

and media exposure and references to published experimental findings concerning the impact of communications on attitude change and perceptual shifts. Some of the findings and generalizations in this book are based on personal interviews conducted in 1967-69 with candidates for public office, party workers, opinion pollsters, campaign managers and consultants, and media specialists involved in recent campaigns in Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Texas, Georgia, Indiana, and New York. The reader is alerted to the fact that assertions based on these interviews are not cited in the reference notes in order to guarantee the informants' anonymity.

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## I

**CAMPAIGNS AND PERSUASION**

One week before Richard M. Nixon's inauguration as the thirty-seventh president of the United States, his defeated Democratic opponent, Hubert H. Humphrey, discussed his own failure in the 1968 election after coming so close his "fingernails could almost touch it." Had the campaign been but a little longer, he conjectured, "surely not more than a week," then, "my own subjective judgment is that we would have gone on to win."

The former vice president's reminiscences of what "might have been" expressed a view shared by many men, both victors and vanquished, who have sought public office—that a candidate's conduct in an election campaign determines his success or failure. As proof they not only cite their own experience, but also point to outstanding examples in American political history. Has not, they insist, the political experience of Richard Nixon demonstrated that campaign conduct can advance or thwart a career? It was in 1952 that Nixon's campaign skills first impressed a national electorate. As the vice-presidential running mate of Dwight Eisenhower, Nixon remained in the background until mid-September. Suddenly he was accused in the press of having accepted an \$18,000 "slush fund" from wealthy Californians to relieve his financial burdens as United States senator. Faced with demands that he resign from the Republican ticket, Nixon appeared on nationwide television. He adeptly explained that no money in the fund had gone for his personal use, that his critics had erred in suggesting he had built a personal fortune in politics (he was in debt at the time), and that aside from a cocker spaniel named "Checkers," he had never accepted any political gift. So polished was the performance, and so popularly pleasing the explanation, that any doubts Republicans

might have had about Nixon's candidacy were erased. Eisenhower underscored the vote of confidence by greeting his running mate as "my boy."

Nixon was later to write that campaigns contribute to the demise as well as the rise of a politician.<sup>1</sup> Nixon attributed his defeat in the 1960 presidential election to campaign mistakes, particularly the relatively weak showing that he made in the first of a series of televised debates against his Democratic opponent, John F. Kennedy. (Kennedy also claimed that the televised "Great Debate" was a turning point in his successful effort to overtake Nixon's early lead in the various public opinion polls). The defeat in 1960, however, was not the only one Nixon was to attribute to an ineffective campaign; two years later confused campaign priorities, a focus on national rather than state problems, and overconfidence brought about his loss in the race for California's governorship. Most observers thought Nixon had written his obituary as a presidential aspirant in 1962, yet he returned from the political graveyard to capture the presidency six years later—and he and his advisers insisted that the success was due to careful mapping of the campaign trail. His unrelenting efforts on behalf of Republican congressional candidates in 1966, his meticulously planned strategy to rebuild his reputation as a "winner" in the presidential primaries of 1968, and his low-key, media-oriented campaign produced the victory that had eluded him in 1960.

The rise and fall, and subsequent rejuvenation, of Richard Nixon's career is but one of many anecdotes told by politicians to illustrate the importance of campaigning in modern elections. Constantly repeated in political folklore, for example, is the story of how the underdog Harry Truman upset the "sure" winner, Republican Thomas Dewey, by a vigorous, no-holds-barred whistle-stop tour through America. Even if no such stories were told, there would still be abundant proof that politicians believe electoral campaigns to be crucial; the most striking indicator, quite simply, is the increasing amount of money spent on campaigns. It is estimated that at least \$140 million was spent on all political campaigns in 1952; this was followed in 1956 by an expenditure of \$155 million, \$175 million in 1960, \$200 million in 1964, and more than \$250 million in 1968. The Republicans alone spent \$21 million on Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign. Expendi-

<sup>1</sup> Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1962), chap. 6.

tures at other governmental levels are also impressive. Nelson Rockefeller devoted \$5 million to his reelection as New York's governor in 1966; candidates in the Texas Democratic primary in 1968 spent over a million dollars seeking the nomination for governor.

Politicians are willing to spend these extravagant sums because of their strong belief that electoral campaigns can make or break political careers, parties, and programs. Yet students of politics—particularly political scientists and sociologists—dispute the politicians' notion that political campaigns make a substantial difference in the outcome of electoral contests. Relying on evidence gathered by systematic studies of voting behavior, they point out that factors shaping voting choices are affected only marginally by campaign appeals.<sup>2</sup> The principal factor consistently related to voting decisions is the party loyalty of the voter. In the long run, voters identifying themselves as Democrats usually vote for Democratic candidates and Republicans for Republicans; even persons who claim no party loyalty—the Independents—more frequently vote for candidates of one party or the other. And the stronger the voter's party loyalty, the more likely he is to remain true to his party's candidates. So long as a substantial portion of the electorate is committed to a party (and studies indicate that proportion to be four of every five voters), campaigns will have little effect on voting patterns.

Studies also suggest that most voters make up their minds about whom to support prior to the campaign. Analyses of the presidential elections from 1948 to 1968 reveal that approximately one-third of voters make their decision before the nominating conventions, one-third decide during the conventions, and the remaining third make their choice during the campaign. And the more strongly partisan a person, the more likely he is to decide either before or during the convention rather than during the campaign.

Finally, studies of political candidates suggest that many politicians deliberately fool themselves into thinking that campaigns make a difference in election outcomes. One analysis designates this tendency the "congratulation-rationalization effect": winners congratulate them-

<sup>2</sup> Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 132-37; Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960), p. 78; and William H. Flanigan, *Political Behavior of the American Electorate* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1968), pp. 98-102.

selves by exaggerating the effect of their personal appeals; losers attribute their defeat to forces beyond their control, such as the minority status of their party or overwhelming resources of their opponents, and rationalize that their campaign at least gave them a fighting chance.<sup>3</sup>

For a number of reasons, however, the discrepancy between the politician's and the scholar's assessments of the impact of campaigning is not as large as it initially appears. First, as long as one-third of the electorate is undecided during the campaign, candidates still have a large bloc of uncommitted votes to worry about, a bloc that can be significant in a close election (like the presidential elections of 1960 and 1968). Second, candidates must work to retain their partisan support and, equally important, to stimulate sympathizers to go to the polls rather than stay at home. Third, in an era of mass communications the distinction between "convention" and "campaign" phases is artificial. The nominating convention is frequently staged as an essential feature of the overall campaign. An incumbent president seeking reelection schedules the nominating convention late in the summer, assuming that a long campaign is unnecessary; but a candidate inheriting a divided party may prefer an earlier convention in order to have time to bind up party wounds, build his organization, and raise needed funds. In 1968 the Democratic party held the latest convention in its history (late August); the gathering was marked by division, dissension, and violence so great that Hubert Humphrey was forced to devote much of September to establishing a consensus on his candidacy. The Republicans, on the other hand, had a five-week period between their convention and that of the Democrats to perform the requisite tasks of soothing hurt feelings, planning strategy, and accumulating funds. Fourth, it must be remembered that evidence from voting studies does not apply to primary elections where partisan identification is the same for all voters and where their decisions are delayed because of a general unfamiliarity with the candidates who are running. Nor are the findings based on adequate surveys of voting behavior in state and local elections (including popular referenda). In these elections, far more common than presidential contests, the campaign can be expected to have greater effect. Finally, in evaluating the effects of election campaigns it is a mistake to focus on the short-term impact on

<sup>3</sup> John W. Kingdon, *Candidates for Office* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1966), pp. 22-41.

specific elections. A political campaign can have long-term effects that may not be felt for a number of years—party loyalties may shift, issues are brought to public attention, and candidates are introduced to the electorate. (In some southern states, for example, it is a tradition for a man to seek office once to become known, even in defeat, and a second time for victory.)

The findings of behavioral research, therefore, reveal that political campaigns are less crucial in elections than politicians believe; yet it is a mistake to dismiss campaigns as merely periodic rituals unrelated to voting decisions or as no more relevant to the functioning of the body politic than the appendix to the human organism. This book argues that election campaigns are essential features of democratic politics and that the advent of new technologies adapted to modern political campaigns is working changes in the character of democratic elections. In the pages that follow we will describe the technology of modern political campaigning and draw tentative conclusions about the effectiveness of campaigns and the consequences of campaign technology for the American political system.

(The relationship between campaign technology and voting behavior can be made clearer by outlining the major themes we develop in our analysis and evaluation:)

- First, we will argue that contemporary political campaigns are not unique but that they possess characteristics similar to those of campaigns conducted in business, academic, charitable, and other fields of endeavor; in short, *modern political campaigns are based on application of the assumptions and techniques of the communication sciences.*
- Second, we shall see that *the short-term effects of political campaigns on voter attitudes are greatest upon the persons who are least interested in and committed to democratic electoral processes.*
- Third, we will note that political campaigns perform a short-term function which is less apparent than changing voter attitudes, yet equally significant; *campaigns permit voters to adjust their perceptions of political candidates to long-term political prejudices and vice versa;* in this respect campaigns cause people to sort out their preferences, thus deciding which of the opposing camps to align themselves with on election day.
- Fourth, we contend that regardless of the immediate short-term responses of the electorate to political appeals, *campaigns are a signifi-*

cant form of symbolic reassurance contributing to the stability of democratic regimes.

- Fifth, we will demonstrate that professional campaigners recognize the latent symbolism of campaigns as well as their immediate effects on voting behavior, and have developed a sophisticated technology to tap these short- and long-term responses; *professional expertise increasingly directs all phases of modern political campaigns*: campaign management through the planning and execution of strategy, organization, and finance; campaign research in all its dimensions; and campaign communication, principally through the mass media.

- Sixth, we will argue that *political scientists may well underestimate the impact of political campaigning on voting behavior* by noting the absence of widespread changes in voting attitudes while ignoring the consequences of perceptual shifts.

- Finally, we will conclude that *the development of modern campaign technology introduces serious problems for the future of our democratic system*; these problems include the high cost of choosing our leaders, the possibility of electoral deception, the absence of meaningful choice, the demise of leadership, and the withering away of election processes in a technological society.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

### CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Exhortative appeals have been a traditional feature of American elections for so long that we seldom ask what contributions political campaigns make to democratic government. Indeed, given the frequency of elections at the local, state, and national levels of our political system, many of us grow weary of political harangues, the faces of politicians beaming from billboards, mailboxes overloaded with brightly colored brochures, and preemptions of favorite television programs for yet another "paid political advertisement." Once the election is over we utter our relief only to read in our newspaper that the local school district has scheduled a public vote on a bond issue six weeks hence. Small wonder, then, that many Americans exhibit disdain for campaigns and campaigners.

(Wearisome and time-consuming as it may be for both candidates and the electorate, the political campaign is essential to American

democracy, most importantly as a method for mobilizing support behind persons competing for the authority to govern. A democracy recruits and selects its leaders through regularized, periodic, open elections. The aim of opposing candidates is to win the election; hence the principal purpose of each candidate's campaign is to achieve victory. Since we take this to be the chief role campaigns play in the political process, our discussion will emphasize the techniques candidates employ in building winning coalitions of community and group leaders, sympathetic followers, and wavering independents.<sup>4</sup>)

In addition, we will also consider the implicit function campaigns perform as by-products of efforts to win elections. (Among these is a symbolic expression of popular will. Democratic elections not only provide us with a means of choosing our rulers; by voting we acquire the feeling that we as citizens are participating in governing the political system.) That feeling is more illusory than real since our voting acts are, at best, only remotely and indirectly linked to the specific policies formulated through presidential, administrative, and legislative bargaining. Yet elections reinforce "the impression of a political system designed to translate individual wants into public policy." Seen from this perspective, campaign communications are symbolic utterances that enlist faith in one candidate, arouse fear of another, create both reassurances and doubts, and provide the illusion of an open debate of issues, personalities, and parties. For the average citizen selectively attending to the campaign provides a way of discovering meaning and order in an otherwise confusing and ambiguous election, thus reaffirming "belief in the fundamental rationality and democratic character of the system" and promoting popular consent to the decisions of leaders chosen to govern.<sup>5</sup>)

(A second latent function of the election campaign is its ability to provide one of the most frequent settings for the development of political leadership.) Current knowledge of political behavior shows that it is scarcely appropriate to think of a "leader" as a person who directs the actions of others because nature has endowed him with superior skills, intelligence, knowledge, strength, or character traits. We now understand that political leadership actually refers to a par-

<sup>4</sup> William J. Gore and Robert L. Peabody, "The Function of the Political Campaign: A Case Study," *Western Political Quarterly*, XI (1958), 55-70.

<sup>5</sup> Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 17.

ticular relationship that exists between a leader and his followers in specific settings. The subtleties of that relationship depend especially on the willingness of followers to support a leader in exchange for certain benefits. To a large degree the leader can influence and coordinate the efforts of others (directing their energies toward electing him if he is a candidate) only if he is able to fulfill their needs. One such need is a yearning for someone to act as the legitimate voice of the political system; to justify their obligations, sacrifices, and deprivations as citizens and to personify their deeply-held aspirations and desires. In sum, leadership "is not to be understood as something an individual does or does not have, at all times and places," but is "always defined by a specific situation and is recognized in the response of followers to individual acts and speeches."<sup>6</sup> The election campaign is one such specific situation, one in which the candidate strives to convey the impression that he is competent to serve, decide, and command. (Seldom need this impression be related to specific policy programs; more often the candidate must project the image of one capable of acting in ambiguous situations.) In this way he reassures followers by personifying an impersonal government and by symbolizing their desires and fears, aspirations and frustrations.

An emphasis on the symbolic quality of running for office implies that campaigns are built largely on the emotional responses of the electorate. To be sure, we will say a great deal about the symbolic uses of political campaigning in our account. (But we should not ignore the fact that campaigns also communicate information about issues and candidates which many voters use for rational decision-making.) Several features of American campaigns are poorly suited to this function—unequal access of competing candidates to the communications media, a tendency to ignore policy discussions, the use of unfair personal attacks, high campaign costs, the need for candidates to make "news," and so forth.<sup>7</sup> We shall touch upon a number of these drawbacks at later points. Despite the limitations to open discussion, however, it is clear that an election provides an opportunity for more intimate communication between governors, or potential governors, and governed

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> See Stanley Kelley, Jr., *Political Campaigning* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1960) and Richard Rose, *Influencing Voters* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967) for discussions of the rational model of campaign behavior.

than is normal in the political system. In the process certain problems on the minds of constituents have an opportunity to surface. Some become topics for debate, as did the war in Vietnam and urban rioting in the presidential primaries of 1968; others are ignored, as have been problems of water and air pollution in numerous elections. This, then, is "one of the most important functions of campaigns: the inclusion, exclusion, and crystallization of issues and problems on the agenda of officeholders."<sup>8</sup>

That candidates wage electoral combat to win normally means that they take the electorate much as they find it; that is, they direct much of their attention toward winning votes from the undecided, reinforcing the faith of voters committed to them, and ignoring persons pledged to their opponent's cause. The notion of converting voters to a new belief or doctrine, say from Republican to Democrat, is not common in American campaigns. Yet some attempts at conversion probably occur in all elections, at least to the extent that we can say indoctrination also is a by-product of election campaigns. And in some elections (as in Barry Goldwater's trumpeting of the conservative cause in the presidential contest of 1964) explicit attempts have been made to change prevailing attitudes of the populace.<sup>9</sup>

#### A PARADIGM OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

(In reviewing the support-mobilizing, symbolic, leadership, information-dispensing, and doctrinal functions of political appeals we have spoken of these election activities of candidates as though they bore little similarity to other types of persuasive campaigns waged in American life—advertising, merchandising, public relations, propaganda, and public service appeals.) Political campaigns are, in fact, but one form of persuasive communications designed to influence the actions of people. In order to make clear the similarity of a political campaign to campaigns in other fields, let us attempt a definition applicable to all campaigns; we can then isolate the basic concepts useful in studying campaigns, define them in turn, and indicate the relations they

<sup>8</sup> Lewis A. Froman, Jr., "A Realistic Approach to Campaign Strategies and Tactics," in M. Kent Jennings and L. Harmon Zeigler, eds., *The Electoral Process* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Karl A. Lamb and Paul A. Smith, *Campaign Decision-Making* (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1968); John H. Kessel, *The Goldwater Coalition* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1968).

have to one another as well as the assumptions that underlie their use. In short, we will construct a paradigm of political campaigns.

A campaign denotes the activities of an individual or group (the campaigner) in a particular context (the campaign setting) designed to manipulate the behavior of a wider number of people (the audience) to his advantage. Specifying these elements indicates that any campaign resembles the basic communication act analyzed extensively by behavioral scientists.<sup>10</sup> (That act involves a source communicating in a specific setting to an audience and receiving responses (feedback) in return. In a campaign the source is designated the campaigner; he may be a candidate, a salesman, a preacher, a teacher, an advertising executive, or a television commentator. The setting may be the polity, a used car salesroom, a church, or a classroom. And the audience may be composed of voters, consumers, parishioners, or students.)

It should be clear that this definition emphasizes the utilitarian rather than the informational aspects of the campaign, recognizing that information is dispensed not merely for its own sake but to produce some shift in behavior (as, for example, when we are told in television commercials that smoking cigarettes endangers our health, a message intended not merely to make us better-informed but to induce us to avoid smoking).

We can familiarize ourselves further with the major concepts explicit in the definition of campaigning if we examine closely the people, attitudes, and behavior that comprise the campaigners and the electorate, and review the elements of the political campaign setting.

### The Campaigners

(Who are the people we designate as "campaigners"? What are their attitudes? And in what types of political activities do they engage?) Preliminary answers to these questions introduce the kind of information we must consider in light of the technology of modern means of political persuasion.<sup>11</sup> The people most citizens think of as

<sup>10</sup> Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. MacLean, Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Communications Research," *Journalism Quarterly*, XXXIV, No. 1 (Winter, 1957), 31-38; Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963); and Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1967).

<sup>11</sup> John H. Kessel, "A Game Theory Analysis of Campaign Strategy," in Jennings and Zeigler, *The Electoral Process*, pp. 290-305.

campaigners are simply the candidates for political office. But the total complement of campaigners also includes persons who have never sought public office. Here we number followers who work on behalf of office-seekers—the candidate's partisan, volunteer, and mercenary army. Let us consider each in turn, then their attitudes and activities.

Candidates. A leading student of political participation estimates that less than 1 per cent of the American adult population ever become candidates or serve in a public or party office.<sup>12</sup> With rare exceptions any American citizen is eligible to run for office, but only those who possess a combination of attributes expressed as "availability" become candidates. Availability implies more than just the candidate's desire to run and his capacity to meet specific legal qualifications. (Other essential attributes include the candidate's ascribed and achieved characteristics, his personal qualities, his contrived image, and his political resources.<sup>13</sup>)

Attractive candidates are those in whom voters see the qualities they desire in public officials; it is important, therefore, that a prospective candidate know both what voters want and what qualities citizens ascribe to him. Voters, for example, want their officials to be honest, intelligent, and educated. To determine what his reputation is among the electorate, a would-be legislator, governor, or president frequently commissions an opinion-polling agency to survey voters and discover what they think of him (an endeavor we shall examine in detail in Chapter 3).

Voters are particularly prone to impute favorable qualities to a political aspirant with a widely-known, respected family name. Hence, the Kennedys, the Roosevelts, and the Rockefellers nationally and the Longs in Louisiana, the Blairs in Missouri, and the Scrantons in Pennsylvania have seemed especially attractive. The electorate's proclivities to act upon the basis of "name recognition" can have startling consequences; for example, in 1954 Democrats in Massachusetts nominated

<sup>12</sup> Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1965), p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> For detailed discussions of the attributes necessary for candidacy see David A. Leuthold, *Electioneering in a Democracy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968), pp. 23-31; Herbert M. Baus and William B. Ross, *Politics Battle Plan* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), pp. 7-39; David M. Olson, *Legislative Primary Elections in Austin, Texas, 1962* (Austin, Texas: Institute of Public Affairs, The University of Texas, 1963), pp. 8-18; idem, *Nonpartisan Elections: A Case Analysis* (Austin, Texas: Institute of Public Affairs, The University of Texas, 1965), pp. 20-35.

a political unknown, John Kennedy, for state treasurer. The man was not the then junior Senator John F. Kennedy, nor even related to the future president. (The advantages of name recognition are more marked in primary than in general elections; in the former voters are frequently faced with a string of candidates about which they have little opportunity to learn anything other than names.<sup>14</sup>)

Voters also are interested in a candidate's achievement; whether his experience has prepared him for public office, for example, and whether his record justifies his return to office if he is an incumbent. Few attributes contribute as much to electoral success as incumbency. Voters know that a man seeking reelection to an office possesses requisite experience; incumbency also carries with it the advantages of frequent exposure to the electorate through news coverage, sufficient previous campaign experience that an accurate assessment of successful strategies and tactics is possible, and invaluable contacts with party, group, and governmental leaders. Occasionally, however, a challenger with a celebrated name can overcome his incumbent opponent's advantages. Although politically experienced, Ronald Reagan had never held public office prior to his successful, and professionally-managed, campaign against Governor Pat Brown in California in 1966. And in his first attempt at elective office, Edward M. Kennedy won the Democratic nomination for senator in Massachusetts, defeating the more experienced Attorney General Edward McCormack in the primary and the son of Henry Cabot Lodge, George Cabot Lodge, in the general election.<sup>15</sup>

(In addition to what voters think of him and his record of experience, an aspiring candidate must consider his personal qualities before deciding to enter an election. Ambition, motivation, and desire underlie every successful candidacy; without them it is impossible to exude the enthusiasm demanded of a candidate.) In 1964, for example, Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania decided belatedly to contest the frontrunner, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, for the Republican nomination for president. Although his supporters had implored him to enter the race earlier by participating in the primaries, Scranton apparently had little taste for the rigors of a presidential campaign. His last-minute effort to woo delegates (he became a

<sup>14</sup> L. J. Kamin, "Ethnic and Party Affiliations of Candidates as Determinants of Voting," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, XII (1958), 205-13.

<sup>15</sup> Murray B. Levin, *Kennedy Campaigning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

serious candidate only a month before the nominating convention) was based upon his concern for the fate of the Republican party if it should nominate Goldwater. But his brief, unsuccessful campaign carried the aura of a lost cause, one motivated more by duty than desire. Scranton did, however, possess one of the personal attributes most essential to effective candidacy—the courage to make the contest.<sup>16</sup>

Another indispensable personal quality is what political practitioners call "acumen" and social psychologists refer to as undistorted perception:<sup>17</sup> the capacity to look at political reality without reading one's own biases, dreams, or wishes into it. When caught up in the enthusiasm of his supporters, a candidate can easily misperceive the political situation, overestimating his strengths and underestimating his weaknesses. A candidate who is trailing badly in opinion polls finds it hard to accept any alteration in his campaign tactics, especially as long as newspapers endorse his candidacy, he encounters enthusiastic crowds of supporters at rallies, his aides praise his utterances, and his mail is congratulatory. There is evidence, for example, that a principal reason why Goldwater supporters refused to believe public opinion polls which stressed that Goldwater's presidential candidacy was in trouble was the fact that the candidate's mail suggested an overwhelming victory, however, very few potential voters write letters to candidates and efforts to predict the behavior of the electorate from such a small and biased sample is foolhardy.

(Candidates vary in the degree to which they possess the reputation, experience, and personal qualities essential to availability. Yet all serious political pretenders must at least act as though they have the necessary attributes.) They must convey the illusion of positive characteristics even in the face of less glamorous realities. (This means the candidate must select and emphasize the most appealing of his qualities, publicize them widely and repetitiously, and at the same time play down any limitations.) The process of selectively publicizing desirable attributes is what professional campaigners term image projection. Richard Nixon, faced in the 1968 presidential campaign with his reputation as a "loser" (he had been defeated in the presidential elec-

<sup>16</sup> Kessel, *The Goldwater Coalition*, pp. 91-119.

<sup>17</sup> Kessel, "A Game Theory Analysis," pp. 298-301; Baus and Ross, *Politics Battle Plan*, pp. 12-16; Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1964* (New York: The New American Library, 1965), pp. 174-96.

tion of 1960 and the campaign for governor of California in 1962), diverted attention from his personal background and experience. He appealed instead for "New Leadership" and representation for the "silent Americans," the middle-class, white suburbanites not engaging in mass protests but instead "paying their taxes and obeying the laws." The result was a subtle identification with the elements in society "losing" from increasing crime and violence, the war in Vietnam, and rising inflation. Consequently, some of the rougher edges were removed from the "loser image." Image projection has become a chief concern of campaign specialists and we will consider the process in detail in Chapter 4.

(A final attribute of availability which warrants mention is resources. The principal resource, of course, is financial. Few candidates have personal fortunes sufficient to finance massive campaign costs; those who do hesitate to use them for fear that reputations as "well-heeled big spenders" will do them political damage.) In 1966, for example, businessman Milton Shapp sought the Democratic nomination for governor of Pennsylvania as a political unknown. Using his personal wealth, Shapp financed a highly sophisticated campaign, spending large sums on television programming, to project the image of a man fighting an oligarchical Democratic machine. He managed to upset the party-supported candidate in the primary, but his Republican opponent triumphed in the general election by emphasizing Shapp's primary expenditures and criticizing the attempt to "buy" the governorship. If large personal expenditures can be detrimental to candidates, the political aspirant must have means of raising funds from outside sources (we shall examine such fund-raising efforts in the following chapter).

Organizers. Finances are not the only resources necessary for availability. (A candidate also profits from the endorsement and support of nonfinancial contributors—influential interests, political parties, newspapers, friends, neighbors, and well-wishers.) By conferring support these groups become campaigners, binding themselves—sometimes tightly and sometimes tenuously—to the candidate's aspirations. They become a part of the candidate's partisan, volunteer, and mercenary organization.

(In general elections the various party organizations—party headquarters, funding agencies, echelons of leadership, and precinct workers—are theoretically at the disposal of the party's various candidates

for public office.) A presidential campaign, for example, depends largely on the organizational efforts of personnel within the Republican and Democratic national committees. As Democratic national chairman, James Farley managed Franklin Roosevelt's successful campaigns for the presidency in 1932 and 1936. Gubernatorial candidates in many states rely heavily on their respective state party executive committees. As in any elaborate organization, there are divisions of labor resulting in numerous specialized, and often overlapping, tasks assigned to party personnel, a matter for discussion in Chapter 2.

(Because any election involves many candidates from a given party, because of factional contests within a party, and because candidates must often seek nominations in primaries without party backing, candidates frequently build personal campaign organizations.) Such organizations are usually composed of an inner core of the candidate's close confidants, a large circle of personal followers, and a throng (or only a clique for some candidates) of volunteers.) The enthusiasm of a voluntary organization often exceeds that of one based on partisan or monetary incentive. Senator Barry Goldwater was able to build a highly effective volunteer organization in his efforts to win the California Republican primary in 1964; his opponent, Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, relied primarily on paid workers who performed their duties in perfunctory fashion at critical moments. Goldwater's managers attributed his victory in that election (which assured his ultimate nomination) to the massive efforts of the volunteers committed to the candidate, his principles, and the general cause of conservatism.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the list of campaigners also includes the specialists who make a profession of managing election campaigns. (These include campaign management firms, campaign consultants, public relations personnel, political pollsters, television directors and producers, fund-raisers, mass mailing specialists, speech-writers, and a host of others.) These professionals now shape the character of modern political campaigning in America. Candidates, political parties, and pressure groups engage their services. They have become, in effect, mercenaries who specialize in applying the techniques of mass persuasion to popular referenda and primary and general elections. Since this book is largely concerned with their activities and their impact on voting,

<sup>18</sup> Kessel, *The Goldwater Coalition*, p. 87.

we will postpone a detailed discussion of these campaigners to later chapters.

Campaign attitudes. We have premised our discussion on the notion that the purpose of campaigning is to win elections. The desire to win, then, is an attitude shared by most campaigners whether they are candidates or organizers. But there are variations on this basic attitude that deserve to be included in our paradigm.

Winning can take several forms. It may mean simply achieving a narrow, but necessary, plurality for election to office; in a bond election or constitutional referendum a simple, three-fifths, or two-thirds majority may be the goal. In either event the accumulation of a minimum number of votes is what we normally regard as "winning" an election. But a minimum number is not always sufficient. Some candidates desire to win by large margins, creating an impression of great popularity that will discourage challenges to their reelection at a later date. This has long been a major strategem of politicians in primary elections in southern states—to overwhelm all opposing factions, minimizing future opposition and assuring tight control of the party organization. An ambitious politician with his sights on higher office prefers large victory margins to publicize his availability for a governorship, congressional seat, or the presidency.<sup>19</sup> John F. Kennedy, for example, regarded his smashing victory for reelection to the U.S. Senate in 1958 as the first step in obtaining the Democratic nomination for president two years later. Richard Nixon was drawn into his ill-fated race for governor of California by the belief that a solid victory would reestablish his credibility as a presidential contender for 1964 and also provide a political base; his defeat removed his chances for 1964, but he captured the 1968 presidential nomination through sizable victories (largely without opposition) in that year's primaries.

Some campaigners may have goals which are more important than victory in a given election. A campaign is built on publicity, the tactic being to expose the candidate to large audiences. For some the exposure itself is a sufficient goal. Many lawyers, for example, campaign for office to win recognition, thus hoping to advertise their existence and win clients. A study of candidates for state legislative seats in metropolitan Houston, Texas, in 1966 revealed that lawyer-candidates tended to use the communications media with the greatest "advertising potential." They employed mass techniques that "attempt to

<sup>19</sup> Froman, "Campaign Strategies and Tactics," p. 2.

reach an audience larger than could be reached by personal physical presence of the candidate or his workers in the field." Nonlawyers, on the other hand, relied more on direct personal contact with fewer voters—tours of shopping centers, coffees, canvassing, and so forth.<sup>20</sup>

As we noted earlier, some candidates campaign to stimulate organizing for future campaigns, living to "fight another day," or to promote a cause. George Wallace of Alabama sought the presidency in 1968 with no hope of winning the election, but he did manage to sow the seeds of a third party (the American Independent party) in all fifty states. After the 1964 election, Barry Goldwater was optimistic that his 25,000,000 votes indicated a solid base on which conservatism could build.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the particular character of an election campaign depends in part on the attitude of campaigners toward its purpose. Also vital to the type of campaign waged are the attitudes of contenders toward the rules of the campaign game. Despite the charges hurled back and forth in elections, it has been asserted that most campaigns are waged with the understanding that demagogic appeals to class warfare, racial conflict, religious antagonisms, and the like are not legitimate.<sup>22</sup> Such insights can lead to more subtle techniques to take advantage of the electorate's emotional sentiments. John F. Kennedy, for example, suspected in 1960 that his Catholicism might win the votes of many Republican Catholics, but would drive off Protestant Democrats. Consequently, he derived a strategy of meeting the "religious issue" head on. Seizing the initiative before a conclave of Baptist ministers early in the campaign, he asserted himself as "the Democratic candidate for president" not the "Catholic candidate." He managed to blunt the fears of some Protestants that his religion would bias his political judgment and won their support without offending Catholics among Republicans or Democrats.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas H. Fowler, "The Lawyer as a Legislative Candidate," in Public Affairs Research Center, *Legislative Recruitment in Texas* (Houston, Texas: The University of Houston, 1967), chap. II, pp. 1-9.

<sup>21</sup> For a contrary view see Angus Campbell, "Interpreting the Presidential Victory," in Milton C. Cummings, ed., *The National Election of 1964* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1966), pp. 256-81. One should also consult Nelson W. Polsby, "Strategic Considerations," in Cummings, *The National Election*, pp. 82-110; Nelson W. Polsby and Aaron B. Wildavsky, *Presidential Elections*, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968).

<sup>22</sup> V. O. Key, Jr., *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1961).

(Research concerned with voters' reactions to violations of campaign ethics has been sparse. The scattered evidence we do have, however, clearly indicates that voters detect violations of campaign norms and react against the violator.) A study undertaken after the elections of 1968, based on a systematically selected voting sample, uncovered reasons why a certain Republican congressional candidate had lost in a predominantly Republican district, even though Richard Nixon and the Republican candidate for the senate had won easily. The majority of respondents, both those supporting and those opposing the Republican, had reacted negatively to what they described as his "mud-slinging" (particularly the candidate's unsubstantiated charges that his opponent was pro-Communist, wanted to register guns instead of Communists, and wished to finance student rioters on college campuses). Given the negative impact of these attacks, it is probable that the Republican's close loss (the winner had 52 per cent of the vote) can be attributed to an overly aggressive campaign interpreted by voters as beyond the limits of fair campaigning.

Campaign activity. During the course of our later discussion we shall describe how campaigners use various persuasive techniques to solicit money and votes. This behavior is conducted within the more general framework of two major activities familiar to all campaigns—the formulation of strategy and the adjustment of tactics. Campaign strategy refers to the overall plan formulated for the conduct of a campaign. It encompasses such features as decisions about which voters are most likely to be swayed by appeals, issues that should be emphasized, fund-raising, allocation of the candidate's time, decisions regarding campaign management and organization, and selection of points on which the opposition seems most vulnerable.)

Any political strategy is planned with three phases of the campaign in mind. The first is the organizing phase when campaigners establish organization and communication lines, select issues, and so forth. This is followed by the adapting phase, which involves modifications in the original strategy to meet the exigencies of the moment. The closing phase usually offers a maximum campaign effort on the part of the candidate, his staff, and organization. Campaigners at the close of the campaign seek maximum exposure to the voters, make last-minute appeals (sometimes revelations about the opposition), and step up door-to-door canvassing. Hence much of campaign strategy concerns problems of timing—when to reserve television time, when

to visit a particular constituency, when to raise a particular issue, and so forth.

Campaign tactics become apparent in the adapting and closing phases of the contest. The range of tactics includes responses to questions at news conferences, debates with opponents, inclusion of appealing symbols in speeches, appearances at rallies, attendance at coffees, and negotiation of disputes between rival factions within the campaign organization. Planning the strategy and executing the tactics of a political campaign have much in common with the approach taken to a serious athletic contest. A football coach prepares for each opponent by devising a game plan based on thorough research of his opponent's capabilities and those of his own team. Throughout the game the coach makes adjustments in his offense and defense—sending in substitutes, calling plays, changing the positions of players. As the end of the contest approaches, the coach exhorts his players to added efforts, hoping for a closing momentum that will put the game out of reach of his opponents, salvage victory, or avert humiliation.

#### The Electorate

The tone of a political campaign is strongly influenced by the attributes of the electorate, their political attitudes, and their voting behavior.

American voters. Americans generally believe campaigning to be a form of "politics" occurring during fairly specific periods of time. For example, September 1 through the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in a presidential election year is informally considered to be the time for "the campaign"; campaigns in the various presidential primaries run continuously from the opening of the New Hampshire campaign to the date of the California primaries in early June. (The tendency to associate campaigns with definite time spans contributes to the popular misconception that campaign activities are restricted to well-defined periods. Actually one of the most significant of campaign efforts, qualifying potential voters, predates by far any informally designated campaign span.)

The potential electorate for political campaigns consists of all U.S. citizens, twenty-one years of age or older (with the exception of four states), who have resided in their respective states for a time period

sufficient to meet state requirements. (But a candidate is interested in the support of potential voters only if they have become members of the qualified electorate.) Most states require by law that citizens register their eligibility to vote in local, state, and national elections, frequently several months in advance of the election. In states where registration closes even before informal campaign periods begin, the first strategic problem of candidates who feel they can profit from a large turnout at the polls is to organize a successful voter registration drive. By way of illustration, the contemporary character of presidential politics dictates that Democrats secure support from large numbers of Negroes in the South, perhaps a sufficient number to permit the party to carry many southern states at precisely the time when southern white Democrats are defecting to the Republican party or to third-party movements. In the spring and summer of 1968, 78 per cent of the white population of voting age in eleven southern states were registered to vote; to offset possible losses among these voters, Democrats conducted Negro voter registration drives, successfully registering 62 per cent of potential Negro voters. Nevertheless, the drive did not save Vice President Hubert Humphrey's candidacy, for southern whites turned to the Republican and American Independent parties. However, underscoring the view that registration drives are critical adjuncts to any campaign—especially for Democratic presidential candidates—is the fact that in the only strategy planning session for John Kennedy's 1964 reelection effort (held on November 12, 1963, ten days before his assassination), the president and his advisers devoted attention to long-range planning for a Negro voter registration effort.<sup>23</sup>

(Once political candidates have converted potential voters into a sympathetic qualified electorate through registration campaigns, they must mobilize their supporters to vote on election day; that is, they must define the actual electorate to their advantage.) The voter mobilization efforts of Republican forces in the 1964 presidential election are illustrative. Campaign workers used two tactics to mobilize Goldwater partisans. First, they devised a "voter quota program." Using data for each state, county, and congressional district concerning the

<sup>23</sup> Registration figures for southern states may be found in Southern Regional Council, *Voter Registration in the South* (Atlanta: Voter Education Project, 1968). The Kennedy planning is discussed in White, *The Making of the President 1964*, p. 42.

sizes of the potential and registered electorates in 1964 and numbers of actual voters in the constituency in previous years, Goldwater's tacticians assigned each precinct a quota of votes that Republicans should deliver for Goldwater if he was to win the state's electoral votes. (The technical details of vote quota programs are described in Chapter 3). The other mobilization plan consisted of a canvassing program. (Canvassing, a traditional way of winning voter support, involves house-to-house visitations by workers on behalf of a candidate.) In the Goldwater program canvassing was conducted by couples rather than a single person, on the assumption that householders would speak more readily with a male and female together. The couples were recruited from activists in local civic organizations, generally those with some familiarity of suburban neighborhoods. Canvassers were organized into county committees responsible to state canvassing committees; the state committees received directions from national campaign headquarters. Detailed instructions from national headquarters requested canvassers to carry flashlights and never enter the house (it would take too much time) and suggested conversation to be used by couples:

"Good evening, Mr. or Mrs. ————. I'm ————, and this is ————. We are volunteers calling tonight to ask you to vote for Barry Goldwater for president. May we count on your vote?"

"We also want you to vote for the other Republican candidates. May we count on your vote for them?"

"We want you to know that we think enough of your vote and our candidates to come by and ask you to vote for them."

This canvassing program contacted almost 3,400,000 voters in 912 counties of 46 states. (In those areas where canvassing was completed, the announced voting intention of householders to canvassers proved an excellent predictor of the percentage of popular votes Goldwater later received.<sup>24</sup>)

Political predispositions. Candidates for office activate voters through registration drives and mobilization programs, but to win the election they must assure that a plurality of actual voters cast ballots

<sup>24</sup> Kessell, *The Goldwater Coalition*, pp. 162-70.

on their behalf. (In this area voting studies suggest that campaigns have only marginal, although measurable, effects. The studies conclude that the impact of campaigns on voting decisions is limited in presidential elections because so many voters (perhaps two-thirds of actual electors) are predisposed to one of the contenders before the campaign.) We noted earlier that there are appropriate reservations to this standard explanation of voting behavior (particularly in local and statewide elections), but it does suggest that candidates must consider the political predispositions of the electorate when planning strategy, tactics, and techniques.

A number of voter attitudes are relevant to a candidate's campaigning. In an election between candidates of our major political parties (that is, an election other than the "nonpartisan" or referenda variety), the party identification of voters weighs heavily in their decisions. As Table 1-1 indicates, voting studies conducted since 1952 estimate that approximately three of every four American voters are committed to one of our two major parties; and, three of every ten are probably so thoroughly committed (Strong Democrats or Strong Republicans) that it is unlikely that they shift to the opposition during a campaign. (Depending on what the distribution of partisan identification is within his constituency (something discovered by the research described in Chapter 3), the general strategy of a candidate is clear: if his party is in the majority, he must conduct a campaign to reinforce the commitments of the party faithful and assure their turnout; if in the minority, the candidate must campaign to hold his own loyalists while winning votes from independents and potential "switchers" who are weakly identified partisans of the opposition.)

Not all elections involve party competition but in those that do, other considerations also enter into voting decisions. Voters react to the issues and candidates in the campaign as well as to parties and campaigners must take these orientations into account.

(In any campaign the vast majority ignore all but the most general issues.) They may, for example, feel that nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union is desirable, but know little about the subtleties of ending nuclear testing, constructing an anti-ballistic missile system, or securing nuclear nonproliferation treaties. And they often rally behind a slogan symbolizing American success in a given endeavor, such as "An American on the Moon by the End of the Decade," yet care little about the tangible taxing and spending priorities such a program implies.

TABLE 1-1  
Party Identification in the United States, 1952-68 (percentage distribution)

\*Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? If Republican or Democrat, would you call yourself a strong Republican or Democrat? or a not very strong Republican or Democrat? If Independent, do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

IDENTIFICATION	OCT. 1952	SEP. 1953	OCT. 1954	APR. 1956	OCT. 1956	NOV. 1957	OCT. 1958	OCT. 1960	OCT. 1961	MAY 1962	NOV. 1962	MAY 1963	JAN. 1964	MAY 1964	OCT. 1964	MAR. 1965	NOV. 1966	NOV. 1968*
<i>Democrat</i>																		
Strong	21%	22%	22%	19%	23%	21%	23%	21%	26%	25%	23%	22%	23%	24%	26%	25%	18%	20%
Weak	25	23	25	24	24	25	24	25	21	23	23	27	27	22	25	25	27	25
<i>Independents</i>																		
Democrat	10	8	9	6	7	7	7	8	9	7	8	6	9	7	9	9	10	9
Independent	5	4	6	3	8	8	8	8	10	9	8	9	10	10	8	9	11	11
Republican	7	6	6	6	4	6	4	7	5	4	6	5	6	5	6	4	7	9
<i>Republicans</i>																		
Weak	14	15	14	18	16	16	16	13	13	15	16	16	14	17	15	15	14	14
Strong	13	13	13	14	13	10	13	14	11	11	12	12	9	11	11	12	10	10
<i>Apolitical, don't know</i>																		
4	7	4	4	10	5	6	5	4	5	4	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	1
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Number of cases</i>	1614	1023	1139	1731	1772	1488	1269	3021	1474	1269	1289	1301	1489	1465	1571	2185	1291	1553

Source: Survey Research Center, The University of Michigan. Provided through the facilities of the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, November, 1968.  
\* Preliminary results from a hand tally

(One might assume that campaigners faced with a widespread indifference to issues would avoid emphasizing issues in their strategic considerations. The opposite, however, is the case; campaigners like to run "on the issues." A candidate can do relatively little about the distribution of partisanship in his constituency, but he can maneuver by articulating issues that strengthen his hand. He has at least partial control over issues. He can often relate specific issues to special interests (union workers, Irish-Americans, or soybean growers, for example) for support; he can orient his campaign to the various elites who can provide financial and organizational support as well as votes. At the same time he enunciates symbolic appeals ("Law and Order" or "Let's get America moving") to please the less informed and uncommitted citizenry. Issue positions are much easier to publicize through newspapers, television, and radio than are appeals to partisans or special groups; journalists dismiss the latter as campaign oratory, but cover the former as "policy statements.")

A citizen's attitudes toward parties, issues, and personalities affect his decision as a voter; therefore, competing candidates analyze each so that strategy, tactics, and techniques will reflect electoral realities. (Bear in mind, however, that these attitudes are seldom separate in the voter's mind.) His views of party color his views of candidates and issues; likewise, predispositions about issues and candidates affect attitudes toward political parties. Frequently a voter may be sympathetic toward a candidate of the opposition and experience a conflict between his party loyalty and his candidate preference. The campaign plays a substantial role in resolving such conflicts, a point we shall return to in our concluding chapter.

Voting behavior. We can summarize the types of eligible voters who are targets in most electoral contests. Table 1-2 classifies voter targets according to two variables—the time at which voting decisions are made and the attention voters pay to the campaign. The result is a four-cell presentation of what the campaigner's major goal should be with respect to each voter type, the goal to be pursued if the purpose of the campaign is to win election.

1. (Early deciders who pay close attention to the election campaign must be reinforced in their decision by the favored candidates.) Persons most likely to fit this category are strong partisans, voters who are concerned about the election outcome and who at the same time support their party's candidate. The opposition candidate stands little hope of win-

TABLE 1-2

A Typology of Campaign Targets (by time of voting decision and degree of voter interest)

	ATTENTIVE VOTERS	INDIFFERENT VOTERS
EARLY DECIDERS	Reinforce attitudes	Mobilize or immobilize voters
LATE DECIDERS	Change attitudes and mobilize	Motivate turnout

ning votes among this group. Whereas one-third of the electorate might fit this description in a presidential election, relatively fewer voters would enter this cell in primary elections, non-partisan contests, or party referenda.

2. Early deciders who pay little attention to the campaign are not likely to be swayed in their vote decisions by alternative candidates. Candidates favored by such voters must mobilize them for turnout on election day; the opposition, in turn, must avoid antagonistic tactics that might shake these indifferents from their lethargy and stimulate them to vote.
3. Voters who pay close attention to the campaign, yet delay their choice until late in the period, are prime targets for campaigners. Most are probably undergoing an attitude conflict of the type mentioned previously; the goal of the campaigner is to resolve those conflicts in his favor and mobilize these voters to prevent them from withdrawing from any decision.
4. A large proportion of the late deciders in any election are persons so indifferent to politics that, unless stimulated to do so by a critical issue or a captivating personality, they will not vote at all. In partisan elections they shift their support from one party to another with little consistency because they have no firm party loyalty (are Independents). They are critical to campaigners who must (a) motivate them to take a last minute interest in the election and (b) secure their votes.

#### The Setting

After a grueling campaign, news reporters struggling to explain the outcome, particularly if the underdog has emerged the victor, analyze the winner's campaign strategy; as students of group behavior, social

scientists focus instead upon the predisposition of voters. The setting is critical in any election, but analysts rarely consider election results as a function of the campaign setting.<sup>25</sup>

The pseudo character of campaigns. As reported in the news media and experienced by the average citizen, political campaigns are dramatic events, especially when they involve a confrontation of striking personalities or a clash of strongly-held principles. But much of the excitement is less spontaneous than contrived, less real than illusory. (Increasingly, the atmosphere that surrounds a political campaign is manufactured by the contenders, a product of the efforts of professional managers to tailor the setting to their candidate's advantage.)

One perceptive analysis of the changes taking place in contemporary American life argues that Americans rarely have firsthand experience of reality; instead they encounter a secondhand, contrived, and illusionary substitute—the pseudo event. (A pseudo event is planned to deceive in that it is contrived to appear as spontaneous without being so, it is designed to catch the attention of the news media and be widely reported, it camouflages the actual situation so that the underlying reality is ambiguous and obscure, and it is intended to produce consequences to the advantage of a particular group, interest, or person.<sup>26</sup>) An airplane crash, a flood, or the heroic saving of a drowning victim may be regarded as spontaneous, but the opening of a Broadway play or a presidential news conference is a pseudo event. Most campaign events possess a pseudo quality. Examples are numerous: carefully staged rallies; skillfully rehearsed and taped television appearances (with retaping of poorly performed or “unnatural” segments); and questions planted with friendly correspondents at news conferences or at “live” telethons where the candidate responds to citizens' telephone queries. Typical of efforts to contrive events and make news is the “spontaneous” public appearance of a candidate or official. For example, Mayor John Lindsay of New York City, both as campaigner and as public official, made a point of walking the streets of his city's ghettos, often in shirtsleeves,

<sup>25</sup> See, however, V. O. Key, Jr., *The Responsible Electorate* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1966).

<sup>26</sup> Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1962), pp. 9–12; for an effective attempt to analyze a single campaign as a pseudo event see Levin, *Kennedy Campaigning*, pp. 285–304.

mingling with passers-by, conversing with shopkeepers, and visiting with constituents. These forays into Harlem and other districts did more than familiarize the attractive mayor with the citizenry; they were well-publicized, they detracted from pressing problems in the ghettos, and they yielded the image of a vigorous, courageous, and concerned official. In the same vein when admirers tear items of wearing apparel from their favored candidates—John and Robert Kennedy, Eugene McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey and others lost cufflinks, ties, and handkerchiefs—television film leaves the impression of a spontaneous outpouring of friendly hysteria; frequently omitted is any report that “thefts” are sometimes planned by campaign managers well in advance.

The purpose of generating pseudo events in a campaign is obvious—to control the campaign setting by making news flattering to the candidate. The voter senses that the candidate is popular, personable, willing to mingle, and that his campaign has momentum. (By winning the battle for friendly exposure the candidate acquires both a rostrum for his appeals and the attention of voters he wishes to reach. And exposure, a congenial rostrum, and audience attention are indispensable in contemporary politics.)

To achieve its intended purposes a pseudo event must be believed. It is the function of the campaign specialists to generate that credibility—the public relations personnel, advertising executives, press secretaries, pollsters, and others.

The symbolism of campaigns. The settings of political events contribute significantly to the outcome of the events themselves. Although we pay more attention to the words and actions of politicians than to the surroundings in which they take place, we should bear in mind that settings provide an aura that enhances some interests at the expense of others. A man tried for a crime sits in a courtroom furnished with trappings symbolic of the primacy of the state in making laws, enforcing them, and punishing offenders. That symbolism is lost on neither the accused nor the jury.

(Relevant symbols also set the stage for campaign actions and, like the pseudo events described above, the symbolic aspects of the campaign setting are assiduously contrived.) Symbols are selected and employed to impress a large audience, evoke a sympathetic response from spectators, identify the candidate with the most cherished traditions, rules, and folk heroes of his party and of America, and convey

a sense of relevance, meaning, timeliness, and appropriateness to what the candidate is saying.<sup>27</sup>)

There is no lack of examples of efforts to use symbols to condition political responses in a campaign. It was no coincidence that Richard Nixon in his 1968 presidential drive reiterated at suburban shopping centers his appeals for "law and order" and a halt to inflation, or that he selected suburban and predominantly white high schools as the setting for his discussions of the role and responsibility of American youth. The Democratic convention of 1964 also illustrates the uses of contrived symbolism. The Republicans had held their convention earlier and nominated Barry Goldwater; it appeared that the Goldwater appeal would be to a narrow segment of the electorate and not in the traditions of Republicanism. To contrast sharply with the opposition, President Lyndon Johnson and his fellow campaigners sought an all-embracing appeal that could win dissident Republicans yet appear as a continuation of the ideals of John Kennedy. The Democrats exploited these themes in their convention by decorating the hall in Atlantic City with references to the "Great Society" (the consensus theme) and the slogan "Let Us Continue" (the Kennedy-Johnson tradition). So as not to antagonize Republican television viewers, convention managers dispensed with the usual procedure of hanging photographs of former Democratic presidents; only one large photograph of John Kennedy and one of Lyndon Johnson graced the walls of convention hall.

By using appropriate symbols campaigners seek to control the context of the election, to define to their own advantage "what this election is about." This leads to decisions that are prized as much for their symbolic aspects as for their substantive consequences. In October of 1960, for example, John Kennedy placed a call of sympathy and understanding to Mrs. Martin Luther King stressing he would attempt to have her husband removed from jail in Georgia, an incarceration that threatened King's life. That act, once publicized, won both the gratitude and support of Negroes previously opposed to Kennedy's candidacy. And, in late October, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson announced a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam, a measure that liberal Democrats and anti-war demonstrators had been demanding if they were to support vice-president Hubert Humphrey.

\* <sup>27</sup> Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses*, pp. 95-113.

The action taken both for policy and political reasons, gave a last minute impetus to the Humphrey campaign.

The timing of campaigns. (The historical epoch in which a campaign occurs affects the conduct and outcome of the election.) The Great Depression of the 1930s became Hoover's depression in the mouths of Democrats in 1932; the cry "don't change horses in the middle of the stream" became the slogan of the appeal to retain Franklin Roosevelt as president in the 1944 campaign during World War II; Eisenhower in 1952 capitalized on dissatisfaction with the Korean War; and in 1968 the Vietnam war conditioned much that occurred in presidential primaries, nominating conventions, and the formal campaign.

(The timing of campaign events is also important. Campaigners like to "pace" their candidates as though they were race horses. They hold back their largest expenditures of money to the last vital weeks, hoping to "peak" just prior to the election. There is considerable doubt that "peaking" (the point at which a candidate is likely to receive his maximum number of votes) occurs except in the minds of politicians, but the myth governs the timing of many campaign events.)

(Any public appearance by a candidate is a performance; as with any actor's performance, timing is important to its success.) An error in timing can give the wrong impression to an audience and destroy the impact of the candidate's carefully prepared remarks. Barry Goldwater paid a high price for this piece of information in 1964. Accepting the nomination of the Republican party, Goldwater delivered a speech prepared as a tightly knit, concise, and logical statement of his views. Its theme was that conservative and puritan principles stand as valid prescriptions for the conduct of American government. A half-hearted commitment to these moral truths was intolerable; American social and political life could be purified only by active allegiance to Freedom, Justice, Liberty, and Constitutional Government. But acceptance speeches are not received as lectures from an academic podium. They are punctuated by loud rounds of shouting and applause and audiences in the hall or watching on television lose the internal logic of the remarks. Thus, when Goldwater came to a passage intended to suggest that Aristotle's golden mean was inappropriate to the struggle for high principles, it was interpreted as approval of extremism and an effort to read moderates out of the party: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! . . . Moderation in the pursuit of

justice is no virtue!" The passage, always quoted out of context, became an albatross around Goldwater's neck in the ensuing weeks.

(Any political campaign has a legally prescribed day on which it must end—election day. Thus any candidate has a limited period following his nomination to build a coalition for the general election (the organization appropriate for winning a nomination within a party is not the same as that needed to win a general election), plan strategy, raise or borrow money, command maximum exposure, adjust to unexpected emergencies, take the offensive, and win. The demands of such time limitations challenge the information-gathering and decision-making capacities of any campaigner.)

The level of campaigns. (Political campaigns vary according to the constituency, or level, involved.) It is one thing to seek a state legislative seat, but quite another to aspire to the presidency. And the problems of winning a gubernatorial nomination in a large and highly diversified state like Texas differ considerably from efforts to secure such a nomination in smaller, more homogeneous states like Rhode Island. (The campaign setting determines many things about the contest itself—the amount of money spent, the campaign resources available, the comprehensiveness of organization, and so forth. Moreover, the attitudes of the candidates themselves in planning strategy are affected by the level of office they seek.) Candidates for state legislative office recognize that their office has relatively low visibility; as candidates they have conservative estimates of how much interest voters take in campaigns and how much information voters have. They believe that partisanship, not issue orientations or candidate personalities, shape election outcomes. Congressional candidates, on the other hand, design their campaigns in the belief that voters are aware of the office, interested in it, informed about it, and that they will vote on the basis of issues and candidates as well as partisanship.<sup>28</sup>

The technology of campaigns. The current era is one of sophisticated campaign technology which opposing campaigners employ in a fashion calculated to control campaign settings at all electoral levels. Specific organizational, informational, and communication techniques occupy our attention in following chapters. Here it is appropriate to suggest the major change that has occurred in American campaigning as a result of technical developments.

• <sup>28</sup> Kingdon, *Candidates for Office*, pp. 138–41.

(Prior to the days of mass organizations, research, and communication, most campaigns relied upon personal contact between the candidate (or his party followers) and individual voters to acquaint the electorate with salient qualifications, issues, and positions. Individualized personal contacts, while by no means a technique of the past, now share center stage with a new campaign technology that relies on the campaigner's contacting voters in a mass.) The candidate still talks with voters, but his words are carried to them through elaborate communication channels (television, radio, rallies, and so forth). This one-way communication offers few opportunities for constituents to voice their views to the candidate; consequently, pollsters are engaged to conduct and interpret surveys and relay their results to the candidate. Also standing between the candidate and his constituents are armies of partisans, volunteers, and mercenaries.)

The growing insulation of the candidate from the citizen with the advent of the mediated campaign results from many factors. (Viable party organizations that once brought the candidate into personal contact with the faithful have declined; partisanship is now more of a symbol with which people identify than a group with which they work. And the growth in the size and diversity of the potential electorate makes it necessary to reach greater numbers of voters quickly and simultaneously. Finally, the theories of mass persuasion mesh with the techniques of the mass media, survey research, and high-speed computers to provide precisely the means of contacting vast numbers of voters that candidates demand.)

The theory underlying contemporary campaigning (in advertising, fund-raising, and selling as well as in politics) is the theory of mass persuasion. We should be aware of its essentials for they underlie the application of the techniques described in the following chapters.<sup>29</sup> (The theory assumes that a society consists of a differentiated mass—a mass of individuals who absorb the bulk of their information directly from communications media rather than from one another. Certain tendencies are common to all members of this mass, but for the most part people respond in different ways at different times to different stimuli. Appeals to people to buy a particular product, contribute to a given cause, or support a political candidate must be diversified accordingly.)

• <sup>29</sup> John C. Maloney, "Advertising Research and an Emerging Science of Mass Persuasion," *Journalism Quarterly*, XLI, No. 4 (Autumn, 1964), 517–28.

(Diversity in mass responses, it is reasoned, is a product of diversified conditioning; although most behavior is conditioned, differences in conditioning stem from attitudes learned in various surroundings. The purpose of mass persuasion is to either change the diverse attitudes into shared ones or trigger identical responses from dissimilar attitudes.) But the theory of mass persuasion regards personal attitudes as fairly fixed tendencies to act in certain ways, yet tendencies that are so vague in content that a given attitude may give rise to conflicting responses, depending on the stimulus that triggers the predisposition and the setting within which that cue occurs.) (For example, a voter predisposed to the Republican party can still be convinced to vote for a Democratic candidate if the candidate is sufficiently attractive or if the setting influences the voter to discount his Republicanism.) (Given this view of attitudes, their stable quality makes it more practical to contrive stimuli and settings to elicit favorable responses than to attempt attitude-change; this is especially true in the short period of a political campaign.)

Furthermore, persuasion specialists recognize that a person's attention is selective; selective attention means that we only pay attention to messages that interest us, reinforce what we believe, and are the most agreeable of those competing for our awareness. The selective attention barrier must be manipulated to produce desired buying habits or votes. One method is to package the stimulus attractively by associating it with universally assuring slogans—"Progress is our most important product" (a General Electric slogan); "Give your fair share" (the United Fund appeal); or, "Forward Together" (the theme of the Nixon inaugural). Another method is to attempt to remove or control the elements of the communication setting that compete with the stimulus. Finally, the most practiced technique is repetition. Repeating a message increases the chances that people will eventually pay attention (hence candidates give the same set speech many times in a campaign); assures that the message will reach the individual in a variety of contexts so that a congenial setting will eventually prompt a desirable response (a weary housewife may ignore a perfume commercial when badgered by her children, yet pay close attention later in the evening when they have been tucked in bed); and offers the possibility that, if heard frequently enough, the message may modify attitudes as well as elicit positive response (a middle-aged man who feels he has no need for a sports car may, upon endless

repetition of a commercial, become so intrigued by the promise of rejuvenation that he accepts the offer to "come in and drive one").

Modern campaign techniques approach the electorate as a differentiated mass which is conditioned to behave in certain ways and has little interest in political affairs.

### DESCRIBING CAMPAIGN TECHNOLOGY

The remaining chapters of this book bring together the current knowledge about political campaigns, enabling us to describe the technology of campaigning in contemporary American politics and to assess the impact of candidate appeals on voting behavior. Each of the subsequent chapters focuses on one of the three major components of political campaigns identified in our paradigm. In addition, our organization stresses that the communications sciences have made the persuasive efforts in political campaigns into a highly specialized activity requiring the expertise of specialists in management, research, and media. Chapter 2 examines how modern campaign technology emphasizes the role of the professional campaign manager, virtually to the point that they, not the candidates, are truly today's campaigners. Chapter 3 describes the application of new technology to the task of providing information about the electorate through techniques that have become so widespread that campaigners increasingly think of constituents as "voter profiles." Chapter 4 probes the use of the mass media to arrange the campaign setting and render it more congenial to the projection of a candidate's "image." Finally, Chapter 5 employs data from sample surveys and experimental research to generalize about the impact of recent campaign techniques on voting patterns in American elections. In conclusion, we suggest a few of the most critical problems raised for American democracy by the advent of the new politics of campaign technology.