The 2016 US Presidential Campaign

Political Communication and Practice

Edited by Robert E. Denton, JR

Political Campaigning and Communication

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This book is dedicated to Ellie Reeser, my mother-in-law. While we are not of the same ideological or political persuasion, she has always been tolerant of my views, opinions, and ranting. Only at family reunions and gatherings are my first amendment rights suppressed. Actually, Ellie has always been most supportive personally and professionally. She provides an endless source of encouragement, optimism, and support. With my utmost gratitude and love.

Preface

Nearly forty years ago, as a graduate student, I was struck by a quote by noted political science scholar James David Barber. As I was beginning my journey into what is now the disciplinary area of political communication and campaigns, the quote struck a chord from communication and campaign perspective. "Every four years a gong goes off and a new Presidential campaign surges into the national consciousness; new candidates, new issues, a new season of surprises. But underlying the syncopations of change is a steady, recurrent rhythm from election to election, a pulse of politics that brings up the same basic themes in order, over and over again."[1] Every modern presidential campaign is different, yet the same.

Since 1992, I have edited a volume on the presidential election. In all the previous volumes, I have noted that every presidential election is historic from policy, issues, and cultural perspectives. To characterize the 2016 presidential election as historic is an understatement indeed. Donald Trump pulled off one of the greatest political feats in modern history. There were a couple of "firsts" related to gender in this election. Of course, Hillary Clinton was the first female presidential nominee of a major party. In addition, Kellyanne Conway, Republican strategist, was the first woman to manage a presidential campaign.

Donald Trump put together the winning coalition of non-college educated, working class, and non-urban voters. Those turned out in record numbers for him. In those critical Midwest battleground states, the disaffected wanted change. After the election there was the meme of Trump's victory based on hate, racism, xenophobic, misogynistic, and homophobic attitudes of his supporters. Others claim it was not an election based on issues. On the latter

claim I would offer some caution. Just before the election, Rasmusen poll found that 62 percent of voters indicated that the candidates' specific policy proposals are more important than their character.[2] Examining the Exit Polls would suggest issues indeed played a role in the election:

- 56 percent of voters who saw the Supreme Court nominations as "the most important factor" supported Trump.
- 64 percent of voters who thought immigration was the "most important issue" voted for Trump, as did 86 percent of those who want a wall built on the U.S.-Mexico border.
- 83 percent of voters who felt Obamacare "went too far" supported Trump.
- 57 percent of those who viewed terrorism as the top issue backed Trump, as did
- 85 percent of those who thought the fight against ISIS was going "very badly."
- 73 percent of voters who felt the "government [is] doing too much" went for Trump.

At the very least these reflect issues of national security, rule of law, and the nature and scope of government. In addition the vast majority of voters expected Clinton to continue the policies of President Obama. Thus, for some, the election did represent a rejection of the Obama administration. Others argued that for the Trump true believers, he was "refreshing," "non-professional politician," "an outsider, "authentic," and "told it like it is." Some even make the argument that Trump's use of social media made a difference.

After the election there were numerous explanations being offered for Clinton's defeat. They include Clinton as a poor candidate, the campaign ignoring the Rust Belt battleground states, FBI Director James Comey's surprise announcement of reopening the private server investigation, and the thousands of leaked emails from the campaign, to name only a few. Others cite tactical errors of the Clinton campaign and a sense of "change" versus "continuity" of the Obama policies and administration. On Election Day, the Clinton campaign underperformed among young people, minorities, and white working class. She also underperformed in the 13 swing states where Obama enjoyed a 3.6 percent margin of victory, whereas Trump won those states by 1.8 percent.[3] In addition, what is now clear, voters deciding within the last week of the election broke for Trump.

Yes, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote. Of the 58 presidential elections in the United States, the popular vote and the Electoral College vote have matched in 54 of them (the exceptions in 1824, 1876, 1888, and 2000). Interestingly, just 77,759 votes combined in the states of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan determined the Presidency for Donald Trump.[4]

The 2016 presidential election was one of the most polarized elections in contemporary history along the lines of ideology, party, income, gender, and age. Polls revealed that the public was frustrated with the direction of the nation and with the institutions of government. Americans in general were angry, especially the middle class, blue collar workers, and minorities. There was a broad anti-government and anti-establishment mood across America. Not since the 1990s have we witnessed such general anger and political fragmentation. The general frustration largely explains the candidacies of Donald Trump and Berney Sanders.

There was also a noticeable shift in media coverage during the campaign in tone and aggressiveness. Many within the journalism academic community note how Trump's relationship with media has changed political journalism.[5] Because of Trump's confrontational style and often sweeping generalizations or falsehoods, journalists were more aggressive, challenging, contextualizing, fact checking, and even editorializing than in the past. However, for many Americans, it made the "main stream media" appearing bias, overtly hostile, liberal, and cheerleading for Clinton. According to Dartmouth political scientist, Brendan Nyhan, this was "the most consequential election for political journalism in my lifetime."[6] For Nyhan, the election drove "a stake through the heart of he said, she said journalism."[7] If "truth" is the standard, then more aggressive approach is warranted. Those on the right have a different interpretation. We are witnessing where news organizations are more open and comfortable with their biases. Rich Lowry, editor of *National Review* believes "going forward news organizations may become less apologetic about those biases. It could be a step to a British-style journalism that's a little more partisan and wears its biases on its sleeve."[8]

I think there is little evidence to suggest that journalists will treat Trump any differently as president. Thus, perhaps American political journalism has changed for the long term. As Ron Schiller, former NPR chief, said, "There's a newfound toughness, a pugilist form that reporters have been embracing."[9] Certainly Trump was the catalyst for it, the question is whether or not it is here to stay.

For communication scholars, the essence of politics is "talk" or human interaction. The interaction may be formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, public or private, but always persuasive, forcing us as individuals to interpret, to evaluate, and to act.

I have argued for years that presidential campaigns are our national conversations. They are highly complex and sophisticated communication events: communication of issues, images, social reality, and personas. They are essentially exercises in the creation, recreation, and transmission of "significant symbols" through human communication. As we attempt to make sense of our environment, "political bits" of communication comprise our voting choices, worldviews, and legislative desires.

The purpose of this volume, as were the others, is to review the 2016 presidential campaign from a communication perspective. The chapters are clustered within three sections. The first section contains chapters that focus on major areas of political campaign communication in the 2016 election to include the nominations, the conventions, the debates, political advertising, and new media. The second section provides more detailed studies of specific topics and issues of the campaign, such as the role of Trump's persona in treatment of opponents, gender in general and in the debates, hate speech, and Benghazi. The final section summaries the campaign finance and its impact in the election and explains the vote in 2016. The analyses presented here go beyond the quantitative facts, electoral counts, and poll results of the election. Thus, each chapter focuses on a specific area of political campaign communication. All the contributors are accomplished scholars. Most have participated in past volumes.

In Chapter 1, Craig Allen Smith explores how our four-year national conversation rhetorically reconstituted the electoral landscape and shaped the subsequent nomination campaigns. In describing the surfacing phase of the 2016 campaign, Smith identifies three kinds of surfacing. It was a national conversation that concerned not only aspiring candidates, but evolving structures such as laws, rules, and calendars as well as evolving issue priorities and their publics. Smith argues that the 2016 presidential campaign occurred in a rhetorical political landscape quite different from that of 2012 that greatly influence the nomination campaigns of both parties. It is equally unlikely that the 2016 landscape will frame the 2020 campaign.

In Chapter 2, Rachel L. Holloway analyzes the political conventions of 2016. Both Trump and Clinton faced significant rhetorical challenges in the conventions. Both were widely unpopular among Americans and both faced divisions within their party. The conventions provided an

opportunity for the candidates to unify party supporters and broaden appeals to general voters. Holloway analyzes the themes, strategies, speakers, and messages of both conventions. The conventions were very much in contrast. The Democrats effectively managed and enhanced the communication potential of a nominating convention through strategic and well-orchestrated presentations. The Republican convention was less successful largely void of party leadership participation and painted a dark and angry perception of America. The parties offered opposing explanations and responses to the nation's challenges.

Ben Voth in Chapter 3 examines the 2016 presidential debates. He begins by noting the rhetorical significance of the 2016 debates and identifies four essential ingredients of a debate. In reviewing the presidential primary debates, Voth explains why 2016 was a blockbuster year with so many initial candidates among the Republicans and a surprisingly tough contest for the Democrats between Clinton and Sanders. Voth addresses the unprecedented role and impact of the media on the debates. Trump received overwhelmingly more negative press than Clinton and the moderators became active participants during the debates. Voth concludes with considerations of why Trump's vulgarity and offensive arguments worked and five lessons from the debates that will influence the 2020 presidential debates.

In Chapter 4, Scott Dunn and John C. Tedesco reviews the strategies that dominated the candidate's televised advertising messages and discuss some of the opportunities seized or missed by the campaigns. Unlike the past several presidential elections, televised advertising spending *did not* exceed the prior election spending. In addition, the narratives of the campaigns *were not* driven by the rhetoric of the ads. Both candidates relied heavily upon negative advertising. The ads reinforced perceptions that neither candidate was fit for office. The authors suggest perhaps if either candidate had run a few more positive ads to give voters an affirmative reason to vote for them rather than trying to convince voters they were the lesser evil, they could have pulled away and won the election convincingly.

John Allen Hendricks and Dan Shill review the use of new media in the 2016 presidential campaign in Chapter 5. Social media radically upended the traditional campaign norms and practices in the presidential contest. Its use was unprecedented in volume, scope, and tactics. The Trump campaign was transformative in relying on social media as the primary communication channel. This chapter reviews how both campaigns utilized social media to include Quora, Tumblr, Pinterest, Vox, Buzzfeed, Upworthy, Facebook, Instagram, Longform, Twitter, Reddit, Snapchat,

YouTube, and LinkedIn. Hendricks and Shill caution that although social media and digital communication were critical in the 2016 contest, it would be an overstatement to claim that social media elected Donald Trump. However, the campaign changed the way social media will be used the future.

In Chapter 6, Deronda Baughman and Dennis D. Cali explore the candidate persona of Donald Trump. It specifically describes how Trump's campaign persona inoculated him from attacks from opponents. The analysis demonstrates how Trump used persuasive inoculation to imprint his version of the other Republican candidates' personae on the public and to enfeeble the influence from the candidates themselves. During the presidential campaign of 2016, while Trump's rivals carefully scripted their own personae, Trump effortlessly and offhandedly destroyed each in turn. Trump's persona assignment against his rivals operated best at the emotional level, vitiating his opponents with his swamp-draining caricatures of them and raising the capital of his own celebrity billionaire belligerence in the process.

In Chapter 7, I provide an overview of how issues of gender played out across the primaries, general election and post-election phases. From the beginning of the political season, there was no question that gender was going to be a major consideration in the presidential campaign. Challenges women face in political campaigns are well documented. Most of the gender characterizations and portrayals noted in the 2008 race also appeared in the 2016 contest, to the detriment of Clinton. The two unexpected aspects were the negative reactions of Third Wave feminists and younger women to the candidacy of Clinton and the statements, attitudes and behavior Trump displayed toward women throughout the campaign, not to mention much of his life. In the end, Trump enjoyed strong support among Republican women, married white women and evangelical white women.

The election of 2016 stands out for its volume of hate-filled messages. The election changed the climate for discourse throughout society. In Chapter 8, Rita Kirk and Stephanie Ann Martin identify the hate stratagems used by both the Trump and Clinton campaigns as well as how they functioned in the course of the election. Kirk and Martin argue that the use of hate stratagems prevented discussion of policy issues during the general election campaign. They conclude by evaluating the impact of hate speech on civil discourse, the media, and self-governance.

In Chapter 9, David R. Dewberry argues that the Benghazi and e-mail scandals were no exception to the American political scandal narrative in

American political culture. Dewberry describes the American political scandal narrative and recount of the Benghazi attack. He focuses on how scandals related to Benghazi followed the scandal narrative in both the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections. Both attempts at scandal unfolded in a similar manner as other historical political scandals. Although both attempts failed to reveal a cover-up, Dewberry addresses the nature of the narrative as reflecting the use of scandals as a discursive political weapon.

Cayce Myers in the Chapter 10 explores the campaign finance issues in the 2016 presidential election. Because understanding campaign finance requires a grasp of federal election laws, this chapter provides a brief and understandable overview of campaign finance laws. Next, Myers discusses the campaign expenditures and impact the hotly contested presidential primaries meant for the general election campaign. He concludes with a detailed analysis of the campaign fundraising and expenditures of the Clinton and Trump campaigns as well as joint fundraising committees and super-PACs, and finally provides some analysis of why Donald Trump lost the money contest, but won the presidential election in 2016.

The study of political campaign communication focuses on the elements of the political environment, messengers, messages, channels of communication (print, radio, television, social media, etc.), audience, and effects. In Chapter 11, Henry C. Kenski and Kate M. Kenski explain the presidential vote in 2016, and it draws upon the key factors in political campaign communication to explain it. Henry Kenski and Kate Kenski focus on: (1) the overall political environment, (2) the rules of the game and the electoral college, (3) the salience of party identification, (4) the messengers, (5) the messages and campaign strategies, (6) the channels of communication, and (7) the audience or the region/state and demographic bases of the presidential vote, with special attention to the roles of gender and race ethnicity in recent elections and the 2016 campaign.

There is no question that this election campaign will generate a great deal of analysis and scholarship. I would offer a word of caution and hope that our collective scholarly endeavors will not and would not reflect the polarization, blindness, and bias of much that was written by the popular press and as reflected by the opinions and attitudes among the general public. I attended a national professional conference within days of the election and was saddened by the “commentaries” and “observations” that were presented as scholarship. We must strive to understand the dynamics of the election of 2016 without overt bias and share our

understanding with our students and the public. And yes, we *should* also engage in thesis-driven and argumentative works as well.

Presidential campaigns communicate and influence, reinforce and convert, motivate as well as educate. Former mentor and early scholar of political communication Bruce Gronbeck argues that campaigns "get leaders elected, yes, but ultimately, they also tell us who we as a people are, where we have been and where we are going; in their size and duration they separate our culture from all others, teach us about political life, set our individual and collective priorities, entertain us, and provide bases for social interaction"[10] (496).

As I have argued in the past in nearly every volume dealing with political communication, I believe strongly that political communication scholars should remember that *more* communication does not mean *better* communication. More technology does not mean more *effective* communication. For well over 200 years, America has incrementally moved toward a more "inclusive" democracy: greater participation of women, minorities, and the young. We have also witnessed unparalleled advances in communication technologies beyond belief just a decade ago. Yet, for well more than a quarter of a century during a time of increased opportunity for participation and information, sadly citizen political awareness, knowledge, and understanding have declined. A Democracy cannot stand without an informed and engaged citizenry.

The central task is how to cultivate an active, democratic citizenry. Civic responsibility and initiative should once again become a keystone of social life. It is my hope that perhaps by better understanding the role and process of communication in presidential campaigns, we may somehow improve the quality of our "national conversations."

Notes

1. James David Barber, *The Pulse of Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), p. 3.
2. Fran Coombs, "Issues Matter After All," Rasmussen Reports, November 9, 2016, http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/commentary_by_fran_coombs/issues_matter_after_all, retrieved November 9, 2016.

3. "56 Interesting Facts About the 2016 Election," The Cook Political Report, December 16, 2012, http://cookpolitical.com/story/10201, retrieved December 20, 2016.
4. Ibid.
5. Dylan Byers, "How Donald Trump changed political journalism," Money. CNN.Com, November 2, 2016, http://money.cnn.com/2016/11/01/media/political-journalism-2016/index.html?iid=Lead, retrieved November 15, 2016.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Bruce Gronbeck, "Functions of Presidential Campaign," in *Political Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns,* ed. Lawrence Devlin (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1987), 496.

Acknowledgments

I have had the privilege to edit well over a dozen volumes over the years. There are always challenges working with very smart, busy, and diverse group of scholars. However, I have actually come to enjoy the process. This project was no exception. This project brought together colleagues and friends, "new" and "old." I am most fortunate to work with such an outstanding group of scholars. Once again, the contributors have made this a most rewarding and enjoyable endeavor. I genuinely appreciate their participation in this volume. I also value their friendship.

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Political Campaign Communication in the 2016 Presidential Campaign

CHAPTER 1

Setting the Stage: Three Dimensions of Surfacing for 2016

Craig Allen Smith

Americans agreed on little in 2016 except that the presidential election was surprising. Although establishment Republicans tried to avoid nominating Donald Trump, Democrats attacked him, and 54% of voters cast their votes for someone else, he won 304 electoral votes to become President of the United States. How? Many surprising results are difficult to explain if we focus solely on the ending. This is not to say that the ending yields no explanations. But such explanations discourage thoughtful inquiry into the evolving dynamics that made the "winning shot" possible.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how our four-year national conversation rhetorically reconstituted the electoral landscape and shaped the subsequent campaign. Imagine the four years between elections as a 24-hour day beginning with President Obama's 2012 victory at 12:00 AM and ending with Donald Trump's victory in 2016. In that context Americans voted at 11:58 PM, the conventions began at 11 PM, and the primaries began at 7:15 PM. This chapter considers the conversations that occurred between midnight and 7:15 PM to understand the dynamics that would shape the "prime time" campaign.

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The Surfacing Trialogue

Presidential Campaign Communication, second edition, provided the theoretical framework that we here apply to 2016.[1] Underlying the theory is a functional view of communication: people communicate to fulfill their own purposes. Some people say similar things for different reasons, while some people respond differently to the same words. What people say (or do not say) and do (or do not do) reshapes or "rhetorically reconstitutes" the menu of available rhetorical and political choices.

The Theoretical Essentials

Six principles form the foundation of the theory. They are:

1. *An American presidential campaign is a complex network of "rhetorical transactions."* To conceive of communication as a rhetorical transaction is to highlight its mutuality and reciprocity. Candidates say things to get coverage, money, and votes from reporters, donors, and citizens who, in turn, grant their support to the candidates who say what they long to hear.
2. *The rhetorical transactions are negotiated in a "trialogue" among three sets of role-defined communicators—citizens, campaigners, and reporters.* "Citizens" engage in the conversation to decide whom to prefer and whether to vote. "Campaigners" are all those who work strategically to win resources from the others in order to elect their candidate. "Reporters" are the assorted scholars, entertainers, pollsters, pundits, bloggers, and journalists who observe and assess the campaign in explanatory narratives that cultivate an audience that makes their work sustainable and sometimes profitable.
3. *Political circumstances create rhetorical opportunities for communication that redefines the political circumstances and rhetorical opportunities.* Everything is fluid, and campaigners, reporters, and citizens continually define and redefine issues and priorities, thereby constituting and reconstituting clusters of interests.
4. *The trialogue unfolds in four functional stages—surfacing, nominating, consolidating, and electing.* During each stage the participants trade words and symbolic actions for attention, campaign resources, and votes. They must navigate the surfacing stage to reach the nominating stage, win the nominating stage to control the party

consolidating stage, and consolidate their support to compete effectively in the electing stage. Success in each stage unlocks the next stage, much as winning sports teams advance to the playoffs.

5. *All three kinds of communicators pursue their agendas by interpreting their environment, saying some things (but not others) to some audiences (but not others) with the intention of improving their environmen*t. All of this talk creates a trail of words that can be studied and effects changes that yield data points.
6. *Contemporary communication technologies provide us with boundless information and data that can be used to study the dynamic, evolving campaign.* We now know that some of it is "fake news," some of it is only partially correct, and some of it is wishful thinking; but some of it is systematically gathered, objective, and potentially useful. Our theory provides a framework for interpreting such data points.

The surfacing stage crystallizes the elements of the campaign to come. The surfacing stage began when President Obama was reelected and people started pondering the next election; it culminated in the February 1, 2016, Iowa precinct caucuses. Iowa provides the first opportunity for citizens to vote (or not vote) in a statewide contest, but Iowans decided only who would represent them at their county party conventions the following month. The nominating stage—the quest for national convention delegates—began the next day as attention and the viable candidates turned to New Hampshire.

Three Kinds of Surfacing

Our theory conceives of surfacing more broadly than have other research projects. Specifically, we shall explore three kinds of surfacing: "structural surfacing," "issue surfacing," and "candidate surfacing." In structural surfacing, the national conversation reconstitutes the rules and processes for campaigning. Rules and laws are verbal texts by which decision-makers prescribe some choices and proscribe others. In fact, it is those rules and laws that distinguish election campaigns from social protests: they determine when elections will be held, who is allowed to vote, how they vote, how their votes are tabulated, and how votes determine the result. Electoral disputes are adjudicated by authorized panels including courts. But before the election campaign begins the interested parties tinker with the rules to "improve" the process.

In issue surfacing, the national conversation reconstitutes the "issues" (recognized by students of argumentation as our points of disagreement), their relative importance or priority, and the number of people who consider each issue important. Every month Gallup asks respondents to name the most important problem facing the country. The Gallup reports identify the general issue frames such as the "general economy," "national security," and "race relations" and calculate the percentage of respondents regarding each issue as "most important." Those percentages represent the "issue publics"—the cluster of people most worried about each issue frame. These clusters vary in size and compete for the attention of candidates and reporters. Put differently, the issue publics provide the potential followers for the candidates who can appeal to them. Changes in these issue publics during the three years of surfacing can reveal how the surfacing trialogue reshaped the electorate.

In candidate surfacing, the aspiring presidents develop organizations, resources, and strategies for competing in the nominating stage. Functionally, they need an organization sufficient to do the necessary work, endorsements from people respected by potential voters, sufficient money to underwrite the cost of their campaigns, news coverage to keep them in the public eye, name recognition sufficient to score well in national polls, and the potential to finish among the top four in their party's Iowa precinct caucuses.

Most of the surfacing literature has studied candidate surfacing, for a candidate who fails to surface effectively has little opportunity to thrive in the primaries. But to focus exclusively on candidate surfacing is to ignore the dynamics of structural and issue public surfacing that both invite and constrain those candidates' rhetorical choices.

Structural Surfacing for 2016

As we consider structural surfacing, we will discuss the structure of the electoral process and the structure of the media environment in which we learned about it.

Restructuring the Electoral Process

The conversation about structural aspects of the 2016 presidential campaign began with President Obama's reelection, but the most important structural question was largely ignored. In 2000, George W. Bush won the

Electoral College but lost the national popular vote to Al Gore. There followed a period of controversy in which several calls for reform emerged. Some called for direct popular election of the president while an intriguing compromise called for electors to cast their votes for the winner of the national popular vote. Not surprisingly, most of those calls for reform came from disappointed Democrats, and two subsequent victories by Barack Obama drained support for electoral college reform . . . until late 2016 when Hillary Clinton won the national popular vote and lost in the electoral college. Sometimes the conversations we defer prove to be important.

Other surfacing conversations established the rules and procedures by which the nominating, consolidating, and electing stages would be conducted. Those included the primary, caucus, and convention schedules, the parties' delegate allocation rules, the rules and schedules for televised debates, and state laws enacted to prevent "voter fraud."

The national party organizations and state governments devote a great deal of time and attention to the schedule of primaries and caucuses. New Hampshire's constitution requires their primary to be "first in the nation" but what of the others? Many states hope to vote early, thinking that they can decisively impact the campaign. Others prefer to position themselves later so they can vote on the survivors and decide the nomination. By setting their calendar for primaries and caucuses, the Republican National Committee (RNC) and Democratic National Committee (DNC) structure the nominating stage.

The parties also set their rules for allocating their national convention delegates to the states. Democrats adopted a simple formula—the average of each state's percentage of the total popular and electoral votes for past three presidential elections.[2] Republicans adopted a more complex formula for allocating delegates to the states. Each state received ten at-large state delegates (five per senate seat), three delegates for each congressional district, and bonus delegates for having elected Republican senators and/or governors, for providing a 2012 majority for Romney, for the state's three Republican party officials, and for Republican control of their congressional delegation and/or state legislative chambers.[3]

The contrast between the parties' allocation formulas is stark. The RNC rewarded with delegate strength all state parties that had won elections—for state legislatures, congress, senate, governor, and president—while the DNC ignored everything but presidential votes. Put differently, the Republican Party restructured itself as an organization of victorious state parties, whereas the Democratic Party restructured itself as an organization

of presidential voters. DNC rules advantaged California and New York where huge populations provided large popular and electoral margins for Kerry and Obama and disadvantaged smaller, competitive states. RNC rules advantaged states with strong party organizations that won elections.

The parties also established the rules for awarding those state delegates on the basis of primary and caucus votes. Since 1972 Democrats have allocated state delegates proportionately to candidates winning 15% or more of a primary or caucus vote. That winnows from the field candidates winning less than 15%, which is important when the Democratic field is crowded. Five Democrats tried to surface for 2016 but Jim Webb and Lincoln Chaffee abandoned their campaigns early when they could not escape single digit polling. Had Democratic rules provided delegates proportionately to *all* candidates receiving votes, Martin O'Malley might have fought on after Iowa (although his failure to muster other resources suggests not). With the Democratic field reduced to two candidates, both were poised to exceed the 15% needed for delegates and neither was likely to win the 86% needed to win them all. Thus, the rules defined a landscape in which two candidates would split convention delegates from every state and prolong the nominating campaign.

Much would later be made of the Democrats' "Super Delegates"—their elected office holders and members of the Democratic National Committee. Yet those Super Delegates—who worked with and knew the candidates—accounted for just 15% of Democratic convention delegates, with the other 85% distributed on the basis of primaries and caucuses. It was also likely that those Democratic party officials would prefer a lifelong Democrat over a lifelong independent socialist who caucused with Democratic senators. Thus the DNC's decision to offer both sorts of delegates created a rhetorical wedge between "the choice of the insiders" and "the choice of the people" even as Clinton won the majority of both groups.

More importantly, it would develop, was a Republican requirement that delegates allocated through primaries and caucuses were pledged to their candidate *through the convention*. Any state breaking that pledge would be penalized 50% of its delegates.[4] The establishment Republicans' effort to "Dump Trump" ran headlong into this rule.

The RNC also laid out a more complicated calendar than the Democrats. Until recently Republicans had expedited nomination with winner-take-all primaries, several of them clustered on "Super Tuesday" in early March. But after those rules brought them John McCain, Mitt Romney, and two defeats, the RNC decided to prolong the process by allowing no winner-take-all

contests until after March 15. Thus, Republican February and March contests would award state delegates in proportion to the 17 aspiring nominees' votes, week after week; should they all tie, then each would get 5.88% of the state's convention delegates. Unlike the Democrats, every Republican with votes won some delegates, so unlike the Democrats the RNC gave lesser candidates an incentive to keep running, and unlike the Democrats the RNC made it difficult for a Republican to pull ahead early but easy to pull away in mid-March when winner-take-all primaries began.

In short, Republican rules encouraged a large early field and bound splinter delegations to their candidate throughout the convention. Primaries would slowly winnow the field until the finalists reached the winner-take-all contests. If that reminds you of sports playoffs or reality television, then you have a sense of how those rules advantaged an inexperienced candidate unfamiliar with party rules who was, however, a reality television host familiar with professional wrestling. These rules—early proportional delegations pledged through the convention—would severely hamper the establishment Republicans' effort to "stop Trump."

The laws governing voter eligibility also changed during surfacing. In 2012, 4 states required a photo ID to vote but, by 2016, 32 states had enacted such laws.[5] These laws were controversial. Proponents considered them necessary to stop the fraudulent voting that they had some difficulty documenting. Opponents charged that the photo ID laws were a veiled attempt to disenfranchise minorities who were less likely to have the requisite photo ID. North Carolina's photo ID law was judged unconstitutional when it was discovered that legislators researched the kinds of identification least common among minorities before deciding which to require. The point here is that the surfacing stage altered the rules for voter eligibility and thus reconstituted the electorate.

In summary, the surfacing stage established the parties' primary and caucus schedule and their delegation allocation rules and revised 28 states' voter eligibility laws. Moreover, the conversation strayed from reforming the Electoral College.

Restructuring the Media Environment

During surfacing, citizens decide where to find the campaign information they want. We reconstitute our networks by revising our viewing and reading habits, even as the information providers revise their services to better serve their target audiences. The rhetorical transaction is a

combination of "I will rely on you for my political information if you provide the information I want" and "We will provide the political information our audience wants." The Pew Research Center reported that 91% of their respondents had learned about the presidential campaign by the end of surfacing, with half of their respondents using five or more sources.[6]

Cable news networks were considered the most helpful single source by 24% of respondents—the same percentage Pew had found in October 2012.[7] Social media were judged most helpful by 14% by the end of surfacing in 2016 (up 8% from 2012). Oddly, although only 1% had found local television news helpful in 2012 and only Iowa and New Hampshire had any significant local campaign news by the time of this February survey, local television news was judged most helpful by 14%, tying for second with social media. News apps were considered most helpful by 13% in 2016 (up from 3%), while radio dropped in perceived helpfulness from 16% to 11% in 2016. Still fewer respondents found traditional television networks helpful (10%). Local and national print newspapers, issue-based emails and websites, and candidate mailings and websites were all considered most helpful by less than 5% of respondents in both years.

The Pew findings suggest a pattern—citizens found "most helpful" the sources of news that they themselves selected. We select our preferred cable news network, our social media friends, our news apps, and our locale. Respondents found less helpful those news sources that aim their news at a broad audience: national newspapers and nightly network news. That is consistent with Stroud's finding that citizens rely on partisan selective exposure and perception to select their news sources.[8]

The media environment saw several important personnel changes. In 2012, the #1 network news anchor was NBC's Brian Williams, who by 2016 had been moved to MSNBC. His arrival there coincided with MSNBC's dismissal of Melissa Harris-Perry, an African-American political science professor whose program had provided a unique perspective on current events.

In 2012, 12% of Pew respondents reported getting political news from late night comedy programs including "the Daily Show with Jon Stewart," "The Colbert Report," "David Letterman," "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," and "Saturday Night Live"; yet only 1% found comedy "most helpful." During the surfacing stage, Jon Stewart, David Letterman, and Jay Leno all left the air and Colbert replaced Letterman. Those and other changes in the entertainment sphere deflected the political conversation.