

Changes in political culture between 2004 and 2008

People, Barack Obama



After reading all of the lecture notes and spending quite some time browsing the internet, I found three things that dramatically changed between the 2004 and 2008 Presidential elections. Media influence, technology and the change in demographics played major roles in the 2008 elections. Media influence was the number one change between 2004 and 2008. Although the media played a big part of the 2004 elections, that election does not compare to the media frenzy of 2008. In 2008, television became the primary medium for conveying the campaign to Americans.

The television channels devoted hours a day to observing every small item, almost all of it live. Little was said back and forth between the campaigns that were not reported quickly by a media outlet. Across the medium, 67% of the time on cable came from talk format or live standup. Only 23% came from reported pieces in which correspondents have control of the message.

(2) What press stories made a difference in 2008? There was more reporting on the background and character of candidates during the primaries, when the process of discovery was new and went on longer.

Yet arguably, the two most important stories about Obama came from a church DVD (the sermon by the Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr.) and a tape made by a blogger doubling as a supporter (Mayhill Fowler) , working for Huffington Post, who recorded Obama's statement about bitter small-town voters. The reporting on Sarah Palin's background in Alaska by various news organizations probably represents the most memorable example of first-hand, pro-active reporting into candidate backgrounds during the general election in 2008. 2) These are just a few of the examples of how the media

bandwagon was so influential during 2008. It does not matter the party affiliation or beliefs, we all followed a certain media outlet of choice during that time. The second change between 2004 and 2008 was that Americans decided to get out and vote. Mainly due to the media frenzy, Americans stormed the ballot boxes none the less. Demographics were a very close second to the media during this time of change. The change in numbers is almost unbelievable.

The electorate in last year's presidential election was the most racially and ethnically diverse in U. S. history, with nearly one-in-four votes cast by non-whites, according to a new analysis of Census Bureau data by the Pew Research Center. (3) The unprecedented diversity of the electorate last year was driven by increases both in the number and in the turnout rates of minority eligible voters. Much of the surge in black voter participation in 2008 was driven by increased participation among black women and younger voters.

The voter turnout rate among eligible black female voters increased 5. 1 percentage points, from 63. 7% in 2004 to 68. 8% in 2008. Among all racial, ethnic and gender groups, black women had the highest voter turnout rate in November's election — a first. Overall, whites made up 76. 3% of the record 131 million people who voted in November's presidential election, while blacks made up 12. 1%, Hispanics 7. 4% and Asians 2. 5%. The white share is the lowest ever, yet is still higher than the 65. 8% white share of the total U.

S. population. (3) The third and final thing that changed between the 2004 and 2008 Presidential elections was technology, especially the internet and social media sites. According to a survey conducted by Complete and released by Cisco about the influence of online video and social media applications on American's political engagement, the Internet was cited by 62 percent of respondents as a regularly used source for 2008 presidential election information and coverage, which was surpassed only by television (82%).

Nearly a quarter of Americans (24%) says that they regularly learned something about the campaign from the Internet; almost double the percentage from a comparable point in the 2004 campaign (13%). (4) The Internet has, and has forever, changed the role of how presidential campaigns are fought, and how Americans attain their political news and information. " Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not be president. Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not have been the nominee," said Arianna Huffington, editor in chief of The Huffington Post, at a conference on ' How Politics and Web 2.0 Intersect,' at the Web 2.0 Summit in San Francisco. (4) " The tools changed between 2004 and 2008. Barack Obama won every single caucus state that matters, and he did it because of those tools, because he was able to move thousands of people to organize," Joe Trippi said. (4) In conclusion I can definitely see the major changes in political culture between the 2004 and 2008 Presidential elections. I also believe these changes started around the 2006 general elections and continued to progress for the next 2 years.

It will be very interesting to watch the 2010 general elections and 2012 Presidential election to see how much influence the media and internet have. I think it will only progress until there is literally a live camera around anytime a candidate is in a public setting. Hopefully the trend of people getting out to vote is here to stay. For as Louis L'Amour said " To make democracy work, we must be a nation of participants, not simply observers.