Chapter 7

The Evolution of Campaign Communications

Many accounts have noted the decline of traditional forms of party campaigning, like local rallies and door-to-door canvassing, and new developments like the growth of spin-doctors and political consultants. A growing series of case studies has documented these trends in a range of established and newer democracies. Different accounts have interpreted these changes as representing the 'rise of political marketing', if the techniques have been borrowed from the private sector, or the 'Americanization of campaigning', if these forms of electioneering originated in the United States. Building upon this literature, the core argument of this chapter is that changes in campaign communications can best be understood as an evolutionary process of modernization that simultaneously transforms party organizations, the news media, and the electorate. This typology can be illustrated schematically in Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1.

In this theoretical framework, pre-modern campaigns are understood to display three characteristics: the campaign organization is based upon direct forms of interpersonal communications between candidates and citizens at local level, with short-term, ad-hoc planning by the party leadership. In the news media the partisan press acts as core intermediary between parties and the public. And the electorate is anchored by strong party loyalties. During this era, local parties selected the candidates, rang the doorbells, posted the pamphlets, targeted the wards, planned the resources, and generally provided all the machinery linking voters and candidates. For citizens the model is one that is essentially local-active, meaning that most campaigning is concentrated within local communities, conducted through more demanding political activities like rallies, door-step canvassing and party meetings.

Modern campaigns are defined as those with a party organization coordinated more closely at central level by political leaders, advised by external professional consultants like opinion pollsters. In the news media, national television becomes the principle forum of campaign events, supplementing other media. And the electorate becomes increasingly decoupled from party and group loyalties. Politicians and professional advisors conduct polls, design advertisements, schedule the theme de jour, leadership tours, news conferences and photo opportunities, handle the press, and battle to dominate the nightly television news. For citizens, the typical experience of the election becomes more passive, in the sense that the main focus of the campaign is located within national television studios, so that most voters become more distant and disengaged spectators in the process.

Lastly post-modern campaigns are understood as those where the coterie of professional consultants on advertising, public opinion, marketing and strategic news management become more co-equal actors with politicians, assuming a more influential role within government in a 'permanent' campaign, as well as coordinating local activity more tightly at the grassroots. The news media fragments into a more complex and incoherent environment of multiple channels, outlets and levels. And the electorate becomes more dealigned in their voting choices. For some citizens, the election may represent a return to some of the forms of engagement found in the pre-modern stage, as the new channels of communication potentially allows greater interactivity between voters and politicians.

The essential features of this model can be expected to vary from one
context to another. Rather than claiming that all campaigns are inevitably moving into the post-modern category, this view emphasizes that contests can continue to be arrayed from the pre-modern to the post-modern, due to the influence of a range of intermediary conditions such as the electoral system, campaign regulations and organizational resources. And instead of a specifically American development, with practices like negative advertising, personalized politics, or high campaign expenditures which are subsequently exported to other countries, it seems more accurate to understand the changes in campaigning as part of the modernization process rooted in technological and political developments common to many post-industrial societies. This chapter aims to develop the main elements in this theoretical framework and then to compare evidence of the main channels of direct and mediated campaigning to see how far we can characterize contemporary European elections along these dimensions. To understand longitudinal trends the next chapter builds on this framework by comparing case studies of the United States and Britain illustrating how campaigns have evolved since the war. We can then summarize the conclusions and consider the implications of these developments for the core issues of political trust and civic engagement that lie at the heart of this book.

The Pre-Modern Campaign

Pre-modern campaigning originated in the 19th century with the expansion of the franchise, and continued in recognizable form in most post-industrial societies until at least the 1950s, when the advent of televised campaigns and the publication of regular opinion polls started to transform the process. In general elections the pre-modern era was characterized by a campaign organization with the party leader at the apex, surrounded by a few close political advisers, running a relatively short, ad hoc national campaign. The base was a loose organizational network of party volunteers dispersed in local areas. The party organization was predominately constituency-oriented, involving politicians, party workers and citizens in direct, face-to-face contact through activities like town-hall hustings, canvassing and branch party meetings. In mass-branch party organizations the grassroots membership provided the unpaid labour, helping the local candidate, advised by the constituency party agent. Pre-modern campaigns relied heavily upon the partisan press as the main source of mediated information, either directly owned and subsidized by party organs, or independently owned and managed but providing sympathetic partisan-spin through editorial columns and political commentary. Newspapers were indirectly supplemented in the 1920s by radio and movies, important sources of news in the interwar period, and these media started to nationalize the campaign even prior to the age of television. The classic theories of voting behaviour stressed the stability of the electorate during this era, anchored by social and party loyalties. Lipset and Rokkan stressed that European parties were based on stable sectoral cleavages in the electorate, with the divisions of class, religion and region providing the solid bedrocks of electoral support. The earliest studies of campaign communications in America, by Lazarsfeld and colleagues, emphasized that European parties were based on stable sectoral cleavages in the electorate, with the divisions of class, religion and region providing the solid bedrocks of electoral support. The earliest studies of campaign communications in America, by Lazarsfeld and colleagues, emphasized that the primary impact of elections was to reinforce partisan supporters, rather than to produce new converts. Classic accounts of American electoral behaviour, by V.O.Key, and Campbell et al., argued that voters were guided by partisan identification, representing an enduring loyalty or 'standing decision' influencing voting decisions over successive contests. If voters were largely stable, the main function of party organization was to energize and mobilize their traditional base of electoral support.
Today these direct forms of campaigning have essentially been supplemented, not replaced. The traditional campaign, built on personal networks of volunteers and face-to-face candidate-voter communications, continues to be common when mobilizing voters in no-frills contests for local, municipal and state-level elected office, for minor parties without generous financial resources, as well as in countries like Britain where mass-branch party organizations maintain networks of active party members. Electoral systems where politicians compete in multimember seats with others within the same party often emphasize the importance of local campaigning to maintain support. This pattern is evident in Ireland under STV as well as in Japan where LDP politicians, when competing under STNV, traditionally relied upon a local association, or koenkai, acting as an election machine maintaining contact with voters. Direct campaigning also remains characteristic of elections in developing countries like India and South Africa, with relatively low levels of literacy and television access. Even in the United States, ‘retail’ politics continues in the New Hampshire primaries, in district and state caucuses, and in general elections, with candidates meeting activists in local living rooms and diners, and displays of yard signs and bumper stickers. Huckfeldt and Sprague emphasize the political importance in presidential elections of local mobilization efforts, party canvassing and discussion networks within American communities. In chapter 13 we examine long-term trends in the proportion of Americans engaged in campaign activism and the results show no consistent and substantial decline across most dimensions (other than the display of buttons and bumper stickers). Figure 7.3 shows no decline in the proportion contacted by the major U.S. parties, either face-to-face or, more commonly today, by telephone; if anything recent indicators point towards more contacting activity. Nevertheless technological changes, notably the rise of television and of opinion polls, meant that in post-industrial societies direct forms of campaigning have become ancillary in general elections to mediated channels of party-voter communication.

The Modern Campaign

The gradual evolution of the modern campaign from the early 1950s to the mid-1980s was marked by several related developments: the move from dispersed state and local party organizations to a nationally coordinated strategic campaign; from party officials and volunteers contributing time and labor to paid professional consultants specializing in communications, marketing, polling, and campaign management; the shift from more partisan newspapers towards national television news; and the development of a more detached and instrumental electorate, less strongly anchored to party loyalties and social cleavages. The 'long campaign' in the year or so before polling day gradually became as important strategically as the short 'official' campaign. In most postindustrial democracies the critical shift towards the modern campaign developed with the rise of television, as well as the publication of regular opinion polling, during the 1950s. This process gradually shifted the primary location of political communications, from the print media towards broadcasting, particularly the mainstream national evening news on the major television channels. The printed press remains politically important, particularly in newspaper-centric systems, and as we have seen in Chapter 4 the per capita circulation levels of newspapers in OECD countries has not declined. Nevertheless there is evidence to suggest that many countries have experienced a dealignment in traditional press-party linkages, as newspapers have become
increasingly politically independent, selecting news on the basis of the commercial logic to maximize sales rather than following the political logic of party support. In the Netherlands, for example, at least until the 1960s there were strong sectoral cleavages, producing ‘polarization’ as people within a community attended the same schools and churches, joined the same social clubs, sports clubs and community associations, tended to vote for the same party, and therefore bought the party newspaper. The ‘zuillen’ or pillars were formed around Protestant, Catholic and labor mass movements, which mobilized politically in the early 20th century, at the same time as mass circulation newspapers developed in the Netherlands, creating stable cleavage sub-cultures. A limited number of papers reflected the Protestant, Catholic and Socialist pillars. The process of de-pillarization started in the mid-1960s, and one major consequence has been the decline of the partisan press in the Netherlands. Many other countries seem to have followed a similar process, producing greater internal diversity within newspapers, such as balanced pro-con op-ed columns, but thereby reducing the degree of external diversity available between different print media. As discussed later, even Britain, which has long exemplified the partisan press, experienced press–party dealignment in the 1990s.

As with direct forms of personal communications, newspapers did not necessarily decline in importance as sources of political communications, but increasingly they became supplemented by television. The main effort of party campaign organizations, from the morning party press conferences through the day’s events, visits and photo opportunities to the evening rallies and speeches became increasingly focused on achieving favourable coverage through the main evening news, current affairs programmes and leadership debates on television. The effort was exacerbated by the mainstream audience for these programmes, given that until the early 1980s there were only two or three television stations broadcasting in most OECD countries, major news programs occurred at regular prime-time slots in the evening rather than on a 24-hour cyclical basis, and most countries offered no opportunities for paid political advertising on television. To a large extent, therefore, what was reported on the flagship news programmes on Britain’s BBC and ITN, on Sweden’s SVT, or on Japan’s NHK, to a largely captive electorate, was the heart of the modern election campaign, setting the agenda for the following morning’s newspapers. The role of television news heightened the party leadership’s control over the campaign, which became increasingly nationalized.

Commentators suggest that the focus on television campaign has strengthened the spotlight on the party leadership, moving from cleavage-based and issue-based conflict towards a ‘personalization’ of politics. Case studies suggest that this trend is particularly marked for presidential elections, such as those in Latin America, but it is also apparent in parliamentary elections as well, such as recent elections in Israel, Germany and Italy. It seems plausible that the shift in emphasis from newspapers to television has probably heightened the visibility of leaders, especially those like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton who seem most comfortable in this medium, although we lack systematic evidence to confirm whether this is a general trend in Western democracies. Moreover it is not clear from the available research whether the focus on leaders in campaign coverage has necessarily led to the increasing importance of party leaders in determining votes in parliamentary systems.

In the modern campaign, following the rise of television, parties increasingly developed a coordinated national and regional campaign with communications designed by specialists skilled in advertising, marketing, and polling. The adoption of these practices did not occur overnight; rather one recent study of European political marketing terms this process a ‘shopping
model’, as parties grafted particular practical techniques which seemed useful or successful in other campaigns onto the existing machinery on a more ad hoc basis\textsuperscript{17}. Party adaptation was particularly evident following extended periods out of power. The move from amateur to professional campaigns was marked by more frequent use of specialist experts, PR consultants, and professional fund-raisers influencing decisions formerly made by candidates or party officials\textsuperscript{18}. Ever since the expansion of the franchise there have always been some ‘professional’ campaigners, in the form of full-time local agents or party managers, along with permanent staff like press officers at central headquarters. The new professionals, however, were essentially ‘hired guns’ external to the party organization, often working on campaigns in different countries, like advertising consultants at Saatchi and Saatchi. Increased use of paid consultants, public opinion polls, direct mail, and professional television broadcasts during the long campaign, led to rising costs and the shift from labour-intensive towards more capital-intensive campaigns.

The professionalization of the political consultancy industry has developed furthest in the United States, with demand fuelled largely by the traditional weakness of American party organizations, the rise of the candidate-centered campaign in the 1960s, the capital-intensive nature of advertising-driven campaigns, and the number and frequency of American primary and general elections\textsuperscript{19}. Outside of America the rise of independent political consultants has been slower, mainly because parties have incorporated professionals within their ranks\textsuperscript{20}, but recent years may have seen the development of a more distinctively European style of political marketing\textsuperscript{21}. Organizations like the International Association of Political Consultants (IAPC) and the World Association of Public Opinion Research, along with regional affiliates, bring together polling experts, advertising specialists and campaign consultants.

The rise of the modern campaign was also related to major changes in the electorate. Many studies highlighted how dealignment had eroded traditional social cleavages and partisan loyalties, produced a more instrumental electorate supporting parties on a more contingent basis based on their policies and performance. The familiar cleavages of class and religion, which had long anchored the European electorate, proved weaker predictors of voting behaviour in many countries as party competition over issues, images and leadership became increasingly important\textsuperscript{22}. Under the new campaign the electorate became less likely to encounter the more demanding forms of local political communications, such as direct face-to-face discussions on the doorstep or in local meetings, and were more likely to experience elections via more passive and indirect forms of spectatorship, like watching television. Earlier theories suggested that dealignment was largely a product of long-term socioeconomic secular trends gradually transforming the mass public, stressing rising levels of education, class mobility, and cross-cutting cleavages like race and gender, whereas more recent accounts have emphasized that parties have both contributed towards, and sought to benefit from, these changes in the electorate by developing more ‘catch all’ strategies, designed to attract voters from outside their core constituency\textsuperscript{23}. The modern campaign evolved into a familiar pattern from the early fifties until the mid-eighties, with similar, although not identical, changes becoming evident in many general elections across post-industrial societies.

The Post-Modern Campaign

Accounts commonly identify only two steps in this historical sequence, regarding the age of television as the culmination of the modernization process. But during the last decade we can identify the transition from this familiar world to the 'post-modern' campaign marked by several related
developments: the fragmentation of television outlets, with the shift already discussed from national broadcasting towards more diverse news sources including satellite and cable stations, talk radio and 24-hour rolling news bulletins; the opportunities for newer forms of party-voter interaction caused by the rise of the internet; and the attempt by parties to reassert control in a more complex, fragmented and rapidly changing news environment through strategic communications and media management during the permanent campaign with the continuous feedback provided by polls, focus groups and electronic town meetings to inform routine decision-making, not just campaigns. This last stage of the modernization process remains under development, and it is more clearly evident in some societies than in others, but it seems likely to represent the future direction of political campaigning in post-industrial societies. Like another layer of the onion, news forms supplement, rather than displace, older forms of campaigning.

In the extensive literature on 'postmodernism' the concept is understood as a complex phenomenon, open to multiple interpretations. Yet the commonalities of post-modernism are usually understood to include greater cultural pluralism, social diversity and fragmentation of sources; increased challenges to traditional forms of hierarchical authority and external standards of rational knowledge; and a more inchoate and confused sense of identity. For these reasons, the term does seem to capture many of the developments that are currently transforming the context and process of political campaigning in postindustrial societies.

In anticipating potential ambiguities, two points of clarification need to be made to this argument. First, the conceptualization in this book refers to campaign not societal modernization. As Swanson and Mancini argue many other factors may well be transforming society in general, like a greater differentiation of roles, rising educational levels and cognitive skills, and more complex social identities, but these factors remain well outside of the scope of this book. The focus here is restricted only to the developments within political communication, defined narrowly within this chapter to communications in election campaigns.

Secondly, many others have characterized recent changes as the rise of political marketing, placing primary emphasis on the strategic activities of parties, politicians, and campaign advisers in their attempt to maintain or expand their share of the electorate. The heart of the political marketing concept is a shift from sales of existing products (advertising party policies, leaders, and images) towards a focus that puts the 'customer' first, using research into voter’s needs, wants and drives as revealed through polls, focus groups and similar techniques, and subsequently adopts strategies like developing a dependable reputation for reliable service delivery on key policy issues that aim to maximize votes. This approach does provide useful insights but in contrast the conceptualization of the post-modern campaign in this study places greater importance on the way that technological and socio-economic developments have altered the context of political communications, like the rise of the Internet, to which all actors - parties, campaign professionals and journalists - have been forced to respond. After all polls were available for at least twenty years before they became widely used internally to shape party strategies. Even in recent campaigns, the use of systematic marketing to inform party policies has often proved very limited; for example the Conservative party commissioned few opinion polls in the run up to the 1997 campaign, in large part because they were short of funds, and their strategic plan was scrapped when John Major tore up the script the night before an election broadcast and made an impromptu plea for internal unity over Europe. The post-modern conceptualization sees politicians as essentially
lagging behind technological and economic changes, and running hard to stay in
place by adopting the techniques of political marketing in the struggle to
cope with a more complex news environment, rather than driving these
developments.

Instead of a linear development, the post-modern campaign symbolizes a
return to some of the more localized and interactive forms of communication that
were present in the pre-modern period. As shown in Figure 7.2, new technology
allows forms of political communication that can be located schematically
somewhere between the local-activism of the pre-modern campaign (with direct
town hall meetings or political rallies) and the national-passive forms of
communication characteristic of the modern television campaign. The development
of political discussion user-groups on the net, party intranets, interactive
political sites by government agencies, community associations or interest
groups, and the political use of email or list-serves to mobilize and organize,
as well as ‘traditional’ news media on the web, represents a mid-way point in
the model. These formats continue to evolve, along with the political uses of
the web. As already observed, at present access to the Internet varies widely
across post-industrial societies and is particularly low in Southern Europe.
Nevertheless as political use of the Internet expands, the post-modern campaign
does seem destined to add yet another distinctive layer of communications to the
process, supplementing existing channels.

Mediating Conditions

The way these changes become manifest in different countries, and the
pace of change over time, is heavily dependent upon mediating conditions.
Post-modern campaigns are exemplified most clearly by contests, like US
presidential and Congressional elections, characterized by two major catch-all
parties with minimal ideological baggage in winner-take-all elections, with an
army of technical consultants for hire, widespread use of capital-intensive TV
ads in a fragmented multi-channel environment, the rapid expansion of
political uses of the internet, and an electorate with weakened party
loyalties. Such an open environment is ideal for an entrepreneurial approach
designed to maximize electoral support. In contrast, pre-modern campaigning
continues to characterize many other types of contest, such as British local
elections which are second-order, low-salience contests where the major
parties rely primarily upon volunteer grassroots members, activists and
candidates in each local constituency to canvass voters and mobilize partisan
support, there is minimal national coverage on television or in newspapers,
the chief means of publicity remains a matter of handbill displays and printed
pamphlets, and financial resources are restricted.

Four major factors can be identified as important mediating conditions
affecting the modernization process, namely:

?? The regulatory environment, including the electoral system
(whether single member majoritarian or proportional party list); the
type of election (including the frequency of elections, the
type of office, such as presidential or parliamentary, and
whether sub-national, national or supra-national levels); and the
laws governing campaigning (such as rules on party funding and
state subsidies, campaign expenditure, the publication of opinion
polls, and access to political broadcasts or ads).

?? The party system including the structure, organization,
membership and funding of parties (such as whether elite-led,
mass-branch, ‘catch-all’, or cartel); and the system of party
competition (such as one party predominant, two-party, moderate or polarized pluralism).

?? The **media system**, including the level of development of the **political consultancy industry**, (including the availability of professional market researchers, opinion pollsters, advertisers, and campaign managers); and the **structure and culture of the news media** (such as the contrasts already discussed between newspaper-centric or television-centric systems, between the partisan--leaning or ‘objective’ models of journalism, and whether broadcasting reflects a public service or commercial ethos).

?? The **electorate**, including the pattern of **voting behaviour** (such as whether electors display strong or weak party loyalties, and whether there is limited or extensive electoral volatility).

Previous chapters have discussed some of these factors so here we can focus on comparing the regulatory framework and party campaign organizations.

**The Regulatory Framework**

The regulations governing television coverage during elections concern three main areas: the purchase of paid commercial advertisements, the allocation and contents of free party political broadcasts, and rules governing political balance in campaign debates, news coverage and current affairs. During the era when public service channels predominated in most countries there were severe restrictions on the ability of political parties to purchase any airtime on television. A comparative survey of Western societies in the late 1970s found that only 5 of the 21 countries had commercial channels, and paid political advertising on television was only allowed in Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States.

By the mid-1990s, following deregulation and the explosion of commercial channels already documented, about half the OECD countries allowed paid political advertising on television (see Table 7.2). In practice the use of this facility varied substantially between countries, as well as between public service and commercial channels. In the Netherlands, for example, although political commercials are now allowed, and were used for the first time in 1994, in practice few have been aired mainly because of limited financial resources by Dutch parties. In contrast, United States campaign ads are employed for every level of office, producing capital-intensive campaigns; for example, about 60% of expenditure in recent presidential campaigns has been devoted to paying for producing and airing TV and radio commercials.

[Table 7.2 about here]

Following the long tradition of public service broadcasting, all OECD countries other than America allocate some free airtime to parties, either on a legal basis or by virtue of a long-standing agreement with broadcasters. The length of these slots varies substantially, from the 30 or 60 second ads common in Italy, to 2.5 minutes in Germany, 4 minutes in France, and an allocation of up to 10 minutes (usually only partially used) for British party political broadcasts. Three formulas are commonly used for allocating time between contestants. Strict equality between all parties is used in countries like the Czech Republic and Mexico; in the latter the Federal Electoral Institute buys 15 minutes per month of advertising on television and radio for each party. Other countries provide allocations based upon the results of the previous general election, for example Greek parties are given airtime based on the size of their membership in the previous parliament, with a modest allocation for parties with no representatives but with many candidates. Lastly countries like Australia and Britain divide the time
according to an agreement between parties and the broadcasting authorities; in Britain, for example, in line with many previous contests, the allocation in the 1997 election was a 5:5:4 ratio whereby the major parties each received five 10 minute party election broadcasts during the campaign, the Liberal Democrats got 4 slots, and other minor parties with at least 50 candidates got one each, with additional arrangements for the regions. In addition, all the countries where we have information have some fair balance rules, either formally or informally regulating the balance of political coverage on television news, current affairs programmes, and leadership debates during election periods. In Britain, for example, the 5:5:4 ratio used in party political broadcasts is also used to allocate the time balance of coverage of the parties on the news, following the 'stop-watch' principle. In the US presidential debates have followed different formats and schedules, for example the questions have been asked either by selected journalists or by members of the public in an invited audience, or by a mix of both. But all debates follow a strict allocation of time designed to be impartial to all candidates.

Party Campaign Organizations and Funding

An extensive literature has documented changes in the structure, membership and finance of party organizations, including the Katz and Mair Party Organizations project. Drawing primarily on party documents and reports, Katz and Mair conclude that the role of parties has evolved or adapted since the 1960s in Western democracies, rather than simply weakened. Documenting trends in party membership in ten European countries from the early 1960s to the end of the 1980s, the study recorded a decline in the proportion of electors who are party members in eight nations, ranging from a very modest slippage (in Sweden) down to far sharper falls (in Denmark, from 21.1% of the electorate in the early 1960s down to 6.5% in the late 1980s). The decline was strongest in relative terms, meaning that party membership failed to keep up with the expansion in the population. Studies based on survey evidence in fifteen West European countries reach similar conclusions about a modest long-term erosion of party membership in many established democracies, although not a steep or uniform decline.

In counterbalance Katz and Mair also found that since the 1960s countries had experienced a substantial increase in the proportion of staff employed by parties, most notably parliamentary party staff paid by state funds, as well as a considerable rise in central party income. Where these personnel and resources are derived from state subventions, this may signal, they suggest a shift from 'mass-branch' parties based primarily upon voluntary labour towards a 'cartel' party organization, more dependent upon public resources. This pattern is clearer in some countries rather than others; state subsidies towards parties are far more generous in Germany, Sweden and Norway, for example, than in Ireland, Britain and the Netherlands, where party income remains more dependent on membership dues. Table 7.2 shows that by the mid-1990s direct funding provided for parties or candidates has become common; 15 out of 20 countries provided public funds, although at different levels of subsidy. In some countries like Canada, France and Australia public subsidies are designed to reimburse some election expenditure, while in others like Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark such funds are designed for other purposes, such as general administration, policy research, political education, or to promote the participation by young people or women. Public funding is often justified to lessen the risk of parties and candidates becoming dependent upon large donations or falling under the influence of lobby groups.

The question whether the 'cartel' party represents the emergence of a
new and distinctive type of party organization that is evident in many countries remains controversial. There are also important questions concerning how we interpret the consequences of the decline of party membership, and in particular whether the fall has been concentrated mostly among the less active older members, or whether it involves an across-the-board contraction. Nevertheless, what does seem well established by these studies is that many European countries experienced a gradual shrinkage in grassroots party membership from the 1960s to the late 1980s, probably reducing the pool of voluntary labour available for traditional local campaigning. In counterbalance parties have growing numbers of professional staff, employed in parliament and at central party offices, as well as more generous financial resources from public funds. These developments, accompanied by the technological and economic changes in the news system, have contributed towards the shift from direct to mediated forms of campaigning.

To examine the consequences of these organizational developments on campaign activity, we can compare the most common ways that European voters were contacted directly by parties or received alternative sources of mediated information, during campaigns in the 12-member states for the elections to the European Parliament in 1989 and 1994. It should be noted that the European elections are second-order contests, and in this regard the results can best be interpreted as a referendum of the performance of the national government, rather than reflecting genuine policy divisions over European issues or a reaction to the performance of the EU. As a low-key contest, we would expect campaigning to reflect a 'mixed' model, combining elements from both the direct and mediated channels of communications, with variations between countries reflecting their electoral, political and media environments, and this is indeed what we find. The European Election Surveys (EES) asked voters about their activities during the two or three weeks before polling day, how the campaign came to their attention, and also what information sources they found most useful in making up their minds how to vote. Campaign activities can be ranged along a rough continuum from direct forms of communication (such as talking to friends or family about the election, trying to persuade someone how to vote, speaking to a party worker, attending a party rally, reading election materials sent to their home and reading an election poster) to indirect or mediated forms of communication (reading an advertisement in a newspaper, reading a newspaper report on the election, watching a television program or listening to a radio program on the election).

[Table 7.3 about here]

The results in Table 7.3 show considerable variations across different items. The single most common type of campaign activity was watching a television program about the election, experienced by half the respondents, although this activity proved far more popular in Germany (61%) than in Luxembourg (43%) or Portugal (30%). The other mediated forms of communication each tapped smaller audiences, such as reading a newspaper report about the election (26%) or hearing a radio program (16%), and again there were considerable cross-national variations in these activities. Some of the more direct forms of party-voter communication proved popular, including discussing the election with friends or family (38%), reading election posters (22%) or reading election materials sent to people's homes (17%). But the results also show that in these election few people reported more active forms of personal engagement such as speaking to a party workers (6%), attending a party meeting or rally (6%), or trying to persuade others how to vote (6%). There were some interesting variations between nations, for example rallies were more popular than average in Greece and Italy, while
campaign leaflets were a more common form of communication in Ireland and the UK, both characterized in these elections by non-party list electoral systems. Similar patterns were confirmed in the 1994 European elections, where again few of the electorate (7%) reported being contacted by party workers during the campaign, while at the other extreme almost two-thirds (65%) were aware of the campaign on television and radio.

Table 7.4 about here

Voters were also asked about the most useful source of information when making up their minds how to vote in the European elections. The results in Table 7.4 confirm the preeminence of television in most countries, nominated as most helpful by half the respondents, although in Luxembourg newspaper coverage is preferred, while in Greece evaluations of the press tie with those of television coverage. One fifth of the electorate regards personal discussions as useful, with particularly high evaluations in Greece and Italy, two countries where we have already noted the importance of traditional campaign rallies. Radio (15%) and opinion polls (4%) are seen as the least useful sources. The overall pattern in the late 1980s confirms the way that traditional forms of campaigning persist throughout Europe but how these channels have been supplemented by mediated communications, with television predominant.

Conclusions: Understanding Campaign Change

Many commentators have noted the transformation of traditional forms of political campaigning and a growing literature has started to distinguish the key features of these developments. Much of this has been conceptualized these changes as involving an ‘Americanization’ of campaigning. Swanson and Mancini provide one of the most ambitious theoretical accounts along these lines, suggesting that the ‘Americanization’ of campaigning has produced similar developments across postindustrial societies: “Around the world, many of the recent changes in election campaigning share common themes despite great differences in the political cultures, histories, and institutions of the countries in which they have occurred. Increasingly, we find such common practices as political commercials, candidates selected in part for the appealing image they project on television, technical experts hired to produce compelling campaign materials, mounting campaign expenses, and mass media moving center stage in campaigns.”

The key features of ‘Americanization’ in this account are certain features of campaigning that are understood to have originated first in US elections, which were subsequently ‘exported’ to other countries. Swanson and Mancini stress four major developments: the ‘personalization’ of politics as leaders and candidates rise in importance; the ‘scientificization’ of campaigning as technical experts like opinion pollsters come to take decisions formerly exercised by party officials; the detachment of parties from citizens as politicians come to be increasingly reliant upon opinion polls rather than direct contact with grassroots activists and voters; and the development of more autonomous structures of communications, as the modern news media are more determined to pursue their own interests rather than to serve the needs of politicians.

Yet the impact of these practices varies substantially between nations depending upon the institutional context of election campaigns, such as the legal rules governing campaigning, the strength of traditional mass-branch party organizations, and the structure of the electorate. Previous chapters have demonstrated the major contrasts between newspaper-centric and television-centric news environments, as well as the differences between broadcasting systems that are predominately commercial, mixed or public.
service oriented. As we have seen the predominance of almost purely commercial television in America is atypical of most democracies. The regulation of campaign ads or party political broadcasts, and systems of campaign finance, also vary substantially cross-nationally. As a result of such structural contrasts, rather than following the American model, election campaigns in different post-industrial societies continue to display striking differences. The rise of television-dominated, personality-driven and money-driven campaigns, often seen as characteristic features of the 'Americanization' of campaigning, has probably gone further in Italy, Venezuela and Israel, for example, than in Britain, Germany and Sweden. National case studies suggest complex and varied patterns of campaigning worldwide, rather a simple and uniform 'Americanization' of campaigning.

Instead this chapter has proposed that the major developments can be understood as a process of modernization with campaigns evolving through the pre-modern, modern and post-modern stages. These changes did not displace local constituency activity, as the ritual of canvassing and leafleting continued in many countries characterized by mass-branch party organizations. Dedicated party volunteers and candidates continue to engage in the day-to-day activity of organizing, canvassing, leafleting, telephone polling and mobilizing support. Nevertheless, due to new technology central campaign headquarters can now tightly coordinate even local activity. As mentioned earlier, many of the features of traditional pre-modern campaigns also continue in America; retail face-to-face politics remains important for presidential candidates in the Iowa caucus and the New Hampshire primary, as well as in local and state races. In the same way the printed press remains a vital channel of political communications, particularly in newspaper-centric societies characterized by high readership. Nevertheless the primary focus of campaign activities shifted during the 1950s towards national television news and then subsequently into a wide range of venues like talk shows, internet web sites and cable stations in a more fragmented electronic environment. The shift towards the ‘most-modern’ campaign has moved towards the permanent campaign, in which the techniques of electioneering become intertwined with those of governing. To understand this process further the next chapter considers case studies of the evolution of campaigning in the United States and Britain, and then considers the possible consequences of these developments.
Figure 7.1:
The Evolution of Campaign Communications in Post-Industrial Societies

Modern Political Communications

[National-Passive]

Post-Modern Communications

[Mixed]
Pre-Modern Communications

[Local - active]

Note: Adapted from Ronald Inglehart. 1997. Modernization and Post-Modernization. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Figure 3.1
Figure 7.2: The Typology of Campaign Media

PASSIVE
- Local TV/Radio
- Regional TV/Radio
- National TV/radio
- Local papers
- Regional papers
- National papers

Party web sites
Talk radio
Internet User-groups

Party Intranets

Town hall/Community Meetings

Local political rallies
Party conferences

Branch party meetings

Email

Telephone

Interpersonal political discussions
Chapter from Pippa Norris “A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies.” (NY: Cambridge University Press, Fall 2000)

ACTIVE

LOCAL

NATIONAL

Note: Modern Media

Post-Modern media
Figure 7.3

Q: Did anyone of the political parties call you up or come round to talk to you about the campaign this year? Source: NES 1956-96
Table 7.1: Typology of the Evolution of Campaigning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Premodern</th>
<th>Modern</th>
<th>Post-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-19thC to 1950s</td>
<td>Early 1960s-late 1980s</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Organization</td>
<td>Local and decentralized party volunteers</td>
<td>Nationally coordinated with greater professionalization</td>
<td>Nationally but opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparations</td>
<td>Short-term, ad hoc</td>
<td>Long campaign</td>
<td>Perma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central coordination</td>
<td>Party leaders</td>
<td>Central party headquarters, more specialist advisors</td>
<td>Special units profe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Local canvassing and party meetings</td>
<td>Occasional opinion polls</td>
<td>Regular plus inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Partisan press, local posters and pamphlets, radio broadcasts</td>
<td>Television broadcasts through main evening news</td>
<td>Television casti mail,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign events</td>
<td>Local public meetings, whistle-stop leadership tours</td>
<td>News management, daily press conferences, controlled photo-ops</td>
<td>Extension of news manag polit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Low budget</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Higher profe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electorate</td>
<td>Stable social and partisan alignments</td>
<td>Social and partisan dealignment</td>
<td>Social deali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 7.2: Campaign Indicators OECD Countries, mid-1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Paid Political Ads on TV</th>
<th>Free Political Airtime to Parties</th>
<th>TV Fair Balance</th>
<th>Leader Debate last on US Publication</th>
<th>Ban on consultants Consultants Func</th>
<th>Direct Financing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Chapter from Pippa Norris “A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies.” (N Press, Fall 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ads on TV</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Rules</th>
<th>Election polls to election</th>
<th>prior campaign</th>
<th>recent campaign</th>
<th>part canc</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD Total</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>21/22</td>
<td>18/18</td>
<td>16/18</td>
<td>5/16</td>
<td>13/18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 7.3 Campaign Activities European Elections, 1989


Chapter from Pippa Norris “A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies.” (NY: Press, Fall 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(% ‘yes’)</th>
<th>Direct Party-Voter Communications</th>
<th>Mediated Party-Voter Commun.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talked to friends, family or workmates</td>
<td>Tried to persuade someone to vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Q “Which of the following did you do during the two or three weeks before the European elections?”

**Source:** Eurobarometer 31A European Elections N.11819 EU12 June–July 1989.
Table 7.4 Most Useful Sources of information, EU Elections, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Television</th>
<th>Newspapers and magazines</th>
<th>Personal Discussions</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Polls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>Lux</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EU12</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Q: “Which of the following sources of information do you consider to be the most useful for making up your mind at the time of the elections?”

**Source:** Eurobarometer 31A European Elections N.11819 EU12 June–July 1989.


V.O.Key

Angus Campbell, The American Voter


14 Although it should be noted that Israel now has direct elections for the prime minister making it a semi-presidential system.

15 For example there is evidence in Britain that coverage of the main party leaders more than quadrupled from 1970–1997, as measured in Nuffield studies by the number of times they were quoted in BBC1 or ITN television news during the campaign. This is calculated from David Butler and Michael Pinto-Duschinsky. 1971. The British General Election of 1970. London: Macmillan. P208. David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh. The British General Election of 1997. London: Macmillan. Table 8.4.


