

The electoral landscape



Changes in American Political Culture from 2004 to 2008 After a very close election in which George Bush won the 2000 presidential election for Republicans without winning the popular vote, Bush was able to hold on to the presidency in 2004 while his favorability was in decline following the boosts he received in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attack and the war in Iraq. Four years later, Barack Obama won the presidential election for Democrats with the state of the economy weighing heavily in the minds of voters. The three major changes in American political culture between 2004 and 2008 were the breaking of a racial barrier to the presidency, the growing influence of the Internet as a new medium of communication, and a shift in focus on the issues. While it is nothing new for voters to want for a change in political leadership, the 2008 presidential election represented an important change in American politics. Barack Obama broke a major racial barrier for African-Americans by becoming the first black American president. Race is likely to be a much less important issue in the future than it has been in the past because Obama has proven that race is no longer an absolute barrier to electability. Obama was able to overcome racial prejudice and the disadvantages of being a little known senator by taking advantage of the growing influence of the Internet and social media. The 2008 election was the first presidential election in which communication through the Internet played a major role (NPR). Lastly, between 2004 and 2008 the economy became the dominant election issue over issues of national security and terrorism. While the Republican Party is generally seen as stronger on economic issues, the economic collapse in 2008 was blamed on the economic policies of Bush by a wide margin (Hagerty 1), and the War on Terror fell out of favor. Works Cited Hagerty, Barbara. "Exit polls link Obama

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victory to economic fears." 4 Nov. 2008. . NPR. " Internet grass roots changing political machine." 26 Oct. 2008. .