

THE TELEVISED PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES
IN CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

by

MARGARET GRACE BEATTY

B.S., Kansas State University, 1977

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree


MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Political Science

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1982

Approved by:


Major Professor

SPEC
COLL
LD
2668
R4
1982
B42
c. 2

A11200 189211

For my parents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	5
III. HISTORY OF THE DEBATES	17
IV. OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS OF CANDIDATES WHO SEEK OR AVOID DEBATES	26
V. STYLES AND IMAGES	47
VI. DEBATES' IMPACT	64
VII. CONCLUSION	82
.	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	86

**CONTAINS
NUMEROUS
PAGES WITH
MULTIPLE
PENCIL MARKS
THROUGHOUT
THE TEXT.**

**THIS IS THE
BEST IMAGE
AVAILABLE.**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. In 1960, following his election as President of the United States, John F. Kennedy said of the campaign: "It was TV more than anything that turned the tide."¹ During the campaign, Kennedy, a senator not as familiar to the nation as his opponent, then Vice President Richard M. Nixon, engaged in four televised debates with Nixon. Each debate was viewed by 65 to 70 million Americans.² Pierre Salinger, Kennedy's press secretary, believed that Kennedy's election would have been impossible without the debates.³ Nixon thought his poor physical appearance at the first debate hurt him and caused a setback in his campaign. Nixon concluded that Kennedy gained the most from the televised debates.⁴

There were no more televised debates between the major party nominees for President until 1976, when Democrat Jimmy Carter, a peanut farmer and former Georgia governor, debated Republican incumbent Gerald Ford three times. One hundred million people saw all or some of the debates.⁵ In 1976 the Democratic challenger won the election and credited his victory to the televised debates. "If it

hadn't been for the debates, I would have lost," Carter said shortly after winning the election.⁶

Four years later, in 1980, incumbent President Carter was defeated in his bid for re-election by Republican Ronald Reagan, whom he debated on television one week before election day. Carter blamed his defeat partially on what he thought was his poor performance in the debate. "I lost it myself," Carter said of the election while watching the returns on television. "I lost the debate, too, and that hurt badly."⁷ Reagan strategists, meanwhile, considered the debate to be a major factor in Reagan's victory.

Since the 1960 televised presidential debates, every four years candidates have either wanted to debate, or wanted to avoid debates for political reasons. The debates can hurt or help a politician and his opponent. Thus, presidential candidates have seen the debates as a tool to be used or a weapon to be avoided.

B. 1. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how candidates try to use ^{television} ~~televised~~ debates to their advantage, and if their perceptions of ^{television} ~~televised~~ debates as campaign tools are correct. This paper concentrates on the debates of the 1980 campaign and uses the 1960 and 1976 debates for comparative purposes. In Chapter II we will review the pertinent literature. Chapter III is a brief history of the debates. In Chapter IV we will discuss the motivations and objectives of candidates who seek or avoid debates.

Candidates' styles before the camera and their preparations to exude certain images will be discussed in Chapter V.

The impact of the debates--on the voters, viewers, the press and candidates' campaigns--is the subject of Chapter VI. Conclusions will be drawn in Chapter VII.

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS
PAGES WITH
THE ORIGINAL
PRINTING ON
THE PAGE BEING
CROOKED.**

**THIS IS THE
BEST IMAGE
AVAILABLE.**

NOTES

¹ Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960 (New York: Atheneum House, Inc., 1961; The New American Library, Inc., 1967), p. 333.

² White, 1960, p. 321.

³ Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 47.

⁴ Richard M. Nixon, Six Crises (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962), p. 357.

⁵ Peggy Lampl, "The Sponsor: The League of Women Voters Education Fund," in The Great Debates, Carter vs. Ford, 1976, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 103.

⁶ Stephan Leshner with Patrick Caddell and Gerald Rafshoon, "Did the Debates Help Jimmy Carter?" in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979) p. 137.

⁷ "Reagan Coast-to-Coast," Time, 17 November 1980, p. 23.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on the televised presidential debates centers mostly around the 1960, 1976 and 1980 campaigns. Since there were no such debates during the other campaigns, some literature about 1964, 1968 and 1972 touches on the strategies incumbents used to avoid debates. Most of the literature available on the 1980 campaign is in the form of newspaper and magazine articles. Since whether or not there would even be a debate between the two major party candidates became a campaign issue in 1980, the newspapers and magazines followed such news closely. In 1981 it was still too soon for books and journal articles of studies on the 1980 debates to be printed. Therefore, the literature review will concentrate on studies surrounding the 1960 and 1976 campaigns.

Perhaps it is fitting we begin with Theodore White's The Making of the President 1960, for his is the book most often referred to by other authors writing about presidential debates. Pointing out that the 1960 debates between Kennedy and Nixon brought the two major party candidates together on television for the first time, White called the debates:

"...a revolution in American Presidential politics" which permitted "the simultaneous gathering of all of the tribes of America to ponder their choice between two chieftains in the largest political convocation in the history of man."¹

After reviewing various polls, and the moods in the Republican and Democratic camps, White concludes that Kennedy was helped and Nixon harmed by the debates, particularly the first one.² In television's Broadcasting magazine, Kennedy was given the final edge in the debates.³ Richard Salant, former president of CBS News, argues that Kennedy gained from the debates and may have even won the election because of the influence the debates had on voters.⁴ Martin, Minnow and Lee conclude that Kennedy won the debates.⁵ Even Nixon, in his book Six Crises, concludes Kennedy gained the most from the debates.⁶

The book edited by Sidney Kraus, the most comprehensive on the 1960 debates, is composed of 19 articles by 29 authors. These articles examine various aspects of the debates, including the history of debates in America; views of the television networks; personalities of debaters; how the debates affected viewers and voters; effects and implications of the debates; and texts of the debates.⁷ Within this book, we will discuss various chapters. Seltz and Loakam give a detailed account of how candidates prepared for each of the debates, down to stage lighting requests, Nixon's makeup, and the images they projected on the screen.⁸ Lubell concludes that viewers

paid more attention to images than issues; and debates made the public less worried about the candidates' abilities once they saw them on television, making "both candidates and the election result more acceptable to the electorate."⁹ Like other authors, Lubell believes that Kennedy gained the most from the debates. But he goes a bit further, saying, "...the TV debates might have produced a Kennedy landslide if it had not been for the anti-Catholic feeling."¹⁰ Katz and Feldman made a survey of 31 independent studies of public response to the 1960 debates. They conclude that Kennedy won the first debate, in the eyes of the public. The second debate was close. Nixon won the third, and the final debate was close. When asked about the debates as a whole, the public perceived Kennedy as the winner.¹¹ Richard F. Carter, studying survey results, concludes Kennedy enhanced his image through the debates.¹² Tannenbaum, Greenberg and Silverman, in a survey of married students at the University of Wisconsin, conclude that "Kennedy did not necessarily win the debates, but Nixon lost them."¹³ Lang and Lang, in a survey of New York viewers, conclude the debates helped Kennedy more than Nixon.¹⁴ Ben-Zeev and White, reporting on a Chicago survey, state that Nixon lost support initially and never regained his loss, while Kennedy steadily gained support over the course of the debates. Their study shows that Nixon supporters did not change because of the debates, but Kennedy gained

among the undecideds.¹⁵ Thus the 1960 literature could be summed up: Kennedy enhanced his image, he reassured a wary public. Nixon was hurt by his own poor appearance in the first debate, which Kennedy won.

For the 1976 debates, the literature covers a wider area and studies are often more sophisticated. By 1976, scholars, politicians, journalists and campaign managers were better prepared to deal with televised debates.

In his book Marathon, Jules Witcover tells how Carter and Ford prepared for the debates and tried to use them to their advantage. He gives a detailed account of how the Ford campaign tried to recover from Ford's gaffe on Poland in the second debate. He also discusses the results of campaign polls and how they relate to the debates and campaign strategy.¹⁶

After the 1976 debates, three major books, all containing studies or articles by different authors, were compiled. The first of these we will discuss is The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, edited by Austin Ranney of the American Enterprise Institute. It consists of eight articles presented at the institute's conference on televised presidential debates. Each article is followed by a transcript of the discussion that ensued after its presentation.¹⁷ Syndicated columnists Germond and Witcover provide a frank overview of why candidates have sought to debate or have avoided debates over the years, and how participants have prepared for the debates.

The two reporters believe televised debates can be a good device in which to call an incumbent or challenger into account, but they warn that such debates should not become a substitute for the traditional campaign.¹⁸ Chaffee and Dennis point out that in 1976, at the time of the debates, much of the electorate was undecided about for whom to vote. They conclude that "a significant number of voters appear to have used the debates as a means of cutting the costs of gathering such information and resolving their own decisional uncertainties."¹⁹ Richard B. Cheney, who served as White House Chief of Staff to President Ford, gives a Republican perspective of the election strategy to have Ford participate in the debates. He concludes that, even though Ford lost the election, the Ford campaign was able to narrow the wide gap in the polls between Carter and Ford--and the debates helped. Cheney also believes that the press magnifies debate outcomes and shapes voter sentiment, despite voters seeing the debates themselves.²⁰ On the Democratic side of the campaign, Carter pollster Patrick Caddell and media advisor Gerald Rafshoon detail the Carter campaign. Caddell contends that the 1976 debates reinforced "soft" Carter supporters, thus stopping Carter's slippage in the polls.²¹ James Karayn believes that debates are important in helping voters make their decisions, and should be mandatory.²²

Sidney Kraus' book on the 1976 debates contains 27 articles by 52 authors and also includes the texts of the

three presidential debates and the vice presidential debate. The book documents events that brought about the Ford-Carter debates, and assesses the effect the debates had on the campaign and voters. It makes comparisons between the 1976 and 1960 debates.²³ In Kraus' book, Chaffee and Sears review three dozen surveys, polls and studies of the debates and conclude Ford won the first debate. Carter won the second and third. They also contend that the news media influences the public's perceptions of who won the debates, and debates help each candidate firm up "soft" support.²⁴ Robinson discusses the polls and how the public perceived the candidates after each of the debates. He concludes that Reagan supporters "came home" to Ford after the first debate, which Ford won; that Ford's gains after the second debate came from independents; Carter's foreign affairs image rose higher than Ford's after all the debates; and that Carter won the second and third debates.²⁵

Bishop, Meadow and Jackson-Beeck are the editors of a book composed of 10 articles by 21 authors. The articles focus on the effects of the 1976 debate on the electorate. The book includes articles on how the debates were produced, issues raised, viewer response; and how the debates affected public opinion, the candidates' images and voting behavior.²⁶ Within this book, Steeper, in a study of public response to Ford's faux pau on Eastern Europe in the second debate, concluded that the blunder put the Ford campaign on the

defensive and Ford suffered a serious image setback. Using poll results, he also contends that people took more notice of Ford's gaffe after the news media played it up--many viewers didn't realize its seriousness just by watching the debate.²⁷ Hagner and Rieselbach's study of poll data led them to conclude that in 1976, while a small percentage of voters changed their voting intentions after viewing the debates, the debates, overall, reinforced voters' predispositions.²⁸

In short, in 1976, the candidates' debate preparations, especially Ford's, were more elaborate than those of the 1960 participants. The campaign managers believed there was a lot riding on the debates. Political scientists have found that the news media affect viewer opinions of "who won" by publicizing candidates' mistakes. Overall, the debates serve to reinforce a voter's predisposition to a certain candidate or party. Candidates reassure the "soft" support or undecideds leaning their way.

NOTES

- ¹ White, 1960, p. 317.
- ² White, 1960, p. 333.
- ³ "Debate Score: Kennedy Up, Nixon Down," Broadcasting 59 (November 7, 1960): 27-29.
- ⁴ Richard Salant, "The Television Debates: A Revolution That Deserves a Future," Public Opinion Quarterly 26 (Fall 1962): 335-50.
- ⁵ John Bartlow Martin, Newton N. Minnow, and Lee M. Mitchell, Presidential Television: A Twentieth Century Fund Report (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973).
- ⁶ Nixon, p. 357.
- ⁷ Sidney Kraus, ed. The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).
- ⁸ Herbert A. Seltz and Richard Loakam, "Production Diary of the Debates," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 73-126.

⁹ Samuel Lubell, "Personalities vs. Issues," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 151.

¹⁰ Lubell, p. 162.

¹¹ Elihu Katz and Jacob J. Feldman, "The Debates in Light of Research: A Survey of Surveys," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 173-223.

¹² Richard F. Carter, "Some Effects of the Debates," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 253-270.

¹³ Percy H. Tannenbaum, Bradley S. Greenberg, and Fred R. Silverman, "Candidate Images," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 286.

¹⁴ Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, "Reaction of Viewers," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 313-30.

¹⁵ Saul Ben-Zeev and Irving S. White, "Effects and Implications," in The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 331-37.

¹⁶ Jules Witcover, Marathon: The Pursuit of the Presidency 1972-1976 (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1977; The New American Library, Inc., 1978).

¹⁷ Austin Ranney, ed. The Past and Future of Presidential Debates (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979).

¹⁸ Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, "Debates: An Overview," in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), pp. 191-205.

¹⁹ Steven H. Chaffee and Jack Dennis, "Presidential Debates: An Emperical Assessment," in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), p. 83.

²⁰ Richard B. Cheney, "The 1976 Presidential Debates: A Republican Perspective," in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), p. 107-31.

²¹ Leshner, pp. 137-47.

²² James Karayn, "The Case for Permanent Debates," in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), pp. 155-69.

²³ Sidney Kraus, ed., The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

²⁴ Steven H. Chaffee and David O. Sears, "Uses and Effects of the 1976 Debates: An Overview of Empirical Studies," in The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), pp. 223-61.

²⁵ John P. Robinson, "The Polls," in The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976, ed. Sidney Kraus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979) pp. 262-68.

²⁶ George F. Bishop, Robert G. Meadow, and Marilyn Jackson-Beeck, ed., The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral, and Policy Perspectives (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978).

²⁷ Frederick T. Steeper, "Public Response to Gerald Ford's Statements on Eastern Europe in the Second Debate," in The Presidential Debate: Media, Electoral, and Policy Perspectives, ed. George F. Bishop, Robert G. Meadow, and Marilyn Jackson-Beeck (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), pp. 81-101.

²⁸ Paul R. Hagner and Leroy N. Rieselbach, "The Impact of the 1976 Presidential Debates: Conversion or Reinforcement?" in The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral, and Policy Perspectives, ed. George F. Bishop, Robert G. Meadow, and Marilyn Jackson-Beeck (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), pp. 157-78.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE DEBATES

When people speak of the history of presidential debates in America, they usually harken back to the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates. However, when Lincoln and Douglas participated in those seven debates in 1858, they were campaigning for a United States Senate seat. Stephen A. Douglas was the Democratic incumbent and Abraham Lincoln, the lesser known Republican candidate, challenged Douglas to debate. The debates are historic, not only because the two men debated the issue of slavery, but also because they were apparently the first public debates between candidates for a major political office.¹ Audiences ranged in size from 1,500 to more than 12,000, and even more read about them in the newspapers.² Through the debates, Lincoln gained public recognition, and later was his party's candidate for President.

Much later, radio and television provided a medium whereby candidates could reach millions. In the 1920s and 1930s there were radio programs that had politicians on them to discuss public issues. It became apparent to the government that the airways could be exploited by politicians, so in 1934 Section 315 of the Communications Act was enacted.

This law requires that a station which allows one candidate to be seen or heard in its facilities, must also allow all other candidates for the same office equal opportunity to be seen or heard, regardless of the size of party they represent.³ In 1959 Congress altered the law so a bonafide new event, such as an interview, documentary or on-the-spot political coverage, did not fall under the equal time provision. This exception would prove significant in 1976, when it provided the basis for the Federal Communications Commission ruling that a debate organized by a nonpartisan group, independent of broadcasters, would be considered a bonafide news event and exempt from the equal time provision. But this exemption was not granted until 1976, so until then the stations operated under the old rules. The alternative was for candidates to buy time on the airways, like advertising, to hold debates. Major parties could afford this, minor parties could not. It was unlikely that a station would provide free time to the major candidates, because it would have to do the same for minor party candidates.

In 1940, Wendell Willkie, in a speech accepting the Republican presidential nomination, challenged Franklin D. Roosevelt to debate. Roosevelt declined.

The first notable broadcast of a political debate took place during the 1948 Republican presidential primary in Oregon. Harold Stassen challenged Thomas E. Dewey to a debate. It was held in a Portland, Oregon radio studio

without an audience, and covered the issue of outlawing communism. It was broadcast to a national audience by ABC, CBS, NBC and Mutual radio networks. Dewey narrowly won the primary.⁴

The first specific suggestion for televised debates between presidential candidates is attributed to Senator Blair Moody of Michigan, who had been the Washington, D.C. correspondent for The Detroit News before becoming a senator. On a CBS radio program in July 1952 Sen. Moody proposed that Adlai Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower participate in a televised debate. NBC and CBS invited the candidates to participate in such a debate. Both candidates declined the offer.⁵ Nor did the same two candidates debate in 1956.

Under the urging of the television networks, in the summer of 1960, Congress suspended the equal time provision for presidential and vice presidential candidates until November 3, 1960. The television networks sponsored all four 60-minute debates between presidential candidates Nixon and Kennedy. When the networks extended the invitation, Kennedy, seeing the debates as a way of becoming nationally known and to dispel doubts about his maturity, accepted. Nixon had done well on television before, via his 1952 "Checkers" speech. He was the minority party and he hoped to woo Democrats and independents. He could reach them in the debates, whereas they might otherwise ignore him. He also hoped to impress Republican voters.⁶ So, he, too,

accepted.

Kennedy, who did well in the debates, indicated he would debate in 1964.⁷ He supported a bill to suspend the equal time provision, which passed both Houses and was referred to a conference committee to work out the differences. Kennedy was assassinated before the committee finished its work. In 1964 Lyndon Johnson, who was ahead of Republican challenger Barry Goldwater in the polls, didn't want to debate. Johnson didn't believe his refusal to debate would hurt him and he made sure the Democratic-controlled Congress did not suspend the equal time provision.⁸ The proposed suspension was defeated in August 1964 by the Senate.⁹ Nevertheless, the Republicans offered to pay one-half of the television time for debates. This offer Johnson also refused.

Nixon, who hadn't forgotten his ill-fated debates with Kennedy in 1960, refused debate challenges in 1968 and 1972. In both election years Nixon was ahead in the polls and did not think his refusal to debate would harm his campaigns.¹¹ In 1968, the issue arose of including third party candidates in debates. In September, Humphrey, behind Nixon in the polls, challenged Nixon to debate. George Wallace of Alabama thought such a debate would help his third party candidacy, and he wanted to be included in the debate. Humphrey, no doubt believing Wallace would siphon off more conservative potential Nixon votes than potential Humphrey

votes, wanted Wallace included in the debate. Humphrey even offered to pay for one-half of the television time. Nixon would have none of it. There has been some speculation that Humphrey, despite his challenge to Nixon, did not make a big issue of it during the campaign because Humphrey may not have been all that eager to debate on nationwide television for fear he would have to defend the Johnson administration's Vietnam War policies.¹²

It was not until 1976 that both presidential candidates saw it in their interests to take part in nationally televised debates. Jimmy Carter, a Georgia Democrat, was not well known and wanted to increase his exposure nationwide. President Gerald Ford was behind Carter in the polls. Ford was an unelected President, having taken office upon Nixon's resignation. It also seemed that the public, suspicious of government and politicians after Watergate, wanted a closer look at the candidates.

In September 1975 the FCC ruled that radio and television stations could broadcast debates between the Democratic and Republican contenders without incurring equal time obligations to minor party candidates, if the broadcaster had not arranged the events. The debates, if sponsored by an organization not associated with the broadcasters, could be carried live and in their entirety by broadcasters as bonafide news events. Thus, the networks would not be subject to equal time demands by minor party candidates. Some critics

saw the ruling as a ploy by the Republican-controlled FCC to gain advantage for the incumbent Republican President.¹³

At any rate, the League of Women Voters stepped into the breach and sponsored "Presidential Forums" during the 1976 primaries and in the general election.

In 1976 the League sponsored three debates, each 90 minutes long, between Ford and Carter. The three major networks and public television broadcasted the debates. A League-sponsored debate between the vice presidential candidates, Robert Dole and Walter Mondale, was also held.

In 1980 the League again sponsored presidential debates and ran into controversy, when instead of inviting only the major party candidates, it also invited an independent candidate to take part. The Democratic incumbent, Jimmy Carter, agreed to debate his Republican challenger, Ronald Reagan, but he refused to debate Independent candidate John Anderson. Anderson, a liberal former Republican, was seen in the polls as siphoning off more potential Carter supporters than potential Reagan supporters. Carter did not want to give Anderson the national exposure or legitimacy he would attain in a debate with the major party candidates. Reagan, believing Anderson would do Carter more harm than himself, insisted Anderson be included. The debates themselves became a campaign issue. Carter held firm, refusing to debate Anderson. Reagan debated Anderson one-on-one under League auspices, but the debate was not carried by one of the major

networks, ABC. Finally, in October the League agreed to exclude Anderson. So, a week before the election, with his campaign stalling, Reagan met Carter for a one-on-one debate without Anderson. All the networks carried the debate. One independent network, the Atlanta-based Cable News Network, seen by an estimated five million viewers,¹⁴ carried the Carter-Reagan debate, and spliced in equal segments of Anderson. An estimated 120 million viewers watched the Carter-Reagan debate in October,¹⁵ while only about 50 million watched the Reagan-Anderson debate in September.¹⁶ Although Carter lost the election, his gamble of not participating paid off. Fewer people watched the first debate. Anderson eventually declined in the polls after the first debate, and Carter was finally able to go it one-on-one with Reagan before a bigger audience.

NOTES

¹ Lee M. Mitchell, "Background Paper," in With the Nation Watching: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Televised Presidential Debates, Twentieth Century Fund Task Force (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1979), p. 24.

² Mitchell, p. 24.

³ Mitchell, p. 27.

⁴ Mitchell, pp. 27-28.

⁵ Mitchell, p. 28.

⁶ Robert E. Gilbert, Television and Presidential Politics (North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1972), p. 166.

⁷ Mitchell, p. 33.

⁸ Germond and Witcover, p. 193.

⁹ Gilbert, p. 206.

¹⁰ Mitchell, p. 33.

¹¹ Germond and Witcover, p. 193.

¹² Mitchell, p. 34.

¹³ Mitchell, p. 37

- 14 Christian Science Monitor, 30 October 1980, p. 19.
- 15 Christian Science Monitor, 30 October 1980, p. 2.
- 16 Washington Post, 22 September 1980, p. 1.

CHAPTER IV

OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS OF CANDIDATES WHO SEEK OR AVOID DEBATES

Presidential candidates who seek televised presidential debates are usually challengers who are behind in the polls. Those who avoid debates usually are incumbents, far ahead in the polls who don't want to give the opposition nationwide television publicity. In 1964 Senator Barry Goldwater, a lesser known candidate trailing in the polls, sought to debate incumbent President Lyndon Johnson, to no avail. In 1968 Vice President Humphrey, behind Nixon in the polls, challenged Nixon to a debate. Nixon refused. Incumbent President Nixon in 1972 had no intention of debating the less well known challenger, George McGovern, despite McGovern's calls for a debate.

It was not until 1976, with an incumbent, albeit unelected President, Gerald Ford, behind in the polls that debates were held. Carter, the less well known challenger, wanted a debate and planned to challenge Ford after he received his party's nomination at the Republican convention. Word of this was leaked to the Ford campaign. Since he was trailing Carter in the polls in the summer of 1976, Ford

challenged Carter to a series of debates during his Republican nomination acceptance speech before a huge television audience.¹

The Ford-Carter debates were the first presidential debates since the televised presidential debates between Nixon and Kennedy in 1960, which were the first in the history of America. In the Kennedy-Nixon debates, neither candidate was an incumbent President. Nixon was then Vice President of the United States. Although Vice President Nixon was better known than Kennedy, a U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, both candidates were running about even in the polls before the first debate.² Nixon saw the debates as an opportunity to rally the Republicans and to gain support of Democrats and independents, some of whom were suspicious of Kennedy. Nixon had been a successful debater in high school and college and during his years as a politician. He believed he was more experienced and knowledgeable than Kennedy. Nixon had reason to believe he would do well in the debates. He was also concerned that if he refused to debate Kennedy, he would be subjected to charges that he was unwilling to face Kennedy.³ Kennedy saw the debates as a vehicle to become nationally known and to shore up Democratic support. Kennedy thought that through the debates he could show that he, too, had broad knowledge and could overcome the charges that he was too young and inexperienced.⁴ Kennedy, always aware of projecting a good image during the campaign,⁵ recognized

the debates as a format for appearing handsome and confident. Clearly both men believed they would make political gains by participating in the televised debates.

Ford and Carter debated for the same reasons. Although traditional wisdom is that an incumbent does not debate the challenger, Ford was not a traditional incumbent. He attained the Presidency under the 25th Amendment. He was trailing Carter by more than 30 percentage points in the polls at the time of the Democratic Convention in July.⁶ Because Ford was behind in the polls, his campaign strategists wanted to focus on television campaigning. Televised debates offered the opportunity to reach millions of voters. Ford strategists wanted to put Carter in a debate situation where he would have to be more specific on issues. Ford campaign surveys showed that Carter "had indeed succeeded in being all things to all men."⁷ The surveys indicated that Republican and Democratic voters perceived Carter's views as similar to their own. Ford strategists thought if Carter was forced to be more specific on television he would lose support because people might discover that Carter's views did not coincide with their own after all, and that many voters, after hearing Ford, might find that they agreed with Ford instead.⁸ Through the debates Ford strategists hoped that they might be able to change the public's perception of Jimmy Carter. This became one of their key campaign objectives.⁹ If Carter was not more specific in the debates, they believed

he would risk increasing the number of people who viewed him as fuzzy and indecisive, making them suspicious.¹⁰ Ford's strategists thought Ford would come off well image-wise in the debates. "The President's physical size and presence presented none of the negatively perceived personal characteristics which had supposedly caused Nixon to lose the first debate to Kennedy."¹¹

Ford's debate challenge in his nomination speech "satisfied the need to mount an aggressive, come-from-behind campaign and provided a justification for staying off the campaign trail as much as possible."¹² Ford needed to use television in order to keep campaign travel to a minimum until shortly before the election. The debates helped Ford's Rose Garden strategy. By not having the first debate until September 23, Ford strategists were hoping that the public would hold off on judging the two candidates at least until after the first debate.¹³ "Partly for this reason, it was decided that Ford's television commercials would not be aired until a few days after the first debate, thus saving money, and telescoping their effect into a shorter period closer to Election Day."¹⁴

The Ford debate challenge was an attempt to capture the initiative in the campaign and begin on the offensive. Richard Cheney, Ford's Chief of Staff from 1974 to 1976, writes that the debate challenge achieved the desired result. "The President had come out swinging, and the Carter campaign

was forced to react to us in spite of their substantial lead and status as the challenger."¹⁵

Cheney writes that the possibility of challenging Carter to a series of debates was raised by Republicans in mid-June.¹⁶ By mid-July, with Carter's 30 per cent lead in the polls, Cheney writes, "neither Ford nor Reagan appeared to have any serious prospect of overtaking Carter by November."¹⁷ The Republican campaign strategy was determined by the time of the Republican Convention in August--and the strategy included the debates.¹⁸

Carter campaign strategists saw the debates as a vehicle to remove Ford from the trappings of the Presidency and present both men in the same context. They believed that because Carter was not as well known as Ford, voters might go with what they already knew, i.e. Ford. They thought that through the debates Carter could avoid erosion of support and reinforce Carter supporters.¹⁹ Some Carter campaign strategists thought Ford was dull witted and slow on his feet, poorly programmed with automated responses. They were confident that Carter, whom they viewed as "tougher, more intelligent, quick-witted and better prepared--would take him to the cleaners."²⁰ Carter supporters thought the pressure would be on Ford.²¹

In the 1980 election, President Jimmy Carter, running for re-election, was behind Republican candidate Ronald Reagan in the polls. Like Ford in 1976, because he was an

incumbent trailing in the polls, Carter wanted to debate Reagan in an effort to gain support and make voters wary of his challenger. But in 1980 Carter had a thorn in his side--Independent candidate John Anderson, a former Republican, who, the polls showed, was taking more votes away from Carter than Reagan.

In 1980 the League of Women Voters was planning to sponsor the presidential debates and wanted to include Anderson. A Gallup Poll taken at the end of August found that 71 percent of the nation's registered voters thought Anderson should be included in the debates.²² The League was toying with the idea of inviting to the debates any candidate who had a nationwide standing in the polls of 15 percent--a ploy to include Anderson.

The League was planning to sponsor a series of debates beginning in September. When the League would not agree to exclude Anderson in behind-the-scene negotiations with the Carter camp, Carter on August 26 accepted an invitation from the National Press Club to debate one-on-one with Reagan.²³ Carter also accepted similar invitations from CBS' "Face the Nation" and Ladies Home Journal.²⁴ Reagan refused these invitations, saying he had an obligation to honor the League's invitation for the first debate and to accept the League's criteria on who should participate.²⁵ Reagan did not want Anderson excluded from the debates.

In September, when the League invited all three

candidates to participate in three debates, Carter refused the invitation. With Anderson included, he did not want to lend presidential stature to the debates and be a party to aiding Anderson's credibility as a candidate.²⁶ Carter's campaign strategy was to "play on doubts about Reagan's ability and to ignore Anderson."²⁷ Carter wanted Anderson out of the race and he wasn't going to appear in a debate that would undoubtedly help Anderson's campaign.

Carter had good reason for wanting Anderson out of the race. Anderson was hurting the Carter campaign. A Harris Survey taken September 3-7 in the eight big northern states showed that Carter led Reagan 47 percentage points to 45 when the two were matched up head-to-head. But when Anderson was added, Reagan led Carter 37 to 35 with Anderson receiving 23. Nationally the survey showed Reagan leading Carter 41 to 37, with Anderson at 17. Reagan's lead over Carter, however, was reduced to 2 percentage points, 48 to 46, when Anderson's name was excluded.²⁸ A California poll taken by Mervin Field showed that without Anderson, Reagan's lead was reduced from 10 percentage points to 6. With Anderson the result was Reagan with 39, Carter with 29 and Anderson with 18.²⁹

In early September the Anderson campaign had received some boosts. The Federal Election Commission on September 5 ruled that Anderson would qualify for federal funds if he received five percent of the vote. On September 7 the New York State Liberal Party Executive Committee endorsed

Anderson, which gave him a spot on the November ballot alongside Senator Jacob Javits. Despite this, Carter saw Anderson's campaign declining and he didn't want to be involved in giving him more credibility. In the spring, Anderson got more than 20 percent in national polls. By late August he was around 15 percent.³⁰ Carter campaign manager Robert Strauss contended that Carter could carry New York and California--but not if Anderson ran strongly. This debate, he pointed out, could only hurt Carter and help Reagan.³¹ With Reagan ahead in the polls and Anderson siphoning off potential Carter supporters, Carter strategists were clearly worried:

"A Presidential advisor put it this way: 'It's been more Reagan coming down than Carter coming up during these first days. But we don't claim to have the momentum yet, the momentum we need. If Anderson were out of it, we'd be closing in. But with Anderson in, it's tough, tough, tough.'"³²

Although Carter was adamant that he would not appear in the first debate with Anderson, he sent a representative to negotiate with the League and Reagan and Anderson campaign representatives on September 10. The Reagan camp suggested a round robin of Reagan-Carter, Carter-Anderson, and Reagan-Anderson, with the order of the debates determined by lot. The Anderson representative agreed. Carter would not. The League negotiators proposed an initial three-man debate, to be followed by a Carter-Reagan debate. The Reagan and Anderson negotiators agreed. Carter insisted he would only

participate if his first appearance was just with Reagan.³³ Carter hadn't forgotten the Kennedy-Nixon debates of 1960. He believed the first debate would be the "all-important one--and that he could not afford, politically, to provide a forum to the third party candidate who might take votes away from him by such a build up."³⁴ Thus, he also would not take a chance on the "round robin" proposal.

With the League insisting on Anderson's inclusion--and with Reagan going along--part of Carter's campaign strategy was being thwarted. Carter strategists had wanted debates as early as the week of September 15. They wanted as many as six debates to be held. They believed many debates could hurt the Reagan campaign. "'The more debates there are,' insisted one senior Georgian, 'the greater the chance that Reagan will screw up.'"³⁵

Reagan strategists just wanted to have two debates, because each debate would tie up Reagan for three days--two to prepare and one to debate. Six debates, as Carter proposed, would have taken him off the campaign road for 18 days. The challenger usually needs to spend more time campaigning than the incumbent, and James Baker, Reagan's chief debate negotiator, said Reagan didn't "'want to spend time running around the country winning debates and losing elections.'"³⁶ Besides appearing sportsmanlike about going along with the League's plan to include Anderson in the debate, Reagan naturally had good political reasons to do so.

As long as Anderson was higher in the polls than 6 percent, Reagan strategists thought he would hurt Carter. But if Anderson fell below 6 percent, they thought he would take more votes away from Reagan than from Carter--most of them moderate Republicans. The Reagan camp believed that a nationwide television appearance would keep Anderson from falling that low.³⁷

Anderson and his advisors saw the debates as a way to give Anderson the nationwide publicity he needed. By appearing with Carter and Reagan in a televised debate, they thought he would gain credibility among voters.³⁸

The League scheduled the televised debate for September 21. With only Reagan and Anderson participating, Carter advisors were hoping Anderson would clobber Reagan in the debate, thus hurting Reagan's image and his election chances.³⁹ The Carter camp saw four possible outcomes of the Reagan-Anderson debate, three favorable to Carter. The first was that Anderson would badly damage Reagan. The second was that one or both would go overboard on their attacks on Carter and create a backlash. The third was that the debate would be boring and unimpressive. The fourth outcome--feared by Carter--was that Reagan would appear "presidential"--a candidate whose criticisms of Carter were substantial, not just political; and that Reagan would answer the questions in a way that would make people feel he could handle the job of President.⁴⁰

The Reagan strategists and Anderson supporters, of course, hoped Carter would be hurt by not attending the debate, that the voters would think less of him for it. Reagan campaign managers wanted Reagan to appear stable, substantive and thoughtful. And they hoped Anderson would provide a contrast and build up his more liberal support which would otherwise go to Carter.⁴¹

After the Reagan-Anderson debate, the League proposed a one-on-one debate between Reagan and Carter to be set for the week of October 12. The proposal called for the one-on-one debate to be followed by a three-man debate with Anderson, Carter and Reagan. The League said if Anderson's standing dropped below 15 percent by the time of the proposed three-man debate, scheduled for the week of October 26, he might be excluded.

Anderson, with little strength from which to negotiate, and hoping to be included in a debate with Carter and Reagan, accepted the proposal. Carter, hoping Anderson would fall too low in the polls to be included in the late October debate, and still wanting to debate Reagan one-on-one, accepted the proposal. Reagan, however, did not. Although Reagan insisted that he didn't want Anderson cut out of the debate, he really just didn't want to participate in any more debates. Reagan advisors decided on September 25 that Reagan should not take part in any more debates because he was leading Carter in the polls.⁴² During the last week of September and

the first week of October, with Reagan leading in the polls, Reagan campaign strategists saw no reason for their candidate to debate and risk making a "bloop" on nationwide television. A Washington Post state-by-state survey the first week of October showed Reagan leading in 28 states with 283 electoral votes--13 more than needed to win the election. Carter was ahead in 14 states and the District of Columbia. Eight states were considered toss-ups. A Newsweek poll showed Reagan leading in 30 states with 321 electoral votes and Carter ahead in 12 states and the District of Columbia with 142 votes.⁴³

The Carter campaign strategists also saw the electoral vote count in Reagan's favor. With less than a month before the election, they were hoping a debate with Reagan could narrow or close the gap. Democratic pollster Michael Barone said an election during the first week of October would be won by Reagan 334 electoral votes to 204 for Carter. The overall impression was that Carter had not been making substantial headway during the last week of September and the first week of October.⁴⁴

Despite the lack of cooperation at various times among the presidential candidates, the League in October still wanted to sponsor a presidential debate. The League October 15 urged Carter and Reagan to agree to debate.⁴⁵ It also announced that it was seriously considering going ahead with a debate scheduled for October 26 in Cleveland. The ploy would be to invite the candidates--and let them

come or not--and let the media cover it or not. The League's plan included reassessing Anderson's support in the polls, then around 10 percent, to see if he would be considered a significant candidate. If not, he would be excluded.⁴⁶ This action was clearly taken by the League to push Reagan and Carter to agree to debate. The League said its action was in response to public pressure. A survey of 16,500 people in 11 states taken for the Global 2000 News Service found 73 percent wanted a televised debate between Reagan and Carter, and 69 percent wanted a 3-way debate between Carter, Anderson and Reagan.⁴⁷

On October 16 Reagan strategists let it be known that Reagan might debate Carter if the League declared that Anderson was no longer a viable candidate and would be excluded. This move by Reagan came after he dropped in the polls in three key states. Reagan aides were worried that if the League declared Anderson ineligible for the debate, Reagan would be hurt by not appearing in a debate with Carter.⁴⁸

Reagan finally did agree to debate Carter, hoping the debate would reinforce Reagan supporters who were "soft" and bring undecideds into the Reagan camp. Reagan advisors also thought the debate would focus attention on both candidates, not just Carter, who was often in the public eye because he was President. Reagan advisors were worried that their campaign had stalled, that Reagan had peaked

too soon.⁴⁹ Polls taken the week of October 10 showed Reagan with a three point lead nationally, but with his margin in jeopardy. Texas, Ohio and Pennsylvania, big electoral vote states that had been considered leaning toward Reagan, were suddenly considered toss-ups.⁵⁰ A poll by Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., taken October 14-16, showed Carter with 42 percent support nationwide, Reagan with 41 percent, Anderson with 12 percent and 5 percent undecided. A Gallup Poll, taken October 17 and 20, found Reagan with 40 percent support among registered voters and Carter with 41. Ten percent supported Anderson. Among those likely to vote, however, Reagan led Carter 42 to 39 percent.⁵² Reagan campaign strategists wanted to use the debate as a vehicle for portraying Reagan as a moderate. They believed Carter had gained support because he was being successful in portraying Reagan as more likely to get the country into war.⁵³ The Gallup Poll taken October 17 and 20 found that the war issue had hurt Reagan. Carter was rated by 52 percent as best able to keep the nation out of war, compared with 22 percent who thought Reagan would best keep the peace. In a Gallup Poll taken June 8, 37 percent believed Carter would best keep the nation out of war, compared with 23 percent for Reagan.⁵⁴ And a Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., poll for Time taken August 26-28 found that 48 percent of those surveyed worried that Reagan might be "trigger happy."⁵⁵ Reagan strategists hoped Reagan could reassure his "soft" supporters and woo

undecideds who were worried about war.⁵⁶ A CBS News-New York Times poll in mid-October showed Carter ahead of Reagan 39 to 38 percent. Anderson had 9 percent and 13 percent were undecided.⁵⁷ Pollsters for Carter and Reagan stressed that undecided voters, which they estimated to be as high as one-third of the electorate, would be "the vote pool from which significant changes and even a wider victory margin would come."⁵⁸ Reagan strategists hoped to gain support from the undecideds. One Reagan aide said:

"It was because of the undecideds that we decided to debate. We had convinced many of them that they shouldn't vote for Carter. But we hadn't talked them into voting for Reagan. We hope to make Reagan voters out of them in the debate."⁵⁹

Reagan strategists believed that undecideds have a tendency to vote for the incumbent--Ford picked up such support in 1976--and they were worried the undecideds would end up voting for Carter.⁶⁰ Reagan strategists thought that Reagan, who performs well in front of the camera, could reassure jittery moderates and make voters comfortable with him as a prospective President.⁶¹ Reagan advisors hoped Reagan could keep Carter on the defensive about his economic record and make the voters feel they could trust Reagan.

"We've found that when more people see Ronald Reagan, they like what they see," says Edwin Meese, his chief of staff. "Just having a debate, giving Reagan a chance to demonstrate his grasp of the issues is a big plus," Meese says."⁶²

Carter strategists wanted to use the debate to scare

voters away from Reagan by putting Reagan on the defensive over the issue of war. They hoped to underscore their belief that Carter was more likely to maintain peace.⁶³

"'If Reagan doesn't make it to the White House, it will be because people are afraid of war,' said one key Carter aide."⁶⁴ Carter wanted to portray Reagan as a man too far to the right, one who couldn't be trusted with the awesome responsibilities of the Presidency. Carter strategists hoped to win over the undecideds and reinforce their "soft" support and get disaffected Democrats to vote--for Carter.⁶⁵

With the two candidates running neck and neck in the polls, the large number of undecided voters, and the debate coming so close to election day, both Carter and Reagan strategists believed the debate could be the decisive factor in determining the election outcome.⁶⁶

NOTES

¹ Germond and Witcover, p. 193.

² Germond and Witcover, p. 192.

³ Evron M. Kirkpatrick, "Presidential Candidate 'Debates': What Can We Learn From 1960?" in The Past and Future of Presidential Debates, ed. Austin Ranney (Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979), pp. 7-8.

⁴ Kirkpatrick, p. 7.

⁵ Theodore H. White, In Search of History: A Personal Adventure (New York: Harper and Row, 1978; New York: Warner Books, 1979), pp. 457-93.

⁶ Cheney, p. 109.

⁷ Cheney, p. 114.

⁸ Cheney, pp. 114-19.

⁹ Cheney, p. 115.

¹⁰ Cheney, p. 115

¹¹ Cheney, p. 118.

¹² Cheney, p. 119.

¹³ Witcover, p. 598.

- 14 Witcover, p. 590.
- 15 Cheney, p. 118.
- 16 Cheney, p. 110.
- 17 Cheney, p. 109.
- 18 Cheney, p. 118.
- 19 Leshner, pp. 140-41.
- 20 Witcover, p. 610.
- 21 Witcover, p. 610.
- 22 "A Debate Over the Debates," Newsweek, September 8, 1980, p. 19.
- 23 New York Times, 27 August 1980, p. A20.
- 24 "The Great Debates Debate," Time, September 8, 1980, p. 17.
- 25 New York Times, 27 August 1980, p. A20.
- 26 Christian Science Monitor, 9 September 1980, p. A24.
- 27 Washington Post, 10 September 1980, p. A3.
- 28 Washington Post, 10 September 1980, p. A5.
- 29 Washington Post, 10 September 1980, p. A7.
- 30 Washington Post, 11 September 1980, p. A7.
- 31 Washington Post, 10 September 1980, p. A5.
- 32 Christian Science Monitor, 8 September 1980, p. A1.

- 33 Washington Post, 11 September 1980, p. A6.
- 34 Christian Science Monitor, 12 September 1980, p. A3.
- 35 "A Debate Over the Debates," Newsweek, September 8, 1980, p. 19.
- 36 "A Debate Over the Debates," Newsweek, September 8, 1980, p. 19.
- 37 Washington Post, 10 September 1980, p. A5.
- 38 Washington Post, 11 September 1980, p. A7.
- 39 Christian Science Monitor, 12 September 1980, p. A3.
- 40 Washington Post, 21 September 1980, p. A6.
- 41 New York Times, 23 September 1980, p. B8.
- 42 Washington Post, 27 September 1980, p. A1.
- 43 Christian Science Monitor, 6 October 1980, p. A1.
- 44 Christian Science Monitor, 6 October 1980, pp. A1, A14.
- 45 Christian Science Monitor, 15 October 1980, p. A24.
- 46 Christian Science Monitor, 15 October 1980, p. A1.
- 47 Christian Science Monitor, 15 October 1980, p. A14.
- 48 Washington Post, 16 October 1980, p. A1.
- 49 Christian Science Monitor, 16 October 1980, pp. A1, A4; Wall Street Journal, 20 October 1980, p. A4.
- 50 New York Times, 19 October 1980, sec. 4, p. 1.

51 "Battling Down the Stretch," Time, November 3, 1980, pp. 18-21.

52 "A Poll Shows Carter Moving Up," Newsweek, November 3, 1980, pp. 29-30.

53 Washington Post, 16 October 1980, p. A1; Washington Post, 18 October 1980, p. A1; New York Times, 19 October 1980, sec. 4, p. 1; Christian Science Monitor, 21 October 1981, p. A1; "A Poll Shows Carter Moving Up," Newsweek, November 3, 1980, pp. 29-30.

54 "A Poll Shows Carter Moving Up," Newsweek, November 3, 1980, pp. 29-30.

55 "The Mood of the Voter," Time, September 15, 1980, pp. 8-17.

56 Washington Post, 18 October 1980, p. A1.

57 Christian Science Monitor, 24 October 1980, p. A1.

58 Christian Science Monitor, 24 October 1980, p. A1.

59 Christian Science Monitor, 21 October 1980, p. A1.

60 Christian Science Monitor, 20 October 1980, p. A12; Christian Science Monitor, 21 October 1980, p. A1.

61 New York Times, 19 October 1980, sec. 4, p. 1.

62 Wall Street Journal, 20 October 1980, p. A4.

63 Christian Science Monitor, 20 October 1980, p. A12.

⁶⁴ "Playing Catch Up Ball," Newsweek, November 3, 1980, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁵ Christian Science Monitor, 21 October 1980, p. A1.

⁶⁶ Christian Science Monitor, 23 October 1980, p. A3.; Christian Science Monitor, 24 October 1980, p. A14; New York Times, 27 October 1980, p. B6.; New York Times, 28 October 1980, p. A1.

CHAPTER V

STYLES AND IMAGES

C.

In the first televised debate with Kennedy in 1960, Nixon learned the hard way that a candidate's appearance and style is very important in projecting a good image to the viewers. Kennedy was perceived to have won the first debate on television, mainly because he projected confidence and looked good. White writes:

"Those who heard the debates on the radio, according to sample surveys, believed that the two candidates came off almost equal. Yet every survey of those who watched the debates on television indicated that the Vice President had come off poorly and in the opinion of many, very poorly. It was the picture image that had done it--in 1960 television had won the nation away from sound images, and that was that." ~~12~~ 12

The contrast in how the two men prepared for the event and the care they took in their personal appearances coincides with the outcome of the debate. Kennedy arrived in Chicago the day before the event. Three advisors brought the portable Kennedy campaign library to Chicago. The three men worked for 24 hours and produced 15 pages of copy divided into 12 to 13 areas of facts and issues they thought the correspondents and Nixon might raise. On Monday morning Kennedy and his advisors had a skull session. In the

afternoon, Kennedy addressed a labor union, took a nap, and met with his advisors again from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Then he had dinner and went to the television studio. He wore a dark gray suit and white shirt. When it was apparent the white shirt would glare against the television lights, he changed into a light blue one. Deeply tanned, he wore no makeup. ^{2 13}

Nixon arrived in Chicago Sunday, gaunt and haggard from hard campaigning. He was ten pounds below his normal weight and his knee, which had been operated on earlier that month, bothered him. ^{3 14} He spent Sunday alone. On Monday he received one visitor for five minutes and took one phone call. A television advisor rode with him to the studio and briefed him during the 10-minute drive. Nixon wore a light gray suit, which blended with the backdrop at the studio. ^{4 15} He refused to wear makeup, except for a "beard stick" for his "perpetual 5 o'clock shadow." ^{5 16}

The first debate was on domestic issues and Kennedy came out on the offensive. He played to the television audience. He came across as strong and self-assured, which he needed to do to overcome Republican charges that he was too young and inexperienced to be President.

"In the reaction shots Kennedy was seen looking at Nixon with an intense concentration, a look which gave the attitude...of command and comfort in the situation." ^{6 17}

Nixon, in the reaction shots, appeared uncomfortable and

unsure of himself. His "eyes darted around, perspiration was clearly noticeable on his chin..."²¹⁸ Nixon looked bad on television, even to people who knew him. After the debate, Nixon's mother, who saw it, called Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods, to see if her son was "feeling all right."²¹⁹

Theodore White sums up the first debate:

"For it was the sight of the two men side by side that carried the punch.

"There was, first and above all, the crude, overwhelming impression that side by side the two seemed evenly matched--and this even matching in the popular imagination was for Kennedy a major victory. Until the cameras opened on the Senator and Vice President, Kennedy had been the boy under assault and attack by the Vice President as immature, young, inexperienced. Now, obviously, in flesh and behavior he was the Vice President's equal. Not only that, but the contrast of the two faces was astounding...Tonight he [Kennedy] was calm and nerveless in appearance. The Vice President, by contrast, was tense, almost frightened, at times glowering and, occasionally, haggard-looking to the point of sickness. Probably no picture in American politics tells a better story of crisis and episode than that famous shot of the camera on the Vice President as he half slouched, his "Lazy Shave" powder faintly streaked with sweat, his eyes exaggerated hollows of blackness, his jaws, jowls and face drooping with strain."²²⁰

And Nixon writes of the aftermath of the first debate:

"At the conclusion of the post-mortem, I recognized the basic mistake I had made. I had concentrated too much on substance and not enough on appearance. I should have remembered that 'a picture is worth a thousand words.'²²¹

Nixon put his act together for the three remaining debates. He gained weight, "studied intensively," read widely and listened to advice.²²² For the second debate he hired his own professional makeup man, and wore a dark suit.²²³

In subsequent debates Kennedy, with his perpetual tan, wore no makeup and he wore the same color of suit as in the first debate. Both sides spent time having the lighting in the studios arranged to their satisfaction.^{13 24}

Nixon was seen as doing better in the last three debates. Thirteen studies reported Nixon won the third debate and the second and fourth were close. However, overall, the public rated Kennedy far ahead.^{14 25} The debates helped Kennedy and put Nixon's campaign on the defensive. With only radio, it might have been different. Five surveys, taken before and after each debate for Broadcasting Magazine, gave Kennedy the edge on television and Nixon the edge on radio. Of those who listened to the debates on the radio, 48.7 percent thought Nixon won, overall, while 21 percent chose Kennedy. Of those who watched the debates on television, 28.6 percent believed Nixon won, overall, while 30.2 percent thought Kennedy won.^{15 24}

In 1976 neither Ford nor Carter forgot this lesson. Nor did the candidates in 1980, the year America elected a former actor as President.

In 1976, in preparing for their first televised debate, Ford and Carter watched films of the 1960 debates between Kennedy and Nixon, and both focused on the first one.^{16 2} Ford's preparations were thorough and elaborate. He viewed videotapes of Carter's appearances in debates and talk shows during the primaries. Extensive briefing books were

prepared outlining the policies of the Ford administration, the policy positions of Carter, and his record as governor of Georgia. Ford's campaign staff reviewed the published work of debate panelists to learn their areas of expertise and interests, and developed questions that might be asked.^{17 23} In the White House family theatre, the staff built a mock-up of the set to be used at the Philadelphia theatre, the site of the first debate. The podium was identical. Television angles were checked so Ford's television advisor could recommend what position Ford should assume. As Ford stood at the lectern, he answered questions from a panel of aides while others held up cards showing how much time remained to answer the questions. The placards were similar to the timing devices to be used in Philadelphia. Ford's performance at these rehearsals were videotaped so he and his advisors could evaluate his performance and make suggestions.^{18 28}

Ford arrived early in Philadelphia the day of the debate, checked the theatre set and made sure his suit looked alright in the surroundings. He had dinner with aides and they reviewed with him the style he should pursue.^{19 30}

Carter did not rehearse for the first debate, use a debate coach, or have his aides throw likely questions at him.^{20 31} He studied briefing books so he would have a grasp of details and facts he could cite to project an understanding of difficult questions.^{21 32} On the afternoon of the day of the debate he examined the set in Philadelphia and put on his

suit to make sure it looked right under the television lights. Then he went back to his hotel, took a nap, reviewed his briefing books and dined with his wife. ^{22 33}

Carter strategists wanted Carter to project himself as a man who had a good grasp of the issues. They thought this especially important because he was a challenger who had never held a federal office before. They wanted him to put Ford on the defensive by being direct and assertive, without being too aggressive. If he was too aggressive they feared people might perceive him as being rude to the President, something the public would not like. They hoped Carter would come across as more "youthful, forceful, dynamic" than Ford. ^{23 34} Before the debate, Carter had encountered some difficulties in his campaign. The most controversial was an interview he had with Playboy magazine. Through the debate, he hoped to shore up "soft" support and convince viewers that he was a man of good judgment. ^{24 35}

Ford strategists wanted their candidate to project a strong presidential image. They wanted him to appear as a forceful leader--to show he had an understanding of the country's problems and make people believe his solutions would work. ^{25 36}

In the debate, Ford was forceful. He attacked Carter's record and positions. He stared and glared at Carter. ^{26 37} Carter avoided calling Ford "President Ford." Instead he called him "Mr. Ford" in an attempt to put the two men on

equal footing. However, Carter seemed nervous at first. He was somewhat "disoriented, tentative and deferential."²⁷ ²⁸ Eventually Carter became more assertive. Near the end of the debate, with eight minutes remaining, when Carter seemed to be hitting his stride and was in the middle of a sentence, the sound system went out for 27 minutes. While technicians worked to correct the problem, with the cameras focused on the candidates, neither would be the first to sit down. After 20 minutes, Carter finally sat down, but Ford would not.²⁸ ³⁰ Once the sound was restored the two men made closing statements.

Neither man made any physical or verbal blunders. There was no knockout, but the first debate polls showed that Ford had "won."²⁹ ⁴⁰

Before the second debate rolled around, Carter got debate coaching on presenting a relaxed appearance.³⁰ ⁴¹ He watched a videotape of the first debate and fielded questions from aides.³¹ ⁴² Ford's preparations for the second debate were less elaborate than those for the first. He viewed the first debate on videotape on which audience response was superimposed. A Ford campaign advisor had each person in a group of viewers move a dial to express his degree of approval or disapproval of each answer. This was superimposed on the tape so Ford could see how the audience evaluated what he said. He also rehearsed for the

debate with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Mike Duvall, his debate coordinator, and retired General Brent Scowcroft, his White House national security advisor. He was also given much background material. ³²⁴³

In debate No. 2, Carter went on the attack from the start. Ford counterattacked. Then he made his now infamous faux pau. In response to a foreign policy question about the Helsinki Agreements, Ford said there was no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. When asked by the [astonished reporter if that's what he really meant, Ford reiterated his statement. Carter naturally picked up on this and attacked.

Carter won the second debate. Ford's blunder on Poland "seemed to reinforce the nagging image of the President as an intellectual lightweight." ³³⁴⁴ The controversy over the statement, and Ford's refusal to admit the error for five days, ate up valuable campaign time, stalling Ford's attempt to close the gap in the polls between himself and Carter.

By the time of the third debate, Pat Caddell, Carter's pollster, found that Carter was slipping in the polls and he needed to shore up support among women, especially housewives. Carter had used some vulgar word during the Playboy interview and Caddell thought this might [be] behind his slippage. So in the debate, Carter sought to reassure women by confronting the problem directly, explaining what he meant, and assuring viewers that he would not again discuss his deep religious

beliefs for such a publication.^{34 45}

Ford had been told by his advisors not to be "too strident" in the third debate and he complied.^{35 46} Nor did he make any blunders. Both men were calm and cautious. Polls showed the final debate was perceived as a narrow Carter victory. It also served Carter's purposes. Carter did almost as well among women as among men in the election.^{36 47}

In 1980, the first televised debate was between John Anderson and Ronald Reagan, because President Carter would not attend.

In preparing for the debate, both Reagan and Anderson intended to capitalize on Carter's absence--pointing out to millions of viewers that Carter would not take part. Carter did win a technical point in the debate, however. The League had threatened to leave an empty chair on the stage--symbolizing Carter's absence. This plan was dropped after the mayor of Baltimore, where the debate was held September 21, objected. Baltimore Mayor William Donald Schaefer was a Carter supporter.^{37 48} The League was also concerned about being the subject of jokes. Talk show host Johnny Carson, referring to the debate on television, had said: "What bothers me is, suppose the chair wins."^{38 49}

In preparing for the debate, Anderson and his advisors reviewed films of Anderson's performance in three debates during the Republican primaries.^{39 50} Anderson aides, noting that their candidate tended to be preachy, wanted him to be

less strident. They wanted him to look solid, comfortable and well informed--presidential. Their hope was to appeal to people who were anti-Reagan by having their candidate be tough on Reagan's positions on energy, taxes and national defense. They did not want him to go overboard on attacking Carter.^{40 51}

Reagan, meanwhile, rehearsed for the debate with one of Anderson's former aides who imitated Anderson's speaking style. The stand-in was Michigan Representative David Stockman. A mock debate was held which included aides acting as the panel of correspondents asking questions. The main objective was to train Reagan not to let Anderson bait him into a fight.^{41 52} The debate strategy of the Reagan campaign was for their candidate to make Carter's record the main issue. They wanted him to appear as a calm, decent, stable man with a grasp of the issues.

In the debate, both men several times alluded to Carter's absence--but they both were careful not to appear disrespectful of the President. They attacked his policies. Anderson, citing government and academic studies, appealed more to the mind. He stated his positions concisely and attacked Reagan's philosophy of letting private enterprise operate more freely and cutting government. In pointing out social problems, he asked Reagan where the private sector had been when solutions were needed. Anderson played to the liberals who disagreed with Reagan's views. Anderson appeared more

pushy and adamant, in contrast to Reagan, who spoke more slowly and grinned before he began rebutting Anderson's points. He called Anderson by his first name, John, in a respectful tone, and seemed almost grandfatherly. He gave the American people a pat on the back, pointing out that they had cut their energy consumption. Reagan had an easy going manner and did not let Anderson pull him into a fight.^{42 53} Both men seemed self-assured and were clear in projecting their views. They did not make any physical or verbal blunders.

After the debate, both sides said they were helped by the debate and Carter was hurt by staying away. Anderson was happy for the opportunity to be seen by so many people. Reagan strategists were pleased with their candidate's appearance:

"We got the two things we wanted," said Mr. [Bill] Brock [Republican National Chairman], speaking for the Reagan camp. "Reagan came across as substantive, stable and thoughtful. And we needed Anderson to do precisely what he did: make a contrast with Reagan and work on strengthening his base. So we're happy."^{44 45}

The debate between Reagan and Carter was on October 28 in Cleveland, just a week before the election. With the polls close, both sides agreed the debate could be decisive in the election.^{45 51} Both candidates prepared accordingly. Reagan stopped campaigning for three days of intensive study.^{46 56} Reagan studied Carter's style by viewing his debates on a simulated debate setting constructed in the garage of a rented Virginia estate.^{48 59}

Carter also used three days to prepare for the debate and rest. He studied analyses of Reagan's positions.⁴⁸⁵⁸ His aides assembled a videotape library of Reagan's past debate and campaign appearances on television for Carter to view.⁵⁰⁵⁹

Carter's debate strategy was to portray Reagan as a a right-wing conservative and a threat to world peace.~~51~~ Carter wanted to portray himself as an experienced world leader, a calm man in a crisis, and to emphasize the differences between the Democratic and Republican approaches to government.⁵² Reagan's strategy was the same as before: dispel the war monger issue, appear as a reasonable, calm man--presidential timber. Reagan wanted to put Carter on the defensive by attacking his record on the economy and national security.⁵³~~442~~

Both men were successful. Carter was poised, confident. He attacked Reagan's stands on issues such as Social Security, taxes, national health insurance, and his record as governor of California. He tried to put Reagan on the defensive, especially on the subject of war--and he did seem to put Reagan on the defensive a bit. Reagan often was forced to try to dispel some of Carter's charges in an effort to reassure viewers that he was not trigger happy. Reagan was finally able to focus on economics near the end, and in a final thrust, asked the audience: "Are you better off than you were four years ago? Is America as respected throughout the world?"⁵⁴~~55~~ Reagan, during the debate, for the most part

gave his standard positions on the issues. He appeared to be relaxed, genial, calm and reassuring. Both candidates appealed to uncommitted voters. At the end, Reagan walked over and shook Carter's hand. The debates were not dramatic, and overall, both candidates did well. An Associated Press panel of forensic professors rated Reagan at 161 and Carter at 160.

NOTES

- 121 White, 1960, p. 329.
- 132 White, 1960, pp. 321-23, 325; Seltz and Loakam, p. 85.
- 143 Nixon, p. 341.
- 154 White, 1960, pp. 323-25.
- 165 Nixon, p. 338.
- 176 Seltz and Loakam, pp. 95-96.
- 187 Seltz and Loakam, p. 95.
- 198 Nixon, p. 341.
- 209 White, 1960, p. 327.
- 210 Nixon, p. 340.
- 211 Nixon, pp. 343-44.
- 2212 Seltz and Loakam, p. 103.
- 2313 Seltz and Loakam, p. 103.
- 2414 Katz and Feldman, p. 195.
- 2515 "Debate Score: Kennedy Up, Nixon Down," Broadcasting 59
(November 7, 1960): 27-29.
- 2716 Cheney, pp. 119-20; Leshner, p. 148.

- 75 17 Cheney, pp. 119-20.
- 79 18 Germond and Witcover, pp. 193-95.
- 30 19 Witcover, p. 613.
- 31 20 Witcover, p. 611.
- 32 21 Leshner, p. 147.
- 33 22 Witcover, p. 611.
- 34 23 Kraus, ed., Debates 1976, p. 106.
- 35 24 Witcover, p. 610.
- 36 25 Kraus, ed., Debates 1976, p. 109.
- 37 26 Witcover, pp. 616-17.
- 38 27 Witcover, pp. 616-17.
- 39 28 Witcover, pp. 616-17.
- 40 29 Germond and Witcover, p. 195.
- 41 30 Leshner, p. 143.
- 42 31 Witcover, p. 635.
- 43 32 Witcover, pp. 633-34.
- 44 33 Germond and Witcover, p. 196.
- 45 34 Leshner, pp. 143-44.
- 46 35 Witcover, p. 664.
- 47 36 Leshner, p. 142.
- 48 37 New York Times 21 September 1980, p. A34.

- 438 New York Times 21 September 1980, p. A34.
- 5039 Washington Post, 21 September 1980, p. A6.
- 3140 Washington Post, 21 September 1980, p. A6.
- 6041 Wall Street Journal, 26 September 1980, p. A1.
- 4342 Wall Street Journal, 29 September 1980, p. A30;
New York Times, 23 September 1980, p. B8; Washington Post,
 23 September 1980, p. A2.
- ~~43~~ Washington Post, 22 September 1980, p. A1.
- 5444 New York Times, 23 September 1980, p. B8.
- 4345 New York Times, 28 October 1980, p. A1.
- 5046 New York Times, 27 October 1980, p. B6.
- 47 "Battling Down the Stretch," Time, November 3, 1980,
~~p. 19.~~
- 5748 New York Times, 28 October 1980, p. A1.
- 5749 "Battling Down the Stretch," Time, November 3, 1980,
 p. 19.
- 5750 "A Showdown, One-on-One," Newsweek, October 27, 1980,
 pp. 33-34.
- ~~4041~~ "The Strategy of the Debates," Newsweek, October 27,
 1980, pp. 36-37; Wall Street Journal, 20 October 1980, p. A4.
- ~~4042~~ "The Strategy of the Debates," Newsweek, October 27,
 1980, pp. 33-34.

61 ~~153~~ "The Strategy of the Debates," Newsweek, October 27, 1980, pp. 36-37; Wall Street Journal, 20 October 1980, p. A4.

67 ~~63~~ ⁵⁴ Wall Street Journal, 29 October 1980, p. A2.

CHAPTER VI

DEBATES' IMPACT

In 1960, the televised presidential debates seemed to spark interest in the campaign. After the first debate the size of crowds increased where Kennedy¹ and Nixon² made speeches. Some of the more vocal Nixon supporters expressed their displeasure at Nixon's performance. White writes:

"Equally visible was the gloom that descended on Republican leaders around the country; they were angry with their own candidate, angry at his performance, angry most of all at his 'me too' debating style. At Nixon headquarters in Washington, the telephones rang incessantly, demanding that someone get to this 'new' Nixon and convince him that only the 'old Nixon' could win."³

Meanwhile, the Democrats were pleased with Kennedy.

White writes:

"There were other measurable hard political results. On the evening of the first debate, the Democratic governors of the Southern states were gathered for one of their annual conferences at Hot Springs, Arkansas. Except for Governor Luther Hodges of North Carolina, they had until then viewed Kennedy with a range of emotions that ran from resigned apathy to whispered hostility. Watching him on TV that night, they too were suddenly impressed. We do not know whose idea it was to send Kennedy the telegram of congratulations which ten of eleven signed that evening--but the enthusiasm and excitement of the telegram was not only genuine but a tidemark in the campaign. The southern gov-

ernors were with him now; and if they were with him, it meant that the machinery of their political organizations would be with him, too."⁴

Public reaction swung Kennedy's way. Just before the debate the Gallup Poll's popularity rating had Kennedy behind with 46 percent to Nixon's 47 percent. After the debate Kennedy led with 49 percent to Nixon's 46 percent.⁵ On the subject of who did the best in the first debate, 43 percent picked Kennedy, 23 percent chose Nixon, 29 percent thought they came out even and 5 percent were undecided.⁶ With the polls adjusted for political preference, of the Nixon supporters, 45 percent thought Nixon did a better job while 17 percent said Kennedy did. Of the pro-Kennedy viewers, 3 percent thought Nixon did a better job and 71 percent chose Kennedy. Of the undecideds, 12 percent thought Nixon bested Kennedy, and 26 thought Kennedy was better. Sixty-two percent of the undecideds said they didn't know or had no opinion. Other polls showed similar results.⁷

When the four debates were considered as a whole, Kennedy was the winner. Some poll results taken from surveys compiled by Katz and Feldman show the public reaction:⁸

<u>Study</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Kennedy</u>	<u>Nixon</u>
Carter	Who benefited	49%	11%
Gallup	Better job	42%	30%
Iowa poll	Gained most	32%	21%
Kraft	Gained most	42%	30%
Minnesota	Gained most	51%	17%
Roper	Best job	37%	21%
Wallace	Better impression	54%	23%

When people were asked if the debates influenced their voting, many said yes. However, it seems the debates reinforced their support. The Roper poll found that 41 percent said the debates made them more sure of their candidate; only 6 percent said the debates made them pick a candidate. Five percent said the debates made them less sure of their chosen candidate and 43 percent said the debates had no effect.⁹

During the 1976 campaign there were three debates between Ford and Carter. In a review of three dozen studies of the debates, Chaffee and Sears write that the consensus is that Ford won the first debate, and Carter won the second and third debates.¹⁰ And an NBC poll of 1600 adults found that while 41 percent said the debates were a draw or they weren't sure who won, 36 percent felt Carter did better overall in the debates compared with 23 percent who believed Ford did better.¹¹ The Roper poll found that 39 percent picked Ford as the winner of the first debate,

compared with 31 percent who chose Carter. After the second debate, 40 percent chose Carter as the winner compared with 30 percent for Ford. For the third debate, Carter was perceived as the winner by 40 percent and 29 percent thought Ford won.¹² In the Gallup Poll, 38 percent picked Ford as the winner for the first debate and 25 percent chose Carter. Carter won the second debate in the eyes of 50 percent, while 27 percent said Ford won. For the third debate 32 percent thought Carter won and 27 percent thought Ford won.¹³ Other polls show similar results.¹⁴

Gallup Poll data show Ford picking up support during September and October when the debates were held. Roper and other polls show a similar tendency.¹⁵ Ford did not win the election, but during the period of the debates he was able to shorten the gap between himself and Carter. According to the Gallup Poll, when people in late August were asked about their voting intentions, Carter received 52 percent of the support while Ford got 37 percent. After the first debate, which Ford was perceived to have won, Ford's support had climbed to 43 percent and Carter's had dropped to 49 percent. After the second debate both men lost one percentage point. Carter had 48 percent support and Ford had 42. After the third debate 49 percent said they intended to vote for Carter and 44 percent said they planned to vote for Ford.¹⁶ Although Richard Cheney, Ford's Chief of Staff, has said the debates were valuable in helping Ford narrow the gap between

himself and Carter, this is not altogether clear. The debates may have been one of the main strategies of the Ford campaign, but their effect may have been negligible in the outcome of the election. The Gallup Poll after the election found that less than 2 percent of voters cited the debates as affecting their votes.¹⁷ As in 1960 the debates seemed to allow candidates to reinforce their supporters and undecideds leaning their way.

One interesting issue that cropped up during the Ford campaign was the influence of the news media in swaying public opinion on the outcomes of the debate. Several studies during 1976 indicate that, at least after the second debate, when Ford made his blooper about Poland, much of the public did not think it significant until the news media pointed it out. Thomas E. Patterson conducted panel surveys of 1,236 eligible voters after the first and second debates. In asking who won the second debate, of the group that was questioned 12 hours or less after the debate, 53 percent said Ford won and 35 percent picked Carter. Of those interviewed 12 to 48 hours after the debate, 29 percent chose Ford as the winner and 58 percent said Carter won.¹⁸ Patterson writes that of the group interviewed earlier only 10 percent mentioned Ford's statements on Eastern Europe. as the reason for him losing the second debate.¹⁹ Cheney writes that the Ford campaign's pollsters found a similar reaction among viewers. In their surveys they found that

Ford was perceived to have won by a margin of nine percentage points right after the debate, and not a single respondent mentioned Ford's comments on the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Twenty-four hours later Carter was viewed as the winner by the majority of those interviewed and 20 percent mentioned Ford's blunder on Poland as one of the things he had not done well.²⁰ Thus, it appears that the media do influence public opinion by pointing out a candidate's mistakes. And that is one of the reasons in 1980 the candidates, besides worrying about their screen images, also worked to avoid making any blunders that might make them look like fools. Even if most of the public was not sharp enough to pick up a blunder, the candidates knew the press would point it out for the public.

Like Kennedy in 1960, John Anderson's participation in a presidential debate generated more enthusiasm for his campaign. However, we shouldn't carry this analogy too far. Kennedy campaigners reported an increase in enthusiasm and support. However, they were backing one of the major party candidates. Anderson was an independent and most Americans didn't believe he had a chance to be elected. Still, the debates did garner more enthusiasm from his supporters. Before Anderson was invited to the League-sponsored debate, donations to the Anderson campaign were about \$40,000 a week. After the invitation, contributions increased to \$98,000 a week. Mail-in contributions rose sharply. The morale of his

campaign workers improved and the crowds he addressed got larger.²¹ After the debate Anderson and his aides started traveling by private jet. The number of reporters in the press corps traveling with the Anderson campaign doubled and crowds were more enthusiastic.²²

In his debate with Reagan, Anderson was seen by a narrow majority as having won the debate. However, that did not increase his support. A nationwide poll taken after the debate by the Associated Press and NBC found that of those who watched the debate, 38 percent said Anderson did a better job and 35 percent said Reagan did a better job. Twenty-three percent said the two men did equally well and 4 percent were not sure.²³ When asked for whom they would vote if the election were held then, 42 percent chose Reagan, 33 percent chose Carter, 13 percent chose Anderson and 11 percent were undecided. In an AP-NBC poll taken in mid-August, 39 percent favored Reagan, 32 percent planned to vote for Carter and 13 percent supported Anderson.²⁴ An ABC News and Harris Survey found that 36 percent thought Anderson did better than Reagan in the debate, and 30 percent said Reagan did better. Seventeen percent rated the two men equal and 11 percent were not sure.²⁵ The Harris poll showed Anderson picking up only 3 additional percentage points of voter support.²⁶ Anderson's appearance at the debate may have generated the enthusiasm of his supporters. And many Americans may have thought he won the debate, but that

did not make them more likely to vote for him. The Gallup Poll taken for Newsweek after the debate showed Reagan's support at 39 percent, Carter's support at 35 percent and Anderson's support at 14 percent--about the same level Anderson had in August. Furthermore, the Gallup Poll found that 35 percent of the viewers were more inclined to vote against Anderson after the debate while 26 percent were more inclined to vote for him. When asked about Reagan, 33 percent said they were more likely to vote for Reagan while 30 percent said they were less likely.²⁷ The Anderson campaigners conceded that Anderson's support hadn't moved after the debate.²⁸

Carter's refusal to participate in the debate was thought to be wrong by a majority of those surveyed, but it did not turn out to have any long term negative consequences for his campaign. A New York Times-CBS News poll found that 50 percent of those surveyed thought Carter was wrong in not participating in the debate and 33 percent thought he was right.²⁹ In the ABC News-Harris survey, 60 percent said Carter was wrong in not participating and 32 percent thought he was right.³⁰ By not participating in the debate, Carter seemed to achieve his goal of depriving Anderson of a wider audience than might have watched had Carter participated. Of those polled, the New York Times poll found that only 44 percent saw the debate--and the audience was mostly older and Republican. Two-thirds of the undecideds and 60 percent of the Carter supporters polled

did not watch the debate.³¹ And a Gallup Poll found that after the Anderson-Reagan debate only 44 percent of those surveyed thought Anderson should be included in the presidential debates--a sharp drop from the 71 percent in August who thought Anderson should be included.³² The debate audience was estimated at 40 to 50 million; 42 percent of the television watchers tuned into NBC or CBS, the networks that broadcast the debates.³³ This was less than half of the number that watched the Carter-Reagan debate the following month. Thus it would seem that on the issue of the first presidential debate, the President made the smart political decision by staying away.

Prior to the October 28 presidential debate between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, the Reagan campaign was seen as having stalled--which is why Reagan agreed to the debate. After the debate the Reagan campaign regained momentum and Carter's level of support was stalled. Reagan's support climbed after the debate and continued to increase through the weekend--when pollsters believe frustration increased over the Iranian hostage situation--right on through to election day when Reagan won the office of President with 50.8 percent of the vote compared with 41.0 for Carter and 7 percent for Anderson.

The public seemed to appreciate Reagan's affable style in the debate more than Carter's pointed words. A CBS News poll found that 44 percent of those surveyed thought

Reagan won the debate, 36 percent thought Carter won, and 20 percent called the debate a tie or didn't know who won. Six percent said they shifted their support as a result of the debate; Reagan picked up two of these for every one gained by Carter.³⁴ And Carter aides conceded that in the debate Reagan fared better in terms of style than did Carter.³⁵

While the numbers of the various polls measuring levels of support don't coincide exactly, they do agree on one thing: Reagan was ahead of Carter after the debate. The Associated Press poll showed Carter with 35 percentage points compared with Reagan's 39 percent before the debate. After the debate, according to the AP poll, each picked up 6 percentage points, which left Reagan in the lead.³⁶ The Gallup Poll had Carter leading Reagan 45 to 42 percent before the debate. After the debate, in a survey taken October 29 and 30, Reagan led Carter 44 to 43. In a survey taken October 30 to November 1 Reagan led Carter 47 to 44.³⁷ Even Carter's pollster Pat Caddell found Reagan ahead after the debates. Before the debate Caddell had Carter with 41 and Reagan with 40 percentage points. By October 30 Caddell's survey showed Carter trailing Reagan by 4.5 percentage points. Carter aides attributed Reagan's rise to the debate and thought Reagan's advantage would erode. On November 1 Caddell found the two men even.³⁸ Reagan's pollster, Richard Wirthlin, found Reagan 7 percentage points ahead of Carter before the debate. The day after the debate he discovered Reagan had moved to a 9 point lead.

On November Wirthlin had Reagan with a 10 point lead.³⁹

On Sunday November 2 the demands were set for the release of the American hostages in Iran, and Caddell's polls showed Carter behind Reagan by 5 percent. On Monday November 3 Caddell's polls showed Carter down by 10 points.⁴⁰

Pollsters from the Harris, Gallup and Yankelovich organizations agreed that the debate made Reagan more palatable to voters, and as their dissatisfaction with Carter came to the surface, with the hostage demands serving as a final catalyst, they decided to vote for Reagan.⁴¹ Daniel Yankelovich summed it up:

"The dissatisfaction with Carter was there all along," he said, "but people couldn't bring themselves to vote for Reagan. The debate changed that."⁴²

The debate helped Reagan reassure people that he was not a hawk who would lead the nation into war. Thus, Reagan accomplished his goal in the debate, which was to erase the perception that he was "trigger happy." Carter had been doing better among women than Reagan, mainly due to the war issue. In mid-October a Gallup Poll showed that among women, Carter led Reagan 42 to 37.⁴³ Reagan quelled these fears among many through his debate performance. An ABC News poll found in the election that 47 percent of the women's vote went to Reagan and 42 percent went to Carter.⁴⁴ An Associated Press-NBC News election day exit poll found only 20 percent were worried Reagan would plunge the country into

a war--a campaign charge that had worked well for Carter before the debate.⁴⁵

The perception of the press on who won or who lost the debates didn't vary much. The Wall Street Journal called the Reagan-Anderson debate a "surprisingly good show" and said both candidates did well.⁴⁶ The Washington Post agreed.⁴⁷ Washington Post columnists Joseph Kraft and David Broder said Reagan and Anderson did well. Kraft, however, thought Carter should have attended.⁴⁸ Broder, on the other hand, thought Carter's absence diminished the significance of the debate and reduced the size of the audience--a political plus for Carter.⁴⁹ The Christian Science Monitor editorialized that the debate was "rather lackluster," but it probably helped the two participants' campaigns.⁵⁰ In his column, the Monitor's Godfrey Sperling, Jr., said that since neither candidate made a blunder, both were helped by the debate, and he added that Carter's absence didn't help the President's campaign.⁵¹ The New York Times praised the debate, lauded the League's decision to insist on Anderson's inclusion, and said Carter should meet Anderson as well as Reagan in a future debate.⁵² The editorial writers pointed out possible gains and losses for each candidate, but were reluctant to declare a debate "winner."

When it came to the Reagan-Carter debate they were slow picking a "winner" right after the event. Broder gave Carter a slight edge for keeping Reagan on the defensive, but

maintained it was no knock-out.⁵³ The Washington Post criticized both candidates' performances, saying they stuck so closely to their respective game plans, they missed opportunities to engage each other in tough exchanges over some issues.⁵⁴ The Wall Street Journal, on the other hand was quite pleased with the debate. Journal columnist Daniel Henniger called the debates a "success" and said such televised debates were a boon to American democracy.⁵⁵ But he didn't pick a winner. The Journal editorial October 30 said that in score card terms the debate was a draw. In electoral terms it said Reagan probably came out ahead, "based on the feeling" he solved some strategic problems that could "open the way for decisive gains" before the election.⁵⁶ On November 4 the Wall Street Journal stated in another editorial that Reagan "gained dramatically" from the presidential debate.⁵⁷ On October 29 New York Times columnist James Reston wrote that because Reagan held his own against Carter, he probably gained from the debate.⁵⁸ The next day the New York Times' William Safire, a Nixon speech writer turned columnist, wrote that while Carter came across as a tough, good debater, he also appeared to be a "man of ice." Reagan, Safire wrote, proved himself "neither a war monger or a dope," and seemed an "honest, decent man defending himself from unfair smears..." Reagan, Safire concluded, successfully dispelled the "Reagan issue."⁵⁹ And liberal columnist Anthony Lewis of the New York Times,

wrote that Carter had better arguments, but Reagan had a more genial, reassuring image.⁶⁰ In picking a "winner," most talked around the issue, but they left the reader with the impression that Reagan gained the most from the debate.

NOTES

- ¹ White, 1960, p. 330.
- ² Nixon, p. 24.
- ³ White, 1960, p. 330.
- ⁴ White, 1960, p. 330.
- ⁵ Germond and Witcover, p. 192.
- ⁶ White, 1960, p. 333.
- ⁷ Katz and Feldman, pp. 198-99.
- ⁸ Katz and Feldman, pp. 196-97.
- ⁹ Katz and Feldman, p. 211.
- ¹⁰ Chaffee and Sears, p. 236.
- ¹¹ Robinson, p. 264.
- ¹² Robinson, p. 264.
- ¹³ Robinson, p. 264.
- ¹⁴ Robinson, p. 264.
- ¹⁵ Robinson, pp. 266-67.
- ¹⁶ Robinson, p. 266.
- ¹⁷ Robinson, p. 268.

- 18 Thomas E. Patterson, The Mass Media Election: How Americans Choose Their President (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p. 123.
- 19 Patterson, p. 125.
- 20 Cheney, pp. 127-28.
- 21 Wall Street Journal, 17 September 1980, p. A8.
- 22 Washington Post, 23 September 1980, p. A4.
- 23 New York Times, 27 September 1980, p. A8.
- 24 New York Times, 27 September 1980, p. A8.
- 25 Washington Post, 24 September 1980, p. A3.
- 26 New York Times, 27 September 1980, p. A8.
- 27 Washington Post, 28 September 1980, p. A3.
- 28 Washington Post, 28 September 1980, p. A3.
- 29 New York Times, 28 September 1980, p. A3.
- 30 Washington Post, 24 September 1980, p. A3.
- 31 New York Times, 28 September 1980, p. A20.
- 32 Washington Post, 28 September 1980, p. A3.
- 33 Washington Post, 23 September 1980, p. A4.
- 34 New York Times, 30 October 1980, p. A1.
- 35 New York Times, 30 October 1980, p. B15.

³⁶ Christian Science Monitor, 30 October 1980, p. A10;
New York Times, 30 October 1980, p. A1.

³⁷ "Campaign '80," The Gallup Opinion Index,
December 1980, p. 10.

³⁸ "Anatomy of a Landslide," Time, November 17, 1980,
p. 32.

³⁹ "Anatomy of a Landslide," Time, November 17, 1980,
p. 32.

⁴⁰ "Anatomy of a Landslide," Time, November 17, 1980,
p. 32.

⁴¹ "Anatomy of a Landslide," Time, November 17, 1980,
p. 31; "Campaign '80," The Gallup Opinion Index, December
1980, p. 10.

⁴² "Anatomy of a Landslide," Time, November 17, 1980,
p. 31.

⁴³ "A Poll Shows Carter Moving Up," Newsweek, November 3,
1980, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁴ "Anatomy of a Landslide," Time, November 17, 1980,
p. 32.

⁴⁵ "How the Land Slid," Newsweek, November 17, 1980,
pp. 31-32.

⁴⁶ Wall Street Journal, 29 September 1980, p. A30.

⁴⁷ Washington Post, 23 September 1980, p. A14.

- 48 Washington Post, 23 September 1980, p. A15.
- 49 Washington Post, 24 September 1980, p. A27.
- 50 Christian Science Monitor, 23 September 1980, p. A24.
- 51 Christian Science Monitor, 29 September 1980, p. A27.
- 52 New York Times, 23 September 1980, p. A22.
- 53 Washington Post, 29 October 1980, p. A1.
- 54 Washington Post, 30 October 1980, p. A22.
- 55 Wall Street Journal, 30 October 1980, p. A30.
- 56 Wall Street Journal, 30 October 1980, p. A30.
- 57 Wall Street Journal, 3 November 1980, p. A30.
- 58 New York Times, 29 October 1980, p. A31.
- 59 New York Times, 29 October 1980, p. A27.
- 60 New York Times, 30 October 1980, p. A27.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In 1976, jarred by Watergate, people were looking for someone to restore trust in government. Carter promised to do that. In the summer of 1976 he was running far ahead of Ford in the polls. In the fall Ford started catching up in the polls. After the first debate, which Ford was perceived to have won, he gained in the polls and Carter dropped, but Carter retained a 6 percent lead. Despite Ford's blunder in the second debate, each man dropped 1 percent in the polls. After the third debate, which Carter was seen as having won, he led Ford by only 5 percent. Ford strategist Cheney claimed the debates helped Ford narrow the gap, and participating in the debates was the right decision, despite Ford's loss. Carter said he wouldn't have won the election without the debates. It's impossible to state unequivocally what the election outcome would have been without the debates, but Carter was ahead of Ford before and after the debates. In 1960, Kennedy's good performance helped shore up Democratic support among party politicians and voters. In 1980 voters were not happy with President Carter. But they were skeptical of Reagan. Through the debates, by presenting a calm, genial

image, Reagan gave skeptical voters the impression that maybe he wasn't such an unreasonable alternative after all. Dissatisfaction with Carter's leadership, exacerbated by the Iranian hostage situation, caused disgusted voters to seek alternatives. After Reagan assured people he was neither unintelligent, nor a warmonger--through his performance in the debates--they went to the polls and voted for him. Perhaps a majority would have cast their ballots for Reagan anyway, but the pollsters, Reagan, Carter, and their campaign strategists believed the debates gave Reagan the opening he needed to surge ahead.

[The debates, viewed by huge audiences, seemed to help the lesser known candidates the most--witness the elections of Kennedy, Carter and Reagan. The debates appeared to harden the support of voters leaning their way. Whether the debates can make a decisive differences in an election or not--the candidates and political strategists believe they do. Candidates who took part in debates in the 1960, 1976 and 1980 campaigns viewed the debates as very important, and they prepared accordingly. In those three campaigns the debates were a major part of the candidates' strategies.]

Candidates debate when it is in their political interests to debate. If it would be politically bad for them to debate, they avoid it. [The challengers, usually less well known than the incumbents, like to debate because of the nationwide

exposure. In a debate, the huge television audience can see the challenger on equal footing with the incumbent. Kennedy, Carter and Reagan were all challengers who benefited from the debates.]

[Candidates like to use the debates to enhance or revise their images. In 1960 Kennedy wanted to overcome his young image and appear as a mature, bright, serious man capable of leading the country. He did. In 1976 Carter wanted to combat his "wierdo" image. He wanted to reassure viewers, especially housewives, that he was a man of good judgement despite his Playboy interview. Through the debates he was able to reassure supporters. In 1980 Reagan used the debates to dispel the image that he was an unintelligent warmonger. Reagan's amiable appearance during the debate, in which he held his own on the issues and put down the notion that he was trigger happy, helped him revise his "right-wing nut" image. People wanted to believe Reagan was a reasonable alternative to Carter. Through the debates, Reagan convinced voters he was a reasonable alternative.)

Television debates have not become an institution in presidential campaigns. The debates are merely used as political tools by the candidates. Such tools are used only when the candidates are convinced they are needed. After the debates between Kennedy and Nixon in 1960, it was not until 1976, when the candidates decided debates would be helpful,

that debates were held. In 1980 the debates themselves became a campaign issue because so much politiking surrounded them. Carter wouldn't debate if Anderson was included. Reagan wouldn't debate if Anderson was excluded. Finally Carter and Reagan agreed to debate because each believed it to be in his interest to debate. Reagan's advisors in September had decided Reagan should not take part in any more debates. Had Reagan not begun stalling in the polls, it is doubtful he would have debated Carter in October.

In 1964, 1968, and 1972 major party candidates, usually the incumbents, did not see it in their interest to debate, so none were held. In 1984 debates will be held if the candidates think such a tool is needed in the election.

Debates are events in which candidates voluntarily participate. Debates are campaign tools, used sparingly and cautiously by candidates and their campaign managers, while they keep an eye on the polls.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "The Architect of a Triumph on Television." Broadcasting, November 14, 1960, p. 32.
- Asher, Herbert B. Presidential Elections and American Politics: Voters, Candidates and Campaigns Since 1952. Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1976.
- Ben-Zeev, Saul, and White, Irving S. "Effects and Implications." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 331-37. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.
- Bishop, George F.; Jackson-Beeck, Marilyn; and Meadow, Robert G., ed. The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral, and Policy Perspectives. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.
- Bishop, George F.; Oldendick, Robert W.; and Tuchfarber, Alfred J. "Debate Watching and the Acquisition of Political Knowledge." Journal of Communications 28 (Autumn 1978): 99-112.
- "Campaign '80." The Gallup Opinion Index, December 1980.
- Carter, Richard F. "Some Effects of the Debates." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 253-70. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.
- Chaffee, Steven H. and Sears, David O. "Uses and Effects of the 1976 Debates: An Overview of Empirical Studies." In The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976. pp. 223-61. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.
- Chaffee, Steven H., and Dennis, Jack. "Presidential Debates: An Empirical Assessment." In The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. pp. 75-102. Edited by Austin Ranney. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

✓ Cheney, Richard B. "The 1976 Presidential Debates: A Republican Perspective." In The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. pp. 107-31. Edited by Austin Ranney. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

Christian Science Monitor, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 23, 29 September; 6, 9, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 31 October; 6 November 1980.

✕ "Debate Score: Kennedy Up, Nixon Down." Broadcasting, November 7, 1960, pp. 27-29.

✓ Germond, Jack, and Witcover, Jules. "Debates: An Overview." In The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. pp. 191-206. Edited by Austin Ranney. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

Gilbert, Robert E. Television and Presidential Politics. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1972.

Hagner, Paul R., and Rieselbach, Leroy N. "The Impact of the 1976 Presidential Debates: Conversion or Reinforcement?" In The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral, and Policy Perspectives. pp. 157-78. Edited by George F. Bishop, Marilyn Jackson-Beeck, and Robert G. Meadow. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.

Jackson-Beeck, Marilyn, and Meadow, Robert G. "Issue Evolution: A New Perspective on Presidential Debates." Journal of Communications 28 (Autumn 1978): 84-92.

Karayn, James. "The Case for Permanent Debates." In The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. pp. 155-69. Edited by Austin Ranney. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

✕ Katz, Elihu, and Feldman, Jacob J. "The Debates in Light of Research: A Survey of Surveys." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 173-223. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.

Kelley, Stanley Jr. "The Presidential Campaign." in The Presidential Election and Transition 1960-1961.

Kirkpatrick, Evron M. "Presidential Candidate 'Debates': What Can We Learn from 1960?" In The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. pp. 1-51. Edited by Austin Ranney. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

X Kraus, Sidney, ed. The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.

_____, ed. The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.

Lampl, Peggy. "The Sponsor: The League of Women Voters Education Fund." In The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976. pp. 83-103. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.

Lang, Gladys Engel, and Lang, Kurt. "Reaction of Viewers." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 313-30. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.

_____. "Immediate and Delayed Responses to a Carter-Ford Debate: Assessing Public Opinion." Public Opinion Quarterly 42 (Fall 1978): 322-41.

Nauheim
NBX X Leshner, Stephan, with Caddell, Patrick, and Rafshoon, Gerald. "Did the Debates Help Jimmy Carter?" In The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. pp. 137-47. Edited by Austin Ranney. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

Lubell, Samuel. "Personalities vs. Issues." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 151-62. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.

Lupfer, Michael B., and Wald, Kenneth D. "The Presidential Debates as a Civics Lesson." Public Opinion Quarterly 42 (Fall 1978): 342-53.

Martin, John Bartlow; Minnow, Newton N.; and Mitchell, Lee M. Presidential Television: A Twentieth Century Fund Report. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973.

"Massive Shift to Right." U.S. News and World Report, November 17, 1980. pp. 26-30.

Middleton, Russell. "National TV Debates and Presidential Voting Decisions." Public Opinion Quarterly 26 (Fall 1962): 426-29.

Mitchell, Lee M. "Background Paper." In With the Nation Watching: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Televised Presidential Debates. pp. 19-104. Twentieth Century Fund Task Force. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1979.

THE TELEVISED PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES
IN CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

by

MARGARET GRACE BEATTY

B.S., Kansas State University, 1977

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Political Science

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1982

Presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon took part in nationally televised debates in the 1960 campaign. Since then, every election year candidates have either wanted to debate, or wanted to avoid debates for political reasons. This master's report analyzes how presidential candidates try to use televised debates to their advantage and if their perceptions of the debates as a campaign tool are correct. This paper focuses on the 1980 debates. The 1960 and 1976 debates are used for comparative purposes. Candidates' debate preparations and styles before the cameras are discussed, as well as their motives for seeking or avoiding debates. The poll results of the candidates' popularity before and after the debates, and the poll results of who the public thinks won the debates are analyzed, along with the reaction of four major American newspapers.

This report concludes that the ^{television coverage} ~~televised debates~~ gives the less well known candidate, usually the incumbent's challenger, an opportunity to become better known because of the huge audiences the debates reach. In 1980, as in 1976 and 1960, ~~the~~ televised debates were a major part of the candidates' campaign strategies. The candidates and their campaign strategists believed that ^{television was} ~~the debates were~~ very important, and they prepared accordingly. Public opinion polls show that the ^{debates} rarely change the

voting intentions of a viewer who strongly supports a particular candidate. These polls indicate, however, that debates can help a candidate shore up his soft support and woo undecided voters leaning his way. If a candidate does well in a debate, it can increase the enthusiasm of party politicians and other supporters. Because of the large number of undecided voters and soft supporters whom candidates must favorably influence, the candidates and political strategists see the debates as events that can play a decisive role in determining the outcome of an election.

X Newsweek, 8 September; 6, 27 October; 3, 17 November 1980.

X New York Times, 27 August; 11, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29 September; 17, 18, 19, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 October 1980.

Nixon, Richard M. Six Crises. Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Company, 1962.

Patterson, Thomas E. The Mass Media Election: How Americans Choose Their President. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980.

Polsby, Nelson W., and Wildavsky, Aaron. Presidential Elections: Strategies of American Electoral Politics, 5th ed. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980.

Pomper, Gerald M. "The Presidential Election." In The Election of 1976. pp. 66-73. Edited by Marlene M. Pomper. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977.

Ranney, Austin, ed. The Past and Future of Presidential Debates. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1979.

Robinson, John P. "The Polls." In The Great Debates: Carter vs. Ford, 1976. pp. 262-68. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979.

Robinson, Michael J. "Television and American Politics: 1956-1976." The Public Interest 4 (Summer 1977): 10-25.

Salant, Richard S. "The Television Debates: A Revolution that Deserves a Future." Public Opinion Quarterly 26 (Fall 1962): 335-50.

Salinger, Pierre. With Kennedy. Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.

Public Opinion X Seltz, Herbert A., and Loakam, Richard. "Production Diary of the Debates." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 73-126. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.

Steeper, Frederick T. "Public Response to Gerald Ford's Statements on Eastern Europe in the Second Debate." In The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral, and Policy Perspectives. pp. 81-101. Edited by George F. Bishop, Marilyn Jackson-Beeck, and Robert G. Meadow. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.

Tannenbaum, Percy H.; Greenberg, Bradley S.; and Silverman, Fred R. "Candidate Images." In The Great Debates: Background, Perspective, Effects. pp. 271-88. Edited by Sidney Kraus. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962.

Thompson, Charles A.H. "Mass Media Activities and Influence." In The Presidential Election and Transition 1960-1961. pp. 90-115. Edited by Paul T. David. n.p.: George Banta Co., Inc., 1961.

X Time, 8, 15 September; 27 October, 3, 17 November 1980.

X Wall Street Journal, 10, 17, 22, 26 September; 20, 23, 28, 29, 30 October; 3 November 1980.

X Washington Post, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27 September; 1, 16, 18, 20, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 October; 1, 4, 12 November 1980.

Wayne, Stephen J. The Road to the White House: The Politics of Presidential Elections. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980.

X White, Theodore H. In Search of History: A Personal Adventure. New York: Harper and Row, 1978; Warner Books, 1979.

X White. The Making of the President, 1960. New York: Atheneum House, Inc., 1961; The New American Library, Inc., 1967.

X Witcover, Jules. Marathon: The Pursuit of the Presidency 1972-1976. New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1977; The New American Library, Inc., 1978.