Simulmatics Project

New book released by Prof. Pool
despite the use of past pre-
election poll results to determine
candidate and attitudes of var-
ious groups, and it describes
the use of computers to predict the
results of an upcoming election.
The project was conceived early
in 1960 and the remaining months
of that year were spent gathering
poll data in various communities
from 1960 election and several preceding it.
These older records, combined
with 380 polls, represented 100,-
000 individual voter interviews
which asked questions about polit-
ical issues.
The individuals were divided
among 480 groups distinguished
by region, economic status, sex,
party, religion, and race. Pool and
his co-workers then developed 92
"issue clusters" to represent the
most pertinent issues in the 1960
presidential campaign. An analy-
sis of the interview data provided
the statistical opinions of each
group on these questions, and
these attitudes were plotted on a
matrix measuring voter trends of various groups.
These reports, along with other
poll data, were used by the Kennedy
organization to determine
campaign strategy.
Regardless of the extent to which
these reports were used by the
Democrats, their information proved
to be quite accurate on Election Day. A projection of the
political issues, for example, had
a correlation of 0.90 with actual
data. When the simulation was
applied to the 1964 presidential
election, it yielded a correlation
of 0.90. The success of this meth-
od shows that public opinion is
rather stable, subject to the
changing issues of the day. It also
demonstrated that dynamic elec-
tion forecasts—the dream of every
politician—can be extrapolated
from old data.
With the advent of computer
simulation, journalists and writers
began to consider its moral im-
lications for society. Many
suggested that it might lead to
(Keep turn to Page 6)

Doubting Thomas?

Hopeful Agnostic?

Christianity has more to offer than hope, it has positive
proof in the form of a MIRACLE which was first told,
described and is intensely personal. Ask the Religious
Leavers, or send me a card marked RSF. I Corporation,
which was hired by the Democrats to
project the results of various issues in the campaign.
These reports, along with other
other prediction services, were used by the
Kennedy organization to de-
take for simulating election re-
results by combining the data with a
hypothetical campaign strategy in
an appropriate comparative pro-
gram. Thus voter behavior in an
upcoming election could be de-
termined from old poll data and
current political trends. Professor
Pool has likened the process to
weather forecasting, in which cur-
rent patterns of pressure, temper-
ate, humidity, and the like are
combined with more stable infor-
mation about the regional climate
to predict the forecast.
Initially favored by the Dem-
ocratic National Committee, the
Simulmatics Project met its first practical test in the 1960 pres-
dential election year. Pool and his
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