CHAPTER

1

Introduction

Campaigns on the Cutting Edge

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I n *Alice in Wonderland,* Alice laughs when the Queen asks her to dream of impossible things. The Queen remarks that when she was young, "sometimes I thought of six impossible things before breakfast."[1] Alice never realized that this could be true. Look at your smartphone or your computer. It is not unusual to see that six new things have happened by 8:00 a.m. In the world of fake or real news, in the world of campaigns, in the world of social media, what happens in politics is reported, repeated, reinterpreted, and reassessed within hours, at a breathless pace. Campaigns have to exist in this world. While most campaigns for senator, representative, and governor do not have to respond and adjust to every national event, the fact is that the political environment evolves at a faster pace than ever in the past. Campaigns have to adapt, or they fail. Understanding what to do under ever-uncertain circumstances can make that adaptation even more difficult. Given how President Trump has shaped the context of today's political environment with his multiple daily pronouncements and reaction to them by his supporters and detractors, it permeates the political environment even where it is ignored.

By the time this book is published, the Democratic presidential nomination campaign will be a year old. We will know each candidate's position on impeachment, the economy, health care, immigration, and guns. All are important to base voters. Campaigns are not only making cutting-edge adaptations; they literally are on the precipice of change more often than they prefer. Understanding that six impossible things can happen before breakfast may not directly affect each campaign and candidate, but some of those things could.

The role of technology in campaigns remains pretty much the same: a smartphone can be a campaign headquarters in someone's hands. But apps and an improved network enable a campaign to do even more. At one's fingertips is information about the demographics of voters in every city, in every neighborhood, on every street. A smartphone can empower a twenty-year-old canvasser to know everything about you: what car you drive; what smartphone you have (iPhone vs. Android); whether you voted in the last election; what you like to read or eat; and, most of all, your

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voting tendencies. In a sense, technology has democratized and popularized politics to a greater extent than ever in the past—because campaigns can access information, communicate concepts, and produce ads more cost-effectively. Will that increase or speed up as a 5G network arrives?

Today, campaigns are similar to the rest of the world—acquiring knowledge is an instantaneous proposition. That means parries and thrusts by campaigns, which were the products of deliberate thinking over hours or days or even months in the past, are now decided in minutes or even seconds. The eighteen-month (or more) hurricane of perpetual motion we call the modern campaign is driven, in large part, by technology. Look at how many 2020 campaigns for president were announced by viral video—including that of former vice president Joe Biden. All campaigns have become more mobile, which means that more campaign functions are integrated together to enable greater efficiencies. Those efficiencies save the precious commodity of time, which is valued beyond price. But efficiencies come with speed, and speed entails danger as well: too rapid a response can fatally injure a campaign because there isn't time for staff to think things through before they react. For better or worse, this is the world of campaigns today.

Campaigns are now personalized to *you*, the voter, because of technology. For the first 150 years, campaigns were largely the domain of party organizations. The birth of television and the advent of advertising spawned personality-driven campaigns. Campaigns used to be about parties and candidates. Increasingly, campaigns will become about *you*, the voter, or what Madison Avenue would call you, the customer.

The book you are about to read is neither a review of the political science literature nor a major discourse on the democratic implications of elections and campaigns, although that latter discussion remains valuable and important, and addressed in the book's conclusion. This new edition continues to show the development of a trend from the third edition—how campaigns are becoming increasingly integrated with overlapping functions. We call this overlap *convergence*. For example, campaign advertising now appears online as well as on the television screen. Campaigns target their audiences using "big data" or consumer information blended with voting behavior patterns much as discussed earlier. In a large campaign, those same data are often shared by the campaign with its consultants. The same data are used to identify donors and to target potential voters for get-out-the-vote (GOTV) operations among other tasks performed by the campaign.

The book explores the most important facets of campaigns (fundraising, paid advertising, new media, polling, and voter mobilization), the institutions that work in campaigns (parties and interest groups), those that report on campaigns (the press), those that govern the process of campaigns

(campaign finance and voter ID laws), and emerging groups that are part of change (women and minorities). For example, women increased their ranks by 35 members in the U.S. House. As of January 2019, a record 102 women were serving in the U.S. House, which was nearly a quarter of the House's total membership (435). The chapter on voter ID laws has become increasingly important because the debate about whether such laws prevent voter fraud or whether they infringe on the participation of minorities, or both, is seminal to today's politics.

The New Political Campaign

The new political campaign demonstrates the importance of contact, communications, and feedback with voters. Part I, "The New Political Campaign," discusses the various facets of campaigns from raising money, to communicating through paid and new media, to targeting messages to mobilize citizens to vote. Campaigns not only are incorporating new technological changes but also must make them work seamlessly with the techniques of the past. Chapters examine what has worked in the past and what works in the present, and most importantly speculate on what the future may hold for national and state-level campaigns.

We begin with money because as former California state legislator Jesse Unruh (D) said: "Money is the mother's milk of politics."[2] Money helps facilitate speech and amplify a candidate's message to a mass audience. Money helps identify voters and target them for mobilization. Candidates spend more time raising money than performing any other task in a campaign.

Robert G. Boatright's chapter on fundraising demonstrates how various methods of traditional fundraising (direct mail, events, telemarketing) are complicated by new rules that govern how money is raised. In this edition, Boatright argues that campaigns, especially presidential campaigns, are now more donor-driven. Understanding what donors do, which is often outside the control of candidates and campaigns, is now having a profound effect on how races are shaped at the national and (sometimes) state levels. One of the big changes in 2020, compared to 2016, was that the challenging party to the White House (the Democrats) had no affiliated candidate Super PACs as of the summer of 2019. This marked the Democrats' attempt to argue that unregulated money was counter to their populist belief that all political groups should be transparent.

Most of the money expended in major campaigns goes to advertising. The percentage can range from 50 percent up to more than 80 percent of the total budget in a presidential race. Tad Devine, one of the nation's premier campaign media consultants, discusses the role of paid advertising

in political campaigns in the third chapter. His career includes working as an ad maker and strategist for the presidential campaigns of Al Gore (2000), John Kerry (2004), and Bernie Sanders (2016). This time, Devine not only provides insight into the work of an ad maker and strategist but also draws on recent campaigns he and his colleagues (Julian Mulvey and Mark Longabaugh) worked on including Sanders's presidential campaign in 2016, which featured the famous "America" ad considered the best campaign advertisement of that presidential election year. Devine also shows us his work on behalf of Democrat Lucy McBath, who was elected to Congress from the Atlanta suburbs in 2018. McBath was campaigning against gun violence—a deeply personal issue. McBath had lost her only son, Jordan, to murder by gun violence six years earlier. The ads are very moving. Devine and his colleagues' ad campaigns always tell the story of the candidate and draw sharp contrasts with the opposition.

To think of social and new media as a communications, organization, or fundraising tool, as presented in the last edition, is simply "naïve" according to Michael Turk, the author of the book's fourth chapter. It can now be wielded as a weapon to use against political opponents according to Turk. Turk draws on his experiences as a consultant working as the eCampaign director for Bush-Cheney 2004. He also served in that capacity for Fred Thompson's presidential campaign in 2008. Turk shows how the Clinton campaign was affected by social media postings and "dirty tricks" played by the Russians in connection with the campaign in 2016. In his conclusion, he articulates an important concern: whether the viewer is able to distinguish between factual information and false information provided by outside entities whose identity is difficult to uncover.

Since the last edition, new innovations have taken place in campaign survey research. Campaigns are now using social media tools such as text messaging short surveys or expanded online surveys with QualBoards, which allow "online group chat" according to author Candice J. Nelson in Chapter 5. Is the role of traditional surveys disappearing? Which modality or technique, if any, will become most prominent in the future? Nelson addresses the challenges and opportunities in this brave new world of survey research by drawing on interviews she conducted with professional pollsters in addition to published research.

The chapter on voter mobilization merges the high-profile technology of the present with the shoe leather of personal contact from the past. In a sense, technology has enabled campaigns to personally contact more of the right people. In this edition, we find that campaigns are learning to turn out low-voting-probability voters, and that the unexpected—in terms of turnout—should now be expected. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates case studies from 2016 showing what worked and what did not work for the Trump and Clinton campaigns. Finally, the chapter also discusses the role of Russian interference to deter voter turnout.

The Evolving Campaign: Adaptation by Political Institutions and Groups

Part II, "The Evolving Campaign," features political parties, interest groups, and press coverage in the campaign process. Moreover, the administrative institutions that govern campaign finance and state voter registration agencies are also coping with new technologies and laws, with cutting-edge changes coming at a rapid pace. Finally, women and minority groups are utilizing these new techniques to increase participation and expand their electoral power.

Political parties are now influenced by populism and reform efforts according to author Tari Renner in Chapter 7. In the last edition, Renner argued that the political parties had been revitalized as effective service organizations. In this edition, he shows forcefully that while the parties still retain the service model, they are affected by the cultural forces that have engaged the rest of society—populism and the movement to reform or rebuild institutions, including political ones. Moreover, parties are sometimes partnering with outside groups to provide a united front to articulate their message, mobilize voters, and increase financial support.

Nina Therese Kasniunas, Mark J. Rozell, and Charles N. W. Keckler argue that interest groups are in an "arms race" with candidates and parties as they do battle in contemporary elections. Moreover, populist sentiment has made these organizations more ideological as they increasingly push a left or right agenda in campaigns. This enhances the lack of centrism in today's politics. Chapter 8 demonstrates that the growth of Super PACs, dark money (nontransparent contributions), and ballot measures have all been used to contact and mobilize voters, but also to promote ideological ballot initiatives on hot-button issues to increase the turnout of their supporters. The degree to which this is being done is unprecedented.

The growth of fake news versus traditional news coverage takes center stage in Chapter 9. The internet is having a profound effect on both the accuracy and the superficiality of content. The move toward breaking news means that the depth of content and context for reporting stories fully and accurately is lost. Furthermore, while fake news is not new (it has been around since the invention of the printing press), it has become a counter source to traditional news outlets. The emergence of Donald Trump as candidate and now as president has made Twitter a staple of the twenty-four-hour news cycle. The pressure to report results quickly means that the major networks and newspapers are often reporting "breaking news" as fact rather than spending an adequate time investigating the veracity and breadth of claims. Given that most Americans use social media as their primary source of news information, news outlets have to chase and report on such claims to maintain viewers and readers—translation: advertising dollars.

The newest version of the tenth chapter discusses campaign finance in the era of the Roberts court. The repercussions of campaign finance over the last decade following the *Citizens United* decision are articulated in the chapter. The decision stated that limits on spending by associations of individuals violated the First Amendment because money helps amplify speech and, by limiting speech, you are limiting the voice of citizens individually or as a group. However, they may not coordinate with candidate committees or political parties. Has increased spending by outside or independent groups made a difference about who wins or who loses? And what has been the role of "dark money" where social-welfare organizations can spend freely on campaigns without disclosing who their donors are? Authors Peter L. Francia, Wesley Joe, and Clyde Wilcox argue that major campaign finance reform in the near future is not likely on the federal level. However, it is important to examine H.R. 1, which was the Democrats' first piece of legislation upon assuming control of the U.S. House in January 2019 (following the 2018 midterm elections). Also known as the "For the People Act," this law would provide greater incentives for campaigns that raise large amounts of money from small contributions to democratize the process by expanding the contribution base and to diminish the effect of large contributors to third-party organizations as discussed in the chapter.

Voter disenfranchisement versus voter fraud represents the cutting-edge dichotomy between Democrats and Republicans heading into the 2020 elections. The growth of ballot access measures to increase or restrict voter access is an empirical part of this phenomenon. Jeffrey Crouch examines the issues associated with voter access laws in the book's eleventh chapter. He looks at states that have such laws and whether such laws are necessary, nefarious, or neither. The protagonists argue that it will cut voter fraud, and the opponents argue that such laws are race based since more minorities are less likely to have state-issued identifications. The Stacey Abrams–Brian Kemp gubernatorial election in Georgia from 2018 provides fertile ground for this examination. Perhaps the most important factor that Crouch examines is the impact of various Supreme Court decisions over the last decade that have dynamically impacted voter access to this day, and how the outcome of those cases will impact voter turnout for underserved groups in the future.

The role of women, African Americans, Latino Americans, and Asian Americans has become mainstreamed in politics to a greater extent than ever in the past. Each group has increased its participation, not only as an electoral force but also in the campaign organization as managers, staff, and consultants. The breadth and depth of representation continues to increase particularly on the Democrats' side. This time, we found that many viable candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination were women (Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar, and Kirsten Gillibrand) or minorities

(Cory Booker and Julián Castro) or both (Kamala Harris). On the Republican side, one future presidential candidate star (possibly in 2024) is former United Nations ambassador and former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, whose parents emigrated from India.

Susan A. MacManus and Amy N. Benner show us that campaigns are targeting women through different generational approaches, which differ according to whether one is a millennial, a Gen Xer, a baby boomer, or Gen Z, in the book's twelfth chapter. MacManus and Benner enable us to understand why this is true and how the political party organizations are messaging this for 2020. In this edition, we see the effects of the #MeToo movement as a motivating force for women to participate in politics as candidates and organizers. While the focus on women candidates of the past was on their physical appearances, the authors show that today a greater burden for women candidates is the "overemphasis on their electability, reliability, and likability," which many observers view as sexist because male candidates are not viewed through the same lens.

Research shows that a majority of the U.S. population will be nonwhite and Latino by 2042.[3] In Chapter 13, Atiya Kai Stokes-Brown examines the role of minorities in campaigns by demonstrating how the 2018 election represented a first for many candidates—Stephanie Murphy being the first Asian American woman elected to Congress from South Florida, for example, or Antonio Delgado being the first African American elected to Congress from a district in central New York State. The chapter shows not only the diversity of candidates but that they are representing increasingly diverse sets of constituents. For example, Delgado's district is about 90 percent white according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[4] The result is that we are seeing more candidates of color representing districts that differ from their own demographic background. In essence, we are beginning to see the mainstreaming of race and ethnicity through representation in the U.S. Congress.

The conscience of the book remains in its conclusion. Technology increases participation, but doesn't it also increase the ability to manipulate voters? Author Dick Simpson, who has politicked in the wards of Chicago, gives us reason to pause: the wonderful cutting-edge changes discussed in the book, no matter how inviting and exciting, have the potential for great harm as well as hope because democracy is increasingly fragile. In this edition, we consider how threats to institutional campaign norms affect the pillars of our democratic system. Consultants, citizens, and officeholders should understand that longtime rituals in politics are still virtuous. If they do, there is hope, and if not, the seeds of destructive politics will be sewn for the future. What we know today is likely to substantially change by the next quadrennial presidential election.

NOTES ●

1. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (London: Macmillan, 1865).

2. "The New Jesse Unruh" (*Time*, September 14, 1970). Accessed on September 6, 2007, from http://time.com.

3. Sam Roberts, "Minorities in U.S. Set to Become a Majority by 2042" (*The New York Times*, August 14, 2008). Accessed on September 2, 2011, from http://www.nytimes.com.

4. My Congressional District, "People," U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed on June 7, 2019, from https://www.census.gov/mycd/?st=36&cd=19.