

TWO POLLS CLASH ON KENNEDY DATA

Gallup Finds Popularity Rise
—Harris Cites Decline

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29 (AP)—Sharply conflicting assessments of the relative popularity of President Johnson and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, appeared today in two nationally distributed polls.

As published today in the Washington Post, the Gallup poll says:

"Senator Robert Kennedy's star looms larger than ever on the political horizon."

But in adjoining columns, the Harris poll says:

"Senator Robert Kennedy's standing with the public has taken a tumble."

The Post said that the Gallup survey was made Jan. 3-8, before Mr. Johnson's State of the Union Message on Jan. 10 and "before the peak of the controversy between the Kennedy family and Look magazine over the book 'Death of a President'."

Interviews for the Harris poll, the paper observed were conducted between Jan. 14 and 22, after the message and while the dispute over the book was at its height.

Gallup reports that voting-age adults said they would prefer Mr. Kennedy for the Presidency over Mr. Johnson by 48 per cent to 39 per cent with 13 per cent holding no opinion.

A Lead for Kennedy

Gallup says that among Democrats with the choice of nominee in 1968 limited to Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Johnson, the Senator led by 52 per cent to 39 per cent, with 9 per cent undecided.

With other names to choose from, Gallop says, Democrats favored Mr. Kennedy over Mr. Johnson by 43 per cent to 34 per cent.

In August, 1966, the Gallop poll found 40 per cent for Mr. Kennedy and 38 per cent for Mr. Johnson, and in February, 1966, Mr. Johnson held a lead of 52 per cent to 27 per cent.

According to the Harris report, however, the American public now favors Mr. Johnson over Mr. Kennedy as the 1968 nominee by 56 per cent to 44 per cent. Last November, Harris says, Mr. Johnson's edge was 54 to 46.

The poll attributes this shift to disenchantment with Mr. Kennedy because of the book controversy rather than to any upsurge for Mr. Johnson.

To support this view, the poll notes that between December and January it found no change in the public's assessment of Mr. Johnson's over-all performance. In each month, Harris reports, 43 per cent approved his actions and 57 per cent disapproved.

Mr. Kennedy has said repeatedly that he is supporting Mr. Johnson for re-election in 1968 and wants neither the Presidential nor Vice-Presidential nomination.