

Lack of Enthusiasm Found for '68 Candidates

By George Gallup

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PRINCETON, N. J., May 18 — The enthusiasm generated by six leading presidential candidates at this time is faint compared to that found in earlier presidential years. No one today reaches the high favor found for Lyndon Johnson in 1964, Richard Nixon and Senator John Kennedy in 1960, President Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson in 1956 and 1952.

Specifically all of these earlier candidates did better than any of the present crop of presidential hopefuls: Senator Robert Kennedy, Senator Eugene McCarthy and Vice President Hubert Humphrey on the Democratic side; Richard Nixon, Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Governor Ronald Reagan on the Republican side and ex-Alabama Governor George Wallace, candidate of the American Independent Party.

Special Scaling Device Used

In personal interviews with 1507 adults in a nationwide sample, a sensitive scaling device called the Stapel Scalometer was used to measure intensity of feeling toward 1968's presidential candidate. This scale, in use for 17 years by Gallup-affiliated organizations around the world, has proved to be one of the most important innovations in the science of public opinion measurement.

The scale consists of 10 squares or boxes that go from plus five, or someone liked very much, all the way down to minus five, or someone disliked very much. The respondent is asked to point to the box that best measures how he feels about each person.

To obtain "highly favorable" ratings, the plus 4 and plus 5 categories are

combined. To obtain "highly unfavorable" ratings, the minus 4 and 5 categories are combined.

Nixon Has Highest Rating

No candidate at this point in the campaign is given a "highly favorable" rating by more than 30 per cent of those questioned. Nixon's rating is highest, 28 per cent, followed by Humphrey with 26 per cent, Kennedy with 24 per cent, Rockefeller with 23, McCarthy with 19, Wallace with 15 and Reagan with 11.

The current ratings contrast sharply with those given presidential candidates in earlier years, excepting only Senator Barry Goldwater in 1964. President Johnson exactly four years ago, in May, 1964, received a "highly favorable" rating of 59 per cent. (His rating today is 32 per cent). Johnson's opponent in 1964, Senator Goldwater, was given a rating of 15 per cent.

In May, 1960, Senator John Kennedy and Nixon each received a "highly favorable" rating of 41 per cent, anticipating the close election in November. At the end of the campaign in 1956, President Eisenhower was given a rating of 57 per cent to 34 per cent for Adlai Stevenson. Four years prior to that, Eisenhower had a rating of 47 per cent and Stevenson a rating of 37 per cent.

No candidate on the political scene in the last two decades has ever rated so consistently high as former President Eisenhower. Eisenhower's rating reached a high of 72 per cent in January, 1957. His current rating is 56 per cent.

Negative Feelings Running High

Not only is the public lukewarm about this year's crop of candidates, but the negative ratings on many of these candidates is even higher today than in the case of some of the earlier candidates in the heat of the campaign.

Four years ago, for example, President Johnson's "highly unfavorable" rating was only 8 per cent. The comparable ratings for Sen. John Kennedy and Richard Nixon in 1960 were 6 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. Today, in contrast, Wallace receives a "highly unfavorable" rating of 32 per cent, Robert Kennedy a negative rating of 19 per cent, and Reagan a negative rating of 15 per cent. (The "highly unfavorable" ratings for the other candidates are as follows: Nixon—12 per cent, Humphrey—10 per cent, Rockefeller—8 per cent, McCarthy—4 per cent.)

Profile of Kennedy

Sen. Robert Kennedy fails to achieve the "highly favorable" score that his brother, John Kennedy, obtained at a comparable time. Furthermore, his "highly unfavorable" rating is higher.

Robert Kennedy, more controversial in the public eye, is therefore more vulnerable than was his brother. On the other hand, Robert Kennedy's recent victories in Indiana and Nebraska primaries could improve his ratings.

The following table compares Sen. John Kennedy's ratings in May, 1960, with Sen. Robert Kennedy's in May, 1968:

	JFK May, 1960 %	RFK May, 1968 %
Highly Favorable . . .	41	24
Highly Unfavorable . . .	6	19

In a companion survey, to obtain a more complete picture of candidate image, respondents were asked:

"What is your mental picture of Robert Kennedy?" (and so on for each candidate).

Favorable: Hard driving . . . tough . . . aggressive . . . capable . . . intelligent . . . a live wire . . . plenty of potential . . . reminds me of JFK . . . dedicated.

Unfavorable: Immature . . . trading on his brother's name . . . opportunist . . . a rich hippy . . . power-mad . . . ruthless . . . will do anything for votes . . . teeny bopper . . . a schemer.

In contrast, the negative remarks about Sen. John Kennedy in 1960 had far less bite. The worst things people were saying was that he was a "headline hunter," "talks too much," "a smart alec," "too young."

Vice President Humphrey

Vice President Humphrey's appeal has in large measure been closely related to public approval or disapproval of Administration policies, but Humphrey has succeeded in generating new enthusiasm on his own in recent weeks.

These are the favorable and unfavorable comments being made about Hubert Humphrey:

Favorable: Has plenty of ability . . . has done a good job as Vice President . . . sincere . . . honest . . . friendly . . . full of life.

Unfavorable: Johnson's shadow . . . just a puppet . . . a yes man . . . a politician . . . a clown . . . too liberal . . . talks too much.

Senator Eugene McCarthy

Sen. Eugene McCarthy's ratings tend to be less polarized (smaller proportions give a "highly favorable" rating and a "highly unfavorable rating"), in some measure because he is known to fewer voters than are other candidates.

McCarthy's "highly favorable" rating has grown since March — from 13 per cent to 19 per cent. Here are the favorable and unfavorable comments being made. In terms of negative comments McCarthy comes off best of the 6 candidates tested.

Favorable: Sincere . . . intelligent . . . honest . . . intellectual . . . distinguished looking . . . a man of principles . . . a nice person.

Unfavorable: Inexperienced . . . indecisive . . . a dreamer . . . not forceful enough . . . too idealistic . . . doesn't seem to want the job.

Richard Nixon

Former Vice President Richard Nixon's "highly favorable" rating at this time has dropped off considerably when compared with eight years ago, dipping from 41 per cent in 1960 to 28, in 1968.

Here are the favorable and unfavorable things people have to say about Nixon today:

Favorable: Competent . . . experienced . . . intelligent . . . clear thinker . . . a man of action . . . a good family man.

Unfavorable: A loser . . . indecisive . . . untrustworthy . . . promises too much . . . cold and calculating.

Nelson Rockefeller

Although the strongest candidate for president in the country today, Rockefeller's "highly favorable" rating shows only moderate enthusiasm for him. His latest favorable rating of 23 per cent represents a slight gain, however, since he announced his candidacy.

Rockefeller has surprising appeal with the Democratic rank-and-file, with 18 per cent according him a "highly favorable" rating.

The comments being made about Rockefeller:

Favorable: Experienced . . . has done a good job as governor . . . a good man . . . an able administrator . . . a lot of common sense . . . a strong person.

Unfavorable: Indecisive . . . spends money too freely . . . his divorce and marital situation . . . mishandled the garbage strike . . . riding on his wealth . . . too willing to compromise.