

# Impact of the media to us politics

Countries, United States



| Impact of the Media to U. S Politics | Edily Vasquez | | 6/27/2012 | |

ABSTRACT Media has had a big impact in almost everything, including past and current generations. Television, radio and most recently, the internet have been one of the influential factors when it comes to how people obtain information regarding politics, particularly during an election year and as a result it helps shapes the final decisions of the voters. One of the biggest changes in the U. S. electoral politics of the last century is that most voters rely more on television commercials for information about candidates and issues. Internet is also one of the major tools candidates use to attract voters; with the social media and with websites such as “ Facebook” is an easy way to create a “ fan page” and have the users like the page also write comments and share it with other Facebook friends. Almost 80% of the U. S populations are Internet users, meaning that the majority of the population relies on the Internet to read the news and current events. Even though newspapers are not as popular as they used to be, it is still an instrument that is used to attract voters to find out more information about the candidates. The following pages will explain in further details how much of an impact media has in U. S. politics.

### INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA ON POLITICS

According to Laura Lane from the University of Southern California, “ The media helps influence what issues voters should care about in elections and what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates. "Over the years the way politicians advertised themselves involves the mass media, newspapers and magazines, radio, television, the Internet, films, recordings, books, and electronic communications, to reach almost everyone in the United States. The news media are part of the mass media that tells the public what is

going on in the country and around the world. The internet has become one of the most important, if not the most important source of news in the United States. The number of people that go online everyday has increased dramatically over the decades and it will continue to increase and become more politically involved as the years come. The Internet allows people to obtain any type of information on any subject at any time of the day or night. The Internet also allows people to communicate and organize rapidly in response to political events. Depending on what is told by the media whether good or bad it will have a big impact to the voters decision. Also, the media helps to dictate what issues voters should be concerned with in elections and what criteria they should use to judge politicians by. It is important to note that during different eras voters have relied on different forms of communication for their personal political decisions. Claire Cain Miller compared similarities between two presidential candidates from different times and described how they were able to influence a large majority of the voters and as a result both became presidents of the United States. Miller pointed out that “ one of the many ways that the election of Barack Obama as president has echoed that of John F. Kennedy is his use of a new medium that will forever change politics. For Mr. Kennedy, it was television. For Mr. Obama, it is the Internet. ” This is a clear demonstration that political candidates will find attractive and modern ways to ensure their victory. New means of communication will come in the near future and will always continue to help share messages.

TELEVISION, RADIO AND POLITICS

Television has changed U. S politics more than any other invention. It relates to different age groups, educational levels, social classes and races. For

more than 40 years, Americans have been getting their news primarily from television. Whenever there is a crisis or any type of important event, most people turn first to television for information. The average American watches four hours of television every day, having access to the news 24 hours a day makes political information to be available any time. Political debates and speeches by the candidates can be seen in TV and heard on the Radio which is are more convenient ways for voters to know what the issues are and how candidates will resolve them. Politicians rely on this type of media to get their message across to the voters and are able to communicate and demonstrate differences of opinion in issues with their opponent. Television provides a variety of programs and gives the viewers diverse options. Out of the many Television News Organizations there are two national channels that appear to show a political inclination for one of the two major political parties in the United States. Based on information from a poll to viewers, Fox News is more likely to target a larger audience with the Republican Party views; while on the other hand, voters who sympathize with the Democratic Party ideals are attracted to watch CNN. The poll states that 50% of Fox News viewers are Republicans and 20% Democrats; yet, 43% of CNN viewers are Democrats and only 23% are Republicans. Television and the newer media have not displaced radio. Radio continues to reach many U. S households. Many consider listening to the radio while driving to work or school. American adults get many facts from radio; they also get opinions from commentators and talk show hosts. Political campaigns continue to use radio to communicate with particular types of voters, because radio audiences are distinctive, campaigns can target younger or older voters,

women, Hispanics and so on. In the 2008 election many voters listened to radio programs such as a personal favorite; “ Morning Edition” in NPR (National Public Radio). In this particular program listeners have the opportunity to obtain national and global news while in their morning commutes. Another source of information includes the local radio stations, which transmits information at a more regional level and listeners are able to relate faster to the issues presented. NEWSPAPERS THEN AND INTERNET NOW Advertising is the most important source of information to voters. Even though the use of daily circulation of newspapers has declined over the past 30 years, newspapers are still a very significant factor in advertising political events and information about candidates. The Wall Street Journal, with a circulation of more than 2 million has long acted as a national newspaper specializing in business and finance. The New York Times publishes a national edition read by more than 1. 1 million people. Washington Post; a major newspaper, has experienced declines in readership. Since the Internet provides instant information newspapers have become less profitable. The internet opens up resources in drastic ways; it can be used to search and search engines such as Google contain political information 24 hours a day. This type of technology eliminates the obstacles of time and distance and increases the volume of information that viewers can store, retrieve and watch. Internet users can also interact with other people or politicians about issues through emails, social networking such as; Facebook and Twitter, and blogs. Candidates are using the Web for fundraising, as people have gained confidence in making credit card transactions via the Internet, they have become more willing to support parties and candidates in this way.

CAMPAIGNING AND MEDIA News coverage of campaigns and elections is greatest in presidential contests, and it is included in both national and local news. Races for local and state positions, Congress and Senate receive less publicity; nevertheless it does not mean they are less important. The more the news attention a campaign gets the more interest and knowledge the voters will have about it, which are more likely to get votes. Candidates schedule events such as press conference and interviews, and regularly send press releases to major news sources for distribution. Many campaign event fail to receive attention from reporters because others are more newsworthy stories or the media may sense that they have been staged to generate news coverage. Campaigns have primarily used the Internet and email to reinforce voter preferences or help answer questions. Also, citizens can now interact with each other online on a wide range of political topics. In conclusion, the media has always had and will continue to have a big impact in the decisions we make not just in politics, but also in our personal lives. Growing up and listening to our parents as kids and becoming an adult we tend to rely on the news and internet to receive current events. We should get more knowledge and facts from the media, but not let it influence our daily decisions and affect our lives.

REFERENCES

How Many People Use Internet 2011. May 13, 2011. <http://exploredia.com/how-many-people-use-internet-2011/>

Lane, L. (2007). The Influence of the Media in Politics, Campaigns and Elections. <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-influence-media-politics-campaigns-and-651361.html?cat=9>

Magleby, D. B., & Light, P. C. (2009 brief edition). Government by the People. Pearson Education, Inc.

Cary, Mary Kate. (2010). 5 ways new media are changing politics.

<http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2010/02/04/5-ways-new-media-are-changing-politics> Cain Miller, Claire (2008). How Obama's Internet Campaign Changed Politics. The New York Times <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/how-obamas-internet-campaign-changed-politics/>