

12-2015

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THE SIMON REVIEW

THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTESTS OF 1976-2012 AND WHAT THEY MEAN FOR WHO WILL WIN IN 2016

Dr. John S. Jackson
December 2015 - Paper #44

SIU SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CARBONDALE **PAUL SIMON
PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE**



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THE SIMON REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

As the nation races into the 2016 presidential elections season, it is worthwhile to stop the headlong rush and take a look back and see what we may have learned from our recent history, specifically what that history can teach us about our presidential elections and their long-term impact on the political system, how public policy is made and the prospects for any party to be able to govern in modern America when the nation is so deeply divided by partisanship, ideology, geography, class and race.

One of the most important lessons is that the nominations process goes a long way toward determining the outcome of the election and helps to define and clarify the images and issue positions of both parties and the choices they are offering for the American people. Our presidential nominations are driven by the primaries and to a lesser extent the caucuses. Both are devices designed to allow the American public the maximum opportunity to participate in the selection of the presidential candidates. Primaries are an American invention and they are uniquely important in the selection of a wide range of candidates for local, state and national office and most importantly, the presidential candidates.

No other nation uses primaries nearly as extensively as we do especially in the selection of the chief executive. Primaries open up the process and make it much more transparent and more widely participatory than the party insider selection processes used in other major democracies. Our primaries and caucuses make it possible for an extraordinarily wide range of candidates to run for president. This means that even people with little or no party identification or party record can compete for the nomination (e.g. Bernie Sanders for the Democrats and Donald Trump for the Republicans). Our nomination system

encourages ordinary voters to become widely and deeply engaged in the selection of the nominees. The candidates who run and especially those who are chosen and the stances they take during the nominations process then help define the image of the parties, solidify their ideological and issue positions and channel their actions over the next four years.

Out of all the millions of adult Americans who are theoretically and legally eligible to become president, only two will become the official nominee of the Democratic and the Republican Parties. One of these two then is almost certainly going to take the oath of office and become our next president on January 20, 2017. Given the impact of this intense political season, this paper will examine some of the **following important questions** about the presidential selection process through the lens of recent electoral history.

***How will the nominations process involving the boiling down of all the potential candidates into two contenders most likely play out in 2016 and what will be the impact of the nominations conflict on the potential outcome of the presidential election?**

***How will the parties try to manage that nominations process in a manner which will enhance their chances for victory in the general election and ensure their futures as they contend for control of presidential power and control of the national government?**

*** How will the president ultimately chosen run a campaign which sets out his or her agenda and manage the campaign in such a way as to have any chance at all of getting that presidential agenda translated into public policy?**

These nominations campaigns are full of drama and conflict and high intensity media scrutiny and intrusion. They are led by outsized personalities who have the audacity to believe

deeply in their hearts that they can and should be president.

The successful candidates already possess, or must build quickly, a deep and experienced political organization capable of functioning at peak capacity for at least two years and spanning the continent. The whole gigantic enterprise is undergirded by tens of millions of dollars for even the most remotely possible candidates and hundreds of millions for the front-runners. This produces a buzzing, blooming confusion that is hard for the average voter to sort out. It is particularly confusing in an open seat election year when no incumbent is running and which ordinarily attracts multiple candidates from both parties as is the case for 2016. The confusion multiplies in such an open seat year and the prologue to 2016 has seemed particularly complicated and confusing.

However, there are distinct patterns and there are discernable regularities to these nominations and general election campaigns. They follow a set pattern of events and rules which are dictated by the political culture, the external political environment, the parties and interest groups involved, and especially by the official state and federal rules and requirements for running for president.

It is possible to discern those regularities and to make some educated assessment of those candidates most likely to succeed in each election year and to handicap with some accuracy those who are likely to be the front-runners or in the first tier of contestants and those who are more likely to fill out the second tier and then the “dark horse” roles. One of the objectives of this paper is to look at the historic record and see what we can learn from each of the quadrennial case studies as we analyze how the overall complex system functions to produce a nominee for the Democratic and Republican

Parties each presidential election year.

I agree with the authors of the most popular and long-lived textbook in the field who argue that their basic theoretical position is based on the following perspective:

“Put simply, the pages that follow argue that the institutional rules of the presidential nominations and election processes, in combination with the behavior of the mass electorate, structure the strategic choices faced by politicians in powerful and foreseeable ways” (Polsby, Wil-davsky, Schier and Hopkins, 2016, xiii).

The age of reform covered in this paper has clearly established that the rules have an important impact on how the game is played. Those rules include the national party rules which have become the most important component of the rules environment since the reform era. Both the Democrats and Republicans have a complex set of presidential selection procedures which in turn have a significant role in establishing the strategic environment and setting the parameters for each presidential aspirant. These national party rules then sit on top of state laws and state party regulations which can sometimes even vary by party within the state. Thus there are 102 different sets of primary and caucus rules which must be understood and mined accurately for what they mean to that particular candidate. Proper strategic planning is a must for the competitive presidential campaign and that planning begins with a cold and rational look at the rules of engagement.

John Jackson
December 2015

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CHAPTER 1

THE RULES OF THE GAME

The case studies from 1976 through 2012 support the following basic generalizations that are usually applicable through multiple elections and are thus probability statements about how the nominations process will play out. These probability statements can be attached to the potential fate of each of the official candidates. The basic “rules of the game” are as follows:

***The successful candidate must run in and win a series of state based primaries and caucuses in order to be nominated.** The last nominee who did not rely on winning the primaries was Hubert Humphrey in 1968. Since the McGovern-Fraser rules were promulgated in 1970 every successful candidate in both parties has been required to prove his or her mass appeal by running in and winning a majority of the delegates coming out of the primaries and caucuses. This also means that the idea of a candidate emerging from a “brokered convention” which means that the choice is made in the convention itself, as was very possible before the reform era, is no longer a viable alternative.

***One of the early front-runners usually wins the nomination.** This is almost always true for the Republicans and usually true for the Democrats. These front-runners are identified long before the first vote is taken in a primary or caucus.

***The Republicans traditionally nominate candidates who have run for president at least once previously.** They nominate experienced politicians with a political record and deep support in the power structure of the party. “Outsider” candidates are usually not welcomed in the Republican Party’s search for a nominee. The Democrats will occasionally, but rarely nominate an outsider or longshot candidate. (See Carter in 1976 and Obama in 2008). But generally the Democrats will also nominate a candidate with widespread early support in the

party organization, and very few outsiders and unexpected candidates or candidates who are little known nationally at the start of the campaign will last long in this high stakes game.

***The party activists in both parties have become the major influences in deciding who the nominees will be.** In the case of the Republicans this means that the candidate must first be supported by and acceptable to the right or the most conservative activists in the party. This is also generally true among the Democrats where the party activists are predominantly from the most liberal wing of the party. Both wings dominate in most of the primaries and caucuses but both parties usually have enough moderates or pragmatists to temper the influence of the party wings somewhat, but there is always a struggle. How that intraparty struggle plays out has a very large impact on the nominee’s prospects in the general election since primaries expose and exacerbate those intraparty conflicts so publically.

This change from a more pragmatic and more diverse party base occurred during the era under study here. That is, the Republicans became the clearly and avowedly conservative alternative and the Democrats have likewise become the liberal alternative since 1972. As previous research by the author has demonstrated this shift and realignment of the party base is reflected in and largely led by the party activists, and most notably by the presidential party elites who are extremely active in helping their favored candidates at the primary and caucus stage of the process and many of whom become delegates to the national conventions (Kirkpatrick, 1976; Jackson, 2015). This polarization also means that the centrist and more moderate activists have declined in numbers and influence in favor of the more ideologically motivated party cadres.

***The candidate who raises the most money will usually win.** Thus successful candidates must spend enormous amounts of time and energy on raising money. It also helps to have significant personal resources to provide early seed money for the campaign or to be supported by interest groups and individual donors who can provide very substantial early financial support which is essential to staying alive in the nominations process. Raising early money is the most essential and crucial challenge any candidate will face.

The current campaign finance system was put into place as a series of reforms which passed the Congress in 1971 and 1974 to address some of the abuses magnified by the Watergate scandal. This system depended centrally on public finance of campaigns through a voluntary check off chosen by income tax filers. Thus the mass public was playing a major role in financing the campaigns through the tax system although private and interest group donations were also important. The sources were also transparent because they had to be publically identified in filings with the Federal Election Commission.

This new reform system broke down initially in 2000 and then most notably in 2008 when first George W. Bush refused public money for his primary campaign in 2000 and then Barack Obama refused public money for both the primary and the general election in 2008 and again in 2012. Their actions, plus U. S. Supreme Court decisions, most notably the Citizens United (2010) and McCutcheon v. FEC (2014) cases, led to the formation of "Super PAC's" which allowed for the unregulated collection of very large sums of money, from individuals, corporations and unions, which could be spent in the campaigns and elections as long as these efforts were not directly coordinated with the candidates' campaigns, or were so-called "independent expenditures." In some cases, depending on how the PAC is registered with the FEC, these funds can now be donated anonymously and thus the public cannot know where the funds originated (i.e. a 501 c 4 PAC).

These developments marked the profound transition from a mixed source presidential campaign finance system that was at least partially funded by the public to one almost entirely dependent on private funding and one where public funding counts for less and less. This also meant that a few very wealthy donors could adopt a single candidate and keep that candidate in the nominations race longer than had been the case in the former public finance system where the candidate who fell below a threshold of 10% of the votes in two consecutive primaries was no longer eligible for federal matching funds. With almost total private financing, this is no longer a legal problem although it certainly can be a political problem if the candidate fails to win early contests.

***Sequencing is critical to the development of a successful candidate strategy.** The sequencing of the nomination contests is dictated by the state level laws and party rules covering when each contest will be held and who can vote in them. Understanding that state level sequencing, and making the most rational choices possible within the parameters provided by the calendar is essential to a candidate's probabilities for success. This requires a state by state strategy as well as a national strategy which is very similar to the Electoral College based strategy required to win the general election.

***Campaign infrastructure and human resources are critical.** The candidate who attracts the most experienced high level political operatives to the major staff positions at the national level and the most grassroots activists at the state and local levels will most likely win. These new political elites and insiders have become the most crucial component in putting together a viable presidential campaign. At the same time the mass voters also play a critical role as the campaign must appeal to them successfully by winning primaries. The primaries used to be secondary and now they are primary influences in winning the presidential nominations.

CHAPTER 1 - THE RULES OF THE GAME

***The preprimary presidential debates are a new obstacle and opportunity and have become an increasingly important part of the winnowing process.** The Republicans scheduled nine debates for the 2015-16 nominations season and the Democrats scheduled six. The debates are the first chance many Americans have to see the potential candidates and thus are the first chance some of the candidates have to make a first impression. The debates also draw enormous audiences in comparison to most other political events. In 2015 the first Republican debate drew a reported audience of 25 million viewers and the first Democratic debate drew approximately 15.3 million (CNN News, October 14, 2015). The debates often reinforce the position of the dominant front-runner (e.g. Clinton in 2015) but can also elevate a relatively unknown candidate from the lower tier to the top tier (e.g. Fiorina and Carson in 2015). A bad or lack-luster performance in one or two early debates can become the death-knell for one of the lower ranked candidates (e.g. Perry, Walker, Chafee, and Webb in 2016). So, in summary, they are just one more hurdle, and an increasingly important one to be negotiated in the long marathon to the finish line.

***Winning early contests and winning often is essential to establishing momentum and staying alive in the race.** The gaining of voter endowed credibility quickly is essential to an ultimate victory in the nominations contest. If one does not win the early contests, he or she must at the very least do “better than expected” in some of the initial contests. The candidate who does not win early can only be competitive in the long race if there is a solid core of dedicated ideological and issue oriented followers who will maintain their commitments to an intensely issue based candidate in spite of adversity. However, these issue intensity candidates must also win some early tests to prove their mass appeal and to maintain themselves and their followers in the race. Otherwise they become the also-rans, or the fringe candidates fairly quickly. (See for example Ron Paul

in 2012 or Pat Buchanan in 1992). One must win often enough to gain the momentum necessary to continue the race from week to week and to gain and maintain the image of being a potential nomination winner. Such momentum is also necessary to weather temporary losses and maintain credibility with supporters, donors and the media alike.

***The candidate who relies heavily or almost exclusively on an initial one state victory strategy will almost certainly lose.** (See for example Paul Simon and Iowa in 1988 or Rudy Giuliani and Florida in 2008). The basic strategy simply must have a longer and larger time horizon and the campaign staff, ground level organization, and most importantly, funding, must be deeper than the typical shoe string foundation of the one state strategy. This means that the once popular “favorite son” candidate strategy is no long viable.

A candidate can skip one or two of the very early primary or caucus states for plausible personal or political reasons; however, a candidate must enter and win or do better than expected in one or more early high profile contests to remain viable and the more early victories the better. Those who cannot pass the early victory hurdle cannot last long because their financial support ordinarily will dry up and the mass media will cease to take them seriously and their news coverage will dry up. (Note: public funding used to cease if the candidate did not exceed the 10% minimum vote threshold in two consecutive primaries but, the political reality has changed since the advent of very wealthy patrons who can fund a favorite candidate in spite of their failure to win early. However, even the most ardent admirers of a single candidate still lose faith and patience if their champion consistently fails to win some primaries).

***The party which holds the most harmonious national convention will go on to victory in November.** A party which holds a national convention marked by highly publicized conflict and dissent will find it almost impossible to heal the internal wounds and achieve victory in the general election.

National conventions have ceased to be the major arenas for making the key decisions on who will be the presidential nominee. However, they are still important to the party activists and party organizations for adopting a platform and taking care of essential party functions, and they must ratify the earlier decisions of the primary/caucus season. They are even more important as the public face of the party and for kicking off the fall campaign. They are held both for the benefit of those in the convention hall and to make the best presentation to the national audience participating vicariously through the media (Shafer, 1988). They are still critical for creating and/or unifying the party coalition which will win the general election.

***Winning the party base, that is a large majority in the range of ninety percent or above of all party identifiers level, is necessary for a victory in the fall.** In the general election candidates must first secure the party base at this very high level before moving on to trying to attract the Independents. In a polarized era, almost no candidate is likely to gain more than about ten percent of potential cross-over voters from the other party. The base is usually secured in the primaries season and at the latest by the time the national convention ends. Ideologically pure and even extreme appeals are often used to secure the party base first. This feeds polarization which has become the major characteristic of the American political system. **(See Appendix A for a synoptic account of these rules).**

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CHAPTER 2

THE CANDIDATES AND LESSONS FOR 2016

As is usually the case when there no incumbent president running, the open seat attracted a lot of early attention and speculation about the candidates for both parties in the run up to the 2016 presidential nominations contest. This would not be a normal open seat contest for 2016 though. For one thing, the nominations contest started earlier than ever before.

Traditionally the “invisible primary” opens on the first day after the results of the mid-term elections are announced. Those results become the grist for media and elite speculation about what they mean for the fortunes of both parties and a variety of specific candidates as the nominations race gets under way for the next presidential election. By the time of the mid-term elections in November of 2014, however, there had already been much media attention and early speculation about who would run on both sides and there had already been several published horserace polls. An already long presidential nominations season became even longer in the run up to 2016. Undoubtedly the American people would tell the pollsters that they were sick and tired of the contest well before the first vote was cast, but the preliminaries start earlier and the campaigns get longer and more expensive with every cycle.

The Republican Candidates

The other difference for 2016 was that the out party, in this case the Republicans, initially fielded seventeen major candidates. The ordinary size of the field for the out party in an open seat contest is no more than eight. Thus, the seventeen official Republican candidates was more than double what is normally expected. At the outset there were plenty of Republican candidates but a shortage of a clear and dominant front-runner. The absence of a natural front-runner meant that a variety of unconventional and unexpected candidates emerged

early with a strong interest in the presidential campaign and the chutzpah to believe that they could attain the Republican nomination and be elected president.

Perhaps emboldened by Barack Obama’s audacity from 2008, an unprecedented bevy of young upstart first term-term U. S. Senators made all the early moves characteristic of presidential aspirants. This group included Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky and Senator Marco Rubio from Florida. Each of these new comers aggressively courted the spot light in the senate, an institution where freshmen were traditionally expected to be seen but not heard. They were eagerly sought out by the national media soliciting their views on every controversial subject whether they had shown any particular legislative expertise in that area or not. From the Senate, they were joined by Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina who was the only veteran U. S. Senator to make the race. Former Senator Rick Santorum who had run in 2012, and effectively came in second to Mitt Romney, also announced, but he had been out of public office for several years and had trouble attracting attention and support.

The list of state governors, or former governors, was lengthy. It included several who had deep experience in governing large states or who had run previously or toyed with earlier races. This group included former Governor Jeb Bush of Florida, Governor John Kasich of Ohio, former Governor Rick Perry of Texas, former Governor Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin, former Governor George Pataki of New York, Governor Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, former Governor James Gilmore of Virginia and Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey.

The perennial narrative of The American people being “fed up” with Washington and longing for an “outsider” not from Washington,

was advanced early and often by all of these candidates who touted their executive experience in the governor's chair since it fit their own campaign rationale so well. The narrative of the alleged deep longing for an outsider was also picked up by the media, and it is a theme that gains great credence every four years. Despite its familiarity, the narrative was treated as though it was a new and novel story and this year it had an extraordinary impact on the Republican race for the nomination.

No one could have anticipated just how virulent this quest for an outsider would become until the three Republicans who had never held public office made their appearance and started to dominate the conversation. Donald J. Trump was at the head of this class of "non-politicians" who made a major impact on the Republican race for 2016. Trump was a real estate entrepreneur who had inherited a small fortune from his father.

He parlayed that inheritance into a much larger real estate empire making his signature "Trump" name a landmark on many high profile trophy properties in New York City, Atlantic City, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. He often boasted about how rich he was as proof of his business acumen. He variously reported his net worth to between eight and ten billion dollars although there were questions raised in the media about just how he had calculated those figures and how accurate they were. There was no log cabin to the penthouse mythology in Trump's appeal.

Trump also developed the image and persona of being somewhat of a character with his flamboyant orange hair permanently fixed in a painfully obvious comb over that became the butt of endless late night comic jokes. His stints as a reality television impresario, especially with his show "The Apprentice" made him a familiar figure on American television which is one of the most important assets all candidates seek. When it comes to a name brand and a well-developed image, hurdles which are very hard to clear for many candidates, Donald Trump already had those

obstacles covered when he officially entered the race on June 16, 2015.

The other two non-traditional candidates were Carly Fiorina and Dr. Ben Carson. Fiorina had been CEO of Hewlett-Packard and other big companies although she had been fired by the Hewlett-Packard Board. She also had run for the U. S. Senate in California against incumbent, Barbara Boxer, in 2010, a race which she lost by a ten percent margin in a year which was generally very good for Republican congressional candidates. Although she had never held public office, Fiorina often advanced the tried and true conservative mantra that business experience was exactly what the presidency demanded. She was also the only female in the Republican race.

Dr. Ben Carson was a retired neurosurgeon who had a compelling Horatio Alger story of rising from rags to the top of his very demanding profession. He had written a best seller book based on his personal life and accomplishments and very public professions of his Christian faith. The fact that he was a conservative African-American also brought a modicum of diversity to a mostly white, male group and this appealed to some Republicans. So, the Republicans had three bona fide "outsider" candidates in the field of seventeen if one takes not having held public office as the definition of that term.

In August and September of 2015, with just over a year yet to go until the general election and just over four months until the Iowa Caucuses and the New Hampshire Primary, the Republicans had two outsiders, Trump and Carson, leading their ticket both nationally and in those early states and Fiorina was moving up noticeably in the polls after a well-reviewed performance in the first two Republican debates. Later, as more revelations about her record at Hewlett-Packard became more widely known, her poll numbers declined dramatically and she dropped out of the top tier of candidates. By November, Trump and Carson continued to dominate and attracted close to a majority of all potential Republican primary voters.

CHAPTER 2 - THE CANDIDATES AND LESSONS FOR 2016

The Democratic Candidates

The race for the Democratic nomination was not nearly as crowded. It ultimately attracted only six official candidates. This number is much more in line with the usual norms for an open seat. This smaller number is probably influenced substantially by the presence of the early front-runner, Hillary Clinton, who many observers thought would be the dominant and odds-on favorite. By the measurement of objective credentials, the nation had not seen a candidate with the unique set of offices held and public image established quite like Hillary Clinton.

She had been First Lady when her husband, Bill Clinton, had occupied the White House from 1993 through 2000. From there Clinton went on to be elected U. S. Senator from New York in 2000 and was re-elected in 2006. She famously ran against Obama for the Democratic nomination in 2008 and their fight for the nomination took on historic proportions (Jackson, 2015 and 2009). Then she became Secretary of State in Obama's first term administration. All of these prior offices allowed her to claim a unique set of experiences and skills to be president and Clinton started the early campaign season as the clear front-runner for the Democrats.

Another early favorite who appeared to be a potentially serious challenge to Hillary Clinton was Vice President Joe Biden. The early polls showed that he was a second strongest Democratic candidate behind Clinton although he later dropped to third in many polls.

He first ran for president in 1988 and in some respects had never stopped running. He was a declared candidate again in 2008 although he, along with other more traditional candidates, like fellow Senator Chris Dodd, were ineffectual in their challenge to Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. He did get to be Vice President, however, as a very nice consolation prize for that effort and in recognition of his three plus decades of service in the U. S. Senate and his legitimate credentials as Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and before that Chair of the

Senate Judiciary Committee. In addition, Biden was a creature of the Senate and knew all the major players on both sides of the aisle and was at home in the wheeling and dealing of the legislative process.

This was an area where Barack Obama needed help and Biden became Obama's most important ambassador to Capitol Hill during their eight years in office together. Biden however endured a family tragedy when his son, Beau Biden, who had been Attorney General of Delaware and was an Iraq war veteran, died of a brain tumor in May 2015. This tragedy was compounded by the earlier loss of Biden's first wife and daughter in a car accident when Beau was only five years old. Biden's family obligations and mourning for his son contributed to the sense that he might not have the emotional stamina to make what would be a demanding and brutalizing race if he chose to run. His very public musing over that issue contributed to persistent doubts about whether he had the "fire in the belly" necessary to face up to the rigors and privations of the campaign trail for over a year. He promised a final decision by the end of October and he opted not to run.

The other potential names in the early horse race polls included former Governor Martin O'Malley of Maryland, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, Independent Senator Bernard Sanders of Vermont and former Senator Jim Webb of Virginia. While each of these currently held office or had recently left office and was well-known in their own states, none had the high name recognition and national reputations that Clinton and Biden had long enjoyed (Balz and Clement, April 2, 2015). Warren and Cuomo ultimately did not make the race while Webb, O'Malley and Sanders did. Later the others were joined by Lincoln Chafee, who was former governor of Rhode Island, and a former Republican Senator, who had defected to become a Democrat.

After Warren very firmly rejected making a run for the nomination, the Democratic Party's left wing turned to Sanders. He was

officially designated as an Independent in the U. S. Senate although he caucused with the Democrats. He variously called himself a Socialist or a Democratic Socialist which clearly indicated his position on the ideological spectrum. The fact that he had never actually run before as a Democrat made it somewhat difficult to imagine that he could defeat Hillary Clinton although some on the left were certainly very loyal to him. The early polls showed Warren was the most popular alternative for those who did not want Clinton.

Later the polls showed Sanders picking up most of the Warren support on the left after she declined to run. He gained significant ground on Clinton in Iowa and New Hampshire and came to tie or slightly exceed her in the polls for those two early states although he trailed her by a twenty percent margin in the nation-wide polls (Real Clear Politics, September 14, 2015). The media gave him enormous attention as they looked for an alternative to Clinton, and he emerged as the candidate most likely to succeed in taking on that mantle if Biden did not run. The challenge for Sanders was to broaden his appeal while at the same time not losing those who were drawn to his ideological purity which is a challenge those who are most clearly ideologues always face.

As almost a footnote, the official list also included Lawrence Lessig, a Political Science Professor from Harvard, who filed his papers and was a single issue candidate running to attract media attention for his major cause of campaign finance reform. Neither Chaffee nor Lessig got much media coverage or raised much money and neither figured in the mix of serious candidates for the nomination.

So who will the Democrats and the Republicans choose in 2016? It will cost hundreds of millions, perhaps a billion dollars, for each of the parties and the nation to find the answer to that question. However, it is certainly possible to discern some basic lessons from the past which can be helpful guideposts for the informed observer:

The Schedule and the Rules

All of the candidates understand to a greater or lesser degree that the calendar and the rules of the game would play a critical role in how the game would be played. **Those who understand these external rules based parameters the most clearly and who develop a strategy designed for the long distance race are the most likely to win.** The overall strategic plan must include a national component which weaves the disparate campaign components together and presents the major rationale for the candidate's nomination and gives careful attention to the state-by-state coalition which must be knitted together to produce a winning combination of delegate votes for the first ballot roll call at the national convention. The national and state party rules create a complex labyrinth of primaries and caucuses which has to be negotiated very deliberately.

The Invisible Primary for this round started early, even before the mid-term elections in November of 2014, and intensified the day after the congressional results which produced a massive Republican sweep were announced (Hadley, 1976). The pre-nominations stage of the season had already grown intense by January of 2015 and only grew hotter during that year as candidates maneuvered and jockeyed to gain position, supporters and resources in the build-up to 2016. The official starting bells, the national conventions, were still over a year away.

The first-in-the nation Iowa Caucus would be held on February 1, 2016 followed quickly by the New Hampshire Primary on February 9. Then the Nevada Caucuses for the Democrats would be held on February 20th and for the Republicans on February 23. The South Carolina Republican Primary was scheduled for February 20th and the South Carolina Democratic Primary for February 27th. **(See Appendix B for the full nominations schedule).** These would be the only party sanctioned early events and anyone outside those windows would face penalties from the national parties.

CHAPTER 2 - THE CANDIDATES AND LESSONS FOR 2016

According to the rules, all the other states were supposed to hold their contests between March 1 and the second Tuesday in June in order to be in compliance with national party rules. March 1, 2016 became the opening of the official window when national party rules allowed all states to first schedule their primaries or caucuses without party approval. It quickly became the focus of what was called the “SEC Primary” which designated it as a de facto southern primary for that year. It was scheduled to include a total of thirteen states with eight being southern or border states on what has been dubbed “Super Tuesday.”

By pushing the opening rounds to later in the year, both parties were attempting to avoid the worst features of the “frontloading” of the primary calendar which previously had been moving more and more states toward early January of election year.

In addition, the Republicans adjusted their 2012 rules regarding the use of Proportional Representation (P. R.) and Winner-Take-All primaries. In 2012 they required P. R. to be used in the states which held primaries before April 1. (The Democrats had emphasized P. R. since the McGovern-Fraser rules in 1970 and had officially mandated it in 1992). The Republicans changed the 2016 rules to require use of P. R. before March 15th. Primaries held after that date could revert to the more traditional Winner-Take-All rules, which mean that those candidates who get the most votes in a primary will get all the delegates. The Winner-Take-All rules help the leading candidate to develop momentum and thus help the party to select its nominee earlier in the season (Jackson, 2015; Nagourney and Martin, September 19, 2015). Undoubtedly the RNC knew that and reduced the P.R. window in order to help encourage an early closure to their 2016 race.

The Republican National Committee in its meeting of January 15, 2015 also adopted a set of rules which attempted to significantly reduce the number of presidential nominee debates. The heavy use and focus on presidential nominations debates was a relatively new

phenomenon which seemed to explode in 2012. The Republicans held more than twenty debates in 2012 and many observers contended the excessive number and rancor of those debates had harmed the party’s eventual nominee, Mitt Romney, in the general election since as the front-runner he was the target of most of the criticisms from his rivals. The RNC decreed there would be just nine sanctioned and official debates this time. The DNC decreed they would hold only six presidential debates reflecting their much smaller field. Later, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz faced intense pressure to expand the number although she resisted that pressure knowing full well that more debates would only exacerbate the party’s internal divisions.

The RNC and DNC also specified the debates should start later than they had in 2012 and be more tightly controlled as to sponsors and the threshold level criteria required for candidates to participate. With seventeen candidates initially, this decision became especially relevant to the Republicans as they sought to winnow down their field as early as possible.

All of this procedural maneuvering was designed to tamp down the divisiveness of the nominations season and intra-party conflict which was so evident in 2012 as well as come to closure on the nominee much earlier than they were able to do in 2012 (Balz and Rucker, January 15, 2015).

Fox News held the first presidential primaries debate for the Republicans on August 6, 2015, and the jockeying for position and to be included in the top ten was intense. Fox ultimately decided on the novel idea of having the top ten candidates in the polls included in the main event and those from number eleven to seventeen included in a warm up debate held earlier in the evening. The second debate was held on September 16, and competition for a position on the main stage was just as intense the second time around. The two tiered format continued although Carly Fiorina was added to the top group as a result of her rise in the polls. In the interim, former Texas Governor, Rick Perry, dropped out on September 11th even before the

second debate. The inexorable winnowing process had begun in earnest and had claimed its first victim.

Trump clearly got most of the media attention and credit for winning the first debate. He managed to dominate the stage and much of the discussion and his attacks on his opponents during and after the debate got most of the media's attention. For the rest of August, the media focused almost entirely on Trump and what he was saying. The only way one of the other Republicans could garner much media attention was to attack Trump or be attacked by him. Perhaps as a result of this outsized media attention Trump began a steady rise in the polls.

As August turned to September, Trump was leading polls of the Republican field at first with one fourth of the vote and then rising to 30 percent. Carson was steadily in second place and Bush, the former leader, struggled to stay in the top tier in most polls. No one else was above single digits as the second debate opened on September 16th. Trump bore the brunt of most attacks in the second debate and seemed to be much less dominant in that round. Fiorina, and to a lesser extent Marco Rubio, got the media's decision as to who "won" that debate. Not surprisingly, Fiorina and Rubio then moved up in the national polls while Trump's lead shrunk a bit although he still retained the top spot (Rapoport, September 20, 2015).

Scott Walker dropped out on September 21 amid poor polling results and having not done well in either debate. At that point two had already dropped out, but fifteen official candidates remained.

The top three candidates for the Republicans in September included Trump, Carson, and Fiorina, none of whom had ever held public office previously. Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio rounded out the top five in both the Bloomberg and Quinnipiac polls (Real Clear Politics, September 24, 2015).

Media observers consistently emphasized that over fifty percent of potential Republican primary voters wanted an outsider nominee and took this as a sign of the much touted

desire for a non-politician to lead the nation. However, this prevailing narrative did not take into account the staying power of the party's establishment and both Trump and Fiorina had many detractors within the party itself and all three had numerous external critics. Those critics apparently had a fairly quick impact on Fiorina as the critiques of her days as CEO spread after the second debate and her poll ratings dropped from the top three into the second tier again. **Over the long haul it seemed probable that the experienced politicians would likely outlast the non-traditional candidates and one of them, most likely Bush or Rubio, would coalesce the party's establishment and go on to become the party's nominee. It also seemed most likely that if Fiorina wound up on the ticket it would be as the GOP nominee for Vice President.**

The first debate for the Democrats was held on October 13th in Las Vegas, Nevada. The next day polls and commentary by the media and political elites gave the victory to Hillary Clinton with Bernie Sanders also doing fairly well. They agreed that O'Malley had done perhaps an adequate job but had not done enough to break out of the second tier. The other two, Chafee and Webb, were all but counted out of the race by the next day. On October 20, Webb officially dropped out of the race for the Democratic nomination. He said he was no longer comfortable in the party and was actively considering a run as an Independent. Lincoln Chafee dropped out three days later on October 23rd. He cited lack of widespread support and lack of money but promised to continue to advocate for a variety of causes he believe in. In effect the first debate had taken two casualties. The winnowing process had begun for the Democrats.

The commentators also claimed that the clear loser was Joe Biden since one of the major rationales for his candidacy was predicated on the possible collapse of Hillary Clinton's campaign and the predicted un-electability of Bernie Sanders. Neither prediction appeared to be very plausible after the first debate, and this made

A vertical strip of an American flag, showing the stars and stripes, runs along the left edge of the page.

CHAPTER 2 - THE CANDIDATES AND LESSONS FOR 2016

Biden's path to a possible nomination seem much more obscure on October 14th than it had been the day before. Biden dropped out on October 21st citing family considerations and his own lack of full and unequivocal commitment to the challenge. So, in that one single week, three of the potential Democratic candidates dropped out of the race and only three real choices were left. **In the wake of Biden's withdrawal, the polls showed Clinton to be in the strongest position nation-wide. Her campaign organization, infrastructure and fundraising were imposing and she certainly appeared to be in a commanding position at that point; however, that presumptive front-runner status would have to be confirmed by the votes of real people in the primaries and caucuses before her nomination was ensured.**

On November 13th, terrorists attacked bars, restaurants and a concert hall in Paris. 130 people were killed at the hands of radicals affiliated with or inspired by ISIS. Naturally this tragedy then had an impact on the American presidential race. On the Republican side the fallout helped Trump and Cruz both of whom were hard-liners on the questions of immigration and whether to allow any refugees from Syria to be relocated to the United States. According to the polls Carson's support took a significant nosedive as he struggled to articulate clear answers to major foreign policy questions.

On the Democratic side the polls showed Hillary Clinton's lead firming up and increasing to a two to one (60% to 30%) advantage over Bernie Sanders who also seemed to have difficulty with foreign policy and terrorism issues. **Unexpected events, especially external threats to America's security are always possible intervening influences and candidates are frequently judged on how they respond to such challenges.**

After the debate season began the rules of the game were in place and started to dictate the pace and unfolding contours of the nominations contest. The debates and the daily campaign grind would dominate the news through the remainder of the fall and into the winter.

Traditionally this season is dominated by the mass media and the candidates and their campaign organizations and a lot of political maneuvering and inside baseball.

The start of the new year is where the voters start to weigh in and make their power count. It would start with the Iowa caucuses on February 1st and the New Hampshire primary on February 9th, and would gain speed and intensity every week after then. **(See Appendix B for the schedule).** Thus began the long internal party struggle to see which of these contenders would still be left standing when the Republicans gathered in their national convention in Cleveland on July 18-21 and the Democrats in Philadelphia starting July 25.

Only two candidates ultimately will have the personal stamina, political acumen and formidable financial and organizational assets required to go the distance necessary to gain the grand prize, the presidential nomination of one of the major parties midway through the second decade of the Twenty-First Century.

CHAPTER 3

THE PAST IS THE PROLOGUE:

THE EARLIER CAMPAIGNS AND WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THEM

As a backdrop to 2016, this paper sets each earlier nomination contest and general election between 1976 and 2012 into a larger historic context. This discussion will provide some detail on the nomination and general election contests for each year. It will provide a roadmap to America's presidential election history over four decades of turbulent and transformative political development.

The 1976 election was chosen as a starting point because it was the first nominations contest when the McGovern-Fraser Rules were fully implemented in the Democratic Party and this election, along with the Nixon – McGovern contest of 1972, actually started what is called the Reform Era which fundamentally changed the way we make presidential nominations (Jackson, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 1976). Most notably it was the time when the presidential primaries became primary, that is, became the necessary route to victory in the nomination process. The system shifted from one where the party elites or insiders could dominate the nominations -- which had been the case since the advent of the national conventions in 1832-- to one where the mass voters had to be included and winning their support was a necessary condition for attaining the nomination.

The Reform Era also fundamentally changed the political parties, the presidency and the way public policy is made in the United States in the 21st Century. This condition is often called “polarization” to refer to the party, ideological, geographic, racial and class divisions which have marked American politics recently and which have made it difficult, and often impossible to get anything of great significance made into public policy.

This is the era when the polarized party system we now find so familiar took shape and developed into the institutionalized form it has

become over the past four decades. This section of the paper outlines the leading candidates and issues of the day and provides the narrative for how the contest unfolded, what the calendar and sequence looked like and which rules helped make a difference. Each national election occurs in a particular political and chronological context, and it is important to understand that context. That election then has a significant impact on the historic period which follows it, and particularly on the fate of the political parties.

One of the basic themes of this paper is that the elections, the candidates nominated, their campaigns, the campaign and party activists mobilized, and notably the ideological and issue positions taken by the candidates matter a great deal. They have a major impact on defining the political parties and creating and sustaining their name brands and images for the American public. This is true in the general elections, and perhaps even more so in the primaries when the candidates usually have to tack to the more extreme ends of the ideological continuum in order to appeal to each party's core supporters.

Candidate identification and image, and both elite and mass polarization, especially publicized and emphasized in the primary season, have become the major products of the recent epic era of party development this author has described elsewhere (Jackson, 2015).

This an era when party and ideological polarization has come to be the major defining feature of the political landscape and constant competition and raucous conflict between the two major parties has become endemic to the way the system works, or many times does not work. The analysis of the candidates nominated by the parties and their campaigns, their issue and ideological positions and the issue groups and party factions they represent and how they ultimately prevailed and who they defeated is

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significant. It is essential to understanding the type of political parties, and in turn the mass appeal based presidential politics, which have emerged in the last three decades of the 20th Century and the first decade of the 21st Century. These conditions have only intensified since the 2010 and 2014 mid-term elections which accelerated and exacerbated the polarized politics that will inhabit and enrage the 2016 elections like a national fever.

The Nominations and Campaigns

1976

The Democrats in 1976

In the annals of presidential history and strategic decision making, the Jimmy Carter nomination campaign of 1976 will always hold a special place because he understood and used the new rules so effectively and won an unexpected victory as an outsider candidate. Carter and his advisers observed the McGovern campaign of 1972 and studied carefully the major product of the reform era, the new Democratic Party rules controlling presidential nominations. From that experience, Carter and especially his chief campaign strategist, Hamilton Jordan, devised an overall strategic plan for approaching the caucus-primary season from a carefully thought out and rational overview of their basic objective and how to accomplish it. In 1975 Jordan wrote a now-famous memo to Carter outlining the strategy and giving the rationale for it, and Carter followed the basic outline of that memo all the way to the Democratic Party's nomination (Witcover, 1977, chapter 4).

Key to their early plans was to win or at least make a "better than expected" showing in the Iowa caucuses and then to use that momentum to win other early contests. At that time Iowa was not especially well known for being the first in the nation contest, although it had helped McGovern get early notice in 1972 (Winebrenner and Goldford, 2010). Jordan and Carter recognized Iowa's potential for establishing a candidate as a serious contender very early in the season, and perhaps even capturing the

front-runner mantle. This was especially important for an "outsider" candidate like Carter, a former one-term governor of Georgia, who at that time had no real national reputation and low levels of name recognition.

Ultimately Carter's carefully laid plan for Iowa and his long months of campaigning in that state paid off. Contrary to popular lore, he did not actually win Iowa, i.e. he did not receive the most votes in the first round of the caucuses. That place was claimed by "Uncommitted" which previously had been a viable way for the party leaders who wanted more time to make up their minds and to preserve their room for maneuvering at the conventions, to remain out of the camp of any candidates while they sought the best deal for themselves and their states. The day of the "uncommitted" delegations controlled by the party leaders was rapidly coming to a close and had probably already passed in most states by 1976 as the new party rules effectively made that strategy obsolete. Carter's finish as the top vote-getter among the candidates in Iowa garnered him the front page of the newspapers and the cover of news magazines throughout the nation in the next week (Witcover, 1977, Ch. 8-13).

The Iowa caucus was the perfect launching pad for the New Hampshire primary which came next, but it was held on February 24, 1976, late by more modern standards. Carter achieved an unqualified victory in the New Hampshire primary finishing ahead of all the other candidates despite winning only 28 percent of the popular vote. Subsequently there were many other state primaries and caucuses and some losses to Senator Henry Jackson of Washington and California Governor Jerry Brown. Brown was to the left of Carter and Jackson was more conservative, leaving Carter in the enviable position of seeming to be at the middle of the Democratic Party which at that time was the most advantageous strategic placement. Carter won the most primaries and won the total popular vote by a wide margin, and he wrapped up the nomination well before the convention started.

The Democrats managed to hold a harmonious convention in 1976, quite unlike 1972, and they used it to unite the party and to launch their general election campaign. Carter, and his running-mate, Walter Mondale, came through the nominations season successfully and they went on to win the general election against an incumbent president a feat which had not been accomplished previously since Franklin Roosevelt turned out Herbert Hoover in 1932.

The Republicans in 1976

Republican Gerald Ford, who was our only appointed president, faced a tough climate for the fall race. His party was divided by a strong challenge from the former Governor of California, Ronald Reagan, who tried to wrestle the party's nomination away from the incumbent by running to Ford's right. The Republican convention was deeply and closely divided, but Ford ultimately prevailed. The party's internal division between the conservative wing led by Reagan and the more moderate wing led by Ford was on vivid display during the primaries. Those internal wounds were exacerbated by the primary season's bad blood and not entirely healed during the national convention.

In the fall Ford's campaign faced the tough challenge of uniting the party base while also appealing to Independents and disgruntled Democrats. He was not able to accomplish that strategic objective and he lost a close popular vote to Carter. Carter won the presidential election with 50.1 percent of the popular vote compared to 48.0 percent for Ford taking 297 electoral votes compared to 240 for Ford (Stanley and Niemi, 1998, 103). Trends and patterns put into place in 1972 and 1976 are still very much with us today. The necessity of winning or doing better than expected in some of the early contests was especially set by the Carter example in Iowa and New Hampshire and those two contests are particularly important still.

The nearly successful challenge Reagan posed to Ford's nomination in 1976 demonstrated just how far the conservative movement had come within the Republican Party. The fact

that Ford lost to Carter in 1976 suggests that the internal factional battle that Ford had to face in the primary season continued to hurt his candidacy in the fall campaign. The somewhat tepid response of the conservatives to Ford's candidacy helped to doom him in the general election although certainly the context of the Watergate scandal and Ford's pardon of Nixon were important factors as well.

The 1976 GOP contest showed **the Republican Party base had clearly shifted to the right and the balance of power within the party was shifting toward the South and West and away from the Northeast and the Midwest.** The fact that Ford felt it necessary to dump his current Vice President, Nelson Rockefeller of New York off the ticket and replace him with the much more conservative Robert Dole from Kansas indicated this power shift. Republican power was shifting rapidly from an old party establishment based in the East and Northeast to a new and much more conservative elite based in the South and West.

That shift became more permanent when Reagan went on to win the Republican nomination and the presidency in both 1980 and 1984. Since then conservatives in the South and West have become the base of the Republican Party and a formidable force in the party while the more moderate Northeastern base of an earlier generation steadily lost influence during the last of the 20th Century and has almost disappeared in the 21st Century.

1980

The Democrats in 1980

In 1980 Jimmy Carter was the incumbent president seeking a second term. Carter campaigned as a moderate in 1976 and generally tried to govern as a non-ideological pragmatist during his term in office. He was frequently in trouble with the liberals in his own party and he came under withering fire from the conservatives on the Republican side. Carter was thought to be in some electoral trouble late in 1979 and early in 1980 because of the voters' general unhappiness with the economic conditions of that

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era. The nation's economic problems had been especially exacerbated by the "oil shocks" of the mid 1970s when the oil cartel known as OPEC, or the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, used a combination of production caps and price increases to rapidly drive up the price of crude oil on the world market, which led to dramatic increases in the price of gasoline.

Because of the energy price shocks the United States reached a state of both high inflation and low economic growth which combined in what was termed "stagflation." This deadly combination led to additional criticism of Carter and his administration's handling of the economy.

The critique of Carter was broadened when on November 4, 1979, militants in Iran, mostly young people, seized the American Embassy in Tehran and took 52 Americans hostage. This happened almost exactly one year before the American presidential elections of November, 1980.

At the time no one dreamed that the crisis would continue throughout the election year. The Carter Administration tried repeatedly to negotiate the release of the American hostages. At first, the hostage crisis worked to Carter's advantage as he enjoyed the "rally round the flag" effect which is typical of public opinion when American interests are challenged overseas and American nationals are placed in jeopardy (Mueller, 1973). This advantage was particularly helpful to Carter in the spring of 1980 when he faced an internal party challenge for the nomination from Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy.

The last surviving brother from one of the most respected families in the Democratic Party, Kennedy had been expected to run for the White House since at least 1972 after his brother, Robert, was assassinated the night of the California primary in June of 1968. Edward Kennedy was an effective senator and had become an important Progressive voice in the senate. The Kennedy versus Carter conflict divided the Democratic Party along the ideo-

logical wings among other factors. Kennedy was clearly seen as representing the more liberal wing of the party while Carter appealed more to the moderates and to some liberals as well. Carter knew that the Kennedy challenge would be a formidable one and that many Democrats felt that Kennedy was entitled to his run. Deft use of the external threat from Iran enabled Carter to weather the Kennedy challenge in the spring even though Kennedy started the race with many advantages of his own (Canellos, 2009).

Carter got off to a quick start winning the first round of the Iowa caucuses by a 51 to 31 percent margin. He then beat Kennedy by 10 percent in the New Hampshire Primary on February 26. Since New Hampshire is next door to Kennedy's home state of Massachusetts, this loss did not help start Kennedy's campaign off on a promising note. Although Kennedy did win his home state primary handily one week later, Carter took neighboring Vermont's primary by a three to one margin and he won the Maine caucuses handily (Ragsdale, 1998, 53).

Then Carter swept three southern primaries, Florida, Georgia and Alabama, on March 11th by wide margins. He followed that with a 65 to 30 percent victory in the Illinois Primary on March 18th. In Illinois Carter piled up the delegates where he took 155 of the 169 delegate slots available (Canellos, 2009, 10). It is notable that Iowa, New Hampshire and the southern primaries plus a quick victory in Illinois had formed the early basis for Carter's victory in 1976, and he repeated that pattern in 1980. Then the race shifted to more liberal territory and Kennedy won New York by almost 20 percent on March 25th and Connecticut by a closer margin the same day (Ragsdale, 1998, 54).

These Kennedy victories breathed some fresh life into his campaign and showed that Carter did indeed have some problems in some of the more liberal Northeastern states. Kennedy's comeback however was only temporary. He did not win any more primaries except for a very narrow victory in Pennsylvania on April

22nd and a two to one victory in the D. C. primary on May 6th. Those scattered Kennedy wins were too little, too late. As the season wore on and Carter maintained the momentum and built his delegate lead, it became increasingly likely that Carter was going to prevail in the convention.

Carter won far more primaries and caucuses and more popular votes than Kennedy did by a considerable margin. Carter won 9.5 million popular votes to 6.9 million for Kennedy (Cook, 2007, 23). In the end he won 23 primaries compared to 9 for Kennedy (Cook, 2007, 23). Total aggregate primary votes won and number of states won became important indicators of the candidate's strength in the party and projected strength in the general election. By both metrics, Carter was well ahead and increasingly likely to prevail on the first ballot; however, Kennedy refused to drop out and vowed to stay in the race all the way to the convention. Only a significant upset based on some external event or fundamental change in the rules would provide a path for a Kennedy upset in the national convention.

Carter went into the Democratic National Convention held in New York City on August 11-14 with significantly more pledged delegates than Kennedy had, and in the final analysis this became the key since almost all of those delegates stayed loyal to their pledge to vote for the president on the procedural challenges and on the first roll call. The Carter campaign firmly controlled the mechanics of the national convention, if not the optics, and the week was spent in a series of tactical moves by Kennedy designed to shake up the equation and to deny Carter a first ballot victory. The Democrats were definitely a party divided by internal strife and this division was easily evident to the national television audience. On the night of Carter's acceptance speech Kennedy refused to concede to Carter except in a most perfunctory manner.

The spectacle of internal party conflict and bad blood between Carter and Kennedy was graphically on display for a national television audience the last evening, and when it was over

the Democratic National Convention had failed to perform one of its most basic functions which is to bring the party together and unite it behind a single candidate by week's end. The whole national convention was one negative portent for the tough campaign which Carter faced in the fall. The fact that the Iranian hostage crisis was still continuing over a year later on the day of the national elections led to dire predictions near the campaign's conclusion about Carter's diminishing chances of beating Reagan. The Iranian hostage crisis and the deadly economic problems of high inflation and low levels of economic growth ultimately doomed Carter to be a one term president.

The Kennedy insurgency against the incumbent president in 1980 was partially based in ideology with the liberals primarily favoring Kennedy and the moderate and conservative party activists overwhelmingly in support of Carter. This is the way it has often been in the Democratic primaries and conventions with the liberal activists trying to drive the agenda to the left and the moderates resisting, sometimes successfully, often not very effectively. The struggle of these two factions has been the major fault line of Democratic Party politics for a generation. Successful presidential candidates, like Clinton and Obama, transcended it. Unsuccessful ones get caught between the ideological pincers and are ground up by them.

Carter made a race of it in 1980 and he stayed very close in the polls until nearly the end of the campaign; however, the division within the party helped to doom his re-election bid in the fall as he faltered against Reagan during the last week to ten days of the campaign. Until then, and the single presidential debate held late in October, the race between Carter and Reagan was a statistical tie in the polls, and the election could have gone either way. Reagan's performance in the debate, and the media's reaction to Reagan's avuncular presentation style, has been credited with sealing the deal with the American public.

News stories that followed in the final campaign week focused on the fact that it was

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the one year anniversary of the Iranian hostage crisis, with no solution in sight, and the Carter Administration's handling of the crisis appeared to be ineffectual. On Sunday morning before the Tuesday election Americans awoke to front-page newspaper pictures of Iranians burning the American flag in celebration of their anniversary of holding the hostages. The die was cast.

The polls, which had been essentially tied during the whole race, turned in the last week against Carter and toward Reagan. Ultimately Reagan won a bare majority with 50.7 percent of the popular vote while Carter took 41 percent and Congressman John Anderson running as an Independent captured 6.6 percent. Based on that margin, however, Reagan won a landslide of 489 Electoral College votes to Carter's 49 (Archer, et. al, 2006, 49). Carter won only his home state of Georgia plus his running-mate Walter Mondale's home state, Minnesota, along with West Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Carter's political demise was due in part to the defections in 1980 of what came to be called the "Reagan Democrats", i.e. blue collar and working class Democrats who decided to go with the candidate appeal of Reagan instead of voting for their own issue preferences and on basis of their historic party identification. There were also internal party structural divisions which continued into the more modern era represented by those who support the moderate Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) which was often at odds with the more liberal components of the Democratic Party's coalition. Sometimes these factional camps seemed more intent on prevailing against the rival faction than they are dedicated to defeating the other party. That was certainly the case for the Democrats and their internal divisions which were very publicly displayed in the 1980 race and which led to their loss in the general election.

The Republicans in 1980

It is usually forgotten now, but there was a spirited contest for the Republican nomination for president in 1980. Ronald Reagan was prob-

ably the initial favorite, but not the prohibitive favorite for the nomination in the early primaries. He had made a preliminary run for the presidential nomination in 1968 in a challenge against Nixon which was abandoned fairly early. He then made a determined bid against Ford in 1976 in a conflict which probably helped seal Ford's fate in the general election. Reagan never stopped running after he lost the nomination to Ford in 1976, and he immediately set his sights on 1980. He was the champion of the conservative movement in the United States having by then assumed Goldwater's mantle, and conservatives were determined that their time had come under Reagan's banner. Thus, 1980 was Reagan's third try for the Republican nomination, and it would probably have been his last if he had lost to one of the other candidates.

In the winter and spring of 1980 the battle for the Republican nomination settled down quickly into a contest between the two leading contenders, George H. W. Bush and Ronald Reagan. Bush was widely seen as representing the more moderate side of the Republican Party while Reagan had the allegiance of most of the conservatives. Bush was widely reported to be pro-choice, and his wife, Barbara Bush, in public comments left no doubt that she favored the pro-choice side of the argument.

Bush got off to a quick start when he won the Iowa caucuses. He happily claimed the momentum in the race or "The Big Mo" as he termed it in a memorable phrase which has stuck in the lingua franca of campaign jargon. However, on February 26th Bush lost the New Hampshire primary to Reagan (Ragsdale, 1998, 53). Bush probably lost the New Hampshire primary when in a dramatic, made for television moment at a Republican candidate debate which was billed to be limited to the top two candidates, Reagan and Bush, by mutual consent, Reagan invited the other candidates to participate. Reagan dramatically declared that he had paid for the microphone and that he could do whatever he wanted with it even though the rules both camps had agreed to beforehand stipulated that the top two candidates in the polls were

the only ones participating in that debate. Bush looked pained and uncomfortable during the incident and said nothing, but all the commentators agreed that Reagan's confident assertiveness during that incident had won the debate. Note that it was style, not substance, that had carried the day.

No one paid much attention to the substance and truth of the answers the contestants had given, but focused on the dramatic microphone incident instead. This focus on style became the pattern for the reporting on future debates and the media evaluations of who won.

The moment illustrated just how effectively Reagan used the mass media, especially television and his skills as an actor to his advantage (Schieffer and Gates, 1989). For a brief period there was a real contest underway particularly when Bush won some early primaries in his native New England. Reagan then scored significant victories in the South and the West and his camp prevailed handily over the challenge being offered by Bush, and most of the other candidates quickly dropped out. Bush ultimately won only six primaries (Michigan, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, D. C. and Puerto Rico) although he refused to concede until very late (C. Q. 2001, 138; Rhodes Cook, 2007, 23). Reagan won the rest and was clearly on his way to a first ballot victory at the convention.

Some suggested Reagan ask Gerald Ford to be his vice president candidate on a sort of "unity ticket"; however, Reagan quickly settled on George H. W. Bush as his running mate. In this choice Reagan was reaching out to his most successful primary opponent. He was also thought to be reaching out to a different part of the ideological spectrum in the Republican Party. Although the moderate faction won on a few platform issues, the conservatives associated with Reagan advocated a number of platform planks that were very conservative, and they successfully turned the party to the right by their actions and rhetoric.

An explicitly anti-abortion plank was adopted for the first time, and it called for a

constitutional amendment to outlaw abortions and overturn *Roe v. Wade*. (C. Q., National Party Conventions, 139; Craig and O'Brien, 1993, 314). Before that, the conflict over abortion had not cleanly divided the two parties into two distinct camps on this issue. Although moderates in the Republican Party objected to the plank and tried to have it removed, it stayed in the platform and has been in each subsequent Republican platform. The party moved decisively to the right in 1980 and precedents established then are still operative today. This and other precedents for the Republican Party's basic issue positions were set in 1980 and the party has maintained these conservative positions each election since then. In addition, that year Republicans pledged that their president would only nominate federal judges who were clearly pro-life and this was the first example of the so-called "litmus test" being introduced into the equation for the appointment of federal judges. This has been an important issue for every Republican convention since 1980.

The fights between liberals and moderates inside the Democratic Party and among conservatives inside the Republican Party have been ongoing since the 1980 conventions and national election. Many of the issue positions which are emblematic for each party now were adopted during this era as well. Republican Party platforms have been very conservative since then, and the 1980 take-over of the party by Reagan's disciples was clearly the tipping point for the clarification of the differences the Republicans were offering compared to their Democratic counterparts (C. Q., 2001, 138-139). The fact that Reagan went on to win a resounding victory over Jimmy Carter in the general election served to assure conservatives that their stance was the correct one for the party's future success and to demonstrate that conservative positions would be supported or at least tolerated by the larger voting public. The conservative wing of the Republican Party since then has dominated the party from the 1980 convention all the way through the 2008 and 2012 conventions.

CHAPTER 3 - THE PAST IS THE PROLOGUE

To the Left, to the Right or to the Center?

After their 2006, 2008 and 2012 election loses Republican party leaders debated what should be the future of their party heading into the 2014 and 2016 elections. Whether to continue their hard turn to the right and vote for the most conservative candidate or take a somewhat more pragmatic view and vote for the candidate they think may be more viable in the fall campaign, which may be a candidate with at least some moderate appeal is a crucial question each Republican delegate and party activist must face each nomination season.

The Democratic activists face the same dilemma on the left side of the spectrum. That debate continues in both major parties as the conflict between the ideological wings of the parties and the more moderate middle is applicable in both cases. Until recently it was more apparent among the Democrats than among the Republicans with the fight between the Democratic Leadership Council and other moderate Democrats, like the Blue Dog contingent, and the liberal factions usually attracting the most media notice.

In 2009, however, the Tea Party burst on the scene as a vehement opponent to the Obama Administration's policies. The Tea Party then took aim at several Republican Establishment candidates, especially for the U. S. Senate, and scored some major victories in Republican primaries in 2010, 2012 and 2014. It was clear from various analyses that the Tea Party enthusiasts were predominantly disenchanted Republicans and that they fell on the hard right of the political spectrum. Suddenly the factional strife within the Republican Party was front and center in the mass media and the nation's consciousness.

Factional strife lives on as a conflict generator common to both major parties. How they manage that factional strife is critical to the health and future of each of the two parties and the debates have continued since the conservative take over in 1980.

1984

The Republicans in 1984

The 1984 election season presented a stark contrast in candidate fortunes. Reagan as the incumbent took his party's nomination with no effective challenger in the primaries. He coasted through the primary season and saved his energy and money for the general election. The negative examples of the Kennedy challenge to Carter in 1980 and Reagan's challenge to Ford in 1976 illustrated graphically the pitfalls of the incumbent's having to face a strong primary challenger, and the Reagan forces were determined not to repeat those two scenarios. The Republican National Convention, held in Dallas, Texas, on August 20-23, became a re-coronation of Reagan and an opportunity for the Republicans to celebrate what they saw as the successes of Reagan's first term (C. Q. National Party Conventions, 2001, 24, 146-147). The conservatives were in complete control of the party in this early phase of the age of Reagan although beneath the surface there was still some dissent from the moderates.

By and large the national convention went very well and according to the script written and directed by the Reagan campaign and designed to showcase their candidate and causes for the general election battle.

The Republicans spent their time and energy in Dallas getting ready for the upcoming campaign and developing the themes they would use against the Democrats in the fall. There was some high profile dissent outside the convention hall and even one widely covered flag-burning which ultimately became a landmark U. S. Supreme Court case; however, the demonstrators were kept far from the hall and only provided unifying fodder for the speakers inside the convention to rail against. In the modern age of media driven politics the conventions are an important and integral part of a larger overall strategy and message, and planning and executing their scripts smoothly is what successful presidential campaigns use the conventions to accomplish. This is what the Republicans did like a well-oiled machine in their

national convention of 1984.

The Democrats in 1984

By contrast, Walter Mondale, who was the former Vice-President, and the early front-runner, faced a serious internal party challenge in 1984 from Gary Hart and from Jesse Jackson. Jackson was the prominent civil rights leader who had been a chief lieutenant to Dr. Martin Luther King and who had emerged in subsequent years as a high profile civil rights leader in his own right with a strong political base in Chicago where he was headquartered. Jackson had a significant following in the African-American community, and even those who did not personally support him also did not want to see him disrespected by the Democrats. Hart was an incumbent Senator from Colorado and had been George McGovern's campaign manager in 1972. He was given much credit for having shaped McGovern's upset victory for the nomination that year. Hart went on to fashion for himself a reputation as a thoughtful and innovative U. S. Senator who was interested especially in national defense and strategic planning issues, but he was also viewed as something of a maverick in the Senate.

Mondale was clearly the favorite of the Democratic Party's Establishment that year. He had especially strong support from the labor union movement for whom he had worked and advocated for years. Mondale was a traditional liberal in the mold of his friend and mentor, Hubert Humphrey, and he had been put onto Carter's ticket in 1976 partially because of his liberal track record and his network of liberal interest group and union supporters.

Hart, by contrast, was hard to classify on the ideological spectrum, but he appealed to the more independent-minded voters and he advocated a mixture of traditional liberal and new high tech policy issues, and he was especially committed to building a modern defense and intelligence capability. Hart also appealed to young people, especially well-educated young professionals.

While Mondale beat Hart in Iowa, Hart's

second place showing gave him some momentum going into New Hampshire two weeks later. When Hart pulled an upset and won New Hampshire, the momentum shifted to him, and Mondale's campaign was in trouble. The polls showed that Hart was at 3% in the Gallup poll taken just before the New Hampshire Primary and Mondale was favored by 49 percent of likely Democratic voters. After New Hampshire, Hart stood at 30 percent and Mondale at 33 percent (Buell, in Mayer, 2000, 104-105). This may be an exceptional case but one which graphically illustrates the instant momentum which a victory in the New Hampshire Primary and its attendant good publicity can create.

Mondale prevailed in the first ever mega primary day when multiple states held primaries on March 13, 1984. It subsequently came to be known as "Super Tuesday". The first such multiple state event was originally touted as a Southern Regional Primary because four of the eight states that held primaries on the original Super Tuesday were in the South (Cook, 2007, 24.) On Super Tuesday Mondale was especially helped by victories in Georgia and Alabama where Hart's style of new age populism did not have wide appeal. This victory helped to slow Hart's momentum.

Mondale then followed with quick victories in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and New York, the nation's industrial heartland which was already threatened with turning into the "Rust Belt". In these states Mondale was especially aided by organized labor which had been a traditional source of his strength. Hart and Mondale then traded victories in a series of primaries and caucuses with Hart doing especially well in the later primaries in the west.

It was a closely contested battle and it was not settled until very late. The fight went on until the last primary day when Hart won the all-important California primary, a loss which ordinarily would prove to be fatal for a Democratic frontrunner; however, Mondale offset California with a victory in New Jersey. Mondale also had far more support among the party and elected officials who were accorded automatic

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delegate status by the Democratic rules which were changed that year in an effort to advantage insiders. Unlike the other delegates, the party and elected officials delegates were permitted by the rules to remain unpledged thus maximizing their potential leverage. There were 568 of those high level party and public officials (e. g. Governors, Senators, Representatives, State Party Chairs, etc.) out of a total of 3,933 or 14.4 percent so they formed the largest identifiable block vote in the convention (Stanley and Niemi, 2010).

These officials are now called “super delegates” and their margin for Mondale was an important factor in his victory (Kamarck, 2009, 132; Mayer, 2009, 91-94). After that initial influence, super delegates laid low politically in subsequent elections and waited until the most popular candidate emerged from the primaries and the caucuses before getting on board the bandwagon. They did not want to create controversy by taking a stance counter to that of the party’s base as expressed in the popular votes. 1984 would be the first and last time the super delegates played a key role in the nomination contest until 2008 when their late movement to Obama helped put him over the top against Clinton.

In 1984, the Democratic nominee needed a united party to face Reagan during the fall campaign, and that unity was going to be difficult to attain.

The Democratic National Convention was held July 16-19, 1984 in San Francisco. The internal fight went on until the convention, after both Hart and Jackson refused to concede to Mondale. Jackson held out for several issue positions which would move the party to the left and the Jackson campaign also advocated several important rules changes. It became popular for the media to ask, “What does Jesse Jackson want?”, and answering that question successfully became a challenge for Mondale.

Mondale understood well that he needed Jackson, and especially African-American voters if he was going to have any chance in November. By this time it was evident that

any Democrat had to have strong support in the black community to counterbalance the hegemony that the Republicans had established in the white South. Even though Mondale had a long history of civil rights support, he still had to defer to Jackson in order to ensure that solid African-American support in the fall contest. Mondale, for example, adopted Jackson’s position on an affirmative action plank in the Democratic platform. Mondale also needed the enthusiastic support of the Hart people, and especially the younger and more independent elements of the electorate they seemed to epitomize. Often catering to the African American or union positions meant taking a stance that alienated the Hart camp. Mondale had to keep one eye on the factions within the convention hall and another on the developing fight with Ronald Reagan shaping up for the fall.

On the roll call in the Democratic National Convention Mondale prevailed rather handily on the delegate vote count. Mondale received 2,191 first ballot votes, compared to 1,200.5 for Hart and 465.5 for Jackson (Ragsdale, 1998, 83). Delegate votes, and their strategic spread across the nation, as well as a narrow victory in the total number of primary votes for Mondale trumped numbers of state primaries won by Hart and Jackson. At that point Hart finally closed ranks with Mondale, and the party began to try to unite the base for the fall contest. Jackson did not win the nomination in 1984 and as these totals show, he did not even come very close; however, he proved that he had considerable appeal and that he could be an important factor in any Democratic race. His claim to speak for African-American voters had to be taken seriously and dealt with carefully by any viable Democratic presidential candidate.

This was the era when African-American voters became solidified as a crucial base vote for the Democrats. However retaining that vote each election came with a price. Jackson’s policy positions tended to constantly pull the party toward the left and to provide fodder for the Republicans especially among white southerners and white males. Appealing to these two

constituencies, white southerners and white males, became increasingly a challenge and a problem for the Democrats. This point became more evident in 1988 when Jackson played a larger role.

Clearly the Republicans held the more harmonious and the more united convention in 1984, which launched Reagan's successful re-election campaign. There were many reasons for the Reagan landslide over Mondale when Reagan took 59 percent of the popular vote compared to 41 percent for Mondale. Mondale carried only his native state of Minnesota plus the District of Columbia and Reagan carried all the rest in an historic Electoral College victory of 525 to 13 (Ragsdale 1999, 103).

If you look at a map of the whole nation with the states coded in the now-familiar red for Republican victory and blue for Democratic victory categories, the map appears as a sea of red surrounding only the islands of Minnesota and D. C. (Archer, et. al., 2006, 50). After the 1984 election the Democratic Party struggled to define itself while the Republicans reveled in the Age of Reagan. It became the thing to do among Republicans to wave the flag of Reagan and to use his name and image as a mantra and a shorthand to illustrate the party's strong stances especially against taxes and in favor of a strong and assertive national defense. What the Reagan legacy would mean for the long term survival and prosperity of the two parties became somewhat more problematic when Reagan left the scene in 1988. The Republican Party is still fighting over what the legacy of Reagan should be and well over two decades later all factions try to claim his mantle.

1988

The Democrats in 1988

In 1988 the Democrats were the challenger party and they could be expected to field multiple candidates which they did. There were ultimately eight serious candidates on the Democratic side. These included the initial frontrunner, Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts who had the most extensive orga-

nization and the most money. Dukakis started his campaign early and was highly successful in raising early money which is one mark of a serious candidate. Dukakis was something of a technocrat and had a good record as the manager of the government in the nation's most liberal state. Dukakis himself was not particularly ideological and promised to run the nation with effectiveness and competence, apart from ideology and partisanship, as he claimed to have done in Massachusetts. He was also fairly unexciting as a personality.

Dukakis was most notably challenged again by Jesse Jackson making his second run for the presidency, Al Gore, who was then a Senator from Tennessee, Joe Biden, a Senator from Delaware, who became Vice President in 2008, Representative Richard Gephardt from St. Louis, Missouri, one of the leaders in the U. S. House, Bruce Babbitt, former Governor of Arizona and Paul Simon, a respected Senator from Illinois. Jesse Jackson coming off his strong showing in 1984 also decided to make another run at the prize in 1988. Waiting in the wings, although not initially included in the early maneuvering, was Gary Hart, who decided belatedly to make another run (Cook, 2007, 26; Simon, 1989).

In 1988 everyone had learned to appreciate the importance of Iowa and the lessons of Jimmy Carter's 1976 nomination strategy, and as Elaine Kamarck has written, by then the candidates had learned the importance of the calendar and the scheduling of the early contests, or that "sequence is strategy" (Kamarck, 2009, chapter 2). Several candidates put major effort into Iowa especially Gephardt and Simon. Simon and Gephardt were both traditional liberals with a strong record of support from organized labor, and both could claim to be neighbors to the state of Iowa. Both Simon and Gephardt put all their efforts and money into scoring a victory in that crucial first caucus and becoming the alternative to Dukakis.

On February 8th, Gephardt won a very narrow victory in the Iowa caucuses, much to the disappointment of Simon and his supporters.

A vertical strip of an American flag, showing the stars and stripes, runs down the left side of the page.

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According to the traditional strategy Gephardt's Iowa victory was supposed to provide the requisite momentum for a win in the New Hampshire Primary; however, Dukakis was geared up and waiting in New Hampshire. He was from neighboring Massachusetts, and a big proportion of the population of New Hampshire is served by the Boston media market. On February 16th Dukakis won New Hampshire with 36 percent of the popular vote case, with Gephardt coming in second at 20 percent and Simon third at 17 percent (Polsby and Wildavsky, 2008, 107). The race was definitely on for the next big event, the second mega primary dubbed "Super Tuesday" on March 8th when 16 states, with a significant portion of them in the South, held primaries. The primaries expert, Rhodes Cook, writing for Congressional Quarterly, described the results of Super Tuesday, 1988, in the following succinct summary:

The huge Super Tuesday vote across Dixie in early March was a wash. Dukakis won the two big states on the fringes, Texas and Florida. Jesse Jackson swept five states from the Deep South to Virginia. Sen. Al Gore of Tennessee won five states across the middle of the South from North Carolina to Oklahoma. And Gephardt won his home state of Missouri. The Democratic race got even more convoluted the following week when Sen. Paul Simon won the primary in his home state of Illinois (Cook, 2007, 26).

As the Cook quote depicts, the race was in disarray at that point; however, it was soon clarified by a series of timely victories by the original front-runner, Dukakis. The primaries came quickly during the rest of March and into April, and Dukakis rolled up a string of impressive victories that included Connecticut, Wisconsin, New York, and Pennsylvania. Dukakis had the deepest campaign organization, raised the most money, and had the most impressive array of party and political leader endorsements.

All of these are elements necessary to fashioning a successful nominations campaign (Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller, 2009). These

advantages enabled him to persist while others struggled and then dropped out or were winnowed out by the lack of money, a losing record, and diminishing prospects for victory. As the season progressed, Dukakis' victory margin in most primaries increased and he appeared to have unstoppable momentum (Ragsdale, 1998, 58). It took all of March and most of April for the race to be sorted out and for the winner to emerge, but Dukakis was clearly in control of the most delegates.

As the out party the Democrats held their convention first on July 18-21 in Atlanta, Georgia. The Dukakis forces seemed to be in firm control, but Jackson held on, and he challenged Dukakis up until the opening of the convention and never conceded to Dukakis. Although it was clear that Dukakis had the votes, Jackson's supporters put his name in for the nomination and set the stage for a roll call vote. A challenge to a roll call vote on the first ballot is always a bad sign for the frontrunner, and it proved to be the same for Dukakis. Ultimately, Dukakis received 2,876 first ballot votes in the convention as compared to 1,219 for Jackson (Ragsdale, 1998, 85).

Although it was obvious that Jackson was not going to win his party's nomination, he did manage to continue to be a presence in the race, attract media attention, and most importantly, was seen as negotiating with and wringing concessions from Dukakis. Dukakis faced the same problem on how to manage Jackson's demands as Walter Mondale did in 1984. One of the concessions was to lower the Proportional Representation (P. R.) minimum threshold for attaining delegate votes from 20 percent and set it at 15 percent of the popular vote in the states' primaries, a concession which made it harder for the front-runner to close the deal and gave a premium to those candidates who ran second and even third in the Democratic primaries (C. Q., 2001, 27).

It was a rules change not widely noted at the time; however, it was the use of P. R. which helped propel Senator Barack Obama to the delegate vote lead, and ultimate nomination, in

the contentious 2008 Democratic contest. After considerable negotiation with Jackson, the Dukakis camp was able to compromise with him, or to finesse his issues, and the Democrats got credit ultimately for holding a relatively harmonious and successful convention. The fall campaign was shaping up to be fairly competitive. Dukakis came out of the national convention with a comfortable lead in the polls over the presumptive Republican front-runner, George H. W. Bush; however, that lead had evaporated by Labor Day because of mistakes made by Dukakis and an aggressive and politically savvy campaign run by Bush.

The Republicans in 1988

At first Bush had difficulty winning in the crucial early primaries and thus attaining what in 1980 he had called “The Big Mo”, or momentum. He actually ran third in Iowa behind Kansas Senator, Bob Dole, and Marion G. “Pat” Robertson, the founder of the “500 Club,” a major evangelical television program. Dole won with 37 percent of the vote followed by Robertson who received 25 percent and then Bush ran a disappointing third with 19 percent (Polsby and Wildavsky, 2008, 107). Robertson effectively mobilized the strong contingent of religious right voters who make up an important constituency in the Iowa caucuses. Dole was from a neighboring farm state, Kansas, and he related well with the Iowa agricultural interests, and this advantage propelled him to victory in Iowa (Winebrenner and Goldford, 2010, 172-173).

Eight days later Bush made a comeback in the first primary, New Hampshire, where he beat Dole handily by 38 percent to 28 percent with Robertson running fifth and receiving only 9.4 percent (Ragsdale, 1998, 57). Bush had the coveted momentum after New Hampshire, and he quickly won the South Carolina Primary and a series of Super Tuesday events mostly in the South. Bush had the South sewed up, and by then he was unstoppable. Dole dropped out on March 29th soon after he lost the Illinois Primary on the third Tuesday in March. Pat

Robertson dropped out on April 6th and he was the last remaining challenger to Bush (Mayer, 2000, 34). The winnowing process had the race down to only one candidate still standing for the Republicans by the first week in April. This was typical for that time, but it would be late by 21st Century standards. Bush went on to win all but one of the Republican primaries that year (South Dakota) and to be unchallenged in the national convention. By achieving something of a party consensus fairly early, and well before Dukakis disposed of Jackson, the Republicans put themselves in a good position to hold a harmonious convention and to make the party combat ready for November. Winning the nomination early is almost always better than winning it later, although 2008 proved to be an exception to that rule.

The Republican National Convention was held on August 15 to 18 at the Superdome in New Orleans (Cook, 2001, 150-151). George H. W. Bush was nominated unanimously on the first ballot in the Republican national convention (Ragsdale, 1998, 85). Bush was Reagan’s Vice President for eight years, a period which he used gainfully to make hundreds of visits to state and local Republican Party events and to garner the friendship and support of thousands of Republican activists. Bush was also a former Chair of the Republican National Committee, the only case in modern history when a national party chair went on to become president. Wearing both of those mantles, Bush was the favorite of the party organizational establishment in 1988. While he was never warmly embraced by the conservative core of the party, by 1988 he had largely rehabilitated himself in their eyes and they appreciated his dutiful service in the Reagan White House for two terms. The race was not a total loss for Dole, however. He had been Ford’s Vice President running mate in 1976, and was also a former national party chair in the 1970s. Dole started building up his own party activist IOU’s which he cashed successfully in the 1996 nominations race.

The Republicans almost always nominate someone who has run before, perhaps multiple

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times, and the Reagan/Bush/Dole examples from 1968 through 1996 illustrate that pattern. There is not a single case of an “outsider” winning the Republican nomination in that era. Bush’s only controversy in 1988 was over the surprise nomination of Dan Quayle, a conservative young Senator from Indiana, to be his running mate. Quayle was largely unknown outside Indiana and Washington, D. C. and he seemed to bring thin credentials to the job of being one step away from the presidency.

If one had to rate the conventions on a preparation for the fall and party harmony scale, the nod would have to go to the Republicans. The Quayle candidacy was more of a negative for those outside the hall and did not create much dissonance within the ranks of the Republican insiders who were at the convention. Quayle was a strong conservative and the conservatives inside the hall rallied to his side. While Dukakis managed his disputes with Jackson relatively smoothly, the sight of Jackson still contending for media attention and for dominance of the message at the beginning of the Democratic convention was a lingering problem for Dukakis, especially in the white South where Jackson was extremely unpopular. Even though the Bush team had been behind Dukakis in the polls going into the Republican convention, soon after the convention was over Bush took the lead in the polls and never trailed Dukakis again.

Bush, of course, went on to score a fairly comfortable victory over Dukakis in the popular and the electoral vote, although Dukakis improved considerably over the performance of Carter in 1980 and Mondale in 1984. Bush received 53 percent of the popular vote and Dukakis 46 percent. On the strength of that popular vote margin Bush attained 426 Electoral College votes compared to 111 for Dukakis (Ragsdale, 1998, 103). In the color coded conventions of red for the Republicans and blue for the Democrats, the 1988 map showed the roots of what has come to be a very familiar pattern. Dukakis won only ten states while Bush won 40; however, there is much continuity between

the Dukakis states and the core of the Democratic Party’s strength two decades later. Dukakis took Hawaii, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia (Archer, et. al, 2008, 51; C. Q., 2002, 224). West Virginia has subsequently become more Republican, and Iowa was a swing state in 2000 through 2012; however, all the others have become more reliably Democratic in presidential voting. In 1988 the Democrats lost their third consecutive national election, each by a wide margin, and they continued a deeply divisive and dispirited period of soul-searching over the future of the Democratic Party. Many were asking insistently whether the Democrats could ever put together a winning presidential coalition again. The answer came four years later in the form of a candidate from the unlikely hometown of Hope, Arkansas.

1992

The Republicans in 1992

The story of the 1992 Republican nominations race is a simple one. George H. W. Bush was the incumbent president, and incumbent Republican presidents are rarely challenged, and never challenged successfully, in the nominations race. Reagan came the closest to success in 1976 in his challenge to Ford; however, his exception is the case which has proved the rule subsequently. There was little reason to believe that Bush was vulnerable in the Republican primaries, and no major Republican figure stepped forward. Former Reagan speech writer, and current cable television talk show personality, Patrick J. (“Pat”) Buchanan, decided to challenge Bush’s re-nomination from the far right. Buchanan represented a sort of unreconstructed nativism and super nationalism which was popular on the talk show circuit, and that view had some support among Republican primary voters. He spoke for those who felt alienated and disenfranchised in the Republican Party and who were feeling the stress of a faltering economy which frequently was blamed on immigrants a fear which Buchanan fed off of.

Buchanan got off to a promising start when he got a respectable 37 percent of the New Hampshire primary vote, compared to the president's 53 percent, and there was some cause for concern among Bush's supporters at that point since Buchanan did much better than most observers expected. For the first time there was empirical evidence, based on real voters, that Bush might be more vulnerable than had been believed. However, after that initial surprise, Buchanan was never able to mount a real threat to the Bush re-nomination effort although he did inflict a serious wound on Bush's re-election prospects at the national convention (Cook, 2007, 29).

The Republicans gathered in Bush's hometown of Houston, Texas, on August 17-20, 1992. The convention was planned to be a happy occasion with an uncontroversial re-nomination of the Bush-Quayle team and a celebration of the Gulf War victory and the party's prospects for a second Bush Administration. Pat Buchanan withdrew on opening day as a part of a deal to give him the spotlight that night for a prime-time address to the nation. The Bush forces could not have known that Buchanan would use the occasion to declare that the nation was in a "culture war" between conservative and liberal forces, and that the liberal forces represented the road to ruin for the nation. The fierce nature of Buchanan's charges against his foes and the re-affirming response they received from a significant part of his audience in the Republican National Convention hall that evening in Houston proved to be the dominant story of the day coming out of the convention, and it left a lasting impression in the minds of many voters who were getting ready to make a commitment for the fall campaign.

There is no question but what the appeal of Buchanan's message was to his fellow cultural warriors on the right and that he gave them the message they wanted to hear. It was not necessarily the message for the larger television audience that the Bush campaign wanted to project. In Byron Shafer's terms, the "Bifurcated" nature of the audience was either lost on

Buchanan, or he simply did not care to appeal to the wider convention audience at home watching television (Shafer, 1988). While Bush was not challenged very effectively in the re-nominations race by Buchanan, this was another instance where the damage outside the hall was greater than the off-setting gains made among the party's core inside the hall. Bush ultimately received 2116 first-ballot votes compared to only 18 for Pat Buchanan and 26 for a variety of others (Ragsdale, 1998, 87)

Bush apparently did not recognize the danger at the time, but his decision to turn the convention stage and microphone over to Buchanan at the convention in Houston became a first step in his fall election loss. Whatever red meat stimulus Buchanan may have provided for some of the Republican base, it turned into a public relations disaster for the Bush campaign since it looked to many more mainstream voters like the Republican Party had come to be dominated by right wing extremists, a perception which the Democrats were happy to reinforce in their campaign. The platform the Republicans adopted also was aimed directly at appealing to the party's conservative base but it was not designed to appeal to a general election audience. The authoritative Congressional Quarterly described it as follows:

There was little moderation evident in the party platform adopted for George Bush's second term. The GOP approved a hard line approach opposing abortion rights and any attempt to increase taxes. On the social issues front, there were planks favoring school choice, school prayer, and family unity (C. Q., 2002, 154).

The same could undoubtedly be claimed about the general cant in the liberal direction for most recent Democratic Party platforms. Indeed, both parties do all they can to encourage the perception that the other party has been captured by extremists, but their own platforms are often very doctrinaire.

The parties and their candidate sometimes reinforce and feed the perception that they are controlled by extremists by their actions and

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the stances taken in the primary and caucus season and in the national conventions. Pat

Buchanan then reinforced the perception that the Republicans were beholden mostly to the social conservatives in their party. The Democrats exploited this message effectively.

Both parties seek to “frame” the narrative in such a way as to present themselves as the reasonable and rational alternative constantly ready to do battle with the crazy extremists who are far out of the mainstream and who have captured the other party. Occasionally, as with the Democrats in 1972 in Miami and with the Republicans in 1992 in Houston, the party’s officials and the candidates and the campaigns running under their banners cooperate with and enhance this perception. Barry Goldwater’s 1964 acceptance speech advocating that the party should offer “A Choice not an Echo” has become party policy and practice for both Republicans and Democrats in the ensuing four decades. However, the parties are loath to admit publically that their platforms and policies are doctrinaire and that they must have the support of their core supporters, and a high level of turnout among them, to win in November. The tension between the fringes and the middle is always there in both parties and how they resolve it helps define their probabilities for success in the general election.

The Democrats in 1992

The Democratic Party’s struggle to find a nominee almost undid it in the early stages of the 1992 race; however, before it was over the nominations campaign worked to the nominee’s advantage and allowed the party to identify and test the candidate who could go on to victory in the fall campaign. The early season contest also allowed Bill Clinton, the ultimate victor, to get all the known skeletons out of his closet and to try to face up to them and to exorcise the major bad news before the fall campaign. In that sense, Clinton and the Democrats were strengthened by the strenuous nominations process and the challenges he faced and ultimately overcame in the primaries. The top three candidates were

Clinton, the governor of Arkansas, former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas, and former California Governor Jerry Brown. Clinton was clearly the middle or moderate candidate; Brown continued to anchor the left; while Tsongas was a hard to classify combination of both perspectives.

None of the top three candidates challenged in the Iowa caucuses in 1992. They left Iowa to favorite son Senator Tom Harkin, who had raised the biggest early money war chest and who won easily in the initial Iowa Caucus, but that turned out to be the high point of his campaign. The days of the true favorite son candidacy being viable were over because the new rules demand competition and victories in the primaries and a nationalized campaign. Then the focus shifted to New Hampshire which was hotly contested. Tsongas came in first, and Clinton finished second. Since Clinton had just endured a week of very negative publicity which came in wake of breaking stories about his marital problems and his Vietnam War era draft status, he was deemed to have done “better than expected” in New Hampshire. Clinton adeptly fed this story line by calling himself “the comeback kid.” Clinton did not get the most votes out of New Hampshire; however, he did get the best story line and the attendant momentum. He used this momentum to gain ground in the polls and to raise new money. That is the advantage of early victories and Clinton exploited that advantage skillfully.

This combination all came together in the “Super Tuesday” primary, which was still mostly a southern primary held on March 21, 1992. Clinton won the entire South on that crucial day. He then used that momentum to sling-shot into Illinois and Michigan on the third Tuesday in March. Clinton used his Illinois and Michigan victories to argue that he was not just a regional candidate and that he could appeal to the large Midwestern industrial and farm states. When he won those Clinton was on his way. (Cook, 2007, 28). Clinton’s primary and caucus season victories provided a very solid foundation for him to claim the Democratic

nomination. He went into the Democratic convention clearly in control. He then used a successful convention to unite the party and to serve as the springboard to the victorious fall campaign (Cook, 2002, 28). This is the ideal strategy for winning the general election.

The Democratic National Convention was held in New York City on July 13-16 (Cook, 2001, 22). It was expected to be a fairly tame convention since Tsongas had dropped out in March and Brown had no real chance of stopping Clinton. Clinton was regarded to be more moderate than Brown or Jesse Jackson and yet he received a great deal of liberal support as well. Clinton had been aggressive in appointing women and African-Americans to key positions as Governor of Arkansas, which is not easy for most southern governors to do. He had cultivated leaders in the civil rights and the women's movements, and he enjoyed high profile support in both communities. His wife, Hillary, was also active in a number of women's and civil rights causes.

Clinton had already announced his choice of Senator Al Gore of Tennessee to be his running mate before the convention started, and that decision proved to be a popular one. The 1992 convention was carefully stage-managed and scripted to present the new generation leadership narrative that the Clinton team wanted to project. They certainly understood that the external audience was watching and that the fall campaign's images and themes were being established. They also wanted to charge up the party faithful who had come to New York to nominate someone they hoped would end twelve consecutive years of Republican rule in the White House.

Clinton won 3,372 first ballot delegate votes in the national convention compared to 596 for Jerry Brown, 209 for Paul Tsongas and 111 for Jesse Jackson (Ragsdale, 1998, 87). This was decidedly Clinton's convention. Clinton's support and his camp's control over the convention allowed them to dominate the message and to frame the image of the Clinton-Gore ticket. They wanted to project the message that

a new generation of young leaders, who were moderate and pragmatic policy wonks, had taken control of the party. The platform that was offered in New York was mostly moderate and leaned decidedly toward the policy preferences of the Democratic Leadership Council (C. Q., 2000, 151-152). Clinton had to deal with challenges on the left posed by both Jerry Brown's delegates and Jesse Jackson, but they were able to do this largely outside the view of the television cameras. The convention itself turned out to be remarkably free of internal strife and acrimony as far as the public could see, and the Clinton-Gore ticket got the best story they could have out of convention week.

Clinton and Gore enjoyed a healthy bounce in the polls out of the national convention and their road trip taken at the end of the convention. While the polls remained close throughout, the Clinton and Gore campaign never relinquished the lead for long during the fall campaign. Because both camps were taking federal matching dollars, the Democrats were able to match the Republicans in campaign expenditures during the general election. Clinton also managed to get credit for doing as well or better than Bush in the debates which further boosted his campaign.

Ultimately Clinton took 43 percent of the popular votes compared to 37.4 percent for Bush. Most of the rest was won by Ross Perot who won an unprecedented 19 percent of the popular vote in 1992 (Ragsdale, 1998, 102-103). However, Clinton's plurality of the votes was spread evenly enough to allow him to win a dominant 370 to 168 Electoral College victory over Bush, and Perot did not carry a single state in spite of his impressive popular vote total. Clinton won all the states that had gone for Dukakis in 1988, and he added to it enough, most notably in the West, Midwest, and the Northeast, to take a comfortable Electoral College victory (Archer, et. al, 2006, 53).

Clinton and Gore, two moderate southerners, were ultimately able to win only four southern states, out of the eleven states of the old confederacy, including their home states

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of Arkansas and Tennessee plus Louisiana and Georgia. The rest of the South stayed firmly planted in the Republican Party's column. The African-American vote, which is very substantial in several southern states, and which is over ninety percent Democratic is not nearly enough to overcome the overwhelming Republican advantage among the majority of white southerners.

The Bush victories in Texas and Florida were especially important components of his total Electoral College vote and were the two biggest states he won. Clinton won the entire tier of states immediately to the west and adjacent to the Mississippi River. Bush won the entire next tier west from Texas on the south to North Dakota on the Canadian border and he extended his reach through the plains and mountain west states with the exception of Colorado, Montana and New Mexico (all of which have become swing states in the 21st century). The Democrats won all the states immediately to the east and adjacent to the Mississippi River except for the state of Mississippi which Bush carried. The Democrats continued to have big problems with the white South, and especially the Deep South, and the Republicans continued to enjoy a major advantage there. The Clinton-Gore victory in 1992 proved that the Democrats could win without much of the South although it would be difficult. This pattern was repeated in 1996.

The now famous "cultural wars" thesis was just emerging in 1992, probably labeled and fed first by Pat Buchanan's speech at the Republican convention in Houston. The manifestation of the cultural wars and the polarized political nation that accompanies this thesis is most graphically displayed in the red versus blue patterns of the Electoral College superimposed on the national map showing the 1992 presidential results. The results are now very familiar, and most of the suspense in recent presidential elections stems from the competitiveness of several swing states, like Florida, Ohio, Colorado, Iowa, and New Mexico.

There is much continuity now evident in

the color coded maps depicting the results from 1992 through 2012 (Archer, et. al, 2006, 52-55). This has been a series of close and competitive presidential elections and the nation has been closely divided in red and blue states at least up to 2008 when Obama won the Electoral College handily mostly by taking nine states that George W. Bush had won in 2004. However, the continuity between George H. W. Bush's red states in 1992 and George W. Bush's red states in 2000 and 2004 is striking. The same is true for the continuity of blue states for Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996 and for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. By far the best predictor of how a state will vote in the presidential election is how they voted in the last election and only the handful of swing states provide for suspense and change at the aggregate level. The demographic groups and specific states which have been in the camp of one or the other of the two major parties have been largely stable and the swing states get most of the attention because there are so few of them. This stability also carries over into group level support and individual voter behavior where the continuity across elections it has been very high for the past several cycles.

1996

The Democrats in 1996

The nominations season in 1996 was pretty much the reverse of 1992 from the perspective of the two major parties. Bill Clinton was the incumbent president finishing out his first term and focused intently on achieving a second term. Early on this was thought to be something of a challenge after the mid-term elections of 1994 produced a New Gingrich led Republican take-over of the congress on the strength of a 54 seat Republican victory in the House that year. It was the first time the Republicans had controlled the House since 1952-54 in Eisenhower's first term. The Republicans also took control of the Senate on the swing of a net of 10 seats in their favor and this was the first time they had controlled the Senate since the 1982-86 Regan era interregnum (Stanley and Niemi, 2007-2008, 54).

Some Republicans saw this transfer of power as the first phase of an inevitable Republican realignment on the strength of what they hoped would be a solid Republican presidential victory in 1996. However, in the ensuing two years, under the leadership of the Speaker of the House Gingrich the Republicans, especially the members of the House, embarked on an ambitious new legislative program. It included a procedural revamping of the House rules which established a much more centralized power structure in the party leadership, especially the Speaker's office (Elperin, 2006; Pika and Maltese, 2002, chapter 5). They also advanced the substantive issues on the Republican agenda as represented in the Contract with America which Gingrich had authored and then attempted to promulgate in the wake of the 2004 victories (Gingrich, 1994). This represented a list of legislative objectives that conservatives had long wanted to see enacted into law.

While most of the important planks of the contract advanced through the House with strong and disciplined Republican support, several items also stalled out in the Senate where Bob Dole, the Republican leader, had other priorities. If the proposals passed both legislative bodies, they still faced the need for a signature from Bill Clinton who refused to sign several items. Then after a series of dramatic face-off fights over the budget ensued in November and December of 1995 and January of 1996 the partisan conflict actually forced a shut-down of the federal government i.e. the closure of some offices for a few days in what were called "non-essential services" areas. Unfortunately for the Republicans, they and Speaker Gingrich received the brunt of the public's blame for the shut-down and the attendant inconveniences to the public, and Clinton fed that perception. (This first shut-down then became the backdrop and the often cited precedent for the next one in October of 2013). Bill Clinton who was derided as "irrelevant" after the 1994 elections was suddenly back in control of the executive branch and very much in control of the bully pulpit of the White House and he used it to his great ad-

vantage in getting ready for 1996 when he was virtually unchallenged for his party's nomination.

Clinton and his advisers had long memories, and they knew what the intra-party fight with Kennedy had done to Jimmy Carter's re-election quest in 1976. They were determined not to have a repeat performance in 1996, and they were successful in clearing the Democratic field for President Clinton's re-election campaign that year. On August 26-29 the Democrats held a very harmonious national convention in Chicago, and the contrast with the 1968 battle in Grant Park and the disaster that was the last Democratic National Convention held in Chicago was studied and could not have been more marked (Nelson, 2011). The Democratic Convention took as its theme, "The Bridge to the 21st Century", which was all about showcasing Clinton's accomplishments in the first term and getting ready for the fall campaign. During his first term Clinton had been somewhat hard to classify on ideological grounds. He took some stances that were decidedly liberal and which were widely condemned by his conservative critics.

However, on other matters, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1993 and the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 Clinton had refused to follow the liberal play book. On the Welfare Reform Act Clinton dealt with Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole and the conservatives in Congress to write a welfare reform agenda that was revolutionary for its time and most of its critics came from the left side of the spectrum. Likewise on trade legislation, particularly the NAFTA bill, he defied the labor unions and used help from the Republicans to pass legislation that he deemed crucial to his economic development agenda. His campaign presented him as pragmatic and moderate in the 1996 election, and the Democratic platform mostly reflected Clinton's stance which was eclectic, but more moderate than doctrinaire liberal (C. Q. 2001, 159-160). This was a strong position from which to fight the fall campaign, and he had no effective challenger for the

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nomination.

The Republicans in 1996

Bob Dole was not as fortunate in the nomination process as Clinton although he ultimately prevailed handily. Dole was the Republican Majority Leader in the U. S. Senate, and a former Vice-Presidential nominee, and a former chair of the RNC, and well positioned to to win the Republican nomination. In addition, he had run on his own briefly in 1988 before bowing out in favor of George H. W. Bush. Republicans favor those candidates who have run before and who have been good partisan soldiers in supporting the ultimate nominee. Dole fitted all those criteria and started as the front-runner.

Dole faltered a bit in the opening rounds. He won Iowa, but by a narrow and disappointing margin given that he had won Iowa handily in 1988 (Winebrenner and Goldford, 2010, 238-239). Dole got 26.3 percent of the caucus vote compared to 23.6 percent which went to Buchanan in second place; however, Buchanan got most of the publicity because of his "better than expected" performance (ibid.). Dole then lost New Hampshire to Pat Buchanan, and Buchanan immediately gained significant ground in the national polls while Dole lost ground (Buell, 2000, 105). This result, like the Democratic Primary results in 1984 when Hart beat Mondale in New Hampshire, illustrated graphically how much damage a loss in New Hampshire can do to a front-runner and how much it can benefit a challenger, if perhaps only temporarily. Dole then quickly lost Delaware and Arizona to Steve Forbes, and his front-runner status appeared to be in some trouble. Then the tide turned when the South Carolina Primary on March 2nd and the Super Tuesday races on March 5th provided Dole with the victories and the momentum he needed to make his nomination inevitable (Cook, 2007, p. 31). Dole went on to crucial victories in the west, including California, and by the end of March he had effectively clinched the Republican nomination.

The Republicans held their national convention in San Diego, California on August

12-15. This choice helped showcase them as the party of the sun-belt which they had become. The Dole forces were not short on the ability to learn from past mistakes. They remembered the negative reaction to the Houston platform speeches from 1992 and by then the divisiveness of the Democratic National Conventions of 1968, 1972 and 1980 had become legend. People in both parties understood that there was a premium to be placed on conducting a spectacular show for the television audience rather than a spectacle for the famous media personalities to cover.

Dole and his campaign managed the San Diego convention very well and prime time was spent bashing Clinton and praising Robert Dole, Jack Kemp, and Ronald Reagan. There had been a behind the scenes struggle over the plank endorsing an amendment to the U. S. Constitution to ban abortions; however, the Dole forces managed to keep this conflict out of the limelight. The platform was very conservative, as Republican platforms uniformly had become; however, Dole kept the more moderate factions on board by giving them high profile speaking slots in prime time. Former Army General Colin Powell, for example, delivered his speech in prime time and gave a ringing declaration for diversity, affirmative action, and abortion rights, positions that were shared by few delegates in the convention hall that evening and that were rejected in the party platform (C. Q., 2001, 157-58).

In fact this has become something of a ritual for both parties. That is, they both adopt very conservative or liberal platforms to please the party base while at the same time prominently programming against type by scheduling moderates and even former members of the other party to speak from the platform in prime time. This, too, is a fine example of the two very different audiences for which the national conventions perform and the different functions they serve (Shafer, 1988).

Nevertheless the Republican Party was only superficially unified coming out of the convention and as the following summary from

Congressional Quarterly indicates, they were facing some internal divisions which are still relevant today: "No matter how well Dole and the Republicans papered over differences at the convention, the party remained split between its traditional base of fiscal conservatives and its new base of social-issue activists who wanted to see their positions turned into policy" (C. Q. 2001, 158). The same could be said of the Republican National Convention which met in Tampa, Florida in late August 2012.

The basics of the general election contest had already been set in place by the events of the past four years, and the fall campaigns reinforced and confirmed the trends which were all pointing in the direction of a Clinton re-election. Dole's campaign was never able to reach a take-off point and never able to overtake Clinton in the polls. In the national convention Dole tried to rally the party for an electoral victory against Bill Clinton in the fall; however, that victory proved to be beyond the grasp of the best efforts of the Republican Party and Bob Dole. Clinton won a formidable 379 to 159 electoral college victory over Dole although his popular vote margin fell a fraction below the 50 percent mark because of the presence of Ross Perot in the race again in 1996 (Ragsdale, 1998, 103). The familiar color coded map of the election results showed remarkable continuity with the 1992 results. Only five states changed colors with Clinton's victories in Arizona and Florida more than compensating for his losses to Dole in Montana, Colorado, and Georgia, states which Clinton had carried in 1992. The Electoral College arithmetic worked to Clinton's advantage as he picked up a net of nine more votes compared to his 1992 total while Dole dropped nine compared to Bush in 1992.

Party and political polarization continued in American politics and in presidential and congressional relations after 1996. Indeed, if anything, party polarization and the culture wars grew more intense as the Republicans aggressively went after Bill Clinton because of his affair with Monica Lewinsky and his attempt to cover it up. This fight resulted in the impeach-

ment vote in the House in 1998 the first since Andrew Johnson was impeached by the radical element of the Republican Party in the House in 1865. The fault lines on Clinton's impeachment in the House and subsequent failure to be removed from office by the Senate divided the nation starkly along partisan and ideological lines in Clinton's second term. The mass public was similarly polarized in their views of whether Clinton should have been removed from office although a majority was opposed. This was one of the most intensely polarized eras in American politics as the Clinton years came to a close and the nation got ready for a new millennium and a new president in 2000. Polarization continued and became deeper in the first decade of the 21st Century.

2000

The Republicans in 2000

George W. Bush was the grandson of a United States Senator from Connecticut and the son of the 41st President of the United States. In 2000 he was serving his second term as Governor of Texas and was very popular in his state. While technically he had not run before, he had been very active in his father's campaigns, and he had been a Republican insider for years.

He had all the earmarks of a successful Republican candidate, and he was initially the favorite of most of the Republican Party's mainline or establishment figures. The Republican Governors, and many members of the House and Senate Republican majority in the Congress, for instance, endorsed him early. In addition, he had already proved to be adept at fundraising among traditional Republican supporters in his two runs for the Texas governor's office, and he improved on his earlier record by raising almost \$100 million for his presidential campaign during the primary season. Bush rejected federal campaign matching funds for the 2000 primary season so he was free to raise and spend as much as he could manage to round up during that nominations phase. Bush was the first front-runner and major candidate of either

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party to reject the federal match, and this started the downward spiral of that campaign finance era which had been dominated since 1976 by federal financing and federal limits on campaign expenditures. The spiral continued in 2004 and reached its apex in 2008 and 2012 when the limits effectively became moot and the whole public campaign finance regime collapsed.

In the 2000 primary season Bush's campaign fundraising was a record by three fold over any earlier fundraising total for a nomination. Bush's camp tried to scare away potential challengers and to project an air of inevitability about his pending nomination. He won an early victory in Iowa on January 24th, by defeating Steve Forbes and Alan Keyes. However, someone forgot to give the script to John McCain, a sometimes maverick Republican Senator from Arizona. McCain was not a favorite of the religious right, a block which is strong in Iowa, and he had a record of opposition to the ethanol subsidy to corn growers which was not a popular position in Iowa, and he probably decided he could not compete with Bush there.

McCain sat out Iowa to concentrate on New Hampshire which came just a week later. This proved to be a good strategic move, and McCain beat Bush by 18 percent in the New Hampshire Primary on February 1st (Cook, 2007, 33; Abramson, Aldrich, and Rhode, 2003, 26-27). Here was another case where a victory in the New Hampshire Primary allowed a challenger to upset a front-runner and stop their momentum. The battle was joined, and the Bush forces and the McCain forces were locked in a mortal political struggle for almost a month afterward. A good deal of bad blood emanated from that contested month and tensions between McCain and Bush simmered for quite a long time.

Bush won a crucial victory in South Carolina on February 19th - a southern state and the home of many dyed in the wool Republican core voters and especially the religious right or "values voters." McCain won Michigan the same week; however, his victory in Michigan depended on it being an open primary and

on McCain's appeal to independents and cross over voters. McCain's campaign argued that this appeal demonstrated that he would be the stronger candidate in the general election, but the Republican Party leadership echelons had already made a choice for Bush, and most of the party "Establishment" supported him. Bush then took commanding control of the nominations race by a string of victories on March 7th when he won most of the large states, including California, New York, Ohio, and Georgia. After that, the handwriting was on the wall, and McCain dropped his challenge on March 9th. This was one of the earliest ever dates for a contested nomination race to be finished (Pika and Maltese, 2002, 47). This early settlement date and the size of Bush's victory augured well for his chances in the 2000 general election.

The themes of party harmony and a focus on getting battle ready for November were prominently on display during the Republican National Convention. On July 31 to August 3 the Republicans gathered in Philadelphia to conduct the business of the party, to celebrate Bush's primary victories, and to get ready for November. They did not want to have any deeply divisive floor fights and internal disagreements on public display, and they accomplished this objective admirably. The Bush campaign managed the convention effectively and they kept the internal conflicts out of the public eye. A group of more moderate Republicans, for example, wanted to revisit the abortion plank and to remove the endorsement of a constitutional amendment against abortion. Bush's forces defeated this movement without a major fight (C. Q., 2001, 162). The Republican platform remained essentially a conservative document; however, it softened somewhat some of the more notably hard line conservative positions of earlier Republican platforms. More importantly, the speakers from the podium again featured people like Colin Powell who gave the convention a more moderate public face. The fire-brands from the right, like Pat Buchanan, were relegated to afternoon speaking slots or shut out of podium appearances at all. By now

this had become a pattern where the party platform endorsed pure conservative positions to appeal to the party activists and the base but the platform guests gave a moderate cast to the convention itself in preparation for the fall campaign. The roll call vote for president was unanimous for Bush. The Republicans left Philadelphia, jubilant, united and determined to recapture the White House in November.

The Democrats in 2000

Al Gore was the early favorite to win the Democratic nomination in 2000. He had been Vice President for Bill Clinton for eight years, and Clinton had taken him seriously and included Gore in most of the major initiatives of his administration. In addition, Gore had run for president himself in 1988, and he had a broad network of supporters and the endorsement of many notables in the Democratic Party. However, it was an open seat and there were people in the Democratic Party who did not want a continuation of the Clinton-Gore era. Clinton's personal life and drama had been an embarrassment to many Democrats, and there were others, especially on the liberal side of the party, who had genuine policy differences with him and Gore. Early on, former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey announced his candidacy, and those who were opposed to Clinton and Gore quickly coalesced around Bradley. Bradley proved that he could raise money, and he basically matched Gore's early fundraising ability.

On January 24th Gore started out well by winning Iowa handily by a 2 to 1 margin over Bradley. Then on February 1st the first in the nation New Hampshire Primary was held. It turned into a very close race which Gore won by a very narrow 3,000 vote margin (Cook, 2007, 32). Even though it was close, New Hampshire was a loss from which Bradley never recovered and it was the beginning of the end for his candidacy.

The most important date in the 2000 nominations race was March 7th when eleven states held primaries. Gore won all of those on that date including the big states of California,

New York, Ohio, Connecticut, and Georgia. Bradley dropped out on March 9th (Abramson, et. al, 2002, 26-27). Gore went on to win a total of 38 state primaries and 76 percent of the total Democratic primary vote cast in 2000 (Cook, 2007, 32; Abramson, 2002, 28-29). The relatively easy and early victory Gore posted should have helped him to get ready for the general election, but he did not ever seem to hit on an overarching campaign strategy and campaign theme that would sustain him into the general election.

The Democratic National Convention convened in Los Angeles August 14 through 17, 2000. It should have been a happy and harmonious convention which got their party and their candidate ready for the fall fight. The Clinton-Gore years were arguably two terms marked by peace and prosperity. The federal budget had been in the black for three consecutive fiscal years- the first time that had happened in thirty years (and it has not happened since). The debates in 2000 were over how to handle the budget surplus. Generally the Democrats wanted to use them to shore up Social Security and to pay other accumulated bills and the Republicans wanted an immediate tax reduction. By historic standards this was a pleasant debate to be holding. The record of the Clinton years should have made Gore's job of fashioning a message relatively easy; however, it did not turn out that way.

On the night of his nomination, Gore was welcomed by enthusiastic national convention delegates and before his speech began he placed a passionate, and to many it seemed, a prolonged and ostentatious kiss on his wife, Tipper Gore. Again, this was read by the media as a rebuke to the famously troubled marriage of Bill and Hillary Clinton. Like Bush before him, Gore received unanimous support from the delegates on the first roll call vote for president thus indicating the level of internal party support he had achieved (C. Q., 2001, p. 164). He and his campaign left the Staples Center with the party united and a successful convention behind them.

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After Labor Day the early trial heat polls showed a very close race shaping up for the fall (Abramson, et al, 2002, 33). During the nominations contest Bush led most of the polls, and he got a convention bounce out of his Philadelphia convention. Gore, too, got a positive convention bounce in the polls and for a short span he led Bush in some of the polls. This lead did not last past the first debate which Gore was widely perceived to have lost to Bush because of his frequent audible sighs and his off camera behavior and those mannerisms, rather than the substance of the questions and the answers. **No matter what the answers were and the policy differences the debates uncovered, it was personality and image which triumphed in the coverage of the debates as it always does.** Gore reinforced his negative image from the first debate with his tactics during the third debate which he was rated to have lost because of his aggressive and overbearing manner.

Gore never really recovered from his performance in the first and third debates, and more importantly from the spin that the media and the Republicans successfully put on the outcomes of the debates. Gore's image continued to be one of a wooden and somewhat artificial campaigner and the Bush campaign successfully put the issue of Gore's trustworthiness and truthfulness on the public agenda. In addition, Gore never figured out what to do with Clinton and how to employ Clinton's formidable campaigning skills, and Gore failed to really take advantage of the peace and prosperity theme which should have been his to exploit.

The final results are a prominent feature of our recent history. Gore did win the popular vote, by over 500,000 votes, but he lost the Electoral College through the combined actions of the officials of the State of Florida, where Bush's brother, Jeb Bush, was Governor, and through a decision of the United States Supreme Court where a very controversial 5 to 4 ruling ultimately stopped the Florida vote recount on the 34th day, thus leaving Bush with a popular vote margin of 537 votes out of more than 6 million cast. With Florida given to Bush, he

took a narrow 271 to 266 Electoral College vote compared to a 48.7 percent to 47.9 percent popular vote victory for Gore (Archer, et al, 2006, 54). If Gore had won any one of West Virginia, New Hampshire, Arkansas or his home state of Tennessee, all states that he and Clinton had carried in 1992 and 1996, he would have been elected president by the Electoral College quite apart from what happened to Florida. He was unable to do so and the nation continued to be deeply divided over the election and its controversial outcome, and the South became even more pivotal in creating a Republican electoral majority.

The Supreme Court voted largely on partisan and ideological grounds when five Republicans voted for the Bush appeal over two Democrats and two of the more moderate Republicans who voted for the Gore position in the case which famously settled the presidential election of 2000 (Bush v. Gore, 2000). In fact, this case as much as any single act is emblematic of the first two decades of the 21st Century and just how much conflict and partisan and ideological polarization has come to mark our politics, especially our presidential and congressional elections, but also including the Supreme Court. The ruling was hailed by Republicans and condemned by Democrats. It further exacerbated and solidified the partisan polarization which had already marked public opinion.

It was only the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 that ultimately made the Florida case and the Supreme Court's settling of it seem moot and the specific controversy largely faded from the public discourse in the wake of the terrorists' attack, but the deep partisan polarization continues and has deepened since then.

The parties and their candidates build on this polarization and they count on it especially to mobilize and energize their core supporters and to raise the money they need in the election. Their allies in the mass media provide a megaphone which magnifies and extends that partisan message out across the nation. The 24 hour cable news cycle, and the leading television and talk-radio personalities

who are clearly and proudly associated with either a conservative or liberal position help to carry that negative message, and that sense of polarized rhetoric to large audiences among the mass public. It is not hard to identify where the candidates are supposed to stand on the ideological continuum and who is on which side.

Party identification and ideological commitments are the lenses through which all of our politics are filtered. For millions of voters there is little question as to who wears the black hats and who wears the white hats. Much of American politics today takes the form of a morality play, but the very definition of which is the more moral position is hotly contested and deeply divisive. This dialectical division into competing partisan and ideological camps was much in evidence during the Clinton era, and the polarization became even more intense during the Bush era (Jacobson, 2004). It then reached a new boiling point in the Obama era leading thoughtful critics to question whether our basic separation of powers system could even perform its basic functions like adopting a budget routinely and paying the nation's bills both of which were questions which precipitated the governmental shut-down of October 2013 and several threatened shut downs subsequently.

2004

The Republicans in 2004

George W. Bush proved to be the most partisan president in the modern era (Jacobson, 2007). In this partisanship he followed his role model, Ronald Reagan, in paying close attention to the requirements of building a strong Republican Party and aggressively campaigning for members of congress who would be sympathetic to his causes (Jacobson, 2004, Skinner, 2008-2009). His unstinting travel and fundraising for Republican candidates was a nation-wide crusade in 2002, and it paid handsome dividends when the Republicans defied the usual pattern of mid-term election losses for the party in the White House. In fact, the GOP picked up 1 Senate and 8 House seats in the 2002 elections for Congress largely in the wake of the terror-

ists attacks of September 11, 2001, and Bush's skillful handling of the aftermath (Stanley and Niemi, 2006, 50).

Bush was a formidable candidate within the Republican Party in 2004, and not surprisingly, no creditable candidate rose to challenge him. Many scholars have argued that Bush was the most polarizing of modern presidents up until then (Jacobson, 2007; Skinner, 2008-2009). Regardless of how much the Democrats disparaged him, and they largely were very united in their dislike of Bush, he was extraordinarily popular among his Republican peers and especially among the party's base or core of conservative voters. They provided strong and unstinting support for Bush, and the conservative media outlets such as Fox News, Rush Limbaugh and the Wall Street Journal provided constant protection for him and his positions and a never ending barrage of criticism directed at his detractors. This was a period when patriotism and who was a patriot and who was soft on terrorism were the major topics of national debate in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, and that debate tended to work for Bush and against the Democrats. Public opinion had not yet turned significantly negative on the war in Iraq although support for it was not as solid as it had been at the time of the initial invasion. All of this put Bush in good shape for the 2004 general election although the united opposition of the Democrats ensured that the race would likely be a competitive one in the fall and polarization would continue.

The Democrats in 2004

The issue for the Democrats was who would be the best candidate to follow into battle in the fall. They desperately wanted to win, and they wanted to choose the candidate who would have the best chance to do so in the fall campaign. At first the answer seemed to be Howard Dean. He was the former Governor of Vermont and as the only Governor in the field. Dean could claim to be the only candidate with significant executive experience. Dean was also an outspoken opponent of the war in Iraq and

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especially of the Bush Administration's rationale for the invasion of Iraq. Early opposition to the war in Iraq was becoming an important metric for the more liberal activists although it did not become a litmus test until 2008. Dean was also popular with young people and he was adept at raising money on the Internet which at that time was a new campaign fundraising tool. He was especially effective in attracting millions of small donors over the internet and was a pioneer in this campaign technique. However, many Democratic leaders doubted his electability and were hesitant to get on board with Dean, and the party seemed to be searching for an alternative as the warm up year of 2003 came to a close.

The Iowa caucuses served as the springboard for a successful candidate and to begin to sort out the alternatives as it has done in several other cases. John Kerry, Senator from Massachusetts, and decorated war hero from the Vietnam era, experienced much difficulty in getting his campaign together and mounting a coherent effort during the fall of 2003. Indeed one would have to say that based on the public opinion polls, Dean won and Kerry lost the invisible primary season up through the end of December of 2003. However, by the opening act on January 19th, 2004 Kerry's campaign was ready, and he won Iowa handily over John Edwards who came in second and Howard Dean who finished a disappointing third (Cook, 2007, 34). Many Democrats thought they needed a candidate who could be inoculated against the "soft on terrorism" and "anti-war" label that inevitably would be thrown at any Democrat during the fall campaign, and with his decorated Vietnam War combat experience Kerry seemed to fill that need quite admirably. When he won in Iowa Kerry began to emerge from the pack, and he began to gain some traction and positive press. Then utilizing the momentum developed in Iowa, Kerry went on to a solid victory by 12 points over Dean in New Hampshire on January 27, 2004. Dean was from next door Vermont, and if he could not win in New England, most thought his race was over. Dean dropped out on February 17th.

Kerry won an overwhelming victory in the "mega-Tuesday" primary on March 2, 2004, and at that time he became the prohibitive favorite to win it all. Edwards, his last remaining serious competitor, withdrew the next day. On the evening of March 2nd, President George W. Bush called Senator Kerry from the White House and congratulated him on his victory. Starting the next day the race for the fall prize was on immediately when the Bush campaign aired a flight of commercials geared for the general election. The nominations issue had been effectively settled for both parties the first week in March, which was the earliest it had ever been settled in the modern nominations era under the new rules. The "frontloading" of the presidential nominations calendar had reached a new zenith. Kerry won 33 of the 36 Democratic primaries in 2004 thus putting him in good shape for making a close contest of it for the fall term. He did make it a competitive contest, and a harmonious national convention helped him to accomplish that objective.

The Democratic Convention of 2004

The Democrats met in their national convention in Boston, July 26 to 29. Boston was chosen well before Kerry was known to be the nominee, but it promised to be an excellent choice to showcase the Kerry campaign. It was Kerry's hometown and his political base of Massachusetts was one of the most liberal states in the union. Kerry was a traditional liberal on domestic issues and his liberal voting record was one that the average delegate to the Democratic National Convention that year would find comforting. The Boston convention could only be deemed a success for the Kerry campaign. He named John Edwards to be his running mate. Edwards had been arguably Kerry's strongest competitor in the primaries, and he had a populist appeal and an attractive newcomer image. Another newcomer to the national stage was the keynote speaker, Barack Obama, a young African-American who was the Democratic Party's nominee for the vacant Senate seat in Illinois. Obama was at that time a state senator,

and this was the first big time national exposure he received. Obama made the most of it, and he would be heard from again soon. The platform the Democrats adopted included a litany of standard Democratic programs and appeals. The convention was harmonious throughout the week, and it ended on a high note with Kerry's acceptance speech. While Kerry was perhaps the strongest candidate in the Democratic Party's field in 2004, neither the primary season nor the convention experience could really change the fact that he was not the most effective campaigner the Democrats had ever offered. Kerry appeared to be wooden and aloof and largely unaffected by the problems and aspirations of ordinary people. Kerry was a patrician in a party that had always championed the common person. This demeanor did not stop him from winning the primaries; however, those early campaign experiences did not loosen him up and present him with the kinds of learning opportunities that a longer and more competitive season might have offered. In effect, the fact that the primaries ended on March 3rd, the earliest date in recent history, was seen at the time to be an advantage for the Democrats; however, the quick end to the competition did not offer the Kerry camp the opportunity to condition their candidate and to vet some of his weaknesses to nearly the same extent that the long and competitive nominations season did with Barack Obama just four years later.

The Republican Convention of 2004

George W. Bush was not expected to draw any real opposition in his quest for the Republican nomination and that proved to be the case. This advantage then allowed him to get an early start on the campaign for the fall. The Republicans being the incumbent party went second and held a late convention on August 30 to September 2 in New York City the site of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Republicans wanted to take maximum advantage of that symbolism and to remind the nation repeatedly of the leadership Bush had provided in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. It was a theme

that worked effectively for them in the mid-term elections of 2002, and they could expect to exploit it again. They fulfilled that expectation. The Republican National Convention that year showcased a long list of Republican luminaries all of whom came to praise George W. Bush especially for his war on terrorism and to urge the nation to return him to office. The convention stage was replete with diversity and the speakers allowed into prime time were mostly moderate, symbolic and uncontroversial. The Republican platform, however, again featured a litany of conservative positions which also reflected the policy positions taken by George W. Bush during his first administration. The convention ended on a high note of party harmony and the Bush campaign was battle tested with veterans who were eager to take on John Kerry for the fall.

The General Election of 2004

The Kerry campaign got the standard bump in the polls coming out of the convention and from then on the polls appeared to signal a very competitive race, which turned out to be a good prediction. The Bush campaign and the interest groups which support the Republican Party had their own strategic plans, and they turned the fall campaign into a referendum on Bush's leadership in the war on terrorism and into a referendum on various "values" issues like gay marriage in ways that dominated the media driven agenda. Bush proved to be an even more competitive and effective campaigner than the Kerry people could have anticipated. In addition, Bush had all the advantages that being the incumbent and controlling both the executive and the legislative branches afforded the incumbent. Bush and his strategist Karl Rove centered their strategy on the Republican base and turning it out in unprecedented numbers while also making some appeals to the Independents. They accomplished this mission and when they won the key state of Ohio by a comfortable margin, the race was over. **This was the first time a presidential campaign was so overtly concentrated on the major**

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objective of mobilizing and winning an overwhelming percentage of the party's base and where appeals to all other audiences were secondary to this objective. The Bush-Rove plan worked admirably and became a standard strategic choice for later campaigns.

Bush went on to win the popular vote by a close and competitive 51 to 48 percent popular vote margin. This translated into a 286 to 251 Electoral College margin. Bush won all the states he had won in 2000 except for New Hampshire which went from Republican to Democratic and he added Iowa and New Mexico to his totals. Outside those three changes, one from red to blue and the other two from blue to red, the colors of all the other states remained the same between 2000 and 2004 (See: C. Q. Archer, et al, 2006, 54-55 for maps). This continuity in the Electoral College map illustrated just how stable, predictable and polarized American presidential politics had become. The red state versus blue state dichotomy had become a familiar one and the continuity in aggregate voting results from election to election was impressive (Gelman, 2008). The only question was whether a relative handful of marginal states could be peeled off from their traditional position and added to the other party's column. Barack Obama's unexpected victory in 2008 indicated that the answer was "yes" in the case of nine states he carried in 2008 that had voted for Bush over Kerry in 2004; however, that election was four years in the future. Shifting from the aggregate vote level to the individual level of analysis, one of political science's most respected analysts, Gerald Pomper, summarized the 2004 general election results in the following terms.

"Always the best indicator of electoral behavior, party loyalty was especially firm in 2004. Kerry won 89 percent of Democrats; Bush won even more, 93 percent, of Republicans; and the two candidates split the votes of independent almost exactly in half" (Pomper, 2005, 50).

One could hardly ask for a better description of the major explanation for most recent

presidential elections. This is the commonly expected "normal vote" of the 21st century, and it is heavily driven by partisanship for those who identify with the two parties, and even for many independents the assessment of the two parties is an important component of their voting behavior. **As Green, Palmquist, and Schickler have observed, partisanship has become a fundamental part of their social identity for millions of voters (2002).** That partisan divisiveness and red state versus blue state polarization continued with only some modest variation in the 2008 elections. However, the change which did occur that year was virtually all in a direction which favored the Democrats.

2008

The nominations contest in 2008 provided an unusual opportunity since it was a completely open seat contest. There were no sitting presidents or vice presidents running on either party's side. It was a rare opportunity for a new generation and a new cohort of leaders to step forward and there was much interest in the nominations contest for both parties. Ultimately there were eight official candidates for the Democrats and at one time as many as eleven announced candidates for the Republicans, or a total of nineteen, a modern record at that time. (Baltz and Johnson, 2009, 227)

The Republicans in 2008

According to the early polls, the initial front-runners for the Republicans were Rudolph Giuliani, former Mayor of New York City, John McCain, Senator from Arizona, and Mitt Romney, former Governor of Massachusetts. These three, in varying combinations, led the polls in the first half of 2007 and were considered to be the first tier of the Republican candidates. This first tier status is important because the Republican Party has a long history of nominating a front-runner candidate, and usually one who is not only widely known but who has also run for president or vice president before. The only exceptions to that rule since 1952 when the Republicans went with war hero, Dwight

Eisenhower, are Barry Goldwater in 1964 and George W. Bush in 2000 and each had their own strong base of support among stalwart Republicans in those years. By that prior experience measure, McCain would have the advantage based on his race against Bush in 2000. The Republican nominations process has simply not been friendly to “outsider” or “darkhorse” candidates, and the Republicans prefer a known quantity and someone who the party can coalesce around as early as possible. In spite of McCain’s presumptive early advantage, he was heavily challenged by Giuliani and Romney, and later by Mike Huckabee, a former Governor of Arkansas.

Romney was the least well known of the original three front-runners, and he had to buy considerable television time to try to close the name identification gap. His substantial personal fortune meant that he could afford to buy the media time and the staff expertise necessary to be competitive. The Iowa Caucuses were held on the third day of January, 2008, the earliest it had ever been scheduled, and it drew massive media attention. The Romney campaign was jolted when Huckabee ran first with 34 percent of the vote to Romney’s 25 percent despite the millions of dollars that Romney had spent and the relatively Spartan campaign that Huckabee could afford in Iowa. McCain ran fourth edged out for third by Fred Thompson.

What Huckabee had going for him was that he was an evangelical Christian, and a former Southern Baptist pastor. He mobilized an Iowa coalition of evangelical church people, home school advocates, and other conservative Christian groups, to attend the Iowa caucuses on his behalf. It takes committed and fervent supporters to win a caucus, especially in Iowa where the caucus has been developed to an art form and a civic ritual. The participants have to be willing to spend a cold winter’s evening attending the caucuses and supporting their candidate. This takes much more discipline and dedication than the simple act of voting in a primary requires. The caucuses reward those candidates who have dedicated supporters who

are motivated by strongly held ideological and issues based positions. After Huckabee won the Iowa Caucuses, he became a significant factor in the Republican nominations contest until he finally dropped out in favor of McCain long after McCain had become the prohibitive favorite. He then became a leading Fox News personality and later announced that he was running for the 2016 nomination.

McCain started his competitive challenge with the New Hampshire Primary where he invested a lot of time and money. This investment paid off on January 8th, only five days after Iowa, when McCain came in first with 37 percent of the vote. Romney came in a fairly close second with 31 percent, and Huckabee third with 11 percent. McCain won South Carolina on January 19th, a victory which must have been satisfying to him since South Carolina had effectively killed his campaign against Bush in 2000. Then with a large last moment assist from popular Governor Charlie Crist, McCain won Florida on January 29th.

Winning South Carolina and then Florida became the tipping point for McCain. It allowed him to argue that momentum was on his side going forward into the “mega Tuesday” primary on February 5th, when a total of 24 states held some kind of caucus or primary. This was a prize worth mounting an all-out battle for, and the remaining candidates expended a lot of money and energy on trying to get the win and the advantages of a positive spin out of that day which some termed a “de facto national primary.”

By the time Mega-Tuesday’s results were digested, it was clear that McCain was the man to beat, and that the alternatives still standing were Mike Huckabee and Ron Paul who continued to get a solid core of around 10 percent from his Libertarian base. In fact, Mitt Romney dropped out shortly after the Mega-Tuesday primary. From then on it was only a matter of time before McCain’s superior support among the party faithful and party notables coupled with his renewed campaign war chest would prevail which he ultimately did.

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His victory on February 5th was one of the earliest for a contested primary season, and it put him in a very good position to marshal his resources and supporters for whomever the Democrats would choose to be their standard-bearer in the fall campaign. That proved to be the most contentious and most interesting chapter in the story of the long campaign of 2008.

The Democrats in 2008

On the Democratic side Senator Hillary Clinton of New York was the early front-runner. Clinton was the former first lady of the land and had just handily won re-election for a second term in the 2006 New York Senate race. She was a very accomplished political leader in her own right, and she had both the advantages and disadvantages associated with being the wife of the former president. Many people liked Bill Clinton, and this was especially the case among Democratic Party activists who are so crucial to winning a presidential nomination. Many activists and ordinary voters alike looked backward to his administration as eight years of relative peace and prosperity from which Clinton retired with very high job approval ratings. Others loathed both Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton and were prepared to vote for anyone but Clinton in either the primaries or the general election. Nevertheless, Hillary Clinton had the advantages that name identification, a proven ability to raise money, and a national network of loyal friends, committed political activists, and interest group support could bring to the nominations contest.

Clinton led almost every poll in the 2007 run up to the 2008 race and she had all the advantages of the front-runner, but she and her husband also carried a lot of baggage. They had become an important part of the party and ideological polarization that was by then so endemic to American politics. Clinton's negative personal ratings among ordinary voters were very high, a condition which had been true ever since she left the White House in 2001. These strategic considerations created many doubts among some Democratic activists. Above everything

else, the Democrats wanted a winner for 2008, and that nagging doubt about Clinton's electability was a persistent liability for the senator. In spite of that disadvantage, Clinton's assets were so formidable that she entered the race as the odds on favorite to gain the nomination, and the polls showed her with a substantial lead that continued through most of 2007.

No other candidate, perhaps besides Hillary Clinton, created the excitement and interest of that generated by Senator Barack Obama of Illinois. Obama was a young former state senator first elected to the United States Senate in 2004. He initially came to national attention with a well delivered and well received Keynote Address to the Democratic National Convention in Boston in 2004. Obama generated a great deal of interest as a fresh face, and he impressed many as a moderate, pragmatic and sane voice of reason in a deeply polarized era. He was also an early critic of the decision to invade Iraq, and in March of 2003 he had made a highly publicized speech in downtown Chicago at an anti-war rally where he said that he was not opposed to all wars, "just dumb wars" and he declared that Iraq would be a dumb war.

This speech became an important credential which gave him real creditability with those opposed to the Bush Administration's decision to go to war in Iraq. Those vehemently anti-war factions were especially concentrated in the Democratic primary electorate. The fact that he was also African-American and that he had a compelling personal biography added to his appeal. Obama used the vehicle of his second book, *The Audacity of Hope*, to mount a national book tour in the late fall and early winter weeks of 2006 to test the waters (Obama, 2006). His trips to Iowa and New Hampshire, sites of the earliest primaries and caucuses, set off extreme interest in his candidacy. When he admitted in an interview with newsman Tim Russert after the November 2006 mid-term elections that he was indeed thinking of running, media interest gained momentum exponentially. Obama truly was developing into a political phenomenon, and it appeared that his time in the

national spotlight had come in spite of the fact that he had served only two years in the U.S. Senate and after ten years in the Illinois State Senate and had a limited political record overall.

Many people saw in Obama a candidate who instilled hope and reason into the political dialogue, and those were appealing qualities in a deeply divisive era. People also saw in Obama a fresh new face in politics and one who represented many who had felt cut-off and alienated from the political process. Young people and many African-Americans, in particular, seemed to be energized and excited by his candidacy. Obama had a particularly strong base of support among those who get their news from the Internet, and his campaign mounted an unusually sophisticated approach to mobilizing every facet of the new technology. Obama took Howard Dean's model from 2004 and built on it and expanded it to an unprecedented new campaign model. This strategy paid ample dividends as he was able to raise extra-ordinary amounts of money on the Internet, and to use it to hook up activists with the campaign and with political events in their area.

This was the take-off stage for social networking via the social media, and Obama's campaign made especially effective use of this developing social and technological phenomenon. Obama's web site consistently far outstripped the number of hits logged by his nearest competitors. No candidate had ever used the Internet with the imagination and effectiveness shown by the Obama camp. Upon the announcement of his tentative interest in the nomination, Obama immediately shot up to second place in the trail heat polls. He was at twenty percent in most polls by the end of December of 2006, although he still trailed Hillary Clinton who stood at just under forty percent (Gallup, December 2006). The fact that Obama quickly began to draw attention and criticism from Republican and conservative commentators, as well as from other competitors in the Democratic race, proved that he had become a serious contender for both the nomination and

the general election. Senator Obama and Senator Clinton were the clear frontrunners in the Democratic race. This was an unusual field, with a history-making line up being offered by the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Caucus and Primary Season Results in 2008

2008 became a volatile, unpredictable, and interesting year for the Democrats. The first sign that this would be an unusually volatile year came when the results of the Iowa Caucuses were revealed. On January 3, 2008, only two days after the New Year was heralded, and the earliest official start date ever, Obama won the first in the nation contest with an impressive 38 percent of the precinct level caucus voters supporting him. Edwards came in second with 30 percent, followed closely by Clinton at 29 percent (Jackson, 2008). In addition turnout surged to 239,000 in the Iowa caucuses almost twice the 2004 level (Patterson, 2009, 44-63; Ceaser, Bush, and Pitney, 2009, 114). The other five official candidates trailed badly- all in the single digits. The Iowa results immediately established the top tier of the Democratic candidates with Obama and Clinton clearly at the top, John Edwards trying to gain some traction and the rest relegated to the second tier. Senators Joe Biden and Chris Dodd both dropped out immediately after Iowa.

The results in Iowa also put the national spotlight on the Obama campaign, and on the prospect that a young African-American Senator might become the Democratic nominee and even the president of the United States. Obama achieved almost instant national recognition and fame, and his candidacy spurred great expectations about his future and the subsequent shape of the race. The Iowa victory also created great excitement among many constituencies which had not been mobilized traditionally, especially among many young people. African Americans also quickly took note of the Obama victory in Iowa, a state with a very small black population, and they seemed to start believing for the first time that one from their community could

A vertical strip of an American flag, showing the stars and stripes, runs down the left side of the page.

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actually have a chance to become president.

In retrospect, Iowa would clearly have to be viewed as the early and one of the most crucial, tipping points of the nominations campaign. However, the very optimistic expectations raised among the Obama supporters were immediately put into question less than a week later when on January 9, 2008 Hillary Clinton came in first in the New Hampshire Primary. Clinton received 39 percent of the votes; Obama followed closely with 37 percent, and Edwards came in a distant third with 17 percent. The pressure increased on Edwards. If he was going to be a factor, he had to start winning some primaries, and he was ultimately not able to do so. Obama's momentum was slowed by his second place finish in New Hampshire, and the "Clinton as the favorite" theme re-appeared instantly. The Democratic contest soon settled down to a two person race which became a marathon rather than a sprint and it was a race which did not end until four months later (Jackson, 2008; Balz and Johnson, 2009).

The two candidates traded blows and victories and defeats back and forth until early June. At first neither seemed capable of actually pulling away from the other and becoming the prohibitive favorite. It is very possible that the Democratic Party's rules was partially the cause of this stalemate. The Democrats' earlier adoption of Proportional Representation meant that the second place candidate got delegates assigned in proportion to the aggregate vote in any state primary. Obama especially was constantly able to win delegates even with second place finishes and to survive losses that might have been fatal to a similar candidate under winner-take-all rules. The caucuses, too, aided Obama as his campaign had figured them into their strategic equation and they consistently picked up victories and delegates in caucus states the Clinton camp had ignored. It was remarkable that the newcomer and his campaign seemed to understand and play the rules more expertly than the veteran candidate who had been involved in far more national campaigns for the presidency. The Obama versus Clinton fight was not finally

settled definitively until the last state contests were held on June 3rd which was extremely late by modern campaign standards.

As the race wore on the delegate vote totals started to loom bigger and bigger in the calculations about who would ultimately prevail. On May 8th, a victory in the North Carolina primary and a close second in the Indiana primaries allowed Obama to pick up more delegates under the Democrats' proportional representation rules and those two contests proved Obama had achieved the momentum he needed for the last stage. He and his supporters started talking about the math of the delegate count and how much the logic of their lead in the committed delegate count favored Obama. They also started to pick up the endorsement of more and more of the super-delegates, a group which initially favored Clinton (Kamarck, 2009, 160-165; Mayer, 2009, 101-103).

From May 8th on, the public count among the super-delegates came to favor Obama, and the initial advantage for Clinton among those delegates had disappeared. In a classic case of the argument between the "Instructed Delegate" concept of representation and the "Trustee" role, the Obama camp argued that the super-delegates should respect the will of the people who had voted in the primaries and caucuses and Clinton argued that they should exercise their own independent judgment and vote for the candidate who would run better in the general election. Interestingly, this is the same arguments made in 1980 when Kennedy argued that the delegates should be free to vote their consciences and for the stronger candidate for the general election and Carter argued that they should be bound by the candidate commitments they had made at the time of the primaries and caucuses in their states (Southwell, 2012, 267-283). Thus the rules continued to have a different impact depending on the strategic choices and the interests of the candidates interpreting them.

In mid to late May several more super-delegates announced their support for Obama, and the magic number of 2118 committed

delegates seemed to be in his reach. **This was the first time since Walter Mondale's nomination in 1984 when the super-delegates made a crucial difference in who got the nomination.** During the day of June 3rd the Associated Press count of committed delegates showed Obama with the required majority. It was finally all over unofficially at that point. The long race for the Democratic nomination had come to a close and the party was still internally divided over the results.

It was up to Obama, and then Clinton, to start to pick up the pieces and to pull a fractious party together for the formidable challenge presented by Senator John McCain in the general election. It was also up to Obama and Clinton, and all who had worked so hard on their behalf, to ensure that the very divisive nomination seasons of 1968, 1972 and 1980 would not be repeated in a raucous and dysfunctional national convention which then led to a general election loss in the fall. Both teams were apparently keenly aware of those precedents and of the costs of a divided convention. No Democrat wanted a repeat performance from the Carter vs. Kennedy convention imbroglio. Even if the Clintons and Obama could declare a truce, it was not clear that their supporters would follow suit. As it turned out, both sides made compromises and took strategic steps to ensure that their national convention would be a success. It is not inevitable that the past has to be prologue as these party leaders demonstrated in 2008.

The Democratic National Convention of 2008

The Democratic National Convention held August 25-28 in Denver, Colorado was planned to be an extravaganza for the nomination of Barack Obama. The challenge for Obama and the Democrats was to unite the party. That is always an important order of business for the convention, but it was even more compelling for Obama because of the long and hard fought intra-party battle with Clinton and the late date at which it had been settled. It was initially unclear just what role Clinton would be given although she was subsequently

assigned a major slot in prime time to deliver her speech. It is always difficult to know how to handle a vanquished rival and especially how to handle former presidents during the convention, and the unique status of both Clintons within the Democratic Party made this question even more difficult.

For all the headaches and problems, however, the Obama forces went about their plans for a national convention that would unite the party and inspire the country if at all possible. They were keenly aware of their need to use the national convention as the springboard to a successful campaign in the fall. Both Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton were given prime time opportunities to speak and both gave exemplary testimonials to the need for party unity and for the election of Obama to the presidency. Those speeches, along with a dramatic appearance by an ailing Senator Edward Kennedy, and a call to arms by the only remaining scion of the Kennedy dynasty helped to set the tone for a harmonious convention.

In this the major challenge for Obama was to win the support of the Clinton delegates. After much courting by the Obama camp, Clinton announced that she was satisfied with the convention arrangements and with the nomination of Joe Biden for Vice President, and she urged her supporters to get on board. It was not clear that they would heed her call until the roll call vote on the presidential nomination since her name was still before the convention as a potential nominee, and the possibility of a vast convention floor demonstration on her behalf was very real. Even though the Clinton camp had insisted on a roll call vote on the first ballot, after the roll call of the states got underway, Senator Clinton, speaking from the New York delegation post, made a motion that Obama be nominated by acclamation which was quickly accepted. From that point on, it became increasingly likely that the Democrats would unite behind Obama and leave Denver with the appearance and the reality of a successful convention. Before that, the issue was still very much in doubt.

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Virtually all of the proceedings of the national convention indicated that the Obama-Biden ticket and the Democratic platform constituted a mostly liberal alternative being offered to the American people. The Democratic Party platform reflected the predominant liberalism which had been the hallmark of most recent Democratic platforms. The platforms, the tenor of the conventions, and the rhetoric from the stage in both parties showed that there were real choices to be made in the general election and that the nation was going to be presented with very substantive policy differences between the two candidates and their parties in terms of where the United States was going in the 21st Century and how they proposed to get us there.

The Republican National Convention of 2008

As the party controlling the White House, the Republicans went second with their national convention. It was an unusually late convention scheduled for September 1 - 4 in Minneapolis: St. Paul, Minnesota. It started out as John McCain's convention. McCain reveled in the term "maverick" which was the adjective he applied to himself often and which the media had applied to him consistently since his 2000 primary challenge to Bush. He touted himself as being above party considerations and some of his votes on high profile issues emphasized the penchant to take some policy stances outside Republican orthodoxy. From a larger view, McCain had a fairly conventional conservative voting record over his long career, but he did break with the party and criticize it occasionally as for example on campaign finance reform, immigration legislation and the elimination of earmarks from appropriations bills. He was also a fierce critic of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Defense Department's execution of the war in Iraq, although he was also a vigorous supporter of the initial decision to invade Iraq. Over the course of the campaign, he also became President Bush's strongest ally in support of the "surge", i.e. the significant increase in the number of American troops deployed in Iraq. This independent quality did not endear him to

all Republicans; however, it did play well with the media and with some independents.

Although in the course of seeking the 2008 nomination McCain had largely become a dependable conservative, by the time the convention opened, McCain had still not settled some of his outstanding conflicts with the most conservative elements of the Republican Party's base. However, on August 29 McCain announced what became the bombshell of the Republican convention. He had chosen Sarah Palin, the young first-term governor of Alaska to be his running mate. This was a surprise announcement since Palin had only been in the office two years and was virtually unknown to a national audience. She had not been on the short list of any of the most knowledgeable handicappers.

The choice did have the desired effect on the convention. The Republican faithful inside the hall were galvanized by the Palin choice, and the social conservatives who had not been especially enthusiastic about McCain were quick to sing Palin's praises. She was pro-life, attended an evangelical church, and was said to be deeply religious. She had cut taxes as Governor of Alaska (except for taxes on the oil companies) and was adamantly in favor of drilling for more oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWAR). From then on, it was the McCain-Palin convention and ticket. A convention which had threatened to be boring at the outset was now excited and mobilized by the Palin choice and very much on board with the man who had made it. McCain had refurbished his credentials as a maverick, a term which Palin happily applied to herself as well.

The Republicans left Minneapolis with their ideological base energized and enthused by the choice of Palin, and the party establishment largely reassured by their selection of McCain although some were uncertain about Palin. Overall it was a successful convention although there were early strains between the McCain camp and the Palin camp which would become evident quickly and which would publically hamper the fall campaign. A national campaign

simply cannot countenance public rumors of dissent and discord between the presidential and vice-presidential forces and be successful in the end. Those stories of divisiveness between the McCain and Palin campaigns started early in 2008 and certainly hindered their efforts to present a unified front in the general election.

The General Election of 2008

The national conventions were the official kick-off of the fall campaign and both were held very late by ordinary standards. The fall issues had largely emerged during the primary season although no one could anticipate just how much the economy would come to dominate the fall. The debates for the fall campaign and the themes for the television commercials were beginning to take definite form and the media were busily framing the two campaigns (Jamieson and Waldman, 2003). It was much later than usual when the Democratic nomination was finally settled and when the national conventions were held; however, the race for the fall had already taken shape as a heated and contentious one as could be expected in a nation which had been so deeply and so closely polarized for the past three decades. It is this run-up to the national conventions and the events of the nominations season which helps define and position the two parties in the minds of the only national audience which counts, the voters in the general election in November.

Ultimately, of course, it did turn out to be a deeply divisive race where the partisan divisions could not have been much more obvious. Immediately after the Republican National Convention the polls showed the race to be essentially a toss-up and the Republican Party's social conservatives were ready to work hard because of Palin's presence on the ticket. This neck and neck horserace continued until the financial melt-down of the national economy in mid-September appeared to present a clear and present danger to the nation's economic security and the whole world financial system was threatened.

In a highly charged atmosphere the two

parties' leaders assembled around a table in the cabinet room of the White House under the leadership of George W. Bush and Henry Paulson, the Secretary of the Treasury. They essentially accepted an emergency bail-out of the banks and other financial institutions which the Bush Administration had put together hurriedly. During the run-up to that meeting McCain canceled his public campaign to fly back to Washington, while Obama continued to campaign and prepare for the up-coming debate. In the last two days before the Washington economic summit, it appeared that McCain was on the outside looking in and that Bush was actually getting more support for his plan from Obama than from McCain. Obama clearly won the perception war and appeared much cooler and in better command of the facts and their strategic implications than McCain did. This was the pivotal moment in the fall campaign and Obama seized it while McCain fumbled. From then on Obama led the polls and never faltered in his drive toward November 4th (Balz and Johnson, 2009, 351).

Obama went on to a convincing victory, taking 53% of the popular vote to 47% for McCain. Obama won an even larger electoral vote victory, 375 to 163 over McCain (Balz and Johnson, 2009, 372). Obama won nine states that Bush had carried in 2004, for a net gain of 112 Electoral College votes there alone (Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney, 2009, 156). McCain did not win a single state that Kerry had carried in 2004. It was the first time since Jimmy Carter's election in 1976 that the Democratic candidate had attained more than half of the popular vote. Obama improved on Kerry's performance in every state except for four southern and border states (Tennessee, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas) (Balz and Johnson, 2009, 372). The political analyst, Charlie Cook, estimated that McCain won the South by 7 points, despite the heavy African-American population of many of the southern states (Ibid, 371). Obama simply got decimated in much of the white South with the exception of the three southern states he won, and in those states he did not carry a

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majority of the white voters. Republicans carried a total of 22 states, most of the South, a part of the Appalachian mountain chain that Obama had problems with in the primaries and the Mountain West. Outside the South it was a sweeping Democratic victory according to Cook's estimate that Obama won the rest of the nation by 14 points (Ibid.). McCain won 91 percent of the Republican voters and Obama won 90 percent of the Democratic vote (Ceaser, Busch, and Pitney, 2009, 158). **This continued the trend of campaigns placing their first premium on mobilizing and winning their party base by a nine to one margin or better.**

Obama won an overwhelming victory among the youngest cohort of voters and he won in every age group except for the senior citizens. Reversing recent trends, the Democratic candidate lost the elderly, i.e. the cohort over 65 years of age. The fact that Obama won the popular vote by a handy margin is presaged by the finding that Obama won 66 percent of the Independents (Stanley and Niemi, 2009, 115). In essence, most of the party identifiers voted for their own party's candidate while the Independents split but leaned significantly in the direction of the party which captured the White House. This was the template for most recent presidential elections. It was another chapter in the modern saga of the ideological and partisan polarization which has marked American politics late in the 20th Century and during the first decade of the 21st Century. That polarization continues and is more marked today than ever before.

2012

The Democrats in 2012

In preparation for the drive toward a second term President Obama and his campaign planners were keenly aware of recent history and the advantages to entering their re-election race without the distraction of a difficult primary fight. They worked hard to ensure that no Democrat of any stature would challenge him, and they succeeded in that objective. Ultimately Obama had no serious opposition in achieving

his second nomination which was a far cry from his internecine struggle with Hillary Clinton in 2008. The Obama campaign's strategic models were the 2004 Bush re-election campaign and the 1996 Clinton campaign and they learned from both playbooks. Obama was able to use the primary season to marshal his resources and to make the kinds of strategic plans that would use the winter of 2011 and the spring and summer of 2012 to focus entirely on the Republican challenge of the fall of 2012 no matter who the Republican nominee turned out to be. The answer to that question about the Republicans was only revealed after a raucous primary season played out.

The Republicans in 2012

There were numerous Republican challengers eager to take on Obama who they considered to be vulnerable, and the polls showed that a Republican could be quite competitive. The economy had been slow to heal from the deepest recession since the Great Depression. The number of people employed had moved from negative to positive territory soon after Obama took office; however, the monthly number of new jobs created by the economy had only grown slowly and in many months it had barely kept pace with an expanding labor pool. Consequently, the unemployment rate had started at ten percent, and then declined slowly but remained stubbornly above eight percent until the very close of the election season. Many commentators and Republicans alike consistently pointed out that no recent president had ever been re-elected with an unemployment rate above seven percent. The monthly jobs report became the single most important indicator of Obama's re-election chances although there were numerous other complaints about his stewardship of the presidency.

As is usually the case with the party outside the White House, and especially if the incumbent looks beatable, the Republican nominations race attracted a large and very mixed field of candidates. These included former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, former U. S.

Senator Rick Santorum, former Speaker of the U. S. House, Newt Gingrich, businessman Herman Cain, Representative Ron Paul of Texas, Governor Rick Perry of Texas, former Governor John Huntsman of Utah, Representative Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, and former Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota. At one time or the other several of these candidates held the top spot in the polls based on a temporary victory in one state.

At the outset Romney appeared to be the front-runner. He had run before in 2008 and it has become an electoral axiom that the Republicans do not nominate outsiders. The only other candidate who had run before 2012 was Ron Paul, and most observers thought that he would have great difficulty in expanding beyond his avidly Libertarian base. Romney also had by far the most money and the deepest and most experienced organization. He was personally very wealthy and he had many super rich friends and supporters. Money can buy a candidate an experienced staff, media exposure, and the freedom to focus on other things besides the grinding demands of fundraising that wear down most candidates. Romney had all of these advantages as well as his experience of having run already in 2008. Based on all these factors, Romney was considered by the pundits and the media to be the early front-runner, but he encountered many problems in maintaining that status.

The Republican race was hard-fought and deeply divisive. The early contests provided more confusion than clarity to the race. The Iowa Caucuses, held two days after New Year's Day of 2012, their earliest ever, were first announced to have been won by Romney by a margin of only a handful of votes. That victory was widely publicized and gave Romney an early boost. More than two weeks later it was determined that Santorum had actually won by thirty four votes, but by then the spotlight had moved on. Based on erroneous counts by Iowa party officials, Romney had benefitted from the typical first in the nation Iowa momentum boost, and Santorum had lost a great opportunity.

One week later Romney won the New Hampshire Primary with 39 percent of the vote compared to 23 percent for Paul; 17 percent for Huntsman; 9 percent for Gingrich; 9 percent for Santorum, and less than 1 percent for Perry. This victory was generally expected; however, coupled with the announced victory in Iowa, it gave Romney an early claim on the magical momentum which all candidates seek (Stanley and Niemi, 2013, 63). Getting credit for winning both Iowa and New Hampshire afforded Romney a good start and a claim on early momentum.

Then the contest moved on to South Carolina on February 21st which Gingrich won; Romney came in a somewhat distant second; Santorum third, and Paul fourth. This victory gave a temporary boost to the former Speaker and he immediately shot to the top of the national polls, but that did not last long. South Carolina and later Georgia were the only two primaries Gingrich was ultimately able to win. Next came Florida on January 31st. Florida is always important because of its size, its status as a battleground state, and its position early in the calendar. Romney won Florida; Gingrich came in second; Santorum came in third, and Paul finished fourth. This win certainly seemed to help put Romney back on track, and he took Nevada the next week.

Then the scene shifted and Rick Santorum's campaign caught fire. On February 7th Santorum won the Colorado Caucus with 40 percent of the vote, compared to 35 percent for Romney; 13 percent for Gingrich; and 12 percent for Paul. Santorum also won the Minnesota Caucus easily outdistancing Paul, Romney and Gingrich who came in second, third, and fourth respectively. Santorum also won the non-binding Missouri Primary that day with 55 percent of the vote. This was not good news for the front-runner, and it was not a good way to bolster the argument that Romney was the inevitable winner.

On February 28th Romney took Arizona and Michigan as expected, but he got less credit for those two victories because of Arizona's

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large Mormon population and because Michigan was Romney's native state. Romney then won a quick succession of states, including Washington on March 3rd and Idaho, Massachusetts, Vermont, Virginia and Ohio on March 6th. Santorum's campaign also gained some new momentum from the results that day as he continued to do well in the conservative southern and border states of Oklahoma and Tennessee. However, Romney also won Virginia handily where Gingrich and Santorum were not even on the ballot. The Santorum and Gingrich campaigns, because of a lack of funds and staff and perhaps also as a strategic failure in planning, did not manage to get together enough petition signatures to get on the ballot in Virginia. The point has been made repeatedly that strategic prior planning is required to play the nominations game successfully, and the campaign with the resources to survive some early setbacks and the ability and resources to mount a second and third wave attack is a decided advantage in the long run. The campaigns with much thinner resources are much more vulnerable to having to drop out after sporadic defeats. The abysmal results for Gingrich and Santorum in Virginia emphasize that basic point.

Santorum went on to win in Mississippi and Alabama adding credibility to his claim of being the "true conservative" in the field. Romney was the clear frontrunner but he had proved to be a somewhat weak frontrunner who could not quite close the deal. On March 20th Romney won Illinois handily. While Santorum actually won more counties in Illinois ($N = 74$), Romney won in the more populated counties ($N = 28$) (Jackson, 2012, 8). This victory in a large and diverse Midwestern state helped to bolster Romney's claim to be the more electable candidate for November. Romney then won a big victory when he took the District of Columbia and Wisconsin on April 3rd. Santorum and the media agreed that his home-state Pennsylvania primary on April 24th had become a must win for him. However, Santorum took a look at his depleted bank account and the polls, which saw him in a close race in Pennsylvania and decided

to drop out on April 10th.

In fact, Santorum would not have been able to get this far under the former rules of campaign finance where candidates who took the federal subsidy funding had to continue to win primaries in order to continue to receive funds. Santorum, like Gingrich was for a while an exception to that rule because each found a "fat cat", i.e. a super-rich benefactor who gave their campaigns millions and tens of millions of dollars to subsidize their races regardless of temporary defeats. In Santorum's case it was a business man and investments manager named Foster Friess and in Gingrich's case it was a Los Vegas gambling casino mogul, Sheldon Adelson, who provided their bankroll at least for a while. Adelson gave Gingrich \$20 million dollars during the primary season and then gave another \$30 million to Mitt Romney after Gingrich dropped out. That independent source of private funds allowed both Santorum and Gingrich to stay in the race longer than usually was the case for candidates who could only win one or two primaries (Gingrich) or a few primaries (Santorum) in the 2012 race. Nevertheless it proved to be inadequate for the long run. **A rich benefactor can sustain a campaign for a time and help them to survive temporary defeats, but there is still the imperative to win crucial primaries and develop broad and deep funding sources to sustain a campaign with hard money over the long haul.** In addition, there are certain categories of direct expenses, for example, staff and travel expenses, and advertising written and placed by the campaign itself that can only be paid for with hard money and those expenses demand a broader base of fundraising than the deep pockets of one or two fat cats. So, the 2012 campaign began to define the limits of the indirect expenditures and those limits were evident again in 2016.

After Santorum dropped out, Romney effectively became the Republican nominee although Ron Paul continued the race and refused to drop out, and the delegate count did not officially show Romney to be over the top until May 29th when he won Texas (Jackson, 2012). It was

late in the day by modern standards, and Romney had been damaged by the primary battle. He had also spent tens of millions of dollars that he would have preferred to be aimed at President Obama. Romney had also been attacked vigorously by Rick Santorum, Rick Perry and Newt Gingrich who identified some of his liabilities and launched extremely critical ads and personal attacks (during the long debate season) against him. Romney's experience in 2012 showed the real problems that a hotly contested presidential primary season with lots of candidate debates can cause for a candidate, and especially to a challenger. The polls showed that Romney was consistently trailing Obama narrowly, but also that the race was competitive. It would take an uplifting national convention and an excellent fall campaign to close the gap.

The Republican National Convention of 2012

The Republican convention was held in Tampa, Florida, on August 27 through 30. They started by having to cancel the first night's official proceedings because of a hurricane which was threatening Tampa. This was reminiscent of the same problem which caused the same result in John McCain's convention of four years earlier. Both cancellations also reminded the nation and the media of how concerned the Republicans were to avoid calling renewed attention to the memory of Hurricane Katrina which hit New Orleans on August 29, 2005, and the Bush Administration's fumbled response to it. Cancellation of the first night backed up some of the better speakers, such as Ann Romney, to later in the week when they did not get optimum speaking slots.

Then a dispute over the rules broke out on Tuesday afternoon and some of Ron Paul's Libertarian supporters demanded to be heard and loudly condemned actions taken by the Convention Chair. They created much noise and conflict on the convention floor which the media, predictably, transmitted to the national audience. There is nothing like internal party conflict to attract the media's coverage and if it happens on or near the convention floor, it

instantly becomes national news. All of that might have been transcended if the convention had closed on a high note and one emphasizing party harmony; however, the last night was devoted not only to Mitt Romney's acceptance speech, but also to an appearance by Hollywood star, Clint Eastwood. His debate with an empty chair, ostensibly intended to represent President Obama, got the lion's share of the publicity the next day, and the national response was one of puzzlement and occasional derision. Romney's generally well presented and positively reviewed acceptance speech got second billing to Eastwood's strange performance. If conventions are supposed to heal factional strife and make the party combat ready for the fall campaign, as well as presenting the best face possible to the mass public, one would have to rate the GOP 2012 convention as having fundamentally failed to perform those most important functions. It did not provide the uplifting start to the general election campaign that Romney would have wanted.

The Democratic National Convention of 2012

The Democrats opened less than a week later on September 2nd in Charlotte, North Carolina. They had the same objectives as the Republicans, i.e. put on a good show for the television audience and blog world, minimize conflict, heal any remaining factional strife, and get the party fired up and ready to campaign for President Obama. By any standard measure the Democrats accomplished these objectives in Charlotte. They were materially assisted by a gracious and appealing speech by First Lady Michelle Obama on Tuesday night and an extraordinary speech by former President Bill Clinton on Wednesday night. Clinton made the case for Obama in a way that even Obama could not quite match and his ability to take complex policies and make them understandable and relevant to a mass audience was on full display. Obama's speech the next night called on the party's shared values and constituted a ringing declaration for mostly liberal causes. The Democrats appeared to leave Charlotte

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“fired up and ready to go” to adopt a phrase Obama used repeatedly during the fall.

The General Election of 2012

Each party got a small but significant initial bump in the polls out of their conventions, but neither one lasted more than a week. Then the polls settled back to where they had been for months, i.e. with a small but consistent lead for Obama. The polls, and the size or even the existence of this lead became an issue itself in the late stages of the campaign. Those on the right insisted that Romney was at least tied and in some cases leading in their polls and some of the less partisan polls, like Gallup, showed a close race occasionally led by Romney by a narrow margin.

The question of how to model the mass electorate and especially how to locate and question the undecided voters and those most likely to vote became hotly contested. Those who were poll “aggregators” like most notably Nate Silver insisted that Obama’s lead was not large but that it was significant and that it remained stable. In an ominous portent for things to come for Romney, when the September unemployment data were released at the end of the first week of October, the rate had fallen to 7.9 percent, the lowest it had been since the start of the Great Recession. Obama insisted that this was empirical validation for his “stay the course” appeal. Romney insisted that it was only a further indicator of just how tepid the economic recovery had been and some of his supporters claimed that the data had been manipulated by the Obama campaign. The argument continued.

It turned out that the poll aggregators were right. Obama won the popular vote by a 51 to 47 percent margin and this represented an almost five million national vote victory. He became the first Democrat since Franklin Roosevelt to win two consecutive popular vote majorities. His Electoral College victory was much more impressive with a 332 to 206 vote margin. Neither margin was as substantial as his 2008 victory. Obama carried 26 total states

compared to 24 for Romney versus 28 to 22 states for Obama over McCain in 2008. Thus Obama lost a net of two states when 2012 is compared to 2008. More importantly, Obama carried eight of the ten “battleground” states, losing only North Carolina and Indiana from his 2008 totals. This means that 48 of the 50 total states voted the same way in both 2008 and 2012. This result illustrates just how stable and just how polarized the nation remained at the aggregate vote level (Jacobson in Nelson, 2014, 145-172). The extent of polarization is also indicated at the individual voter level by the fact that 93 percent of the Republicans voted for Romney and 92 percent of the Democrats voted for Obama (Stanley and Niemi, 2013-2014, 117). This continued the extraordinarily high indicators of the partisan polarization which had marked all the recent presidential elections.

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For those who follow the Responsible Parties theory, the 2012 elections might have been thought to perform the function of providing a mandate to govern for President Obama and the Democrats (White and Mileur, 1992). In the one truly national election we have, Obama had “gone to the country” and won. The Democrats maintained their control over the U. S. Senate, but lost the House by a 33 vote margin. Even in losing the House, however, they had garnered more than a million popular majority of the total votes cast in House races. It was only the vagaries of how the votes are allocated and distributed and especially how the districts had been drawn by more states with a Republican majority in control of unified state governments that produced this gerrymandered outcome.

Thus, we began a new era of divided government at the national level. Party and ideological polarization continued and the legislative gridlock and partisan wars intensified, if anything, in 2013 through the 2015 preamble to the 2016 national elections. All of the ensuring partisan bickering in Washington provided the backdrop for the run up to the 2016 presidential nominations and election season. It was an era when the political leaders fought almost incessantly and had trouble getting anything much done and the voters professed repeatedly to the pollsters and the media their disappointment and disgust with their government, but tens of millions of Americans through their individual votes ensured the aggregate outcome they apparently disliked and distrusted.

The 2012 elections produced divided government again and the divisions in the federal government reflected and exacerbated the continuing partisan and ideological divisions in the country. Then the 2014 mid-term elections produced a partisan wave for the Republicans which changed the U. S. Senate from a Democratic majority to a Republican majority giving

complete control of Congress to the Republicans and producing an even more deeply divided government. The polls showed that job approval for Congress was at historic lows in the eyes of the American people. The question was whether these negative evaluations of Congress would improve under complete Republican control but the early results indicated that they did not change much.

Most of Obama’s second term policy agenda was stymied and the chances of his prevailing on most legislative votes were small and none. Obama’s job approval ratings would be an important factor setting the context for the 2016 campaign and for most of 2015 these hovered in the mid to high forties and occasionally broke fifty percent. These job approval numbers were not a disaster for the Democrats’ hopes for 2016, but they were not great either. They essentially meant either side could win. The economy turned in very positive job creation numbers, with almost every month in 2015 showed that the new jobs created were consistently above the 200,000 mark, and the total numbers of jobs created since the Great Recession reached and then exceeded the number lost producing very positive net jobs gained totals. The stock market was twice the level that existed when Obama took office, and the consumer confidence index grew. Those objective numbers should help the Democrats, but many people were still unemployed or under employed and many also believed the nation was still in a recession. In politics it is the perceptions which count.

The Republicans in the Congress were intent on fashioning an image and a strategic narrative for the upcoming 2016 national elections by stressing the negatives claiming that the nation was weak abroad and struggling economically at home. The Democrats were just as intent of achieving the same objective by stressing the positives in the Obama record. The media swung back and forth in their coverage

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and interpretations of both narratives- highlighting the positives one day and stressing the negatives the next. All of this conflict intensified the already deep divisions in the government and in the nation. This mixed picture became the backdrop for the beginning of the 2016 race and the official start of the primary season.

The American people had consistently voted for divided government and the attendant polarization but they were not particularly happy with the results. The “right track; wrong track” poll questions consistently produced a whopping majority for the wrong track although that has been the case for a long time. Our political culture apparently now includes the recognition that Americans are a dyspeptic and critical people when it comes to overall evaluations of their government no matter who is in control. This has become a key component of the American political culture. This insures that “the angry electorate” marked by a large contingent who tell the pollsters that they want to throw all incumbents out and vote for newcomers will continue to be a staple of every election. This phenomenon may account for the fact that three of the top candidates in the Republican contest for 2016 are people who have never held office before and who ran with pride with their “outsider” labels.

So what do all these historical examples teach us? **Well, first the all-important base of the two parties has shifted significantly along the ideological axis.** The Republicans have become the markedly conservative option and are probably now the most purely conservative the party has ever been in its history (Mann and Ornstein, 2012; White, 2016). This is particularly the case among the political activists and campaign funders who are so crucial to gaining the necessary victories in the primaries and the caucuses. There are now groups on the right in the Republican Party who effectively hold veto powers over the nominations and if a candidate is not acceptable to them, they will not be successful in winning the nomination. The old Eastern elite establishment of moderate and liberal Republicans has disappeared to be replaced

by hard core conservatives, mostly from the South and West.

Essentially the same picture holds true in reverse in the Democratic Party. Their core is on the left or liberal end of the continuum, and they have shifted markedly along the ideological axis in that direction since the beginning of the reform era in the early 1970s. In fact, the reform era was initiated and led by the Democratic Party activists of that time who wanted the party to displace the former party bosses and replace them with grassroots activists much like themselves. These activists came from the civil rights, anti-war and women’s movements and they entered party service in order to advance those causes. Today a candidate who does not accept the broad consensus of liberal values which animated those groups will not have much of a chance in seeking the Democratic Party presidential nomination. The old conservative wing of the party, primarily centered in the South, has almost completely been thrown out in favor of conservatives who are now Republicans.

That being said, however, the Democrats are still the more diverse of the two parties. This diversity includes the demographic groups they represent, the socio-economic classes they include in their base, and even a certain level of ideological and issue based disagreement that is at least tolerated. There are significantly more moderates still identified with the Democratic Party than among the Republicans where the term conservative has achieved almost universal approbation and adoption among the party’s base and party leaders alike (Jackson, 2015).

The candidates understand all too well that they have to appeal to the party’s activist base in order to win the caucuses and primaries. This means that they usually have to tack to the right if they are Republicans or to the left if they are Democrats. As the nominations season goes on the candidates often become more and more shrill and more and more pure in their attempts to appeal, and even pander, to those they must please in order to win the next primary or caucus. They may have been

somewhat moderate in at least some of their positions in the past or they may have a moderate record in prior offices held; however, such beliefs become expendable in the constant drive to win over the ideological and issue driven party loyalists and activists who disproportionately populate the precincts that turn out most reliably in the primaries and caucuses. They also have to please the major campaign financiers who tend to be funders with a cause and not just disinterested champions of good government and the common good.

For example, early in the spring of 2015, Hillary Clinton moved much more clearly into the liberal ranks on such issues as same-sex marriage, civil rights, and income inequality under perceived pressure first from what was initially the Elizabeth Warren constituency and then became the Bernard Sanders consistency. She also started taking much more hard-hitting and well defined policy positions in order to make her liberal bona fides clear. For example her earlier studied reluctance to take a stance on the Keystone pipeline proposal evaporated into a ringing declaration of her opposition, a position well calculated to appeal to the environmental activists in the party base. Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio abandoned their earlier support for a moderate immigration reform plan, which included a path to citizenship, in order to placate the Tea Party constituency in the Republican base who denounced all such plans as “amnesty”. In 2012, Mitt Romney announced early on that he was an “extreme conservative” even though his record as governor of Massachusetts was more moderate than anything else and he had even initiated and signed into law a health care plan that became the model for the national Affordable Care Act in the Obama Administration.

No modern Democratic candidate has been pro-life and no Republican candidate has been pro-choice since the two parties realigned on this controversial issue and started putting their signature positions into the party platform in 1980. Early in their presidencies Bill Clinton and Barack Obama equivocated on the matter

of same sex marriage until they both adopted the Democrats’ litmus test position somewhat later; however, Hillary Clinton got out front on the issue at the early stages of her campaign in 2015. The time for equivocation had passed. All the Republicans were opposed although they varied somewhat in just how vociferous they were in their condemnation of the Supreme Court’s landmark ruling in June of 2015 holding that state recognition of same sex marriages was required by the U. S. Constitution. All of this scrambling to the ideological extremes and even pandering to the right or left is driven by the nature of the new nomination system and the fundamental imperatives of a much more ideological and issues oriented party system. The base for both parties is much more ideological and those who are the most involved in politics as activists are also the most ideological and issues oriented voters.

All of this nomination season policy position taking is highly relevant to the way the winner will govern. Candidates who run on the signature values and issues positions of their parties are very unlikely to abandon them when they attain the White House. The platforms they run on in the general elections are markedly different from each other and promise quite different visions of what American government and society will look like if they are elected. The most important positions literally become matters of war and peace and life or death for millions of people both at home and in the foreign countries that are profoundly impacted by the policies of an American administration.

The platforms of the two major parties are certainly not binding on those elected in any legalistic sense; however, they are important political statements of the fundamental issue and ideological commitments of the two national parties, and they are important indicators of where the president will try to take the party and the country when he or she is elected. The candidates make promises and commitments when they are running and they take campaign funds from interest groups and individuals who have a policy agenda.

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Those who are elected are unlikely to just abandon those promises, friends, supporters and sources of campaign funds once they are in power. Indeed they are almost always committed to trying to transform those earlier campaign promises into public policy.

The same situation exists in the U. S. Congress. The Congress is now more polarized ideologically than it has ever been in American history. The redistricting process is firmly under the control of the parties in most states. Where one party is dominant in a state they draw congressional and legislative district lines that are designed to protect their party to the maximum extent possible. This means a maximum number of districts where there is one party control and achieving the nomination is tantamount to achieving election victory. Thus, the only way an incumbent is likely to be defeated from such a district is to draw a strong opponent in a party primary. Such an opponent is likely to come from the more ideological right wing if the incumbent is a Republican and from the left wing if the incumbent is a Democrat.

Thus, party gerrymandering which is rampant in many states is a very strong driver of party polarization and the rewards for sticking to the party line are much more compelling than the rewards for “working across the aisle” in a bi-partisan fashion. The policy making process in Washington has been sacrificed to the electoral interests and the gerrymandered district line drawing of the two parties. Getting elected and following the signature issue positions of the party base has become more important than any pursuit of the common good or the public interest. Compromise is taken as the sign of weakness and insufficient commitment to ideological dogma and the Congress is often gridlocked over the most basic issues and the ability to govern suffers.

The level of party unity and party line voting in the Congress has never been higher. The 2010 and 2014 mid-term elections effectively wiped out those who mis-identified with the other party. That is, the moderate to conser-

vative Democrats were almost totally thrown out or retired, especially in the South, and they were replaced with conservative Republicans. On the other side, the old line liberal to moderate Republicans have all been replaced by much more conservative Republicans. The party in the government is now almost entirely conservative on the Republican side and almost entirely liberal on the Democratic side. The “Blue Dog Caucus” which once represented the moderate Democrats, mostly from the South and West, faded away after the 2010 and 2014 mid-term elections decimated their ranks.

This polarization also extends to the party in the electorate. Following elite level leadership, the two parties have moved a long way toward realignment at the mass voter level as well. The liberals are almost all Democrats and the conservatives are almost all Republicans and there are far fewer misaligned partisans now than at any time in our history. Only the moderates remain somewhat confused with some going each direction and many calling themselves independents. The ideological voters do the expected and vote for their own party both for president and Congress. **The level of party voting at the mass level has never been higher and the level of cross-over or split-ticket voting has never been lower than in recent presidential elections.** This all starts in and is reinforced by the presidential primaries and caucuses. What is true at the presidential level is also true at the congressional level although the trend is tempered and dampened somewhat by voting for the incumbent.

This is the typical picture of party and ideological polarization. It is also reinforced by geographic, class based, racial and gender polarization. The earlier cross-cutting cleavages of the American polity and society have now aligned themselves to be much more conterminous with party loyalty and the existing issue cleavages in the polity. The cross-cutting cleavages which formerly led to cross-pressured voting now is much more comfortably ensconced in the belief that everyone I care about thinks very much like me and shares my views

and beliefs. Partisanship has become an integral part of one's social identity, just as important as religion or race, as scholars such as Green, Palmquist, and Schickler argue (2002). Voters are reinforced in these comfortable beliefs by the now partisan and polarized media, especially cable television and talk radio which is sought out by those who believe whatever that particular media outlet is advocating and reinforcing every day and with every newscast. The Internet, social media and blogs are made to order for those who seek a community of shared interests and true believer certainty. If one sticks to one's Facebook Friends and Twitter community each day to gain news and perspectives on politics, never a discouraging word will be heard.

This familiar picture of the polarized electorate led by a polarized political elite and reinforced by a polarized media and mobilized interest groups has significant implications for the operation of the government.

Because of the separation of powers and checks and balances system deeply embedded in the structure of American government, it takes coalitions and compromise to make much happen and particularly to fashion new and innovative policy departures. The president proposes and the Congress disposes in the legislative process. It takes building a winning majority in order to pass a bill. It requires give-and-take and compromise in order to build winning coalitions. It requires even more give and take and compromise if the government is divided with the congress, or even one body of the Congress, under the control of one party and the presidency under control of the other. Divided government has been the norm far more often than unified government since the reforms were instituted.

This means that the compromise and the give-and-take that are required for the democratic process to work in a separation of powers system have become more and more difficult to achieve. The large issues like adopting a budget and determining the size of the defense establishment and dealing with domestic challenges like the health care needs of the millions of uninsured, or the legal status of

millions of illegal immigrants, the need to constantly build and upgrade the nation's infrastructure, or what to do about climate change, clean air and water rules, and the right to life versus freedom of choice positions, or any semblance of limitations on guns, all strike fierce debates and party-line votes, and legislative gridlock is the norm when dealing with anything controversial. Just keeping the government open and not facing another shut down threat over such mundane procedural issues as voting to raise the debt ceiling, which absolutely has to be done to preserve the full faith and credit of the American government, is a frequently faced and totally manufactured crisis in recent years.

It is a crisis which apparently became the tipping point leading to the resignation of former Speaker of the House, John Boehner. A dysfunctional Congress has become the new normal in Washington, and the polls indicate that the judgment of the American people on the job the congress has been doing for the past several years is devastatingly negative.

This malfunctioning of the system has a major impact on the executive branch as well. The president becomes a lame duck after two years of his first term and two years of the beginning of the second term, if he can achieve a second term. The battle to be the president's successor starts earlier and earlier and the partisan gamesmanship leading up to the next national elections starts as soon as the new Congress is seated. The president has certain prerogatives, especially in the foreign and defense fields and he can still lead in those areas although even there the president is increasingly challenged by the other party in congress. President Obama's attempt to join six major world powers in the negotiation of a plan to control Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions is just one of the most important and most conflict ridden examples of such partisan opposition in the Congress developing around the position of trying to scuttle the agreement, or even make it impossible to achieve, as Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas and forty six of his Senate colleagues did even before the agreement was signed.

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This is only the most recent example of congressional assertion of its powers to contain and control the president's power over foreign policy although it ultimately failed.

On the domestic side it is infinitely harder for the president to work his will and lead Congress in his preferred policy direction. The Congress has multiple powers that can be used to counter and stymie the president, with the power of the purse as the most important and most easily used example. They also have the power of continuous oversight of the executive branch and it can be used as a potent political weapon against the president's policies and administrators. Obama's two-year battle for the Affordable Care Act actually ended in legislative victory in 2010. However, its implementation was constantly challenged in the Congress and before the courts for the next five or six years. At this writing the legal fate of the ACA has seemingly been settled as to its basic constitutionality by an apparently definitive victory handed down by the U. S. Supreme Court at the end of June, 2015. Its political fate awaits the outcome of the presidential and congressional elections of 2016 since most of the Republican presidential candidates claim they would move to repeal or seriously modify the ACA on the first day of their new administrations. The fate of the president's immigration policies and environmental regulations await a similar fate with the next Congress and administration.

This policy gridlock is the product of the separation of powers system James Madison and his colleagues constructed as the basic edifice of the American Constitution. The basic structure was one which required coalition building and compromise to make it work in the founders' day. It also required the development of modern political parties which the founders got busy building even as some of them at the same time denounced the bane of excessive partisanship. This basic constitutional structure is one which requires the same skills today. However, today it is very difficult to find the formula for compromise and the path to successful coalition building in order

for the major and deeply conflicted issues of the modern world to be managed under the aegis of an Eighteenth Century government structure. Starting in the 1790s, the parties were the nerves and sinew which bound the body politic together and allowed a disjointed system to function. The political parties were always the key to making that separation of powers and checks and powers system workable. The parties organized their forces to advance their causes, and the cause of their president if they controlled the White House. But, they also usually recognized that the opposition had rights and maybe occasionally had good ideas which should be included in the basic policy.

With the kind of polarization we have today, which is clearly driven and exacerbated by the presidential nominations and election system, and then reinforced by the separate congressional elections, partisan gerrymandering, and the pernicious influence of big money and ideologically driven media, it is very difficult to make basic policy and to address the fundamental problems facing American society and the world's needs.

We can do better. Indeed we must do better if our 18th Century constitutional form of government is going to be capable of addressing the nation's complex modern problems and find a way to survive the deep conflicts and unyielding political allegiances which often threaten to paralyze it and prevent American government from rising to the demands of a 21st Century world.

Appendix A

Presidential Nominations Primer: The Rules of the Game

1. The successful candidate must run in and win a series of state based primaries and caucuses in order to be nominated
2. One of the early front-runners usually wins the nomination.
3. The Republicans traditionally nominate candidates who have run for president at least once previously. The Democrats occasionally nominate an “outsider”.
4. The party activists in both parties have become the major influence in deciding who the nominees will be.
5. The candidate who raises the most money will usually win.
6. Sequencing is critical to the development of a successful candidate strategy.
7. Campaign infrastructure and human resources are critical.
8. The preprimary presidential debates are a new obstacle and opportunity and have become an increasingly important part of the winnowing process.
9. Winning early contests and winning often is essential to establishing momentum and staying alive in the race.
10. The candidate who relies heavily or almost exclusively on an initial one state victory strategy will almost certainly lose.
11. The party which holds the most harmonious national convention will go on to victory in November.
12. Winning the party base, that is a large majority at the ninety percent or above level, is necessary for a victory in the fall.

Appendix B

Schedule of Primaries and Caucuses for 2016

Date	State	Contest Type
February		
Monday, February 1	Iowa	Caucus
Tuesday, February 9	New Hampshire	Primary
Saturday, February 20	Nevada (D)	Caucus
	South Carolina (R)	Primary
Tuesday, February 23	Nevada (R)	Caucus
Saturday, February 27	South Carolina (D)	Primary
March		
Tuesday, March 1 (Super Tuesday)	Alabama	Primary
	Alaska (R)	Primary
	Arkansas	Primary
	Colorado	Caucus
	Georgia	Primary
	Massachusetts	Primary
	Minnesota	Caucus
	North Carolina	Primary
	Oklahoma	Primary
	Tennessee	Primary
	Texas	Primary
	Vermont	Primary
	Virginia	Primary

Date	State	Contest Type
Saturday, March 5	Kansas	Caucus
	Kentucky (R)	Caucus
	Louisiana	Primary
	Nebraska (D)	Caucus
	Maine	Caucus
Tuesday, March 8	Hawaii (R)	Caucus
	Idaho (R)	Caucus
	Mississippi	Primary
	Michigan	Primary
Sunday, March 13	Puerto Rico	Primary
Tuesday, March 15	Ohio	Primary
	Florida	Primary
	Illinois	Primary
	Missouri	Primary
Tuesday, March 22	Arizona	Primary
	Utah	Primary
Saturday, March 26	Alaska (D)	Caucus
	Hawaii (D)	Caucus
	Washington (D)	Caucus
April		
Tuesday, April 5	Wisconsin	Primary
Tuesday, April 19	New York	Primary
Tuesday, April 26	Connecticut	Primary
	Delaware	Primary
	Maryland	Primary
	Pennsylvania	Primary
	Rhode Island	Primary

Appendix B cont.

Schedule of Primaries and Caucuses for 2016

May

Tuesday, May 3	Indiana	Primary
Tuesday, May 10	Nebraska (R)	Primary
	West Virginia	Primary
Tuesday, May 17	Kentucky (D)	Primary
	Oregon	Primary

June

Sunday, June 5	Puerto Rico (D)	Primary
Tuesday, June 7	California	Primary
	Montana	Primary
	New Jersey	Primary
	New Mexico	Primary
	South Dakota	Primary
Tuesday, June 14	D. C.	Primary

States Not Settled

North Dakota
Utah
Colorado
Idaho
Maine
Washington
Wyoming

** Date RNC rules allow states to shift from Proportional Representation to Winner-Take-All primaries.

Sources: <http://www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com/2016-presidential-primary-schedule-calendar/>
<http://www.politics1.com/calendar.htm> Accessed: September 16 and 17, 2015.

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