THE EFFECT OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES ON ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR: AN APPLICATION OF THE VOTER DECISION RULE TO THE 1952-1988 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

THESIS

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This study assesses the major determinants of the vote in presidetntial elections. Various data are analyzed to empirically test the validity of the hypothesis.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter I introduces the subject matter, states the purpose of the thesis, and identifies forces which influence voting behavior.

Chapter II reviews the relevant literature in the study of voting behavior.

Chapter III outlines the methodology used to assess the determinants of electoral choice.

Chapter IV adapts and extends the methodology through the 1988 presidential election.

Chapter V concentrates on factors determining the vote by reviewing voters' responses.

Chapter VI offers a general summary and conclusions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I

Scope of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine two major psychological determinants of the vote in presidential elections - candidate image and party orientation. The central thesis of this study is that candidate image, as measured here, has been a greater determinant of electoral choice in the majority of presidential elections since 1952 than has party orientation. One of the vices as well as virtues of a democratic society is that the people often get what they want. This is especially true in the case of electing our leaders. Political scientists have often concentrated their efforts on attempting to ascertain why people vote as they do. Studies have been conducted focusing on the behavior of voters in making that important decision—who should govern?

An institution which is as deeply embedded in our society as the electoral process is the political party. The study of American political parties has intrigued political scientists since their inception. There is no authorization in our Constitution for political parties nor even any mention of them. In fact, there is strong indication that political parties were viewed as factions which would be harmful to our government (Hamilton, Madison, and

Jay, 1961, p.10).

Despite many of the founding fathers' wishes to prevent their emergence, political parties quickly formed and grew, in part, due to certain constitutional provisions. Articles I and II of the Constitution call for periodic elections of Congress and the president respectively. Competing in elections for Congress and the presidency required organization, and that task became the job of political parties. These "factions" began to organize the electorate rather than simply working within the halls of Congress or the White House. This was a major political innovation, forming institutions with mass followers to contest elections. The rights of freedom of speech and assembly guaranteed by the First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution required parties' organization and allowed them to express themselves.

Before one can fully appreciate the importance of political parties in the United States, one must first determine what their purported functions are. Political parties have been defined in terms of their purpose and in terms of the methods used to attain their purpose. A political party is first of all an organized attempt to gain control of the government as a whole (Schattschneider, 1942, 35), and it is by this standard that we must gauge the success of political parties in recent years. When the voters go to the polls, is it the impact of parties which accounts for their decision or are there separate forces which act to most strongly influence that decision?

While earlier studies focus on sociological influences on voting behav-

ior (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944, 1948; Janowitz and Miller, 1952; Berelson, et al. 1954), others concentrate on psychological influences. This study falls into the latter category. Three separate psychological forces have been identified which influence voting behavior: party affiliation, candidate orientation, and issue awareness (Campbell et al. 1960, 59). Historically, party orientation has been identified as the most influential factor in determining how the voter votes (Campbell et al. 1960). However, recently, a growing number of political scientists has hypothesized that the role and significance of political parties in the United States is on the decline (Pomper, 1975; Nie, et al. 1976; Crotty, 1984; Wattenberg, 1984). This has been attributed in part to factors such as a changing society, the rise of a new technology of politics, and new and unaccustomed demands on the party agencies placed by an evolving electorate. Others argue that "parties are not in a state of decline, but rather the role of the parties in the political process are being redefined" (Gitelson et al. 1984, xv).

This study does not attempt to examine the role which issue awareness plays in voting behavior, only to address the importance of candidate image and party orientation. It has been argued that there is often a distinction between which candidate is actually closest to the voter and which candidate is closest to the voter in issue stands (Campbell et al. 1960). The voter's opinion of candidate stands is often influenced by his/her party affiliation or image of the candidate (Berelson, et al. 1954; Sigel, 1964). Therefore, the two

major determinants of the vote which are examined here are candidate image and party orientation. This study will focus specifically on presidential elections. Presidential elections are one of the most appropriate types of elections to begin any study of voting behavior because there are distinct forces here that may not be present at lower level elections in influencing voters' decisions. National candidates, through the medium of television as well as the importance of office, might be much more "visible" than local candidates. This is especially true in the case of presidential competitors. Further, there may not be as many salient issues at a local level as there are at a national level. Political parties might not necessarily gain recognition in presidential elections but should not diminish in recognition either. The media concentrate on presidential elections much more than other elections, thereby bringing various influences to prominence which otherwise might be obscure.

A second reason for focusing on presidential elections is because these are the only elections in which everyone is able to vote for the same office at the same time. It is very difficult to identify the most important influences in other contests when there are so many variables involved. In presidential elections, while each person might have a different reason for voting as they do based on their geographical location, the same candidates, office, and (for the most part) issues are involved. Further, if political parties are the dominant factor in elections, as many claim (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse, et al. 1966), then it is important to see how successful they are in electing the

nation's top official.

The third reason for this study's focus on presidential elections is due to the nature of the elections themselves. The two other national offices that might be focused upon to determine factors influencing voting behavior are the Representative and the Senator. All members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years. In most states, during presidential election years, House candidates find themselves the second, third or fourth name on the ballot. They are often victims of a coattail effect (Moos, 1952, 110-111; Press, 1958; Press, 1963; Cummings, 1966a, chaps. 1, 2; Cummings, 1966b, 231-233; Edwards, 1976). In other words, a strong candidate at the top of the ticket could carry those below him/her into office. Conversely, a weak candidate heading a ticket can often doom those below him/her on the ballot. As a result, the influences which elect the top of the ticket will often be the same influences electing those below. In off year elections, there is still no guarantee that candidates running for the House of Representatives will be at the top of the ticket. Off-year elections are further complicated by the phenomenon that the president's party has lost an average of 34 seats in the House of Representatives in each non-presidential election since 1936 (Hinckley, 1967; Abramowitz, 1985) an occurrence which might have nothing to do with party affiliation or candidate orientation.

Those seeking office to the Senate during presidential election years have the same problem as candidates trying for the House of Representatives

at this time—they are often only as strong or as weak as the presidential candidate of their party. Therefore, the same influences working for or against that party's presidential candidate work for or against its senatorial candidate (Edwards, 1977). Those running in off-years however, often find themselves at the top of this "coattail" phenomenon. There is another problem which complicates the national study of electoral behavior by focusing on Senate elections, the fact that not all members are elected at the same time. Only one-third of the Senate is elected at any one time. This makes it difficult to study, nationally, the influences on any given senatorial election year. These problems encountered at the House and Senate level are not encountered at the presidential level.

If we can ascertain which factor most strongly influences electoral behavior in presidential elections, we can predict the outcomes of elections much more easily. If party affiliation is the most important factor, the party most dominant in the voters' minds should win the presidential race. If candidate image is the most influential factor, then the candidate who appeals the most to the voters should prevail, regardless of party attachment.

It is further offered that if we can anticipate the outcome of elections, we can, to some degree, predict the future of our political system. By charting trends in voting behavior over the years, we can, to some degree, predict future trends in voting behavior (Campbell et al. 1966, 9-40). If candidate image is the dominant influence in an electoral outcome, will the future of

our electoral system hinge on popularity contests oblivious to major issues or philosophical stands? If candidate image has replaced political parties as the most influential factor in voters' decisions, what factor or factors have accounted for this increase? If political parties are dying, as some have argued (e.g. Crotty, 1984), is there anything that can be done to halt this demise, or is there anything which may replace them as durable political institutions able to elect certain philosophically similar candidates to office? While it is not within the scope of this study to answer these questions, the research provided herein may prove an adequate starting point from which to begin to ask these questions.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews the literature concerning voter behavior, beginning with some of the earliest studies. It proceeds to examine both sociological and psychological studies of voting behavior. Concentrating on psychological studies, research which focuses on the dominance of political party affiliation, issue awareness, and candidate orientation as influences of voting behavior, is critically analyzed and evaluated separately.

Early Studies - Sociological Influences

In surveying the literature, one finds that the study of voting behavior, while being a relatively recent phenomenon, tends to be more advanced than many other "subfields" in political science. As early as 1949, voting behavior was the one area in political science where theory could be systematically analyzed. Further, in voting behavior research, political scientists had achieved more definitive conclusions than any other type of research. Theory construction had also reached a higher peak of sophistication in the field of voting behavior research than elsewhere in political science (Eld-

ersveld, 1951). Accomplishments had been made in hypothesis-testing exploratory studies (Rice, 1928; Diamond, 1941; Chapin, 1912; Millspaugh, 1918; Ogburn and Jaffe, 1936), in mass tabulation case studies (Hecock and Trevelyan, 1938; Pollock, 1939; Arneson, 1925; Martin, 1933), in comparative statistical surveys (Tinsten, 1937; Gosnell, 1940; Tibbitts, 1931; Holcombe, 1940; Bean, 1948), and in hypothesis-testing factoral analysis (Ogburn and Coombs, 1940; Gosnell and Gill, 1935; Litchfield, 1941; Anderson and Davison, 1943). While these studies have value for theory, the potential value had not yet been realized because of basic weaknesses which still existed in theory-constructing efforts in political science (Eldersveld, 1951). The one possible exception was the progress in the study of community dynamics made by Lazarsfeld, et al. (1944, 1948).

One of the earliest studies to utilize survey research in voting behavior, their focus was on how the voters in Erie County, Ohio, made up their minds in the Roosevelt-Wilkie campaign of 1940. Six hundred residents were each interviewed six times in a panel technique in order to trace attitudes throughout the campaign. The emphasis was primarily on group influences and pressures important in voter motivation (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944, 1948).

A significant portion of the analysis of political behavior during the presidential election hinged on the crucial role assignment assigned to the "Index of Political Predisposition" (IPP). This index sought primarily to account for the presidential vote in terms of three sociological variables:

socioeconomic status, rural-urban residence, and religious differences in the adult population. The authors found that the voter's socioeconomic status was the most important determinant in his/her voting behavior, followed by other factors such as religion, family traditions and education. Further, between two-thirds and three-fourths of the voters had already made their presidential choice by the time the national party conventions were over. Changes in party position during the campaign occurred less frequently than changes between campaigns. Less than ten percent of the voters changed political party or candidate preference during a campaign, and those who did change tended to cancel out each other's vote. Finally, exposure to the campaign changed only a small minority of the voters' minds in candidate and party preference.

Although it would be unwise to infer that these findings are indicative of voting behavior throughout the United States, Lazarsfeld's study nevertheless represents a path-breaking method in the study of voting behavior in the United States.

Another study applied this Index of Political Predisposition to data on the 1948 election gathered by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center (Janowitz and Miller, 1952). The results of the replication showed that the IPP, while having explanatory value, required considerable refinement in order to constitute a basis for building an index of electoral behavior which seeks to incorporate the group characteristics of populations (Janowitz

and Miller, 1952, 714).

When the relevant data were analyzed to prepare an Index of Political Predisposition for the 1948 survey research national sample, the results indicated a distribution quite similar to that encountered in Erie County. Comparison of basic data distributions provided evidence that elements of the two studies were clearly compatible and that analyses of data collected by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan could produce a valid replication of crucial portions of the Erie County study (Janowitz and Miller, 1952, 714).

A study which furthers these types of findings, focused on voting behavior in the 1948 presidential contest between President Truman and Governor Dewey by using a panel method to survey voters in Elmira, New York (Berelson, et al. 1954). By interviewing one thousand residents four times between June and November in 1948, the authors find that most first-time voters tend to favor the political party of their parents. This precipitated the notion that the family tends to be the major source of political socialization. Other sources of political socialization such as membership in social and economic groups proved to have a great impact on the way people voted.

In terms of voter influence, political parties were more concerned with activating the votes of existing party supporters rather than attempting to solicit new party supporters for the election. It is important to point out that

both candidates, for the first time, were beginning to utilize the media to develop a campaign style in order to sway the voters. This study further showed that only about one-third of the voters were highly accurate in their perception of where the candidates stood on the issues. Most voters perceived the candidate of their party as having stands on the issues similar to their own and the opposition candidate as having a dissimilar stand.

The influence of the media was to strengthen the voters' support for their own candidate. There appeared to be a direct correlation between exposure to the campaign through mass media and increased support for one's own candidate.

It is claimed by the authors that the Elmira study contains a sufficiently heterogeneous sample of people and conditions to assure a realistic test of the generalizations advanced in this study. However, one must proceed with caution when applying these findings to the aggregate since this research was conducted in only one city where some factors which compete to influence the vote might not be as prevalent as in other areas of the country.

Psychological Influences

One of the first studies to empirically research voting behavior using a national sample devised a measure of voters' motivation in terms of party loyalty, concern with issues, and orientation toward the candidates (Campbell, et al. 1953). Although earlier studies researched presidential

elections, this work took them out of a generalizable form and put predictability to them. Indeed, V. O. Key Jr. in his foreword, called it "the most impressive analysis yet made of a national election" (Key, in Campbell et al. 1953 iv).

In contrast to earlier studies which emphasized group influences and pressures (sociological factors), this study focused for the first time on individual motivators (psychological factors) which help to determine a voter's choice at the polls. Voting behavior in the 1952 presidential election is analyzed through the use of a political survey. Conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, a national sample of the electorate was surveyed. Both prior to and after the election to identify voters and nonvoters, Democrats and Republicans were queried on socioeconomic characteristics, attitudes and opinions on political issues, and perceptions of the parties and candidates. The data collected were then analyzed according to party identification of the respondent, concern over contemporary national issues, and orientation toward the two presidential candidates.

Relevant to this study, the authors note that voter turnout in 1952 was 61.5 million, as compared with 48.5 million in 1948. One of the reasons offered for this phenomenon is the attractiveness of the candidates, particularly General Eisenhower. The authors further point out that there was a large number of switchers in 1952; switchers being identified as those voters who had voted for the other party's presidential candidate in the previous

questions asked what there was about Stevenson and Eisenhower that might make the respondent want to vote for or against either of the candidates. When combined with responses to several to several other questions, it was possible to select those cases in which the factor of charismatic perception of one candidate or the other was evidently predominant over other grounds for evaluating the candidates (Davies, 1954, 1087).

The results show that less than two percent of the sample (32 cases out of 1799 respondents) gave clear evidence of a charismatic orientation. It is of importance to note that all 32 of the cases involved charismatic perceptions of Eisenhower. No clear-cut cases of Stevenson-oriented charisma were found. Although Eisenhower was the eventual winner, it is apparent that candidate charisma was not the decisive factor in the voters' choice.

A similar study attempts to gauge the influences on the election result and resolve a winning combination of forces into its component parts (Stokes, et al. 1958). Using the SRC studies, the authors attempt to find an explict technique by which to know in any presidential election the relative influence on the outcome of each of a set of factors affecting the result.

The authors hypothesize that the direction of a person's vote would depend, in an immediate sense, on his/her perceptions and evaluations of the things he sees in national politics: the parties, the candidates, the issues of foreign and domestic policy, and the contending group forces such as religion, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Eight open-ended questions with provi-

sion for recording 5 responses each were included in the pre-election interviews in 1952 and 1956. For each party, one question invited favorable responses and one invited unfavorable responses. Similarly, for each candidate, one question asked for favorable comments and one for unfavorable comments. This approach has been used in subsequent presidential election years, except for 1972 which allowed for three, rather than five, responses.

In measuring partisan attitudes to explore their influence on the individual's choice of a candidate, the results indicate that the joint relation of partisan attitudes and voting preference was high and that each attitude dimension makes a contribution to the relationship. While partisan attitudes tend to be the key determinant for voter choice in both elections, public attitudes toward the presidential candidates were of greater influence on voting choice in 1956 than they were in 1952 (Stokes et al. 1958, 381).

The Importance of Partisanship

From this research, the same authors provided what has become the landmark study in voting behavior (Campbell, et al. 1960). Based on nationwide surveys of large samples of the electorate in 1948, 1952, and 1956,

> comparisons are made between Democratic and Republican voters in presidential elections on the basis of voter's attitudes toward a limited set of political objects: the attributes of the candidates, the relationship of interest groups to the major parties, issues of

> domestic policy, issues of foreign policy, and the records of the major parties in managing the affairs of government (Campbell et al. 1960, 66-68).

Similar to Campbell's earlier work (1954), this study is social-psychological in nature as opposed to most earlier works which tended to be purely socioeconomic in nature. This continues the (then) recently examined notion that there exist psychological factors which greatly influence voter's choice as well as social pressures.

The authors propose a "funnel of causality" whereby the axis of the funnel represents a time dimension. The narrow end of the axis contains the immediate determinants of the vote. Such factors include attitudes toward the candidates and the parties. The broad end of the axis contains the broader and more remote factors such as party identification, membership in social groups and categories, population movement and personality which serve to influence a voter's choice (Campbell et al. 1960, 24-32). It is the narrow end of the funnel on which this study concentrates.

Four basic prerequisites for issue voting are laid down. First, a citizen must have an opinion about a given issue. Second, he/she must know the current government policy concerning the issue. Third, he/she must have a perception of party positions on the issue. Finally, the voter must also care enough about how the issue is resolved "to make his/her first three prerequisites relevant to his/her electoral considerations" (Campbell et al. 1960, 170-74).

The findings indicate that less than one-third of those interviewed meet these prerequisites (Campbell et al. 1960, 182). The electorate is shown to have little concern for issues. Instead, partisan preference and candidate

perception play major roles in voter's decisions. In fact, most positions which voters held on the issues tended to agree with those of the party (Campbell et al. 1960, 173-179).

Similar to earlier studies, the research finds that political party identification is the single most important psychological factor in choosing a president. Strong party identifiers are more consistent in their decisions than weak identifiers who are more consistent than Independents. Therefore, the stronger a person's party identification, the more consistent his/her vote (Campbell et al. 1960, 77). Further, political party identification is typically learned from one's family at childhood and lasts throughout one's lifetime although it is subject, but not likely, to change by competing social or personal forces (Campbell et al. 1960, 88-89).

It has also been suggested that in presidential elections since 1890, sharp upsurges in turnout have been associated with partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960). Such fluctuations in turnout and partisanship are derived from a combination of short-term political forces, superimposed on the underlying level of political interest and on the long- standing psychological attachments to the two parties (Campbell et al. 1960, 418).

By measuring a limited set of political orientations (among which party loyalty is pre-eminently important) it has been argued that we are able to say with increasing confidence what the behavior of the American electorate would be in any given election if the vote were to express only the influence of these basic dispositions. However, it must be pointed out that election returns also reflect the public's reaction to more recent and transitory influences, such as candidate personality, that deflect the vote from what it would have been had these short-term factors not intruded on the nation's

decision (Stokes, 1962, 689).

These studies show significant evidence of stability in the American electorate. It is argued that such stability stems directly from the demonstrated importance of party identification in explaining the vote (Merelman, 1970, 115). Partisanship is said to be the most important single influence on political opinions and voting behavior. The normal vote associated with any population depends entirely on the underlying distribution. While many other influences are at work on voters in society, none compare in significance with partisanship (Campbell et al. 1966, 18; Flanigan, 1968, 35).

The Decline Of Partisanship?

Is this to say that all students of voting behavior equally agree that partisanship is the single most important influence in determining the vote? Definitely not. While most pioneer studies emphasized the importance of partisanship in electoral behavior, studies in the 1970s and 1980s began emphazing its decline. One advocate of the influence of partianship in elections points out that while, as the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan has demonstrated, partisanship is still the single most important determinant of the vote, it does not control the vote. "Not every voter is a partisan and not every partisan votes in conformity with his party identification" (Merelman, 1970, 116). Further, the composition of the American electorate appears to be changing in such a way as to produce more electoral instability in the future. This increasing electoral stability, the author points out, may have important effects on our party system (Merelman, 1970, 117).

Other studies have shown that there is a significant number of Independents who are motivated by factors other than partisanship. As early as 1952, it was warned that we may need to reexamine our old adages about the "remarkable persistence" of party loyalty and "the mass conditioning of the electorate" in view of the fact that only 60 percent of the voters in the Survey Research Center study were definitely committed to a party (Eldersveld, 1952).

In determining the numbers of independent voters, as an initial step, two criteria have usually been adopted (Stedman, 1956). The first is to examine objective evidence from election statistics, and make some kind of inference. The second is that of self-classification, i.e. to ask people whether they consider themselves as Democrats, Republicans or independents.

As one study points out (Stedman, 1956), in a survey conducted in October 1952 asking people whether they identified with one of the major parties, the Survey Research Center found that most Americans did. However, people originally classifying themselves as "Independents" were further asked which party they generally supported. In addition to Republicans and Democrats, two other categories were established— "Independent Republicans" and "Independent Democrats." On this basis, the study was able to reduce the proportion of Independents to five percent. It could just as easily have been asked of those identifying with one of the major parties, "Do you always support this party?" If the answer was in the negative, the number of people classified as Independents would have increased.

Many studies have suggested that even if political parties play the major role in determining one's vote, they have significantly declined in influence (Kirkpatrick, 1975; Trilling, 1975; Pomper, 1977; LeBlanc, 1979;

Ware, 1981; Kleppner, 1982; Tuckel, 1983). However, these studies differ as to what is the major cause of this phenomenon, and what determinant has replaced parties in importance.

One study points out, that from 1952 to 1964, the overall amount of party identification among voters remained stable. However, from 1964 onward, more Americans have identified themselves as Independents (Polsby and Wildavsky, 1988, 18; Miller and Wattenberg, 1983). Here it is argued that while there have been massive defections of identifiers from the major parties in presidential voting in recent elections, no one can say for sure whether these defections mean a long-term drop in party identification or are a short-term response to particular events and specific candidates. Here it is concluded that the party as a value and as an orientation point is less important than it once was, but it is still very important (Polsby and Wildavsky, 1988, 20).

The Importance Of Issues

Many studies have argued that issues have been the major determinant of the vote in presidential elections. Such studies are in agreement that The American Voter (Campbell et al. 1960) needs to be updated with respect to issue voting (Field and Anderson, 1969; Boyd, 1969; Pomper, 1972; Kovenock, et al. 1970; Natchez and Bupp, 1968; Pierce, 1970; Repass, 1971).

Some studies have concentrated on voters who are likely to be sensitive to issues. This would include works on issue publics (Natchez and Bupp, 1968), and works on ideologies (Field and Anderson, 1969). Field and Anderson examine whether the proportion of the electorate construing politics in

ideological terms remains fairly constant from one election to the next. They find that the number of people making ideological evaluations of the parties and presidential candidates does differ over time, and that a relationship does exist between political environment and the public's assessment of it. All of these studies isolated those voters whose responses to open-ended questions show a concern with the issues (Kessel, 1972, 461).

Other scholars have perfected new indices or have used new concepts in measuring issue-awareness. Philip Converse conceptualized the normal vote to monitor the effect of issues on voters' choice (Campbell, et al. 1966, chap. 2). John Pierce has suggested various measures for "informational ideologies" and "effective ideologies" to add to the "conceptual ideologies" discussed in The American Voter (Campbell et al. 1960).

Richard Boyd has employed indices of party compatibility, candidate compatibility and issue compatibility to analyze vote defection (Boyd, 1969). He found that these cross-pressures relate directly to vote defecting; the greater the cross-pressures, the greater the likelihood of defection, defined as voting against the candidate of one's party. When forces arise which move some people to acquire attitudes which conflict with their party identification, these political attitudes tend to prevail.

Although not convinced of the complete demise of political parties, Boyd pointed out that the importance of issues is more problematic than the importance of candidates.

> The impact of a candidate is substantial but of short duration. The impact of issues, while rarely greater at any single moment, accumulates over a period of time. Overall, issues may outweigh candidates in affecting the outcome of elections, for issues have

> the capacity to alter the greatest single determinant of the vote, party identification (Boyd, 1969, 510).

David RePass has worked out a measure of issue partisanship which suggests that, contrary to earlier studies, the voting public has at least a few substantive issues in mind at the time of an election, and the voters seem to be acting more responsibly than had previously been thought (Repass, 1971). Furthermore, the public is seen to be in large measure concerned about sepcific issues, and these cognitions have a considerable impact on electoral choice. John Kessel notes that these two lines of analysis—the isolation of issue-motivated voters and the use of issue-sensitive measures—have tended to heighten our awareness of issue voting (Kessel, 1972, 461).

Perhaps the strongest statement about issue voting is put forth by Norman Nie, Sidney Verba and John Petrocik (1976). They analyze the major developments that have occurred in the American electorate since the 1950s which updates and brings into new perspective the findings of The American Voter (Campbell et al. 1960). Similar to earlier studies, this work is based on the series of national election studies, conducted by the Survey Research Center and the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan.

Also, similar to earlier studies, the authors assert that there has been a general decline in partisanship. Citizens who identified with a party were less guided by their affiliation in the seventies than they were in the fifties. For as they argue, "party affiliation, once the central thread connecting the citizen and the political process, is a thread that has certainly been frayed" (Nie et al. 1976, 73). Many factors contribute to this phenomenon. While the study confirms that party identification as a long-term commitment is estab-

lished early in life and maintained thereafter, the partisan attachments which arose out of the New Deal years remained dominant in the 1950s when the surveys upon which The American Voter was based were being conducted. There has been an increase of new, independent voters into the system since that time.

A second reason for the apparent decline in partisanship is attributed to the new set of intensive and emotional issues which came about in the sixties and early seventies (Nie et al. 1976). The 1960s and 1970s were marked by a whole new range of intensive and emotional issues never before seen in the American electorate. Issues such as racial violence, the Vietnam War, the urban crisis, Watergate, and a major economic recession cut across the old New Deal alliances and voting patterns. These events increased people's awareness of and concern for contemporary issues. The increased level of concern over issues has in turn been translated into a greater connection between issue positions and voting patterns (Nie et al. 1976, 96-109).

With the rise of issue voting came a decline in partisanship among the voters of America. Independents are found to represent the largest group of voters in society, with numbers slightly larger than the Democrats and over twice as large as the Republicans. Even among those who claim a partisan identification, the allegiance is found to be weak. The authors assert that the reason for this is because citizens are dissatisfied with the parties as they are presently constituted (Nie et al. 1976, 96-109). The study concludes that the electorate continues to be more issue conscious at the expense of political partisanship, and as such, the major component of an individual's choice at the polls is issue awareness.

It must be pointed out however, that there are certain flaws with the

study's reasoning. First, the levels of conceptualization are different from earlier studies. While using the SRC master codes yields an increase of 18 percent between 1956 and 1968 in the proportion of ideologies in the electorate, examination of the actual interview responses (a technique common to earlier studies) yields an increase of only 3 percent (Asher, 1976).

A second problem in the authors' reasoning is that the very argument used for the reason behind the increase in issue awareness can be used against its continued dominance as a motivating force in elections. It is possible that there were many more salient issues in the 1960s and 1970s than in other elections before or after. It is easy for a voter to be issue-conscious when so many issues dominate the political realm. However, this is rarely the case. Few elections are marked by so many salient issues, and as Survey Research Center studies have shown, voters are rarely informed of more than one or two issues in any presidential campaign. Furthermore, the events of the 1960s and early 1970s which increased voter's issue awareness would have a short-term effect on voter's consciousness that would not be likely to show a continued pattern over a period of time that would be exhibited by an enduring realignment such as that which occurred in the 1930s. Thus the same arguments which have been used against The American Voter accusing it of being time-bound, could now apply to The Changing Americans Voter.

The Importance Of Candidate Image

Other studies have argued that political parties have declined in importance due to an increase in attitudes toward candidates outside of

traditional party mechanisms rather than an increase in issue awareness among voters. As one scholar points out, "Appraisal of the candidates is clearly now a vital influence, and independent of other variables" (Pomper, 1975, 346).

One longitudinal study utilizes total party and total candidate attitudes in regressions for the vote in each presidential election from 1952 through 1972. It finds that there was a consistent linear decrease over the twenty-year period in the relative influence of total party images on the vote, and the linear decrease in party accompanied by the linear increase in candidate image (Kirkpatrick, et al. 1975). Attitudes grounded in candidate images, irrespective of various candidate differences from year to year, nearly doubled in their explanatory power and attitudes oriented toward the political parties were cut by more than one-half over the six electoral contests.

The explanatory power of regression coefficients affiliated with various candidate images tends to increase rather consistently over the twenty-year period. This increase is accompanied by an equally rapid weakening of party images in influencing voting behavior in presidential contests (Kirkpatrick et al. 1975, 278).

Some early studies recognize the increasing importance of candidate image on the electorate. One study using a statistical model for measuring various attitudinal forces on the nation's vote from 1952 to 1964 finds that the dynamism of popular attitude is peculiarly tied to the emergence of new candidates for the presidency, and that the fluctuations of electoral attitudes over these elections have to a remarkable degree focused on the candidates themselves (Stokes, 1966, 27).

In assessing the "dynamic elements" in presidential voting across four

elections, the author finds that candidate image varies most in attracting voters to candidates. Apparently, among those not loyally voting their party identification, impressions of the candidates personal qualities, their personality and honesty, caused a sufficient swing in votes to provide the Republicans with victory in 1952 and again in 1956. Candidate image is conceptualized as a "short term" force since it varies between elections more so than does party identification.

Most studies which advance the notion of candidate image as the determinant of the vote attribute this phenomenon to the increasing focus on candidates by the news media. One study examines campaign coverage in the press and its relation to public perception of presidential candidates. By using a national survey of U.S. voters conducted during the 1968 presidential election, it finds that press images furnish data for the formation of differential images of various candidates. The stress of personal image qualities, prevalent in the political imagery of average Americans, is paralleled by a heavy emphasis on personal qualities in the press (Graebner, 1972, 71). It is further found that the manner of information presentation, rather than the substance, may contribute substantially to the dominance of personality traits in public presidential images (Graebner, 1972, 72).

An analysis of voting behavior for President, Senate, and House at the state level for the period 1914-1980 found that since World War II, there has been a pronounced trend toward "particularization" in voting for federal offices (Tuckel and Tejera, 1983). In the past, voting behavior was strongly influenced by party loyalty, which in turn, lent a high degree of predictability to the vote outcome. Such constraints no longer influence electoral behavior with the same degree of force as they did in the past. To an increasing de-

gree, the outcomes of federal elections seem to depend upon transient concerns and the ability of candidates to exploit these concerns through expensive mass media campaigns (Tuckel and Tejera, 1983, 243). As Frank Sorauf (1976, p.416) has pointed out,"the handsome faces, ready smiles, and graceful styles that television screens convey so fully attract some of the support that party symbols once commanded".

The Re-emergence of Party Identification?

Is this to say that the impact of the media on candidate images in presidential elections has totally replaced the political party in importance? Some recent studies disagree.

One study investigates various factors as explanations of the voters' choice in 1972 and 1976, using data from the national election survey conducted by the Center for Political Studies. It focuses on the effect that partisanship, issues, ideology and candidate evaluation had on the individual vote decision (Miller, 1978). Finding that candidate evaluations have a greater impact than party identification on the vote, it argues that this is because we consider only direct effects.

> Theoretically, party identification is a prior predisposition to such attitudes as candidate evaluations and issue preferences; thus it is more correct to speak of total effects, rather than just the direct effect, that party has on vote choice (Miller, 1978, 151).

When total effects are computed, it is shown that party identification is the most important overall explanation for the electoral outcome. Also, when the general characteristics of the 1972 and 1976 elections are com-

pared, the re-emergence of party identification as a determinant of the vote is a noteworthy difference, although the evenly balanced popularity of the 1976 candidates, as measured by the Survey Research Center also presents a strong contrast (Miller, 1978, 152).

Another study using data derived from the NES-SRC American National Election Studies, argues that reports of the demise of political parties have been exaggerated (LeBlanc and Merrin, 1979). Most Independents lean in a partisan direction, and "leaners" are behavioral partisans, almost the equal of weak identifiers (LeBlanc and Merrin, 1979, 240). The implications are that partisan ties, even though weakened, continue to structure the American electorate. That there has been a growth among Independents is partially offset by the inclinations of most of them toward one or the other of the parties. The decline in partisanship from 1960 through 1972, as well as its resurgence in 1976, can be explained in part by the type of issues that gained the electoral agenda (LeBlanc and Merrin, 1979, 254). However, one cannot be sanguine that parties have regained their former stature in voters' minds.

Observation - General Trends

In this brief review of the relevant literature of factors which influence voting behavior in presidential elections, it is clear that there is no definitive agreement among scholars as to which factor is most influential. One study conducted in 1975 might help to account for some of these differences by showing the fluctuations in the importance of each factor throughout the years (DeClercq, et al . 1975). Relying on the Survey Research Center's

presidential election studies between 1956 and 1972 as the sole source of data available to assess the determinants of how people vote across time, the authors agree that each of the major determinants of the vote shows a different pattern over the five elections. Party image shows a continual decline from an already low influence in 1956 (DeClecq et al. 1975, 237). This image, highly influenced by party identification, seems unimportant in motivating a partisan vote.

Issue orientation shows a moderate increase in influence on the vote over the same span. In 1956 it was the weakest influence, but in 1972 it exceeded partisan influence. Candidate image showed stability until 1972 when it became the most influential factor in influencing the vote. From these data, one might infer that candidate image is sharply ascending in influence, replacing party identification and unlikely to be challenged in the foreseeable future by any other influence (DeClercq et al. 1975, 238).

In reviewing the literature on the subject, one finds that most studies follow this trend. The importance of partisan influence in presidential elections dominated research in the 1950s and early 1960s, until it started being replaced by research demonstrating the importance of issue orientation in the middle to late 1960s. Candidate image as the main determinant of voting behavior in presidential elections replaced issue orientation in research in the early 1970s and continues to dominate the literature today.

Another study divides all voting studies into two contradictory theories (Sigel, 1964). One theory leans heavily on theoretical and empirical work in social psychology, especially social perception, and has been referred to as the perceptual balance theory (Heider, 1946; McGrath, 1962). This theory posits that political perception is perceiver-determined. In order not to expe-

rience imbalance or stress partisans, especially, will see in a preferred candidate what they wish to see—even if it is unrelated to objective reality (Sigel, 1964, 484).

The second theory, referred to as image-theory, holds that the image voters have of a candidate is not perceiver-determined. Therefore, candidates by their appearance, speeches, and stands on issues, convey a specific image. As a result, the candidate who casts the most popular image wins the election (Sigel, 1964, 484).

From a survey conducted in 1960, the author was able to conclude that neither the perceptual balance theory nor the image theory provided exhaustive explanations of political perception, since both failed to take into account the crucial role of political party identification (Sigel, 1964, 495).

The author warns that party preference greatly affects a voter's perception of candidates, and future research on political perception and voting preferences must take into account the degree to which candidate perception is influenced by party perception. No theory of political perception can offer much promise that fails to take cognizance of the role of parties in voter's political imagery (Sigel, 1964, 496).

While this study is over twenty years old, it still presents a very valid distinction in the literature concerning voting behavior in presidential elections. We can argue that studies placing partisan influence foremost in importance as an influence on voting behavior are perceptual balance oriented, while studies emphasizing issue orientation or candidate image are image-theory oriented. Sigel conducted her study before image-theory research became so dominant in the literature. It is important to also point out that Sigel's study was written before television became so dominant. There-

fore, while her assertions still hold true, her conclusions need to be reevaluated today.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

The Kelley — Mirer Rule

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this analysis to assess the determinants of electoral choice for president. A study conducted in 1974 by Stanley Kelley and Thad Mirer is focused upon as one explanation for the vote. Two other forms of analysis are also used. A study conducted in 1974 presents a simple yet brilliantly conceived empirical study of the voting decision (Kelley and Mirer, 1974). Kelley and Mirer viewed voting as a simple act, "entailing little agony of decision for the average voter" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 572). A voter simply adds up his/her likes and dislikes about the parties and candidates in arriving at a voting decision. The authors regard one set of facts as a better explanation of how people vote than another,

> if it (a) shows a stronger, nonspurious statistical association with voter's choices, (b) involves a more believable and nontrivial account of the ways voters arrive at their decisions, and (c) permits one to predict voter's choices more accurately (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 572).

The American Voter (Campbell et al. 1960) is the explanation of voting that best meets this test. However, Campbell and his associates identify the attitudes which explain voter's choices as "considerations" that enter into these choices. They do not take into account any rule which voters follow in

"translating these attitudes into voters" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 572). If such a rule or rules could be identified, a better and more relevant explanation of voting could be achieved. "Knowledge of the considerations that a person is taking into account and of the rule he is applying are a sufficient basis both for predicting what he will decide and for explaining his decision" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 573).

The voter's decision rule, or "the Rule" as it is commonly referred to, suggests that:

> The voter canvasses his likes and dislikes of the leading candidates and major parties involved in and election. Weighing each like and dislike equally, hee votes for the candidate towards whom he has the greatest net number of favorable attitudes, if there is such a candidate. If no candidate has such an advantage, the voter votes consistently with his party affiliation, if he has one. If his attitudes do not include him toward one candidate more than toward another, and if he does not identify with one of the major parties, the voter reaches a null decision (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 574).

Put in a simple way, if a voter likes one candidate more than another, he/she will vote for that candidate. If he/she prefers neither candidate, then he/she will vote with his/her party. If the voter does not favor any candidate and does not have a party affiliation, then no prediction is made. This would argue that image-theory applies to the voter's decision; that is, that the voter's decision is stimulus-determined.

The findings are quite impressive. The data used in the presidential election studies of 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1964 allow the authors to make a prediction based on the rule for more than 98 percent of the respondents reporting having voted and how they voted in those elections. Of the 98

percent, the authors were able to correctly predict an average of 88 percent of the votes.

Predictions based on other methods have proven inferior to this method. Research based on voters party affiliation provides a prediction for an average of only 92 percent of the total cases, and a correct prediction of only 77 percent of these (Kelley and Mirer, 1974). The Rule is better for predicting votes because it permits one to make predictions in a larger percentage of the cases than does voter's partisan identifications. It also permits one to predict a greater percentage of all votes correctly and to make more accurate predictions than does partisan preference.

Statements of how one intends to vote for a particular candidate have also proven to be a better predictor than predictions based on party affiliation alone. By indications of how one intends to vote, an average of 88 percent of the cases produce predictions. However, of the 88 percent an average accuracy of over 93 percent is yielded. While predictions based on the Rule are not so likely to be correct as those based on the voter's statement of how he/she intends to vote, the Rule permits one to predict a larger proportion of all votes correctly. This is because the Rule allows a greater prediction rate of approximately 10 percent. Since many of the voters who had not decided or would not say how they intended to vote could still be predicted by applying the Voter's Decision Rule when they voted.

Some authors argue that the "net effect" approach provided by the Kelley-Mirer Rule "inappropriately combines evaluations of the two distinct objects of favorable attitudes" (Conway and Wycoff, 1980, 1147). This would serve to reduce the role of party identification in predicting voter choice. However, this argument is used in the context of senatorial elections. Kelley

and Mirer's study deals only with presidential elections. Candidate orientations may play a different role in voter choice at the Senate level. Candidates for the Senate may also be more easily distinguished from their parties than can presidential candidates, especially incumbents. As Campbell and his associates first observed when asking voters their likes and dislikes of the parties, presidential candidates are often included in party attitudes, and vice-versa (Campbell et al. 1960, 249-265).

Another criticism of the Kelley-Mirer Rule is that it does not identify or explain "those components upon which the electorate depends most heavily" (Feigert and McClure, 1981). This criticism cannot be dismissed lightly. However, the fact that Kelley and Mirer have identified the major psychological factors comprising a voter's decision at the polls indicates that a strong step in the positive direction has been taken in discovering why people vote as they do. Further research must be conducted to identify the individual components comprising the voter's evaluation.

The Data

One of the major objectives of social science is to explain abstract matter parsimoniously. That is, social science should be able to explain the abstract world in clear, concise terms. One of the major reasons why the Kelley-Mirer Rule (Kelley and Mirer, 1974) is focused upon in this research is because it is parsimonious. This, however, proves to be one of its major shortcomings as well. It is quite easy to predict that a person will vote for the candidate and party that he/she likes the most in any given election. The difficulty lies in determining which factor is of most importance for the voter

in any given election. Therefore, the research is only half complete.

This study attempts to go beyond the Kelley-Mirer Rule by focusing on the major determinants of the vote. As such, the research is divided into three sections. The first section is simply an adaptation and extension of the Kelley-Mirer Rule in the aggregate through the 1988 presidential election. This will determine the generalizability of this rule in predicting the vote. The second section of the research concentrates on the factors determining the vote by reviewing the responses of the voters regarding the presidential candidates and political parties in a presidential election.

Similar to other studies, the data used here have been gathered by the Survey Research Center conducted by the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. The Survey Research Center has conducted a cross-sectional survey in each election year since 1952. The sample of respondents surveyed constitutes a cross-sectional sample which is representative of the voting age population of the United States residing in private dwellings.

In the first phase of the research, the easiest and clearest way to describe the procedure is to review the application of the Rule to the data as Kelley and Mirer do. "The voter canvasses his likes and dislikes of the leading candidates and major parties involved in an election" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 90).

Only respondents reporting having voted and reporting how they had voted are treated as voters. Voters therefore include all respondents (1) who said that they had voted for a major party candidate or for a minor party candidate, (2) who said they had voted for a candidate who was not running, and (3) who said that they had voted for a party but did not name the candi-

date. Those who did not say how they had voted or could not remember how they had voted were not treated as voters, however. These may seem like very liberal standards to the cautious, but they are consistent with previous studies in voting behavior (Campbell et al. 1960; Nie et al. 1976; Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 590-91).

Respondents' likes and dislikes of the candidates and parties are recorded by the Survey Research Center. Set questions put to voters in pre-election interview were open-ended and identical in form for each of the elections from 1952 through 1984. The questions regarding parties were worded, "I'd like to ask you what you think are the good and bad points about the two parties. Is there anything in particular that you like about the (Democratic, Republican) party?" If the answer was in the affirmative, the next question would then be, "what is that?" Interviewers could record up to five responses given (three responses were allowed for in the 1972 study). The same procedure was used for the respondents' dislikes of the two major parties. The questions about the candidates were, "Now, I'd like to ask you the good and bad points of the (two, three) candidates for president that might make you want to vote for him?" If the answer was in the affirmative, then the voter would next be asked, "what is that?" once again, upon to five responses (with the exception of three for 1972) could be recorded. The same procedure was used for the respondent's dislikes of the candidates (Is there anything that might make you want to vote against him?").

"Weighting each like and dislike equally, the voter votes for the candidate toward whom he has the greatest net number of favorable attitudes, if there is such a candidate" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 91).

The net number of favorable attitudes is determined for each respon-

dent by subtracting the number of unfavorable attitudes from the number of favorable attitudes. This applies to both attitudes about the parties and candidates involved. For the Democratic Party and its candidate, likes minus dislikes results in net likes $(D^+) = (D^-) = D$. Republican support is measured as: $(R^+) - (R^-) = R$.

"If no candidate has such an advantage, the voter votes consistently with his party affiliation if he has such" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 91).

In the Kelley and Mirer study, all respondents classified as "Strong Democrats, Weak Democrats, or Independent Democrats," are treated as being affiliated with the Democratic party. All respondents classified as "Strong Republicans, Weak Republicans, or Independent Republicans", were treated as having an affiliation with the Republican party.

In the research here, differing from Kelley and Mirer, we first see which candidate has the largest net number of favorable attitudes in the aggregate and whether that candidate won the election. If that candidate did not, then we add the total net number of favorable attitudes for each candidate with their respective party to determine whether or not the candidate and party which combine for the greatest net number of favorable attitudes wins the election. If this combination does, then this section of the Kelley-Mirer Rule is validated.

Finally, "if his attitudes do not incline him toward one candidate more than another and if he does not identify with one of the major parties, the voter reaches a null decision" (Kelley and Mirer, 1974, 91).

Sometimes the voter has no greater net number of favorable attitudes toward one of the candidates or parties. If this occurs and he/she has expressed no affiliation with either major party, then under the Rule, he/she

reaches a null decision. In the research here, there should be no such thing as a null decision because party identification is not measured by claims to be, but rather, by which party they find most favorable in the election. In other words, party identification is measured by what they say. It is argued here that a person is not truly a Democrat if he/she likes the Republican party better, and as such, votes for that party. The result of this measure is that people will tend to favor one party and candidate over another thereby negating the possibility of a null decision unless both candidates and their parties fair equally.

It is not the aim of this research to predict how a person votes but rather to identify whether the candidate or the party plays the decisive role in one's decision. Therefore, as stated previously, the Rule will be applied only in the aggregate to see if, on the average, the assumptions hold true for each election from 1952 to 1988. Next, we shall proceed to the second phase of our research.

In this phase of the research, each election year will be viewed in terms of number of responses on the average for each candidate and each party to determine which of these two factors produces the greatest number. The total number of responses for both candidates and both parties on the average are reviewed to determine which of these two factors the voter is able to express the most opinions about. Candidate orientation (C) will determined by adding all favorable and unfavorable responses about the Democratic candidate ($DC^+ + DC^-$) with all favorable and unfavorable responses about the Republican candidate ($RC^+ + RC^-$). Party orientation will be determined as follows: $DP^+ + DP^- + RP^+ + RP^- = P$.

The final phase of the research will focus on the direction of candidate

approval ($C^+ - C^- = C$) and of party approval ($P^+ - P^- = P$) for each election to determine whether candidate orientation or party orientation was most responsible for producing the eventual winner. First, the net score for each candidate is examined and compared against the other and to the electoral outcome. If the winning candidate also received the higher score, candidate orientation is said to play a significant role. Next, the net score for each party is examined and compared against each other and to the electoral outcome. If the winning candidate's party received the higher score, party orientation is also said to play a significant role. Finally, if the winning candidate and his/her party both receive a score higher than that of their opponents, they are compared against each other to determine which factor produces the greater advantage over the opposition.

CHAPTER IV

Findings Using the Kelley-Mirer Rule

This chapter adapts the Kelley-Mirer rule in the aggregate and extends it through the 1988 presidential election to determine the generalizabilty in predicying the vote.

The first year in which we test the Kelley-Mirer rule is 1952. This was a unique election year in that neither candidate for the Presidency was an incumbent. This was the first such election in twenty-four years. In fact, neither participant was considered a political "insider" in national politics. The Democratic nominee, Adlai E. Stevenson, had been a very popular Governor of Illinois. The Republican nominee, Dwight David Eisenhower, had been one of the heroes of World War II. Each candidate, as an outsider to national politics, could project an image separate from that of the party which he represented.

As can be seen in Table I, each candidate fared well among the strong supporters of his party. Stevenson received an average of 1.1 favorable responses while Eisenhower received an average of 1.6. However, Stevenson averaged .6 unfavorable responses whereas Eisenhower received .7 unfavorable responses. In subtracting the average number of unfavorable responses

TABLE I

Candidate and Party Preference Scores for 1952

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	1.9	0.3	1.6	0.9	1.3	-0.4
WD	1.2	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.8	0.6
ID	1.7	0.5	1.2	1.5	1.2	0.3
I	0.8	0.7	0.1	2.1	0.5	1.6
IR	0.7	1.1	-0.4	2.7	0.5	2.2
WR	0.7	0.9	-0.3	2.4	0.5	1.9
SR	0.5	1.3	-0.8	2.8	0.3	2.5
$\bar{X}$	1.1	- 0.6 =	0.4	1.6	- 0.7 =	0.9
	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	2.3	0.7	1.6	0.3	1.8	-1.5
WD	1.6	0.9	0.7	0.6	1.0	-0.3
ID	1.8	1.1	0.7	0.8	1.5	-0.7
I	0.9	1.3	-0.4	1.0	0.5	0.5
IR	0.8	2.1	-1.3	1.8	0.7	1.1
WR	0.8	1.6	-0.9	1.7	0.5	1.2
SR	0.5	2.3	-1.8	2.8	0.3	2.4
$\bar{X}$	1.3	- 1.2 =	0.1	1.0	- 0.9 =	0.1

Source: Survey Research Center

from the average number of favorable responses, we find that Stevenson scored a .4 while Eisenhower, the winner, scored a .9. In reviewing each party that year, we find that the Democrats received an average of 1.3 favorable responses and 1.2 unfavorable responses, for a net score of .1. Interestingly enough, the Republican party received an average of 1.0 favorable responses to an average .9 unfavorable responses, for a net of .1 as well. While the average voter could give more favorable responses for the Demo-

cratic party than the Republican party, he/she could give more negative responses for them as well. This is probably due to the fact that the Democratic party had been the most visible party since 1932. Although the candidate receiving the largest number of favorable responses minus unfavorable responses won the election, when adding each candidate to their respective party, the assumption holds true as well. The average number of net favorable responses about the Republican party and its candidate was 1.0, as compared with the .5 average for the Democratic party and its candidate, a ratio of two to one.

The next presidential election was unique as well in that we saw the same two combatants going against each other again. This was the first presidential election since William Jennings Bryan challenged William McKinley in 1900 that a candidate who had been defeated for the Presidency rechallenged the candidate who won. It should be noted that Bryan lost in his second race with McKinley as well. This election is also unique in that we can assess the differences in the candidates' average favorable response rate compared to the previous election. Here we have the same two candidates representing the same two parties. Any difference in ratings is noteworthy.

As can be seen in Table II, Stevenson's average number of favorable responses went down while his average number of unfavorable responses went up. In fact the average number of favorable responses about Stevenson (.9) equalled the average number of unfavorable responses about him (.9), for

TABLE II

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1956

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	1.9	0.3	1.6	1.0	1.5	-0.5
WD	1.2	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.9	0.6
ID	1.7	0.5	1.2	1.9	1.3	0.7
I	0.8	0.7	0.1	2.0	0.6	1.4
IR	0.7	1.1	-0.4	3.0	0.4	2.6
WR	0.7	0.9	-0.3	2.7	0.4	2.3
SR	0.5	1.3	-0.8	3.2	0.1	3.0
	---	---	----	---	---	----
$\bar{X}$	1.1	- 0.6	= 0.4	2.0	- 0.8	= 1.2
	DP+	**DP-**	**NET**	**RP+**	**RP-**	**NET**
SD	2.3	0.3	1.9	0.3	1.8	-1.5
WD	1.6	0.4	1.1	0.6	1.0	-0.3
ID	1.7	0.7	1.0	0.8	1.5	-0.7
I	0.7	1.5	0.2	1.0	0.5	0.5
IR	0.6	1.1	-0.5	1.8	0.7	1.1
WR	0.7	1.1	-0.4	1.7	0.5	1.2
SR	0.3	1.5	-1.2	2.8	0.3	2.4
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$\bar{X}$	1.2	- 0.7	= 0.5	1.0	- 0.9	= 0.1

Source: Survey Research Center

a net of 0. On the other hand, Eisenhower's average number of favorable responses rose from 1.6 to 2.0 while his average number of unfavorable responses increased only slightly (.7 to .8). This left Eisenhower with a net of 1.2 favorable responses. Once again Eisenhower won the election, and once again the Kelley-Mirer rule, in the aggregate, holds true.

In looking at the number of favorable responses for each political party that year, we can see that the average number of favorable responses for the Democrats slightly dropped (1.3 to 1.2) while the average number of unfavorable responses about them greatly decreased (1.2 to .7). There was virtually no change in the average number of positive or negative responses regarding the Republican party. The net number of favorable responses about the Democratic party rose to .5 while the net number of favorable responses about the Republican party remained at .1. In adding candidate and party, we find that the Republican candidate and party received a net average of 1.3 favorable responses, while the Democratic candidate and party received a net average of .5 favorable responses. This large difference is almost wholly attributable to the immense popularity of Eisenhower.

The next presidential election, 1960, once again pitted two non-incumbents against each other, although the Republican nominee, Richard Nixon, was Eisenhower's vice president and, as such, was probably greatly associated with his presidency in the minds of most voters. The Democratic nominee, John F. Kennedy, was a U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and was considered a "rising political star" (Barber, 1980, 64-86).

As Table III shows, Kennedy received an average of 1.4 favorable responses per voter, the largest number of favorable responses for a Democratic nominee since such studies had been conducted. However, Kennedy also received the largest number of unfavorable responses recorded by a

TABLE III

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1960

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.3	0.4	1.9	0.5	1.2	-0.7
WD	1.7	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.9	0.3
ID	2.1	0.6	1.5	0.7	1.0	-0.3
I	1.2	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.9
IR	0.8	1.5	-0.7	2.6	0.4	2.3
WR	1.0	1.4	-0.4	2.3	0.2	2.0
SR	0.6	1.9	-1.3	2.9	0.1	2.7
$\bar{X}$	1.4	- 1.0 =	0.4	1.5	- 0.6 =	0.8
	DP+	**DP-**	**NET**	**RP+**	**RP-**	**NET**
SD	2.1	0.2	1.9	0.3	1.5	-1.2
WD	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.9	-0.4
ID	1.5	0.3	1.3	0.3	0.9	-0.6
I	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.0
IR	0.7	1.1	-0.5	1.5	0.5	1.0
WR	0.5	1.1	-0.7	1.5	0.4	1.1
SR	0.3	1.3	-1.1	2.0	0.3	1.7
$\bar{X}$	1.1	- 0.6 =	0.5	0.9	- 0.8 =	0.1

Source: Survey Research Center

Democratic nominee (1.0). Kennedy's net number of favorable responses was .4. Nixon received an average of 1.5 favorable responses to an average of .6 unfavorable responses (the smallest number of unfavorable responses for a Republican nominee since such studies have been conducted). Nixon's net number of favorable responses was .8.

Comparing each candidate's average net number of favorable re-

sponses is quite interesting for a number of reasons. First, Kennedy, the eventual winner, received only half the number of net favorable responses than did Nixon, the loser (.4 to .8). Candidate scores, by themselves, are not an accurate indicator for the 1960 election. Therefore, we must look at the number of favorable responses for each party to determine whether our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule is affirmed for the 1960 election.

The Democratic party received an average of 1.1 favorable responses and an average of .6 unfavorable responses, for a net number of .5 favorable responses. The Republican party received an average of .9 favorable responses to an average of .8 unfavorable responses, leaving the Republican party with a net of .1 favorable responses. When adding the net number of favorable responses for each candidate to the net number of favorable responses of their respective party, we find that each candidate and party receives a score of .9. This is interesting because under the guidelines established in the Kelley-Mirer rule, we reach a null decision. In other words, we cannot successfully predict this election. However, this is an important point because the narrowness in the number of net favorable responses for each party and candidate was reflected by the narrowness of the election. Although John F. Kennedy defeated the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, the margin of victory by popular votes was the closest of any presidential candidate in recent history with 114,673 popular votes (Guide to U.S. Elections, 1985, 360).

A final reason why these results are interesting is that when people speak of the 1960 presidential election, they often note the "Kennedy mystique", charm and charisma as the decisive factor. However, the research here suggests that Nixon had a more favorable image, on the average, among most voters; and that it is the Democratic party, and not their candidate which was most responsible in winning that election (Page, 1978, 240).

The presidential electon of 1964 featured an incumbent who had achieved office through succession, not election, due to the assassination of Kennedy. While Lyndon Johnson had not been elected president, he still possessed the advantages inherent with incumbency—primarily name recognition. The Republican nominee, Barry Goldwater, was a conservative Senator from Arizona.

As can be seen in Table IV, Johnson received an average of 1.8 favorable responses. The average number of unfavorable responses about Johnson was .8. This gave Johnson a 1.0 net of favorable responses. Goldwater, on the other hand, averaged .8 favorable responses to 1.6 unfavorable responses, for a net average of -.7 favorable responses. Johnson had a larger number of favorable responses and triumphed in the election. It appears that our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule is confirmed for this election.

Exploring this election deeper, we see that the Democratic party had an average of 1.2 favorable responses compared to an average of .7 unfavorable responses. This gave the Democratic party a score of .4 favorable re-

TABLE IV

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1964

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.6	0.3	2.3	0.3	2.0	-1.7
WD	2.0	0.6	1.4	0.6	1.6	-1.1
ID	2.1	0.7	1.4	0.6	2.0	-1.4
I	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.6	1.3	-0.7
IR	1.3	1.6	-0.4	1.6	1.1	0.4
WR	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.4	-0.2
SR	0.6	1.8	-1.3	2.3	0.8	1.6
	---	---	---	---	---	---
$\bar{X}$	1.8	- 0.8 =	1.0	0.8	- 1.6 =	-0.7
	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	2.1	0.3	1.7	0.2	1.3	-1.1
WD	1.2	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.8	-0.4
ID	1.3	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.8	-0.4
I	0.5	0.6	-0.1	0.3	0.4	0.0
IR	0.7	1.4	-0.7	1.0	0.8	0.5
WR	0.5	1.0	-0.5	1.0	0.6	0.5
SR	0.4	1.8	-1.4	2.0	0.5	1.4
	---	---	---	---	---	---
$\bar{X}$	1.2	- 0.7 =	0.5	0.6	- 0.8 =	-0.2

Source: Survey Research Center

sponses. The Republican party received an average of .6 favorable responses compared to an average of .8 unfavorable responses. This left the Republicans with net of -.2 favorable responses. When adding the score of each candidate with that of his party, we find that the Democrats received an average of 1.4 net favorable responses while the Republicans received an average of .9 net favorable responses.

In reviewing these results, a few points should be made. First, Johnson's net average of 1.0 favorable responses represented the largest average number of favorable responses recorded by a Democratic candidate, and the second largest by a candidate of either party (Eisenhower averaged 2.0 in 1956). It should be mentioned that both Johnson and Eisenhower were incumbents and, at that time, the only two incumbents seeking election since these studies have been conducted. This might lead one to believe that incumbency leads to a large favorable rating. While this appears to be the case, such an assumption will not be advanced by this paper (for reasons we shall see later).

It should be pointed out, secondly, that Barry Goldwater's rating of -.7 was the lowest of any candidate since such studies have been conducted. Also, it was the first negative score recorded by a candidate of either party. The Republican party's score of - .2, while being the lowest score ever recorded by either party up to this point also represented the first negative rating of either party.

Finally, when adding the score of each candidate to that of his party, we notice that the Democrat's score of 1.4 was the largest ever recorded while the Republican's score of -.9 was the lowest ever recorded. Johnson also won the election with over 61% of the popular vote, the largest popular landslide since these studies began. These results would appear to show that our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule confirmed. Further, our adaptation can

(as in 1960) also indicate, to a degree, the closeness of the race.

The presidential election of 1968 pitted a Democratic nominee, Hubert Humphrey, who had "inherited" the nomination from a president under whom he had served as vice president against a Republican nominee, Richard Nixon, who had run unsuccessfully for the same office eight years earlier. While Nixon was the first presidential candidate since Adlai Stevenson to seek the office again after losing the first time, the circumstances were different. Stevenson sought the office against the same individual who had beaten him four years earlier whereas Nixon was seeking the office against a first-time candidate.

As shown in Table V, Humphrey received an average of 1.3 favorable responses to an average of 1.3 unfavorable responses. Humphrey's overall favorable response rate was -.1. Nixon had an average of 1.5 favorable responses and an average of 1.1 unfavorable responses. This gave Nixon a net average of .4 favorable responses. Nixon had a larger net average of favorable responses than did Humphrey and was the eventual winner of the election. Once again, our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule is confirmed.

The Democratic party received an average of 1.1 favorable responses and an average of 1.2 unfavorable responses. The Republican party received an average of .8 favorable responses and an average of .9 unfavorable responses. The Democratic party's net average of favorable responses was -.2 while the Republican party's was 0. In adding each candidate's score to that

TABLE V

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1968

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.5	0.6	1.9	0.4	1.7	-1.3
WD	1.3	1.2	0.2	1.0	1.2	-0.1
ID	1.4	1.3	0.2	1.0	1.6	-0.5
I	0.7	1.2	-0.5	1.5	0.9	0.6
IR	0.9	2.1	-1.2	2.6	0.8	1.8
WR	0.6	1.8	-1.2	2.4	0.7	1.7
SR	0.4	2.2	-1.8	3.3	0.4	3.0
$\bar{X}$	1.3	- 1.3 =	-0.1	1.5	- 1.1 =	0.4
	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	2.1	0.7	1.4	0.3	1.5	-1.1
WD	1.2	1.0	0.2	0.5	0.8	-0.3
ID	1.3	1.1	0.2	0.5	1.1	-0.6
I	0.5	1.2	-0.6	0.5	0.7	-0.2
IR	0.6	2.1	-1.5	1.3	0.8	0.9
WR	0.4	1.6	-1.1	1.3	0.6	0.7
SR	0.4	2.2	-1.7	2.1	0.4	1.8
$\bar{X}$	1.1	- 1.2 =	-0.2	0.8	- 0.9 =	0.0

Source: Survey Research Center

of his party, we find that the Democrats received a score of -.3 while the Republicans received a score of .4.

This election represents the first time that a Democratic candidate had received a negative average of net favorable responses. Undoubtedly, just as Nixon had partially "inherited" Eisenhower's net favorable response rating in 1960, Humphrey had partially "inherited" Johnson's. The major

difference was that Eisenhower was extremely popular when he left office whereas Johnson was equally unpopular. Humphrey's unfavorable rating was partially a reflection of Johnson's just as Nixon's favorable rating in 1960 was partially a reflection of Eisenhower's.

A complicating factor in this election was the emergence of George Wallace as a third party candidate (Kessel, 1984, 166-70, 258). Wallace, a conservative Democratic governor from Alabama, garnered over 13 per cent of the popular vote that year while picking up 46 electoral votes. Had all of Wallace's votes gone to the Democratic nominee, Humphrey (an unlikely possibility due to Wallace's conservative stands), Nixon still would have won the election but Humphrey would have received the majority of the popular vote.

Not only was this the first election in which the Democratic candidate received a negative favorable rating, but it was also the first in which the Democratic party received a negative favorable rating. This is an interesting point considering the fact that four years earlier, the combined score of the Democratic candidate and party was the highest recorded. This implies that positive or negative attitudes toward a party or the candidate of that party do not always carry over from one election to another. In other words, it appears that the American people are fickle with regard to lasting attitudes about both political parties and their candidates for office.

Another point worth mentioning is that neither party received a

positive favorable rating, on the average. This is important because it appears that overall, the American people weren't very favorable to either party, they simply disliked one party more than the other. One scholar argues that it is quite possible that the initial decline in party identification may have been due to the large increase in negative attitudes apparent in 1968 (Wattenberg, 1981, 949). However, he points out that since that time, such attitudes have subsided. Furthermaor, positive attitudes have also declined as neutrality toward parties, rather than negativity, has increased.

The election of 1972 featured a senator from South Dakota, George McGovern, as the Democratic nominee and an incumbent president, Richard Nixon, as the Republican nominee. Nixon was now a familiar figure to most Americans while McGovern was not nearly as well-known. The Democrats fielded the first candidate in twelve years who had not come from the White House, as either a president or vice-president.

As Table VI shows, McGovern received an average favorable response rating of only .7 (the lowest ever recorded by a presidential candidate). This could be explained by the fact that McGovern was not that well-known nationally except for the fact that he received an average of 1.4 negative responses per voter (the largest of any Democratic nominee up to that point). Therefore, it appears that people had formed ideas about McGovern, but those ideas were largely negative.

Nixon, on the other hand, received a favorable response rating of 1.4

and an unfavorable response rating of .9. While this left Nixon with a net of .5 favorable responses, it by no means represents the largest favorable response rating of any Republican candidate. In fact, Nixon's rating from 1968

TABLE VI

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1972

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	1.4	0.8	0.5	0.8	1.5	-0.7
WD	0.8	1.2	-0.4	1.2	1.0	0.2
ID	1.2	0.9	0.2	0.9	1.5	-0.5
I	0.4	1.2	-0.8	1.3	0.6	0.6
IR	0.5	1.9	-1.4	2.0	0.7	1.3
WR	0.4	1.9	-1.5	1.9	0.6	1.3
SR	0.2	2.0	-1.8	2.5	0.3	2.2
$\bar{X}$	0.7	- 1.4 =	-0.6	1.4	- 0.9 =	0.5
	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	2.1	0.5	1.2	0.3	1.5	-1.2
WD	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.9	-0.5
ID	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.4	1.1	-0.7
I	0.4	0.6	-0.2	0.3	0.6	-0.3
IR	0.4	1.0	-0.6	1.1	0.7	0.3
WR	0.4	0.9	-0.6	1.1	0.5	0.6
SR	0.4	1.3	-1.0	1.8	0.5	1.3
$\bar{X}$	0.8	- 0.7 =	0.1	0.7	- 0.8 =	-0.1

Source: Survey Research Center

increased by only .1. This also helps refute the notion that incumbency produces large favorable ratings since Nixon's .5 represented the fifth highest

net favorable response for any candidate since 1952 (out of twelve candidates). Since Nixon received a larger net average of favorable responses, and since he was again triumphant, our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule is once again confirmed.

Reviewing each party we find that the Democrats received an average of .8 favorable responses while receiving an average of .7 unfavorable responses, yielding a net of .1 favorable responses. The Republican party received an average of .7 favorable responses and an average of .8 unfavorable responses. This left the Republican party with a rating of -.1. By adding the score of each candidate to that of his party, we find that the Democrats received an average of -.5 favorable responses and the Republicans received an average of .4 favorable responses.

That the Democratic party received a net rating of .1 and the Republican party received a net rating of -.1 once again shows that neither party was thought of highly by the people. The Republican party was thought of less highly than the Democrats. It was Nixon's favorable response rating along with McGovern's unfavorable response rating which accounted for the overall advantage of the Republicans.

The next presidential election had a relatively unknown ex-Governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter, as the Democratic nominee facing an incumbent, Gerald Ford, as the Republican nominee. Like Johnson 12 years earlier, Ford had gained the office through succession rather than election. Unlike

Johnson, the circumstance bringing Ford to office (the resignation of Nixon) cast a pall over his Presidency.

As Table VII indicates, Carter received an average of 1.3 favorable responses and an average of 1.1 unfavorable responses. Carter's net favorable response average was .3. Ford's average of favorable responses was 1.2 and his average of unfavorable responses was 1.1. This gave Ford a net average of .1 favorable responses. Carter had a larger net favorable average than did Ford (.3 to .1), and won the election. Our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule, for 1976, once again is confirmed.

The Democratic party received an average of .9 favorable responses and an average of .7 unfavorable responses. Therefore the net average of favorable responses for the Democratic party was .2. The Republican party received an average of .6 favorable responses and an average of .9 unfavorable responses. This left the Republican party with a net average of -.3 favorable responses. When adding the net average of favorable responses of each candidate to those of his party, we discover that the Democrats received a rating of .5 while the Republicans received a rating of -.2.

Three observations should be made. First, 1976 is the first election since 1960 in which both candidates received a positive net score of favorable responses. Each of the three previous elections featured one candidate whom the voters disliked more than they liked. Perhaps 1976 signaled a return to positive viable candidates from each party, but in reviewing the 1980 and

TABLE VII

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1976

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.1	0.5	1.6	0.5	1.7	-1.2
WD	1.6	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.2	-0.3
ID	1.7	1.0	0.7	0.9	1.6	-0.7
I	1.1	1.0	0.1	1.1	0.9	0.2
IR	0.9	1.7	-0.7	2.0	0.9	1.1
WR	0.9	1.4	-0.4	1.6	0.7	0.9
SR	0.6	2.0	-1.4	2.3	0.6	1.7
$\bar{X}$	1.3	- 1.1 =	0.3	1.2	- 1.1 =	0.1

	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	1.8	0.4	1.4	0.2	1.5	-1.4
WD	1.2	0.5	0.7	0.4	1.0	-0.7
ID	1.1	0.6	0.4	0.4	1.1	-0.8
I	0.5	0.6	-0.1	0.3	0.7	-0.3
IR	0.5	1.2	-0.5	1.0	0.7	0.3
WR	0.5	0.9	-0.5	1.0	0.6	0.4
SR	0.5	1.8	-1.4	1.8	0.7	1.1
$\bar{X}$	0.9	- 0.7 =	0.2	0.6	- 0.9 =	-0.3

Source: Survey Research Center

1984 data, we find that this is not the case.

Second, it appears that the negative feelings which the public had for Nixon at the time he left office did not transfer to his successor. Inevitably, some of Nixon's favorable response rating in 1960, Johnson's in 1964 and Humphrey's in 1968 were due, in part, to those of their predecessors (Polsby and Wildavsky, 1980, 70). Perhaps the circumstances which thrust Ford into

the Presidency, helped sever the tie between him and Nixon in the voters' minds. Although Ford's pardoning of Nixon undoubtedly caused his rating to drop, many of the voters had possibly disassociated ford from the scandal which forced Nixon to resign.

Finally, 1976 represents the fourth consecutive election in which the Republican party failed to get a positive net favorable response. Although a Republican achieved the office of the president in two of those four elections, it appears that the party was not a positive factor or even the decisive factor in those two years. Such a trend, if continued would have dramatically changed the nature of the Republican party.

In 1980, the Democratic nominee was an incumbent president, Jimmy Carter, whereas the Republican nominee was an ex-Governor of California, Ronald Reagan. Reagan proved to be an interesting candidate since he had spent a lifetime projecting a popular image by his acting in motion pictures and television. In this election both candidates should have been well-known to the public—one, an incumbent, and the other, a former actor and governor.

Table VIII shows that Jimmy Carter received an average of 1.0 favorable responses to an average of 1.7 unfavorable responses. This left Carter with a net average of -.7 favorable responses. Ronald Reagan received an average of 1.2 favorable responses along with an average of 1.2 unfavorable responses. This gave Reagan a net average of 0 favorable responses. Since Reagan's net average of 0 was higher than Carter's net average of -.7 and

Reagan won the election, our adaptation of "the Rule" once again is confirmed.

The Democratic party received an average of .7 favorable responses and an average of .8 unfavorable responses. This left the Democratic party with a net score of -.1 favorable responses. The Republican party averaged .7 favorable responses and .6 unfavorable responses. This gave the Republican

TABLE VII

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1980

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.0	0.8	1.2	0.4	1.7	-0.3
WD	1.2	1.5	-0.3	0.7	1.3	-0.6
ID	1.3	1.4	-0.1	0.8	1.7	-0.2
I	0.7	1.6	-0.9	0.8	1.7	-0.2
IR	0.7	2.0	-1.3	1.7	0.9	0.8
WR	0.7	2.0	-1.3	1.5	0.9	0.6
SR	0.5	2.5	-2.0	2.2	0.9	1.4
$\bar{X}$	1.0	- 1.7	= -0.7	1.2	- 1.2	= 0.0

	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	1.4	0.4	1.0	0.2	1.2	-1.0
WD	1.0	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.7	-0.4
ID	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.7	-0.4
I	0.1	0.4	-0.3	0.3	0.7	-0.4
IR	0.3	1.0	-0.7	1.1	0.4	0.0
WR	0.5	1.0	-0.5	1.1	0.4	0.7
SR	0.4	1.5	-1.1	1.8	0.4	1.4
$\bar{X}$	0.7	- 0.8	= -0.1	0.7	- 0.6	= 0.1

Source: Survey Research Center

party a net score of .1 favorable responses. By adding each candidate's score to that of his party's, the Democrats receive a score of -.8 while the Republicans receive a score of .1.

There are some important observations about this election. Carter's average of unfavorable responses (1.7) was the lowest ever recorded by a candidate of either party. When combining this with the relatively low average of favorable responses (1.0), his net score was extremely poor (-.7). Carter's score represents the lowest rating of any incumbent, of any Democratic candidate, and tied Goldwater's score in 1964 for the lowest recorded by a candidate of either party. Not only was Carter's score the first negative rating by any incumbent, but the fact that it was so low diminished the assumption that incumbency necessarily leads to large favorable ratings.

Reagan by comparison did not fare that much better. His net score of 0 was the second lowest of any Republican candidate, and represented the lowest favorable rating of any candidate ever to win an election. This should show that Reagan's win was by no means a mandate. 1980 was the first presidential election in which neither candidate received a positive net favorable response rating. It is not that the voters necessarily liked Ronald Reagan as a presidential candidate. Rather, it seems that they did not dislike him as much as they disliked Carter.

Political parties did not fare much better in the minds of the voters. The Democratic party's score of -.1 was the second lowest that the party had

ever received at that time, and represented only the second time that the party had ever received a negative net score. On the other hand, this was the first election since 1960 that the Republican party received a positive net score. Although the Republican party's average of .1 was not very large, it is interesting to point out that this tied their largest ever favorable rating (along with 1952, 1956, 1960, and in 1984, as we shall see).

In adding each candidate's score to that of his party, the results are not too favorable. The combined score for the Democrats (-.8) was the lowest ever recorded for them, and the second lowest ever recorded by either party in an election. The Republicans combined score of .1 was the lowest ever recorded by a winning combination. All of this implies that the voters were disenchanted by the candidates and the parties in the 1980 presidential election.

The 1984 presidential election featured a former vice president as the Democratic nominee (Walter Mondale) facing an incumbent as the Republican nominee (Ronald Reagan). This election represented the third time in which an incumbent president from the Republican party sought reelection, and the third time one won.

As Table IX shows, Mondale received an average of 1.1 favorable responses along with 1.2 unfavorable responses. This gave Mondale a net favorable response rating of -.1. Although Mondale's response rating was negative, it was around the center of the ratings for candidates representing

the Democratic party. It also marked the fourth time in five elections in which a Democratic candidate failed to receive a positive net favorable rating.

The average number of favorable responses about Reagan as a candidate was 1.5 while the average number of unfavorable responses was 1.5. This gave Reagan a net of 0 favorable. Reagan's average was .1 higher than Mondale's. This combined with the fact that Reagan won the election once again confirms our adaptation of the "Rule".

The Democratic party received an average of .9 favorable responses and .7 unfavorable responses. This gave the Democratic party a net of .2 favorable responses. The Republican party received an average of .9 favorable responses and .8 unfavorable responses. This produced a net favorable response rating of .1 (tied for the highest by the Republican party in any presidential election with four others). In adding the rating of each candidate to that of his party, the Democrats receive a .1 favorable response rating while the Republicans receive a .2.

The fact that the total score for each candidate combined with his party was above 0 represented the first time since 1960 in which both scores were positive. Although neither combination received a large favorable rating, it is evident that both combinations were considered favorable by the voters (a marked change from previous elections).

Once again we have an incumbent who does not receive a large favorable rating. While receiving a larger favorable rating than Mondale, Re-

TABLE IX

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1984

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.4	0.5	1.9	0.6	2.6	-2.0
WD	1.3	0.8	0.5	1.0	1.8	-0.8
ID	1.7	0.9	0.8	0.8	2.2	-1.4
I	0.9	1.0	-0.1	1.5	1.3	0.2
IR	0.6	1.8	-1.2	2.3	1.2	1.3
WR	0.4	1.5	-1.1	2.2	0.9	1.3
SR	0.3	2.0	-1.7	2.7	0.6	2.1
$\bar{X}$	1.1	- 1.2 =	-0.1	1.5	-1.5 =	0.0
	DP+	**DP-**	**NET**	**RP+**	**RP-**	**NET**
SD	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.5	-1.1
WD	1.2	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.9	-0.5
ID	1.2	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.2	-0.4
I	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.6	-0.2
IR	0.7	1.0	-0.3	1.2	0.7	0.5
WR	0.5	0.9	-0.4	1.2	0.5	0.7
SR	0.5	1.3	-0.8	1.8	0.4	1.4
$\bar{X}$	0.9	- 0.7 =	0.2	0.9	- 0.8 =	0.2

Source: Survey Research Center

agan's of 0 tied his 1980 rating as the lowest of a winning candidate in this study. This is to argue, Reagan's victory while a landslide, may not have been an overwhelming mandate by the people since on the average, the voters could think of only .6 net favorable responses regarding his candidacy.

In the most recent presidential election, the Democratic nominee, Massachussetts Governor Michael Dukakis challenged the Republican nominee,

George Bush, an incumbent vice president. This represents the third time in our study that an incumbent vice president has sought the presidency, and the first time one was successful. Bush sought the presidential nomination but lost to Reaga in 1980, and served as his vice president the next eight years. Dukakis, by contrast, was relatively unknown nationally before the Democratic primary. Although Bush was better known than Dukakis entering the 1988 electoral contest, as we shall see, he was not able to generate more resonses on the average.

As table X shows, Dukakis recieved an average of 1.1 favorable responses as well as 1.1 unfavorable responses. This gave Dukakis a net rating of 0. Dukakis' rating was about average for a Democratic candidate as shown in this study. His rating also represents the fifth time in six elections that the Democratic candidate did not recieve a positive net favorable rating.

Bush's rating, however, was not much better. Bush recieved an average ov 1.2 favorable responses to 1.1 unfavorable responses, giving him a net rating of .1. This was the thirtd lowest rating for a successful GOP candidate. However, because Bush's score was higher than Dukakis', our adaptation of the "rule" is again confirmed.

The Democratic party recieved an average of 1.0 favorable responses and .8 unfavorable responses, giving it a net average of .2. The Republican party recieved an average of 1.0 favorable resonses along with an average of .9 unfavorable responses. This gave the Republican party a net average of .1.

In adding the rating of each candidiate to that of his party, we find that both recieve a rating of .2.

This election marked the first time in this study that either party was victorious in three consecutive presidential elections. 1988 was also the first

TABLE X

Candidate and Party Preference Score for 1988

	DC+	DC-	NET	RC+	RC-	NET
SD	2.1	.5	1.6	.4	1.7	-1.3
WD	1.4	.8	.6	.7	1.2	-0.5
ID	1.9	.7	1.2	.5	1.7	-1.2
I	.7	.8	-0.1	.9	.8	.1
IR	.6	1.7	-1.1	1.9	.7	1.2
WR	.7	1.2	-0.5	1.6	.8	.8
SR	.3	1.7	-1.4	2.5	.5	2.0
$\bar{X}$	1.1	- 1.1 =	0.0	1.2	- 1.1 =	.1

	DP+	DP-	NET	RP+	RP-	NET
SD	1.9	.4	1.5	.4	1.5	-1.1
WD	1.2	.4	.8	.5	1.0	-0.5
ID	1.5	.7	.8	.6	1.4	-0.8
I	.5	.3	.2	.5	.5	0.0
IR	.6	1.2	-0.6	1.4	.7	.7
WR	.8	1.0	-0.2	1.3	.7	.6
SR	.5	1.7	-1.2	2.2	.5	1.7
$\bar{X}$	1.0	- .8 =	.2	1.0	- .9 =	.1

Source: Survey Research Center

year since 1928 that the Republican party won the presidency three consecutive terms.

The data here also indicates that, similar to earlier studies (Campbell et al. 1960, 77), strong party identifiers give much more responses about candidates and their respective parties than do weak identifiers or independents. In each election studied, those identifying strongly with a political party were able to express the greatest number of favorable opinions about that party and its candidate, while expressing the greatest number of unfavorable opinions about the the opposition party and its candidate. Independents were more likely to give fewer responses (positive or negative) about either party or its candidate.

In summary, of each election studied, our adaptation of the Kelley-Mirer rule is confirmed. This includes the election of 1960 in which a null decision was reached. Therefore, we can proceed to the second phase of the research.

CHAPTER V

Candidate Image and Party Affiliation as Influences on the Vote

In the second part of the research, the influence of candidate image and party affiliation is assessed. This chapter concentrates on factors determining the vote by reviewing the voters' response regarding the presidential candidates and the political parties.

Reviewing our adaptation of the Voter Decision Rule put forth by Kelley and Mirer, it is evident that we can predict elections better by simply focusing on the net number of favorable responses regarding the candidates than by focusing on the net number of favorable attitudes about parties. In each of the nine presidental elections studied, with the exception of 1960, the candidate receiving the largest net favorable rating also won the election.

Preference for political parties is not, by itself, an accurate indicator for predicting elections. Reviewing each election separately, in 1952 both the Democratic party and the Republican party received the same number of favorable responses. Although the Republican party captured the White House, no prediction can be made from the data.

In 1956, the Democratic party received a higher net favorable response rating than did the Republican party. However the Republican

party's candidate was able to win the Presidency. Therefore, a prediction based on party ratings alone would be inaccurate. In the presidential election of 1960, the Democratic party received a larger number of favorable responses than did the Republican party, and the Democratic candidate won the election. Here, party ratings accurately predicted the elections whereas candidate ratings could not.

In the 1964 election, the Democratic party also received a larger net average of favorable responses than did the Republican party. The Democratic party also won the election. In the election of 1968, the Republican party received a larger average of favorable responses than did the Democratic party, and went on to win the election.

In the election of 1972, the Democratic party received a larger net number of favorable responses than did the republican party. However, the Republican candidate beat the Democratic candidate in the election. Party responses alone, in 1972, were not an accurate predictor of the election outcome. In 1976, the Democratic party also received a greater number of favorable responses, on the average than did the Republican party. Here the Democratic party's candidate won the election, providing a correct prediction by looking at party responses.

In 1980, the Republican party received a larger net average of favorable responses than did the Democratic party. The Republican party's candidate won that particular election. In 1984, the Democratic party received a

higher favorable score than did the Republican party. However, the Republican candidate won that election. Once again party was not an accurate predictor of the electoral outcome.

In 1988, the Democratic party also recieved a higher favorable score than the Republican party. Again, the republican party won the election. For 1988, patrty was not an accurate predictor of the electoral outcome. In reviewing favorable responses toward candidates versus favorable responses toward parties, we find that candidate responses, alone, are a more accurate indicator of electoral outcomes than party responses alone. In nine of the ten races, the candidate receiving the largest net average of favorable responses won the election. In only five of the ten races did the party receiving the largest net average of favorable responses win the election. Candidate response rating yielded a 90 percent accuracy rating in predicting elections whereas party response rating yielded only a 50 percent accuracy rating.

The second part of the data analysis focuses on the total number of favorable and unfavorable responses, on the average, for both candidates and compares that number with the total number of favorable and unfavorable responses, on the average, for both parties. It is argued here that the influence (candidates or parties) which produces the largest number of total responses (both favorable and unfavorable) is the influence most prominent in that election.

In 1952, the total number of responses about Stevenson, the Democratic candidate, on the average, was 1.7. The average number of responses about Eisenhower, the Republican nominee was 2.3. This produced an average of 4.0 responses about the candidates. The Democratic party received an average of 2.5 responses while the Republican party received an average of

TABLE XI

Average Number of Responses for Both Candidates and for Both Parties

	1952	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972	1976	1980	1984	1988
DC	1.7	1.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.3	2.2
RC	2.3	2.8	2.1	2.4	2.6	1.5	1.5	2.4	3.6	2.3
C	4.0	4.6	4.5	5.0	5.2	3.6	3.9	5.1	5.9	4.5
DP	2.5	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.3	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.8
RP	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.9
P	4.4	3.7	3.4	3.3	4.0	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.3	3.7

1.9 responses. This produced an average of 4.4 responses regarding the political parties.

In the presidential election of 1956, Stevenson, once again the Democratic nominee, received an average of 1.8 total responses. Eisenhower, once again the nominee of the Republican party, received an average of 2.8 total responses. The average number of total responses for the candidates increased to 4.6. The Democratic party received an average of 1.9 responses.

The Republican party received an average of 1.8 total responses. The number of total responses combined for both parties was 3.7. The average number of responses for candidates was larger than the average number of responses for parties (4.6 to 3.7).

The election of 1960 had John Kennedy, the Democratic candidate, receiving an average of 2.4 total responses and Richard Nixon, the Republican candidate, receiving an average of 2.4 total responses. The number of responses for both candidates was 4.5. The Democratic party received a total of 1.7 responses, on the average, and the Republican party also received an average of 1.7 total responses. This gave the parties an average of 3.4 total responses. The average number of total responses for the candidates, once again, was larger than the average number of total responses for the parties (4.5 to 3.4).

In the election of 1964, Lyndon Johnson, the Democratic nominee, received an average of 2.6 total responses. Barry Goldwater, the Republican nominee, received an average of 2.4 total responses. Combined, candidates received an average of 5.0 total responses. The Democratic party received an average of 1.9 responses whereas the Republican party received an average of 1.4 responses. The total response rate, for both parties, was 3.3, on the average. The average number of total responses for both candidates is larger than the average number of total responses for both parties (5.0 to 3.3).

In 1968, the Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphrey, received an

average of 2.6 total responses. His Republican opponent, Richard Nixon, also received an average of 2.6 total responses. This gave the candidates an average of 5.2 total responses. The Democratic party received an average of 2.3 total responses. The Republican party received an average of 1.7 total responses. The two parties combined for an average of 4.0 total responses. The average number of total responses for candidates was higher than the average number of total responses for parties (5.2 to 4.0).

In the election of 1972, George McGovern, the candidate from the Democratic party, received an average of 2.1 total responses. Richard Nixon, once again the Republican nominee, received an average of 1.5 total responses(an interesting total considering the fact that he received a total of 2.6 four years earlier). The two candidates together had an average of 3.6 total responses. The Democratic party received an average of 3.0 favorable responses. The combined average of responses for candidates was higher than the combined average of responses for the parties (3.6 to 3.0).

The presidential election of 1976 had Jimmy Carter, the Democratic nominee, receiving an average of 2.4 total responses and Gerald Ford, the Republican nominee, receiving an average of 1.5 total responses. Overall, this gave the candidates an average of 3.9 total responses. The Democratic party received an average of 1.6 total responses whereas the Republican party received an average of 1.4 total responses. Together, parties combined for an average of 3.0 total responses. Once again candidates received a larger

average number of total responses than did parties (3.9 to 3.0).

In the election of 1980, Jimmy Carter, once again the Democratic nominee, received an average of 2.7 total responses. Ronald Reagan, the nominee of the Republican party, received an average of 2.4 total responses. The average number of responses for both candidates was 5.1. The Democratic party received an average of 1.5 total responses while the Republican party received an average of 1.3 total responses. Overall, the average number of total responses for both parties was 2.8. The average number of total responses for candidates was higher than the average number of total responses for parties (5.1 to 2.8).

In the 1984 election, Walter Mondale, the Democratic candidate, received an average of 2.3 total responses. Ronald Reagan, once again the nominee of the Republican party, received an average of 3.0 total responses. The average number of responses for candidates was 5.3. The Democratic party received an average of 1.6 total responses. The Republican party received an average of 1.7 total responses. The average number of total responses for both parties was 3.3. The average number of responses for candidates remained higher than the average number of responses for parties for this election (5.9 to 3.3).

In 1988, Michael Dukakis, the Democratic nominee, recieved an average of 2.2 total responses. George Bush, the Republican nominee, recieved an average of 2.3 total responses. The average number for both candidates was

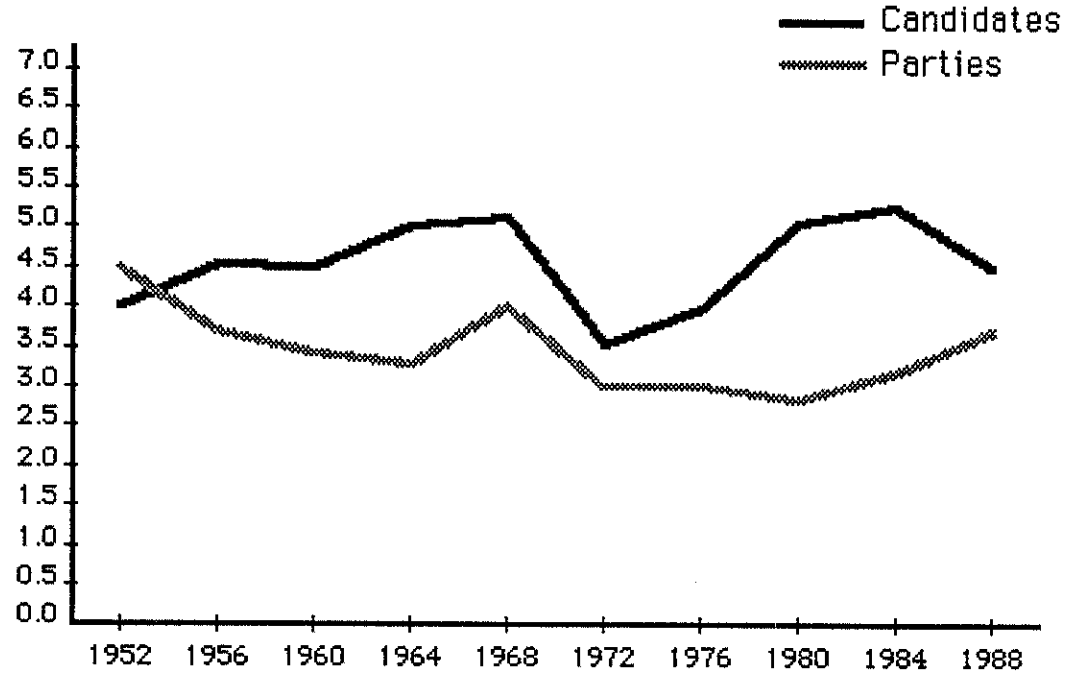
4.5. The Democratic party recieved an average of 1.8 total responses. The Republican party recieved an average of 1.9 total responses. The average number of total responses for both parties was 3.7. The average number of responses for candidates was again higher than the average number of responses for parties (4.5 to 3.7). Of the ten elections studied in only one election (1952) did parties produce the greatest number of total responses (10%). On the other hand, every election since 1956 has produced more responses regarding candidates (90%). It is not enough to say that candidates have produced the largest total response ratings, on the average, for the last eight elections. We must examine the difference in the average number of responses each factor produces in each election and determine what trends, if any emerge.

In 1952, as Figure 1 shows, parties produced an average of .4 more responses than did candidates (4.4 to 4.0). However the advantage greatly shifted when, in 1956, candidates produced an average of .9 more responses than did parties (4.6 to 3.7). The gap widened in 1960, when candidates averaged 1.1 more responses than did parties (4.5 to 3.4). In 1964, the gap widened still. Candidates produced an average of 1.7 more response than did parties (5.0 to 3.3).

In 1968, parties' average response rate increased for the first time (to 4.0). However, candidates' average response rate increased as well (to 5.2). While the gap narrowed, candidates still averaged 1.2 more responses than

FIGURE 1

Total Number of Responses for Both Candidates and for Both Parties, 1952 - 1988



did parties. In 1972, the gap between candidates and parties narrowed considerably. The average response rate for parties was the lowest it had been (3.0). But the average response rate for candidates was the lowest it had been as well (3.6). This produced an average of .6 more responses for candidates than for parties. This represented the closest response rate between these two factors since 1952.

The election of 1976 saw a widening of the gap between candidates and parties (.9). Parties produced an average of 3.0 total responses while

candidates produced an average of 3.9 total responses. The 1980 election represented the largest gap seen between parties and candidates. Parties produced an average of 2.8 responses (the lowest yet) while candidates produced an average of 5.1 responses. This produced a difference of 2.3 responses. In 1984, the gap narrowed somewhat (2.6). Parties' average response rate increased to 3.3. However candidates' average response rate increased to 5.9 (the largest average so far).

Finally, the gap between candidates and parties in 1988 the narrowest it has been since the election of 1972. While the gap narrowed to .9 responses, it still represents a substantial difference rate. From these data, it appears not only that people are able to respond more and more about candidates than they are about parties, but that the advantage one candidate has over the other outweighs any advantage one party may have over the other. Candidates seem to dominate individual's concerns in electoral contests.

In the third and final part of the research, the net differences in scores between each candidate and between each party are compared against each other to determine which factor produces the greatest advantage over the opponent. That factor is then determined to be the voter's main orientation in the election.

Reviewing each election separately, we find that in 1952, the Republican candidate (Eisenhower) possessed a .5 advantage in candidate preference over his opponent (Stevenson). Neither party held an advantage over the

other in their scores. Therefore, we can consider 1952 to be a candidate-oriented election. In the election of 1956, Eisenhower's score was .8 higher than that of Stevenson. However, the Democratic party's score was .9 higher than the Republicans. Since the Republican candidate's advantage was .4 higher than the Democratic party's advantage, and since Eisenhower once again won the election, 1956 can also be considered a candidate-oriented election.

That the 1952 and 1956 elections are classified here as candidate-oriented helps explain Eisenhower's victories in light of the fact that more Americans identified with the Democratic party than the Republican party at that time, according to SRC studies. Had most Americans voted party preference over candidate orientation, it is highly unlikely that Eisenhower would have won either election.

The election of 1960 presents a unique problem in that the Republican candidate (Nixon) held a .4 advantage over the Democratic candidate (Kennedy) while the Democratic party's advantage over the Republican party was also .4. In balancing the two against each other, neither side appears to have a clear advantage. Since Kenndy won the election, one might infer that it was a party-oriented election. However, one should be cautious since, as pointed out earlier, his victory was by the narrowest margin in recent history.

In the 1964 election, the Democrats enjoyed an advantage over the Republicans in both candidate and party scores. However, Johnson's advan-

tage over Goldwater was 1 point higher than the Democratic party's score

TABLE XII

Net Differences Between Candidate Scores and Party Scores, 1952 - 1988

		D	R	
1952	C	.4	.9	.5 R
	P	.1	.1	0.0
		.5	1.0	.5 R
1956	C	.4	1.2	.8 R
	P	.5	.1	.4 D
		.9	1.3	.4 R
1960	C	.4	.8	.4 R
	P	.5	.1	.4 D
		.9	.9	0.0
1964	C	1.0	-.7	1.7 D
	P	.5	-.2	.7 D
		1.5	-.9	2.4 D
1968	C	-.1	.4	.5 R
	P	-.2	0.0	.2 R
		-.3	.4	.7 R
1972	C	-.6	.5	1.1 R
	P	.1	-.1	.2 D
		-.5	.4	.9 R
1976	C	.3	.1	.2 D
	P	.2	-.3	.5 D
		.5	-.2	.7 D
1980	C	-.7	0.0	.7 R
	P	-.1	.1	.9 R
		-.8	.1	.9 R
1984	C	-.1	0.0	.1 R
	P	.2	.2	0.0
		.1	.5	.7 R
1988	C	0.0	.1	.1 R
	P	.2	.1	.1 D
		.2	.2	0.0

over the score of the Republican party (1.7 to .7). Therefore, we can conclude that 1964 was a candidate-oriented election.

Similar to the 1964 election, the election of 1968 saw the Republicans with an advantage over the Democrats in both candidate and party scores. Once again, the candidate's advantage (.5) was relatively higher than the party's advantage (.2). Therefore, the election of 1968 is also considered to be a candidate-oriented election.

In the election of 1972, the Republican candidate (Nixon) had a score that was 1.1 higher than his opponent (McGovern). However, the Democratic party had a score that was .2 higher than that of the Republican party. Because Nixon's advantage was .9 higher than the Democratic party's advantage, 1972 is also a candidate-oriented election.

In the 1976 election, the Democrats possessed an advantage over the Republican both candidate and party scores. However, here Carter's advantage over Ford (.2) was not as great as the Democratic party's advantage over the Republican party (.5). This election represents the first which can clearly be termed a party-oriented election.

The elections of 1980 and 1984 are both considered candidate-oriented since Reagan's advantage over his opponents was greater than either party's score over the other. In 1980, Reagan's score was .7 higher than Carter's while the score of the Republican party was only .2 higher than the Democratic party's. In the 1984 election, Reagan's advantage over Walter Mondale

was .7 while neither party possessed a clear advantage over the other.

The election of 1988 is also considered candidate oriented because Bush's advantage over Dukakis was .1. The democratic party, however, actually possessed a .1 advantage over the Republican party. In using the standards put forth for identifying candidate-oriented and party-oriented elections, we find that of the ten elections studied, only one election is clearly party-oriented (1976), eight elections are candidate-oriented, and only one election (1960) showed no clear advantage for either candidate or party orientation.

CHAPTER VI

Concluding Comments

Before declaring the decline and eventual demise of political parties (Burnham, 1970; Crotty, 1984), some limitations in the study should be pointed out. First, there is the problem of separating candidate from party. As SRC studies point out, often voters will give favorable or unfavorable responses about a party when asked what they like or dislike about that party's candidate. A candidate's party often becomes so ingrained in voters' perceptions that many times it becomes difficult to distinguish one from the other. Thus when a voter is responding about a candidate, he/she might actually be responding about that candidate's party.

Another point that should be made is that by looking at voter responses about candidates and parties, this study differs from many studies which focus on the impact of parties in presidential elections. Many studies concentrate on the number of voters classifying themselves as members of the major political parties versus the number of voters classifying themselves as independents (Eldersveld, 1952; Nie et al., 1976; Large, 1982). Other studies focus on the amount of ticket-splitting in presidential elections (DeVries and Tarrance, 1972; Boyd, 1963). While this study is consistent with other stud-

ies which analyze party persistence (Stokes, 1966; Graebner, 1972; Kirkpatrick, 1975; Nie et al., 1976), survey research to assess parties' impact has some disadvantages. For one thing, looking at responses and not affiliation might produce results counter to party affiliation. However, if it "looks like an independent, acts like an independent, and votes like an independent, then it must be an independent regardless of what it might claim to be." In other words, if a person claims to be a Democrat but is more favorable to the Republican party and its candidate, then his/her stated party affiliation is inconsequential. Further, if a person can operationalize ideas about candidates more than about parties, then party affiliation, once again is not the dominant factor in his/her decision.

Another problem with using survey data of this type is that it does not take into account the "intensity" factor. That is to say that although a voter might have 5 favorable responses about a candidate and only 1 unfavorable response, that one unfavorable response may be so compelling as to outweigh the five favorable attitudes in making his/her decision for whom to vote. Likewise, although parties might produce lower average total responses than candidates do, the responses about parties might be intense enough to sway that person's vote.

A final problem is that many times voters are unable to enunciate their likes and dislikes. They may like something and not be able to verbalize what it is that they like. While this is a problem with open-ended ques-

tions, it also provides a measure of voters' awareness in general.

While there are some flaws using a research design of this nature, this design is consistent with others. Simply because there are certain limitations in a study, that study's observations should not be dismissed out of hand. Instead the observations should be qualified in light of these limitations. Once again, the central thesis of this study is that candidate image has been a greater determinant of electoral choice in the majority of presidential elections since 1952 than has party orientation.

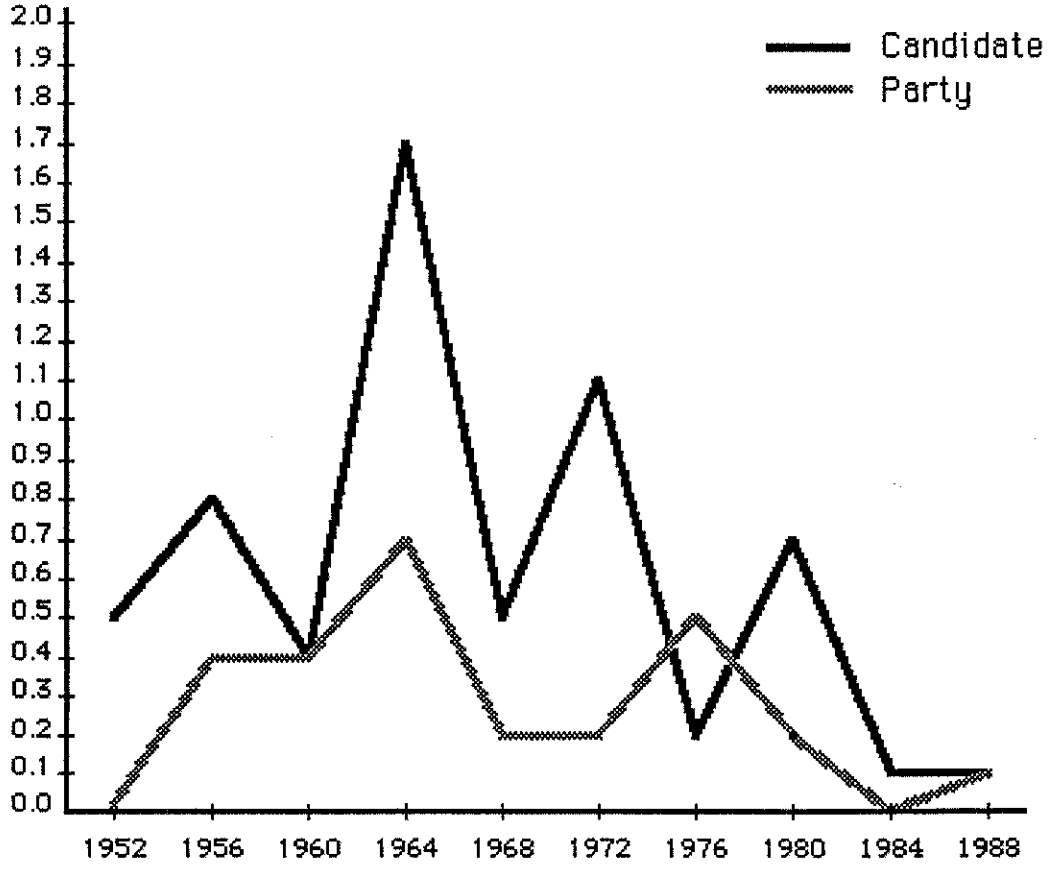
By using three different methods, we see that candidate orientation prevails over party orientation in presidential elections. The first method examines candidate response rate first, and party response rate second. In nine of ten elections (1952, 1956, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988), the candidate receiving the highest net score won the election whereas in only five of ten elections (1960, 1964, 1968, 1976, 1980) did the party with the largest net average of favorable responses win. The second method of assessing the dominant influence focused on the factor producing the most responses on the average. In nine of ten elections (1952, 1956, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988), candidates produced the most responses, whereas in only one election parties produced the most.

Finally, in eight of the ten elections (1952, 1956, 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988), the winning candidate possessed a greater advantage over his opponent than did his party over the opposition party. In five

of those eight (1952, 1956, 1972, 1984, 1988), the winning candidate's party either possessed no advantage or had a score lower than that of the losing candidate's party. In only one election did the winning candidate's party actually have a greater advantage over the opposition did the candidate (1976). In the remaining election (1960) one candidate's advantage equalled

FIGURE 2

Net Differences Between Candidate Scores and Party Scores, 1952 - 1988



the opposition party's advantage which resulted in no total advantage for either side. However, the party with the highest score also won the election.

This candidate orientation trend is supported by the fact that Republican candidates won the Presidency in seven of the ten elections. If more people are Democrats, as the SRC studies indicate, what accounts for this phenomenon? In three of these five elections, the Democratic party received a larger net average of favorable responses than did the Republican party, but lost. In all five of these elections, the Republican candidate received the largest net score and won the election. Therefore, it appears that candidate response rating helps account for these victories.

Another finding is that the number of favorable attitudes toward the parties and their candidates are declining. The average number of favorable responses for both candidates and parties are added in each election to assess their importance. The average number of total favorable responses in the first three elections was 1.7. The average number of total favorable responses for the last seven elections was .1. Charting these trends shows that the public's perception of both parties and their candidates is becoming more and more unfavorable. If this trend continues, voters will not be voting for one candidate over another, but against one candidate, thereby electing the other by default.

Our research has indicated that political parties do not occupy the position that candidate orientation does in influencing voting behavior in

presidential elections. However, this study does not attempt to address the question of why this is the case. Some scholars claim that this is due to the changing structure of political parties. That is, that internal mechanisms have furthered their decline in influence (Pomper, 1977; Kleppner, 1982). They claim that the proliferation of primaries, changes in election laws regarding party control of nominating procedures, and the increase of professionals and of political action committee contributions have perpetuated parties' downfall. Others have argued that the decline in influence of parties is due mainly to the increase in candidate awareness brought about by the media (Stokes, 1966; Graebner, 1972; Robinson, 1974; Kirkpatrick et al., 1975; Tuckel and Tejera, 1982). They argue that because the media focus more on candidate images than on political parties, voters are more aware of candidate images and, as such, are more likely to be influenced by them in deciding for whom to vote. More research is required to determine why voters vote as they do.

What has been the consequence of increasing awareness of candidates and decreasing awareness of parties? As has been pointed out, "since candidates and issues change far more frequently than parties, the consequence is an increasingly unstable, less predictable pattern of voting" (Sorauf and Beck, 1988, 481). As a result, long-term voting patterns will be increasingly more difficult to predict.

While finding that parties are not as influential as candidates are this

research does not diminish their significance. Rather, it suggests that parties must be prepared to meet this change in voter behavior or their continued influence in presidential elections is in serious doubt. Parties therefore must adapt to their environment if they want to regain their position as the dominant factor in the voters' electoral decision.

If parties can successfully adapt to this changing environment, they can retain control over their candidates as well as national policies. As Gerald Pomper points out, "A party as well as a candidate is vested with power, and the composition and commitments of the winning party will greatley shape the course of future events" (1974, 99).

Political parties provide an element of stability and predictability in our political system. Party platforms are a meaningful guide to party action because they contain the commitments and appeals of the parties, and thereby permit indirect voter influence (Pomper, 1974, 203). By re-establishing themselves as the dominant influence in presidential elections, parties can force their candidates to pay more attention to platforms in order to activate the vote, and thereby hold officials more accountable to the people.

As the research here suggests, candidate image has been a greater determinant of electoral choice in the majority of presidential elections than has party orientation, and it continues to dominate decision making. However, to be of any value, research should not only explain certain phenomena, it should be of significance to the scientific community as well as the general

public. The research here has certain implications for, and is of value to, four different groups: political scientists, the general public, candidates, and political parties.

Political scientists and the academic community should reevaluate notions about partisan realignment, where one of the two competing parties becomes the majority or dominant party. The concept of partisan realignment assumes that one of the two parties will be in control of all branches of government. However, in five of the last six presidential elections, one party (Republican) has controlled the white house. The other party (Democratic) has controlled the state legislatures and both houses of congress (with the exception of 1980-1986, when the Republican party maintained control of the U.S. Senate). It is quite possible, as the research here suggests, that voters are focusing on candidates rather than parties in selecting their leaders.

Another challeng for political scientists is predicting the vote. If candidate images have replaced partisan affiliation in influencing voters' choices, we will continue to see an increasingly unstable electorate. Political scientists may be forced to concentrate on which candidate is best financed, or has the fewest skeletons in his/her closet rather than on which party has the greatest number of voters, or offers the most appealing policies. Since candidate images are more transient than political parties, long-term predictions of electoral behavior will become increasingly difficult.

The implication of this research for the electorate and the general public is increased instability. Voters can quite easily elect a candidate from one party in an election by a landslide, and do the opposite in the following election. Political parties bring consistency and stability to our system. Without political parties to guide their choices, voters will continue to become more fickle and unpredictable in their choices for president.

If voters are to make an informed choice then they must look beyond the superficial images and messages which the candidates provide. It is the civic duty of each voter to carefully research candidates and issues in deciding foe whom to vote. While this may seem like a pipe dream, only by having an informed electorate can we elect well-qualified, responsible leaders.

That candidate image is more significant than party affiliation in structuring voters' choice in presidential elections should send certain messages to presidential candidates. successful candidates cannot necessarily rely on traditional party mechanisms for producing the vote. Candidates must run on their own merit. Since voters focus on individual candidates rather than on political parties, a successful candidate must develop a clear image and message separate from those provided by his or her party. Unfortunately, the images provided by candidates are often superficial at best. Many campaign messages are filled with such valence issues as, "We can build a strong America," or, "Working together for a brighter future."

Other messages may contain empty promises that, when elected, the candidate will not fulfill such as, "Reducing the national debt," or "No new taxes." If candidates must develop individual messages, then cabdidates have also have a moral obligation to the public to develop representative images and responsible messages containing rational promises which will be fulfilled once that candidate is in office. The likelihood of this is low however, if candidates percieve advantage in gloss over substance.

Further, presidential candidates can no longer rely on traditional partisan coalitions to get elected. Candidates must build their own geographical, ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic coalitions capable of producing enough votes to win. While the coalitions of the 18th, 19th, and early to mid-20th centuries were built primarily along partisan lines, coalitions in recent years have been based largely upon individual candidate images. The so-called "Reagan revolution" of the 1980s did not produce a Republican coalition capable of controlling all branches of government at both the national and state levels. It did not even bring about significant durable changes in the partisan composistion of Congress. It only signified a great amount of support for a very popular presidential candidate. Therefore, candidates must be individually responsible for producing the right combination of factors of factors to get elected.

For political parties, this trend (candidate image over party affiliation) is alarming. As this research indicates, parties are declining in influencing

voters' choices. Some of the oldest and most important functions of parties include organizing the electorate, educating voters about candidates and issues, and structuring voters' choices. As candidate image increases in significance, the role of political parties in providing these services decreases, and some of the main reasons for parties' being, cease to exist. Candidates and interest groups can more readily provide these services outside traditional party mechanisms.

Another problem for parties is that, as candidates become less reliant on political parties to get elected, they become less accountable to political parties. America has never operated under a "responsible party" model. However, since candidates can now get elected (for the most part) without party support, there are no guarantees that, once elected, these candidates will be accountable to their respective parties. Further, there are relatively few ways that a party can hold its candidates accountable to either that party, or to its members.

Since it is not part of this study to determine why parties are declining in influence, it is then up to p;arties to determine why this is occurring and what, if anything, can be done to halt this decline. Parties must reassess their roles in society and determine new ways to build and strengthen their position. One suggestion is to develop a clear image and present that image to the public. This is especialy true for the Democratic party, which in recent years has looked like a party with no well-defined image or message.

A way that political parties can elect responsible candidates is to recruit those candidates from within the party ranks. Candidates who have a strong partisan allegiance tend to be more accountable to that party and to its members than candidates without such a strong allegiance. Some of our recent presidents are considered "outsiders" and, as such, have not been guided by partisan allegiances in making key decisions.

A third suggestion for parties is that they must reclaim many of their traditional functions. As previously mentioned, many of the traditional functions of parties such as otganizing the electorate, educating voters about candidates and issues, and structuring voters' choices have been taken over by individual candidates and interest groups. For parties' continued success, they must once again perform these functions more effectively than anyone or anything else.

Finally, parties must deriously examine the party organization. The proliferation of direct primaries accompanied with the decline in party caucuses has produced presidential candidates who are not necessarily representative of their respective parties. Relaxed party discipline and the increase in political action committees has led to single-issue candidates who do not adhere to a party philosophy or doctrine. The absence of major campaign finance reforms has produced candidates with strong financial resources, yet few with consistent partisan allegiances. If political parties restructure their organizations and correct these problems, then they can be

much more successful in activating the vote.

It is important that political parties reestablish themselves as the dominant influence in presidential elections. The traditional roles which they have played have been beneficial to our society. By structuring voters' choices they have, in effect, provided consistency and stability to our political system. Historically, they have given the voters a choice between party A and party B, candidate A and candidate B, position A and position B. Without parties as the guiding influence in presidential elections, voters tend to rely much more on transient images and candidates.

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