ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE STUDY GUIDE

Wed., Sept. 17

Political Science Meets Politics: Predicting and Understanding Presidential
Elections in the U.S.

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 300-337.

Chapter 9: Understanding Presidential Elections
- Introduction
    - o People sure do like to try to predict the outcomes of elections.
    - o Predictions and surveys also provide important information for people running for the office or who have been elected so they can know what issues they need to address and how, helps candidates to target audiences.
- Predicting Presidential Elections
    - o Debate over whether campaigns matter or not: Some people argue the campaigns don't matter as much as the environment in which the election occurs, other argue preexisting political views determine the outcome, others argue that campaigns can be decisive, especially when the electorate is closely divided.
    - o Formal models: used to predict elections, based on belief that the environment conditions the results. Identify a few critical variables to make predictions. Some use econometric models that heavily weigh factors like GNP/GDP/inflation/unemployment to predict outcome, attempt to predict % of popular vote candidates receive.
    - o Voters can vote retrospectively (vote for or against an incumbent based on his or his party's past performance) or prospectively (no incumbent, electorate looks to future based on promises and qualifications of candidates).
    - o Other variables used to predict outcome: approval ratings, "electability", amount of time candidate/party has been in control.
    - o Models' success depends on relevance of measures they use as variables, timeframe in which they collect data, and assumption that the effects of campaigns of the two major

candidates will cancel each other out.

- o Models can be wrong if they misinterpret effects of incumbency (ie Clinton's effect on Gore), don't account for changes in expected voter turnout, or don't anticipate Electoral College-motivated strategizing.
- o Public Opinion Polls: let people know the electorate's opinions and how the electorate responds to campaigning.
  - There have been lots and lots of polls in recent elections.
  - 1916: first nationwide polls: straw polls by the *Literary Digest*, involved mailing millions of surveys to people on lists of automobile owners and telephone directories, but was wrong in 1936 because it only received 2 million responses from the 10mill ballots it sent out, ballots tabulated as they came in (blurred shifts in public opinion), and used an unrepresentative sample of the voting public. Other polls got the 1936 prediction right by using smaller samples that more accurately reflected population.
  - Another big polling error in 1948 (Dewey v. Truman), sampling error again as pollsters sought to fill demographic quotas but avoided going to certain areas in cities, and stopped interviewing several weeks before election when many people were still undecided.
  - Pollsters tried to better predict likely voters.
  - Sources of error in polling today: turnout and undecided voters.
- o Television Forecasts: continue right to the end until all votes are tabulated. News media has four objectives: to report the vote, to forecast the winners, to analyze the returns, and to do so ahead of the other networks.
  - In 1980s, major networks and news services established consortium to pool resources in reporting vote count. In 1992, they consolidated their data-gathering operations and conducted a large exit poll.
  - Exit polls: large number of precincts across the country are randomly selected, selection is made within states in such a way that geographic units, size of precincts, and past voting records are taken into account. Lots of pollsters are sent out (1200 or so) to poll every fourth or fifth person who leaves voting booth, they complete short questionnaire. Several times a day, questionnaire results are collected and tabulated. Poll results are made public after most or all election polls in a state have been completed.

- Criticism that exit polls affect turnout and results in states with polls that are still open. Exit polls can also be inaccurate in the case of voting irregularities (ie Florida in 2000) or as a result of certain times of day over-representing one candidate's supporters.

Interpreting the Election Results: exit polls allow you to connect voting decisions to issue positions and perspectives, allow you to see patterns among demographic groups. They don't allow you to see changes over the course of the election, though.

- Models of voting behavior: prospective, which emphasizes issues and looks to the future; and retrospective, which emphasizes candidates/parties and looks to the past.
- To make a prospective judgment, voters must have discernible beliefs and opinions of their own, must be able to differentiate between candidates based on beliefs and opinions, and be able to make a judgment based on which candidate/party will cause the result they want. To simplify this, issues are frequently bundled together by parties and nominees are given an ideological label.
- Retrospective: voters believe past is prologue for the future. Incumbents get a lot of the praise/blame for past conditions. Voters also compare incumbents to challengers to predict if the other guy could do better in the future.
- Partisanship often affects both prospective and retrospective models.
- Increased polarization recently has made the issues less of an independent factor in determining election outcomes.

Explaining Contemporary Presidential Elections: 1952-2004

- 1952-1956: The Impact of Personality: democrats enjoyed a partisan advantage in congress, but lost votes in '52 because Republicans seemed better able to fight the commies, promote efficiency in gov't and end the Korean War. Democrats regained control in 1956 of Congress, but electorate continued to like Ike.
- 1960-1972: The Increasing Importance of Issues: non-economic social issues played big roles in shifting party lines (ie Kennedy's Catholicism lost some S. Democrats, 1964: LBJ was seen as the peace candidate, white S. Democrats voted for Goldwater because they opposed civil rights initiatives, 1968: Vietnam War and civil rights remained huge issues that worked against Democrats). Decline in intensity of partisanship and growth in the number of independents contributed to issue voting.
- 1976-1996: The Evaluation of Performance: Issue differences narrowed in 1976, Gerald Ford and Carter focused on trust in gov't and domestic economic matters. Unfavorable assessment

of Carter's performance led to Reagan victory in 1980. Increases in prosperity benefited Reagan in 1984, and people believed he had more leadership qualities. People in 88 voted on belief that Bush would continue the Reagan prosperity more than Dukakis would. Partisanship also played a factor in 88, with people voting along party/ideological lines, but with more conservatives turning out than liberals. In 92, Bush is voted out mainly because of poor economic performance, Clinton is helped by his Democratic and southern affiliations, Clinton also won over moderates. In 96, strong economy helps reelect Clinton.

- 2000-2004: Party Polarization and Personal Performance: Gore decided to focus on future instead of past performance of the Clinton administration to his disadvantage. Strong partisanship led to a very close election. Third parties had a reduced role (although questions remain about the Nader effect in Florida). 2004: electorate was again highly polarized, success for candidates hinged on maximizing how much of the base turned out. Bush also was perceived as having strong leadership skills.

Pages 322-324 have charts depicting the split among voters of different demographic groups.

Converting Electoral Choice Into Public Policy

- The President's Imprecise Mandate: for a president to have a mandate, he must take clear policy positions and the electorate must vote for them because of these positions. If there's a discrepancy between popular and electoral vote or which parties win the presidency versus the Congress, then it's difficult to claim a mandate. It's also unlikely that the electorate agrees with all of a candidate's policy positions. Elections provide a window of opportunity for candidates to get stuff done, but rarely provide a mandate.

- Party Platforms, Campaign Pledges, and the New Agenda: the party platform often does not completely represent candidates' policy views. In general, though, campaign pledges and party platforms are taken seriously by those in power and many campaign promises become laws.

- Expectations and Performance: candidates try to convey aura of leadership in campaign, voters often become disillusioned when the candidates don't resemble their campaign aura. Presidents' decisions often alienate parts of the coalition that elected them.

- The Electoral Coalition and Governing: Washington outsiders have had an electoral advantage since the 1970s, but being an outsider makes it difficult to accomplish things once in office. Partisan unity in Congress can give Congress

more sway in governing with the president. Presidents rely on interest groups to win, but this restricts what presidents can actually accomplish as they are beholden to these groups when elected.

- Personality Politics and Presidential Leadership: must convert campaign promises into political agenda without enflaming political divisions, must make priorities about what they can accomplish, must convert electoral coalition into governing coalition, presidents must be flexible yet decisive, must be sensitive to public opinion while trying to mold it, and must grow and learn in office.

James Campbell and Michael Lewis-Beck, "US Presidential Election Forecasting," *International Journal of Forecasting*, **vol. 24, no. 2, April-June, 2008, pp. 181-321**

US Presidential Election Forecasting: An Introduction – *James E. Campbell and Michael S. Lewis-Beck*

- There are four main methods of election forecasting:
  - Among academic forecasters, statistical models have been the dominant strategy of election forecasting. Econometric modeling takes into account two main factors: incumbent presidential popularity and the health of the economy. If done correctly, econometric modeling can forecast the winner of election months beforehand and with as much accuracy as day-before public opinion polls.
  - Popularly, the most well known election forecasts come from public opinion polls. Polls, however, are subject to systematic bias based on the survey methodology used. Poll firms, such as Gallup, must also make decisions about sampling, question wording, instrumentation, and weighting, which can also lead to incorrect election forecasts.
  - Political stock markets (prediction markets) are another method of election forecasting. A high candidate stock value translates into a higher forecasted share of the presidential popular vote. Political stock markets tend to be more accurate than public opinion polls.
  - Expert opinion is another method. Experts often offer checklists of conditions (or "keys") to evaluate when forecasting the election winner. Depending on the number of conditions that favor each party, one can predict the winner of an election.

Forecasting the Presidential Primary Vote: Viability, Ideology, and Momentum – *Wayne P. Steger*

- Presidential primary forecasting is difficult because:
    - The public's candidate preferences exhibit greater uncertainty and volatility in nomination campaigns.
    - The populations that vote in primaries change as nominating coalitions shift, making vote prediction based on demographic characteristics difficult.
    - The primary vote is distributed across time, so early caucuses and primaries have the potential to affect later primaries.
- In forecasting presidential primaries, the viable candidates are those raising money, gaining media exposure, receiving the backing of party insiders, and drawing support in national polls *before* the caucuses and primaries begin. Thus, models forecasting the primary elections ought to consider the pre-primary competition. Such models provide accurate predictions of the primary vote for candidates who lack resources and support before the primaries, but are substantially less accurate in predicting the vote shares for the candidates who gain enough money, recognition, and elite and mass support to be viable contenders.
- Ideology is another important predictor in the presidential primaries. Models with candidate ideology indicate that the primary voters have a bias in favor of more ideological candidates, controlling for the other variables in the models.
- Momentum during the primaries, especially from the early caucuses and primaries, can be a powerful predictor. Candidates who beat expectations for performance in early caucuses and primaries received a surge of positive media coverage and fund-raising success, and go on to receive more votes in later primaries. Winning Iowa and New Hampshire can propel a candidate to the nomination. Models that incorporate momentum effects from IA and NH are better at predicting the primary vote shares of both dark horse and top tier candidates.

It's About Time: Forecasting the 2008 Presidential Election with the Time-For-Change Model – *Alan I. Abramowitz*

- This paper uses an econometric model to predict the outcome of the 2008 presidential election.
- The Model: The popular vote for president can be predicted accurately before the national nominating conventions based on three factors: the incumbent president's approval rating at

mid-year, the growth rate of the economy during the first half of the election year, and the length of time that the president's party has controlled the White House.

- The Election Forecast: Based on President Bush's approval rating in June of 2007, the recent growth rate of the economy, and the fact that the Republican Party will have controlled the White House for eight years, Abramowitz predicts that the Democrats will win the national popular vote by a comfortable margin. He predicts the Republican candidate will win only 43 percent of the popular vote. Unless the economy grew briskly during the first two quarters of 2008 or Bush's approval rating soared, the Republican candidate cannot be expected to win.
- Bottom Line: It looks like it will be a decisive victory for the Democrats.

The Economy and the Presidential Vote: What Leading Indicators Reveal Well in Advance -
Robert S. Erikson and Christopher Wlezien

- This paper uses an econometric model to prove that cumulative leading indicators measured early in the election year actually reveal as much about the final vote as cumulative income growth observed on the eve of the election. In other words, voters respond at least as much to economic change that is predicted well in advance of elections as to economic surprises that are felt during the course of the campaign.
- The Model: The econometric model is a function of two variables: first, the cumulative quarterly growth in leading economic indicators over the course of the sitting president's term, where each quarter is weighted 0.9 as much as the one that follows; and second, presidential approval. In order to use advance indications of changes in the economy and approval leading up to the election, the authors use an index of leading economic indicators.
- The Results: Using the model it seems that cumulative economic forecasts in the winter of the election year reveal at least as much information about the election as do early polls asking voters to choose between the eventual candidates.

Forecasting Presidential Elections: When to Change the Model – *Michael S. Lewis-Beck and Charles Tien*

- The authors' aim is to address how election forecasting with statistical models (econometric models) might be improved. With these findings, the authors question whether their Jobs Model should be changed for the 2008 presidential election. The authors warn against simple curve

fitting in election forecasting models.

- Abramowitz's Time-For-Change Model has gotten high quality ratings. Why? At its core is a strong theory (The public rewards the incumbent for good times and punishes the incumbent for bad times. Punishment increases the longer the incumbent serves). *Therefore, good forecasts and good forecasting models are based on good voter behavior theory.*

- The improved Jobs Model uses four variables: Incumbent president popularity, GNP, incumbency advantage, and the number of in-party terms. The improved model forecasts a win for the Democrats. The original model also forecasts a Democratic victory.

- Authors' conclusions: Most forecasters tend to tinker with their models in order to improve accuracy. The different models, and the different tinkering, do contribute to measurable quality differences among the models. In considering the Jobs Model, authors Lewis-Beck and Tien made alterations that came out of considerable empirical experimentation, heavily guided by theoretical considerations. They found that the changes improved upon the original model. However, both the original and improved models predicted a Democratic victory on Election Day.

Forecasting Non-Incumbent Presidential Elections: Lessons Learned From the 2000 Election –
Andrew H. Sidman, Maxwell Mak, and Matthew J. Lebo

- Authors explore how statistical models should treat elections in which there is no president seeking re-election. They look back at the 2000 presidential election to evaluate the utility of "weighting" candidates in non-incumbent elections. They find that weighting helps to better predict the outcome of the 2000 presidential election but that it produces a poorer model over a wider set of elections. For other non-incumbent elections, weighting only improves predictions for the 1960 election. Given that the 2000 election was out of the ordinary, *it is concluded that presidential forecasts are best when they ignore whether or not an incumbent is running*. Indeed, the 2000 election did not follow the forecasting patterns expected by political scientists. Thus, tailoring models to best predict a once-in-a-century outcome is too high a sacrifice to make when dealing with very little empirical evidence that the adaptations are even appropriate for non-incumbent elections.

Key Terms From These Readings:

Election forecasting – Predicting the winner of a political election by various statistical and non-statistical methods.

Statistical models (or econometric models) – Mathematical models that predict the winner of an election as a function of the state of the economy and the attitude toward the incumbent president or party.

Public opinion polls – Surveys of random samples representative of the population that indicate public preference for one candidate over another.

Prediction markets – Political stock markets in which a higher candidate stock value forecasts a higher share of the popular vote.

Systematic Bias – The tendency of a process to favor a particular outcome. Can result when polling procedures do not account for response bias, non-response bias, sample bias, etc.

Weighting – Refers to the subjective weighting of variables within statistical or econometric models.

James Campbell and Michael Lewis-Beck, "US Presidential Election Forecasting,"
***International Journal of Forecasting*, vol. 24, no. 2, April-June, 2008, pp. 237-321, Articles 7-12.**

Article 7: Forecasting non-incumbent presidential elections: Lessons learned from the 2000 election

- We are faced with a unique situation this year without an incumbent President or Vice President running in the election
- The experiences of 2000 lead to 3 major questions about how forecasting models should address non-incumbent elections in the future:
    - Was the 2000 election typical?
    - Should models be updated to account for successor candidates, and how?
    - Do appropriate methods for updating models lead to better election forecasts?

1. Back-casting the 2000 Election Results

- Surprising to political scientists, who predicted a Gore victory by a landslide, was that Gore lost despite having been part of an administration that had overseen 2 terms of peace and prosperity.
- Some people suggest that it was inaccurate to forecast such a comfortable victory for Gore based on success of Clinton's two terms because Gore was just the VP, and not the President, therefore not directly responsible in people's minds for this prosperity, especially when he was going around declaring that he would lead people to a "more prosperous America."
- Some people think that forecasters would have more accurately predicted how Clinton would have performed in running again, and not Gore.
- By back-casting, and looking back on what was included in forecasting the 2000 election, and what went wrong in the forecasting, we find that the high level of presidential approval before the 2000 election was a major factor in throwing off vote projections for Gore. This approval was attributed to Gore, but should technically have been treated as high approval of Clinton.
- Should we then manipulate approval numbers in such a way as to punish a candidate from the incumbent party who is not the president? No. The 2000 election seems to be a slightly unique case where discounting values of economic growth or presidential approval for successor candidates would help aid forecasting. It ultimately harms the forecasting exercise.

2. Methods

- Using 72 models, they identify and test 3 concepts that are used in most forecasting models:
  - Presidential approval
  - Objective economic indicators
  - Subjective economic evaluations
- Their goal was to figure out certain simple weights to assign to successor candidates by which they would receive partial credit for the successes and failures of the incumbent.
- (There is a lot of mathematical information here about how they went about collecting data and compiling results…You can read more here: http://www.sciencedirect.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V92-4SCTMTB-4&_user=209690&_coverDate=06%2F30%2F2008&_rdoc=7&_fmt=high&_orig=browse&_sr

3. Successor Weighting and the 2000 Election

- There ends up being a stark difference between the predictions for 2000, with the successor weighted models coming much closer to the actual results.
- Therefore, "Down-weighting" the independent variables so that Al Gore doesn't receive full credit for Clinton's numbers is a sensible procedure to get a more accurate prediction of the 2000 outcome.
- (There is also a lot of complex data explanation in this section)

4. Down-weighting in Other Non-incumbent Elections

- At the same time that they found that successor weighting predicts the 2000 election better, they found that successor weighting does more harm than good in predicting other successor elections.
- We see that the 2000 election is quite unique.

5. Conclusion

- The 2000 election didn't follow established patterns seen in the forecasting models of political scientists.
- One seemingly simple explanation is that the election did not feature an incumbent, and therefore measures of the performance of the incumbent should not have been given their full weight.
- Yet, down-weighting for former-VP candidates doesn't help the forecasting exercise as a whole and leads to overall poorer model performance.
- On average, presidential forecasts are best when they ignore whether or not an incumbent is running.
- In conclusion, tailoring models to best predict a one-in-a-century outcome, like 2000, is too

high a sacrifice to make when dealing with datasets as small as these, especially when such models were not appropriate for similar non-incumbent elections.

Article 8: Evaluating U.S. presidential election forecasts and forecasting equations

- This article examines 4 problems with past evaluations of presidential election forecasting and suggests one aspect of the models that could be improved.
- Also examines the question of whether current forecasting models grounded in retrospective voting theory should be revised to take into account the partial-referendum nature of non-incumbent, open-seat elections such as the 2008 election.
- Contends that overall assessments are innately arbitrary, that benchmarks can be established for reasonable evaluations of forecast accuracy, that blanket assessments of forecasts are unwarranted, that there are strong (but necessarily limited) theoretical foundations for the models, and that models should be revised in the light of experience, while remaining careful to avoid data-mining.

1. Evaluating Election Forecasting Criticisms

- Argues that most past criticism of election forecasting has been erroneous or idiosyncratic, largely off-target and not constructive.
- The 4 general problems with critiques of election forecasting are problems in
  - Appraising forecasting equations
  - Evaluating the accuracy of both forecasting models generally and forecasts of individual elections
  - Identifying the theoretical foundations of forecasts
  - Distinguishing between data-mining and learning in the revising of models

1.1 Evaluating Forecasting Models

- Michael Lewis-Beck has identified the most systematic 4 dimensions of forecast model quality: accuracy, parsimony, reproducibility, and lead time.

1.2 Evaluating the Accuracy of Forecasts

- This is the ultimate standard for any forecast.
- Yet, it is difficult to even assess accuracy. Evaluations are arbitrary sometimes. Take for instance the 2000 election where forecasts were criticized for being so wrong, yet they did predict the majority correctly if you take into account just the popular vote.
- These forecasts should not be judged as simply right or wrong. Since the forecast of the vote is an interval measure, the rightness or wrongness of these vote forecasts should only be discussed as a matter of degree, not as a dichotomy. The degree of rightness or wrongness requires that we have some bearing on what can be reasonably expected.
- The 3 benchmarks for assessing the forecasting equations:
    - (Easiest) The error associated with a random guess of a 50-50 vote, or the guess of the mean in-party vote in past elections
    - (Stricter) The error associated with the polls conducted around the time of the forecast
    - (Strictest) The error associated with the polls conducted just prior to the election
- (chart that evaluates presidential election forecasts relative to these three benchmarks)
- Critics of forecasting have often not even bothered to evaluate the accuracy of individual forecasts, effectively regarding all forecasts as a singular entity to be criticized. For instance, the forecasts in 2000 were regarded as a complete failure, but the errors actually ranged from 0.5 to 10.0 percentage points—some therefore should be regarded more favorably.

1.3 Locating Theoretical Foundations

- Critics of forecasting have made mistakes in judging not only the outputs of the forecasts, but their origins as well.
- The idea that the major presidential election forecasting models lack theoretical foundations is false. Most of the models are rooted in the theories of retrospective voting (when voters evaluate the record of the in-party) and economic voting.
- Many of the forecasting equations also have a theoretical foundation in both theories of partisanship and of presidential campaign effects.
- The purpose of electoral theory is to have a deep understanding of what causes the vote, while the purpose of forecasting is the accurately anticipate what the vote will be. Thus, theory is definitely important to forecasting, but concern for theory should not impede forecasting accuracy.

1.4 Distinguishing Data-mining from Learning

- Although forecasters could be tempted to revise their models to produce the strongest fit or retrofit to past elections, they should be wary of too easily making changes in their models.
- Credibility depends on track records, and without model stability there can be no meaningful track record.
- Each passing election offers a temptation for this data-mining, but also an opportunity to learn about forecasting specifications that can improve the future accuracy of the models.
- Overall, model construction and revision must be undertaken in a way that avoids both data-mining and curve fitting, while at the same time allowing for model adaptations that reflect what has been learned from the additional information provided by recent elections.

2. Constructive Criticism and the 2008 Election
- There have been many adaptations made to forecasting models in their relatively brief history, but what should the field have learned that would be helpful in the 2008 election?

2.1 Is Retrospective Voting Conditional?

- There's a problem in that many of the models are better suited to predicting races in which the incumbent is running than those lacking an incumbent. 2008 is the first election since 1952 in which neither major party's presidential candidate had previously served as either president or vice president.
- Models are usually better at predicting an incumbent's vote than an in-party successor's vote because:
    o Most of the elections used to estimate most forecasting equations have involved incumbent races.
    o With respect to the economy, research suggests that an open-seat election involves less of a retrospective judgment of the incumbent's record than an election with an incumbent. Successor candidates are not accorded the full rewards or punishments that apply to incumbents.
    o The outcomes of open-seat presidential elections have been systematically different from the outcomes of incumbent elections, historically being much closer races.

- The problem is that many forecasting models do not fully take this difference between open-seat and incumbent elections into account.

2.2 Successor Versions of Two Models

- The results of 2 sets of full and half-credit forecast models are shown in tables.
- The overall summary stats for the 2 pairs of models indicate that the half-credit successor versions of the two models produced a slightly stronger fit than specifying that successor candidates receive the full credit or blame for the previous president's actions.

2.3 The 2008 Election

- The 2008 experience will probably not settle the matters of whether retrospective voting is conditional or whether forecasting models should incorporate the differences between incumbent and open-seat elections.
- Each additional election offers forecasters a learning experience and opportunity to carefully assess and improve their models.

Article 9: Campaign Trial Heats as Election Forecasts: Measurement Error and Bias in 2004 Presidential Campaign Polls

- If late campaign polls are to be used as forecasts, it's important to ask how well do the polls do, and why are some polls better forecasts than others?
- A third of polling houses exhibited large and significant biases in 2004, but the industry as a whole converged on the truth.

1. Introduction

- There is random measurement error, consequence of inevitable limitations on sample size, but there are also poll differences among firms in sample design, question formulation, weighting, and screening: "house bias."
- Because the industry as a whole holds itself to the standard of average truth, prediction failure regularly leads to serious reconsideration of fieldwork designs and changes in fieldwork practice.
- They become especially more informative as the increase in volume also reflects the growth of new technologies, such as the Internet, which has lowered costs and shortened turnaround time,

but has also called into question the sampling claims of the industry as a whole.

- Overall, underestimated standard errors increase the probability of a false positive test for bias, and overestimated standard errors increase the probability of a false negative test for bias. These two approaches are tested using data from the 2004 election, finding that each produces a different substantive interpretation of the success of polls as forecasts.

2. Polls as Forecasts

- When considering bias, it is important to ask whether you are assessing bias of a certain house or of the industry. The bias of the industry is an important consideration—it is the perception of such bias that has led to the declaration of the "failure of the polls" in particular elections. If this is true, one should explore the potential sources of discrepancy: Practices such as the likely voter screen are in industry control, whereas partisan asymmetry in willingness to reveal intention and behaviors or differential mobilization by the parties are outside industry control.

3. Estimating the Systematic Bias in Poll Forecasts

- The article here outlines methods of identifying house effects by utilizing polls from the entire campaign.
- These methods have taken 2 current forms: frequentist and Bayesian. Both were originally developed for the purpose of combining poll information from different houses while controlling for a house bias. However, both have begun to be used for the purpose of evaluating house and industry biases.
- The article goes on to recommend two slightly different approaches, one frequentist and one Bayesian because the two currently-used methods incorrectly estimate the standard errors of the estimated biases. The frequentist fixed-effects approach does so by biasing the estimation of the standard deviation of the model residuals downwards. The Bayesian state space approach does so by incorrectly specifying the variance of the measurement errors.

4. The 2004 US Presidential Election Poll Forecasts

- To compare the consequences of applying each of their methods to the estimation of house and industry biases, they use the 2004 election.
- They discuss three data preparation issues:
  - The disconnection between reports of results & the fieldwork that generated them
  - The problem of the pooled presentation of so-called "tracking polls"
  - The fact that a given poll may be reported in more than one way, thus criteria are

required for choosing among the alternatives

5. House and Industry Bias in 2004

- How much of inaccuracies are simply sampling error and how much are a consequence of house biases? What benchmark should be used to assess the accuracy of the polling industry as a whole?
- The article looks at a couple tables to go in-depth in a case study of interpretation of data points for the 2004 election.

6. Discussion

- Post-election analyses of how well individual polling houses and the polling industry as a whole did in forecasting the election result are common. The two methods that are in current use allow the analysts to incorporate polls throughout the campaign in order to estimate systematic bias.
- This article goes into the specific approaches and purposes of appropriate evaluation and estimation of house vs. industry biases.
- There is a clear need for methods to assess how well polling firms and the polling industry do at forecasting elections.
- In 2004, the case study election for this article, 8 out of 25 houses exhibited large and significant biases, but the industry as a whole converged on the truth.
- Overall, there is a call for greater clarity in the polling practices of houses in the business of forecasting elections.

Article 10: Prediction Market Accuracy in the Long Run

- "Prediction markets" are designed specifically to forecast events such as elections.
- There is evidence that prediction markets outperform polls for longer horizons.
- In comparing market predictions to 964 polls over the 5 presidential elections since 1988, the market is closer to the eventual outcome 74% of the time and significantly outperforms the polls in every election when forecasting more than 100 days in advance.

1.Introduction

- Prediction markets are designed and conducted for the primary purpose of aggregating information so that market prices forecast future events. They differ from typical, naturally occurring markets in that their primary role is as a forecasting tool instead of a resource

allocation mechanism.

- Iowa Electronic Markets (IEM) have proven accurate in forecasting election vote shares the evening and week before elections.
- Still, looking at 5 markets from the IEM, we see that these markets dominate polls in forecasting election outcomes, well in advance of elections.
- Prediction markets prove to be so accurate for the following reasons:
  o The market design forces traders to focus on the specific event of interest: how the entire electorate will vote in the specific election
  o The act of putting money at stake means that the more confident they are in their predictions, the more money they are willing to put at stake.
  o The market aggregates the divers information of traders in a dynamic and efficient manner.
  o The markets provide an incentive to generate, gather, and process information across information sources and in a variety of ways.

2. Prediction Markets

- Markets in general have a dual role: they allocate resources, but more importantly, through the process of price discovery, they aggregate information about the values of those resources. Prediction markets though are a recent adaptation of such market strategy, that are designed specifically to exploit their information aggregation characteristics for use as dynamic forecasting systems.
- The idea is straightforward: trade contingent claims in a market where the claims pay off as a function of something one is interested in forecasting.
- The prices should reflect the expected payoffs to the claims, and therefore the expected outcome of the event of interest.
- Are these markets closer in prediction than polls are when looked at well in advance of the election? We must compare:
  o The forecasts from the IEM, designed to predict vote shares of US Presidential elections since 1988
  o Contemporaneous poll results
  o The eventual outcomes of the elections
- The eventual outcome: on average, the markets are closer than polls to the eventual election

vote share.

3. The IEM Presidential Vote-share Markets

- The first and longest running set of formal prediction markets known to us.
- Computerized, electronic, real-time exchange where traders buy and sell future contracts, with payoffs based on election outcomes.
- Traders entering the market are allowed to invest between $5 and $500, therefore traders are subject to real monetary risks and returns.
- Contracts pay an amount equal to the relative percentage of the popular vote received by a candidate times $1.
- Instead of being a randomly selected representative sample or a deliberately chosen panel as in polls or other prediction methods, IEM traders are self-selected.
- Unlike polls, which ask each respondent how he or she would vote if the election were held today, the market asks traders to forecast how everyone will vote on Election Day.

4. Performance versus Polls

- Polls measure voter sentiment at any particular point in time, which frequently differs greatly from what the market predicts will actually occur in the election.
- In polls, we observe the well-known phenomenon of "convention bounce"—strong effects that do not appear in the markets.
- The market appears to forecast the election outcomes more accurately than polls, even months in advance.
- There is striking volatility in polls, both in absolute terms and in comparison to the market.
- In looking since their creation in 1988, predictive markets have performed with the following results:

  4.1 Result 1
- The results from the last five days before an election, the "election eve" forecasts, markets are closer than polls 68% of the time overall.

  4.2 Result 2
- The markets generally outperform polls over the duration of the markets

  4.3 Result 3
- The markets outperformed polls in each time period considered. The largest market advantage was in the 66-100 day time range.

4.4 Result 4

- In the longer run, markets perform even better relative to polls. The longer time until the election, the market will have improved relative accuracy, that is, relative to the polls.

5. Concluding Remarks

- Previous research showed the absolute and relative accuracy of prediction markets at very short horizons, but this article shows that the markets are also accurate months in advance, and do a markedly better job than polls in these longer horizons.
- How might campaigns put prediction markets to use?
  - Campaigns might want to influence prediction markets but this is not very likely to occur based on a lack of ability to influence prices.
  - Campaigns might use prediction markets to assess the campaigns themselves. This is reasonable because participants in markets will react to certain campaign tactics based upon whether they think the tactics will influence voters.
  - The electorate or parties as a whole might use the markets to select candidates or policy positions. Potentially appropriately designed conditional contracts can be used to forecast the relative viabilities of potential candidates, and could help primary voters and parties select the strongest candidate. Or a campaign might want to use this idea to propose policies that are the most likely to achieve particular platform goals.

Article 11: The Keys to the White House: An Index Forecast for 2008

- The Keys to the White House are an index-based prediction system that retrospectively account for the popular-vote winners of every American presidential election from 1860 to 1980, and prospectively forecast the winners of every presidential elections from 1984 through 2004 well ahead of time.
- The Keys give specificity to the theory that presidential election results turn primarily on the performance of the party controlling the White House.
- The Keys include no polling data and consider a much wider range of performance indicators than economic concerns.
- They predict that in 2008 we should see a Democratic victory, and suggest that candidates should be liberated to offer forthright discussions of the issues and ideas that will shape America's future.

1. The Winds of Political Change

- There are 13 Keys to the White House:
    - Party Mandate: after midterm, incumbent party holds more seats in the House than it did after the previous midterm election
    - Party Contest: the candidate is nominated on the 1st ballot and wins at least 2/3 of the delegate votes
    - Incumbency: the sitting president is the party candidate
    - Third Party: a third-party candidate wins at least 5% of the popular vote
    - Short-term Economy: Nat'l Bureau of Economic Research has either not declared a recession or has declared it over prior to the election
    - Long-term Economy: Real per-capita economic growth during the term equals or exceeds the mean growth during the previous two terms
    - Policy Change: the administration achieves a major policy change during the term comparable to the New Deal or the first-term Reagan Revolution
    - Social Unrest: there is no social unrest during the term that is comparable to the upheavals of the post-civil war Reconstruction or of the 60s and is sustained or raises deep concerns about the unraveling of society
    - Scandal: there's no broad recognition of one that directly touches on the President
    - Foreign or Military Failure: no major failure during the term comparable to Pearl Harbor or the Iran hostage crisis that appears to significantly undermine America's national interests or threaten its standing in the world
    - Foreign or Military Success: a major success during the term comparable to the winning of WWII or the Camp David Accords that significantly advances America's national interests or its standing in the world
    - Incumbent Charisma/Hero: the incumbent party candidate is a national hero or an inspirational candidate
    - Challenger Charisma/Hero: the challenger is not a national hero like Grant or Eisenhower, and not an inspirational one comparable to Roosevelt or Reagan

2. The Keys Model

- 6 of the 13 Keys must be called against the party in power to predict its defeat.
- The Keys relies on an index rather than a regression-based method of forecasting.

- It forecasts not percentage votes, but wins and losses by the party holding the White House, based upon an index comprised of true or false responses to a set of questions
- It uses pattern recognition, not regression, to select relevant keys and develop a decision rule for distinguishing incumbent from challenging party victories
- It includes a much wider array of predictor variables than the regression models
- The model provides for very long-term forecasts of an upcoming election

3. Judgment and the Keys

- Two constraints distinguish the answers to the Key questions from the ad hoc judgments offered by conventional political commentators
  o All judgment calls are made consistently across elections; the threshold standards established in the study of previous elections must be applied to future contests as well.
  o Each Key has an explicit definition that is briefly summarized.

4. Subsets of the Keys

- Some subsets of the 13 Keys also correctly predict the outcome of all elections since 1860.
- Yet, they don't diminish the set of Keys because a full set of 13 provides the greatest separation between incumbent wins and losses over the entire sample of elections.
- Also, the full 13 have the greatest capacity to capture future variations in political circumstances.
- In all the elections until Clinton's reelection in '96, the combination of Keys 2, 4, 5, and 7 correctly predicted all elections (the party in power wins unless two Keys are turned against it).
- The greater stability and range of the full system also provides the ability to conduct long-term forecasts for a future election.
- All of the 13 have strong theoretical justification for their inclusion, consistent with the dual objective of the Keys—to both predict and explain the outcomes of elections.

5. Extensions of the Keys

- They used advanced pattern recognition to generate multiple distinctive traits and to weight each key according to its individual predictive power.
- Some Keys do have trigger effects on other keys.

6.Forecasting 2008

- In November 2007, only 5 Keys were called in favor of the incumbent Republican Party. 8 were called against the party in power, two more than necessary to predict its defeat.

7. Governing and Campaigning

- The keys do not prove that campaigning is irrelevant to the outcomes of presidential elections. Primary campaigns can influence Key 2, and general election campaigns can influence Keys 12 and 13.
- The Keys do suggest that what mainly counts in presidential elections is governing, as measured by the consequential events of a presidential term, not packaging, image-making, or campaigning.
- It's possible that the predictive power of the Keys depends in part on the fact that historically candidates have followed conventional campaign models. If so, the candidate predicted to lose by the lineup of the Keys has an incentive to break the pattern of history by waging an unconventional, breakthrough campaign.
- Not only elections, but also election forecasts, have consequences for politics.
- The models that we use to predict in turn shape the conduct of campaigns, the relationship between candidates and the American people, and ultimately the policies of government.

Article 12: The State of Presidential Election Forecasting: The 2004 Experience

- Assesses the state of US presidential election forecasting, describing methods and their predictive accuracies for the 2004 election.
- Three types of forecasts were made for the election using:
  - Point forecasts of the popular vote by campaign polls, futures contracts on candidate's performance, regression models, Delphi expert surveys, and a combination of forecasts from these methods
    - Candidate futures were the most accurate
  - Point forecasts of the electoral vote by regression models, probability models based on state polls, a compilation of median polls in states, and exit polls
    - State probability models and the median state poll technique were the most

accurate

- o Dichotomous forecasts of the popular-vote winner by a multi-indicator index, cut-points for single indicators, and bellwether states.
    - All three dichotomous techniques were successful predictors

2. Point Forecasts of the National Popular Vote

    2.1 National Campaign Polls

- Public opinion surveys conducted to determine the percentage of the potential electorate that would vote for the respective candidates if the election were on the day when the interviews occurred.
- Lack of standards of defining likely voters caused some variation problem
- Along with this was the increasing use of cellular phones by young voters
- Also, growing public resistance to participating in surveys, due to telemarketing
- Internet polls are an attempt to overcome some of these problems

    2.2 Futures Markets for Elections

- Online markets in which traders buy and sell contracts at prices that represent the market's estimate of the likely outcome of a given election.
- Most prominent are Iowa Electronic Market (IEM) and Intrade.com

    2.3 Regression Models of the National Popular Vote

- Most are based on the theoretical assumption that presidential elections are referenda on the president's job performance, particularly with respect to the economy.
- Most models come from political science and economics, with varying structures

    2.4. Delphi Expert Surveys

- Surveying groups of experts has been little used in forecasting presidential elections.
- The accuracy of Delphi as a forecasting method is dependent on the expertise of the participants and on the success of efforts to minimize the bias associated with subjective methods.

    2.5. Combined Forecasts of the Popular Vote

- In 2004 for the first time, forecasts from all four of the leading methods were combined to

produce one composite forecast, dubbed the Pollyvote project.

- Included campaign polls, prices in the IEM, forecasts from regression models, and the results of the Delphi expert surveys.
- With a 51.5% forecast for Bush this average of averages was a highly accurate predictor of the 2004 election result, with an error of only 0.3%.

2.6. Comparing the Accuracy of the Popular-vote Techniques

- The IEM was the superior performer in the methods of forecasting the popular vote.

3. Point Forecasts of the Electoral Vote

- Forecasters have generally been less concerned with forecasting the electoral vote than the national popular vote.

3.1 Regression Models of the Electoral Vote

- Regression has been used to forecast the electoral vote from the national level and the state level.
- Most of the electoral vote models are casual and are based upon polls taken within the states, thus have no explanatory purpose.

3.2. Other Probability Techniques Using State Polls

3.2.1. The Moro Technique—Use the most recent poll for each state and its reported margin of error to calculate the probability that at least 50% of the electorate in the state favored a given candidate.

3.2.2 The Wang Technique—candidate with the highest probability of winning in each state was allocated the state's electoral votes.

3.3 Median State Polls—Colley and Gott

- These astrophysicists identified the median poll from among polls conducted in each state during the previous 30 days, and then allocated the state's electoral votes to the leader in that poll.
- In this highly accurate forecast, the Electoral College tallies were off by only 4 votes.

3.4 Exit Polls

- Only predictions of how people have already voted.
- If accurate, exit polls accelerate the reporting of the election outcome in advance of the official vote count.

- Inaccuracy in exit polls was a big factor in the 2000 and 2004 elections.

3.5 Comparing the Accuracy of the Electoral Vote Techniques

- The average error for electoral vote forecasts was 5.0%.

4. Dichotomous forecasts of the National Popular-vote Winner

- These are methods that are used to forecast the national popular vote, but which do not produce print forecasts or probability estimates.

4.1 Lichtman's Index of 13 "Keys"

- (Refer to Article 11)

4.2 Single Indicator Cut-points

- Some analysts attempt to identify a single indicator that might predict whether a candidate will win or lose.
- These indicators are commonly thought to reflect the incumbent administration's performance.

4.3 Bellwether States

- If a candidate wins the bellwether state, that candidate is predicted to win the national election.
- The bellwether therefore does not imply any causal effect on the national election, but is presumed to function as a microcosm of the nation.
- In recent years, New Mexico has been the most consistent bellwether state, voting for the winning candidate in every presidential election since 1916.

4.4 Comparing Dichotomous Techniques

- The objective of these are more limited, and the methodology simpler.
- In the end, each method was successful in achieving the limited objective of forecasting the 2004 election winner.

5. Conclusion

- Most of the techniques in use are suitable for forecasting elections.
- IEM is a superior forecasting tool
- Averaged polls perform only somewhat less well
- Some regression models are highly accurate
- Largely subjective indexes can be consistently accurate
- Most "simple" techniques involving no math are quite accurate, combining polls and other forecasts

Mon., Sept. 22

The Origins and Evolution of the American Presidential Selection Process

William Mayer, ed., The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2008, pp. 203-229.

Chapter 8: What the Founders Intended: Another Look at the Origins of the American Presidential Selection Process

- The Evolution of the Presidential Selection Process During the Constitutional Convention: delegates had little experience in selecting executives, so they didn't know the best way to do it, just things to avoid.
- Presidential selection process is contained in Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution.
- There is a handy timeline of the Convention decision making process on page 207 of the Mayer that you should check out.
- First proposal on June 1 was that the nat'l executive would be elected by the nat'l legislature, serve for 7 years, and be ineligible for reelection. James Wilson then suggested that the executive should be elected by the people, offered compromise with Electors who would select president based on popular votes within districts within states, but this plan was rejected. Alternate plan that president is to be chosen by executives of the states was also rejected. Then, the convention got distracted by that pesky little matter of deciding how to apportion seats within the state legislature and they didn't get back to discussing choosing the national executive until three weeks later.
- By then, a number of delegates were dissatisfied with the first selection mechanism (7 years, no reelection, chosen by legislature). First alternative proposal was a straight popular vote, which was rejected. Next was election by Electors to be appointed, also rejected. They then went back to the original proposal but a vote was taken to delete the clause making the national executive ineligible for a second term, which passed by a narrow margin. So then the delegates decided to reconsider the whole proposal.
- Strong arguments were made in favor of having executive eligible for reelection, but this would be incompatible with having the legislature elect the executive because then the executive would be beholden to the legislature. They decided to go back to the Electors chosen by state legislatures system, but some dissenters thought it would be difficult to get capable men to

serve as electors in all states and it would be inconvenient to get them to all come together. So, the convention flipped back to the national legislature selection strategy.

- The convention dragged on. Lots of bizarre alternatives (20 year presidential terms, randomly selecting the legislators who get to choose the prez) were suggested. They went back to the original suggestion (7yrs, national legislature, no reelection), but people still weren't content. By the end of August, they still couldn't' figure out a good compromise, new committee was created, the Committee of Eleven, to deal with parts of the Constitution that still weren't figured out. They came up with a complicated solution involving electors from each state appointed by state legislature who would cast votes for two different people. Votes would be counted by state. If no candidate received a majority vote, the decision would go to the Senate. They decided to change this because people worried the Senate was going to have too much power, decided the House should make the decision with each state getting one vote.

- After choosing a viable way to pick the president, many powers that were originally entrusted to the Senate (ie negotiating treaties) were entrusted to the prez.

- An Atheoretical Compromise?: some political scientists (John Roche) believe we should view this choice as a political compromise, not an attempt to institutionalize a particular theory of presidential selection (ie. wasn't created because they distrusted the masses)

- The idea of electors/indirect election of the executive was not a newly hatched idea, was already going on in many states (even the Maryland senate was chosen by electors). Reached a compromise by allowing states to appoint electors as they see fit: other proposals thought electors should just be popularly elected or just be appointed by the legislature.

- Only new proposals of the Committee of Eleven were requirements that electors meet in respective states and creation of vice presidency.

- What the Founders Intended: Four Core Ideas
  - o A determination to preserve and enhance executive independence
    - ▪ Arguments in favor of reelections: keeping experienced people in the position, reelection provides an incentive for good behavior, and fear that an executive might resort to illegal means to hold onto power if he couldn't do it legally.
  - o A remarkable fear of cabal, intrigue and corruption
    - ▪ Electors required to vote in separate states, on the same day, by ballot to reduce risk of corruption. Ballots were to be sealed and in case of a tie, the House was to choose immediately.

- A heightened concern for the interests of small states
  - # of electors=senators + representatives, giving small states more representation than they would have if it were done purely by popular vote.
  - Wanted two people to be chosen by each elector, one of whom could not be a resident of the home state. This led to the creation of the vice presidency.
- And a cautious respect for popular participation
  - Plenty of delegates were okay with popular voting for the president, but many people thought this type of election would be impractical (lack of mass media, infrastructure and logistical difficulties) and that people were more tied to state loyalties instead of national loyalty.

This part of the constitution made it through the ratification process fairly easily, although some amendments were proposed to change the length of presidential terms or specify that elections must occur every four years.

After ratification, though, people became concerned about the vice presidential selection process, worrying that people intended to be VP might wind up being president, hence adoption of Twelfth Amendment. Otherwise, this has been a pretty durable system

See page 229 for full text of Article II Section 1.

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 2-28.

Presidential Selection: A Historical Overview

Creation of the Electoral College:
- wanted electoral system that would choose most qualified person but not necessarily most popular
- multiple proposals:
  - Virginia Plan: legislative selection (Parliamentary system)
    - Pros: Would be quick, selectors would be informed
    - Cons: worries that president would be indebted to Congress, little accountability to populous
  - Popular Election:
    - Rejected twice because of concerns about public's competence, primitive

communications prevented national campaign and election

- o Indirect Election
    - ▪ Finally agreed to after deadlock over other forms
    - ▪ Seen as consistent w/ constitutional and political ideals
- Early Structure
    - o # of state's electors = # of Senators + # of Representatives
    - o each elector had two votes
        - ▪ president and VP chosen separately (winner = President, runner-up = VP)
    - o electors could not cast both ballots for inhabitants of own states or designate which candidates they preferred for president or VP
    - o if no one received majority, House would choose from top 5 by each state delegation casting one vote
    - o if VP was tie, Senate would select one
        - ▪ amended by 12th Amendment
- political compromise
    - o by having # of electors be equal to state's congressional delegation gave larger states initial advantage in voting
        - ▪ in case of tie, small states held advantage (everyone only got one vote)
    - o between federalists and states' rights people
        - ▪ allowed states to establish procedures for choosing electors, but had House decide if there was no Electoral College majority

Development of Nominating Systems

- founders did not anticipate the emergence of political parties
    - o nomination of electors became partisan process
- 1796 Election: Adams = President, Jefferson = VP
    - o from different political parties
- King Caucus
    - o Partisan caucuses in Congress met to appoint nominees
        - ▪ Violated spirit of Constitution (not supposed to be legislative selection)
    - o Suffered from low Congressional participation up until end
    - o 1824 Election: John Quincy Adams selected by House (no original majority)

- end of King Caucus
- National Nominating Conventions
  - States accorded as many votes as congressional representation merited
  - Method of choosing delegates left up to states
  - Public participation was minimal → party leaders really in charge of choosing delegates
    - Selection done behind closed doors in "smoke-filled rooms"
- Popular Primaries ("Mixed" System)
  - Demands for reform of previous system – too undemocratic
  - Primary results ~ self-fulfilling → confirm front-runner status
  - Primaries were a good way to prove nominee's public palatability, but were not essential to securing the nomination
    - Hoover's nod in 1968
- Primary System
  - Primaries now used to build popularity rather than just reflect it
  - Now the essential key to winning nomination
  - More democratic
  - Changes
    - Enlarged potential pool of nominees
    - Made governing more difficult

Evolution of General Election
- trend towards "winner-take-all" partisan apportionment of electors

Congressional Decisions
- Election of 1800:
  - House decided between Aaron Burr and Thomas Jefferson
    - Elected Jefferson after 36 ballots
- 12th Amendment
  - established separate voting for president and VP
  - refined selection procedures in event of non-majority
- Election of 1824:

- House had to select among top three b/c no one had a majority
- House Speaker, Henry Clay, got bumped and supported Adams, who won, supposedly in exchange for being Secretary of State
- Andrew Jackson had received majority of the popular vote
  - Wanted to abolish the electoral college

Judicial Determination
- 4 legal issues:
  - voter confusion over design of the ballot in one county
  - disagreement over eligible voters and absentee ballots
  - tabulation problems in countries that used punch-card ballots
  - date when official results had to be certified by secretary of state
- Bush narrowly won Florida by 537 votes and w/ its electors, carried the presidency

Close elections
- elections can be decided by small numbers of voters in specific states because of the electoral college system

Politics of Electoral College Voting
- campaigns are entirely centered on getting electoral votes (often ignore big, solid states like CA or TX)
- Electoral College exaggerates margin of victory
  - Due to winner-take-all system in states
    - Candidate who receives plurality of popular vote within a state receives all of its electors
      - Gives states greater importance in national election
- Large states and smallest states gain more influence in Electoral College by winner-take-all voting
  - Medium-sized states are disadvantaged
- Battleground states receive greatest advantage, regardless of size
  - Advantages groups that live in these states – not usually very diverse
    - *De facto* racial bias → elected candidate may feel indebted to the groups that

elected him in battleground states

- Winner-take-all also disadvantages 3rd party candidates
    - o Hard for 3rd party candidate to accumulate enough electoral votes to win an election
        → people don't want to support a loser
            - Support would have to be geographically concentrated
- Conventional wisdom = Republican party advantaged by Electoral College system
    - o Can rely on support of noncompetitive states (Rockies, South)
    - o Closeness of recent elections suggests movement towards parity

THE NOMINATION

Building Momentum: The Invisible Primary, the Money Race, and Media Politics

William Mayer, ed., The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2008, pp. 1-35, 75-87, 141-165.

The Invisible Primary in Presidential Nominations

- Summary
  - The Invisible Primary refers to the process by which presidential candidates build support in the period prior to the actual primaries. Usually the candidate who is ahead at the time of the first primary is the one who goes on to be nominated. During the invisible primary, candidates will cover thousands of miles, give speeches, meet donors, recruit workers, and seek the endorsements of party leaders. At the end of this process, usually only one candidate emerges at the head of the field. In order to win this invisible primary, candidates must have a significant amount of party support, and to get this party support, a candidate must satisfy each of the party's principal groups on their most intense concerns. Fund-raising is also an important factor in the invisible primary; however, even great fundraisers are unlikely to win the nomination if they do not also have the support and endorsement of party insiders. Basically, politics more than money drives the nomination process. However, there are several key ways in which party control over the nomination process could break down – first, party insiders may not reach an agreement amongst themselves concerning who the nominee should be, second, the candidate favored by party insiders could be beaten by an insurgent in the primaries, and finally, a candidate with a great deal of financial support, and little else, could triumph over the party favorite. In general though, party support is still very important in securing the nomination, and it is for this reason that candidates who are distant from the party mainstream are unlikely to get nominated in the current system. The significance of party support in the current system could be beneficial though, in that party insiders are more likely to know a candidate well and determine how capable

that candidate is of assuming the presidency

- Key terms
    - .The Invisible Primary - The process by which presidential candidates build support in the period prior to the actual primaries. Candidates build support by traveling across the country, giving speeches, meeting donors, recruiting workers, and seeking the endorsements of party leaders.
    - Party Resurgence – The process by which political parties have gained importance in the nominating process throughout the last several elections. While party leaders no longer directly select the nominees (due to the McGovern-Fraser reforms of 1972), the endorsement of party insiders is important in the modern nominating process.

How Television Covers the Presidential Nomination Process

- Summary
    - Citizens heavily depend on the media during the presidential nomination process, a time when most candidates are not well-known, when the selection process often takes place very quickly, and when voters cannot use partisanship as a cue to help them choose among competitors from the same party. However, there are several key problems with this news coverage of campaigns and elections. First, there is not enough coverage during the primary process, with television news stations only tuning in once the nomination process is in full swing (usually toward the end of the primary season). Second, campaign coverage mainly focuses on the horserace aspect of the campaign as opposed to focusing on the issues that differentiate between the candidates. Third, the coverage is not fairly allocated among the candidates, with front-runners getting significantly more media coverage than candidates who are "unlikely" to win the nomination. Finally, the tone of media coverage is unfair, with news stations treating some candidates more harshly than others.
- Key terms
    - Horse race journalism – The tendency of news reporters to continually discuss polling data as opposed to actually covering the issues.
    - Free media – Political advertising that the candidate does not pay for, mainly news coverage. This free media is the best way for a candidate to become better-known.
    - Compensatory coverage – For candidates who are behind in the polls, reporting that is

more positive in tone than that of the front-runner.

Presidential Nomination Finance in the Modern era

- Summary
    - Prior to 1971, the concept of campaign finance was a very murky one for the American public. Essentially, people had no idea how much money candidates were raising, from whom candidates were getting this money, or how this money was being spent. However, following the Presidential Election Campaign Act of 1971 (FECA), many amendments were made so that campaign finance was as open and as accountable a process as possible. With restrictions on individual contribution limits, one of the main purposes of FECA had been to require candidates to raise money from a much larger number of contributors and thus diminish the importance of large donors in financing presidential campaigns. To compensate for the money candidates were losing as a result of the new contribution limits, FECA also established a new source of campaign income: federal matching funds (in which the federal treasury would match any individual contribution of $250 or less). FECA also created election spending limits and personal campaign financing limits, however candidates could choose to bypass these rules if they also agreed to decline the aid of matching funds. Most candidates chose to accept matching funds however, and so matching funds were an important source of campaign income up until the 1996 election. After 1996, extremely wealthy candidates such as Steve Forbes and Ross Perot chose to decline matching funds in order to personally finance their own campaigns. In 2000, George Bush, an excellent fundraiser, also chose to forego matching funds, as did John Kerry and Howard Dean in 2004. Candidates increasingly choose to forego matching funds so that they can bypass such restrictions as state spending limits. Because of the front-loading phenomenon, it is now more beneficial for candidates to decline matching funds in order to spend as much money as possible in such key primary states as New Hampshire and Iowa. Today, candidates who accept matching funds are perceived to be at a significant disadvantage vis-à-vis the other party, as they would likely be dramatically outspent, and so party activists and insiders are unlikely to support a candidate who accepts matching funds.
- Key terms
    - FECA – Federal Election Campaign Act – an act passed in 1971 to bring a greater

measure of openness and accountability to campaign finance

- o Matching funds – funds provided by the federal treasury to account for the money candidates lose as a result of individual contribution limits. The government will match any individual contribution of $250 or less.
- o BCRA – the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act – an act passed in 2002 which essentially doubled individual contribution limits to candidates and parties and banned unlimited "soft money" contributions to parties

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 137-169.

Chapter 5

Campaigning for the Nomination

Main point: raise money/campaign early and use technology effectively

<u>Basic strategic guidelines</u>

- *Plan far ahead*
  - o Exploratory committee after midterm election
  - o Jan 2007: 9 Dems and 10 Reps to run in 2008 election
- *Concentrate efforts in the early contests*
  - o Iowa
    - First official selection of delegates by tradition (→media coverage!)
    - Winning/coming in 2nd increases chances of an unknown candidate (**expectations game**: an unknown candidate who does better than expected can get big media coverage)
    - Well-known candidate: not essential to do well, but it is for a lesser known candidate
    - Importance has decreased recently b/c of frontloading
  - o New Hampshire
    - First state to hold a primary for both parties
    - Chance for candidates to bounce back
    - Same advantages as IA
- *Raise and spend money early*
  - o Those who do, tend to win nomination

- o Invisible primary (financial campaigning yrs before nomination) = more important
    - ▪ Impact of early money = greater for unknown candidates
        - • Indication of viability (shows public support)
    - ▪ Expert staff, better planning
- *Gain media attention*
    - o Harder for unknown candidates b/c coverage and public recognition go hand in hand
        - ▪ **Free media**: earned coverage by participating in debates, staging events, leaking info etc – insufficient b/c cannot control it
        - ▪ **Paid media**: ads
- *Develop a wide organization*
    - o Mainly in early states b/c it's too expensive
    - o Tasks: mobilize voters, build electoral coalitions
- *Monitor public opinion*
    - o State polls, focus groups
    - o 1940: Dewey – first to have private polling data
    - o Use: help identify main challengers, cite in ads, raise money
    - o abuses: push polling
- *Design and target a distinctive personal image and policy message*
    - o Establish credentials, articulate a general approach and address policy probs/solns
    - o Pos/neg ads, speeches etc – messages do reach voters
- *Make effective use of communication technologies*
    - o Circumvent natl TV for cheaper local media
    - o Internet – blogs, emails, website to raise money/reach out to youth

Nomination Strategies

The non-front runner approach: "stepping stones to prominence"

- Objective: gain resources necessary to win (media, money, organization)
- How?
    - o Enter early contests → do well → media attn → momentum TO SHOW VIABILITY (eg: Carter 1976)
    - o front-loading decreased the impact of winning IA/NH, but it's non-front runners' only option

The front-runner strategy: amassing delegates

- *objective*: maintain viability and extend electoral coalitions
- use resources to discourage challengers
- advantages are most potent in the beginning of the process → winning early contests = important to keep the gap
- eg: Mondale (1984), Gore (2000), Kerry (2004), Clinton (2008)

Mon., Sept. 29

Securing the Nomination: The Primaries and Caucuses

William Mayer, ed., The Making of the Presidential Candidates 2008, pp. 39-69, 87-116, 169-195 (last piece still missing).

The Reemergence of the Iowa Caucuses: A New Trend, an Aberration, or a Useful Reminder?

- Caucuses are neighborhood meetings of local Democratic or Republican party supporters typically held in homes or public facilities. They select delegates to the bottom, if you will, of a pyramid of local and state conventions that ultimately do lead to selection of delegates to the national convention. They are intimate, long affairs and require a significant time commitment from participants, who have to be 18+ and live in the precinct where the caucus is. Caucuses are party matters and results are announced by the parties, not by government officials
- Process: neighborhood caucuses→county conventions→congressional district conventions →state conventions; only at the last two are nat'l convention delegates selected
- The two parties elect their county convention delegates differently:
    - o Republicans cast secret presidential ballots and then the whole caucus elects delegates to the county convention
    - o Democrats allocate county convention delegates via proportional representation by presidential preference group, with a 15% threshold to win delegates. Supporters of candidates who have less than 15% have to redirect their support to their 2nd choice
- Iowa is all about organization, identification and mobilization of core supporters
- Iowa caucus has maintained its early position thanks to the Winograd (1978) and Hunt (1982) Commissions which respectively established a window during which Dem delegate contests had to be held and established that Iowa was allowed to hold its caucuses no more than 15 days before the start of that window
- Iowa Straw Poll is an event usually one year prior to the actual caucus that gives party members an early opportunity to express support for their favorite candidates, and are often conducted largely as a fundraising device

- Political culture in Iowa is focused on agriculture, is predominantly moralistic, and the Iowa electorate is unrepresentative of the US as a whole (whiter, older, more blue collar)
- Controversies: unfair to be so early every year, contributes to front-loading (increased importance of early money, increased incidence of early candidate withdrawals, and earlier end to competition, less time for voters to assess the candidates, lower levels of participation in later primaries), too peculiar in is demographic makeup and economic base to have so much power
- Solutions: a national primary, regional primaries in which Iowa and New Hampshire are merged into larger groupings, allowing 1-2 states to start the nomination process but rotating those states each cycle
- McGovern-Fraser Commission reforms allowed for greater and more visible competition among candidates and contributed to forcing the Iowa caucuses into January thereby moving Iowa ahead of New Hampshire
- Candidates have to decide whether or not its worth it to compete in Iowa, and if they don't, they have to have a good reason for it
- Three historical phases of Iowa caucuses:
  o 1) 1972-1984—The Carter Model with Iowa as "king-maker" when the potential of Iowa to confer momentum on lesser-known candidates was emphasized
  o 2) 1988-before 2004—The Limits of Iowa era when the Iowa caucus seemed to have little impact on the nomination races and scholars and journalists emphasized the limits of Iowa. Thought that front-loading had rendered earliest contests less important because of the increased importance of the invisible primary
  o 3) 2004-? when the Iowa caucuses played a crucial role in the Democratic nomination and now its clear that Iowa can once again be a king-maker, depending on the circumstances
- Conclusion
  o Iowa as the "effect" in some cases in which the front runner is far ahead and the "cause" incases when the race is tighter to begin with
  o Carter Era overstated the influence of Iowa and Era of Limits sold it short
  o The fluctuation of importance of the Iowa caucus emphasizes how our electoral system allows for fluctuations in importance of particular political processes because it is so circumstantial

- Key terms and definitions
    - There aren't really any key terms/definitions in this reading, but the important things to take away are 1) how the Iowa caucus and caucuses in general work and 2) the different phases/levels of importance of the Iowa caucus over time

Part of "How Television Covers the Presidential Nomination Process"
- There are differences in the amount of attention devoted to individual candidates and the tone of coverage throughout the primary season. The three periods that see different coverage are I. January 1-the Iowa caucuses (about 3 weeks), II. the Iowa caucuses-eve of New Hampshire primary (about 1 week), III. night of New Hampshire primary-Super Tuesday
- Throughout recent nomination struggles, TV reporters tend to focus on no more than 2-3 candidates at a time
- TV does little to change the fact that if a candidate does not start out as a front-runner, her or she is probably not going to be the nominee because candidates at or near the top in fundraising and in early polls receive the bulk of public and media attention
- Nonfront-runners need to do better than expected in first contests to stay in the game
- Reporters tend to be kinder to senators than to current or former governors, even though the nomination process has favored governors and its easier for them to spend significant amounts of time in Iowa and New Hampshire
- Candidates pushing a pet cause can generally expect to be ignored by the news media, unless they show other indications of strength
- A popular message can help generate media coverage
- The increasingly front-loaded nomination calendar has increased the influence of Iowa and New Hampshire and has decreased the importance of many other states
- Front-runners, serious challengers, and dark horses will all try to use the internet aggressively to compensate for limited network TV attention

"Television Advertising During the Presidential Nomination Season"
- This chapter is about how much advertising takes place, who sponsors the advertising, when it is aired, and the implications of these patters of advertising for voter learning and on who wins. Analysis is confined to 2000 and 2004 nomination cycles.

- TV ad air war is an important part of contemporary presidential nomination campaigns and is perhaps more important now than in the past because of the front-loading of nomination events
- Most ads are placed on local broadcast stations because it is a more efficient use of resources and has a larger audience than local cable
- Most advertising is sponsored by the candidates themselves rather than political parties, interest groups, or 527 organizations because political parties maintain neutrality during a nomination race, interest groups save their resources for the general election since policy differences between candidates are minor, and interest groups better devote their resources in a nomination campaign to get-out-the-vote efforts
- Amount of money raised, size of crowds attending events, and amount of news media attention all shape how much candidates advertise
- Candidates focus ad resources on states that are early in the process in an attempt to garner media attention, on states that provide the most delegates, and states that hold primaries rather than caucuses (with the exception of Iowa)
- Advertising starts very early and continues through the course of the campaign. Advertising peaked earlier in 2004 than in 2000, indicating that the front-loading of the nomination calendar has continued/increased
- Timing of advertising varies considerably by candidate and also varies by media market. Patterns of campaign advertising: the long, heavy campaign, the short, intense ad campaign, and a mixed model
- Some think ads don't have much capacity to influence voter choice, but…
    o voters do not know much about most candidates who seek nomination for president so it is possible that ads may be effective in helping candidates gain name recognition
    o ads may be more effective in creating a favorable image of a candidate in the nomination campaign than in the general election
    o with so little policy separation between intraparty candidates, messages of a few ads may convince a voter to vote for one candidate instead of another
    o the flow of messages is likely to be more unbalanced because of differences in resources among candidates
    o ads don't just persuade, they also mobilize

- The authors argue that ads are more likely to affect who wins in a primary than in the general election
- Ads are only one way candidates spread their message. Campaign rallies, tv interviews, and speeches are other ways they communicate
- Front-loading has contributed to the development of a nomination system in which voters increasingly meet the candidates through their ads

- Key terms and definitions:
  o Front-runner: a candidate with a lead in the polls, the most name recognition, and the most funds raised, or a combination of these characteristics
  o Front-loading: the phenomenon of states moving when they hold their primary elections up so that the results of the primary election in their state have more of an influence on which candidate is nominated

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 116-133, 173-181.

Chapter 4
Party Rules and Their Impact: The Legal Environment
Main point: power transfer from party leaders → rank-and-file
- nominees are selected by delegates in nat'l party conventions
- state law determines delegate selection → **rules make a difference**!
  o Before 1970s: caucuses/conventions selected nominees
  o 1970: reforms regulating when/how delegates will be selected and how they will behave at conventions

Democratic rules, 1968-1980
- *motivation for reforms*: 1968 convention: Humphrey (LBJ's VP) won nomination w/out having campaigned because he had support of top Dem leaders + Pres
- 1970 - Sen McGovern chairs a commission to review Party nomination rules
  o *(Goal #1) Delegates = more representative of electorate*
    ▪ Easy for individuals to run
    ▪ Smaller districts
    ▪ Delegates won by a nominee = proportional to popular vote

- Must be chosen in election year of election
- Tried to prevent independents/R from voting in primaries
  - Must identify themselves as a Dem (don't have to be registered)
  - NO **open primaries** (receiving ballots for both parties and choosing which primary to vote in)
- Equalized representation – minorities represented proportionally (first: quotas, later: affirmative action plans)
  - 1980: women/men ratio must be 50-50

o *(Goal #2) Increasing rank and file participation*
  - most states switched to primaries (electorate elects delegates directly)
  - caucuses: smaller districts, announced well in advance to allow campaigning

- *Unintended consequences:*
  o Longer process/**front-loading:** early primaries get a disproportionate attention from the media → states want to move their primaries earlier
    - A. Advantages *candidates with national recognition*
    - B. *Higher costs* because primaries start much earlier
  o Candidate fatigue/public boredom
  o Increased internal division
    - A. Nominees and electoral coalitions = more closely connected
      - BUT *party's organization/leadership = more alienated*
        o Severely affected candidate's chances in the general election and governing
    - B. *Fractionalizes* party because of the small percentage of votes (**threshold** = 15%) required to get a delegate
  o Lower turnout
    - Because states' proportional voting encouraged candidates to focus on certain districts with more delegates

Changes in democratic rules, 1981-present
(1) Time frame and procedures
  - "**Window**" (1st Tues in Feb – 2nd Tues in June in 2008) to have primaries *to prevent front-loading*

- o IA, NH – state laws require delegate selection before other states → exception
  - ▪ 2005: incentive for states holding primaries later = give additional delegates *and* frontier caucuses/primaries after IA, NH and other states

(2) Representation of public officials

- ▪ **Superdelegates** (party leaders and elected officials attending nat'l conference) to unify party and help governance

(3) Behavior of delegates at the convention

- ▪ All delegates vote on their conscience

<u>Republican rules</u>

- ▪ Only the Rep convention can change rules (RNC can't) → very few national rules
  - o Minimal changes related to eliminating discrimination
- ▪ Many D reforms forced onto Rs by states
- ▪ Differences
  - o No national min threshold - many winner take-all states (advantages front-runners)
  - o No superdelegates

SEE CHART ON P. 124

<u>Legality of party rules</u>

- - Does the state or the nat'l party have higher authority on delegate selection?
  - o 1975 - *Cousins vs. Wigoda* – national party
- - Cross-over voting: D prohibit open primaries
  - o 1976 - Wisconsin didn't want to change it → SC sided w/ national party again (based on Wigoda decision)
  - o 1996 - CA's "blanket primary" (all primaries on one ballot) = unconstitutional

<u>Impact of rule changes</u>

- - *Turnout*
  - o Partially achieved
    - ▪ Initially increased (1972), peaked in 1988 and later dipped (except 2000)
  - o Higher turnout
    - ▪ In earlier primaries (2004 – national = 10%, NH = 23.5% in D)
    - ▪ Among the better educated, higher income, older
- - *Representation*
  - o Demographically diverse

- o   Income, education = higher than natl avg & more partisan than regular party members
- - *Party organization and leadership*
  - o   Party leaders can influence date and procedures, but not selection
  - o   Divisive → may impact candidate in general election

Chapter 6: Spring Interregnum: Consolidating Victory and Posturing for the Election

A time for parties and candidates to reenergize, reunify, and refocus between the primaries and the conventions.

The NonCompetitive Phase of the Nomination Campaign

- - Repairing the Damage: after bruising nomination battles, candidates need to define themselves and their positions, use biographical ads, try to reduce negative stereotypes about selves. For example, after 1992 primary, Clinton worked to brand himself as the boy from Hope. This can also provide a time for candidates to do major fundraising if primaries were expensive, but doing too much fundraising and not enough campaigning in this time can leave candidates vulnerable to attacks (ie Kerry in 04). By allowing the Bush campaign to define him instead, Kerry gave Bush the opportunity to energize his base right away.
- - Repositioning and Reprioritizing the Issues: candidates often move to parties' ideological cores during campaigns and therefore must work to move toward the center after the primaries. One strategy (used by Clinton and Bush in 2000) is to take issues used by the opposition and provide more moderate stances on them (ie balanced budget, social security). In '04, Bush reprioritized more toward winning the base's support. On the flipside: candidates use this time to criticize, exaggerate, and distort their opponents' records.
- - Healing partisan discord: trying to reach party partisans that supported other contenders for the party's nomination: attempts to gain endorsements and active support from primary opponents, gestures like primetime speeches at convention and hints at cabinet positions.

Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky, Presidential Elections, 12th ed., p. 102-131.

Delegates must organize visibility before primary season → importance of invisible primary

IA and NH

- ▪   IA state causes = early, but the delegates only get selected later in state party conventions

- Important b/c the media singles out winning candidates in IA, indicates viability for donors/voters
- Reforms in 1968 front-loaded the process

Key points from primaries:

1972 - IA energized NH voters, but NH killed nomination (Muskie – D)

1976 - Even though Carter only came in 1st w/ 28%, the ***media*** picked up on it and launched his nomination

1980 - interdependence of IA/NH and media; Candidates can no longer afford to ignore IA/NH

1984 - Media created a horse race, even though Hart was far behind Mondale in IA

1988 - media's effect through one party's news impacts the other party. Reps: Pat Robertson = 1st, Dole = 2nd, Bush = 3rd (Media focused on this race and minimized Gephardt (D) victory/chance)

1992 - **expectations game** (media interprets results against the backdrop of how candidates were expected to perform)

→ NH: focus on Clinton's infidelity/draft escape, but still finished a close 2nd behind Tsongas ("the comeback kid" --- important b/c of expectations game)

1996: media's bias towards creating a horse race in Rep primary instead of focusing on the front-runner (Dole vs. Buchanan vs. Gramm)

2000: media's effect through one party's news impacts other party (McCain's landslide victory took away the momentum from Bradley's "comeback" in NH)

2004: expectations game – Kerry's surprise win in IA generated major media coverage that helped him win NH

Lessons

8. Candidates cannot ignore NH/IA, but winning them isn't sufficiet
9. This is b/c of their timing (effect of media)
10. Losing badly ends candidacy

State primaries

Front-loading to share in NH/IA's influence, but it didn't pay off – it just shortened the period of time required to determine the winner

- front runners are established fast, others drop out early
- front-loading will actually increase NH/IA's influence b/c of the ability to ride the momentum

(**bandwagon effect of primaries**)

Herman-Price commission (after 2004 election) voted to allow 2 states to hold caucus/primary after IA/NH and before the bulk of other states (2008 – NV and SC)

Other ways of states attempting to gain influence:

- *Regional primaries* (Super Tuesday – 11 Souther/border states in 1988, Midwestern states, Northeastern states) – not particularly successful
- *Separation from region* – hoping that candidate will spend more time in the early state
- *Home state* – helps candidate by moving primary fwd (if he's expected to win) or later (if he is expected to lose)
- *Delegate selection:* R - *Winner take-all:* big states can have an influence if they have a lot of delegates ("mop up" primary)

Spin control: trying to manipulate what the mass media says about primaries (expectations game --- Clinton "comeback kid")

Are primaries/caucuses a better way of selecting nominees?

- media gives voters info, but it is focused on horse-race aspect →voters vote based on viability and personality, not necessarily issues

Do primaries reflect voters' preferences?

- can't rank candidates → plurality elections
- low turnout

Three ways of counting votes:

1. Winner take-all: advantage to populous ad competitive states

2. Proportional rule: favors noncompetitive states

3. Congressional district rule: fragments large states

Because party leaders have less of an influence, it is better for a candidate to have a concentrated support among a fraction of them than to be the 2nd choice of the majority of them (→ may yield candidates that are less representative of the party)

State caucuses

In the past, candidates tried to influence non-primary delegates after they were selected. Now: most delegates are pledged → try to sway voters/delegates

Most caucuses are open to those who identify with the party (some are open) and reward candidates with extensive campaign org in the state

Wed., Oct. 1

The Veepstakes: The Politics of Choosing a Running Mate

Mark Hiller and Douglas Kriner, "Institutional Change and the Dynamics of Vice Presidential Selection," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, **vol. 38, no. 3, September 2008, pp. 401-421**

David Romero, "Requiem for a Lightweight: Vice Presidential Candidate Evaluations and the Presidential Vote," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, **vol. 31, no. 3, September 2001, pp. 454-463**

Little aggregate data supports the hypothesis that VP candidates give their candidacy a state or regional advantage, though individual analysis shows that VP choices do affect voter preferences. Romero thinks that individual-level results overestimate the VP's influence on the vote. After controlling for rationalization effects, we find that the president has no direct influence on the vote, though may have indirect influence.

Mon., Oct. 6

Accepting the Nomination: The National Conventions

Spring Interregnum: The Prelude to the Conventions

National Nominating Conventions

   Convention Build-Up. Considerable planning goes into the convention buildup, particularly the selection of vice-presidential candidates. Selection of the vice-presidential nominee is one of the most important decisions a presidential candidate makes. It reflects on the judgment and decision-making of the presidential candidate, and offers an opportunity to vet the ability, qualification for office, character of the second in command and potential future president. There are a number of reasons for choosing a particular vice-presidential nominee. Kerry chose John Edwards to balance the ticket "geographically" and because Edwards was a powerful speaker. Clinton chose Gore to reinforce the concept of the New Centrist Democrat. Bush chose Cheney to draw on his experience in national security. The latter also suggested a larger role for vice president. Selection of a running mate offers an important opportunity to generate national news. A running mate must also be acceptable to the major party factions.

   Conventions in the past. Historically, conventions were an arena for settling party disputes, for unifying delegates, for deciding platforms, rules and procedures, and for getting ready for the general election. The 1968 Democratic Convention, for example, witnessed a four-hour debate on U.S. policy in Vietnam. In the past, it was not uncommon for multiple ballots to be cast before the candidate was agreed upon. Today, a first ballot nomination is virtually assured by virtue of caucuses and primaries. Few disputes ever make it to the convention floor because the winning candidate controls the majority of the delegates. Today, political conventions are pure theater.

   Modern Conventions. Modern conventions are made for television productions. The delegates reflect their electoral constituencies; candidates compose their electoral slates to achieve the broadest possible representation (to reflect the demographic make-up of their states). Democratic rules require an even gender division; Republican rules do not. Ethnic and racial minorities make up a large part of the Democratic coalition. Conventions primarily provide opportunities for party leaders to gain media attention and for the party to present policy positions. They also give the candidates an opportunity to speak nationally.

   Platforms. Conventions approve the party's platform. This is essentially the principle positions of the parties and the political agenda for the fall campaign. The platform is important, because it helps

to shape the agenda for government. About one quarter of party platforms are specific policy pledges. A majority of these will be proposed as laws or implemented as executive actions. The most important purpose of the convention is to offer the candidate a national podium to present his ideas. Candidates tend to reiterate their major themes, emphasize their priorities, and illustrate their character.

Conventions have sometimes been the site of violent political demonstrations (the Democratic Convention of 1968, Chicago). After the presidential debates, conventions provide the largest viewing audience for any election event.

There have been third-party conventions (Ross Perot in 1996, Buchanan in 2000). Also Nader in 2000. Nader's candidacy had a deciding impact on the Bush-Gore contest in Florida.

Do Conventions matter. Political scientists believe conventions matter. They see a relationship between convention unity and electoral success. They also often result in a **bounce** in the polls. Most importantly, they allow candidates to define themselves to a larger audience. Their long-term impact is more difficult to measure. Political scientists have suggested that the conventions heighten interest and increase turnout, raise partisan awareness and color perceptions. They clarify the candidate images and policy positions. Conventions watchers tend to make their voting decisions earlier in the campaign. In 2004, it was estimated that two-thirds of the electorate decided whom they would vote for on or during the conventions. It seems that conventions have a profound psychological impact.

Characteristics of the nominees. The constitution prescribes only three formal criteria for the president: he must be at least 35 years old, have 14 year residence in the United States and be of native-born status. However, most successful candidates have been well-known and active in politics and they have usually held high government positions. When the national conventions replaced the convention caucuses, most successful presidential candidates were taken from the Senate. However, after the Civil War, governors emerged as the likely contenders. They had a large political base and political leverage, because they controlled their delegations. But they were also relatively insulated from national politics. Until 2008, only white males had ever been nominated for president. Race and ethnicity are no longer as great a factor. Recent Gallup polls indicate growing public tolerance for various racial and religious backgrounds. While Cheney's physical ailments were not a deterrent, Eagleton's psychological illness was, as were Kennedy's marital problems and the Chappaquiddic incident.

Coming at the end of the caucuses and primaries, conventions allow the winners to consolidate their base, unify the party, gain support from their nomination opponents, and develop/test the themes of the campaign.

Nelson Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky, Presidential Elections, 12th ed., p. 131-150.

Historically, major factor in selection of convention city site was city's contributions to national committee, partly from city government and partly from local businesses. Today, after a scandal in '72 where the Sheraton chain offered several million to host in San Diego, federal government offers $10M-$20M to host cities to defray cost. Still, competition for funding remains. Other factors: regional electoral politics surrounding the city and state, quality and quantity of convention, hotel, and other facilities, and esp. for Dems, sufficient unionized labor in the city. Helps if Gov. and Mayor are party members.

Conventions held between mid-July and early September. Party out of power holds before party in power. Once assembled, today, is a massive media event; before, candidate surrogates busy currying support.

First modern candidate org at national convention: JFK '60. Continual stream of information about gossip between delegates and in the media. Detailed personal knowledge about delegates to court undecideds and quash rebellions. Individual coordinator assigned to the delegation of each state, from a delegate to a Kennedy staffer. Established in-convention communications center to coordinate messages to delegates. Not limited to emergencies; regular reports on everything. **Not usual for its time**, but a harbinger of modern candidate organizations, which focus more on quashing tumult than affecting the final result.

Delegates: "Republicans perceive themselves as insiders even when they are out of power, and Democrats perceive themselves as outsiders even when they are in power." GOP more hierarchical, stressing loyalty at the convo; more multiple power structures in recent years for the Dems, especially during the Nixon-Ford-Reagan era. More diversity among Dems thanks to '70 McGover-Fraser regulations. Dem delegations normally from public sector and have slightly lesser incidences of college education.

Modern conventions mostly advertising, since 1952 when the first convention TV broadcasts occurred. Act of launching a national campaign. More tailoring to the type of show being put on after candidates realized could not count on gavel-to-gavel coverage. Heavily scripted; few policy decisions made; image of a unified party the first and foremost goal. Particularly important to introduce the VP

nominee to the country. VP choice is about compensating for geographic and ideological shortcomings in the Presidential candidate (though of course, other articles we've read suggest that executive experience has become the best predictor by far).

Delegates theoretically retain importance in the case of a close race, despite advertising orientation of the convention itself, but in reality, experiences in 1980 (Ted Kennedy's test-vote at the convention produced few defections from Carter delegates) and in 2008 suggest that the delegates are loathe to overturn the extant result of the primary selection process.

THE GENERAL ELECTION

Wed., Oct. 8

Campaign Organization and Strategy

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 214-249.

Organization, Strategy, and Tactics

The Evolution of Campaigns
*1840 Election***:** Tippecanoe and Tyler too"—This was the campaign slogan that was meant to promote Whig candidates William Henry Harrison (hero of that battle) and John Tyler
-This was also the first election in which a candidate actually campaigned for himself
-While Lincoln refused to campaign for himself, his supporters mounted the "Wide Awake" Campaign in which large numbers of people were mobilized

-Presidential candidates remained on the sideline until the 1880s, when **James Garfield** broke the national tradition by receiving visitors into his home—from then on, Presidential candidates actively campaigned

Harding—used the Radio as a medium to speak to voters
-From the turn of the Century until 1948, campaigning was largely an aggressive procedure by which candidates logged tens of thousands of miles on whistle stop tours throughout the entire US

Television killed the *Era of Presidential Campaigning*

Checkers incident—Nixon is accused of accepting campaign donations that were of questionable legality—One even included a cocker spaniel named "Checkers"

Television—decreased the incentive to campaign—physical appearance became more important than oratorical skill

We also see the growth in political consultants

Campaigns became better able to communicate with the public

Basic objectives of campaign:

- ***Designing a basic appeal***
- ***Creating a leadership image, sometimes coping with the incumbent factor***
- ***Building a winning geographic coalition***

Campaign structures--- Goldwater, Nixon, Reagan, Bush, and Bush II campaigns all exemplified a tight hierarchical structure of a campaign—this was used to gain control and circumvent the party structure

Key objective of the 2004 campaign was to reinforce Kerry's flip flopper image

-Democratic campaign structures have tended to be looser and less hierarchical

-Clinton's campaign relied heavily on pollsters

-Traditionally, the Dems have been more reliant on outside groups to campaign and help them

campaigns often reflect the manner and style in which the president will govern

Designing a basic appeal

-This is focused on partisan positions and policy positions and priorities

-They identify with the party

-Dems tend to do better on bread and butter issues such as the economy

-Republicans tend to do better when foreign policy or national security issues are the most salient

-A poor economy helps the party that is out of power and hurts the incumbent's party

Creating a Leadership Image

You want to appear assertive clear, and confident—like Reagan

-Experience, empathy with the common man

-Want to highlight your opponent's negatives

incumbency requires a different approach to the leadership challenge

-Clinton ran a ***constant campaign,*** blurring the line between governing and campaigning

Building a Winning Geographic Coalition

-You have to win the Electoral College—not the popular vote!

-Campaigns concentrate on battleground states, whose numbers decrease as the campaign wears on

-**tactics**—this relates to the day-to-day operations of the campaign

Bush's 2004 Strategy—To enlarge the Republican electorate, as he assumed that most of the electorate had already made up its mind and would thus follow its partisan loyalty

-In the years leading up to the 2004 race, the Bush team began testing new ways to reach out to voters

-They bought consumer data on people and looked at hoards of information to determine who was most likely to sympathize with Bush—they then MOBILIZED those voters

-Bush also focused on cultural issues

Kerry 2004 Strategy

Included policy change, leadership acceptability, and partisanship

In the 1960s and 1970s, candidates and parties devoted more of their resources to mass-marketing techniques, which ended up leading to a decrease in voter-turnout

Advance work—In 2004 the Bush campaign took the art of crowd control to new heights

Stephen Craig, ed., The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice, pp. 2-37.

-Modern election research originated with two studies conducted by members of the so-called the **Columbia School**

-A series of studies conducted during the 1940s 50s and 60s indicated that voters rarely change their political preferences as a result of a campaign—If they do change their preferences, they tend to return to their party's fold instead of voting against the party—According to these studies, election campaigns only matter at the margins

-There was a surge of studies in the late 80s and early 90s—these indicated that exposure to the media is most influential when people have relatively weak ties to candidates and when one of the candidates is relatively unknown

-When you **activate** a voter, you grab hold of an undecided voter in your party and pull him or her back

into the party fold

-Holbrook's earlier studies are focused on three propositions:

- There exists in each election cycle an equilibrium level of support for the candidates, and that equilibrium reflects the political and economic context of the election
- Public support for the candidates during the campaign season fluctuates, sometimes widely, around the equilibrium, and those fluctuations are in response to campaign events
- Candidates running far behind their expected level of support can expect greater increases in support in response to favorable campaign events, compared with candidates running ahead of their expected level

Findings:

- Economic conditions and presidential approval determine the equilibrium level of support during a campaign
- Campaign events do a fair job of explaining fluctuations around that equilibrium level
- Among these events, nominating conventions are particularly important, presidential debates aren't that important, and day-to-day campaigning usually has a modest impact

What goes on between elections is more important than what goes on during the campaign—The Economy and the president's approval rating are key

***Bump and wiggle**—this is the belief that large changes in candidate support tend to be transitory, while minor, but steady changes usually reflect long-term trends*

11—Newer threads of research are suggesting that presidential campaigns DO matter

12—This paper will argue that ***scholars downplay the true impact of campaigns***

The entire discussion has been distorted by an overemphasis on the competitive, horse-race aspect of elections

Second, The Presidential perspective is unnecessarily restrictive and probably biases our findings in a manner that prevents us from seeing the full impact that campaigns have

The Civic functions that campaigns perform:

- **Voter education**—campaigns are an excellent source of information acquisition— even if the

information is slightly distorted, viewers still learn a ton
- **Voter Mobilization—**

The candidates themselves and campaign resources are vital in the election

Campaign Strategy: Michael Burton and Daniel Shea

The Columbia studies found that the impact of campaigns was negligible

How do scholars look at this issue?

They are interested in applying theories to voter behavior

-They tend to choose a theory and stick with it until the very end

26—Scholars have looked at a number of statistical models that have attempted to predict election outcomes—Some of them were within a couple of percentage points, even though their predictions were made nearly a year in advance

27—It is a rare campaign strategy that can elect candidates whose background, ideology, and partisanship are at odds with the people they are seeking to represent

Journalists

They are primarily concerned with reporting news

-Journalism is the primary gatekeeper of campaign information

-They often miss the big picture

Campaign professionals

-they see elections as battles

-**Mark Hanna—McKinley's longtime political advisor:** Believed that the electorate needs to be viewed as a whole, analytically-segmented, and then courted according to needs and demands

-In the 1960s, the political party structure began to fall away as elections became more candidate-centered—This allowed for consultants to gain in prominence

-EMILY's List—Early Money Is Like Yeast—It makes the dough rise

Each of these three groups has an enlightening perspective to offer

D. Sunshine Hillygus and Todd Shields, The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns, pp. 107-182.

The Republican Southern Strategy
- Nixon was very pro civil rights during the 1960 presidential selection in order to recruit southern white Democrats to the Republican party
- But during the 1968 election, during a televised interview in the South Nixon argues that federal efforts to enforce desegregation have gone to far
- Nixon changes his rhetoric on racial issues as a campaign strategy aimed at driving wedge in the traditional democratic coalition.
- Republican use of racial issues to appeal to conservative white democrats is the most widely recognized example of a wedge campaign tactic.
- This strategy was successful as Richard Nixon lost all of the southern states to Democrats in 1960 but returned in '68 to carry five of eleven southern states in 1968 and win each and every confederate state in the 1972 presidential victory.
- Candidates have less incentive to offer policy rewards to win them over
- Policy interests of groups fully aligned with one party are more likely to be taken for granted as candidates focus attention on the persuadable voters
- Economic and foreign policy issues are almost always the centerpiece of presidential campaigns.
- After end of Reconstruction, southern white hostility toward the Republican party translated into a cohesive and consistent Democratic voting pattern.
- 1928 Herbert Hoover was first Republican president who make inroads in the South by campaigning on prohibition and anti catholic sentiment
- Hoover pushed to make a lily-white GOP by replacing black patronage hires with white protestants
- Truman assumed that southern whites would remain loyal to democratic party even if presidential candidate appealed to black voters so on feb 2, 1948 Truman sent message to Congress asking for civil rights legislation and issued two executive orders…
- Equality for treatment and opportunity in the armed forces without regard to race, color religion or national origin
- Political miscalculation in taking the South for granted
- Eisenhower victories of 1950's showed that it was possible for a republican candidate to pull voters away from new deal coalition and republican party leaders openly debated how they could best attract voters from the Democratic camp.
- He attracted 39% of the black vote in 1956

- In 1960, divisive racial cleavage between northern and southern democrats that was ripe for exploiting
- Also, number and political importance of enfranchised blacks increased.
- Republicans decision to take conservation position on civil rights in 1960's was not driven by electoral concerns but by an ideological struggle between conservative and liberal party leaders.

The Strategic Shift
- Since Nixon lost the 1960 election despite efforts to reach African American voters, the RNC initiated "Operation Dixie" in the 1957 effort to build on Eisenhower's gains in the South.
- When Nixon was reelected to run in 1968 elections for Republicans, his main concern shifted from viewing northern blacks as the critical sing voters to viewing southern whites as necessary for victory.
- He then won every southern state
- Wedge strategy only works to the extent that the candidates take different policy positions and that the campaign highlights the key differences so that the voters are able to vote on the basis of those differences.
- In 1968 Nixon tried to prime racially conservative attitudes among white democrats.
- Focused on issue of busing to achieve racial integration of public schools.
- Busing was a potential wedge issue because Democrat George McGovern was supportive of busing, while many rank and file democrats were opposed.
- Nixon placed issue center stage by requesting that Congress place moratorium on busing…"irrevocably opposed to busing…unnecessary…wrong."
- Busing dropped out of campaign rhetoric from 1972 and 1976 because of Gerald Ford's unwillingness to exploit racial issues.
- Nixon chose to emphasize issue of busing to appeal to incongruent Democrats in the South in 1972 while Ford focused on other issues in appealing to a different subset of incongruent Democrats in the Northeast in 1976
- Racial and Moral Issues in the Evolution of the "Southern Strategy"
- Original southern strategy needed to change because of it's success.
- GOP emphasis on racial conservatism appealed to many white dems but gradually some of those racially conservative Democrats realigned to the Republican Party.
- As party coalitions changed, potential cleavages available to Republican candidates changed as well.
- Emphasizing racial issues during campaigns also because increasingly risky because it violated American norm of equal.
- GOP strategists decided that cultural issues could bridge the country clubbers and populists

- Abortion debate
- Divorce rate
- Other societal problems such as gay rights, pornography, flag burning
- Candidate Strategy in 2004 Campaign
- In 1988 acceptance Speech George HW Bush made a promise to add no new taxes but because of the economic recession, it was impossible for his to make good on the promise.
- Bush's reversal on taxes is what contributed to his electoral defeat in 1992
- Democratic television labeled Bush to be untrustworthy and unprincipled
- Bush's slogan turned into the "six most destructive works in the history of presidential politics"
- Flip flopper
- Wafflers
- Candidates choose particular campaign issues based on:
- When an issue of overarching national interest is in the limelight
- Balance appeals between own party's activists and ideological leanings of the independents of their states
- The more information candidates have about the preferences of individual voters the better they can calculate the costs and benefits of emphasizing a particular position.

Microtargeting
- Allows candidates to surgically deliver different messages to different constituencies, thus expanding the arsenal of potential wedge issues that can be used in the campaign
- Enables candidates to use double edged issues
- Candidates should be less willing to stake a position on an issue if they are uncertain about the preferences of voters or if the issue message will be disseminated to voters who disagree with the position.
- New technologies are viewed as supplemental communication tool for conducting 'politics as usual'
- This information and communication technologies have changed not just how candidates communicate with voters but also the substance of their communication.
- Evolution of Microtargeting
- Candidates targeting different issues started with a Whig-committee campaign memo in 1840
- Not a new tactic, but changes in information environment and lessons from commercial marketing, grassroots mobilization and mail have changed things.
- Profound influence on voter.

Geotargeting:
- Candidates used precinct voting history and census information about income or racial

composition of a neighborhood to target efforts to specific precincts and geographic areas in a state that might have a cluster of supporters

- Ex: democrats concentrate canvassing in urban precincts were mobilization effort would be more likely to increase the number of vote for the candidate.
- Voter registration rolls
- Candidates use Data bases filled with voter registration files, statistical and computing power and have made it possible to match consumer data to individual voter records.
- Geographical targeting
- In 2004 presidential candidates prioritized their direct mail to battleground states and an average of 8.7 million was spent in battleground states.
- Campaign Dialogue On Issues
- Direct mail enables candidates to emphasize more issues and more divisive issues than other forms of mail
- Talking past each other in ground war campaign
- War, economy, health care and education were he main issues in both candidates' mailings.
- Discussing more issues through direct mail compared to other forms of campaign communication
- Pro bush mail emphasized war on terrorism
- Pro Kerry mail focused on health care and education
- Both discussed wedge issues
- Three most important moral wedge issues
- Abortion
- Stem cell research
- And gay marriage
- Most important general wedge issues
- Abortion
- Immigration
- Minimum wage
- School prayer
- Kerry and Bush used divisive issues to mobilize and motivate base
- Compelling evidence that mail sent to persuadable voters was more likely to contain wedge issues than that received by the partisan base
- Republicans that they did better job of taking advantage of the information databases to target campaign messages.
- Media accounts following 2004 elections interpreted candidates focus on wedge issues were using wedge issues in order to mobilize the base.
- Also to focus on winning independents and opposing partisans.
- Persuadable voters not viewed as homogenous group of unsophisticated, ideologically

moderate, political independents but people who are more receptive on an issue which they disagreed with their own party's nominee.

- Candidates simply not catering to their base supporters.
- More precisely target their efforts to those likely to vote thereby reinforcing the participation gap between those politically unengaged and those politically engaged.

Wed., Oct. 15

Facing the Opponent: The Debates

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 268-275.

Because Wayne puts things so well, these notes are almost all quotations from this section of the chapter on presidential debates:

-"Debates represent another 'entertainment' component of presidential campaigns, one which candidates, particularly those who are behind, find useful."

-Along the same lines: "Debates usually help the challenger more than the incumbent because they provide a basis for comparison."

-"The public likes debates because they are more exciting and 'real' than staged campaign events and canned stump speeches."

-The Commission on Presidential Debates' criteria for inclusion: (1) must meet Constitutional eligibility for the presidency, (2) must be on the ballot in enough states to have a chance of winning a majority [NOT JUST A PLURALITY] of the electoral votes, and (3) have at least 15% popular support in the national-level polls. This makes is VERY difficult for third party candidates to be included in presidential debates.

-"Despite the appearance of spontaneity, debates are highly scripted, carefully orchestrated events."

-The goal of the non-incumbent is to show that he or she is presidential.

-** "In close races, debates can make a difference. They can convince the undecided for whom to vote and reinforce or counter preferences of weak partisans."

-"Normally, the vice presidential debate is not nearly as consequential as the presidential one" except in cases where the vice presidential candidate appears particularly unqualified (like Stockdale in 1992 and Kemo in 1996).

Alan Schroeder, Presidential Debates: Fifty Years of High-Risk TV, 2nd ed., pp. 1-131.

The main point is that the television medium realigned politics and media in America following the televised presidential debate between Nixon and JFK, 1960. Television emerged as a revolutionary genre that shifted the focus of campaign politics from the issues to image. The Kennedy/Nixon debates

took place on Sept. 26, 1960. They were the first televised debates and they had a radical impact on the way the public judged each candidate, by virtue of the fact that television was a visual medium. Nixon arrived looking like he was going to a funeral with a fever and a bad make-up job. He had prepared his responses alone, solely from briefing books. JFK was athletic, tanned and fit. He had rehearsed all his responses live with his staff and he had been prepped based on how he would appear, not how he would sound. 70 million viewers watched, and another several million listened on radio. The black and white medium exaggerated Nixon's feeble health and naturally pasty complexion, and gave JFK a star quality. The issues were already thoroughly vetted, so it was the personal characteristics that became important. JFK appeared relaxed, while Nixon shifted nervously in his seat. This is the basis of the debate truism that the candidate should look presidential. The candidates negotiated such issues as reaction shots (or cutaways) in the pre-debate negotiation. JFK had little to lose because he would gain credibility simply by appearing with Nixon. The pundits were unanimous that JFK had walked out of the debate the next President. Lodge had advised Nixon to take the high road with JFK, and so he was much too willing to acknowledge that the challenger had made a good point. He advised Nixon to *lose the assassin image*. Nixon felt Lodge had cost him the election.

Television is a medium that trades largely in celebrity, visuals, conflicts, hype. It also emphasizes the voyeuristic: debates are the political version of the *Indie 500*: people watch to see one of the candidates crack up in flames. TV coverage runs on mistakes and manufactured scandals.

A huge staff behind televised debates includes advisors, journalists, moderators and questioners, debate sponsors and production crews. The debate rules are hammered out in a contentious pre-debate period. The candidates are prepped heavily, expectations are controlled, the media interprets the results and the public responds. There is both pre and post debate handicapping. Debates straddle a fault line between artifice and reality.

I. *Pre-Debate Debate*. Nixon's participation in the 1960 debate was one of the great miscalculations in American campaign history. TV debates almost always favor the challenger. He gets instant credibility from appearing with a sitting president. As a result of the Nixon fiasco, 16 years passed before another president agreed to debate. Nixon and Johnson dodged the debates, citing sec. 315 of Communications Act, which granted all participants in the presidential race equal TV time. The 1975 FCC **Aspen** ruling exempted presidential debates from the **equal access** requirement and Ford, the then incumbent, agreed to debate Carter.

In 1980, Carter was no match for Reagan, whose "media skills" far outstripped Carter's -- "genial Ron" bested "uptight Jimmy" with his media presence, not his substance. Carter believed the debates would be won on substance. Only one debate could be scheduled and Carter was done in by media presence.

In 1984, Mondale put Reagan on the defensive by showing little deference to him as a sitting president. It was one of the few times Reagan lost his composure. The "great communicator" turned in his worst performance. But he also appeared confused and weak, raising the issue of his age and his fitness to be president for another term. He was able to recoup in the debate that followed.

By 1988, the debates had become largely shaped by public expectation.

In 1992, when Bush Sr. refused initially to debate Clinton, he found himself followed around by people in chicken suits (the Chicken George campaign). When a scheduled East Lansing debate was canceled a free lancer showed up in a chicken suit and the stunt was repeated by others at several Bush campaign rallies. The chickens got substantial local media coverage: one embarrassing clip shows George having it out at a mid-west whistle-stop with an anonymous citizen in a poultry suit on nation-wide television. The chickens would ultimately force him to debate.

In 1996, Dole tried to avoid a three-way debate with Perot. The Debate Commission established criteria for when a third party candidate must be included: a candidate must demonstrate evidence of a national organization, signs of national newsworthiness and competitiveness, and indicators of national public enthusiasm or concern. Clinton's formidable skills as a debater exposed him to little risk, but Dole was at a substantial disadvantage to Perot whose folksy self-deprecating humor initially played well. It also made Dole look even more like a stiff. The media ultimately tired of Perot, however.

In 2000, the debate began to focus on controlling expectations. Bush agreed to debate Gore but he then suggested informal forums (*Meet the Press* and *Larry King Live*) and a shorter time (an hour instead of the usual hour and a half). When the media criticized him for trying to control the media environment by choosing friendly forums, Bush folded and agreed to the standard format. The Debate Commission revised its rules for third party participation in response to the earlier controversy. It now required that third party candidates demonstrate national polling standing of at least 15 percent. Nader did not meet this; neither did Buchanan. In one of the truly great debate gaffs, Gore left his podium and crossed the

stage to *confront* Bush on an issue. When Bush looked up, and dismissed Gore with a peremptory nod, Gore looked like a stalker. Gore's many *personality changes* also did not help him. He was perceived by the public as insincere and untrustworthy.

In 2004, Bush Jr. had a protracted pre-debate over the debate. He looked petulant and weak in first two debates with Kerry, and only barely recouped in third. Some commentators believe the election was so close because of his poor performances.

Pre-debate negotiations cover a number of issues: structure, schedule, timing and staging. Advisors try to win the format and rules that play to their candidate's strengths or that minimize his weaknesses, and that amplify the opponent's weaknesses. The rules are covered in a memorandum of understanding that covers everything. Basically, these rules try to do damage control in the face of the extremely volatile medium of TV. Handlers want the maximum exposure for their candidate, the minimum risks. Baker, as chief negotiator for Reagan and Bush, crafted very favorable rules. One of the most important issues is scheduling: how many debates and how close to the election. Front runners want fewer debates, and as much time between the last debate and the election as possible. Trailing candidate want more and as close to the election as possible. The rationale is that a front runner can recoup any ground lost if there is a substantial gap between the last debate and the election. Debates tend to **freeze** campaigns as the candidates go into preparation mode (Baker's theory). In 1992, Clinton scheduled four debates to play out like a TV miniseries. In 1996, Clinton scheduled them at the same time as the World Series, so that Dole and the debates could be ignored.

The debate format was originally a joint news conference with a panel of independent reporters posing questions. In 1992, Clinton introduced the town meeting format, which was more informal and played to his strengths as a speaker. In 2000, the table debate format was introduced. Candidates have tried to control the audience of the town meeting, and questions have been pre-screened. Whether candidates stand or sit has been an issue particularly where standing for an hour and a half would highlight the age or stamina of a candidate. Dukakis was concerned about his height, and insisted on a platform behind the lectern. Press panelists have been phased out, as candidates objected to their partisanship. When a negotiation team objected to nearly four dozen reputable reporters, major press refused to participate.

2. *Pre-Debate Strategy.* Debaters attempt to control the storyline: Reagan's *Are you better off than you were four years ago?* and *There you go again* were effective one-liners that took control of the tone and

tenor of the debate, and established him as the dominant presence. Reagan was king of the no-content one-liner. Bentsen's *You're no Jack Kennedy* to Quayle effectively dismissed him as credible. Debaters must connect with the audience. These comments are KO's. What wins is if one candidate appears to command the stage. Gore's shifting personalities worked against his credibility. A debate is essentially a job interview, and citizens want to feel comfortable with the candidate. Challengers must cross the "**Acceptability Threshold**." They must appear presidential, but they must also be "likable." They can be aggressive, but they must be "appropriately aggressive." Gore's crossing the stage worked against him: it made him seem inappropriately aggressive, and he was finished. Dukakis wasn't likable.

Candidates must also dispel any perceived weaknesses. Reagan had to overcome the image that he was a war monger. Bush Sr. was seen as disconnected from voters; Bush Jr. as intransigent. Challengers must isolate the president from the trappings of office (the seal cannot appear on the lectern). Voters like real life stories. The candidates must stay on message – not only present their case, but disparage the competition. And they should not *ad lib*. One liners are good, if they don't appear forced. The Vice-presidential candidates can attack more, and Cheney was one of the best debaters, because he was relaxed and confident. He gave the impression of being comfortable with decision-making.

3. *Candidate Preparation*. Debates are heavily rehearsed. Successful debaters like Clinton and Reagan love to act. They have rhetorical devices that help to convey the message, like Reagan's repetition of the word *peace*. Voters like metaphors and they like strategic empathy. They don't want Dole's disdain for the process, or Bush's disconnect from the voters. Candidates create boot camps and mock debates. Reagan used pilfered Carter prep book to prepare. Gore was given comparable materials, but chose to return them. While they look like televised drama, debates are heavily staged events that are tailored to the clock and two minute answers. Too short an answer will create awkward silence (Bush); too long a response loses the audience (Kerry).

4. *Debate News Coverage*. In 1960 only 8% of front page news coverage was interpretive; in 1992 80% was. Speculative analysis in pre-debate reporting is now the norm. Reporters address the performance, strategy, cosmetics. They also set expectations: what each candidate needs to do to win. Journalists are obsessed with mistakes – wait for someone to crash and burn. Handlers deliberately lower expectations for their candidate and raise them for the opponent. Republicans characterized Clinton as "the greatest debater of all time." Dole just had to survive. Candidates manipulate the press; the press manipulates the public. Bush let his handlers trash his abilities as a debater to lower expectations. There has been

an explosive growth of pre-debate coverage since 1976.

Journalists are obsessed with mistakes. However, if a candidate succeeds, success becomes expected, and the advantage shifts to the opponent in the next debate. Lowering expectations becomes a game of brinkmanship. Bush was the underdog to Gore in 2000. All Quayle had to do was not to drool on his shoes. Candidates also manipulate the press by planting red herrings, like the suggestions that McCain could not control his temper.

Finally, candidates need to control pre-debate publicity (particularly the visuals). There was so much press on Kerry's pre-debate manicure that everyone was looking at his hands. The windsurfing photos were also very damaging. Quayle lost the debate based on pre-debate publicity.

Key terms:

equal access requirement: the requirement under section 315 of the Communications Act that grants all presidential race participants equal TV time.

freeze period: term coined by Baker to describe the fact that campaign activity effectively stops while the candidates are preparing for the debates

acceptability threshold: challenger to an incumbent president must demonstrate that he is presidential

Aspen **ruling** (1975): FCC ruling exempting presidential debates from the equal access requirement

Debate Commission: the commission set up to schedule and to supervise the debates, and originally to choose the venues and the panel of reporters

Initial Debate Commission Criteria for third party participation: to be included in the debates, a third party candidate must demonstrate 1. evidence of a national organization, 2. signs of national news-worthiness and competitiveness, and 3. indicators of national public enthusiasm or concern

Current Debate Commission Criteria: all third party candidates must demonstrate national polling standing of at least 15 percent to participate in the debates

Follow the Playbook: Political Consultants and Modern Presidential Campaigns

Stephen Craig, ed., The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice, pp. 183-200.

Summary: Consultants are not miracle-workers, but they serve important roles in **fundraising** (getting donors [individual, party, PAC], improving reputation of candidates (implicitly through mere presence and explicitly through work) **and votes** [advertisements, discipline and organization]). They may be good for democracy because they bring public issues to the forefront and encourage partisan debate, yet they may be bad for democracy because negative attack ads may increase voter disillusionment and decrease turnout.

- Rove the architect : responsible for crafting the strategy of turning out a larger share of Republican base, including millions of evangelical Christians in 2004. He gave clinics to WH officials to lay out 2004 game plan. Had help from campaign manager Mehlman, as well as, Dowd and Mckinnon.
- Any serious contender from the President down to, as of recently, the local elections needs political professionals.
- **Political Consultant**: "a campaign professional who is engaged primarily in the provision of advice and services (polling, media creation, production, fundraising) to candidates, their campaigns and political committees. (Sabato 2981) Johnson adds that that advice is "central to the execution of the campaign"
- Initial negative reaction to consultants
    - Contributed to party decline by being their sole service provider *-enabled by the rise of technology- TV, Radio- and thus the capital, rather than labor, intensive campaign.*
    - Willingly and knowingly undermine party abilities (competed with parties for candidate loyalty) and court voters independently with technology
    - They shape the ideologies of the candidates to victory and not to party ideology
    - The structural change of the electoral environment from a local, personal campaign to a TV, radio campaign has no need for huge party machines.

- o Competition between consultants and arpties (O'Shaughnessy)
  - o The consensus: Consultants were NOT a reason for the decline of parties, but rather that they were a reaction to what had already happened and that they came in to fill a void left by decline.(Dulio, Dulio, Nelson)
- More recent positive outlook
  - o (Kolodny Logan) consultants see themselves as assisting parties in achieving the goal of electing candidates to public office.
  - o Synergy: Consultants offer strategic advice, management, survey research, TV ads, while parties offer more labor intensive opposition research, fundraising GOTV efforts. (Dulio 2004). Parties have hired consultants in recent years

It was thought that consultants had an adverse effect on parties, but it is now thought that consultants help parties be efficient by helping get the candidates' elected.

Consultants effects on citizens

- **Undecided if the effect is positive or negative**
  - o **Negative** (Nimmo 2001, Kelly 1956, Sabato 1981): deceive and manipulate the public using sophisticated campaign techniques (polling, TV); rely too heavily on negative advertising which, it is believed, undermines the electoral process and maybe voter turnout; "image merchants" or "impression management".
  - o Adlai Stevenson said, *"the ad man's selling instinct among political consultants is the most degrading and repulsive aspect of their profession"* (191()
- Positive: energize previously held beliefs, raise the level of debate
- **Deliberate Priming:** "Campaigns emphasize (Frame) certain topics with the intention of altering the criteria that voters use candidate evaluation" Critics argue that it's using public opinion polls to craft the message of the candidate. But, Medvic argues that it is simply to guage where, not how, the candidate should stand in the race.
  - o Consultants are "issue choosers" (o'Shaughnessy). Consultants, nevertheless, in this regard give thewir candidates a competitive advantage in chosen issues.
  - o Deliberate priming is good: forces candidates to focus on issues important to elecorate. Also, bringing issues to the forefront allows for intelligent interparty debate encouraged by the press and public.
- Studies have shown that "professionalized campaigns" tend to raise more money and garner

more votes than campaigns run by amateurs (195), though it's hard to measure the independent variable of effort of the consultant (use a consultant scorecard?)

- o The presence of consultant's signals to donors that one's race is likely to be competitive. (Medvid Lenart): number of consultants and presence of consultants increased the share of vote in election.
- o Candidates who hire well-known consultants and consultants wel-regarded by peers are able to attract more party and PAC money

Conclusion: Consultants make a difference in fundraising and votes, but a consultant cannot guarantee victory. (e.g. Kerry-Edward's star-studded team).

Dennis Johnson, No Place For Amateurs: How Political Consultants are Reshaping American Democracy, 2nd ed., pp. 1-32.

Celebrity Consultants and Professionally driven campaigns

- **Rove and Texas:** Arriving in 1977 Texas, Rove changed the 1 in 30 Republican-held statewide offices into 29 of 29 state-wide offices being held by Republicans when he left to become senior adviser to George W. Bush in 2000
- Medium: Rove and Co. specialized in direct mail: identifying likely voters, dividing them into hundreds of subgroups, crafting tailored messages, and sending millions of pieces out.
- Famous ones: Dick Morris: *Time* "the most influential private citizen in America" 1996 for helping Clinton**;** James Carville; Lee Atwater (Rove's South Carolinian mentor)
  - o Consultants have burst onto media channels: books (Primary Colors) movies (Wag the Dog) TV shows (West Wing) and books and appearance by the aforementioned consultants add to this persona.
- *Despite these exceptions, political consultants tend to "toil in the background and ply their craft in anonymity" (6)*

Political Consultants at Work

- Small industry: generates less than 50 million a year each with very small staff
  - o To be a viable firm: consultants must spread the curves in election cycle so that the money and resources flow more regularly: seek off-year races, stretch amount of time

they stay with campaigns or shift to a more corporate side (like Walter Clinton's Clinton Group which used to get 90% candidate work and has since moved away)

- o **Needed elsewhere** "Some of the most successful political consulting firms have less than half of their revenues coming form political campaigns"
- **Winning isn't enough**: candidate needs to not only win, but win and beat expectations for the consultancy to be successful. And as Carville's career points out you can't always win.
- **"***While candidates are ultimately responsible for their campaigns, there is no way they can compete, let alone win, without professional help" (11)*
  - o allows for raising more money, sending more focused messages, redefining the race in its own terms, grabbing media attention, and mobilizing resources.
  - o Atwater would go to Walmart and anonymously see if shoppers got the election message
  - o Dean lacked the structure and discipline
- **consultants provide:**
  - o time: The candidate's time and stress burden is allayed by the consultant
  - o accounting services for their candidates, also spend finances effectively in commercials.
  - o Technological expertise online retrieval systems, demographic databases, computer assisted telephone technology, deo-mapping, sophisticated targeting techniques, interpret statistical and strategic data (as advanced as neural nets and genetic algorithms)
  - o Experience from other campaigns: need to know the waters: situations, circusmstances, oppurtuninties: consultants need to *have forgotten more about media, mail, fundraising, and strategy than most candidates ever know*" Consultant Joseph Cerrell.

II. Running for Offices: not for the faint of heart

"Anybody who says he enjoys campaigning is either a liar or a psychopath" Rep Barney Frank

- The sour mood of the public: report by Wash Post, Harvard, and Henry Kaiser Foundation concluded that America had become a nation of "suspicious strangers," who've lost faith in the government.
  - o 35% of the public said they trusted each other down from 1964's 54%.
  - o 1964 76% of the public thought the government "always or most of the time" did the right thing to 1995's 25%
  - o The "anger," decline of intelligent dialogue and public distrust throughout the 90's played into the hands of conservatives and anti-establishment candidates, and 2006

- **This mood leads to decreased voter turnout in most of the last four decades' election, (except '92, '00, '04), especially among youths → apathy.**
  - Stuart Spencer's take: politics is becoming a spectator sport; only 5% of Americans take place in any kind of political activity, and few contribute money to political causes b/c fewer people need to lick stamps etc.
- **Using internet tools to tap into voter disenchantment**
  - Jesse Ventura: small budget and little visibility, this former pro-wrestler tapped into voter disenchantment with the internet and grassroots enthusiasm to win governorship of Minnesota.
  - Dean created Meet-up.com to get Dean-supporters to host parties, bring together, and energize volunteers.
  - Ned Lamont got favorable media coverage on the liberal DailyKos blog and associated Lieberman with Bush's war policies
- **Avoiding "Going Washington" in recent years it has been taboo to be associated with Washington and its corrupt acts encouraged by high-priced lobbyists. Anti-washington, anti-incumbent**
  - Maryland Senatorial candidate Michael Steele: " I know what you're thinking; I know what you're feeling. Washington has no clue what's going on in your life."(21)
- **Declining influence of the parties caused by:**
  - Campaign finance reform
  - Proliferation of Political Action Committees
  - Creation of political consulting industry
  - Rise of candidate-centered campaigns
  - Rise of television "television is the political party of the future" (Spier)
- **Emergence of soft money in 1990's, stopped after 2002**
  - Soft money: campaign funds that do not fall under the jurisdiction and control of federal election law. Disallowed after bipartisan campaign reform act of 2002, 527 groups and hard money stepped im → political parties still play big fundraising role.
- TV, talk show radio
  - Choice on television has greatly expanded thus cable news has gained predominance, especially Fox News. Those who watch fox watch it for a longer period of time.
  - Radio has mushroomed after the Reagan appeal of FCC fairness clause

- - - Launched bred of radio superstars: Imus, Limbaugh, Hannity
      - 17% of Americans listen to talk radio
    - Conservative talk-show radio, *"powerful vehicle that trumpets the most extreme and polarizing views, that panders to sensationalism, that spreads innuendo and misinformation with stunning efficiency."* Kurtz
- Newspapers losing readership and revenue have sought to build up online
- Internet makes for inexpensive outlet for marginal voters: at one point they represented a disproportionate amount of the better educated-more apt to vote- population, but that's waning.
- Response is instantaneous: Clinton's TV response saying Dole's leaked tax plan was "a desperate move" and went to air on TV before Dole could announce the plan.
    - "Crash ads"= rapid-response commercials
    - rapid response puts huge pressure to act quickly, thoughtfully and decisively

outside groups:
- bombard the air-waves trying to persuade voters, taylor writes, candidates "now share the election megaphone with a cacophony of voice." NR poured in 4.5 million to support pro-gun advocates. But they can't call for the defeat of a candidate. After Bipartisan Campaign reform Act the ads were limited in scope, but 527 groups emerged in 2004.

Getting Money
- **Invisible primary: "**the year or so before Iowa and NH when candidates raise money, fundraise, use direct mail, internet, phone to get campaign dollars.
    - Cost of Campaigns has risen: each election year becomes the most expensive election ever.
- Negative campaigning has increased; it's a potent weapon.

Conclusion of part II: The emergence of different mediums (internet, talk-radio), proliferation of interest groups, and the importance of the invisile primary has changed the game considerably. Many candidates play into the public's disenchantment with government. It's a rough road to the WH. Those who are winning elections, are they the right people to have?

Wed., Oct. 22

Interpreting the Numbers: Campaigning and Polling

Richard Semiatin, ed. Campaigns on the Cutting Edge, pp. 69-100.

-Public opinion surveys by landline phones are still the most effective means of obtaining the most accurate responses

-The chapter suggests that the growing number of cell phone-only users might eventually prove problematic, but for now it is not because studies show that cell-only poll respondents tend to be very similar in political views to their landline peers.

-Problem using cell phone surveys: they are more expensive to conduct and the respondents might not even live in the same state as their area codes suggest

-Pro of using online surveys: they're cheaper and could be useful *if* used to supplement phone surveys (but not on their own).

-"The lack of randomness in most online surveys is a serious problem" because there arises a response bias from the opt-in nature of online polls.

-"For political polling, particularly predicting election outcomes, [online] data are particularly worrisome because seniors are the least likely demographic group to be online but the most likely to vote."

-"Phone surveys off voter lists have replaced random digit dialing, but phone surveys still face the problem of the growth in cell phone use, particularly among the youngest age cohort."

-"The long-standing model of party-driven politics was ended by the era of television, as candidates, beginning with John F. Kennedy, became their own electoral entrepreneurs."

-Various methods of getting out the vote include turnout mail, radio, ID calls, and door to door (the most labor intensive but also the most effective).

KEY TERMS:

RDD- random digit dialing; computers generate random numbers that allow survey administrators to call random respondents within the survey population

Voter list- a list of registered voters provided by the state election agency

Help America Vote Act (HAVA)- is making voter lists become increasingly accurate and more reliable to use by pollsters

Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) Amendments of 1974- allowed parties to provide "coordinated expenditures" to help candidates for Congress, Senate, and president get out the vote

Herbert Asher, Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know, 7th ed., pp. 141-176.

-"As for the mass media, election polls are a central focus of their election coverage, and they have been criticized for treating elections as if they were horse races, emphasizing not what candidates say on the issues but their relative standing in the polls."
-Benchmark surveys are conducted when candidates initially seek to run for office, and they "provide a baseline for evaluating the progress of a campaign."
-Trial Heat Surveys as people how they would vote if the election were held right now, but they are notoriously inaccurate if conducted several weeks before an election.
-Tracking polls work by surveying population samples often (sometimes every day the week before a major election) and removing data from earlier samples to show trends in the electorate.
-"*Cross-sectional* surveys are fine for revealing net changes in the relative standing of the candidates, but a *panel design* is needed if the total volatility of voters' attitudes and preferences is the chief concern."
-Focus groups are small numbers of people (10-20) who often are selected to represent broad demographic groups and are asked questions to gauge how a candidate is doing within particular population segments.
-Deliberative opinion polls bring together a representative group of citizens, provide them with information and the opportunity for discussion on issues, and then poll them on those issues.
-Exit polls are interviews with voters as they leave polling places. They tend to be pretty accurate (as they avoid the problem of not knowing who likely voters will be), but they face the one downside that they do not capture early or absentee voters.
-Although some experts "believe that exit polls have few if any effects on elections, they argue that their use should still be curtailed because most citizens believe that exit polls can influence election outcomes."
-Florida in 2000 provides an example of how exit polls can be inaccurate in close races.
-Candidates can use promising poll numbers to convince people to donate money to their campaigns because a victory is likely with enough help.
-In the primary season, "the perception that a candidate is running strongly, as indicated by good poll

results, makes it easier for the campaign to attract money, volunteers, and media coverage."

-"Winning a debate may be a function less of a candidate's actual performance than of the media's coverage and interpretation of that performance."

-A presidential candidate has to have more than 15% of the vote in national polls to allow him or her to participate in presidential debates.

-Tracking polls are more accurate than standard polls because they include more timely information without overemphasizing new developments or old news

-It is possible that significant numbers of white voters will report their vote as "undecided" when they have actually already decided to support the white candidate over the black one.

-Identifying likely voters is key for developing an accurate poll, and different polls use different formulas, which might account for much of the difference in results reported.

-There is no strong evidence that polls lead to bandwagon or underdog effects, increasing support for the leading candidate or the trailing candidate, respectively.

*** "By and large, election polls in the United States are very accurate, particularly those conducted and sponsored by reputable media and polling organizations."

KEY TERMS:

Push polling- a widely condemned campaign attack method that disguises itself as a poll but actually phrases survey questions in a way to harm opposing candidates by providing misinformation; Example: The Bush South Carolina primary campaign called thousands of voters there and asked if they would still support John McCain if they knew he had fathered an illegitimate black child.

Fair and Balanced? The Media and Modern Presidential Campaigns

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 254-268.

Road to the White House: Chapter 8: Summary and Synthesis: Have Presidential Campaigns become more negative?

The authors measured negativity of campaigns by figuring out the % of total campaign statements that were negative (since 1960)

2000 was most polarized election, but lower negativity than any in survey except 1976

the 3 most recent races were below avg negativity

small parties need to be included to capture complexities because they tend to attack other parties

NO evidence that negativity has risen steadily over time

measured overall negativity against both all opposing parties and the main party in opposition:

Clinton and Gore near bottom

1960 election ranked high

negativity of presidential candidates:

top of list: Mondale, McGovern, Perot

bottom: Gore, Clinton, Nixon

VP negativity:

top: Miller, Gore, Bentsen

bottom: Bush, Kemp, Lodge

HOW and WHY these findings differ from other studies

different data sources, samples, decision rules, & units of analysis

drew info from "free" rather than "paid" media

sample: used every statement from Labor Day – election day, including those not paid for by campaigns (like Swift Boat ads)

Skaperdas-Grofman model

says decision to go negative is rational and contingent on standing

trailing candidate should always be more negative

true that underdogs often attack more initially, BUT, contrary to what this model says, the leaders often attack back as their opponents fail miserably, and some just attack the whole time

also predicts that the third party should attack the front runner (problematic in close races)

no allowances for **spoilers** (like Perot)

The division of labor among attack sources

Democrats attacking Republicans

Dems are generally featured as prolific attackers and many attacks are made solo

rise of 527s changed distribution

Republicans attacking Dems

fewer solo attacks

often supported by organizations/associations (like the NRA)

Targeting of Attacks

with major parties, attacks almost always target the other party's pres. Candidate

major parties rarely pick on any minor party candidate that is not pres candidate

minor parties make a lot more varied attacks on major parties

Methods of attack

both Dems and Reps rely heavily on fear, but Reps use more labeling, and neither relies much on ridicule

neither party's candidates use methods predicted by models… but rather employ methods best-suited to personal styles and the situation

Issue Avoidance Thesis

states that both parties stick to the issues that they "**own**" and showcase them

not necessarily so true

high "interparty issue convergence"

debates can influence this convergence, but aren't necessary (ex = '64)

when one party embraces issues usually not so high on the list of topics, the other party generally must do the same

Conclusions

negativity has not increased progressively over time

parties/candidates did not employ strategies anticipated by "rational" models

issues are not "owned" by one party and ignored by the other

Stephen Craig, ed., The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice, pp. 97-141.

Free Media in Campaigns – E.F. Fowler and K.M. Goldstein

This article beings with the observation that most people get their news from the local news. As a result, candidates in political campaigns spend most of their money on *paid* political advertisements, and most of their time trying to attract *free* press coverage that is favorable.

Media Effects. This article looks at what we know about media effects. The current scholarship

suggests that media plays a role in shaping voter engagement, knowledge, turnout, and behavior. These vary from time to time, or place to place. *Bartel's* study largely discredits the historically accepted idea that the media has only minimal effects. Current scholarship concludes that news media, together with paid ads, can have a direct effect on citizens' attitudes, knowledge and level of political engagement. It can also have an indirect effect through **agenda setting** (determining which issues are regarded as most important) and **framing** (shaping the meaning of those issues).

Sophisticated consumers of media ("**political sophisticates**") have many sources of information on a given political topic. As a result, any one new piece of information from the media is less likely to have an impact on their opinion than it would on the **political novice** (that is, someone with a low level of political sophistication).

Because **communication flows** in mainstream media are likely to be two-sided (containing the opposing messages of both parties), they generally cancel each other out. Studies show that one-sided communication flows (heavily partisan news and shock radio) are most effective in changing opinions. Objective journalism (most mainstream print journalism) is generally two-sided. Journalists like Rush Limbaugh give the Right a huge political advantage, because they are one-sided communication flows. However, the viewer audience for stations like this are self-selected and tend already to be predisposed to the viewpoints expressed. Their highly partisan tone is unlikely to sway the margin.

One of the most powerful ways the media shapes individual attitudes is through **agenda setting**: media coverage of specific issues elevates the perceived importance of such issues on a national stage. In addition, **issue priming** is important. **Priming** involves the ability to affect the considerations used to evaluate political stories. The media has recently primed us to consider the economy as an important factor in choosing the president. **Framing** is another type of media effect. **Framing** occurs whenever the manner in which a message is "packaged" influences people's attitudes about that issue. A common example of framing is the horse-race rhetoric of political campaigns, which conditions viewers to think about the election as a competition.

Differences in Media. **Free media** ordinarily has a different goal than paid media. The goal of the free press is not to persuade but to inform and to engage the public. **Paid media**, by contrast, is specifically designed to persuade voters. Paid media is characterized by biased content. There is also an important difference between **print media** and **broadcast media**. Newspapers compel attention to a degree that

television does not (we must pay attention to read). Broadcast media depend on its visuals and punchy sound bites. However, within broadcast media, the evening news is not crafted or packaged in the way paid political coverage is. And local news is generally more targeted, and more positive, than national news. More people report getting their political news from local news than from any one of the major national news networks. But there is little comprehensive data on local television news coverage.

Limitations in current research. Politicians obviously believe that free media matters, because they spend a great deal of the time trying to get free local press coverage. The **Gore Commission** (the 1998 President's Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligation of Digital Television Broadcasters) made a series of recommendations for the adoption of a voluntary code of conduct for broadcasters. It asked stations to volunteer five minutes of free air time for use by candidates each night and to observe certain ethical standards of objectivity and disclosure in reporting political news. The premise was that more issue-based campaign coverage would lead to a more informed and active electorate. This would improve the quality of democracy in America.

Studies have looked at volume of news coverage, breakdown of issue content in coverage, focus of coverage, and types of coverage. In spite of the amounts of money spent by campaigns on broadcast media, less than half of local news broadcast aired during the 2002 election contained a campaign news story. Moreover, news coverage is dominated by **top-of-the-ticket** races. Local races represented less than one percent of total election coverage. Those stations that had adopted voluntary "Gore" standard had twice the election coverage.

The author concludes that media (both paid and free) is likely to influence the electorate mainly at the margin, influencing three percent of the electorate at best. But because elections have been close, the margin matters.

Campaigning on the Internet – D. W. Johnson

In the 2004 presidential election record amounts of campaign dollars were raised on the Internet. Millions of voters were reached through **e-mail**, **blogging**, **web-posts** by **527** groups, and **get-out-the-vote** drives. The Dean campaign created an extraordinary virtual and real community of its supporters, who linked up on Meetup.com (even though the campaign ultimately crashed and burned). The net had been shown to be a very successful **mobilization** tool previously in connection with the abolition of the land mines, protests against the World Trade Organization, and the campaign of Jesse Ventura. It had

also proven to be an effective fund raising tool.

Research on campaigns and the Internet. Online communications in political campaigns began with the Clinton-Gore campaign, 1992. By 1998, most congressional and gubernatorial candidates had their own websites. Computer technology had also had a major impact on surveys, targeting, polls, and database management. The Internet improved voter information, it increased civic participation, and it aided in fund raising.

Examination of campaign web sites

In 2003, *Bimber* investigated the nature of the interplay of online communication and elections. He learned that: 1. Internet audiences are self-selected, 2. competition among sites is increasing, 3. in the area of interactivity, the Internet offers real value. Bimber concluded it was possible for candidates to wage a successful campaign on the Internet, even in the absence of the traditional infrastructure. In a second survey, *Dulio*, *Goff*, *Thurber* found that candidates underutilized the full potential of websites in their campaigns; they found no evidence that websites provided a winning margin in any congressional race examined. Bimber found that websites served to reinforce the attitudes of committed voters rather than to mobilize non-voters or to assist undecided voters. Most websites contained relatively safe issue papers on predictable themes. The effects were minimal. Campaign sites failed to change the minds of citizens and rarely assisted undecided voters.

E-mail. E-mail improves the efficiency of familiar campaign tactics and outperforms websites, because e-mail is read, it is easy to respond to, and it is more difficult to monitor from outside. The Internet is successful in encouraging voters to seek out additional types and sources of political information, while other broadcast media are more effective at encouraging citizens to volunteer, to contribute money, and to contact candidates. The Internet is useful because of its ability to send a high volume of messages at high speed. This makes the election process more democratic; it's also useful in building communities of like-minded individuals online and encouraging grassroots political action. It offers a new paradigm of political discourse.

Net Voting. The net has been proposed as a method for voting, but there is as yet no "foolproof" election software, and still too great a threat to privacy. The **Help America Vote Act** (2002) provided federal assistance to states in modernizing and standardizing their voter equipment.

The 2004 campaign and the Internet

   Net users. Reseach shows that people who accessed information from campaign websites tend to be younger, better educated, and more liberal. Internet participants (in the 2004 campaign) tended to volunteer for campaigns, to participate in web blogs, and to give money to candidates. The Internet has been used successfully to recruit volunteers in unprecedented numbers, particularly in the 2004 election campaign. The first blogging software was developed in 1997, Dean was the first presidential candidate to establish a blog. The Dean campaign created a paradigm for the "bottom-up" campaign. In terms of fund raising, the Internet has shown a tremendous capacity to raise small donations (under 100 dollars). Raising money over the Internet is relatively simple and inexpensive, and an extraordinary number of small donations in 2004 came in through the Net.

   Finally, e-mail is now used widely by both candidates. It is inexpensive and fast. Its two major drawbacks are that it is difficult to gain e-mail addresses, and such addresses do not indicate where the person lives (making them of limited use for polling).

Richard Semiatin, ed. Campaigns on the Cutting Edge, pp. 137-152.

Campaign Press Coverage – At the Speed of Light
American political campaigns are getting both faster and longer. Sound bites have been reduced from 60 seconds in 1968 to 7 seconds. Campaigns are more volatile. A single You-Tube post can alter a race. As a result, it's natural to expect that the Internet will alter the way the news media covers campaigns. It will decentralize the campaign as well as the media's power and coverage. The Internet also raises questions about distinctions between citizens, reporters and political actors.

The Internet introduces the phenomenon of narrowcasting. It takes customers away from print and broadcast media, increases the surveillance on candidates, and exacerbates the brutal nature of modern politics. There is no limit on what is covered by hostile websites. Moreover, there is no consistency in fact checking on websites. The net lacks traditional journalistic standards and filters to confirm news stories. The author calls this state "filterlessness", a term that indicates there is no way of separating facts from rumors.

History: at the national level, the strong link between parties and newspapers began to weaken in the late 19th century with the rise of mass media. At the same time, journalistic professional ethics began to

emerge as well as the emphasis on objectivity. In the early 20th century, radio networks emerged, and in the 1950's television. The impact of television on political campaigns was vast, focusing much more on the visual than on the substance. Television contributed directly to the decline of issues in U.S. campaigning, and the rise of personality as the decisive factor. Television put media at the heart of political power in America, because it replaced party organizations as the means of communication. The rise of broadcast media has also been correlated with the decline of print media. The Internet is now causing a consolidation in broadcast media.

Internet creates a "digital divide" between people who can fully consume information on the Net and those with limited or no access. A new wave of media bloggers has arisen, like Matt Drudge, who have remarkably low overhead and limitless space, and who have a dramatic impact on American politics. Drudge first reported the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

We now have a 24-hour news cycle. In addition, the Internet acts as a fact checker for conventional broadcast journalism. Recall the Dan Rather debacle over the anti-Bush documents that were not legitimate. Damage control has to be 24/7 now, as John Kerry demonstrated when he failed to respond to the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads.

Citizen groups have emerged as the new press in the 21st century. Daily Kos is the largest left wing political website. Free Republic is the largest right wing site. An indication of the power of these sites was seen when moveon.org asked for "Bush in 30 seconds" – that is, submission of 30-second anti-Bush ads. The contest was a huge success and raised a tremendous amount of money. Moveon suggests why traditional broadcast media can't take advantage of "filterless" or "wiki" (meaning fast) technologies. Mainstream media websites offer little opportunity for visitors to shape their content or to post. What is interesting about Free Republic and Daily Kos is that most of the stories they post are from mainstream media. They do very little reporting on their own.

The new technologies have also exposed the candidates to constant brutal scrutiny. Candidates are trailed everywhere by people trying to capture an unflattering moment or ridiculous image. Surveillance on the net is constant and damaging. What changes with the Internet is not the existence of dirty tricks, which have always been around, but the speed, impact and number of such tricks. You-Tube can end a Senate career. New technologies effectively make everything public. Constant surveillance also increases the emphasis on personality and lessens the importance of issues.

Finally we have the question of who is a journalist and who is an advocate, because blogs are not objective journalism. As a result, the veracity of news coverage suffers. The Internet has fundamentally altered the definition of who is a journalist. It is fundamentally more difficult in cyberspace to police the legitimacy of journalism. Bloggers can be hired and paid by a campaign, whereas traditional journalists cannot.

In July 2005, the FEC held hearings on whether bloggers should be given the same general exemption from campaign finance regulation that journalists receive.

The Internet also weakens the media's control over what citizens learn about politics. While Internet visitors tend to reinforce their own prejudices by selective viewing, the Internet also provides more points of access to political information.

Another risk posed by the Internet is that anonymous campaign messages sometimes masquerade as news. For example, the Clinton Chronicles falsely alleged that Bill Clinton was involved in a string of drug related homicides in Arkansas. The Net can disseminate wild and anonymous rumors with great ease.

One ancillary result of this is that mainstream media coverage has become even more superficial. There is also the concern that as mainstream media merges with popular websites and hosts, there will be less independence in the news. Concentration of different types of media outlets boosts media power and influence in the news, but it also produces more homogeneous new coverage. As a result, unbiased news coverage can suffer.

In the Internet era, mainstream media elites will lose some power over political communication, but there is value in having many independent media outlets. A challenge will be to keep mainstream media viable economically and to prevent news from become infotainment.

Wed., Oct. 29

I Approve this Message: Campaign Advertisement and the Politics of Attack

Stephen Wayne, The Road to the White House 2008, pp. 275-291.

Still waiting

Stephen Craig, ed., The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice, pp. 79-94.

General effects of exposure to political advertising

Campaign ads can:

Increase voter knowledge about candidates and issues with greater learning evident from political television advertising that from television campaign news or candidate debates.

Have an agenda setting effect on voters and media.

Affect positive or negative evaluation of candidates

Shape voting behavior, increase likelihood of voting for or against a candidate.

Factors that condition effects of exposure to political advertising

Political advertising overcomes partisan selective exposure.

Political advertising is most effective when voter turnout is low.

Effect on voting is greatest with undecided or late-deciders.

Emotional content is effective

Issues ads are more effective than image ads particularly when the candidate's party is perceived to have issue "ownership."

Production characteristics of ads affect voter's responses to candidates.

Some candidates are better on radio or television or internet.

Differences in effects for males and females.

Effects of exposure to negative advertising

Can increase voters knowledge on issues, sometimes decrease favorability of the opponent at directed opponent, sometimes raise likelihood of voting for the candidate carrying out the ads

Sometimes have backlash effect

More effective when sponsored by a third party

Attacks on issues rather than on a personal message are more effective.

Rebuttals can blunt the effects of negative ads.

Getting negative message out first sometimes helps.

Also highly interrelated with the type of programming or stations on which they appear. Evidence is mixed as to whether they decrease voter turnout or are otherwise detrimental to the democratic process.

Emmet Buell Jr. and Lee Sigelman, Attack Politics: Negativity in Presidential Campaigns Since 1960, pp. 1-27, 245-265.

Negativity and Campaigns

> **Objective:** Provide detailed and systematic analysis of negativity in every presidential campaign from 1960-2004.

> **The Concept of Negative Campaigning**
>
> Campaigners see voters as less likely to blame just one side for going negative
>
> Ind def of negative campaigning varies, there is no consensus
>
> Neg Camp- criticize opponent's accomplishments and qualifications
>
> Pos Camp- focus on one's own accomplishments and qualifications
>
> "Reason to doubt that positive messages provide more accurate info about a candidate's accomplishments, issue stands, or personal life than do the opposition's attacks."
>
> Two concepts that guided research
>
> > Rational formulation of campaign strategy in varying electoral contexts
> >
> > Presidential tickets stress issues that work to their advantage while avoiding those that do not
>
> **Language of Civic Combat**
>
> Verbs from the battled field are regularly used with pugilistic metaphors
>
> **Negativity Integral to Campaigning**
>
> It has been around since Washington
>
> Sexual innuendo often worked into nineteenth century elections
>
> During 19th cent surrogates would neg attack opposition
>
> End of 19th century nonincumbent gains attack role which eventually led to incumbent presidents attacking
>
> Valuable Contribution?
>
> > Glen Richardson: "Cherished expressive freedom"
> >
> > Mayer: provides essential information for casting an informed vote
> >
> > Geer: neg required otherwise the costs or benefits of electing would not come out
> >
> > Jamieson, Waldman, Sherr: legitimate and important part of differentiating positions and bio
>
> **Anecdotal and Singe-Case Studies of Negativity**
>
> Fall short of providing a framework for precise and systematic comparison of camp negativity

Pos: highlight key developments and provide rich account of a campaign's ebb and flow

Comparative Studies of Negative Campaign Ads

"Researchers studying the same campaigns have employed different units of analysis, approached the weighting issue differently, and used a variety of sampling methods from incomplete archives."

Pos: offers greater overview

Negative Campaigning Effects

Debate some argue that neg turns off voters and turnout, while others argue the opposite

Who Attacked Whom?

Anyone can mount an attack

How Frequently?

"**Attack Propensity Score**" measures freq of neg attacks, number of attack statements/total statements

On What Issues?

Fear Arousal

Ridicule/Humor

Pejorative Labeling-guilt by association

Apposition-unfavorable comparison of the opponent with the sponsoring candidate

At What Point in the Campaign?

Two approaches Electoral Context and Skaperdas-Grofman Model

Electoral Context

Competitors in very close races are less likely to adopt diff strategies than candidates in contests where circumstances overwhelmingly favor one side

Expect less neg from clear front-runners in two-candidate races that from their opponents

Closer the contest the less obvious the strategy on either side

# of minor and ind candidates running for pres has quadrupled between 1960 and 2000, but for the most part have exerted no discernable influence on the race or its outcome

4 two-party scenarios

       Runaway

       Somewhat Competitive

       Comeback

       Very Close/ Dead Heats

Skaperdas-Grofman Model

Presidential candidates have better idea of how they are performing during the campaign than how they will perform on election day

Positive campaigning drains the pool of undecided voters

Negative campaigning increases indecision among voters

If one attacks, they risk losing support

The model assumes that a candidate will be less inclined to go negative when the risk outweighs the likely benefits

Page 23 gives several examples of how to maximize support while minimizing opponent

Spoiler Model

       Third-party candidate runs positive campaign to reduce # of undecided

Best-Shooter Model

       Third-party/ranked joins runner-up in attacking front runner

              Anderson/Carter, Perot/Bush, Nader/Gore

Buell & Sigelman view spoiler's purpose as bent on preventing one of the top two candidates from winning

Issue Ownership or Convergence?

Selective emphasis leads to ownership of ideas while certain ideas are avoided

Think of Dem and Rep platforms

Conclusion

There has been no increase in the negativity of campaigns since 1960. Candidates do not use a "rational" model when they choose to use an attack strategy making the S-G Model invalid. Candidates address all issues which makes issue avoidance impossible

Mon., Nov. 3

Getting Out the Vote: Voter Mobilization

Stephen Craig, ed., The Electoral Challenge: Theory Meets Practice, pp. 163-181.

Grassroots Mobilization

- In the 2004 election, both parties significantly increased voter turnout
- Steps for effective grassroots campaigning: divide states/counties/cities into districts of manageable size, make a list of all voters in each district and determine underlying political preferences, distribute campaign information, make sure that partisans show up to vote on election day
- There are three themes in early grassroots mobilization literature:
  o Local party organizations—have always been important but the way they operate has varied over the years, provide the structure through which info is delivered
  o Campaign information delivery—propaganda central to information dissemination, messages conveyed through mass and partisan media
  o Individual's political attitudes and behaviors—introduction of survey research methodology showed that information received reinforced previously held partisan preferences, activated people's interests in the campaign, and occasionally converted people to a new political position
- Modern grassroots campaign research:
  o The central role of party organizations has diminished
  o Parties' grassroots contacting efforts are strategically targeted towards specific segments of the population that are more likely to contribute to an electoral victory
  o People who are personally contacted by campaigns are significantly more likely to become politically active
  o The social context in which people live influences their political preferences and behaviors
- Whereas historically party orgs were the principal source of expertise for running campaigns, now political consultants are the principal source. Parties and consultants

coordinate and collaborate. Intermediary organizations (unions, faith-based orgs) also get involved in grassroots mobilization

- Mobilization of minority groups
  - o Research has conflicted as to if African Americans respond to mobilizations efforts with higher rates of political participation
  - o Research has found that political participation of Latinos and Asian Americans was affected by interactions between context and mobilization efforts, who was delivering the mobilizing message (ingroup bias)
- Limited knowledge on the effects of particular kinds of messages, the role of message repetition, what people do with political literature/information after they receive it

- Key terms and definitions:
  - o Grassroots: a term that refers to mass-based political activity, that is any political activity that involves large numbers of 'real' people as opposed to political elites

Donald Green and Alan Gerber, Get Out The Vote: How To Increase Voter Turnout, 2nd ed., pp. 1-25, 135-183.

*** Possible ID's are in bold and underlined ***

Chapter 1: Why Voter Mobilization Matters
- Most people only look at big elections, like those for US Senate, Governor, or President. But most campaigns are very different and minor campaigns are important. They occur within constrained budgets, and consist of a struggle to target supporters and get them to the polls.
  - o 1998 Kansas State Board of Education. In 1999, the new conservative majority voted to drop evolution from science education standards. The battle continued on the 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006 Boards, as power shifted between conservatives and moderates.
  - o Voters' opinions did not change. Who showed up to the polls, however, did. If certain groups start showing up, policy makers are forced to take their positions seriously.
- Two main questions for GOTV methods: (1) What steps are needed to put it in place? (2) How

many votes will be produced for each dollar spent?

- o When one candidate for a given party gets large numbers of people to the polls, other candidates in the same party on the ballot will also see a boost in their voter turnout.

- o In 2004, both presidential candidates, sensing that the electorate had made up its mind, focused mostly on GOTV in battleground states, rather than undecided voters.

- GOTV experiments use a ***randomized experimental design,*** meaning they have a control group and an experimental group of voters and can test the actual effects of the GOTV method.

- o Voter Mobilization: Turning out those who support you, but aren't planning on voting.

- o Voter Demobilization: Getting those who vote for your opponent to stay home.

- o Persuasion: Persuade voters who were for your opponent to come over to your side.

- A problem for this area of study is that experts don't have rigorous testing to determine findings; there is no parallel universe to see what would have happened without GOTV.

- o Very few GOTV experiments have been done on mass media, so it may be hard to apply strategies to larger races that span the nation or multiple in-state media markets.

- o Randomized experimental design attempts to address this problem, as do effective measure of personal contact, live phone calls, and direct door-to-door canvassing.

- o Impersonal contacts and recorded phone calls do very little for GOTV efforts.

Chapter 2: Evidence Versus Received Wisdom

- It is important to not extrapolate too far from each study, but only to certain similar campaigns. It is also important to watch for correlations that become cause-and-effect relationships.

- o Some methods of GOTV are better tested than others. Telephone calls have been more thoroughly studied than election day festivals, about which more is known than radio ads.

- o Research has been done, starting in 1998, in all kinds of areas and with all types of constituencies. The amount and variety of studies has consistently increased each

year.

  - Nonpartisan and partisan campaigns are allowing researchers to take control groups.

- Both RNC and DNC surprisingly agree that with limited budget, telephones are the most cost-effective method for GOTV. All tactics are helpful, but which are most cost-effective?

- Randomized Experiments: Begun in the medical world, where high quality research is of the utmost importance, highlight six components of a study with useful results:

  - Population of observations is defined (usually registered voters, sometimes streets, precincts or media markets).

  - Each population is assigned randomly to either control or treatment group

  - An intervention is applied to those in the treatment group (i.e. they are sent a mailing).

  - The outcome variable is measured for each group (using public records), and the two data sets are compared.

  - Statistical analysis is conducted on the data. This takes into account how often the intervention reached people, etc. and determines the strategy's overall effectiveness.

  - The experiment is replicated in other times and places.

Chapter 10: What Works, What Doesn't and What's Next

- Simply asking people about their intentions to vote, reminding them that Election Day is coming, or reminding them to vote does not result in any significant voter turnout.

  - Canvassing and direct mail campaigns with voting guides have also returned bad results.

  - Putting a partisan edge on one of these strategies also does not seem to make a difference.

  - Robocalls and television do not have effects that are statistically significant from zero.

- o The **synergy** hypothesis -the overall effect is greater than the sum of the parts (ie; those who receive mailings are more receptive to a phone call), has been soundly rejected.

- o Voter registration drives are ineffective at producing votes.

- o Encouraging people to vote absentee often results in more mail-in, but not more, votes.

- Successful GOTV Strategies make people feel wanted at the polls:

  - o Personal phone calls where they get to chat with the person on the other side (no script).

  - o Personal visits and invitations (not mailed) are a great GOTV strategy.

  - o Building on a voter's preexisting motivation through calling them back is very successful.

  - o Some of the strongest turnout is generated when voters are reminded that voting is a matter of public record.

- Once a voter mobilization campaign takes place, voters that were contacted prior to the particular election are more likely to vote in subsequent elections.

  - o Once a person skips an election, they are less likely to vote in the next one. Our low voter turnout rates may reflect that we have more elections than any other nation on earth.

- "**Supertreatments**," which greatly increase voter turnout, do not consist of combinations of other tactics, but it has been shown that a single mailing revealing all of the neighbors' voting records to each other GREATLY increases the likelihood to vote (8% more votes than without).

Page 139 gives a table comparing various GOTV methods worth reading quickly

Conducting Your Own Experiment:

- State the purpose of the experiment and the claim to be tested in a one sentence hypothesis.
  - o Define the target list of voters for the GOTV effort, determine how many voters/precincts should be in the target and control groups, and randomly divide the list into random and control groups for the GOTV treatment.

o The treatment and control groups of voters should be carefully separated throughout and the campaign materials related to both carefully archived.

- After the election, the effectiveness of the treatment on voter turnout can be determined but should also control for statistical randomness and other biases of a campaign trying to alter who is in the "control" group to maximize the voters exposed to the strategy.
  - o The goal is to have results that can legitimately be presented in an academic context to further everyone's knowledge; include setting, treatment, and result info in presentation.

Strategies for Increasing Electoral Participation:

- Strategies for increasing turnout from 60% for Presidential and 33% for Midterm Elections:
  - o Constitutional Changes: allowing for third party representation to help generate greater interest, giving some control of federal policies to the electorate, and (most plausible and likely most effective) consolidating federal, state, local elections to minimize polling trips.
  - o Making Voting Simpler: automatic registration and changes, allowing anyone to vote by mail, and increasing the voting period all make incremental boosts to voter turnout.
  - o Educating Voters: while creating websites, TV shows, and public debates more centered around the issues is admirable, the audiences for "politics" rather than "drama" is small.
- The strategy proposed to evaluate cost-ineffectiveness of normal media and phonebank tactics used by campaign manager will take time to win converts over and produce new managers.

Frontiers of Campaign Strategy: The Relative Cost-Effectiveness of Turnout v. Persuasion

- Persuasion tactics are generally very expensive and have transitory and unpredictable benefits; challengers do well by increasing recognition, incumbents only receive short-term boosts.
  - o Independent organizations that target their members for likely political associations also tend to increase the voter turnout, but not necessarily in the direction of their issue.
- The years 2000-2006 have witnessed an explosion in studies looking at persuasion tactics and use of field experiments for determining causation: theories can no longer hide from reality.