign is a collection of people of different interests, beliefs, and styles, united only by the hope of electoral success. When it became obvious in September and October that McGovern had no such hope, whatever unity had existed in the struggle for the nomination evaporated.

At the beginning of the campaign, most politicians and commentators gave McGovern little or no chance of success, based largely on his low (under 5%) standing in the public polls. As a result, the campaign, especially before the New Hampshire and Wisconsin primary victories, was often short of funds. While this meant that there was not enough money to hire a well-known polling firm, McGovern's campaign had the good fortune to discover Patrick Caddell, then a Harvard ⁸ senior, who worked for a very low fee. This campaign and the even more successful Carter effort in 1976 were to make Caddell into one of the most successful of private poll-takers. Despite occasional shortages of funds, helpful polls were available. Unlike the 1968 candidates, McGovern also had plenty of time to plan for he decided to run soon after the previous presidential election.

1. The announcement of candidacy

Once he had decided to run, McGovern immediately began recruiting a staff and gathering lists of potential supporters. One of his first recruits was a young Colorado attorney named Gary Hart who agreed to coordinate efforts in the Western states. In May 1970, Hart set up a file for each of 24 states, including lists of supporters and

potential supporters, lists of party officials and office-holders, and registration and voting statistics for relevant primaries and elections.⁹

The key question was one of timing. Presidential candidates go through a ritual of formally announcing their candidacies after everyone knows they will be running. Before 1972, most candidates announced early during the year of the election or late the preceding year. McGovern was to change the custom with a much earlier announcement. McGovern's situation makes the reasoning behind this quite clear. His major disadvantage was his extremely low poll standing which made it difficult to attract the support of prominent politicians, to gain news coverage, and most important, to raise money. As McGovern put it a bit later in the campaign (but before the primaries had begun), "The polls have killed my fund raising. People tell me if they could appoint a President, they'd appoint me, but since the polls don't give me a chance, they say they're not going to 'throw their money away.'" ¹⁰ On the other hand, McGovern had several advantages. This lack of public recognition and his reputation as one of the more principled politicians gave him the opportunity of running as a fresh face against such familiar ones as Hubert Humphrey. The new delegate selection reforms would also be of considerable aid to their chief architect. Democratic activists came largely from the party's liberal wing which was McGovern's natural constituency. Nor had he alienated party regulars which made him a possible party unifier unlike Humphrey who was anathema to antiwar activists or McCarthy who would never be accepted by the regulars.

The above was discussed at a July 25, 1970 strategy meeting

attended by McGovern and his wife Eleanor, Senate aide George Cunningham,
Secretary Pat Donovan, Hart, Stearns, and Richard Wade. ¹¹ Senator
McGovern told the others that the absence of a party leader due to
Humphrey's teaching and preparation for his 1970 Senate campaign and the
huge party debt created a real opportunity for the first announced
candidate. In a large field of candidates, McGovern's logical strategy
was to emerge as the leader of the party's liberal wing so it was im-
portant to get a head start on his liberal rivals, especially John
Lindsay who McGovern seemed to fear most. In addition, avoiding the usual
strategy of denying a candidacy that everyone knew was coming would
make McGovern look less calculating and political than his opponents.
None of those present disagreed with the plan of announcing early.
Only the timing was in question. Wade and Stearns advocated waiting
until after the 1970 elections so as to enable McGovern to continue
as chairman of the party reform commission as well as to campaign for
other Democrats. Hart felt that a McGovern announcement would lead
to press scrutiny of his organization so that should have priority.
It was agreed that McGovern would announce in December but, because
the announcement was to be accompanied by a seven page letter explaining
to nearly a quarter of a million potential supporters why he was running
and what he would do if elected, it was delayed until January 1971
so as not to be lost in the Christmas rush. McGovern may still have
been uncertain of the timing because late in 1970 he asked Ted Van
Dyk, who would soon join the campaign, whether he should declare his
candidacy immediately. Van Dyk agreed that it was important to declare
early to get a head start on other liberals in gaining support and
raising money but felt there was still considerable time. Van Dyk

now agrees that McGovern was right to ignore this advice.

Because Caddell had not yet been hired, private polls played no part in this decision, but it is apparent that McGovern's low standing in the public polls was a crucial factor in deciding to announce early. His January 18, 1971 announcement was the earliest ever made, approximately earlier than had been normal. The success of his strategy has led all but the best known candidates to make earlier announcements than had been customary.

2. Which primaries to enter.

Before 1972, candidates had fairly simple decisions to make regarding which primaries to enter. McGovern, however, was facing a large field of candidates and lacked the resources to contest every primary with maximum effort. The New Hampshire primary was an obvious choice because it was first, would prevent other liberals from getting a head start, give an early indication that McGovern had more support than the public polls claimed, help fund raising with a good showing, and provide a chance to damage front runner Edmund Muskie near home. The fact that the press gives New Hampshire a disproportionate share of coverage was also a factor.

But New Hampshire alone would not be enough. A good showing there would provide a helpful start but he would have to win some later primaries. Florida, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, and Wisconsin placed all contenders on their ballots so they seemed likely choices. Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania all had possibilities and Ohio and Illinois, although possible, presented more difficulties. Rhode Island's party organization was deemed too hostile and well-

entrenched so it was eliminated. Hart says that McGovern wanted to run in as many states as possible, including even North Carolina, Tennessee, and Michigan, but that he preferred to be more selective so as to use their resources wisely. Each primary entered, he believed, should have a specific aim.¹³ In any event, only the decisions on the early primaries were crucial since resources could be reallocated among the later ones as the situation changed.

Wisconsin seemed to offer the best chance of success--McGovern was well-known there, it was a mid-western agricultural state with a progressive and antiwar tradition (McCarthy had scored a big victory in the 1968 primary), there was a large college student population, and office-holders, especially the state's two Democratic senators, were friendly. As McGovern put it, "If we can't do well in Wisconsin,¹⁴ I don't know any state where we will do well."

According to Hart, the biggest controversy concerned whether to emphasize Florida and Illinois as well. Van Dyk visited Florida and returned favoring a large effort there because New Hampshire would be viewed by the press as a certain Muskie win making Florida the first big test, the party organization was weak, the liberal Reuben Askew had been elected governor in 1970, and the state was a fair cross-section of national voters. Mankiewicz agreed, favoring a strong Illinois effort as well. Joseph Grandmaison and Eugene Pokorny, in charge of the New Hampshire and Wisconsin campaigns, felt such efforts would draw necessary resources from them as did Hart. Furthermore, Florida would include George Wallace as well as a John Lindsay campaign featuring heavy media spending. Illinois presented the problem of dealing with Mayor Daley since a full-scale campaign would mean challenging

him in Chicago. By February even Van Dyk had changed his mind. According to Hart, "As was the case in most major controversies inside the campaign, there was no specific point at which it was resolved." ¹⁵ The decision to concentrate on New Hampshire and Wisconsin remained.

Van Dyk's account is very different. He writes that "Florida was expensive, inhospitable, and had too many candidates," and Illinois appeared unfavorable. Wisconsin looked like McGovern's best state but because there was a need to do well in another state, everyone but Hart, who favored maximum efforts in Florida and Illinois, favored concentrating on New Hampshire first. ¹⁶ Fortunately, we do not have to evaluate whose description is correct. What is common to both accounts is that the more traditional sources of political intelligence were used in deciding on which primaries to emphasize--visits to the states, historical factors, the views of political leaders, and expectations of how the press would view each one--rather than polls.

A September 1971 meeting with Hart and a group of Illinois supporters present was held to discuss the nature of the effort to be undertaken there. The Illinois primary consisted of a non-binding presidential preference vote and a separate election of the delegates. Although McGovern felt Illinois was a potentially favorable state for him, the decision had already been made to devote only limited resources to the state. It was decided to run delegates in six districts in the Chicago suburbs and six downstate districts, avoiding a possible conflict with Chicago's Mayor Daley. The preference vote would be skipped as it would be too expensive and without real reward. If McGovern entered, he and McCarthy would appeal to the same voters while ¹⁷ Muskie, the only other candidate, was likely to run his best campaign.

The crucial early tests would be New Hampshire and Wisconsin. Failure there would end the campaign.

3. Targeting in New Hampshire.

Like McCarthy in 1968, McGovern was greeted in New Hampshire by "expert" evaluations of an easy win for his opponent. Six weeks before the primary, the Boston Globe published a John Becker poll giving Muskie a 65-18% lead over McGovern. McGovern was also able to turn such predictions into an asset. Mankiewicz repeatedly asserted that anything less for Muskie than the predicted 65% should be considered a defeat. Although this was considered an exaggeration, it was generally felt that, to maintain his front-running status, Muskie had to garner
18
a majority of the votes.

McGovern had to decide where to concentrate his efforts. Early analysis by Hart and Grandmaison suggested that McGovern's main potential was in the university towns of Hanover (Dartmouth) and Durham (University of New Hampshire) and the southeastern part of the state which contained a large number of young families who worked in Boston. McGovern disagreed, feeling that blue-collar workers, who Hart and Grandmaison felt would support Muskie, should also be appealed to by scheduling visits to factories, especially in Manchester. Caddell's polls supported McGovern's contention. Caddell told McGovern he could do well in blue-collar and middle income areas by taking specific even
19
if unpopular stands.

As a result, McGovern decided to appeal to all three groups-- the university communities, southeastern New Hampshire residents, and the working-class of Manchester. Before every trip to the state, he would stop in Boston, whose television stations were widely watched

in New Hampshire, to hold a press conference on a specific topic. A successful February 18 visit to a Manchester shoe factory was followed by many similar appearances. McGovern stressed such economic issues as taxes, jobs for all who needed them, inflation, and reduced defense spending. His ads, produced by Charles Guggenheim, showed him in informal small group discussions on different issues. Every home in the state was canvassed, sent a follow-up letter, then called back. ²⁰

The results were considered a great success. Muskie fell short of the expected 50%, defeating McGovern by only 47.8% to 37.6%, reasonably close to Caddell's last poll which gave Muskie a 46-30% lead. McGovern got 80% in Hanover, 72% in Durham, carried the suburban areas of Bedford and Amherst and lost Manchester, which had 20% of the party's vote by only 511 votes. ²¹ Clearly he had targeted the right groups. He might well have followed his instincts and aimed at the blue-collar vote without Caddell's recommendations but they certainly made the decision easier.

4. Issues in Wisconsin

After the New Hampshire primary, attention shifted to Florida where all major candidates were automatically placed on the ballot. However, as we have seen, the McGovern campaign planned to devote few resources to this race, preferring to concentrate on Wisconsin. With a paid staff of six and a budget of \$50,000, ²² it was not surprising that McGovern got only 6.1% of the vote. What was surprising was that this turned out to be quite a success. McGovern's chief liberal rival, John Lindsay, conducted an expensive media campaign but barely edged McGovern with a mere 6.5%. Front-runner Edmund Muskie did little better with 8.8%. On the other hand, George Wallace won a smashing

victory with 41.5% to his nearest rival Hubert Humphrey's 18.6%.

The situation facing the contenders going into the April 14 Wisconsin primary had now changed dramatically. Muskie, despite a victory in Illinois March 21, needed to win to retain his front-running status. Lindsay's campaign was on the ropes and could be ruined by a poor showing. Wallace had become an important but unpredictable factor. Humphrey had moved to the forefront and a good Wisconsin showing could reinforce that. A McGovern victory in Wisconsin would surely make him the leading (and perhaps only) candidate of the party's liberal wing.

Clearly Wisconsin was a crucial primary for nearly all the candidates. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, a close friend of McGovern, advised him that property tax relief was the most important issue. As a result, McGovern co-sponsored Nelson's bill for direct federal aid to education in order to reduce local costs and local taxes.²³ From the first, McGovern stressed tax issues including the elimination of tax loopholes as well as lowering property taxes. One of his television advertisements began, "If you want lower property taxes, you want George McGovern. It's as simple as that."²⁴

Published accounts make no reference to Caddell's findings on this issue. They do note that these polls, as well as Oliver Quayle's taken for the AFL-CIO, showed dramatic McGovern gains. Two weeks before the primary, Caddell showed McGovern only five percent behind Humphrey, with Muskie well behind. Quayle showed McGovern rising from 9% in January to 19% in early March to 28% in the final survey. This last, showing McGovern nearly 8% ahead of Humphrey was leaked to the press.²⁵ The steady gains certainly argued against any

change in strategy but the advice of Nelson seems to have been the crucial factor in McGovern's emphasis on the tax issue.

5. Reassessing the middle primaries

The victory in Wisconsin had put McGovern in better position than his advisors could have predicted prior to the primaries. Lindsay withdrew, leaving McGovern as the only candidate of the party's liberals. Muskie, the early front-runner, received a mere 10.2% in Wisconsin and was fading quickly. His chief rivals seemed to be George Wallace who could get a large number of votes but had virtually no chance of being the party's nominee and Hubert Humphrey. With a series of big state primaries coming up--Pennsylvania and Massachusetts April 25, Ohio May 2, and Maryland and Michigan May 16--it was time to reconsider how to allocate resources among them. Maryland was never seriously considered as it seemed solidly for Wallace. Massachusetts, on the other hand, had been given heavy emphasis early in the campaign. At that time it was viewed as a two man race with Muskie who was devoting considerable effort to the same day Pennsylvania primary as well, splitting his resources. The steady weakening of the Muskie campaign meant that some resources could be freed for the other primaries but which ones? Not enough money was raised in the three states (Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) to permit a full scale campaign without bringing in outside funds. Of the three, Pennsylvania was the least promising. There was not much time remaining before the primary and Massachusetts was the same day. Humphrey had considerable strength among the party leadership, organized labor, and in most cities, leaving only the Philadelphia suburbs and the Pittsburgh area for McGovern. It was decided to concentrate on the delegate races rather than the preference

vote and to rely on volunteers rather than the media.

The problem in Michigan was the busing issue. It was feared by McGovern's advisors that the primary would become a referendum on busing which would give Wallace an insurmountable edge. Caddell's surveys showed so much polarization on busing that other issues would be of little consequence so it was decided to limit the Michigan

27
effort.

This left Ohio. There were, according to Hart, three possibilities considered: 1) A limited local effort costing \$25-30,000 with a likelihood of electing between 11 and 15 delegates out of 153. 2) Bringing in six organizers, spending five days campaigning, and spending \$100,000 with a likelihood of electing 33-36 delegates. 3) Bringing in twelve leading organizers with others to help, spending ten days campaigning, and spending \$250,000. Of all the states being considered, Ohio seemed the best for a maximum effort. The party organization favored Muskie who was likely to be out of the race by then. Wallace was not on the ballot but would be opposing Humphrey in Indiana the same day, thereby splitting the latter's resources. Mankiewicz and Hart agreed on option three provided that McGovern agreed, a substantial part of the necessary funds could be raised within the state, and Caddell's poll results promised a reasonable chance of success. McGovern was favorably disposed while Howard Metzenbaum promised the needed money. Caddell's survey, taken March 8 and 9, showed Humphrey ahead with 33% to 21% for Muskie, 15% for McGovern, and 23% undecided. Despite this, prospects seemed good, according to Caddell's analysis. Muskie was rapidly fading and Humphrey had little second-choice support along with "mushy" first-choice support. Be-

cause of the large number of voters who distrusted politics and were looking for someone new and trustworthy and a lack of knowledge among the undecided of McGovern, Caddell strongly favored a big Ohio effort. He concluded, "The situation in Ohio is definitely fluid enough to permit a McGovern victory, if sufficient time and resources can be devoted to the Ohio campaign."²⁸ A later Caddell poll confirmed this, showing Humphrey declining to 28%, Muskie static at 22%, and McGovern rising to 21%²⁹

Clearly, Caddell's polls and analysis were a major influence in this decision. By this time, according to Theodore White, Caddell "had been right for so many months in describing the aimlessness and alienation of American voters that, in the shaping of McGovern's strategy, he had reached a status just below that of Hart and Mankiewicz."³⁰

6. Issues in Nebraska

By the May 9 Nebraska primary, McGovern's strategy seemed to be working extremely well. He won the Massachusetts primary easily with 52.7% of the vote to Muskie's 21.3%. His showing in the Pennsylvania primary was unexpectedly strong with 20.4% to Humphrey's 35.1% and 37 delegates to Humphrey's 57. These results caused Muskie to withdraw from active campaigning. Ohio proved to be a virtual tie with 41.4% for Humphrey and 39.4% for McGovern. Although Wallace was still strong, the race had clearly become one between Humphrey and McGovern with the winner-take-all California primary looming as the decisive test. Those primaries preceding it would test the strategies employed by the two. Nebraska would give a preview of what was to come in California.

Humphrey began forcefully to portray McGovern as dangerously radical. In advertising and literature, Humphrey supporters attacked McGovern on the so-called "three a's"--abortion, amnesty, and acid--the last referring to the legalization of marijuana. At first McGovern simply dismissed these charges then changed the subject but Caddell's surveys indicated that Humphrey's attacks were leading voters to view McGovern as a radical, causing a loss of support. McGovern decided to confront the charges directly. He bought television time for a program with his Nebraska campaign manager, moderate former Governor Frank Morrison. Morrison, dressed in a Stetson hat and cowboy boots responded to the charges by saying, "Can you imagine anything more ridiculous than that old Frank Morrison is out advocating a dangerous left-winger?" Advertising accused McGovern's opponents of distorting his record to hide real differences between the candidates. Finally, the schedule was adjusted to bring the candidate into those areas where the damage was thought to be worst--conservative, rural, and Catholic areas. Although the problem was later to become even more serious, these efforts arrested McGovern's decline in Nebraska. He defeated Humphrey 40.7% to 35.0%.

31

No serious thought was given to changing McGovern's issue positions. His convictions on amnesty for draft evaders were so strong that he had announced them without any discussion with his staff. He could fairly claim that his positions of the other two issues were exaggerated by the opposition. He favored reduced penalties for marijuana use not legalization and was not in favor of legalizing abortion, preferring to leave the matter to the states and the courts.

32

In any case, it is apparent that the polls played an important

role here. They provided specific evidence that Humphrey's attacks were having an effect and caused the candidate to stop brushing them aside and to deal with them directly.

7. The California debates

As the June 6 California primary approached, the optimism among the McGovern forces began to grow. A victory in California coupled with an expected triumph in New York would all but wrap up the nomination. Both the California Poll and those of Caddell showed McGovern pulling ahead as Humphrey's campaign ran short of funds. In such a situation, debates would seem an unnecessary risk for McGovern but, as the underdog, he had been asking for them during the entire campaign so he could hardly refuse now. Three debates were scheduled. The day of the first debate a briefing session was held with memos prepared by Hart, Pierre Salinger, John Holum, and others. Caddell reported that his polls showed a 15 point McGovern lead but that Humphrey's strong attacks on McGovern's proposed reductions in defense spending, welfare reform proposals, alleged weak support of Israel, and the "three a's" had caused 20% of those polled to view him as too radical. On the other hand, many viewed Humphrey as too strident in his attacks. The logical strategy for McGovern was to remain calm and rational. The others present agreed with Hart suggesting short deliberate responses to contrast favorably with Humphrey's well-known garrulousness. Some substantive issues were discussed but there was considerable confusion about the cost of McGovern's welfare plan, with a number of different figures tossed in. In the first debate, McGovern was hurt by his inability to say how much his plan would cost but his aides thought he "won" because Humphrey's attacks were too harsh, an assess-

ment confirmed by responses given to canvassers. McGovern "was chiefly concerned about doing nothing that might anger his (Humphrey's) supporters" for the general election campaign but now feels his failure to reply to Humphrey's strong attacks hurt him.

Preparations for the other debates were similar. In the two later debates, Humphrey toned down his attacks, even apologizing for calling McGovern a "fool" in the first debate, but the substance was similar. McGovern won the primary 44.9% to 39.7%, seemingly giving him all of California's 271 delegates.

As in Nebraska, Caddell's polls proved extremely useful in diagnosing an area of weakness. They could not, however, tell what to do about it. In both primaries, adjustments were made which solved the problem for the moment but which failed to remove it. Thus were planted the seeds of eventual landslide defeat.

8. Writing the party platform

At the convention there were four crucial events--the California and Illinois challenges, the writing of the platform, and the selection of a vice-presidential candidate. Because polls could not have played a part in the first two we will spend little time on them. The last stand of the anti-McGovern forces was a challenge to the California delegation on the ground that the new party rules prohibited winner-take-all primaries. McGovern had no choice but to oppose this challenge as the loss of 150 California delegates would jeopardize his nomination. Angered by this challenge, a number of McGovern delegates challenged the Illinois delegation claiming it failed to give adequate representation to women and minorities. Although McGovern claims that this was a "retaliatory move by McGovern delegates that I did my best to

36
prevent," polls would hardly have been of any help in making his decision.

The party platform was a different matter. McGovern forces were very much in control both in the Platform Committee and when the platform was given final approval on the convention floor. Although it did call for "immediate and complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces in Indochina" as well as amnesty for draft evaders, an end to the draft, and a minimum income of \$3,900 for a family of four, its main thrust was to attempt to avoid positions that would appear as radical. It called for reductions in defense spending but failed to repeat the specific numbers used by McGovern during the campaign. At the same time it advocated "a program of national defense which is both prudent and responsible, which will retain the confidence of our allies, and which will be a deterrent to potential aggressors." On school busing, it equivocated, first listing some of the "many ways to desegregate schools" before ending with, "Transportation of students is another tool to accomplish desegregation" if the courts order it. Among the proposals rejected in committee and on the floor were a \$6,500 minimum income in place of the \$3,900 adopted by the committee, a specific tax reform plan, a proposal to break up large conglomerates, protection for the job rights of homosexuals, and a relatively moderate pro-abortion plank stating that "In matters relating to human reproduction, each person's right to privacy, freedom of choice and individual conscience should be fully respected, consistent with relevant Supreme Court decisions." These actions angered many of McGovern's supporters but led Ben Wattenberg, a representative of Senator Henry Jackson, to praise the platform as showing "a lot of signs of moder-

37
ation."

McGovern was acting in the manner prescribed by traditional political wisdom of moving toward the center. At the same time he was reacting to Caddell's polls which showed that many voters viewed him as too radical. Lack of information prevents us from evaluating how specifically information from polls was related to the writing of each platform plank but the general direction is clear. We cannot tell how important polls were for this decision but we do know they had a substantial effect, if not necessarily on the specifics, at least on the broad strategy.

9. The Vice-Presidential candidate

How Thomas Eagleton was chosen as McGovern's running mate has been told at considerable length in numerous other sources. ³⁸ During the California primary, Alan Baron and Robert Shrum wrote a memo urging a systematic study of possible candidates but it never reached McGovern. Polls taken by Caddell in early June showed that except for Edward Kennedy, none of the other possibilities helped the ticket. Adding Kennedy narrowed the gap from 52-38% to 47-43%. According to Michael Wheeler, this convinced McGovern's staff they had to get Kennedy on the ticket, resulting in a failure to evaluate other possibilities. Kennedy was even shown the poll results in an unsuccessful ³⁹ effort to convince him to run. Nevertheless, before the convention, McGovern told Van Dyk he was certain Kennedy would accept the nomination. ⁴⁰ Even when considering other candidates at the convention, McGovern called Kennedy several times urging him to change his mind.

With Kennedy eliminated, McGovern's aides, exhausted by the convention, met to offer a list of possible candidates. This list

included Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale, Boston Mayor Kevin White, Wisconsin Governor Patrick Lucey, Connecticut Senator Abraham Ribicoff, Ted Kennedy's brother-in-law R. Sargent Shriver, party chairman Lawrence O'Brien, and Missouri Senator Thomas Eagleton. Before the convention, McGovern had also considered Florida Governor Reuben Askew who ruled himself out, United Auto Workers President Leonard Woodcock who was rejected due to opposition from the AFL-CIO, and Senator Muskie. Muskie, however, indicated he would withdraw from the presidential race, then changed his mind, alienating McGovern. Ribicoff and Mondale also ruled themselves out, the latter because he was running for re-election to the Senate and did not wish to give up his seat. Shriver was in Moscow and could not be reached so he was eliminated. O'Brien was felt, on the basis of polls, ⁴¹ to be too much of a professional politician to appeal to voters disillusioned with politics. Lucey seems never to have been seriously considered, in part because of his wife's outspoken views. White seemed the leading candidate but the apparent coolness of Kennedy and strong opposition from the Massachusetts delegation ruined his hopes.

By a process of elimination, only Eagleton was left. While eliminating the other candidates, McGovern had heard favorable comments about him from Gaylord Nelson, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Kennedy, Ribicoff, and Guggenheim who had worked on his Senate campaigns. Eagleton had a number of ticket balancing qualities as an urban Catholic from a border state. He was an excellent campaigner with ties to organized labor. Because Rick Stearns remembered rumors of a drinking problem, Gordon Weil was sent to check them. After making telephone calls for approximately half-an-hour, he found no

evidence to support these rumors. Eagleton was offered the nomination and accepted it immediately.

Because polls showed no significant differences among the possible candidates, they played little role in the final choice. Wheeler, as mentioned, suggests that Kennedy's favorable ratings caused McGovern and his staff to neglect all other choices leading to the ill-considered choice of Eagleton. This seems far-fetched. Some thought was given to others (note the Baron-Shrum memo) but the first priority of the staff was to win the nomination. This was not accomplished until after the California challenge was repulsed and even then there remained other credentials and platform matters to take care of. McGovern argues that the decision was made with as much (perhaps he should have said as little) care as was usual⁴² and there is some justification in this.

10. The decision to ask Eagleton to resign from the ticket.

Soon after the convention, McGovern and then the public learned that Eagleton had been hospitalized several times for depression. Treatment included shock therapy. At first McGovern supported his running mate, then seemed to waver, and finally asked for his resignation. A detailed treatment of this much analyzed decision is beyond⁴³ the scope of this chapter, but we will try to look at the factors that went into the decision.

Essentially there were four arguments in favor of removing Eagleton: 1) He would lose votes for the ticket; 2) Debate about his fitness for office was diverting attention from other issues; 4) He was hurting fund raising; and 4) His medical history made him too much of a risk to be vice-president. McGovern had considerable

difficulty getting Eagleton's medical records so as to evaluate the last reason but did consult with two leading psychiatrists who warned of the risks, telling McGovern that there was no way to predict Eagleton's future behavior with certainty.

Money was probably the most important factor in the decision. When Eagleton's medical history was revealed to the public, contributions stopped. Within 72 hours, 90 percent of the money previously pledged was either withdrawn or hedged. Morris Dees, whose direct mail operation had sustained the campaign financially for much of the prenomination period, left the campaign for as long as Eagleton remained. Campaign treasurer Henry Kimelman told McGovern that the campaign could not be funded with Eagleton on the ticket.

Assessing the first two arguments was more difficult. The published accounts mention no polls which seems possible in light of the short period of time in which the decision had to be made. McGovern relied on more traditional methods of measuring opinion. He consulted with national and state political leaders who were almost unanimous in their desire to have Eagleton removed. Gaylord Nelson told McGovern that at public forums in Wisconsin those present favored Eagleton's resignation by margins of ten or twelve to one. This caused Nelson, whose opinion McGovern valued highly to change his position to one of opposition to Eagleton. McGovern's advisors also strongly urged Eagleton's removal. Polls seem not to have been a factor in this decision.

11. Formulating campaign strategy.

As the Eagleton affair was unfolding, strategy for the campaign had to be formulated. Surveys taken by Caddell before the convention

showed Nixon with a lead of 52-37% but characterized 40% of Nixon's support as "soft", meaning these voters wanted to know more about the candidates before making their final decision. There was also a large number of people who still knew little about McGovern.

More specifically, Caddell felt that there was no reason to write the South off. His polls showed that a significant number of Wallace voters favored McGovern as their second choice. This meant that McGovern could carry some southern states with a coalition of blacks and alienated whites. In response to these findings, McGovern campaigned in the South and Southwest just before the convention. The McGovern plan for victory called for concentrating on those states Humphrey had won or narrowly lost in 1968, a few others such as Wisconsin and Oregon where McGovern had shown strength in the primaries, and a few southern or mountain states.

By Labor Day, however, in view of a series of disasters that had plagued the campaign such grandiose plans had to be scaled down. McGovern's standings dropped sharply in all polls, public and private. There was no longer any realistic chance of carrying any southern states. The now desperate strategy called for maximum effort in the large industrial states and only a token effort in the South. McGovern's only southern campaigning was at the Southern Governor's Conference, a few stops in Texas, and an October rally in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Much the same thing happened to plans concerning image and issues. After the convention, surveys indicated to McGovern's advisors that his positions on reducing the defense budget and tax reform could gain wide support if handled properly. They felt that

if President Nixon asked for a larger defense budget at the same time he was negotiating the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, the contradiction would work to their advantage. They also felt that McGovern's tax plan would gain support if it would decrease the taxes of all earning less than \$20,000 per year while increasing those of all above that figure.⁴⁷ Without the actual polling data, however, we cannot tell how much of this was a valid interpretation of the polls and how much was wishful thinking or meant to generate optimism.

At an early August press briefing, Van Dyk stated that, "The campaign will be decided on the personality and credibility of the candidates." But he too had to change his mind. In an August 23 memo to McGovern, he wrote that recent events had "defused" the theme "that McGovern is more trustworthy and credible than Nixon, both personally and across the key issues..." Instead, he urged McGovern to stress traditional themes and the party's record to try to regain the votes of undecided and pro-Nixon Democrats.⁴⁸

Although polls played a significant part in planning at first, events moved to make these plans obsolete before they were carried out.

12. Countering the public polls

As did Humphrey in 1968, McGovern faced a deficit in the Public polls so large it destroyed belief in any possibility of his winning the election. By the middle of September, he was facing a Nixon lead of 63-29% according to Harris. Although this was an even larger lead for Nixon than at any time in 1968, McGovern's

financial situation was much better than that of Humphrey with a large number of small contributions arriving at a steady rate. Nevertheless, there were some financial problems but even more serious was low staff morale and the damage to McGovern's image done by constant press reports of his poor prospects. When we compare what he did with the 1968 effort, it will be obvious that his ammunition was not as good. As discussed in Chapter Two, Humphrey waged a six front battle against Gallup and Harris--their use of national samples, the volatility of public opinion due to a lack of enthusiasm for all candidates, the historical analogy, errors in sampling procedures or interviewing techniques, challenges to the questions asked, and the use of other polls more favorable to the campaign. Because the McGovern campaign used similar techniques, a comparison will show why they put in less effort and had less success.

Humphrey's forces emphasized that although they trailed by large margins in small states, the big industrial states were close enough to give them a credible chance in the Electoral College. Unlike Humphrey, McGovern had few specifics to back this up. On September 25, after a Harris poll had given Nixon a 59-31% lead, the campaign called a press conference at which they claimed that by omitting all of the South but Texas, the gap "narrowed" to 55-36%, hardly a figure to give them better press coverage but one calculated to give some encouragement to workers and supporters.⁴⁹ In an interview, O'Brien, without citing any figures, claimed that Caddell's polls showed "our situation in Texas to be clearly a winnable one."⁵⁰ But McGovern's forces had to counter a steady stream of negative public state polls. In New York, a New York

Times survey showed McGovern trailing 50-44%, the worst Democratic statewide race of any kind in 20 years. Caddell's October 7-8 poll, showing McGovern 50-39% behind was hardly an effective counter.⁵¹ In California, Mervin Field's California Poll gave Nixon its largest Republican lead ever, 50-36%. The McGovern campaign countered with Caddell's October 9-11 survey showing McGovern⁵² ahead 45-42%.

McGovern, like Humphrey, also tried to show great volatility among the voters. At the September 25 press conference, this claim was made citing Caddell's figure of one-third of those questioned having switched candidates since July. O'Brien, in the interview cited above, suggested that "questioning in depth of Nixon voters indicates a great lack of confidence in the President. Fully 40 percent of the Nixon vote polled today rests on very shallow support." Leaders of the campaign tried to convince the press that their goal was to reduce the gap to 15 to 20 percent by the end of September, 10-15 percent by October 10, and to be within five percent by the⁵³ end of October so as to be able to win with a final surge. However, as the election neared, even these goals seemed out of reach. Nor did Caddell's polls provide any real help. An October poll showed McGovern's vote was even less committed than Nixon's. Since July more than a third of his supporters had switched to undecided or pro-Nixon. Caddell's panel studies of personal characteristic showed that the 3-1 favorable ratio of July had been reversed. McGovern was seen by voters as "indecisive," "impractical," and hurt by "the Eagleton experience."⁵⁴

McGovern had his own version of the historical analogy used

by most trailing candidates. In response to constant questions about his low standing in the polls, he and his advisors never failed to mention his rise from less than five percent when he announced his candidacy to victory at the convention.

There was some questioning of sampling procedures but not nearly as much as in 1968. One of the few examples occurred when Caddell claimed his total sample of 13,000 was much more reliable than Gallup's 1200⁵⁵ but this was never followed up. The margin was simply too large and too consistent to be attacked as sampling error. For similar reasons, no real challenge to the wording of the questions was mounted.

Finally, there was only limited use of other polls to discredit Gallup and Harris because they were little better. Caddell's results were only marginally better for McGovern. Sindlinger, whose results the Humphrey campaign had publicized, showed McGovern even further behind, e.g., by 62-21% in late September. A survey done for the New York Times by Daniel Yankelovich gave Nixon a 62-23% margin.

As the election was to show, McGovern's efforts to discredit the public polls were weaker than Humphrey's simply because his case was weaker.

These twelve decisions indicate that polls played a significant role during the campaign for tactical decisions and allocating resources. They proved especially helpful when a changing situation necessitated a reassessment, as occurred after the early successes in New Hampshire and Wisconsin and the failures of the

Muskie and Lindsay campaigns. For the vice-presidential choice, however, they were of little help and, by their showing that only Ted Kennedy could help the ticket, may even have contributed slightly to the haste with which the final selection was made. They did prove helpful in deciding which groups to appeal to, especially in the early stages, but Caddell's thesis that alienated Wallace voters would switch to McGovern did not work out. On issues, polls played a secondary role. As was the case with the other candidates we examined, McGovern had a long record which meant that too many changes in his positions would damage his credibility. The commitment of his supporters and his own strong feelings on issues such as the Vietnam War and amnesty ruled out any suggestion of change. The polls proved useful in determining which issues to stress. In 1972 they were most important in providing concrete evidence that people saw McGovern as too radical. The McGovern campaign was able to counter this successfully enough to win the nomination but their efforts failed during the general election campaign.

Private polls played a more significant role in this campaign than in 1968. There are several reasons for this. First is the time factor. Because McGovern got such an early start, he and his aides were able to do more thorough planning than the 1968 candidates. Although private polls played only a small role at first, beginning with the New Hampshire primary, they became an important factor. Second, the new rules created a need for more information. In 1968 and before there were a few key primaries and a candidate could skip even these, as did Humphrey, and still

succeed. McGovern and his rivals faced a much larger number of primaries and a much larger field of candidates. The ups and downs of the numerous candidates in these primaries created a need for reliable information and constant reassessment. Polls can be extremely helpful. Finally, the McGovern campaign was lucky enough to find Patrick Caddell. The campaign lacked the money to hire someone well-known when young Caddell appeared, willing to work for a minimal fee to establish a reputation. The results were of great benefit to both the campaign and Caddell whose influence, not very great at first, grew steadily as McGovern marched to the nomination. Nixon's landslide victory only delayed Caddell's rise for a few years. As Jimmy Carter's pollster in 1976, he would rise to the top of his profession.

FOOTNOTES

- 1
Gary Hart, Right from the Start, (New York: Quadrangle, 1974), p. 105.
- 2
Ibid., pp. 19-20.
- 3
Ibid., pp. 87-88, 91-92.
- 4
Ibid., p. 72.
- 5
Ibid., p. 79-80.
- 6
Lawrence O'Brien, No Final Victories, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 323.
- 7
Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1972, (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), p. 422.
- 8
Hart, p. 91.
- 9
White, p. 51, and Hart, pp. 7-8.
- 10
Michael Wheeler, "Primaries and Opinion Polls," The Atlantic Monthly, CCXXIX (May 1972), pp. 6-8.
- 11
For accounts of this meeting see Hart pp. 18-19, White, pp. 51-54, and George McGovern, Grass Roots, (New York: Random House, 1977), pp. 174-175.
- 12
Ted Van Dyk, "The hero of a year ago," The Washington Monthly, V, (May 1973), p. 40. It is, of course, possible that McGovern was merely being polite in asking Van Dyn for his opinion.
- 13
Hart, pp. 18-19. See also McGovern, p. 179.

- 14
Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX, (March 25, 1972), p. 653.
- 15
Hart, pp. 107-109.
- 16
Van Dyk, p. 41.
- 17
Hart, pp. 83-84, 136.
- 18
Wheeler, p. 8.
- 19
Time, LXLIX, (March 20, 1972), p. 16; Hart, p. 13; McGovern, p. 180, and Van Dyk, p. 41.
- 20
Hart, pp. 121-125, McGovern, p. 180, and Van Dyn, p. 41.
- 21
Time, LXLIX (March 20, 1972), p. 16.
- 22
Hart, p. 131.
- 23
McGovern, p. 181.
- 24
Time, LXLIX (April 17, 1972), p. 17.
- 25
Ibid., p. 18, and Hart, p. 141.
- 26
Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX (April 15, 1972), pp. 860, 863, and Hart, p. 141.
- 27
Paul Wieck, Even in Ohio," The New Republic, CXLVI (May 13, 1972), p. 12, and Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, XXX (May 6, 1972), p. 1031.
- 28
Hart, pp. 147-152, and White, p. 146.
- 29
New York Times, April 30, 1972, p. 44.

30

White, p. 146.

31

Hart, pp. 169-170, and Time, LXLIX (May 22, 1972), p. 19.

32

Hart, p. 205.

33

Hart, p. 188, and White, pp. 165-167.

34

For a more complete account of the debate see White, pp. 167-170, and Hart, pp. 188-190.

35

McGovern, pp. 184-185.

36

Ibid., p.186.

37

New York Times, June 26, 1972, p. 24; June 27, p. 1, 30; June 28, p. 34; and July 13, pp. 1, 22.

38

See for example McGovern, pp. 191-199, Hart, pp. 238-243, White, pp. 258-262, and Haynes Johnson's series in the Washington Post, December 3-6, 1972.

39

Michael Wheeler, Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1976), p. 213.

40

Van Dyk, p. 45.

41

O'Brien, pp. 321-322 and McGovern, pp. 197-198.

42

McGovern, p. 191.

43

See the sources listed in note 38 for a more thorough discussion.

44

Newsweek, LXXX (October 9, 1972), p. 31; McGovern, p. 225; and Time, C (July 24, 1972), p. 10.

45

Time, C (July 24, 1972), p. 10, and New York Times, June 27, 1972, p. 30.

46
McGovern, p. 226.

47
Time, C (July 24, 1972), p. 10.

48
White, pp. 288-289.

49
Hart, p. 298.

50
U.S. News and World Report, LXXIII (October 9, 1972),
pp. 66-69.

51
New York Times, October 17, 1972, p. 28.

52
New York Times, October 22, 1972, p. 50.

53
New York Times, September 26, 1972, p. 36.

54
White, pp. 450-451, and Newsweek LXXX, (October 30, 1972),
p. 36.

55
Wheeler, Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics, p. 78.

CHAPTER SIX

THE 1976 CARTER CAMPAIGN

According to Jimmy Carter, he first began to consider running for president when, as governor of Georgia, he met past and potential presidential candidates such as Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, Hubert Humphrey, and George McGovern and "I lost my feeling of awe about presidents."¹ As early as September 1972, even before that year's Presidential election, Carter met with a group of advisers to discuss the pros and cons of running in 1976.² Like McGovern, but unlike the 1972 candidates, Carter had a great deal of time to plan his campaign, making it more likely that polls would be used. There were even more primaries and more candidates than in 1972, leading to a constantly changing situation that required frequent reassessments for which polls could be useful.

The candidate himself was a great believer in polls. According to Elizabeth Drew, "Carter loves polls, devours them and his recent actions and today's (September 6, 1976) schedule show that he uses them as a guide."³ Carter's polls were taken by Patrick Caddell. As the campaign became more and more successful, Caddell became one of Carter's most influential advisers. Since Carter's election, Caddell has continued to give him advice on important matters. Thus, even more than Louis Harris in 1960, Caddell has transcended the role of the pollster to become a full-fledged political adviser, creating possible conflicts of interest

which will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

All of the above indicates that the Carter campaign, given sufficient funding, was likely to rely on private polls more than any of the campaigns we have looked at. It was also considerably more cohesive than any of these earlier efforts. At first the organization consisted of a number of Georgians whom Carter placed considerable trust in. Because of this he was able to delegate authority to make day-to-day decisions while being consulted on broad strategy. Hamilton Jordan and Jody Powell (who was more important as an adviser than his title of Press Secretary would indicate) decided on how to allocate resources among the states. Robert Lipshutz was in charge of finances and Gerald Rafshoon media. As Rafshoon put it, discussing advertising in New Hampshire, "The governor always knew the concepts we were operating from and we talked to him about our strategy from time to time; but our decision making about New Hampshire was prompted by what we were reading in the press, and what was happening in Iowa."⁴ Carter did not even see any of his television ads until April of 1976.

This organization worked very well as long as it remained small, but, as it became more successful, growth caused some strains. According to one observer, Carter was well organized in states such as Florida, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania where he brought in his own organizers but had problems where state politicians were in charge. He cites one national campaign aide's comments about California, "Hamilton kept letting these people join and he kept giving them titles and each thought he was

running things. They all fought most of the time and little grass roots organization developed. They spent their energies on each other." ⁵ As was true with every campaign we have studied, although to a lesser extent, there were reports of friction between the national staff and field organizers. ⁶

The most publicized incident of friction within the campaign organization was also caused by an attempt to broaden its base. During the Pennsylvania primary, Caddell recommended that Robert Shrum, a McGovern staffer in 1972, be hired as a liberal speech-writer who would help meet criticism that Carter's issue positions were vague. Only nine days after he was hired, Shrum quit, giving the press a copy of his letter of resignation which accused Carter of "an attempt to conceal your true positions" on such issues as the defense budget, aid to mass transit, changes in trucking regulations, economic policy, and the Middle East. ⁷

Despite such difficulties, the Carter organization comes the closest of all those we have studied to the picture of a group solely devoted to one objective--the election of Jimmy Carter as president. In looking at key decisions during the campaign, we can expect that polls would be relied upon more than in the other campaigns.

1. Early campaign strategy

Carter's basic problem was similar to that faced by McGovern--his low standing in the polls meant that his candidacy was not taken seriously enough to generate large financial contributions or serious press coverage. At first glance he seemed even worse off than McGovern who at least was an experienced senator with strong liberal

and antiwar credentials. Carter was not only little known, he was a one-term former governor of a relatively small state, very far from traditional presidential timber. Yet the political climate presented opportunities for someone not identified with the usual political standards.

In a November 1972 memo, Jordan outlined the situation. He felt the recent preoccupation of the party with senators as presidential candidates meant that most other candidates would be all too familiar to the public by virtue of having run before. McGovern had shown the public's desire for moral leadership and honesty but also the need for competence. Carter should therefore present the image of "a highly successful and concerned former governor of Georgia and peanut farmer living in a small rural town, speaking out on the pertinent issues of the day." Jordan listed⁸ nineteen tasks for doing this, each with a target date. In an unexpected stroke of good fortune, Carter was named by Democratic Party Chairman Robert Strauss as head of the party's campaign committee for the 1974 elections. This gave him a position from which to become better known as well as a chance to develop contacts throughout the country. Strauss would surely not have done this had he taken Carter seriously as a presidential candidate.

Jordan also sought to determine a strategy for gathering delegates in the states. This would not be easy this early as many states had not made final decisions as to how and when they would select delegates nor was it at all clear who the major contenders would be. Jordan felt that George Wallace and Edward Kennedy would be the chief opposition. Wallace could be beaten by a res-

pectable southerner who could "encompass and expand" upon the Wallace constituency. This led to a basic strategy as follows:

- 1) Show strength in the early primaries to prove he was a serious candidate. The key primaries would be New Hampshire and Florida. In the former he would take on Kennedy, in the latter Wallace. New Hampshire was viewed as a potentially favorable state due to its tradition of slowing front-runners and encouraging dark horses. As a small, rural, and independent state, it was ideal for the kind of personal campaigning that Carter and his family were best at. And Carter's "farmer-businessman-military-religious-conservative background" would be an asset.
- 2) Win a medium non-southern state such as Wisconsin to show he was not a regional candidate.
- 3) Show Carter to be a major contender by confronting his chief rivals in a large northern Democratic industrial state with an early primary. Here Jordan cited Pennsylvania and Ohio but the latter would become one of the last primaries.
- 4) Show consistent strength in all primaries entered.

In the fall of 1974, after Kennedy's withdrawal from the race, Jordan became more specific. He developed a formula, "percentage of effort targeting," for allocating resources among the states. The early primaries would be most important because of the large number of candidates, the intense press coverage they would receive, and the likelihood that there would be a gap between the late March and early April primaries of two or three weeks. Jordan felt serious efforts were needed in the first five primaries, which he then expected to be New Hampshire, Florida, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Rhode Island. "Our minimal goals in these early

primaries would be to gain acceptance as a serious and viable candidate, demonstrate that Wallace is vulnerable and that Carter can appeal to the Wallace constituency, and show through our candidate and campaign a contrasting style and appeal." Four of the middle primaries, Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Indiana, were deemed more favorable than Ohio, Washington D.C., or Massachusetts. The next three, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Nebraska, would be excellent states. Little thought was given to the late primaries because failure in the early ones would make them irrelevant.

Later developments would change some of the details but the basic strategy remained the same. At the time of Jordan's first memo it was felt that Kennedy would keep out other liberal candidates but his withdrawal, according to Jody Powell, produced no real strategic changes. The same can be said of changing primary dates. Rhode Island switched to June 1 so it was, at least for the moment, deemphasized but the other four early votes retained their importance. Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, and North Carolina moved up their dates but this became important only after Carter's early successes in Iowa and New Hampshire. The only significant change made in this early strategy was the decision to make a major effort in the Iowa caucuses which preceded all of the primaries.

Because the basic outlines of this strategy were well set before any polls were taken, they played only a reinforcing role. A good example is a 1975 poll taken in Florida which showed that of all the candidates, only Wallace was widely known. It found

two Wallace constituencies--his hard-core supporters who numbered fewer than in 1972 and those who supported him as a symbol of their frustration with government and politics.¹¹ The decision to concentrate on Florida had been made long before. This confirmation that Wallace was vulnerable may have made the Carter camp more confident, but it had no effect on the original decision.

Polls had more of an effect on the development of the campaign's themes. Carter presented his qualifications and views as a unified whole, often ignoring some of the more conventional issues in favor of trust, honesty, or love, so that speaking of campaign themes is more accurate than to separate image and issues. When asked how he developed his major themes, Carter replied, "All Democratic candidates--congressional, governors--have available to us polls showing broad thematic studies. The polls showed us the post-Vietnam feeling, the feeling of exclusion, the embarrassment at lower ethical standards, at Watergate."¹² In addition to these polls, Carter had hired Caddell in 1974. Caddell's polls also showed pessimism among the public both about the country and their own lives. 68% of those questioned agreed that in the past ten years "America's leaders have consistently lied to the American people." There was simultaneously a search for leadership and change and a desire for a restoration of basic values. The need for reform,¹³ however, was not defined in any concrete ideological terms.

This turned out to be exactly where Carter's campaign was aimed. In 1974, he gave Rafshoon a list of words and phrases to work with, including "not from Washington," "competence," "integrity," and "outsider." It would be a gross oversimplification, however, to say that polls led directly to these themes. Some had been used

so often by Carter in past campaigns in Georgia that one aide called them "vintage Carter." "Competence" was at first used without having been tried in the polls but a 1975 survey confirmed its effective-
14
ness. Nevertheless, it is clear that polls played an important role in the development and testing of Carter's themes.

2. Emphasizing the Iowa caucuses

Traditionally the first test of the campaign had been the New Hampshire primary. However, this was preceded by the previously little noticed Iowa caucuses. Carter felt that the expanded number of primaries and the unclear situation caused by the large number of candidates meant that the press would stress the first contest of any sort as an objective test of candidate appeal. Since his problem was being taken seriously, the caucuses presented an opportunity worth considering. Because only 35,000 Democrats had participated in 1972, he saw "a good chance to build that up with a
15
major media event to demonstrate his appeal."

State party chairman Tom Whitney had told Jordan to "forget about Iowa. It's not your kind of state," but Carter's aides did not agree. Tim Kraft was put in charge of the Iowa effort and felt Carter could do well there. In an August 28, 1975 memo he argued that the state's "media/political significance" made a big effort worthwhile. Carter's other advisers agreed. The state seemed well-suited for Carter, his rivals there--Birch Bayh, Fred Harris, Morris Udall, Henry Jackson, and Sargent Shriver--also were low in Gallup's rankings, and the press's expectations for Carter
16
seemed unrealistically low.

Carter's staff was able to give him a boost by means of

some shrewd maneuvering. The Des Moines Register took a straw poll at a late October fund raising dinner. While the other candidates concentrated on speechmaking, Carter's supporters organized to pack the dinner. Carter's "victory" with 23% of those present supporting him led to considerable national publicity topped by a front page New York Times story about his "lead" in Iowa. The fact that a week later the Iowa Poll gave Carter less than 10% support among Democrats did not even slow him up. Even party chairman Whitney, although officially neutral, had moved into Carter's corner.¹⁷ In the actual caucuses, 37% of those participating declared themselves uncommitted, followed by 27% for Carter and 13% for Bayh. Typical of the press reaction was U.S. News and World Report's cautious declaration that "Democrats, for the moment, have a front runner in Jimmy Carter," emphasizing his 2-1 margin over Bayh but suggesting that too much significance should not be read into the results.¹⁸ Carter's decision to stress these caucuses proved a great success.

Polls seem not to have played a part in this. The caucuses presented an opportunity that a dark horse like Carter could not pass up. Kraft's first hand view, coupled with other favorable factors already mentioned, seem to have tipped the scales. A poll taken early would certainly have shown Carter doing poorly but the difference between a caucus--which has a generally low turnout of the most dedicated supporters--and a primary made the very personal campaign style used by Carter and his family extremely effective. The weakness of his opponents turned what could have been interpreted as a modest victory for Carter (or even a lack

of enthusiasm for all the candidates) into proof that Carter was a serious contender.

3. The Massachusetts primary

Carter's success continued with a solid victory in New Hampshire February 24, a month after the Iowa caucuses. According to the original plan, the next important test would be the March 9 Florida primary. But he had done so much better than even his campaign had expected that some saw the opportunity for a knock-out of the opposition with a victory in the March 2 Massachusetts primary coupled with a Florida win. Because New Hampshire has no statewide television station of its own, advertising had already been shown on Boston television to reach New Hampshire voters. Should greater effort be devoted to the Massachusetts primary which Carter had previously planned to give little attention?

The original plan had been supported by a December survey giving Carter only 3% of the vote. Such early surveys usually show little more than name recognition as shown by the fact that Sargent Shriver led with only 18% while 40% had not yet made up their minds. The night of the New Hampshire primary, Carter's staff met and decided on another week of advertising on Boston television. The next day Caddell reinterviewed a small sample of his December interviewees and found that Carter was now significantly ahead of his nearest rivals, Henry Jackson and Morris Udall. A poll taken by one of the television networks gave Carter a 5% lead. Both Caddell and Jordan argued that Carter should spend less time campaigning in Florida and more in Massachusetts but Carter himself was reluctant to do so. The result was a compromise--no extra

campaigning by the candidate but an expensive (\$105,000 to Jackson's \$91,000) media campaign. This investment of prestige and money did not pay off in votes with Carter finishing a distant fourth, behind Jackson, Udall, and Wallace. Caddell claimed the defeat was caused by a heavy snowstorm which deterred the weakly committed Carter voters from turning out.

4. Issues in Florida

The defeat in Massachusetts only served to underscore the importance of the Florida primary which was Carter's chance to show he was the respectable southern alternative to Wallace. His advertising, helped by the victory in New Hampshire, stressed the theme, "Now we can stop sending messages and send the President." The 1975 poll we referred to earlier, showing that much of Wallace's support was due to frustration rather than commitment to the candidate clearly had a role here, although published sources do not tell how much. There were two more concrete issues of importance-- school busing and the mortgage interest tax deduction.

The liberal candidates had avoided campaigning in Florida either because they felt they would do poorly there, as in 1972, or because they hoped that Carter could knock out George Wallace if there were fewer candidates to split the anti-Wallace vote. The only other important candidate was Senator Jackson who ran a strongly anti-Carter and anti-busing campaign. The 1972 results in Florida as well as Jackson's win (although with only 23% of the vote) in Massachusetts seemed to favor such strategy. Nevertheless, Carter strongly counterattacked Jackson's emphasis on the busing issue. In an interview he explained, "To build a campaign

on an issue...that has already created disharmony, and sometimes even bloodshed, is to me the wrong approach to politics." Raf-shoon, Jordan, Powell, and Caddell all opposed this but Caddell later felt that even though Carter never said so, he was intuitively appealing to the 10% of the vote that the liberal candidates would have received. If so, polls played no part in this decision. However, surveys showing that Carter had done well among black voters in Massachusetts, a result which surprised the campaign, could have reinforced his decision.

The mortgage interest issue had been started by Carter himself. At a League of Women Voters' forum in Boston, he explained that his proposed tax reforms would eliminate income tax deductions for home mortgage interest. Jackson seized this issue in Florida. At first Carter did not reply directly but his staff tried to explain that this was only part of a reform that would reduce the total amount of taxes paid by low and middle income home owners. A phone survey in Florida showed his positive ratings going down as his negatives rose. Florida headquarters was deluged with calls on the subject. Putting two and two together, the campaign realized that something had to be done. Essentially, Carter took the advice of his wife Rosalynn who told him, "Just be brief. Say, 'I'm not going to raise your taxes' and explain that no tax reform proposal of his would cost them more money." Questions were handled in this way and television spots were immediately made to eliminate whatever harm had been done. The issue soon vanished and Carter won the Florida primary.

5. The "fuzziness" issue

The crucial Florida win was followed by victories in the less important Illinois and North Carolina primaries but the big tests were to come in April with simultaneous primaries in New York and Wisconsin on the sixth and Pennsylvania's three weeks later. The day after the North Carolina primary, Caddell wrote a memo assessing the situation. For a "quick kill," Carter had to defeat Udall in Wisconsin, do respectably in New York, and beat Jackson in Pennsylvania and Indiana. Carter's surprising rush to the front, however, had created new problems. Caddell's Wisconsin surveys showed Carter ahead but Udall was gaining, with most undecided liberals leaning in his favor. Caddell recommended a more issue oriented approach with formal addresses on specific subjects every ten days or so in order to "send 'signals' to interested groups and particularly to the suspicious but open liberals." This proposal was never implemented. ²⁵ Late poll results gave the Carter campaign reason to be optimistic. The final Wisconsin survey gave Carter a 38-27 lead over Udall, although the 5% who had no preference were mostly liberals most of whom were expected to vote for Udall or stay home. In New York, Carter and Jackson were even which seemed to indicate a narrow victory for Jackson who had the better organization there. ²⁷ The election results must have been quite a jolt. Carter won by a mere one percent in Wisconsin after early projections had led Udall to claim victory. In New York Carter finished fourth, electing only one-third as many delegates as Jackson. Caddell immediately went over his Wisconsin data. Open-ended questions in the two polls taken showed a dramatic increase in the number of voters whose

responses were classified as "not specific, wishy-washy, changes stands." The number of people who agreed with the statement "Jimmy Carter always seems to be changing his positions on the issues" went from 23% to 33%. Caddell also cited a similar question used in a CBS survey of voters as they left the polling booths which elicited 43% agreement as a danger signal.²⁸

As was the case with McGovern's image as a radical in 1972, the first evidence of a real danger for the candidate was provided by polls. Rafshoon was quickly alerted. Since there was too little time before the Pennsylvania primary to produce new advertising, he simply re-edited the old advertisements to include a new introduction ("Jimmy Carter on the issue of _____") and a new ending ("If you see this critical issue the way Jimmy Carter does, then vote for him.") Enough money was borrowed to enable the campaign to spend \$146,000 on media. In addition, Carter issued one statement on the economy advocating the creation of jobs through private industry but not explaining how this could be done and another advocating national health insurance but avoiding the controversial issue of how it should be financed. At the urging of Charles Kirbo, he increased his appearances in Pennsylvania from three days²⁹ to ten. He defeated Jackson 37-25%, making his nomination appear quite likely.

6. Late entrants and late primaries

Just as Carter seemed to have disposed of all his opponents, two new ones entered the race: Idaho Senator Frank Church and California Governor Jerry Brown. Also, although he was never to become an active candidate, Hubert Humphrey remained as a possible

rival. But Carter had become very confident, a confidence that was reinforced by his winning of 258 delegates the first week in May. The Nebraska ballot listed the names of all candidates, declared or possible, but Carter's chief rival in the May 11 primary was Church. Caddell's poll, taken a week before the vote, gave Carter more than 30%, non-candidates Humphrey and Kennedy a total of 25%, and Church 17%. Caddell now feels that he erred by not asking Humphrey and Kennedy supporters who their second choice was. He also did no additional polling. As a result, the Carter organization failed to note the effectiveness of Church's very active campaigning in winning over supporters of the undeclared candidates. Carter, influenced by the polls and his series of victories, did little campaigning in Nebraska. The result was a narrow Church victory, 38.8% to 37.8% with only 7% for Humphrey and 4% for Kennedy.

The Maryland and Michigan primaries followed a week later. Maryland had separate delegate and preferential elections. Brown had entered too late to file delegate slates so he could only challenge Carter in the preference race. The crucial question for Carter was whether to concentrate his efforts here or against Udall in Michigan. Caddell's early polls seemed to argue for a Maryland effort, giving Carter an overwhelming 48-30% lead in Michigan where-
as Brown led in Maryland by only 4%. Coupled with endorsements by Detroit Mayor Coleman Young and United Automobile Workers President Leonard Woodcock, this made Carter so certain a victor in Michigan over the often defeated Udall that he could afford to spend more time in Maryland.

According to Jordan and Powell, this was a mistake which

built Brown up rather than destroying his candidacy. Carter's
emphasis on government reorganization hurt him among the large num-
ber of employees living in the Washington suburbs. Catholics, who
were to prove troublesome from here on, supported the Catholic
Brown in preference to born again Baptist Carter. The party or-
ganization was also behind Brown. Caddell's final poll showed
33
Brown nearly 8% ahead and the actual results were even worse:
Brown 48.3%, Carter 36.9%.

At the same time Carter's expected easy victory very nearly
turned to defeat. Against the advice of his pollster, Udall ran
34
strongly anti-Carter ads. One showed a two-faced caricature of
Carter as conflicting Carter statements were read. Another suggested
that "a smile is not enough." A pamphlet entitled "Udall's Quick
Carter Quiz" asked where Carter stood on a list of issues. But
Caddell's polls showed that cross-overs were an even greater prob-
lem. In his home state, President was assiduously wooing Democratic
voters who could vote in either party's primary. A week before the
vote, Caddell began taking daily surveys which showed that nearly
15% of Democratic voters, three-quarters of whom were Carter suppor-
ters, were considering crossing over to the Republican primary.
But the Sunday prior to the primary much of Carter's lead had vanished
35
and, if the trend continued, the race would be even. This is ex-
actly what happened. The Democratic vote was considerably less than
it had been in 1972, with Carter winning by only 1000 votes of
659,000 cast in the Democratic primary.

Carter's seemingly certain nomination had suddenly run into
a few roadblocks. Fortunately for him, he was expected to win

three of the next week's four primaries easily--in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Arkansas--with only the Oregon primary in doubt. Originally, Carter planned to fly home for a rest the weekend before the vote but the results of the last few primaries and Caddell's surveys caused a change of plan. But Church and Brown were well-known in Oregon because they came from neighboring states. Although not on the ballot, Brown was waging a vigorous write-in campaign. The addition of Brown changed a 24-22% Carter lead over Church to a slight Brown edge over Carter who was slightly ahead of Church. Carter cancelled his weekend rest in favor of additional Oregon campaigning, telling reporters it was because his polls showed such good results in Oregon that he could win even more delegates than he had originally thought. Since this was not true, he was unable to respond to skeptical reporters' requests to see the results. He also increased the amount of his television advertising.³⁶ As a result, he was able to stave off the worst, finishing second with 27.7% to Church's 34.6% and Brown third with 23.3%. At the same time he won the other three primaries overwhelmingly. Thus, he could emphasize that on that day he had gained 110 delegates compared to 30 for Church and 13 for Brown.

One week before the June 8 wind-up with primaries in New Jersey, Ohio, and California, there remained the less important South Dakota, Rhode Island, and Montana primaries. While Carter was campaigning in Oregon, Rosalynn visited South Dakota and Rhode Island (Montana was considered certain to go for its neighbor Church). She reported considerable support in both states, urging her husband to campaign there to raise morale among his supporters.

It was also important to avoid losing all three states on one day. Caddell's South Dakota survey, showing Carter with a 45-33% lead over Udall, indicated that this was not likely but these results were not released in order that the press would think the contest close. Rhode Island at first seemed even more of a sure thing but less than a week before the vote Brown discovered he had three free days so he decided to campaign for the uncommitted slates, spending \$25,000 on advertising. As a result, Carter once again cancelled a weekend rest to campaign in Rhode Island and South Dakota. He won in South Dakota easily but lost to Brown in Rhode Island by less than 800 votes.

Polls played a major role in resource allocation in these late primaries but their record was mixed. In Nebraska they led Carter to underestimate Church's strength. By indicating a big Carter lead in Michigan and a close contest in Maryland, they encouraged a mistaken diversion of resources from the former to the latter. Later surveys either were too late to change strategy or were not sufficiently heeded. After this, however, polls were extremely helpful, pointing out weakness in Oregon and strength in South Dakota. Nevertheless, the same decisions would probably have been made without polls. Overconfidence in Nebraska was also caused by Carter's prior wins and a belief that the nomination was all but wrapped up. Similar reasoning, coupled with endorsements by important Michigan leaders, caused Carter to think Michigan certain and to underestimate Brown in Maryland. In South Dakota and Rhode Island, Rosalynn's reports from the scene were at least as important as Caddell's surveys. Polls seem to have

been an important but not determining factor.

7. The finish--New Jersey, Ohio, and California

June 8 was dubbed by some the "Super Bowl" with primaries in New Jersey, Ohio, and California. When Brown entered, it was clear he would carry his home state of California easily. In New Jersey, the party organization's uncommitted slates supported both Humphrey and Brown in a bit of sleight of hand that created problems there too for Carter. Only Ohio seemed favorable--not as liberal as the other two states, without the possibility of cross-over voting, and with a large number of former southerners and rural voters. Caddell's polls confirmed this. He polled Ohio the most, finding Carter's standing holding steady at more than 45%, well ahead of the ever-trailing Udall. Campaigning time and money were shifted from California to the other two states. The staff sought a means of making Ohio the crucial state. The final trip to California was cancelled in favor of a full day in Ohio and an evening visit to New Jersey, diverting press attention from California. Carter himself called Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, telling him he would win in Ohio but lose the other states. Daley then held a press conference saying of Carter "if he wins in Ohio, he'll walk in under his own power..." As a result, Carter's overwhelming victory in Ohio overshadowed his two defeats, causing most politicians and the press to concede him the nomination. According to Caddell, "We orchestrated that. We were in trouble in New Jersey but we
39
knew we were going to win in Ohio."

8. Selecting the vice-presidential nominee

Once Carter had effectively clinched the nomination, attention turned to his choice of running mate. Unlike McGovern, he had plenty of time to decide. As early as April, Jordan had written a memo setting forth, as was his wont, numerical criteria for rating potential candidates. Ability and integrity were assigned 15 points each; acceptance 10. Ratings were calculated for all governors and senators as well as leading members of the House of Representatives and several mayors. All those with less than 27 points were eliminated unless they had been very helpful to the campaign or it would be politically harmful to exclude them. Age, political philosophy, region, other political considerations, and Jordan's own views were then used to create a list of twenty possibilities. Caddell and Jordan reduced this to fourteen--Senators Adlai Stevenson III, Walter Mondale, Alan Cranston, John Glenn, Birch Bayh, Edmund Muskie, Church, and Kennedy; Representatives Peter Rodino and Barbara Jordan; Governors Hugh Carey, Michael Dukakis, and Wendell Anderson; and Mayor Thomas Bradley. Caddell then took a survey of 2000 people to assess the popularity of these fourteen.

In fact, much of this was done for show--to make certain people and certain constituencies feel they or their representatives were under consideration. Carter felt that his status as a Washington outsider meant that his running mate should be a member of the Washington establishment i.e. a member of congress. Therefore the three governors and one mayor on the list of fourteen could not have been under serious consideration. Nor did the results of the poll prove to be of much help. None of the candidates made any

significant difference to the ticket's chances, with only Glenn adding anything and most of the rest actually lessening support. Glenn, Church, and Muskie had the best name recognition while Mondale had the worst of the top contenders, only 30%.

Carter was given these results on June 2. He called forty leaders in politics, business, labor, and journalism to solicit their views. Before these calls Carter was leaning toward Church who was strong in the West where Carter was weak, a liberal who had been elected in a conservative state, and experienced in foreign affairs, but those consulted did not think highly of Church. Charles Kirbo was then dispatched to interview the leading candidates and have them fill out a questionnaire about their finances, legal history, mental and physical health, relatives, and possible embarrassing incidents in an attempt to avoid a repetition of the Eagleton affair.⁴¹ By now the list had narrowed to Muskie, Church, Glenn, Mondale, Jackson, Stevenson, and Rodino. The list was soon revealed to the public, with many observers feeling that Rodino was on it only to impress Italian-Americans. In any case, he soon removed himself from consideration for health reasons. Glenn was now viewed as the leading contender but problems began to emerge--he only had served in the Senate for two years, was viewed as hard-working but not the most able of the group, would create a ticket with two former military men, was not popular with organized labor, and had possible financial and tax problems. Of the others, Stevenson, although from an important state and popular with Mayor Daley, was viewed by most Carter advisers as too colorless; Muskie was able, respected, and a Catholic (a weak group for Carter) but had been through two

losing presidential campaigns and had a bad temper; Jackson, though favored by Kirbo, was anathema to liberals because of his support of the Vietnam War; and Mondale was popular with liberals and the press and viewed by his colleagues as able but had withdrawn from the presidential campaign as early as 1974, saying he lacked the determination to go through the rigors of such a long campaign.

Carter met at length with each of the contenders. He found Glenn personable but poorly prepared. Muskie was too stiff. However, he and Mondale got along extremely well, finding their positions on issues surprisingly compatible. Mondale had studied Carter's autobiography and speeches thoroughly and came prepared with specific suggestions about the role of the vice-president. He explained his early withdrawal from the presidential race as actually due to his poor prospects rather than a distaste for campaigning. Carter's advisers also liked Mondale, viewing him as a fresh face yet reassuring to liberals and powerful Washington leaders. Glenn's lackluster keynote address at a party convention reinforced the move away from him. On July 15, Mondale was selected.

Since Mondale did poorest of the leading contenders on the poll, it is apparent it had little effect on his selection.

Jordan now feels the survey was "an ill-conceived idea."⁴² At a July 15 news conference, Carter said that after the primaries, "I would have made one choice. Later, I decided on a different choice. And then I decided to wipe the poll results and everything out of my mind and just choose the person that I thought would be the best to lead this country and the most compatible with me."⁴³

Although a bit self-serving in that it leaves out political and

ticket-balancing considerations that clearly played a part, Carter's description of the selection process is otherwise apparently accurate. One of his first two choices was Church then after seeing the poll results (and hearing unfavorable reports about Church), he switched to Glenn then he ignored the poll results and picked Mondale.

9. Formulating election strategy

Carter's staff also got an early start planning election strategy. A pre-convention memo from Jordan stressed the importance of creating the right image before it became fully developed. He suggested Carter stop campaigning and go home in order to maintain his "outsider" and "new face" image while President Ford and Ronald Reagan battled at the Republican convention.

Jordan's strategy for gaining the necessary 270 electoral votes was based on a solid South. Although Carter should publicly maintain that he would contest all states, he should actually concentrate on ten southern states with 96 votes, four contested southern and border states (Texas, Florida, Maryland, and Missouri) with 65, and four very Democratic states (Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the District of Columbia) with 38. Their total of 199 votes would leave Carter lacking only 71 which should come from the 215 held by the remaining eight large industrial states (California, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, and Indiana). This was backed up by Caddell's polls taken soon afterward.

An early August memo contained 31 pages of formulas allocating the campaign time of the candidates and their families among the

states based on the population of each state, its Democratic potential, and the need to mount an effective campaign there. These last two were measured by polls, the overall election plan, whether or not Carter had campaigned there during the primaries, his performance in the primary, and other miscellaneous information.⁴⁴

Meanwhile Caddell was cautioning against overoptimism caused by Carter's large lead in the public polls. His own polls, taken before the Republican convention, gave Carter a lead of as much as 33% against Ford, but Caddell argued that these figures were misleading and that defeat was a real possibility. In a July 22 memo, he wrote that one-third of Carter's supporters in the most recent surveys described themselves as unenthusiastic. The most serious problem was Carter's relatively poor performance among such traditionally Democratic groups as Jews, Catholics, liberals, and women. August interviews containing open-ended questions about Carter's views on social issues actually had Carter supporters becoming undecided during the interview as they thought about the "fuzziness" issue. Once again, polls had pinpointed a weakness but Carter's big lead meant there would be little pressure to take drastic action. When polls taken immediately after the Republican convention showed Carter's lead reduced from 25 to 9%, Jordan called⁴⁵ the candidate who was stunned.

The official beginning of the campaign was a break with the tradition of a Labor Day rally in Detroit's Cadillac Square. Instead of opening in Ford's home state, Carter began in Warm Springs in his home state of Georgia. This was very much in line with his strategy of building on a southern base but it was also

meant to reassure those traditional Democrats whose loyalty, according to the polls, was in doubt. Warm Springs seemed an ideal choice because it had been a favorite spot for Franklin Roosevelt. Carter emphasized this party tie in a way no one could miss. Two sons of Roosevelt were present at the speech which compared Ford to Herbert Hoover and emphasized that Carter was the candidate of the party of Roosevelt, Truman, and John Kennedy. Problems among traditional party loyalists were to prove to be troublesome throughout the campaign, however.

10. The abortion issue

The issue of abortion had appeared as early as the Iowa caucuses when Carter's suggestion that although he opposed a constitutional amendment, he might favor a "national statute" to restrict abortion gained him some anti-abortion votes but led to charges that he had deliberately clouded his position to gain votes from all sides. During the general election the issue was less easily handled. The party platform, although mentioning "the religious and ethical nature of the concerns which many Americans have on the subject of abortion," explicitly opposed a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's ruling striking down state anti-abortion laws. Those opposing a constitutional amendment could point to its unimportance to most voters. It was ranked last among 25 issues, even for Catholic voters. Most Catholics felt a President could do little about this and only 40% favored a constitutional amendment. On the other hand, Carter did very poorly for a Democrat among Catholic voters, barely leading Ford compared to the nearly 70% averaged by recent Democratic candidates. In order to make progress among

Catholic voters, Carter had to do something about the abortion issue which had taken on a great symbolic importance.

Apparently Carter accepted the latter view. Mondale had arranged an August 31 meeting with six bishops, although the aide who delivered the message opposed it. At the meeting, Carter began by explaining his position on abortion which was both at odds with the party platform and the bishops' view. He was personally opposed to abortion, feeling that government should do nothing to encourage it. He did not support a constitutional amendment but would not actively oppose it. At this point Carter tried to demonstrate that he and the bishops agreed on most other issues but Archbishop Joseph Bernardin read a prepared statement saying that no other issues mattered until the abortion issue was settled. After the meeting Bernardin told the press that because of Carter's failure to support a constitutional amendment, "We therefore continue to be disappointed with the governor's position."⁴⁸

Carter moved quickly to recover. The next day he equivocated still further, telling reporters, "I've never said I would actively oppose every possible constitutional amendment that was proposed on the subject of abortion." His staff arranged a visit to Pittsburgh's Polish Hill where he was met by an enthusiastic crowd and kissed by Father John Jendzura. President Ford was also courting Catholic voters. He invited the six Catholic bishops to the White House where he told them he favored a constitutional amendment allowing each state to decide whether or not to permit abortions. The bishops were "encouraged" by this.

But as the polls had suggested, many Catholics did not

agree. The bishops' position was attacked by the National Federation of Priests' Councils. The National Coalition of American Nuns endorsed Carter. Such reactions led the bishops to "clarify" their position at a mid-September press conference at which Bernardin stated, "we are not supporting religious bloc voting, nor are we instructing people for whom to vote. We reject any interpretation of the meetings with the candidates as indicating a preference for either candidate or party." After this, the abortion issue slowly faded away but Carter received only 55% of the Catholic vote.

11. Countering the rapid decline

Caddell's early warnings against overoptimism quickly proved accurate as Carter's overwhelming post-nomination lead melted away. Gerald Pomper speaks of three distinct phases in the campaign. Phase one lasted from the conventions until Labor Day and was characterized by a large Carter lead, ranging from the 2-1 margin after the Democratic convention to the more realistic 10% edge at the official campaign kickoff. The second phase showed a steady disappearance of this lead until the candidates were nearly even by the first week of October. Phase three saw a halt to the Carter decline followed by an even contest through Election Day. Pomper, claiming that the poll takers in both campaigns agree, feels that the third phase began October 6, the day of the second debate. What we are most interested in is how the Carter staff interpreted the decline and what actions they took to counter it.

Caddell's role was much akin to that of a diagnostician, seeking out weak spots among key groups, important states, candi-

date image, and issues and themes. A September 11 memo from him analyzed a survey of eleven major states which showed less than a 10% difference in all but Florida and New Jersey. Carter led in all but Illinois and Ford's home state of Michigan. Caddell concentrated on the problems in Illinois. Once more Catholic voters were a problem, supporting Ford by a 48-37% margin, but the major problem was Carter's association with Mayor Daley and his hand-picked gubernatorial candidate, Michael Howlett which "has almost⁵¹ destroyed our anti-establishment image." Little could be done about this, given Mayor Daley's influence and the help he had given Carter late in the prenomination campaign. Illinois gave Ford its 26 electoral votes in November.

Adding to Carter's decline was a series of errors, highlighted by an interview given to Playboy. In warning against pride, Carter explained that everyone has sinned, that even he had "committed adultery in my heart many times." This unfortunate example, taken out of context and coupled with its placement in a sexually explicit magazine, hurt Carter's standing among women, already a⁵² problem group. At the end of the interview, he coupled Presidents Johnson and Nixon as having engaged in "lying" and "cheating," creating animosity in Texas and necessitating an apologetic telephone call to Mrs. Johnson.

The first debate was also viewed as hurting Carter by most⁵³ observers. Compared to other candidates, the usually meticulous Carter had done little preparation. Caddell had opposed too much⁵⁴ preparation, fearing it would make Carter appear less natural. The usual lengthy briefing book was prepared by a group including

such experienced advisers as Stuart Eizenstat, Ted Van Dyk, and John Stewart. It discussed the format of the debate, contained a list of twelve major subjects followed by 23 sections on issues, and ended with a discussion of Ford's changes of position on issues to counter the "fuzziness" charge. While Ford spent weeks practicing before videotape machines, Carter had only a discussion of issues with Eizenstat two days before the debate and no practice question and answer sessions. He also watched a film of the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates. Caddell, having by now become a key adviser, clearly had a voice in the preparations but polls seem to have had little effect.

By this time both public and private polls had given the campaign reason to worry. After the first debate, Caddell added a question asking whether Carter promised too much. He found many people agreed that he had. Other questions asked whether respondents disagreed with statements about the images of the candidates, which candidate "is closer to me on the issues," and which candidate they identified more with words and phrases such as competent, concerned about ordinary people, keeping taxes down, and keeping inflation down. Despite Carter's "loss" of the debate, he had achieved one goal--the number of people who felt that electing him was too much of a risk had declined slightly. It declined still more after the second debate, which was viewed as a Carter victory largely because of Ford's poor performance highlighted by his assertion that Eastern Europe was not dominated by the Soviet Union. Otherwise the results of the polls were discouraging. Caddell urged Carter to press economic and anti-Washington themes.

"The problem is that the electorate can make a judgment on a number of grounds--whom they like best, whom they like least, the economy--and it hasn't decided what grounds to decide on. There are no cutting issues. We're having a thematic campaign without any themes, and we don't have any issues to substitute for that." 55

Later reports were more specific. An October 16 memo showed a continuing decline. Carter's lead in the southern states had become precarious with Texas an especially big concern. Carter's attacks on Ford had not worked so Caddell again suggested more stress on economic issues. He also recommended taking advantage of Mondale's big lead over his opposite number, Senator Robert Dole. 56

An October 20 memo showed Carter well ahead among men but trailing significantly among women, especially middle-aged, middle-income, Catholic housewives. This happened despite the fact that women were closer on the issues to Carter than Ford. Caddell explained that this anomaly was due to a feeling that Ford, the known quantity, was less of a risk than the untested Carter. Carter also was losing nearly a third of big state liberals to Ford. Ford's attacks on Carter's record as governor of Georgia were hurting. The result was a serious decline in such key states as Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, and Florida. 57

Clearly something had to be done. With the advantage of hindsight, we can agree with Pomper that the decline had already been halted, but the polls reflected a time lag in perception. Even if this had been known, the election was so close that these measures were necessary nonetheless. One result was the quick production of new advertising. New copy was produced at an all

night meeting by writers directed by Caddell, Powell, and Rafshoon. Again, we can see how important an adviser Caddell had become. It is hard to visualize any other pollster participating in such a session. One ad attacked waste and mismanagement in government. Another, aired only in the South, stressed Carter's being a southerner by asking, "Are you going to let the Washington politicians keep one of our own out of the White House." After the Vice-Presidential debate, when the polls showed 47% of those interviewed felt Dole unqualified to be President, an ad was aired which, after showing the two candidates, asked, "Which of these two men do you want a heartbeat away from the presidency?" Daytime calls to housewives and daytime television advertising were also increased. ⁵⁸

The third debate was used as a vehicle for working on these same weaknesses, especially the appeal to women. Carter, who had been more aggressive during the second debate, now toned down his attacks on Ford, adopting a more restrained and polite style. Because a key goal was to counter the harm done by the Playboy interview, Carter opened with an apology for it. He promised that unlike his opponent, he would not use advertising that personally attacked the opposition. And he succeeded in contrasting his choice of Mondale with Ford's selection of Dole. All of the adjustments made by the campaign were in line with Caddell's diagnosis. Carter narrowly won the election.

Our expectation that polls would play a more important part in this campaign than in the others we examined was clearly confirmed. Of the eleven decisions studied, all but the decision to emphasize the Iowa caucuses involved the use of private polls.

Especially important was their use in allocating resources. Every decision about where to send the various campaigners, advertising, and other primary spending was made only after consulting the polls. Jordan's penchant for using formulas for these decisions made a quantitative indicator, of which polls were one of the few available, quite important. There was some use of polls in deciding which issues and themes to emphasize but, as with McGovern, polls were more important in spotting weaknesses, such as the impact of Carter's alleged fuzziness. They also pinpointed some of the signs of the late summer decline, spotting those groups whose defections could be countered.

Surveys were least useful in two situations--immediately after the entry of Brown and Church and for selecting the Vice-presidential nominee. Both these situations illustrate again the problem pointed out by Adam Walinsky that polls often do a poor job of predicting what can happen in a campaign after a sudden change. This explains the overoptimism in Massachusetts after the win in New Hampshire and the underestimation of the appeal of the late entrants although after the Nebraska and Maryland primaries more useful information was provided for Oregon and the following primaries. Similarly, the results of the poll on vice-presidential candidates at first led to a false start, but Carter soon decided to throw out the results and use other information. As a result he selected Mondale whose name recognition was lowest of all the major candidates. This turned out to be one of his wisest decisions.

Not only did the Carter campaign rely upon polls more than their predecessors, they also used them in a more sophisticated

manner. Unlike Robert Kennedy, Carter did not worry about early trial heat polls. Instead he used surveys to help formulate or support decisions about what to do. Polls indicated that themes of trust and honesty in government were what was wanted by the public, so they were pursued. Weaknesses found in Wallace's Florida constituency were exploited. Such uses of polls proved so helpful to the campaign that Caddell became the only non-Georgian to rise to the top echelon of the campaign. By November only Jordan, Kirbo, Rosalynn Carter and Powell had more influence than he did.

We can pinpoint several reasons for the importance of polls in this campaign. Carter and Jordan believed very much in polls. As in 1972, Caddell became steadily more influential, rising to the very top of the campaign this time. The environment was even more favorable for polls than in 1972--more primaries; an unclear situation with many candidates, including some very important late entrants; the lack of a crucial issue; and Carter's early decision to enter which allowed considerable planning and preparatory work. Carter's funding was much less uncertain than McGovern's had been, allowing the now well-known Caddell to be hired at an earlier date. Finally, unlike the previous candidates, Carter did not have a long record in national politics, so he was able to be more flexible (his critics would call him fuzzy or worse) with his issue positions.

FOOTNOTES

1

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2

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Elizabeth Drew, American Journal: The Events of 1976, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), p. 414.

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5

Schram, pp. 162-163, 181.

6

Newsweek, LXXXVII, (June 21, 1976), p. 21.

7

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8

Much of the Jordan memo is reproduced or summarized in Schram, pp. 54-61, and Witcover, pp. 108-117.

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Schram, p. 121; Drew, pp. 166-167, 478; and Moore and Fraser, p. 99.
- 30
Schram, p. 140.

31
Moore and Fraser, pp. 105, and Schram, pp. 146-147.

32
Moore and Fraser, pp. 100, 108.

33
Schram, pp. 146-147.

34
Witcover, pp. 337-338.

35
Schram, p. 149, and Moore and Fraser, p. 105.

36
Schram, pp. 163-164, and Witcover, p. 341.

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Schram, pp. 173-174.

39
F. Christopher Arterton, "The Media Politics of Presidential Campaigns," in James D. Barber (ed.), Race for the Presidency, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 45-46 and Schram, pp. 176-177, 190.

40
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41
For the text of the questionnaire see Reeves, pp. 238-239.

42
Moore and Fraser, p. 142.

43
U.S. News and World Report, LXXXI, (July 26, 1976), p. 23.

44
Schram, pp. 248-250, Moore and Fraser, p. 124, Witcover, pp. 518-521 and Time, CVII, (June 14, 1976), p. 15.

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Schram, pp. 218-220, 238, and Moore and Fraser, pp. 134-136.

46
p. 283. Newsweek, LXXXVIII, (September 20, 1976), p. 17 and Schram,

47
Schram, pp. 218-220. The 70% estimate comes from and is explained in Robert Erikson and Norman Luttberg, American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content, and Impact, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), pp. 194-199.

48
For accounts of this meeting and its aftermath see Schram, pp. 224-226; Time, CVIII (September 13, 1976), p. 21 and (September 20, 1976), p. 11; and "Decision '76: What Stand on Abortion?" Christianity Today, XX (September 24, 1976), p. 54.

49
Time, CVIII (September 27, 1976), p. 11.

50
The Election of 1976: Reports and Interpretations, (New York: David McKay Co., 1977), pp. 66-73.

51
Schram, pp. 282-284.

52
Ibid., p. 305.

53
See, for example, "Packaged Politics," The New Republic, CLXXV, (October 9, 1976), pp. 7-8. The Harris poll showed that Ford "won" 40-31% while a Time-Yankelovich poll gave him a 41-28% edge, Time, CVIII, (October 11, 1976), p. 16.

54
Stroud, p. 361.

55
Drew, pp. 474-475.

56
Schram, pp. 329-330.

57
Witcover, p. 622, and Schram, pp. 329-335.

58
Witcover, p. 623, Schram, pp. 332-333, and Moore and Fraser, pp. 140, 146.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE POLLS: USES AND CONSEQUENCES

Our examination of these five presidential campaigns puts us in a better position to try to answer the questions posed in Chapter One. The literature discussed there suggested seven basic uses of polls. How did these campaigns use them?

1. Deciding whether to run

The belief that trial heat polls are misleading and should not play too important a role in this decision was confirmed by our study. McCarthy, McGovern, and Carter ignored poor poll results, demonstrating that their chances were considerably better than these polls indicated. Robert Kennedy's vacillation, caused in part by poor poll results, harmed his effort by eliminating time needed for preparation and leading to defections both by traditional Kennedy supporters and by opponents of the Vietnam War to McCarthy. Humphrey was so suddenly thrust into his candidacy that polls were irrelevant.

The volatility of public opinion at the campaign's early stages, coupled with the lack of recognition of many candidates and the long period of campaigning make early polls very unreliable. It is unfortunate that some candidates do not run due to poor pre-campaign polls. How often this happens is beyond the scope of our study but, at least for presidential campaigns, polls should not

be important in deciding whether to run. However, even if candidates realize this, fund raisers and the press will still use polls to determine whether to invest money or news coverage in a candidate.

2. Image

The concern in the campaigns we examined was primarily with their candidates' images rather than those of their opponents'. For those candidates with long careers in public life, polls are of limited use because their advisers already know the public's view of their strengths and weaknesses. Hubert Humphrey's 1968 campaign illustrates this well. But for others, less well-known, polls can point out perceptions by the public which can help or hurt the campaign. McCarthy's 1968 advertisement during the California primary stressing his "guts," although removed from the air, was an attempt to counter negative perceptions by the public. Among the candidates we examined, the polls were most useful in pointing out negative aspects of their image, confirming Louis Harris' assertion. The McGovern and Carter campaigns provide the clearest examples. Polls convinced McGovern that attacks on his alleged radicalism were having an effect. The impact of attacks on Carter's supposed fuzziness on issues was first indicated by polls. In response, both campaigns took measures to counter such attacks, with varying degrees of success.

Carter also used early polling to help determine and test his campaign themes. We cannot really classify these themes as "image" or "issues" as they have elements of both. We do know that Carter paid careful attention to early polls to determine what would work best.

3. Issues

Most observers feel that polls, when used, are used to determine issue priorities rather than what stand to take. Although the dividing line is not always so clear, this seems generally true. However, I would not state it as flatly as those cited in Chapter One. For example, although Robert Kennedy's use of the crime issue in Indiana was primarily a change in emphasis, people both inside and outside the campaign were disturbed by its symbolism. Such a change in emphasis can be an attempt to make a campaign appear more liberal or more conservative. The McGovern campaign's attempt to avoid extreme positions in the party platform was seen by some supporters as a betrayal of principle.

Polls can often serve as ammunition in internal campaign debates. As we have seen, presidential campaigns must be viewed as collections of individuals or groups who are likely to have disagreements as well as differing interests. During the Humphrey campaign, the Vietnam issue was the focus for such debate. The recommendations of those most concerned with polls--to try to minimize the major issues, Vietnam and law and order, and stress traditional party appeals--were largely followed. During the late stages of the McCarthy campaign, debates about which issues to stress or what strategy to follow were not influenced by aides' use of polls to support their positions. Most candidates weight their own instincts or other traditional sources more heavily than polls. A good example is McGovern's asking Senator Nelson of Wisconsin, a trusted friend, what concerned the voters of that state most.

This makes firm conclusions difficult. Clearly polls have played an important part in setting issue priorities but less so than in several of the other areas of campaign decision making which use of polls.

4. Key subgroup breakdowns

This is a most important use of private polls. In any campaign, a candidate seeks to determine his or her most likely supporters and how best to appeal to them. This is even more true for presidential candidates whose constituency is the entire nation.

In the prenomination campaign, a candidate seeks to develop a constituency. The larger the field or the less well-known the candidate, the more important this is. In New Hampshire in 1972, McGovern's polls reinforced his instincts that a significant portion of the blue collar vote could be won over. This overrode the advice of others who urged a more limited appeal. Polls in several campaigns were helpful in determining whom to aim advertising at and where to schedule appearances (more on this below).

When the candidate's appeal is clarified, he must determine not only which groups he expects to support him but also where he is meeting expectations and where he is not. Candidates study the undecided most carefully. The Humphrey campaign's polls concentrated on this last group. Numerous memoranda discussed who they were, why they were undecided, and what should be done. Carter's polls carefully examined how well he was doing among traditionally Democratic groups, pointing out weaknesses among Catholics and Jews, liberals, and most notably, women (a rather large group). The effects of this analysis could be seen in his approach to the

final debate and his advertising.

Polls are the most reliable tool for such analysis. Humphrey's polls purposely used large state samples so subgroup breakdowns would be statistically reliable. Candidates with less knowledgeable advisers or who try to cut financial corners may wind up with surveys with a sample that provides group breakdowns so small as to be statistically unreliable. Other sources such as group spokespersons or the candidate's intuition can be out of touch with rank and file group members.

5. Resource allocation

This was the single most important use of polls. As we have already discussed, the growing complexity of presidential campaigns, especially during the prenomination stage, has made wise use of resources essential if a candidate is to have any hope of success. In 1968 the number of primaries was small enough that the problem of which to emphasize could be handled largely by other methods but by 1972 this had become impossible. Even in 1968, had McCarthy used polls, he would have probably avoided the disastrous Indiana primary. Kennedy, who did use polls, saw that he had potential in that state. In the later campaigns, we saw McGovern using polls in determining how to handle the middle primaries and Carter continually reassessing his situation in light of poll results. Of course, polls do not guarantee success, as Carter discovered in 1976 in Massachusetts, Maryland, and Michigan, but they were helpful for many other primaries. They were also used for the many smaller, though still important, decisions concerning the use of resources--

advertising, scheduling, the use of volunteers, etc.

The same uses occurred during the general election campaign. Presidential candidates do not campaign equally hard in every state. They try to determine which states are most likely to provide the necessary 270 electoral votes, then devote most of their time and attention to the most closely contested of those. Jimmy Carter built his victory on a southern base added to a few large industrial states. Although the overall plan was not itself based on polls, they served to verify it and help fill in the details, as Hamilton Jordan's detailed memoranda indicate. Humphrey's plan paid less attention to polls leading him to neglect closely contested New Jersey in favor of California, which proved unwinnable. George McGovern also had a winning plan but his campaign went so swiftly downhill that it soon became irrelevant as the effort became one of trying to salvage a few states in order to avoid a landslide defeat.

6. When to leak?

Candidates can make their poll results available either by direct release or anonymous leak. Since candidates never release all their poll results during a campaign, this raises the ethical question of what a pollster should do if the material leaked is misleading. Such leading pollsters as Burns Roper and the late Oliver Quayle have stated that it is their policy to release complete results if a client makes a false or partial disclosure that does not reflect the actual results. One wonders, however, if the less eminent pollster, working for a marginal profit, could afford to alienate a client by doing this. One also wonders just how mis-

leading the results have to be to trigger complete disclosure.

A case in point is Jimmy Carter's explanation that he was doing extra campaigning in Oregon because his poll results were so encouraging when in fact they showed him in danger of finishing third in the primary. Was this misleading enough to require Patrick Caddell the release the complete results? Obviously Caddell did not think so since no results were released. In this case no one was really misled. Carter had made this statement in public so reporters were skeptical, feeling that a candidate making so unlikely a claim without releasing any figures was too self-serving a source to be credible. We can see that an anonymous leak or a partial but misleading disclosure would be more likely to deceive the public, especially if the press gave it some credibility.

Trusting a pollster to blow the whistle on his own employer is hardly dependable protection for the public. There have been some recent attempts at voluntary self-regulation with very limited success. The National Council on Public Polls, an association of sixteen major polling organizations, adopted a code which would require private pollsters to release information about the sponsorship of a survey, the sample methods used, complete question wording, and results if their clients released part of the survey. Even these measures were unacceptable to Caddell's Cambridge Survey Research, which resigned from the organization claiming that the new rules would violate some of their current contracts, many with corporate clients. John Gorman, treasurer of Cambridge Survey Research stated, "We're not happy to get into the role of policing our clients."²

This problem was also discussed at length during Congress' only recent attempt to do something about polling--four days of hearings held by a house of Representatives subcommittee chaired by Lucien Nedzi in 1972.³ The hearings were primarily about public polls, but the witnesses, who included leading pollsters and academics as well as several politicians who claimed they had been hurt by inaccurate polls, did discuss the leaked poll. The consensus was that legally requiring full disclosure would run afoul of the First Amendment, especially if confidential news sources were involved. No bill was reported by the committee. It seems as if the best we can do is to urge the press to be more sophisticated and skeptical about leaked polls. More newspapers and television stations are now commissioning their own polls either singly or in combination, providing a check on possibly self-serving leaks.⁴

For the candidate the more practical question is when to leak. We can suggest three reasons for a leak--to improve press coverage, to improve campaign morale and finances, and to trick or discredit the opposition. The first two are much related when a candidate is considered so far behind that he has little or no chance of victory. The press either ignores him or writes only about his troubles. Contributors stop giving if the cause appears hopeless while workers put forth a half-hearted effort. This was a problem faced by Hubert Humphrey in 1968 and George McGovern in 1972. We discussed the efforts of each to counteract negative public poll results. One of the tools was the release or leak of any poll showing them ahead or close in states or the nation

as a whole.

A candidate must also worry when he seems too far ahead. Overconfidence can be nearly as serious a problem as its opposite. In addition, a candidate may also want to make his opponent or the press think the contest is closer than it actually is. This is especially true during the prenomination period. News reports of a big victory in a seemingly close contest are much better than of an expected sweep or, still worse, of a win of less than expected proportions. Fooling the opponent can lead him to invest resources in the wrong place. Both of these reasons explain Carter's failure to release polls in South Dakota showing him well ahead of Morris Udall. Alternatively, a candidate with a big lead early in the campaign may release polls showing that in order to dry up an opponent's contributions or convince him to withdraw. Which path to take seems as much an art as a science.

7. Measuring progress

The increasing sophistication in the use of polls is best illustrated in this area. In each election we examined, we found an increase in the frequency of poll taking. The most recent campaign, that of Jimmy Carter in 1976, featured constant polling which was often used to reassess plans, diagnose problems, and locate and evaluate changes in the situation. Because of their greater speed, telephone polls are often used for this rather than face-to-face interviews, which, although permitting more depth, take longer to conduct. Techniques such as the panel study, reinterviewing the same respondents during the campaign, have also been used. However, the more times the sample is reinterviewed, the lower the

response rate and the more likely are those questioned to "bone up" on the issues, making them less a typical sample. Nevertheless, Carter was able to measure the effectiveness of his campaign with some degree of accuracy, spotting his steady gains in early primary states and, in the later primaries and general election, spotting weaknesses and declines and trying to do something about them.

Except for Robert Kennedy, whose entire campaign lasted less than three months, the other candidates all sought to measure their progress. Signs of progress by the Humphrey campaign were important in countering the harmful effects of low public poll standing. In addition, the decline in the Wallace vote showed that strategy used against him was proving successful. McGovern was able to measure both his steady early progress and late primary decline although his post-California primary decline was so sharp that polls told him little he did not already know nor did they show him a way out of his dilemma. Only Eugene McCarthy measured his progress in a different way--by using the canvass. This proved an excellent measuring tool in New Hampshire and Wisconsin but with the withdrawal of President Johnson, the entrance of Robert Kennedy, and states less conducive to the canvass, it stopped providing useful information. McCarthy was left with no real idea of how well he was doing until the day of each primary.

Of course, polls are not infallible. Our research shows several instances in which polls failed to show a change in the situation. This can occur for many reasons--limits on polls as predictors, poor poll design, or simply incorrect interpretation of the data. Polls are only as good as those who take or read them.

In addition to the above uses of polls, we have found two others peculiar to presidential campaigns--selecting a running mate and the expectations game. For the former, polls proved to be no help whatever. For both Humphrey and McGovern, the only vice-presidential candidate under consideration who added to the ticket's strength was Ted Kennedy who continually ruled himself out. Humphrey's choice proved a wise one and McGovern's disastrous Eagleton affair would not have been prevented by additional polling. Carter decided to ignore the polls, selecting the candidate with the worst results. By the end of the campaign Walter Mondale was enough of an asset to be stressed in the third debate and late advertising. Future presidential candidates would be well-advised to ignore such polls which appear even less reliable than the trial-heat polls used by potential candidates deciding whether or not to run.

The expectations game is a recent phenomenon. Because presidential nominations are not determined by a single primary or caucus but rather by a series of more than fifty such contests, each week's events affect the next. This means that the interpretation of a primary or caucus can be more important than who gets the most votes. Each candidate seeks to show he did better than expected. In the New Hampshire primaries of 1968 and 1972 Lyndon Johnson and Edmund Muskie got the most votes but because Eugene McCarthy and George McGovern did so much better than expected, they were considered the "winners" by the press. As a result, candidates now try to create expectations that they think they can exceed. In order to do so, they must have as good an

idea as possible of where they actually stand. This is where private polls come in, especially if they show a candidate he is doing better than published polls indicate. Perhaps the best example of the manipulation of expectations is Jimmy Carter's final primary week effort. Because he was able to create the impression that a win in Ohio, which he was fairly certain of, would clinch the nomination, his losses in California and New Jersey did nothing to slow his drive to the nomination.

Another problem occurs after the election. What should a pollster's role be if his client becomes President? Louis Harris' tenure as a presidential adviser proved short-lived but Patrick Caddell has continued to advise President Carter since his election. Does this create a possible conflict of interest? Since such an influential pollster has numerous other clients there is always the possibility this will have an effect on the advice he gives to the President. Because very few internal White House memoranda are currently available, we cannot fairly evaluate Caddell's performance. We can show the possible problems with an example. Recently a group called Westchester Citizens Against Government Takeover, funded by \$1.2 million contributed by Consolidated Edison, one of the largest private utilities, waged a vigorous and successful campaign to defeat a Westchester County (New York) referendum which would have begun a government run electric company. Polls were taken for this group by Caddell's firm for a fee of more than \$100,000. Did Caddell give Carter any advice about energy? If so, is there a conflict of interest? What about his other clients? Although we cannot answer these questions, they are certainly worth

asking.

Now we turn to the question we stressed at the start, do polls help or hinder the purposes of elections? In other words, do they lead candidates to provide useful information to the rational voter or do they cause them to blur distinctions and stress appeals not relevant to the concerns of the electorate. An example of the latter would be the advice to Hubert Humphrey to say as little as possible about the two major issues, Vietnam and law and order, since they worked against him. An even more extreme example, at the moment purely hypothetical, would be one of two candidates each completely following polls results and consequently agreeing on all important issues, thus denying the voters a chance to hear any real debate. What effect would all of this have on leadership, the taking of minority positions in the hope of changing the public's opinion? This was the question posed by Adam Walinsky and others to Robert Kennedy when the latter was refusing to commit himself to opposing President Johnson.

Clearly polls are being used more and more, especially for presidential campaigns. We cited several factors determining how much they will be used: the attitudes of candidates and their staffs, the availability of funds, and the nature and environment of the campaign. Candidates and their staffs have become more convinced of the importance of polls while the campaigns themselves have become more complex, especially in the prenomination campaign with its multiplicity of candidates and primaries. Most candidacies are started earlier than was the case in 1968, giving more time for planning and raising funds. The techniques of polling have improved considerably since 1968 as well. It is not likely that there will be

any Eugene McCarthys, going their own way with no attention to polls, in future campaigns. If so, what effect does this have on the information provided to the electorate?

In order to vote rationally, the public needs information about the record and qualifications of the candidates and their positions on issues of public concern. Because polls are a neutral tool, they do not in themselves lead to either relevant or irrelevant information. An example illustrates this. In 1976, Jimmy Carter's opponents charged him with "fuzziness" on the issues. His polls showed that these attacks were hurting him so he had to do something. He could have, as Caddell urged, made a series of issue oriented speeches but instead simply added a new introduction and ending to his advertisements. Polls simply revealed the problem; they did not tell which way to deal with it.

Yet, in the campaigns we have looked at we have found more of the superficial adjustment than the substantive one. Some of this is due to the nature of polls. They provide the most reliable advice when it comes to matters such as resource allocation. When it comes to imponderables such as the effects of trying to lead the public on a certain issue, the results are often ambiguous, leading different factions to interpret the results as agreeing with their original position. Many of the internal campaign debates in our study illustrate this ambiguity. Thus, it is easier to discuss other matters.

It is here that our three levels of rationality, discussed in Chapter One, come into play. We have noted that if polls tell the candidate that the best strategy is not to provide the information needed by the rational voter, then his goal of winning may be

best achieved by acting to frustrate that rational voter. But presidential candidates do not take and interpret polls; their staffs do. Therefore, the candidate's decisions can be influenced by the recommendations of his staff. As we have seen, however, different staff members have different interests of their own. The campaign organizations we looked at often consisted of individuals or groups with differing points of view, each seeking to convince the candidate to take his advice. Polls, because they appear to be an objective set of numbers, can be a useful weapon in such internal struggles. Yet polls are not necessarily neutral statistics. The nature of the questions and their phrasing, the subjects asked and not asked about, the nature of the sample, and a host of other variables affect the final numbers. The pollster, usually more knowledgeable about this than anyone else in the campaign, can take advantage of his expertise to gain the candidate's ear. This differs from campaign to campaign. In Eugene McCarthy's campaign, strategies based on poll results were given short shrift by the candidate. In the Humphrey campaign, pollster Gerald Hursh did not play a large role in formulating strategy but others, such as William Connell, used the poll results to try to influence the candidate, with some success. Finally, Patrick Caddell's polls and the advice he gave, brought him from total obscurity to a leading position in the campaigns of two candidates as different as George McGovern and Jimmy Carter. It is not inevitable that being able to back up one's position with polls will lead to greater influence. In the Humphrey campaign, the advice given by those responsible for interpreting polls was heeded because the situation seemed so desperate that no one else had any concrete suggestions. When

Connell's recommendation for a fund raising appeal at the end of the Salt Lake City speech proved spectacularly successful, his stock as an adviser went up. In like fashion, Caddell's influence in the McGovern and Carter campaigns stemmed from his ability to anticipate trends not simply from his status as a pollster. The key to gaining influence in a campaign is to give good advice and hope someone is listening.

We have also seen that, contrary to the fears of the critics of modern elections mentioned in Chapter One, polls have not displaced such traditional methods of political intelligence gathering as the canvass, consulting with political interest group leaders, and sending campaign aides to scout important areas. Even in the area of resource allocation, which we found to be the most common use of polls, other methods were used. All of the candidates, including those who relied most heavily on polls, used the other methods as well. When Jimmy Carter was deciding whether to stress the Iowa caucuses, he did not take a poll, instead sending Tim Kraft to scout the state and court party and interest group leaders. George McGovern learned the importance of the tax issue in Wisconsin from Senator Nelson, with polls serving only to reinforce this. All of the candidates found the traditional methods useful in selecting vice-presidential candidates while the polls were of no use at all. Our case studies demonstrate clearly that fears that polls have supplanted traditional methods are ill founded.

The lion's share of blame for the often superficial nature of campaigns must go elsewhere than polls. Much lies in the nature of the modern presidential campaign. Candidates must make rapid adjustments in a constantly changing situation. It is not quite fair, for example, to blame Carter for not rethinking his issue positions and making more issue oriented speeches when he had to make numerous appearances in several

states each day while also worrying about strategy. Four years of nearly constant campaigning presents few opportunities to be thoughtful. This is reinforced by television coverage which emphasizes campaign hoopla and the horse-race aspects of the election with only limited attention to more substantive matters.

Private polls are more used than we think. In addition to the standard uses in political campaigns such as those we looked at, polls or pseudo-polls are used in everything from television ratings to questionnaires. These uses present problems crying out for further study too. Television programs often succeed or fail on the basis of a single rating point or two yet the margin of error for the Nielsen sample is greater than that and the sample and much of the methodology is secret. Members of Congress, utilizing their free mailing privilege, mail out what claim to be polls but often are simply devices to give constituents the illusion of being heard. And we must also note that many of the leading pollsters, Gallup included, claim that they make little profit from their political polling. Instead they use it to gain a reputation for accuracy which gains them clients for the market research that is their real bread and butter. All of these uses of polls have direct or indirect political effects. As important as studies of the methods used by pollsters may be, we need to know more about what is done with the results and what effects they have on all of us.

Our agenda for further research should include the questions for which this dissertation provided only partial answers. Are the uses of polls we discussed the same for other campaigns? What differences are there at the state or local levels? What influence does a pollster have after the election and what problems does this present? Most importantly, have polls improved or hurt the quality of political discourse?

This last could include a look at the types of candidates who are hurt by polls. Is there a certain type of candidate who is kept out of the race by poor poll results? This is a subject we have already spoken about but our studies give only hints of answers. We have suggested that candidates who are short on name recognition or who challenge the status quo are most hurt. One might also argue that there is an inherent conservative bias in polls because of the most common techniques and the pressure for quick results and analysis. It is much more convenient and cheaper to use close rather than open-ended questions. Therefore, new issues or different points of view are often missed. Speedy analysis also often means that important aspects of the data may be overlooked. During the 1976 Carter campaign, most notably in Wisconsin, Caddell reanalyzed his data after poorer than expected showings and discovered that the seeds were sown earlier but he had not seen them. It is David Garth's contention⁷ that most pollsters are not politically sophisticated enough to do more than read the data in a too superficial fashion. The fact that the academic advisers to Humphrey in 1968 often ignored the analysis provided by the pollsters they hired, providing their own analysis instead would tend to confirm this.

The argument that a challenge to the status quo cannot be tested by the polls but must be tried in an actual campaign was made most forcefully by Adam Walinsky to Robert Kennedy when the latter was trying to decide whether or not to run. It too would suggest a status quo bias inherent in polls. Yet, although these aspects of our study hint that this is so, such fragmentary data are hardly

a basis for sweeping conclusions.

Any reforms must be aimed not at polls in isolation but at the modern media campaign. A number of suggestions are worth attention. If poor poll results dissuade good candidates from running because they make fund raising difficult, the solution is hardly to limit such polls. It would make more sense either to find a way to make campaigns less expensive, such as by providing more free television time, or to expand public financing. How to do this without also increasing the number of frivolous candidates is subject enough for another study. If polls are used to enable candidates to manipulate the electorate by means of large numbers of television spot advertisements, limiting polls will not stop such manipulation. The most useful reforms will be those aimed at the advertising. Perhaps such ads could be banned and all candidates given or sold television time in longer blocks, handed a microphone, and told to start explaining why they should be elected. A less drastic change would be to have more debates between candidates, although the 1976 Ford-Carter debates do not give much reason for optimism about informing the electorate through debates.

The above is hardly a definitive list of possibilities. It does indicate that most problems caused in part by private polls can only be treated as a part of the modern election campaign which, to a large extent, has replaced the political party.

FOOTNOTES

1

Hearings before the Subcommittee on Library and Memorials of the Committee on House Administration, House of Representatives 93rd Congress, First Session on HR 5003 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 148, 223.

2

New York Times, December 18, 1979, p. B 15.

3

These are the hearings cited in note one.

4

Note the New York Times-CBS polls, NBC-Associated Press polls, Newsweek's hiring of Louis Harris, and Time's use of Daniel Yankelovich.

5

Jack Anderson, "Con Job," Syracuse Post-Standard, January 23, 1980, p. A 5.

6

The best studies on the subject are Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure, The Unseeing Eye, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976) and James D. Barber (ed.), Race for the Presidency, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978).

7

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