

POLITICAL SCIENCE 229

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

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MR. MCFARLAND

LECTURE NOTES

BEFORE FIRST MIDTERM

Not including the first lecture

[These notes are revised from the 2003 version.]

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Political Science 229

The constitutional way of electing the President. The adoption of the Constitution in 1789 occurred before the time of general belief in elections with widespread participation.

Electors. Each state gets a number of electors equal to the number of its Representatives in Congress added to the number of its Senators;

E.g. Illinois in 2000 had 20 members of the House, plus two Senators or 22 electoral votes. Delaware, on the other hand, has one member of the House and two Senators or three electoral votes.

California in 2000 had 52 members of the House plus Senators making 54 electoral votes, the most of the states. The District of Columbia is given three electors by a Constitutional Amendment.

This makes 538 electors, equal to 435 members of the House, 100 members of the Senate, plus three for D.C.

The candidate getting a majority of 538 or 270 is elected President.

By a tradition, nowhere in the Constitution, all states but Maine and Nebraska follow the winner-take-all system in allocating electoral votes. As we know Bush barely edged Gore in Florida but he got all of Florida's electoral votes; Gore barely edged Bush in Oregon and New Mexico, but Gore got all the electoral votes in these states. A candidate getting a plurality in California gets all 54 electoral votes in 2000. Note that a plurality is not a majority. A plurality means comes in

first, while majority means more than 50%. Candidates often get all a state's electoral votes for coming in first, yet they got less than 50%, because a third-party got votes.

The candidates give first priority to populous states with more electoral votes, particularly when polls show there is a close race in such states. Recently Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and some other states have got a lot of attention due to the Electoral College and to the fact that polls showed a close race within these states. In 2000 populous Texas and New York got little attention from the candidates, because, while having a good chunk of electoral votes, Texas was sure for G.W., while New York was sure for Al.

The Electoral College provides strong incentives for presidential candidates to advocate policy positions advocated by swing voters in large competitive states. The main case is the embargo against trade to Cuba, which must be supported by candidates due to Florida's position in the electoral college and to Cuban voters. Note here is a case in which political rules are more powerful than the desires of the rich: wealthy Texans want to export beef and petroleum products to Cuba, but G.W. will prevent this due to the need to carry Florida. The steel industry is currently privileged by the electoral college, since in the 1990's, the steel producing states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia have a sizable number of electoral votes and are seen as close battlegrounds in presidential elections. This is why Bush instituted the steel import tariff of 30%, saving jobs for steelworkers, but raising the price of new cars and construction. The

European Union is discussing the imposition of retaliatory tariffs, and is reportedly focusing on exports from Florida and other key Electoral College states.

Because of the Electoral College, candidates of both parties support taxpayer subsidies for the production of ethanol, alcohol fuel distilled from corn grown in downstate Illinois and refined by ADM Inc.

What if no candidate gets a majority of electoral votes? Then the election goes to the House of Representatives which votes among the three candidates getting the most votes in the Electoral College. The voting in the House of Representatives is by state, with each state getting one vote, and a majority of states electing the President. This actually occurred in 1824 when John Quincy Adams got more states than Andrew Jackson (elected later in 1828 in the Electoral College).

The House of Representatives provision enhances the influence on those third-party candidates who can get electoral votes. But first note that most third party candidates get no electoral votes, because they cannot get a plurality in a state, even though they do well. Thus in 1992 Ross Perot was a strong third-party candidate and got 19% of the total vote, but he did not come in first in any state, and thus got 0 electoral votes. However, George Wallace in 1968 was a third-party candidate with support concentrated in a region—the South, as Wallace opposed racial integration.

Wallace carried 5 Southern states and got 46 electoral votes. Wallace was hoping to strike a deal with Nixon and throw his electoral votes to Nixon in exchange for ending affirmative action, but Nixon had a majority and didn't need the 46 Wallace electors to win.

There are actually people corresponding to each electoral vote known as the "electors." There is

a slate of electors in each state for each party. The electors in the winning party in a state actually put their “x” on a ballot. The parties are careful to name party loyalists as electors. But this means that a George Wallace could hope to control his 46 individual electors. In recent decades one elector out of 538 does not go along with his/her party and votes for someone else. The electors go to their state capitol, vote, and the ballots are mailed to the House of Representatives, which counts the votes. There is a period of time between the election date and the day in December when the electors vote.

As we know, it is possible to get a majority of electoral college votes, yet not be first in the actual voting in the U.S. as a whole. This happened in 2000, in 1824, 1876 (Tilden more votes than Hayes), and 1888 (Benjamin Harrison more votes than Cleveland, who defeated Harrison in 1992).

2004: States seen as competitive for Electoral College

Up to August 1, 2004 both Democrats and Republicans saw these states as competitive:

Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota (midwest)

Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Maine (east)

Florida, Arkansas, West Virginia (south and border)

Washington, Oregon, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada (west)

These states had close votes in the 2000 election, and polls showed that the even political split has continued. As of August, almost all television commercials for Bush and Kerry were shown in the above states, and not in the others. Illinois TV stations did not carry Bush and Kerry commercials since the Bush campaign expects Illinois to vote for Kerry.

Among the cities with the most commercials: in Ohio, Columbus, Dayton, Cleveland, Toledo; and Madison, Wisconsin.

Primary Election for President

At the end of the presidential election process is the vote in the Electoral College. But this is preceded by the **primary elections** in the spring, and then the **nominating convention**, usually held in August, and then the **general election**, conducted on the first Tuesday, after the first Monday in November.

While the Founding Fathers initially envisioned a “college” of men selecting the President, with the organization of modern political parties in the 1830's, we now have the system in which two major parties each nominate a candidate for president, and these two persons are the only ones considered by the Electoral College. Occasionally, third parties have a significant impact on the election process, and occasionally, a third party, particularly if its support is concentrated in a

region, will get electoral votes.

Parliamentary democracies have a relatively simple way of selecting the candidates for prime minister. The members of parliament in each political party vote for a party leader from the group of members of parliament. This is the person who becomes the prime minister if that party wins the election. For instance, the Labor party members of parliament selected Tony Blair as their leader, and when Labor wins a majority of the Parliament, the Labor leader, Blair, becomes prime minister of Britain.

The American system is more complicated than that. Let us review the history of how parties have selected their candidate for President.

1. In 1788 and 1792 George Washington was the unanimous selection of the electors. From 1796 to 1828, the selection of the candidate for President was usually conducted by a party's members in Congress, as in the parliamentary system, although there were variations in this practice as sometimes the majority of congressmen did not participate.

2. From 1832 to 1904, the major parties selected the candidate at national conventions of state delegates, selected by the state organization of a political party. In practice, the leading politicians at the state level attended the national convention and picked the other delegates to round out the state delegation. [National conventions had several hundred, then later thousands of delegates.] Certain national party leaders would be recognized as leading candidates, and they would campaign among the state delegations for delegate votes to win the nomination. Governors and other leading state politicians would control blocks of delegates, and they would try to strike deals with candidates, in return for political favors. About half the time, when the convention opened, it was quite unclear who would get the nomination. It was often tough for someone to get 50% or sometimes the 67% of the delegate-votes needed. This meant that several ballots would be needed to get a nomination, as the weaker candidates dropped out, endorsing one of the emerging, leading candidates.

In general, participation during this era was controlled by politicians. However, they were concerned to nominate a candidate (such as war heroes Gen. Harrison or Gen. Grant) who would appeal to the general public.

3. From 1908-1968, the system changed somewhat, as an average of 1/3 of the states held **primary elections**, in which party-registered voters and sometimes independents would vote for delegates pledged to a candidate in a secret ballot election. Other states retained the system in which the delegates were selected by party politicians, attending party meetings, and not having an election with a secret ballot. The primary election was a reform introduced by the "Progressives," that is middle-class reformers who felt that America was being taken over by corporate monopolies and political bosses, and that new types of political institutions and public policies should be adopted to combat special interest rule in the name of the public interest. In other words, the Progressives felt that party bosses had too much power in politics, and when factions of Progressives gained power in a state government, they would enact laws mandating the primary election system, rather than the political party meeting system, of selecting delegates to the national convention for the presidential candidate. The most famous Progressive at the

state level was **Robert LaFollette** of Wisconsin, whose political faction introduced the presidential primary in that state. **President Theodore Roosevelt** and **President Woodrow Wilson** were the two presidents who represented the Progressive Movement at the national level. However, neither was associated with the introduction of presidential primary elections.

The Progressives introduced the primary election system of delegates into about 1/3 of the states, although the particular enumeration of states having the system fluctuated. Under this system, candidates would run in the primary elections in some states (e.g. New Hampshire) to demonstrate their appeal to party voters, and by extrapolation, to voters in general. But the same candidate would need to make deals with party leaders in the other 2/3 of the states; such leaders still had most of the power, but they were not likely to back a candidate who was a loser in the primaries, thereby likely to lose the general election. In 1912 Teddy Roosevelt won most of the primaries in the Republican party, but the party leadership still preferred William Howard Taft, as a more reliable and conservative Republican. The party split, Roosevelt did not get the nomination and ran on a third party ticket (the Progressive or Bull Moose Party), and the Democrat, Woodrow Wilson got elected. This was a lesson that party leaders should give strong weight to the primary winner.

An interesting race under this system was the famous Kennedy campaign of 1960, in which John Kennedy had to win a couple of primary elections in predominately Protestant states, to show that a Catholic could be effective in a presidential election. At that time it was widely considered that millions of Protestants would never vote for a Catholic, making it impossible for a Catholic to be elected. Kennedy won highly publicized primaries in Wisconsin and West Virginia, giving evidence that he would not drive away many Protestant voters. But at the same time, 2/3 of the states had their delegates selected at party meetings, often controlled by governors and mayors. Therefore, the Kennedy political organization, including his father and brother Bobby, negotiated with governors in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and with Mayor Dailey of Chicago, to get delegates. In those days, governors and Senators would sometimes run as “the favorite son” in their home state, because, although not serious candidates for president, they would get their state political party to back them with its delegates. Then the favorite son would make a deal with one of the leading candidates, and might be rewarded with a cabinet position or benefits for the state in the case of the candidate’s success. For instance, the governor of Michigan lined up the state delegates, was nominated as a favorite son, and then turned over his delegates to Kennedy. He later got a job in the U.S. Department of State.

4. From 1972, **2/3 of the states adopted primary elections** and moved away from the party meeting system. 1/3 of the states made this change in 1968-72, as part of the spirit of the Sixties, in which calls for increased democracy and participation were powerful. In particular, many Democrats were angry that while Hubert Humphrey entered no primary elections in 1968, he still got the party nomination because almost all of the established Democratic politicians supported Humphrey. On the other hand, Eugene McCarthy had won several primary elections (as did the assassinated Bobby Kennedy whose supporters opposed Humphrey), but McCarthy did not get the nomination. This was the opposite of “power to the people,” and so Democrats in many states were persuaded by reformers to change from the party meeting system to the election system of selecting convention delegates. In such states, Republicans normally changed their system of delegate selection also, so that they would not appear to be elitist.

[The type of selection process is actually decided by the political party, and not the state legislature. The process by constitutional law, cannot discriminate against minorities. However, legislatures become involved as they actually conduct the elections.]

By 1972, then, 2/3 of the states had elections, and not party meetings, to select the delegates to the convention. For a while, this meant (especially in the Democratic Party) that inside candidates, those favored by many party leaders, would be challenged by outsider candidates, in a series of primary elections that might extend to 30 states. For instance, George McGovern (1972, Dem) and Jimmy Carter (1976 Dem) were candidates who initially got almost no support from established party leaders, and who got the presidential nomination through defeating insiders and other outsider candidates by running in numerous primaries, and winning many of them. Under the previous system, they would not have got the nomination, since there were not enough primary elections. Michael Dukakis (1988, Dem) and Bill Clinton (1992) were in a somewhat different position from McGovern or Carter. Although at first they were not seen in some group of perhaps four likely candidates for President from the Democratic party, Dukakis and Clinton through effective organization and fund-raising put themselves at the head of the group of possible candidates by the time the primaries started. Each then defeated the other candidates in the primaries without a great amount of difficulty and then got the party nomination. Dukakis probably would not have been nominated under the previous system; Clinton might have since he was able to impress insider politicians like Richie Daley.

Republicans were not so affected by the increase in primaries. Republicans in most years were more unified than the Democrats, and they tended to follow some previously established leader "heir apparent" such as Reagan, Bush, Dole, and now G.W. Bush. In 1976, however, the Republicans endured a protracted struggle in many primary elections between President Ford and challenger Ronald Reagan, and while Ford got the nomination, Reagan got about 47% of the delegates, so it was close. However, this fight was precipitated by the unusual circumstance of Ford gaining the Presidency without ever running as President or Vice-President, thereby disrupting Reagan's ascent to be the obvious successor candidate to Nixon.

The new system of 2/3 primaries was supported by the popular belief in grass-roots democracy, rather than control by party politicians. The losing Democratic faction in 1968 felt vindicated as its preferred system of nomination was largely adopted. A wider range of candidates became available for the Presidency, because candidates not supported by party leaders, could run in 30 primaries and get the delegates anyway (like Carter). In theory, this would seem to be a good thing, but traditional Democrats and some political scientists argued that such unconventional candidates were relatively untested in national political issues (again Carter an example). Thus a group of politicians and intellectuals argued that it would be better to have fewer primary elections, and more restricted participation within the political party in selecting delegates to the national convention.

The new primary system, spread among 35 states, motivated outsider candidates to start campaigns much earlier than previously. Under the previous system, candidates would announce in January of the election year, or even later. Now, all the candidates are obviously running the November, a year before the election, and many of them announce their candidacy 15 or 18

months before the election. Outsider candidates make running for office a full time job, which it must be if one is to win numerous primary elections and is not yet too well known to the public. This had the ironic effect that it was better for a politician not to hold office so that he could campaign full time for as long as 24 months. For instance, neither Reagan nor Carter held elected office and were able to devote full time to campaigning. Mario Cuomo, the governor of New York and a possible Democratic nominee, said that one reason he didn't run was his responsibility to be an effective governor of an important state. In general, the public became resentful and bored by what seemed to be the new system of permanent presidential elections, in which candidates were organizing more than a year ahead of time, with some years having primary elections going on for months.

The new system made the role of campaign money more important. An outsider candidate could not long survive unless he could raise money to go ahead to contest more primaries. Candidates who raise little money are not taken as seriously by the media. Contesting primaries means raising lots of money for TV and radio commercials, direct mailing, and calling voters by phone bank. Lesser known candidates especially need money to get their names recognized by voters.

During the reform days of the early 1970s, Democrats in Congress passed a law, the **Federal Elections Campaign Amendments of 1974**, which among other things, provided for public money for presidential primary candidates. [See section on Campaign Finance below.] Essentially the U.S. Treasury, starting in 1976, would match donations of \$250 and under given to primary candidates, up to a specified total of federal grants (about \$18 million in 2004). The idea was to give outside candidates a chance to challenge well funded insider candidates, and this law has provided encouragements for the outsider candidates to run. Among such outsiders with less money are Pat Buchanan, Jesse Jackson, Jr., John McCain, and Carol Mosely Braun.

The new system of numerous primaries has been undermined by **front-loading**. State political parties wanted to be among the first to schedule a primary as this seems to have the most effect, rather than voting after the candidate has been decided in practical terms. State parties envied Iowa and New Hampshire, two states which had established a tradition that they were to be the first two primaries, thereby gaining an enormous amount of attention to the political factions and public policy needs of their states, which were not particularly representative. (Almost no Latinos or African-Americans live in Iowa and New Hampshire, for instance.) Thus, during the 80's and 90's, states began moving their later primary dates to early March, right behind the first primaries. By 1996, front loading went so far that about 40% of the delegates were selected by the middle of March, including about 10 primaries on March 7, including New York and California.

Now, instead of dragging on too long, the primary elections may be over by the middle of March, in the sense that the candidate is actually decided, and that the later primaries decide very little.

There have been three reform suggestions to deal with the front-loading problem. One is to have a single **national primary**. This seems straightforward and simple, but it has drawbacks: all the state legislatures would have to be induced to cooperate as the legal entities who control the election date; this might result in an increase of big-money, television campaigns, as the

incentive for the candidates to engage in “retail” politics, like they did in Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina would be removed; and finally, outsider candidates, like McCain, need several primary dates as they build their political reputations from national obscurity to national leadership. The outsider candidates need the prestige of winning primary elections in a few states, but if there is only one primary, their efforts will be thereby hindered.

A reform supported by many leading intellectuals and politicians is **regional primaries**, in which there would be four to six regional primaries, perhaps three weeks apart. Regions would be defined as the Northeast, the Midwest, the Pacific Coast, etc. Regional blocs would make it easier for candidates to travel among the primary sites. Sequential timing for the regional primaries would give a chance for the outsider candidates to demonstrate early support and build on that. There would still be a chance to conduct some “retail politics” (small meetings, campaigning in neighborhoods), especially before the first primary. Since it is still advantageous to be first, the first primary date might be rotated among the regions.

The **small states first plan** has achieved popularity among Republican party leaders as a way to deal with front loading. A Republican study commission advocates that there be several staggered primary dates, with a set of small states going first, and a second set of small states going second.

Outsider candidates would then have a chance to campaign for a long time in small states, in which they could engage in retail politics to make an impression, in the way that McCain and Buchanan have done in New Hampshire. Such outsider candidates could then build on early success in larger states. The Republican commission believes that states such as California, Florida, New York, or Texas are too large for the largely unknown, outsider candidates to make a significant impression. I published my support for the regional plan in 1980 as I then believed that Iowa and New Hampshire were getting too much attention in the primary process.

Since 1984 the Democrats (but not the Republicans) have had **superdelegates**. About 20% of the delegates are not selected in state elections or party meetings, but are delegates *ex officio*, by virtue of being Democrats elected to important public offices, such as U.S. Senator or member of the U.S. House of Representatives, or governor, or mayor of a large city. This provision was inserted because after the rules changed in 1972, many of these important elected officials could not attend the convention, because they did not support winning candidates such as Carter or McGovern. It seemed wrong to exclude major party leaders from their own convention. But the existence of superdelegates gives a special source of support for party insiders, such as Gore.

Recent Primary Campaigns (1980-2000)

In the Republican party there is usually an “heir apparent,” who before the primaries, has gained substantial support among party leaders and followers, and who can be sure of strong financial support for campaigning. These were Reagan (1980 and 1984), George Bush (1988 and 1992), Robert Dole (1996), and George W. Bush (2000). The heir apparent will be challenged in the primaries, and the main challenger may do well in Iowa or New Hampshire, or both, after intensive retail campaigning. But since the heir apparent has been working for a year or more to get party support around the nation, and since this candidate has the most money, normally the

challengers cannot overcome this, and their campaigns fail a few weeks after the New Hampshire primary. The major challengers included George Bush in 1980, who was able to defeat Reagan in a few northeastern primaries, but could not go further than that, and the idiosyncratic Pat Buchanan in 1992 and 1996, who developed substantial populist appeal in Iowa and New Hampshire at the beginning of the primaries, but could not develop his campaign beyond that. Another major challenger was Dole against Bush in 1988, but after winning the Iowa caucuses, the Dole campaign declined, and got nowhere among Bush's friends in the South. We now understand that Dole is not a talented campaigner in electoral politics. The most interesting of the challengers was John McCain in 2000, who developed a reputation for leadership and a fresh approach to politics and issues, but who was rejected by the majority of Republican primary voters on the ten state primary day of March 7.

Here let us note that **primary voters are a minority**. The only place where more than 50% of the voters turn out is New Hampshire; actually only about 20% vote in the presidential primaries. Further, within this 20%, there is often an over-representation of the most conservative and the fundamentalist Christians in the Republican party. Thus if G.W. Bush defeated McCain by 60-40 in a primary election, this is likely to mean that 12% of the Republicans voted for Bush and 8% for McCain, or some such figure. A number of states, though, allow independents to vote in a primary for one of the parties. Independents were much more favorable to McCain than registered Republicans. I would speculate that McCain would have defeated Gore and that such an election would not be close, due to his greater attraction to independents and Democrats than Bush had, at least in the spring.

One significant Republican event occurred in 1988, when Rev. Pat Robertson raised a lot of money and put together a fundamentalist Christian campaign for the nomination. After doing well in Iowa, his campaign fizzled out and really went nowhere. This was partly because other fundamentalists backed Bush, as continuing the Reagan tradition, and most Republican politicians, even if fundamentalists, were opposed to nominating someone seen as a loser in the general election.

Once every 20 or 30 years, this system might produce a candidate who is ideologically extreme, compared to the average voter, because the candidate's ideological following turned out disproportionately among the 20% primary voters. This happened once when the Democrats nominated George McGovern, the most liberal Senator, in 1972, because the liberal, anti-war faction was willing to work and vote for McGovern. Rank and file Republicans fear the possibility of a very conservative or fundamentalist candidate, such as Pat Buchanan gaining their nomination, but losing disastrously in the general election.

Turning to **Democratic Party** primaries since 1980, there was less unity than among the Republicans in the 1980's, but Bill Clinton's dominance in the 90's lessened the amount of competition in the primaries. In 1980, Jimmy Carter seemed like a probable loser in the general election, and he was challenged by Ted Kennedy in the primaries, backed by many party leaders, and many liberal and labor factions. Kennedy's campaign started badly, as he blamed President Carter for the Iran hostage crisis, and this was resented by many Democrats who felt the country should rally behind the President in a crisis. The Kennedy campaign thus tended to lose early primaries and primaries in the South, but Kennedy won several primaries in May and June.

However, though he finished with over 40% of the delegates, he could not catch Carter, who of course lost to Reagan.

In 1984, Carter's vice-president Walter Mondale had the most support around the country before the primaries, as he was well liked by Democratic politicians. Similar to events in Republican primaries, Senator Gary Hart suddenly emerged to win the New Hampshire primary, but Mondale recovered to win most subsequent primaries due to his pre-existing support among established politicians and union officials. Rev. Jesse Jackson ran a creditable race through the entire season of primaries. Mondale was the favorite of party officials and he won, but this was a year in which no Democrat could beat Reagan.

In 1988 Michael Dukakis showed political savvy in organizing for the primaries, a political adeptness which eluded him in losing to Bush in the fall. Initially not considered a leading candidate but only an energetic governor of a medium sized state, Dukakis put together a

for McCain to overcome, plus conservative voters identified Bush as their candidate, as opposed to the moderates, or independents, who supported McCain.

Al Gore, Jr., got the support of Bill Clinton and became the heir apparent in the Democratic party. He has been working for years to line-up support around the country, and evidently would have no problem in raising funds. Senators Wellstone (Minn), Kerrey (Neb.), Kerry (MA), plus Gephardt and Rev. Jackson all considered running, but saw the race as hopeless. Only Bradley continued to run. Bradley equaled Gore in fund-raising, and got some enthusiastic backing from liberals, reformers, and intellectuals, but he turned out to be an indifferent campaigner and did not win any primaries, losing by landslide margins in a few (he did get 47% in New Hampshire, but he needed to defeat Gore there). Also Bradley was not able to put together much organization except in a few states, so that on March 7, in Ohio and other states there was barely an organized campaign for Bradley.

The emergence of the heir apparent phenomenon in both parties to some is a disappointment, as compared to the ideal of a half dozen interesting candidates running against each other in 30 primaries. The leading candidates seem able to defeat all their opponents by the middle of March, even though a number of states have not held their primary elections. On the other hand, the party leaders backing the heir apparent are very concerned to back someone well-liked in their own party, who is very capable of winning the election, attracting votes from independents and from the other party. In other words, the party leaders want to back someone who will please the majority of the voters, which is a democratic principle.

In 2003, however, there was no Democratic heir apparent in that Al Gore did not choose to run. The Democrats once again were left with competition among six major candidates. Vice President Cheney would be the heir apparent if had no heart condition, but instead, one can only prognosticate about a Republican heir apparent in 2007: Jeb Bush, governor of a major state, or Bill Frist, the Senate leader. The Constitution prohibits naturalized citizens from being President; therefore Gov. Schwarzenegger is not eligible.

In the 2004 Democratic primary, the initial news was that the hitherto obscure Howard Dean rapidly gained support during 2003 by being most critical of the Iraq War and of President Bush in general. The fall of 2003 witnessed the successful innovation of internet financial contributions to the Dean campaign, in a quantity never before seen. By January 1 many thought that Dean would get the nomination with his fervent support and excellent finances. However, the Iowa caucus results brought short the Dean campaign, as Kerry won with 38%, Edwards had 32%, Dean 18%, and Gephardt 11%. As subsequent primaries indicated, Dean could not increase his support from his base supporters, as political officeholders, union members, and African-Americans were more attracted to Kerry and Edwards. New Hampshire, adjoining Dean's home state, came next with: Kerry 39%, Dean 26%, Clark 13%, Edwards 21%, Lieberman 9%. After New Hampshire, Kerry's campaign snowballed, as he won all the primaries but two.[Edwards saved his campaign by winning in South Carolina with 45% to 30% for Kerry. General Wesley Clark won in Oklahoma with 30+%, Edwards 30-%, Kerry 27%. But Clark was unable to make another strong showing.] Edwards seemed to pick up support each week, and trended towards finishing second to Kerry. Kerry won all the primaries on super-Tuesday on March 2, and the nomination was secure. The Kerry campaign was in financial difficulty before the Iowa

caucuses, but after Iowa, the Kerry campaign raised as much money as it needed.

The Nominating Convention

Up to 1980 the party nominating conventions actually had a decision-making function, playing a role in the nomination of the presidential candidate, vice-presidential candidate, and the statement of a party platform in the context of party divisions over such issues as civil rights or the Vietnam War. But the change to the primary election dominated system of selecting delegates in 1972 apparently has eliminated the decision-making function in most conventions. This happened because the presidential nominees are decided in the spring in the primary elections. Up until 1988 the presidential candidate would announce the vice presidential candidate at the convention, but since 1992 there has been a tendency to announce the vice presidential candidate before the convention, to give the vice presidential nominee a build-up of support through media publicity.

Legally the nominating convention is the body that selects the presidential nominee, so there is some possibility that a convention may have an important decision making function in the future. If a party were badly split, the primaries might yield no winner and three or more continuing candidacies, who might split the delegates by 40-40-20, for instance. In this case the convention might decide which would get the 50% needed for nomination.

In 1996, 2000, and 2004 splits on issues have not been allowed by convention directors. This is due to an increase in party rivalry and the relatively evenness in the presidential vote; party leaders have an intense need to defeat the other party, and thus have an intense need for party unity, so that issue discussions at the conventions are not permitted (e.g. differences among Democrats about Iraq in 2004). Thus there are not platform debates. But it is possible there may be such debates at future conventions.

The 1992 Republican convention is seen as a negative model for convention directors. In a divisive speech, Pat Buchanan declared a "culture war," and one or two other aggressive right-wing speeches were given. Observers concluded the convention presented an image of extremism, and lost votes to the relatively moderate Bill Clinton. Convention managers of both parties now strive to prevent the presentation of speeches that might be seen as extreme or politically harsh.

The main goal of the convention after 1980 is media communication. The main goal is to promote a positive image of the candidate and also of the party. The major television networks have cut back on their convention coverage, so that only major speeches are on major network TV. Still a large number of undecided voters do watch the major speeches, particularly the acceptance speeches of the two candidates. Media communication is particularly important to a candidate who is not an incumbent, because the non-incumbent is not so well known to the undecided voters. This was the case with G.W. Bush in 2000 and with John Kerry in 2004. Convention publicity plays an important role in shaping the public image of such candidates.

The second goal of the convention is to promote party morale and party unity. There is a show of

primary losers endorsing the winner to placate the factions supporting losing primary candidates. There is a great show of enthusiasm for the candidate and for the party to boost one another's morale and to influence party supporters, watching on TV, to work for the candidate with enthusiasm.

The Democrats and the Whigs, the two major parties of the day, initiated national nominating

contrast, the strongman LBJ was not really in the camp of the Kennedys.

Campaign Finance

The costs of campaigning for public office have been steadily increasing (see Wayne book, pp 34, 35) for numbers. The most important reason for this increase is the central role of television commercials in campaigns, and the increasing number of commercials bought by politicians.

Democracy implies a competition in elections for office. If one candidate or political party has a great deal of money more than the other, then competition and hence democracy are weakened. This is becoming an important question for America.

After Watergate the Congress was especially concerned by campaign finance. One reason was that Nixon's campaign had more than a million dollars in cash contributions, which by law it did not have to report, and this money was used to further illegal or ethically questionable practices of harassing Nixon's opponents. The **Federal Campaign Amendments of 1974** established the basic rules for the use of money in federal elections. These rules were significantly modified by the Supreme Court in its 1976 decision **Buckley vs. Valeo**.

Congress wanted to set limits on campaign spending, but the Court said that candidates had the free speech right to have no such limits, unless the candidate accepted public money for the campaign, in which case there could be campaign spending limits. The Court said it was legal to limit contributions to campaigns, as opposed to the money the candidate can spend. But the Court said that an individual was free to spend unlimited money of his/her personal money on his/her own campaign as a free speech right, unless he/she accepted public money.

Before 2004 most candidates for President have accepted partial subsidies for their campaign from the U.S. Treasury. But there were significant exceptions.

Ross Perot financed most of his own campaign for president in 1992 and did not accept public money. In 1996 Perot accepted public money and thus his own contributions were limited. Steve Forbes did not accept public money in his 1992, 1996, and 2000 Republican primary campaigns, which he personally paid for. G.W. Bush did not accept public money in his Republican primary victory in 2000, but he did not pay for it out of personal funds. He was able to raise about \$80 million dollars in contributions limited by law to \$1,000 or less (now \$2,000), with some PAC contributions limited by law to \$5,000.

Gore, Bradley, and McCain, however, did in the 2000 primaries accept public funds. This meant that they were subject to federal spending ceilings, although only Gore hit the overall limit. All other presidential candidates in 1976-2004 (except for John Connally in 1980) have accepted public money, and with it the various rules, including the spending ceilings.

However in 2004 the political practice in the primary campaigns began to change. G.W. Bush rejected public funding, leaving him free to ignore spending ceiling requirements. The stated goal was to raise \$230 million for use before August 26 in contributions of \$2,000 or less, the

contribution limit in the McCain-Feingold law (see below). In the fall of 2003, the Howard Dean campaign pioneered the successful use of the internet for funding, and Dean announced he would reject public funding, and thus not be subjected to the ceiling, as he could raise more money than the ceiling through the internet. This was an entirely unexpected development. Next John Kerry announced he would not accept public funds either, and thus not be subject to the ceiling. After the Kerry campaign caught fire in Iowa, Kerry raised a total of more than \$200 million, a complete surprise to everyone. No Democrat had done this before; Kerry's fund raising was due to his acceptability to the numerous well-off Democrats who intensely dislike G.W. Bush.

The rejection of public funding, and Kerry's fund raising success, changed the whole campaign. If a candidate in the primaries spends up to the public funding ceiling, the candidate cannot spend more money until his nomination during August. This happened to Dole in 1996, and then Clinton clobbered Dole with TV commercials throughout the summer as Clinton had his money, while Dole had spent all of his. The Bush campaign was planning to emulate this strategy in 2004, but the whole situation changed when Kerry did not subscribe to the ceiling. Both campaigns then were about equal in spending, while special committees supporting Kerry spent an additional \$50 million or more in anti-Bush commercials.

It now appears that in future presidential primaries, major candidates will reject public funding and follow the lead of the 2004 candidates, raising large sums over the internet. Candidates, not initially so strong (e.g. Elizabeth Cole or Wesley Clark) will continue to accept public funding to enhance their financial support. For the moment it looks as if this change in primary financing will benefit the dominant candidates, or outsiders with fervent support from the upper middle class (Howard Dean).

Primary Funding Rules

Some of these campaign funding rules are still important so let us consider them.

A summary of these rules for presidential campaign spending is found in the Wayne text, pp. 43, 54. *Note that these rules are for presidential elections, and that there are different rules for congressional elections, and that state and local elections are controlled by state and local government. The issue of money in elections is most intense in congressional elections, where it actually plays a more important role than in presidential elections.*

A very important factor in politics is the distinction between **hard money vs. soft money**. From the standpoint of a campaign, hard money is that contributed subject to federal regulations. For instance it would count towards a spending ceiling, while individuals can contribute only \$2,000 to one campaign. **Soft money** is contributed to help a campaign, but it is not given to the campaign itself, but to committees whose spending is not regulated by federal election law. Before 2003, state political parties could spend in campaigns without federal regulation, just as long as such spending was not coordinated with the organization of the presidential candidate. Before 2003, an individual could give an unlimited amount of money to state political parties. Such parties could then buy commercials for a candidate and sponsor get-out-the-vote drives,

and so forth, just as long as these are not coordinated with the candidate. However, the **McCain-Feingold Act** of 2002 prohibited individuals from giving large sums of soft money to state and local party committees to be used in federal campaigns. The 2002 law applies only to federal elections, not to state elections (e.g. for governor). 10 of the 49 Republican Senators at that time voted for McCain-Feingold, enabling it to pass as almost all Democrats in Congress supported the legislation. A veto would have hurt Bush's popularity, so he signed it.

A second major provision of the 2002 law states that business corporations and unions cannot spend money on behalf of a federal election candidate within 60 days of an election with an attempt to specify a strict interpretation of what this means. The Supreme Court has ruled that this is a constitutional restriction of free speech.

It is expected that McCain-Feingold will reduce the effect of money in federal elections for the next few years. Professor McFarland, however, does not think the impact of the reform will be great, although there will be some impact. The Federal Elections Commission is in charge of implementing McCain-Feingold, and this commission is not friendly to reform efforts. Campaign strategists will find loopholes whereby they can spend soft money in compliance with the rules.

A new development after McCain-Feingold, evidenced in the 2004 campaign, is "527 groups" named after a section of the federal tax code. Large soft money contributions can go to a 527 group, which will get some of the soft money previously given to state political parties. A 527 group is an independent group, not connected to a previously organized business, union, or association, which is organized for the purpose of raising and spending money in politics, including campaigns. The 527 group is not allowed to coordinate its spending with a political campaign; it is not allowed to specifically urge a "vote for X"; it cannot participate with TV or radio commercials within 60 days of an election. However, it can buy TV criticizing a candidate or extolling another candidate's position, just as long as it avoids the "vote for" language. Republicans did not bother to organize major 527 groups in 2003, but anti-GW Democrats did, and these groups have raised large sums of money (\$100 million?) aimed to help the Kerry campaign, by buying anti-Bush commercials and registering Democratic party voters. Leading 527 groups include Move-on.org and America Coming Together (ACT). One presumes in 2008 the Republicans will organize a significant strength in 527 groups, unless the Supreme Court finds such groups illegal under the system of federal election law.

McCain-Feingold also increased the limit of a hard money donation to a federal campaign from \$1,000 to \$2,000. This was set at \$1,000 in 1974 and the increase partly offsets inflation. In 2003 Democrats were upset to realize that even though Republicans may have raised more money in soft money, Democrats were more reliant on soft money donations in terms of percentage of total contributions. This was because there were many more persons willing to give \$2,000 to a campaign who are Republicans, rather than Democrats. The Democrats were greatly helped by soft money contributions from trial lawyers, wealthy entertainers, and various liberal millionaires. This situation changed in 2004, when due to anti-Bush resentment, there was a huge increase in Democrats contributing the \$2,000 limit to the Kerry campaign.

In 2003 the section 527 loophole in the federal election regulations was discovered. The 527 groups exist side-by-side with campaign finance groups created under the 1974 law known as **Political Action Committees or PACs**, organizational offshoots of business corporations,

unions, or previously organized ideological groups. PACs contribute to campaigns for their group, and are regulated by the federal government. In particular, the law stated that a PAC was limited to a \$5,000 to one campaign. PACs are required to raise funds from within a specified corporation, union, or association. The total of PAC contributions is important in congressional elections. But surprisingly, PACs play little role in federal elections, although the 527 groups emerged as important in 2004.

Public Funding

Let us look briefly at the public funding system which was dominant from 1976 to 2000, but after 2004 is important only to secondary candidates in the primaries. But it is still used by the two major candidates in the general election.

In primary elections, the government gives matching funds for contributions of \$250 or under, up to a limit, about \$18 million in government money in 2004. Logically, the existence of this 1974 law encourages “underdogs” to run, most underdogs (except Forbes) having a fund-raising problem. (See 2000 numbers, p. 46 in book.) So far, soft money has not been important in *presidential primary* elections within a party, although soft money has been important in the race between the two major parties.

It is important for the student to realize that **there are different fund-raising and spending rules for the general campaign for President**, after the convention. The federal government gives each of the two major candidates a sum to finance the general election campaign—in 2004 this is about \$73 million. Each candidate is allowed to raise and spend another \$8 million for administrative costs, and the national committees are allowed to raise and spend about \$15 million for their candidate. This is the only hard money permitted.

But in recent presidential general elections, soft money was equally or more important than hard money. In 1992, 1996, and 2000 substantial sums were spent by state political parties, and in the year 2000, they were joined by interest group committees. Voters in key electoral college states were bombarded by TV commercials from state committees or from pseudonymous committees. Due to McCain-Feingold, soft money in the 2004 general election is more restricted, and will be less important (state political parties limited, 60 limit before election on groups).

@ If a third party gets 5% of the vote for president, it becomes eligible for the funds in the general election. Perot and the Reform Party got 19% in 1992, and thus got funds in 1996, while the Reform Party got 8.4% of the vote in 1996, and thus got public funds in 2000. Third parties get money corresponding to their fraction of the average two-party vote.

@ The federal government also pays for the national party conventions, about \$15 million going for each convention in 2004. The idea is that this frees parties from accepting corporate contributions for their conventions. However, due to free speech, corporations and other groups are free to give lavish receptions in the vicinity of the conventions, thereby enhancing their public image.

@ The federal money for presidential elections comes from the check-off box on the federal

income tax return, in which taxpayers voluntarily assign \$3 to the fund. Most taxpayers refuse to do this, so the fund may run out of money, necessitating a supplement from Congress.

The Individual Voting Decision

In deciding their votes for President, individuals can be seen as doing the following:

1. They start with their party identification, a predisposition for supporting one party or another. At present there are about 1/3 who identify as Democrats, 1/3 who identify as Republicans, and 1/3 who are independents. Among the party identifiers, there are strong supporters, who almost never support a candidate of the other party, and there are weak supporters, who can be easily persuaded to vote for the other party.

2. They consider a retrospective point of view; they engage in retrospective voting. In judging an incumbent candidate or party, they ask: is the country better off now than it was four years ago?

In particular, they consider the state of the economy.

At times they may consider engagement in a war, such as Vietnam or Korea. This may be a negative factor, if the war seems to be going on too long and if the reasons for the war are not compelling for the voter. The Iraq War is smaller than the Vietnam War, but it apparently has caused a drop in support for G.W. Bush.

3. The voters consider the personalities of the major candidates, as another factor in their voting besides their party identification, or aside from retrospective voting, for issues for the future. To what extent is the voter impressed by the character of the candidate, leaving aside issue positions and political party?

4. The voter may consider issues which affect the future, as opposed to issues concerning what happened in the past [retrospective voting]. The voter considers the candidates' likely future policies on issues important to the vote: economy, war, abortion, civil rights, or whatever a voter cares the most about.

Some balance or weighing of these factors leads to the voter's decisions. The importance of these factors at the aggregate level varies with elections: e.g. personality was not important in the 1972 election but was in the 1980 election; retrospective voting was more important in 1992 (the first Bush and the economy), but not so important in 2000 (economy less important).

Elections & Voting

The Economy: Usually the key factor in a presidential election. Important factors are the rate of unemployment and the rate of inflation during the first six months of the election year. If unemployment and inflation are both low, this is a great advantage for the incumbent president and for the incumbent party. If one or both of these factors are high, it is major trouble for the incumbent president or party, such as the first Bush in 1992. But the economy predicted Gore

would win in 2000, and that did not happen.

Foreign Affairs: unpopular wars can defeat an incumbent as with the Korean War (Truman declines to run again) or with Vietnam (LBJ declines to run again). This obvious factor places a limit on Presidents' decisions to initiate military action. Unpopular wars are those which we do not win within the first year, which cause considerable American casualties, and which did not start because of an attack on the US.

The Iraq War is not to the scale of the Korean War or the Vietnam War, but polls indicate that Bush began losing support due to the Iraq War by March 2004. Bush's initiation of this war endangered his reelection.

The capture of American hostages in Iran in 1980 helped defeat Carter, but the economy and Reagan's personality were more important than this foreign affairs issue.

Routine foreign affairs issues do not affect voting very much, although a few voters may be influenced by their ethnic identification (Jewish, Arab, and Cuban voters).

Personality: Some voters may switch parties or downplay issues because a presidential candidate inspires great confidence: Eisenhower, FDR, Reagan. Kennedy was beginning to develop this; Clinton was intermediate in that some reacted that way. Gore and G.W. did not have this in 2000, although some may view G.W. this way after the war on terrorism.

Very popular candidates are likely to be detested by a significant minority, as in the case of FDR and Reagan. Eisenhower was not detested, but was viewed by some as being not motivated to do the job. Kennedy, Clinton, and Nixon have also been detested by many.

A well known candidate has an advantage against a candidate less well known (Nixon vs McGovern, Bush vs. Dukakis). The better known candidate can challenge the personality and background of the lesser known, and many voters will not have other information about the challenger. This was a factor as most voters knew little about Kerry in March, 2004.

Issues for the Future: This may be hard to separate from the other factors, but it was clear in 1972 that neither Nixon nor McGovern were popular personalities, and many selected Nixon because they had more confidence about his future actions on issues, viewing McGovern as too radical on future issues. In 1984, against Reagan's personality and retrospective satisfaction (economy good; no war), Mondale was forced to attack Reagan on future issues, such as increasing the national debt. This didn't succeed but Mondale had little choice.

General Election for President

By general election, we mean the period after the candidates are nominated by the political parties, and they are running against each other, roughly September and October of the election year. Historically speaking, the first thing to understand about president elections is *party alignment theory*. This is based on the observation that for most of American history, most voters identified with some political party, and most voters would usually vote for their party candidates, including the candidate for President. Accordingly, the first factor in determining the outcome of a presidential election was the balance of numbers of party identification among the voters. At some times, the parties had roughly equal numbers of voters identifying with them. At other times, one party had many more party identifiers than the other party, which meant that the larger party would tend to win presidential elections. Let us examine how this worked out in the

past.

ALIGNMENT THEORY

1. 1860-1892. Alignment=Democratic and Republican parties are about equal, taking the country as a whole. There are roughly equal numbers of voters identifying with each party, taking the country as a whole. In particular states, persons might identify with one party in a great majority, but nationally this averages out to an alignment of rough equality in party support.

Effects: presidential elections are very close in 1876, 1880, 1884, 1892. The House and the Senate shift from one party to another; neither party controls the House and the Senate for a long period of time.

2. 1896-1928. Alignment: Republicans are the dominant party. More people are Republicans than Democrats, although the white South is a stronghold for the minority Democratic party.

Effects: Republicans easily win presidential elections, except for 1912, when the Republican party split into two parties, led by President Taft and ex-President Teddy Roosevelt. Therefore, the Democrat Woodrow Wilson won, and was reelected by a close margin.

Both the House and the Senate are normally controlled by Republicans, except during the Wilson administration.

3. 1932-1968. Alignment: Democrats outnumber Republicans by 3-2. The popularity of Franklin Roosevelt and his policies produced a big switch in the party loyalties of the people.

Effects: Democrats win the presidency, except when the Republicans nominate the chief national hero, General Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956.

Democrats control both houses of Congress almost all the time, except for 1947-49 and 1953-55.

4. 1969-- Alignment: ambiguous. Scholars argue about the situation. Republicans usually win presidential elections; Democrats usually win congressional elections, and control the House every year before 1995. Polls show that Republican identification moving up to equal Democratic identification among the people. But most people care less about political parties, and the polls show more people calling themselves "independents."

Is there a new Republican alignment forming? Or has the alignment theory lapsed and cannot predict the situation. Probably the majority of scholars think the latter is the case; they say that we are in a situation of party dealignment because the majority of the public does not care much for political parties. Some say that maybe a new political party will form, supported by Perot supporters and others disaffected with politics, as the Republican party formed in 1856. Then the alignment theory might apply again.

Party identification statistics: from 1950 to 1980 there were many more Democratic p

arty identifiers than Republican—generally a ratio of 5-3 or 3-2 Dems/Reps. However, during the 80's during the Reagan Era, the Republicans caught up so that the ratio went down to 4/3 Dems/Reps, or even closer. See the Table on page 82. Meanwhile the number of Independents went up 1952-2000 from 23% to 40%. These numbers are based on careful national surveys.

Since 1952 the number of Democrats switching to vote for the Republican candidate has been much greater than the number of Republicans who voted for the Democratic candidate, except for 1964 (LBJ landslide) and the two Clinton elections. In addition, Democratic voters turned out at a lower rate, so ordinarily with so many of their voters switching to the Republican (Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, Bush in 88), the Democrats had a tough time getting votes.

From 1952-2000, there have these changes: White Southerners have gone from predominately Democrat to predominately Republican; 17% of the public switched from having a party identification to answering “independent;” the number of union members is only 40% of what it was during the 50's, which reduced the strength of Democratic party identification and voting.

Party dealignment: one theory is that we cannot speak of party alignments anymore. This is because so many party-identifiers actually have only a weak identification, and engage in much more split ballot voting than their parents and grandparents did. In addition, observers point to the increase in the number of independents, so that the overall identification with any political party among the general public is much weaker than it was before 1960. This theory states that many more persons will not align themselves with a single political party. This is called the theory of party *dealignment*.

The traditional theory of realignment would argue that this is a stable period in which Democrats and Republicans have about an equal number of party identifiers. Or a few might argue that this is a period of Republican party dominance, in which the trends point to more and more persons switching from Independent or Democrat to voting for Republican. The strongest evidence for this would be in the South.

Still party identification remains very important in relation to an individual's voting decision. On page 90, see that in 2000, 85 percent of Democrats voted for Gore, and 91% of Republicans voted for Bush. In 1996, 19% of the Independents voted for Perot, who got only 4% of the Democrats and 5% of the Republicans.

On 90, note that Gore got 49% of the women's vote as opposed to 43% for Bush; 81% of Nonwhite to Bush's 9%; 48% of grade school educated to 42% (also measures low income); but for voters under 30 Gore got 43%, Bush 46%, with 8% for Nader. Gore got 52-38% in the Eastern states. But for men it was Bush 51 to Gore's 42; among whites it was 59% Bush to 39% Gore; among college educated it was 46% Gore to 48% Bush (measures higher incomes); in the South Bush won 56-36%; and in the Midwest Bush won 47-43%.

Voting Turnout: in 2000 only 51% of American adults voted in the presidential election.

About 67% of the registered voters cast a ballot for president. This is not a good turnout; only Switzerland among stable democracies has voting so low.

Typically in European democracies 70% of the adults vote. Some reasons for this: typically it is easier to register, voting may be on weekends when fewer have to go to work, Australia & Belgium fine persons who do not vote; political parties are stronger and get out the vote; voting in multi-party parliamentary elections seems more meaningful, as the smaller parties need every vote to have influence.

Clinton instituted the “motor-voter” law, in which persons can register when they renew their

drivers' licenses. But this did not seem to have much effect on the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections.

Who turns out? The more educated (who have higher incomes) and older people. See table, pages 73. See reference to education on page 68. Educated persons seem to be able to relate politics to their own lives better than uneducated people; they have a clearer understanding of the differences among presidential candidates. Younger persons do not have the experiences to care about political events as much as the older, nor do they have financial stakes or concern for children that older persons have. Younger persons move more often, making it more difficult to register. Hispanics vote less because they are not used to American politics, and their experiences in the old country alienated them from politics. However the Hispanic vote is now rapidly increasing. Blacks have somewhat less education on average than whites; but if you control for this, black voting is about the same as white voting.

Even though the degree of education has been going up since 1960, which promotes voting turnout, the number of Americans voting in presidential elections has substantially decreased since 1960, even with motor-voter registration.

Research cited in the text argues this is due to the decline of party identification (leaving some to feel adrift in politics), greater cynicism about politicians, and the decline of a sense of political efficacy (the sense that a vote makes a difference). In addition, 18-21 year-olds vote at a low rate, and they were enfranchised in 1972. The text remarks that lower income and status groups have more political cynicism and less political efficacy, and that the voting power of such groups is thus less in balance to higher income groups than it was in a preceding generation. (Pp75)

TV Debates: Now are the most important events in the campaign, in my opinion, although in 1984 and 1996 they did not change things much. The debates are more important to a candidate who is definitely behind, as they provide an opportunity to catch up. An incumbent president is already well known to voters, but the challenger still is not well known to some voters, and the TV debates are the single most important forum for the challenger to make an impression. The candidate who is ahead is reluctant to schedule TV debates, because such a candidate has little to gain. However, after 1980, a candidate who refused to debate would be severely criticized by the other candidate and in the media, and so now leading candidates feel they must debate but they try to negotiate conditions most helpful to himself/herself.

There is no law stipulating that there must be debates. It is a custom developed by the two leading political parties and most presidential candidates, worked out with the television networks, and with nonpartisan debate sponsors, such as the League for Women Voters. There is no law stating that a third party must be allowed to debate: Perot was allowed in 1992, but was kept out in 1996. Nor is there any rule stipulating the number of debates and the debate formats, which must be negotiated each time between the candidates. Clinton was most effective when persons in the audience were allowed to ask questions while the elder Bush was at his least effective; another format is when candidates can ask each other questions without the intervention of a journalist.

Comments on some debates:

1960: radio listeners thought Nixon won, but TV viewers thought Kennedy won, due to Nixon's poor appearance;

1976: Gerald Ford said “The Soviet Union does not dominate Eastern Europe” meaning that resistance to Communism existed in Poland, but on the surface this appeared to be a dumb answer or a big mistake which hurt his image.

1980: Carter debated Reagan only once, towards the end of the campaign, and the debate may have had a major effect, as at the end of the campaign voters switched to Reagan. The idea is that a lot of voters were wary of Reagan, the former movie actor, but when he appeared to be a reasonable, reassuring leader in the debate, their fears were alleviated, and they voted for him. They wanted to vote against Carter because of the poor state of the economy.

1992: The debate helped Perot, who many voters thought looked to be as good as Clinton or Bush. Perot got 19% of the vote.

1996 It doesn't seem that the debates changed much. Dole tried to bring in the character issue, but it didn't help him.

2000 Overall the debates helped G.W. who seemed reasonably informed and on the same level as Gore, which some had doubted. Gore at times was effective, but at first seemed too aggressive, and also was accused of “fibbing.”

Incumbency

I do not see this as a major advantage. Incumbents often are defeated: Carter in 1976, Bush in 1988. Incumbent vice-presidents do not have an overwhelming advantage: v.p. Nixon lost in 1960; v.p. Humphrey lost in 1968; Gore lost in 2000; the elder Bush wins in 1988.

The incumbent is subject to retrospective voting: if the economy is good, then incumbency is an advantage, but if the economy is bad, incumbents have a big problem; the same for foreign policy, so that incumbent Truman did not run again because of Korea, and LBJ did not run because of Vietnam. Carter suffered because of the Iran hostages.

Still the incumbent has advantages:

1. He can schedule popular events for television coverage, in which he/she looks presidential, such as signing a popular bill in the White House rose garden.
2. The incumbent can look presidential by taking politically strategic trips abroad, especially to voter homelands such as Mexico, Ireland, Italy, and Poland.
3. The incumbent can issue news releases that the media must carry, e.g. about national defense, the environment, etc. He can thus look presidential.
4. The incumbent's administration can give highly publicized grants and payments to key electoral areas. Clinton refused to close several military bases in California even when requested by the Pentagon; the non-incumbent Dole could say little about this.

TV spots: in 1988 the Bush campaign did a job on Dukakis, who was not very well known, in its TV advertising. In his service as governor Dukakis was charged with not supporting the pledge of allegiance (he had refused to make it mandatory), with not cleaning up pollution in Boston Harbor (the Reagan administration would not give grants for this), and for letting a criminal out of jail on parole, a criminal who then committed rape (this spot was paid for by an independent Republican group). In the last three elections the TV spots have been less negative in presidential campaigns, particularly in 2000. Public reaction against negative ads increased in the 1990's. A negative ad is defined as “negating” one's opponent, without saying anything about one's own

positions.

One proposed reform to control negative spots is to have the candidate sign off on his/her TV commercials to prevent the candidate claiming he/she had nothing to do with a negative ad and did not even see it. George H.W. Bush claimed he never saw the negative ads. Another control is anticipation of voter backlash about negative ads; e.g. the famous LBJ negative commercial—implying that Goldwater might start a nuclear holocaust—was actually never run for this reason. At the Senate level in Ohio a challenger ran a TV ad accusing the incumbent of supporting child pornography. The incumbent capitalized on this negative commercial which outraged most of the voters, and the challenger's campaign was destroyed.

During the 1990's journalists initiated coverage in which serious newspapers ran stories on the accuracy of ads in the presidential elections. I believe this had some effect in toning down negative commercials in the general election campaign. We need to keep this up. It has been

is going to carry how many closely contested states (Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, etc.).

REFORMS

Here are some reforms of presidential elections I would support.

1. In theory I would like to get rid of the Electoral College and to introduce direct voting with a runoff system. For instance if no candidate got 40% of the votes in the nationwide count, I would favor a second run-off election. This system would have the effect of encouraging third parties (not necessarily a good thing), and many would object to the idea of voting twice if no candidate got more than 39%.

My argument would be that below 40%, a candidate has not shown that he/she has enough backing to be elected. The alternative would be to have direct voting with plurality election, no matter if it were even below 40%.

In the Twentieth Century, the lowest percentages for a winner were during major third party years
(Wilson 42% in 1912, Truman 43% in 48, Clinton 43% in 92).

2. I would prefer the system of regional primaries, rather than the new front-loaded system. This would give a chance for outsider candidates to test their popularity. One national primary date would help the best known candidate and would result in even more campaigning by television commercials.

3. I would be concerned that the Federal Elections Commission enact tough enforcement of the rules of the McCain-Feingold bill limiting soft money contributions to state parties and the purchase of TV ads by independent political committees 60 days before an election. However, I expect the McCain-Feingold reform bill will make only a modest change in the role of money in presidential campaigns, because loopholes will be found in the law.

4. While it has not been so much of an issue in the presidential campaigns in 1996 and 2000, the use of negative, attack commercials should be monitored. Senior political reporter David Broder has proposed a good practice: (1) presidential candidates should sign off that they have seen the TV spots before they are released; (2) the campaign manager or press person should hold a press conference to deal with questions about a newly released spot ad. Candidate will claim that they did not see a controversial negative ad before it was released.

5. Better voting equipment should be used. Almost everyone favors this, but the changeover is too slow. The federal government should increase its subsidies to local jurisdictions to purchase new voting equipment. Legitimacy of election results is necessary for democracy.