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**Barack Obama's rise to power: *Reinventing political campaigns?***

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ARJCAR001

A [minor] dissertation submitted in [*partial*] fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Media Theory and Practice

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: signature removed Date: 10/02/2009

## Abstract

Barack Obama's 2008 election victory witnessed historic levels of grassroots volunteer mobilisation, voter turnout, youth voting, and campaign fundraising, as well as the election of the United State's first Afro-American President. This research paper uses content analysis to analyse the subtext of Obama's campaign messages and virtual ethnography to analyse the way that information technology was used to further his campaign's goals. The findings suggest that while historic forces, such as economic turbulence and the unpopularity of outgoing President George W Bush, helped propel Obama to power, his campaign was nonetheless revolutionary. It will be argued that it contained several elements of trail blazing innovation that are likely to redefine political communications in the U.S and globally. They include – the introduction of new candidate centred software for PC's, iphones, and blackberries; and the successful synergy of text messaging, online video messaging, online social networking, merchandising, and emailing, to mobilise record numbers of donors, money, young voters, and volunteers. It will be argued that although Obama's ability to bring about meaningful transformation in political policy remains to be seen, his 2008 campaign has brought political marketing in the U.S firmly into the information age and has thus indisputably reinvented the art of political campaigning.

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**VOTE**

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## The scope of the study

This study will analyse whether the meteoric rise to power of US President elect Barack Obama has revolutionised political campaigning as we know it. In many ways Obama's election is indisputably historic. For example, it represents: the first Afro-American President in US (and Occidental) history; the highest US voter turnout in 100 years; the highest funds ever raised by any political candidate in human history; and the greatest political mobilisation of youth and of grassroots volunteers since the Vietnam war. This dizzying array of record breaking statistics is creating a global sensation. Obama is now a darling of the international media and his election has reverberated throughout the world in a manner that is in many ways unprecedented. The fact that Kenya declared a national holiday on the day of his election (Available: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7710394.stm>. Accessed 5 November 2008) can be seen as a testimony to this, as can his attraction of a crowd of an unbelievable 200,000 people *in Berlin* during his campaign trail (Available: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/07/24/obama-in-berlin-video-of\\_n\\_114771.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/07/24/obama-in-berlin-video-of_n_114771.html). Accessed 25 July 2008). The challenge in this climate is to be able to separate fact from fiction and to replace hype with objective analysis. Barack Obama's place in history is only just beginning to be written and it remains to be seen whether he will be able to use the levers of Presidential power to translate rhetoric into reality. As such, this study will not focus primarily on predictions or speculations about how truthful his campaign promises were (though this will be touched on), but rather on the study of the political marketing

tactics which lifted a middle ranking senator into the citadel of US political power. The time span of this analysis will cover the beginning of the battle for the Democratic nomination up until the recent election victory.

## Research question

This thesis focuses on whether Obama's 'rise to power' somehow 'reinvented' political campaigns. The term 'rise to power' is interpreted here as referring specifically to Obama's election to the Presidential office. Further, analysis of that rise is being limited specifically to the Presidential campaign waged by Obama's team – the organisation calling itself 'Obama for America'. The dictionary definition of 'reinvent' is: "to create anew" or "to make over" (Available: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/reinvention>. Accessed 22 November 2008). The term "re-invent" is also taken throughout this thesis to be synonymous with the word "revolutionise", which is defined in the dictionary as: "*cause to change*", "*make different*", or "*cause a transformation*" (Ibid.). Thus we are asking here whether the marketing of Barack Obama has *created anything new, different or transformative* within the field of political campaigning. This could involve for example, bringing new types of technological innovation to the fore, or new types of communications or fundraising strategies, that are likely to change the way that political campaigns will be waged in the future. The focus of the study will be on the Obama campaign trail, centering on two interlinked questions. Namely, *what can be legitimately categorised as 'revolutionary' about Obama's campaign (?)*, and *what impact will this have on the field of political campaigning?* At no point in this thesis is the term 'revolutionary' used to refer to actual social, political, or economic revolution. Rather, it refers more narrowly to a 'revolution' within the field of political campaigning – analysing the significance that a specific piece of political activism has had within that field, and posing the question as to whether this

requires a change in the way that political campaigning, or (more broadly) political marketing, is thought of or practiced in the future.

## **Significance of the study**

This political campaign is hugely significant, whether or not Obama is able to deliver the change and hope which he so aptly sold to the electorate. Amongst other things it has redefined the relationship between information technology and political campaigning as well as crossing barriers of race, class and age that were often thought of as relatively fixed. Books and theses are already emerging at an extremely rapid rate chronicling the Obama campaign trail, including for instance: '*Barack, Inc.: Winning Business Lessons of the Obama Campaign*' by Barry Libert and Rick Faulk (Bandyk 2009); '*What Obama Means: ...for Our Culture, Our Politics, Our Future*' by Jabari Asim (Thompson 2009); and Gwen Ifill's '*Breakthrough: Politics and Race in the Age of Obama*' (Boynton 2009). As one US political website highlights "there are at least 11 books coming out about Barack Obama in January 2009. Most of these books are scheduled for release in time to take advantage of the next wave of Obamamania expected to strike around the time of his inauguration" (Available: <http://politicususa.com/en/Obama-Books>. Accessed 22 November 2008). No doubt we are witnessing the tip of an iceberg of literature that will emerge on this topic. This powerful academic and media spotlight is a tribute to the significance of this study. Scholars the world over are rushing to chronicle and map the contours of the campaign which Barack Obama fought over this last year. This is perhaps in large part because nobody ever dreamed this could happen. As one analyst highlights "for an inexperienced single term African-American senator tagged with the most liberal voting record to defeat the heir apparent in his own party and then go on to hold off the much-vaunted Republican machine is a truly remarkable achievement"(Quelch 2008). The

question on everyone's lips seems to be "how did he do it?" and the answers are already beginning to redefine political campaigning as we know it.

It is undeniable that Obama's team fought an impressive and innovative campaign. No doubt others will seek to emulate their successes in the future. However, this does not mean that the entire field of political campaigning has been revolutionised. This is but one potential explanation. It is also possible for instance, that we are witnessing a situation where historic levels of gloom and apathy have propelled a bright young candidate - who was able to feel the pulse of the nation and connect with voters - to levels of popularity that he would never have otherwise attained. In other words, one could argue that innovative campaign tactics only succeeded on this scale due to a specific set of historical circumstances that are unlikely to be reproduced for a very long time. If this is the case then we have not witnessed anything like a revolution in political campaigning but merely the application of some clever marketing strategies employed at just the right time. The study will seek to uncover which of these two scenarios is most plausible and thereby put the Obama campaign in its proper historical context. The significance of this endeavor lies in the fact that political campaigning is itself an important field, lying as it does, at the intersection between politicians and the citizenry. In large part, the way that campaigns are fought defines the nature and tone of democratic politics. Political campaigns represent, if you like, the 'power acquisition process' in democracies. They are important because the way that people acquire power tells us much about the health of a political system.

Democracy seeks, supposedly, to confer legitimacy on the institutions of power by creating accountability between politicians and the citizenry. The word itself comes from the Greek words "*Demos*" - meaning "people", and "*kratos*" - meaning "rule" (Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy>. Accessed 1 January 2009). In today's world, democracy supposedly confers power onto the people through elections. There is no

universally accepted interpretation of the word (Ibid.). However, in the modern world, the concept has come to entail the rule of law applying equally to all citizens and by extension equal political rights, enshrined within the law (Ibid.). More-over, democracies are *supposed* to be accompanied by a free press and by legal checks and balances that foster transparency and reduce the scope for political acts of nepotism, corruption, or arbitrary acts of violence (Ibid.). This combination of factors is intended to create an environment in which the ideals of freedom, social harmony and equal rights can flourish, and it is the propagation of these ideals that has been used to market democracy as the best available system. Thus, if power were for example, acquired by corrupt and morally bankrupt politicians through negative campaigning funded by special interest groups, one could reasonably argue that in this case democracy itself would be in bad shape, because its underlying ideals were not being realised. On the other hand, if a political campaign were fought on the basis of ideals and policies, funded in large part by citizens, in the midst of historically high voter turnouts, one could deduce that democracy would be in many ways alive and well, because the ideals of accountability, transparency and informed debates would be manifesting. In a sense then, political campaigns reflect the moral and intellectual state that a society is in.

If political campaigning is itself being redefined then it is vital to know how, to what extent, and what impact this has on politics itself. For example, does Obama's successful use of internet blogging set a precedent that will impact on the relationship between politicians and voters generally? Will the successful engagement of youth in this campaign bring young people closer to the centre of future campaigning strategies in the US and beyond? Has the merchandising strategy of the Obama campaign created a new format for branding and outreach that will reverberate globally? Will internet fundraising smash the power of lobbyists and special interest groups and make the masses the core funders of future political campaigns? These questions and many more will be dealt with in this study.

The answers to them will tell us much about the future of 21<sup>st</sup> century politics and will no doubt be debated for years to come.

## **The context of this study**

Barack Obama has come to power riding the crest of a wave. In particular his election witnessed the highest voter turnout in generations. Up until the new millennium the US had been experiencing record lows in terms of voter turnouts. Kotler & Kotler (1999: 3) highlighted at the turn of the last century “While campaign spending is skyrocketing, more and more dollars are seeking after fewer and fewer voters. In the presidential election of 1996, voter turnout dipped to 49%, the lowest turnout as a proportion of eligible voters since 1924. Turnout in local and state elections often falls between one fifth and one third of eligible voters”. However, the picture today looks very different. “It looks like 136.6 million Americans will have voted for president this election...That would be the highest turnout rate that we’ve seen since 1908” (Borenstein 2008). Further, “The total voting in 2008 easily outdistanced 2004’s 122.3 million, which had been the highest grand total of voters before” (Ibid).

Obama is also coming to power during arguably the most turbulent period in world history since the fall of communism. Current levels of international economic instability are unrivaled since the great depression. Economists speak of the threat of ‘systemic failure’ which could literally spell the collapse of global capitalism as we know it and lead to a planetary financial meltdown, with utterly unpredictable consequences. It seems we are only being cushioned from this by vast injections of government cash, unprecedented in the history of the world. Moreover, it seems that the US gave birth to this storm and exported it. To add insult to injury, they are also embroiled in not one but two long and bloody wars, which have sapped their military and economic resources, produced few

improvements in international security, and led to an increase in anti Americanism and a dramatic decline in the U.S's standing in the world. A commonly used statistic last year was that record numbers of Americans feel that their nation is broadly speaking "on the wrong track". George Bush left office with the lowest approval rating of any President in living memory. America is, militarily, economically, and politically, in a state of absolute crisis. Obama has emerged at the centre of this storm as a harbinger of hope and change, which is something Americans seem to desperately want and need. Moreover, a majority of nations in the world seem to want and need America to change, which is why Barack Obama has received unprecedented levels of international media attention.

It is impossible to separate Obama's political campaign from these sweeping and fundamental historical issues. The winds of change have been blowing in Obama's direction and they have infused his campaign with incredible momentum. The history of his campaign is basically the story of how he has harnessed these forces and seized his moment in history. However, the key question that this study will seek to answer is what role the political marketing techniques employed on his campaign trail contributed to his success, given that history moved in his favour.

## **Structure**

This study will be divided into 4 broad segments. The first segment will look at the theoretical framework. This will include an analysis of the history of political campaigning and of the current dominant theories in political marketing. A framework will be presented that posits the political candidate as a central figure 'selling' policies and ideas to five key 'markets' – political organisations, the media, voters, funders, and interest groups – in search of several potentially overlapping things: money, votes, public endorsements, positive coverage, and partnerships. It will be argued that this framework chimes with the

actual job descriptions of campaign managers and is thus a useful tool to help us understand how campaigns work in the modern world. The second segment will look at the methodology employed to analyse Obama's campaign – highlighting content analysis and virtual ethnography as key research tools. The third section comprises the presentation and analysis of data – using content analysis to dissect a random selection of speeches and e-mails issued by Obama - and virtual ethnography to analyse the role that information technology played in the campaign. The content analysis uncovers two interesting features of Obama's communications strategy – namely, a much greater emphasis on fundraising in his e-mails as compared to those of his adversary, and a consistent repetition of words and phrases designed to produce feelings of *ownership* and *empowerment* amongst the audience. The virtual ethnography illustrates how these messaging tactics combined with technological wizardry to produce true innovation within the field of political campaigning. This includes a precise breakdown of how different technological mediums were fused to: spread messages, recruit volunteers, raise funds, and create a detailed contacts data-base larger than that of any political campaign in recorded history. In particular we will see how text messaging, e-mailing, online social networking, video messaging, internet telephone calls, merchandising, and the provision of new and free software, combined to create an interactive digital communications platform that attracted unprecedented levels of money and volunteers, and mobilized his support base in new and decentralized ways.

The final section will test the evidence presented against arguments for and against Obama having revolutionised political campaigning. In particular it will seek to dispel myths about what was revolutionary and to highlight particular areas of his campaign which *can* be said to be genuinely transformative. Further, it will seek to analyse what this means for political campaigning as a field and the potential impact that this could have on the practice of politics more generally. This segment will also take a closer look at the counter

arguments. It will unpack, for example, suggestions that Obama *did* in fact take money from lobbyists, that his policies (which represent the substance of his campaign and his brand) do *not* represent radical change, and that historic forces (rather than innovative campaigning) propelled him to power. However, it will be argued that although Obama's messages and policies were not particularly 're-inventive', and that history did move in his favor, his *campaign* was a radically transformative and utterly revolutionary piece of political activism. By harnessing the power of information technology to unprecedented degrees Obama's team created a truly trail blazing multi-media spectacle that has brought the practice of campaigning into the information age, and ushered in new eras in internet fundraising, online political branding, and candidate centred software. It will be argued here then, that although Obama is not necessarily a revolutionary candidate in the broad sense of the word, the answer as to whether his rise to power re-invented political campaigns is a resounding and unambiguous 'yes'.

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## Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Political campaigns represent a huge industry that generates a vast and steady stream of literature. There is no hegemonic theoretical framework within this field of study. Rather, theoretical precepts governing the practice of campaigning vary across space and time. For example, the field of political campaigning in the US differs markedly from that in Europe, and 'Northern' campaigns differ in many ways from those in the global South. Different legal frameworks abide, as well as differences in voting behavior, electoral systems, technological development, economic development, and media culture. Furthermore, within the US there are differences between the global spectacle of a Presidential campaign and those of Senators or Congressmen, for example. However, there are certain factors that all political campaigns in democracies do share: the need to garner media access, votes, and money, for instance. As such, this study seeks to analyse whether Obama's 2008 campaign has set precedents that will impact not just on US Presidential elections but also onto the field of political campaigning more broadly.

The first part of this section will begin with an analysis of the historical evolution of Presidential campaigning in the US since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tracing its evolution from the 'quiet' elite-focused campaigns of the early 1800's up to the evolution of a marketing based model of mass political campaigning emerging in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The history section will by necessity be greatly abbreviated. However, in order to judge whether we have witnessed a truly revolutionary campaign, we need to be able to look back through time and understand how the theory and practice of political campaigning has evolved into

its present state. This is because the size and scope of 'change' is itself relative and needs to be weighed against other changes and evolutions, in order to be accurately assessed. The second part of this framework will consist in an analysis of contemporary theory and practice within the sphere of political campaigning – looking in particular at the strategic side of campaign theory that governs the everyday work of campaign managers. In this section the candidate will be posited as a key actor selling themselves to five overlapping 'markets' in pursuit of several overlapping goals. It will be argued that this represents a broad, pragmatic, and generic model for understanding a diverse plethora of political campaigns in the North and South.

### **A brief history US Presidential campaigning**

Throughout history political campaigning has been punctuated by revolutionary moments. New technologies such as the telephone, the television, and most recently the internet help to redefine paradigms and frameworks. Visionary individuals can in some rare cases do the same. The history of US Presidential campaigning reveals that each race has its own unique features, and that the field of campaigning undergoes regular oscillations which are sometimes measured in decades or 'eras' rather than years – for example, between 'image based' and 'issue based' campaigns, in levels of mudslinging and bi-partisan tension, or in the level of public participation or voter turnout. Thus, changes that may *seem* sensational at the time, can appear with the benefit of hindsight as mere shifts in style that hark back to much earlier times. However, history also reveals that very rarely the odd campaign *does* come along that most historians later agree revolutionised the entire field of political campaigning. Perhaps the most striking example of this is the campaign waged by Mark Hanna on behalf of President Martin McKinley in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, which helped coin the very term 'political marketing' and brought campaigning into the industrial age through the application of cutting edge business practices. Others

include the 1828 campaign of Henry Jackson which was described as the first truly national campaign, and the campaign of William Harrison in 1840, which witnessed the first ever Presidential stump speech. The question we are analysing here is whether Obama's campaign should be counted within this small historic cluster, and this section will provide a basis and a marker to help answer that question.

### *The early years*

In the US, Presidential campaigns were initially supposed to be silent and stoic affairs. Presidential speeches were unheard of and public 'campaign trails' were still decades away. As late as 1892 the *New York Times* reported that the notion of a President campaigning "disgusts the people" (Perloff 1999:29). Thus, public campaigning in much of the 1800's was left largely up to enthusiastic supporters. Another key difference was that the electorate was still comprised mainly of white males and that these citizens were in any case not supposed to be active participants in policy making in the new democracy. Noam Chomsky explains James Madison's vision of democracy as follows:

He didn't call it the population. He called it the ignorant and meddling outsiders. The ignorant and meddling outsiders have a function...namely to watch what's going on and to push a lever every once in a while and then go home. But, the participants are us privileged, smart guys. (Chomsky 2007).

Another distinguishing feature of pre-industrial campaigns was the overt partisanship adopted by the media. Newspapers were in many cases little more than angry party propaganda machines. As one historian explains: "applying the criteria of our own era we would judge the discourse of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to be coarse and uncivil" (Perloff 1999: 22). For example, in the 1800 race between Adams and Jefferson, pro Adams newspapers suggested that Thomas Jefferson had raped a slave girl and newspapers supporting Jefferson in turn alleged that Adams was part of a monarchist plot to establish a successive dynasty with his sons (Ibid.). Perloff explains that this very aggression helped

establish newspapers as a dominant political force and also that partisan press attacks in the 1800s “helped to pave the way for the full scale development of political parties” (Ibid.). Further it was these very parties that “helped to democratise American politics by putting people in touch with candidates” (Ibid.). In the absence of television and radio, nationwide party structures in the 1800’s represented a key mediating link between politicians and the citizenry – not unlike the role ascribed to the media today. Their development represented a move towards a more inclusive and people-centred approach to politics that went well beyond Madisons’ original vision.

The increase in public participation in politics in the 1800’s is often attributed to reforms enacted by Democratic President Henry Jackson, elected to power in 1828. As one historian highlights:

Presidential campaigns changed dramatically during the period of 1824 and 1852. During this era, loosely called the Jacksonian period... the nation witnessed the rise of a number of institutions that have remained as fundamental components of the electoral system. These include party platforms, nominating conventions, and national campaign committees. The reforms significantly increased democracy in that they gave the public a greater voice in the nomination process. (Perloff 1999: 23).

The 1828 campaign of Henry Jackson has been described as ushering in the “first truly national campaign organisation” and ‘the emergence of a new class of political professionals dedicated to mastering the art of winning an election’ (Ibid.). The *industry* of campaigning was thus being born. In the absence of television, radio, and major league sporting events, politics in this era came to be seen as a form of entertainment and even as a national passion akin to a religion for many people: “Recognising that the public was a new force in politics the Jacksonian Democrats held barbecues, staged rallies, and promoted their candidate by planting hickory trees and erecting hickory poles in town squares” (Perloff 1999: 23 - 24). This represented the birth of a new style of campaigning that incorporated elements of entertainment, spectacle and showmanship. Thus, the 1828

election was historic, both because of the democratising reforms it would later facilitate and because the ways in which it was conducted ushered in a new era in campaigning, the impact of which can be clearly seen in the 1840 race.

Like the 1828 race, the 1840 race had a marked impact on the field of political campaigning. Troy observes that in this election “millions of Americans entered the political process not only as voters but also as partisans attending caucuses, conventions, committee meetings, and rallies... Popular politics became the new American religion, as two and a half million people streamed to the polls – 10 times the number enrolled in churches” (Troy 1996: 20). What comes to light here is how the 1828 election paved the way for the popularization of politics in the mid 1800s. Essentially politics was set to become a people’s pastime – something fun, entertaining, relevant and even fashionable. Many believe that the 2008 election is historic in the levels of sheer enthusiasm it generated. History reminds us that this used to be the norm rather than the exception.

The 1840 race was also historic in other ways. Firstly, it witnessed the use of merchandising on a mass scale to promote candidates: “to involve the masses, no novelty was too inane,” observes Troy (1996: 20). Thousands gathered at Whig rallies, parades went on for miles, and they featured speeches, songs, Tippecanoe badges (remembering Harrison’s now controversial military victory against the Shawnee Indians at Tippecanoe Indiana), Tippecanoe shaving cream, hard cider, and “more log cabin paraphernalia than you could shake a stick at” (Boller 1996: 66). Such merchandising is still very popular in Presidential campaigns as evidenced by the mass of Obama T-shirts, badges, hats, key rings and trinkets on sale during his campaign. Further, Harrison made history by becoming “the first Presidential candidate to deliver a stump speech on the campaign trail” (Perloff 1999: 26). Although Presidential stump speeches would still be frowned upon for the next 50 years or so, this act paved the way for the gradual breaking of this taboo and

was thus revolutionary in its impact, especially given the importance of political speeches for today's candidates. As one journalist notes for instance, "Obama's skill as an orator has been one of the most important factors - perhaps the most important factor - in his victory" (Higgins 2008). Finally, "Harrison and the Whigs waged an image campaign...promoting Harrison as the log cabin-hard cider candidate who, unlike the high falutin' Martin Van Buren, was plain, simple, down to earth, and very much of, by and for the people" (Boller 1996:66). This image campaign was not the first of its kind but was very much a sign of things to come both in scope and also in content. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Presidents have repeatedly sought to sell themselves as 'ordinary folks'. The strategy reminds us, for instance of "Jimmy Carter in a work shirt and blue Jeans addressing voters from his home in Plains, or Ronald Reagan splitting firewood or riding horseback on his ranch" (Jamieson 1984: 12). Or more recently, we may recall the TV news slots showing Obama playing basketball, or the countless appearances he has made with his wife and children, thereby positioning himself as a down to earth 'family man'. The theory behind such image-based campaigning is simply that people relate better to those that remind them of themselves – i.e. 'ordinary people'. One tactic used by organisers of grassroots volunteers is to send out volunteers to communities where they fit in – for example, sending elderly volunteers to old people's homes, Hispanic volunteers into Latino Areas, female volunteers to talk to women's groups and so on. Political candidates cannot be all things to all people but they have for over 150 years needed to project themselves as understanding ordinary voters and being 'in touch', 'down to earth' and ready to take on elite interests when necessary. One could argue that it is precisely because so many politicians have been *out* of touch, privileged, and *aligned* to elite interests that they need professionals to help them project this image. Journeying through the history books reminds us that the art of image-making and what we now call 'spin', has played an intermittent role in political campaigns for hundreds of years.

## *Educational and information based politics*

Perloff describes the 1876 campaign waged by Samuel Tilden against Rutherford Hayes as the “first educational style campaign”, witnessing the distribution of millions of pages of campaign literature describing the candidates background and the drafting of informative ‘issue based’ newspaper editorials (Perloff 1999: 26). He argues that following this, “an emphasis on education and dissemination of facts permeated the politics of the 1880s and 1890s” (Perloff 1999:31). After decades of spectacle, mudslinging, image posturing and political jamboree it is probably difficult for us to imagine how revolutionary this might have seemed as a campaigning tactic at that time. Several factors propelled this fascinating development of educational style politics, including increased class divisions arising through the growing strength of labour unions, and a growing number of independent newspapers (Ibid.). Thus, we can see that Tilden had his finger on the pulse of history. By focusing on ‘facts’ his campaign strategy created historic changes in how future campaigns would be run. However, the campaign was also a product of historic circumstances and may not have succeeded in different times. The lesson here is that the relationship between political campaigns and history is fluid and dynamic. Even as they shape history, they are in turn shaped and constrained by it. The notion that political campaigns cannot be understood in isolation from history is a key tenet of this theoretical framework and this thesis generally.

For example, some credit Barack Obama with waging a campaign that was historic for the way in which it galvanized youth. This is often attributed to technologically savvy use of social networking sites where young people ‘hang out’ online, to market Obama. While this was an inspired piece of political activism, young people’s engagement with the political process cannot be seen in isolation from the historic forces that led them to feel that this election was important to them. History shows us that political and economic ‘shocks’ often

jolt people of all ages into action, and the US experienced just such a shock in 2008, when its economy all but crashed. The evolution of campaigning is about how visionary individuals step onto the scene of history to produce new tactics that fit with the reality of their times.

### *Bringing the business model 'in' to political campaigns*

The next 'revolutionary campaign' occurred in 1896, pitting the Republican William McKinley Vs the Democrat William Jennings Bryan. McKinley's campaign manager Mark Hanna revolutionised the field of political campaigning in a way that continues to reverberate globally. His historic stroke was to apply the principles of modern day business to Presidential campaigning. Amongst other things he "employed more experienced workers at campaign headquarters, used up to date bookkeeping practices, expanded polling operations, relied on the telephone to keep track of campaign developments and brought campaign finance into the modern age" (Perloff 1999: 34). The last point is particularly important. Hanna was the first campaign manager to successfully tap the fundraising power of private corporations. Standard Oil alone provided \$250,000 towards the campaign and the total sum raised is estimated to be between \$3.5 million and \$7 million, up to three times more money than any previous campaign (Ibid.). Hanna also began employing modern advertising techniques, such as catchy slogans, realising that the same methods that were being used to sell products could be used to market politicians (Perloff 1999:35). This realisation in fact gave birth to the very term 'political marketing' and preceded a new era in political campaigns characterised by "a mix of education and marketing" that was to become the norm throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Ibid.). The McKinley election of 1896 provides a classic example of what a revolutionary campaign looks like. It was technologically savvy (through its use of the telephone), and it incorporated new fundraising and communications techniques that were markedly different

from anything that had gone before. The marketing strategy was drawn from developments in modern advertising techniques arising through the increasing industrialization and commercialization of the US economy, making it (arguably) the first industrial era campaign. These innovations were followed by one of the longest periods of successive election victories for the Republican Party. Tellingly, President George W. Bush's master spin doctor Karl Rove, likes to compare himself with Hanna. One of the most fascinating aspects of Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign is that for the first time since McKinley, a large portion of campaign funds were raised from an entirely new source – namely, voters themselves. McKinley was the first President to truly revolutionise campaign financing and arguably Barack Obama may go down in history as the second. This issue will be analysed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

### *Political campaigns in the postwar era – the rise of political marketing*

Technological developments in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century had profound effects on the field of political campaigning. In particular, they allowed the marketing model to emerge as dominant. The advent of radio, followed by the even more groundbreaking invention of television, was key. Television essentially fuelled the rise of the marketing model, making it a defining feature of political campaigns in the modern world. David Axelrod, Obama's Chief campaign strategist likened a Presidential campaign to "an MRI of the soul", where every aspect of a candidate's life and personality is inspected in microscopic detail (Von Drehle 2008). Television no doubt facilitates this process, and some argue this is no bad thing as it allows the public to become better acquainted with candidates. Even if most TV encounters are scripted, candidates are still human and moments of spontaneity will break through, giving the public more insight into the 'real' person, or so the argument goes. What is certain is that Hanna's business-based model of campaigning was perfectly aligned for the TV era. Commercial marketing techniques were

more relevant than ever in an age where television allowed politicians to beam controlled messages to millions of voters on a regular basis. Furthermore, the high cost of televised adverts meant that corporate money was more necessary than ever. The theoretical framework presented in the coming section draws much of its inspiration from the campaign implemented by Mark Hanna, showing just how revolutionary it was. This example thus provides an excellent marker against which to judge the extent of 'reinvention' on display within the Obama campaign.

### **Contemporary theoretical frameworks in political communication**

The study of political campaigns generally falls under the broader subject of political communication, a term which "has proved to be notoriously difficult to define" (McNair 2003: 3). Denton and Woodward define political communication as "pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes)" (McNair 2003: 4). They also explain political communication in terms of "the intentions of its senders to influence the political environment" (McNair 2003:3). On the other hand, Doris Graber proposes a broader definition which includes what she describes as "political language", and suggests that "it comprises not only rhetoric but paralinguistic signs such as body language, and political acts such as boycotts and protests" (McNair 2003: 3). From both definitions cited above, Brian McNair concludes that political communication "is purposeful communication about politics" (McNair 2003: 4) which incorporates:

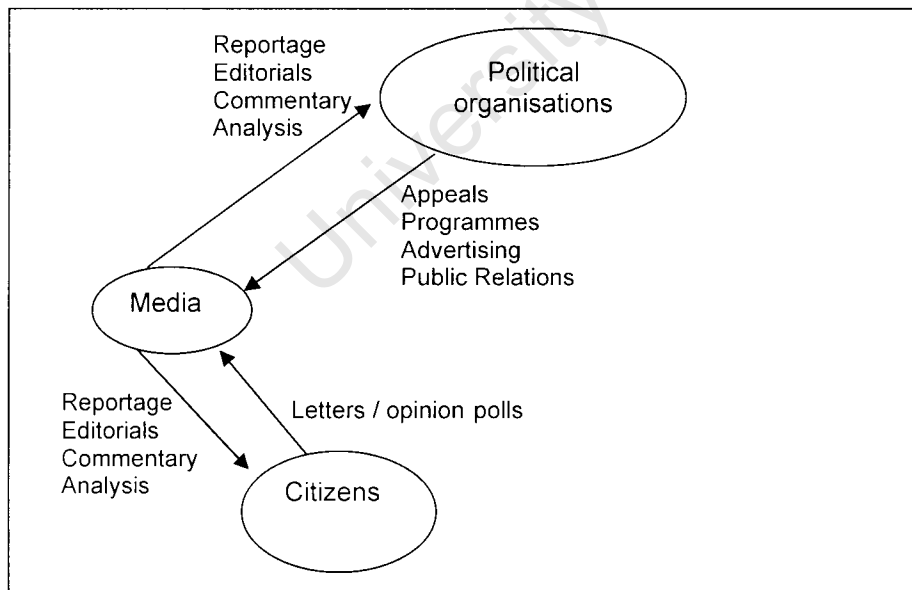
- All forms of communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives.
- Communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspapers columnists.
- Communication about these actors and their activities, as contained in news reports, editorials and, other forms of media discussion of politics (Ibid.).

Furthermore, McNair suggests in his definition that political communication is “not only verbal or written statements, but also visual means of signification such as dress, make up, hairstyle, and logo design, i.e. all those elements of communication which might be said to constitute a political ‘image’ or identity” (McNair 2003: 4).

### *Elements of political communication*

McNair (2003) distinguishes three elements of political communication: political organisations, the media and citizens. The political organisations are subdivided into political actors, political parties, public organisations, pressure groups and terrorist groups.

McNair posits the media as the key intermediary between politicians and citizens (the audience), fulfilling a linking role much like that played part political parties in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This framework has been visually illustrated by McNair as follows.



**Figure 2** Elements of Political Communication, reproduced from McNair (2003:6)

What emerges from this framework is the central role that the media inhabit within political communication. Indeed, the power of the media in political communication should not be

underestimated. The media, in this framework, is seen as the channel through which political actors transmit their messages to the audience. This does have resonance in daily life. All Presidential campaigns involve vast communication teams. Daily press briefings, televised speeches and debates, and regular lobbying of journalists and editors forms a very large part of the campaign trail work load. Barack Obama himself refers to the media as key to a politician's conversation with the citizenry, stating in 2006:

I – like every politician at the federal level – am almost entirely dependent on the media to reach my constituents. It is the filter through which my votes are interpreted, my statements analysed, my beliefs examined. For the broad public at least, I am who the media says I am. I say what they say I say. I become what they say I've become. (Obama 2006a: 121).

Within this framework the voting public can be seen as an 'audience', representing the focus of any political message whose purpose is to shape public opinion, persuade voters, and influence the political environment. In ideal democratic societies, journalists are expected to act as educators so "once the citizens are entrusted with the right to choose who governs them, (they) are sufficiently well informed to vote for the wisest, the most honest, the most enlightened of their fellow citizens" (McNair 2003: 17). However, the audience frequently confronts problems such as biased media coverage, the tailoring of pseudo-events, and manufactured realities which deprive them of the truth and therefore undermine their ability to choose the 'right' political actors and to influence policy-making. The media do *not* always report events as they actually take place. On the contrary, messages are frequently distorted by prejudice, subjectivity, bias and partisanship. Kaid (in McNair 2003:17) explains that "we may view political 'reality' as comprising three categories":

- First we may speak of an *objective* political reality comprising political events as they actually occur
- There is then the *subjective* reality -the 'reality' of political events as they are perceived by actors and citizens
- Third, and critical to the shaping of the second category of subjective perceptions, is *constructed* reality, meaning events as covered by the media" (Ibid.).

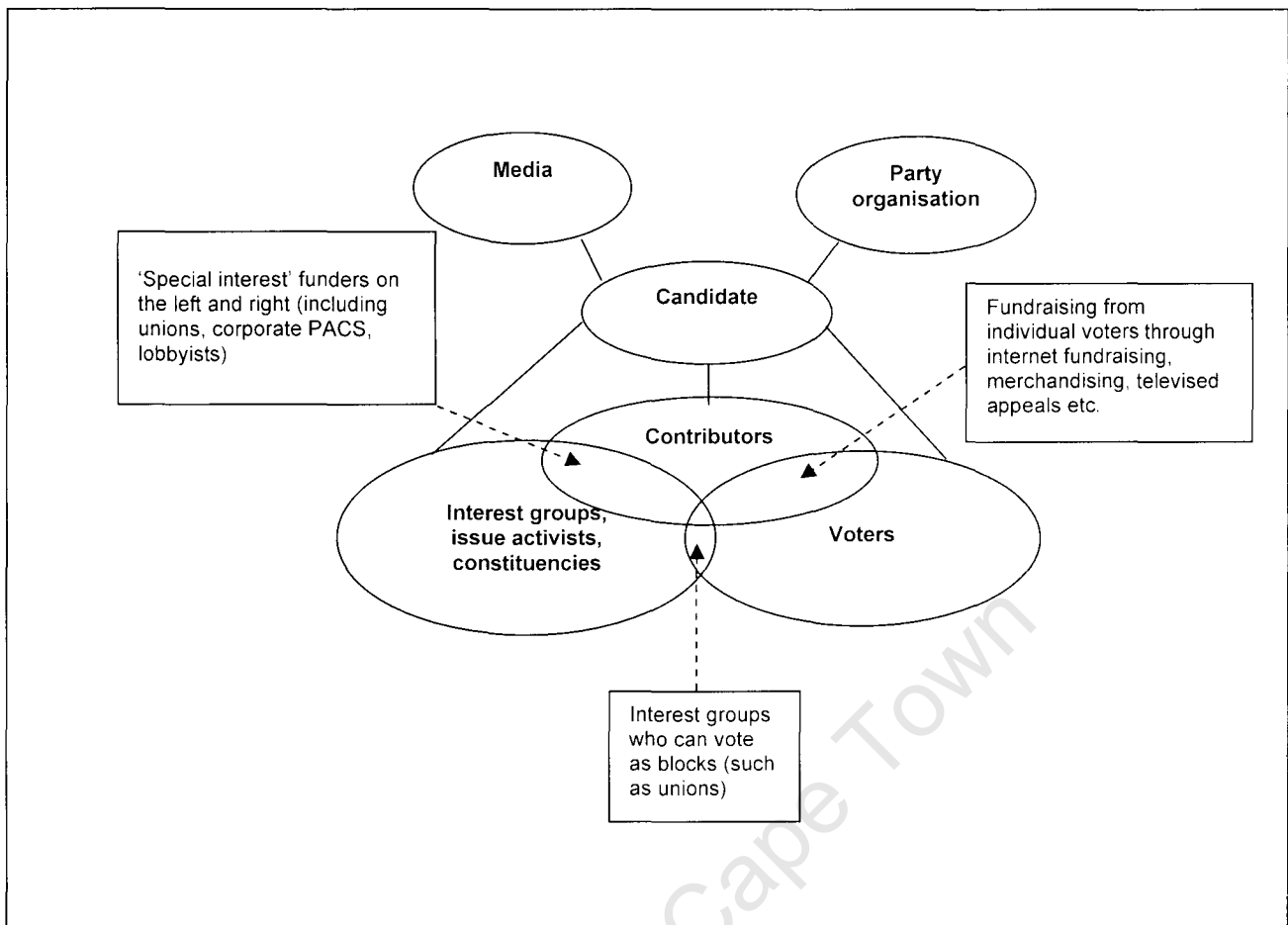
The existence of the last category is what keeps spin doctors in business. We can see that the 'constructed reality' featured in newspaper reports in the 19<sup>th</sup> century also, for example in the 'log cabin-hard cider' campaign of 1840. However, the advent of television has greatly enhanced the value and impact of this method of campaigning. The 'construction' of reality by media savvy spin doctors is something that subverts the function that the media is supposed to play within a democracy. McNair (2003: 21-22) highlights five functions of the media in an 'ideal' democracy: informing, educating, providing a 'platform' for public political discourse, scrutinising political institutions, and publicising the views of political actors. This ideal type presumes that the public are sufficiently educated to accurately digest the information and make rational decisions based on it and, as Habermas highlights, that the political discourse is both comprehensible and truthful (McNair 2003:22).

### *Towards a more comprehensive conceptual framework for political marketing*

The fact that the media do not always live up to our democratic ideals does nothing to subvert McNair's framework, the main tenet of which is simply that the media are the key link between political organisations and voters. It will be argued here that this hypothesis is nevertheless fundamentally flawed. Whilst it has been stated that the media do play a vital linking role between politicians and citizens, this is not to say that there is no politically relevant communication between the two that bypasses traditional media channels. McNair's framework would be more nuanced and accurate if it had included a two way arrow between politicians and citizens. Its absence represents a rather striking omission that renders the framework simplistic and out of step with today's reality. The letters that citizens write are not always sent to the media, but often direct to politicians; political

speeches and appearances are often made live to crowds of thousands, sometimes 'off air'; and grassroots volunteers (and sometimes candidates themselves) campaign in many cases on a door to door basis speaking face to face with voters. Moreover, the advent of the internet does not sit neatly within this framework. Whilst it is considered a new form of 'media' broadly speaking, it is not something that is exclusively controlled by editors and journalists. Rather, it facilitates a direct line of communication between political actors and citizens and between citizens themselves, unregulated by media managers.

A more comprehensive framework for understanding political communication is provided in figure 2.1. This framework has been adapted from Kotler & Kotler (1999:5). Rather than falling into McNair's model which presents the media as the sole recipient of *all* direct communications flows from political organisations, this framework leaves room for a two way process of communication between political candidates and five key 'markets' – of which the media represents but one.



**Figure 2.1** The five markets in a political campaign (adapted from Kotler & Kotler 1999:5)

The original framework has been amended here, in order to bring out more clearly the overlaps between contributors, voters and interest groups. Hanna demonstrated the fluidity between interest groups and contributors clearly as far back as 1894, when receiving a cheque of \$250,000 from Standard Oil. In another example, Howard Dean, and more recently Barack Obama, underlined the fundraising potential of voters in the new millennium, with their campaigns in 2004 and 2008 respectively generating tens of millions of dollars from ordinary citizens through small online donations. The core feature of this framework though, is that the media represents one of several important groups, defined as 'markets', to which the candidate needs to reach out and sell themselves. It is within this framework that the practice of modern day political marketing can be seen to take place.

According to a survey of 200 political consultants conducted by the Pew Research centre in 1997 – 1998, the top factors in winning an election include, “the quality of the campaign message...along with money and the extent of partnership and district” (Kotler & Kotler 1999:3). Thus, much of the campaign labour force’s efforts are directed toward the pursuit of money, the building of ‘partnerships’, and the crafting and delivery of campaign messages. This mix of fundraising, communicating, and building partnerships involves interaction with the five key ‘markets’ outlined in figure 2.1. Further, these ‘winning factors’ are very much interlinked. For example, candidates need money in order to project their campaign messages far and wide, and they need to build ‘partnerships’ in order to fundraise.

Kotler and Kotler (1999: 5) explain the framework as follows:

as a general rule, candidates face five different markets in organising political campaigns: a) voters...b) activists, interest groups, and organised constituencies who wield clout in votes and donations (e.g., labour and business, civil rights organisations, law-and-order advocates); c) the media, which can make candidates visible if not laudable, or can keep candidates on the shadow of campaigns; d) party organisation, which exist in most (but not all) districts; and e) donor and financial contributors, who might or might not reside in the district in which the candidate is running.

This implies a reconfiguration of McNair’s theory into something that fits more neatly within the actual strategies employed by campaign teams in the modern world. In addition to communicating with the media, politicians also need to communicate with lobbyists, unions, rich individuals, corporate businesses, party apparatchiks, religious and civic organisations, and in many cases directly to voters through e-mails, text messages, and grassroots volunteers. The reason it makes sense to see these groups as ‘markets’ is because politicians are in essence selling them a ‘product’, namely themselves. The currencies accepted include cash, statements of support, positive coverage, and most importantly, votes. The service supplied in exchange for this includes news stories that sell papers and boost ratings, as-well as policies that are seen to align with the interests of supporters. However, in the case of the policies, the “product” is “mutable” because it is

subject to changes after the election takes place (Butler & Collins 1999:57). Another way of saying this is that politicians can and often do break their promises after they get what they need from supporters.

This framework is applicable to a broad range of nations in the North and South. For example, (Galindo 2005: 166) explains how within Peru's leftist APRA party's "early reliance on political propaganda has been replaced by sophisticated techniques associated with market oriented strategies". Over the last 30 years in particular, the marketing based model has been largely globalised (Schafferer 2006). Peru represents one of myriad case studies of nations in which it has been applied. Others include: New Zealand (Rudd 2005), Brazil (Cotrim-Macieira 2005), Canada (Marland 2005) and the UK (Lees-Marshment & Lilleker 2005). A growing trans-national industry of private consultants has emerged to help political parties across the five continents of the earth sell themselves effectively to their key markets (Scammell in Schafferer 2006: 257). This includes for instance the American Association of Political Consultants, which claimed at the end of the 1990's, to have over 800 active members who handled campaign business worth more than \$1 billion per year (Ibid.).

The analogy of political candidates as 'products' targeting 'markets' illuminates many practical aspects of contemporary political campaigning across the world. For example, corporations spend millions upon millions of dollars branding their products. Likewise political campaigns spend hundreds of millions on developing a candidate's image and branding their message. Catchy slogans, merchandising, sound bites, advertisements, photo shoots, and leaked press stories painting the candidate in a positive light are all part of this. Moreover, political candidates also spend millions attacking their competitors through negative advertising (a practice that is usually illegal for corporations that sell 'things' instead of people). These practices tend to be associated with image-based

marketing - an undeniably important aspect of any Presidential campaign. As one scholar highlights:

To bridge the gap between what political scientists know about electoral behavior and the notion that voters are consumers, a concept called the image is used. Image consists of the person's subjective understanding of things i.e., of what he or she believes to be true about something, likes or dislikes about it. This use of image parallels the definition of brand image in advertising and market research. As with brand images, political images do not exist apart from the political objects (or their symbolic surrogates) that stimulate political thoughts, feelings, and inclinations (Newman 1993: 91).

### *Candidate marketing plans – linking theory to practice*

According to contemporary campaign marketing theory, there are six key elements in the marketing of a political candidate (Kotler & Kotler 1999:9). The first element is environmental research, which includes an assessment of the economy, the mood of the electorate, and the general socio-political climate. Secondly, there is internal and external assessment analysis, including the strengths and weaknesses within the campaign team, the opponent's team, and other potential external threats and opportunities. The third element is strategic marketing, which includes analysing different political audiences and tailoring messages towards their competing claims and needs. Fourth, there is goal setting and campaign strategy, including developing measurable benchmarks to assess how well a campaign is going as well as developing an image and concept relating to specific policy preferences and a set of messages that will carry these things forward. Fifth, the candidate needs to design a 'communication, distribution and organisation plan', which "involves tactical marketing and the use of marketing tools such as product design and promotion that are widely used in commercial and nonprofit marketing" (Kotler & Kotler 1999:9). The final stage involves designing strategies that target the key markets of donors, voters, and the media. This entails allocating resources between the key functions of fundraising and communications as well as creating detailed timelines and itineraries to guide the campaign trail. In this stage "the candidate and his or her campaign organisation are

focusing on outcomes: the number of messages necessary to mobilise voter turnout, the number of votes needed in the various precincts of an electoral district, and so on” (Kotler & Kotler 1999:10). Key elements of this might include personal appearances, paid advertisements, and mobilising grassroots volunteers (Ibid.).

The outline above explains some of the ‘nuts and bolts’ work of a campaign manager. This description outlines how modern day business techniques have come to be engrained within the practice of political campaigning. Right throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century politics has been very much a business, where candidates compete in a market place of ideas, policy proposals, and ‘imaging’. It has been argued that this work can be broadly seen to fall within a framework that views a candidate as reaching out to five key markets, seeking several (potentially overlapping) things to help them win an election – primarily: votes, money, positive coverage, public statements of support, and/or ‘partnerships’.

Butler & Collins (1999) see political marketing as “exhibiting both structural characteristics”, such as the nature of the product, the organisation, and the market, as well as ‘process’ characteristics that define, develop, and deliver value. By drawing out these characteristics and examining them for marketing implications, the campaigner is better equipped to conceptualise the environment and develop appropriate strategies” (Butler & Collins 1999: 56). By defining political marketing in terms of structure and process, Butler & Collins illuminate that marketing strategies are developed in phases and also that they are defined and constrained by broader structural characteristics, relating for instance to the organisation that strategists work for, the ‘product’ (or candidate), and the market (or electoral landscape). The ‘process’ of marketing is divided by Butler & Collins into three key phases – namely “value defining”, “value developing” and “value delivering” (Butler & Collins, 1999: 56). These relate respectively to: assessing the electorate’s

concerns and the core themes which matter to them; developing messages and policy positions which target these concerns; and developing a strategy to articulate these messages and policy proposals and enact them. It is easy to see how the six key phases of a political marketing plan could link with these phases. For example, the environmental analysis could form part of the 'value defining' process, because politicians could use much of the information gathered in this stage (about the economy, the political landscape, and voting patterns for instance) to help define the values and themes that are important to their key markets. Further, the internal and external assessments and strategic marketing phases could potentially fall, broadly speaking, under the process of 'value developing' - as information gathered in these stages (e.g. about the strengths and weaknesses of an opponent, or the concerns of different political audiences) could help a candidate to develop the core themes of their campaign. Finally, the communication, distribution and organisation plan, and the targeting of voters, donors and media markets could fall under the process of 'value delivering' (i.e. the delivery and implementation of communications strategies and policies that enact and/or play to the core themes of the campaign).

Butler & Collins' three stages are fluid and there is likely to be overlap between them. However, they do give us another lens with which to analyse the practice of political campaigning which is compatible with the framework of Kotler & Kotler. The main contribution of this extra lens is that we can now see how the different stages of political marketing strategies fall within broad processes, constrained by structural features. In figure 2.1 we have a broad theoretical framework that posits the political candidate as a central actor marketing themselves to five key 'markets'. This is followed by an illustration of a six step strategy that a campaign manager seeking to target these five markets might adopt, showing clearly how the framework links with modern day realities. Butler & Collins shed an extra dimension to this, by explaining that the work of a campaign manager can

be conceived as a process (essentially of defining, developing and delivering 'values' to markets) constrained and contextualised through structural features (for example, organisational resources, candidates innate talents, histories, defects, and beliefs, electoral climates and so on). This can be woven together into a theoretical framework that conceptualises political marketing as: *a process of selling candidates to voters, interest groups, donors, the media, and party organisations, in a context of value based conflicts and structural constraints imposed by the external environment.*

### *Summary of theoretical framework*

The theoretical framework presented in this section has provided two key tools to help us answer the question at hand. Firstly, a historic backdrop against which to analyse the impact and scope of contemporary innovations in political campaigning, and secondly, a conceptual framework that illuminates how the practice of political campaigning is applied in the modern world. One important fact that emerges is that political campaigning represents an industry unto itself, with a growing transnational consultancy wing, and a deep and well documented history. Further, we have seen how that industry is shaped and defined by historic forces (such as technological advances and the development of advertising) as well as the penetrating insights of a small handful of forward-looking individuals. For example, we can see that the contemporary theoretical framework provided in figure 2.1, positing the candidate as a 'product' being sold to five 'markets', stands on a historic edifice of ideas dating right back to the visionary McKinley campaign of 1894, that was later fuelled by the invention of radio, television, and the internet. Throughout all this we witness pivotal moments where key actors recognised the new opportunities opening to politicians and seized upon them. For example: the first Presidential stump speech and the image campaign delivered by Harrison in 1840; the

application of a business marketing model, adopted by McKinley in 1894; and the first live televised Presidential debate during the marketing of Richard Nixon in 1968.

The question is whether Obama's 2008 campaign should be classified within this small handful of transformative campaigns and the aim of this theoretical framework has been to provide a historic context and a conceptual tool that can help us to analyse whether this is the case. A theoretical framework has been introduced that illuminates how a campaign manager might see their own strategic environment from the 'inside'. This framework posits the candidate selling themselves to five potentially overlapping 'markets' in search of numerous benefits – primarily: votes, money, positive coverage, endorsements, and 'partnerships'. Further, the link between this theory and actual practice has been illuminated through an illustration of the six key stages of a campaign strategy, clearly targeting the five markets in the framework. Thus the practical work of campaign managers is brought into strategic focus and situated clearly within the framework. The aim is to provide a conceptual tool with which to analyse and understand different strategies that might be employed in actual political campaigns. For example, we can now begin to look at how Obama targets his messages towards the five key markets and most importantly appreciate the strategic challenges he (and every other Presidential nominee) face in needing to attract votes, capital, coverage, endorsements, and partnerships from different markets. Providing a framework that illuminates the challenges facing candidates in the real world and some of the typical strategic approaches adopted by them should help us to understand Obama's campaign from the perspective a campaign manager might take – giving us more of an 'inside' view that will help us assess how revolutionary the campaign really was.

The question being addressed here is not predominantly theoretical (though it could have theoretical implications). Rather, it is directed towards the impact of a specific campaign on

an industry and workplace that employs tens of thousands of people. The historic backdrop provides perspective and context. The conceptual framework provides the intellectual tools to make sense of what is happening today. This will aid the analysis in three key ways. Firstly, we will be able to see how the 2008 campaign strategy of Obama fits within the contemporary framework provided, thereby creating a broad strategic context within which to analyse it. Secondly, we will be able to analyse whether any core precepts of political campaigning have been challenged or rethought. Finally, we will be able to weigh the significance of any innovations against the historic backdrop provided. There is no 'objective' answer as to whether Obama 'reinvented' political campaigns. However, this theoretical framework should give us a strong basis from which to analyse the impact of the 2008 Obama campaign and its potential reverberations on the future of public campaigning.

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## Chapter 3: Methodology

Given that Obama was only just elected, the documentation available on his campaign is not as extensive as one might wish for. However, the campaign did receive unprecedented coverage in the global media, and there is a growing body of data available in the public domain which sheds light on various aspects of the campaign. This includes: speeches, press releases, direct mails, web posts, and blogs released by the campaign team; journalistic reports and internal strategy documents on communications, media, and fundraising strategies; and quantitative data collected by various research groups and NGO's measuring things such as – campaign funding, numbers of grassroots volunteers, and numbers of people reached through different digital mediums (e.g. measurements relating to web hits, campaign e-mails, SMS's, and membership of online support networks)

Two methodological approaches will be applied to analyse this body of data – namely, content analysis and virtual ethnography. Broadly speaking, the first methodology will be used to shed light on *what* was communicated, whilst the second will be used to illuminate how information technology was used to spread the message.

### *Conceptualising methodologies*

In order to think coherently about which methodologies will be used and how, we need first to have some idea of what the features of a 'revolutionary campaign' might look like. For example, if we are using content analysis or virtual ethnography to analyse particular

aspects of campaign related communication, how will we be able to infer whether we are seeing signs of 're-inventive' campaigning? Further, what context and comparisons could we provide to justify our arguments?

The theoretical framework presented in the previous section can provide guidance here. This framework posits the candidate as a central figure reaching out to 5 key markets in search of money, coverage, partnerships, public endorsements and votes. These pursuits describe the practice of political campaigning as it is commonly understood today. Further, they are seen to take place in several key stages involving *processes* of value defining, value developing, and value delivery. Moreover, these value based processes are subject to structural constraints that help define their boundaries and shape - such as the nature of candidates, the political organisations they represent, and the markets they target. Crucially, the theoretical framework has also given us a historic backdrop with which to analyse how trends in campaign theory and strategy have evolved over time. Using this information, we can begin to think about what a revolutionary campaign might look like. For example, it is reasonable to imagine that a genuinely revolutionary campaign may:

- a) call for a redefining of key tenets of the framework, or
- b) show similarities with former campaigns that have been described as 'revolutionary' - such as the Hanna campaign of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which brought in radically new fundraising and communications strategies as well as novel uses of technology.

## **Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a tool to analyse texts and to make valid inferences from verbal, symbolic, or communicative data. It is a quantitative research technique that involves selectively measuring the appearance of particular clusters of words. Krippendorff (1980:

21) describes it as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context”. Bernard Berelson defines it as a “research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson 1952:18). Weber (1990: 10), sites some of this technique’s key advantages – namely: its direct focus on human communication; its ability to combine qualitative and quantitative analysis in one system; the availability of potentially vast series of data spanning several centuries; its ability to yield unobtrusive measures which the sender and receiver of information are unaware of.

### *The uses of Content Analysis*

Berelson (1952: 25) suggested 17 uses of content analysis based on the issues that this method has been applied to. There is no space here to list them all. However, some of the most relevant ones include: describing trends in communication content; exposing propaganda techniques; discovering stylistic features; identifying the intentions of the communicators; revealing the focus of attention; and describing attitudinal and behavioural responses to communications (Ibid.). Ole Rudolph Holsti (1969) adapted Berelson’s list and deducted 15 uses of this technique in terms of their general purpose, elements of the communication to which they apply, and the general question they are intended to answer. The table overleaf reflects the list of uses proposed by Holsti. Not all the uses of content analysis will have relevance for this study. In this table a select number of uses (in the right hand column) have been highlighted in bold to indicate those that could prove useful. They include: securing political intelligence; inferring cultural aspects and change; analysing techniques of persuasion; describing trends in communication content; describing patterns of communication; and analysing the flow of information.

### Uses of Content Analysis by Purpose, Communication Element, and Question

Purpose	Element	Question	Use
	Source	Who?	Answer questions of disputed authorship  <b>Secure political &amp; military intelligence</b>
Make inferences about the antecedents of communications	Encoding process	Why?	Analyse traits of individuals  <b>Infer cultural aspects &amp; change</b>  Provide legal & evaluative evidence <b>Analyse techniques of persuasion</b>
	Channel	How?	Analyse style  <b>Describe trends in communication content</b>
Describe & make inferences about the characteristics of communications	Message	What?	Relate known characteristics of sources to messages they produce  Compare communication content to standards
	Recipient	To whom?	Relate known characteristics of audiences to messages produced for them  <b>Describe patterns of communication</b>
Make inferences about the consequences of communications	Decoding process	With what effect?	Measure readability  <b>Analyse the flow of information</b>  Assess responses to communications

**Figure 3** Uses of Content Analysis (Holsti 1969).

### *Methodological dilemmas and pitfalls of content analysis*

Methodological dilemmas can occur due to bias in the selection of data and coding frames, ambiguous research questions, and subjectivity in the meanings attributed to particular words or phrases. While it is *not* possible to neutralise these problems, care has

been be taken to minimise them. A random sampling method is employed in order to reduce the risk of bias in data selection. Further, the coding frame groups words and phrases into broad themes that refer to commonly accepted uses of campaign related communications. Moreover, care is taken, as far as possible, to use words with unambiguous meanings and to stay true to the perceived context and original intentions of the author, when grouping words or phrases into themes expressed in the coding frame. Finally, a full sample of the coding frame is provided in the appendix, to ensure transparency in the attribution of meanings. This does not eliminate (or even reduce) subjectivity in the attribution of meaning, but it does allow the reader to draw their own conclusions about how valid those attributions are, and put the reasoning of the researcher on full display.

### *Sampling and data collection*

The content analysis will focus on a randomly selected sample of speeches and e-mails to supporters, issued by the Obama and McCain campaign teams, between July and November 2008. The direct mails are taken from my e-mail inbox. The speeches are taken directly from campaign related websites. Random sampling is sought by selecting the first of each type of text issued on every *odd* month in the selected time frame (i.e. July, September, and November). This impedes bias in the selection of texts. The coding frame for these texts looks for words or phrases that can be seen to fit within three commonly cited campaign goals – namely: fundraising, positive messaging, and negative messaging. This framework is illustrated overleaf.

Candidate	Type of Text	Positive messaging	Negative messaging	Fundraising
Barack Obama	Speeches			
	e-mails			
	<b>Total</b>			
John McCain	Speeches			
	e-mails			
	<b>Total</b>			

**Figure 3.1** Coding frame

The main aim will be not only to analyse the quantity of messages falling into the different categories, but also the types of words and phrases employed, as it is this which allow us to analyse whether there are any significant features of Obama's lexicon that differs markedly from McCain's, and whether this can help us analyse the features highlighted in bold in figure 3 - namely: inferring cultural aspects and change; analysing techniques of persuasion; describing trends in communication content; describing patterns of communication; and analysing the flow of information. This in turn will be used to assess whether anything in Obama's communications can be seen to call into question any key tenets of our framework or whether there is a suggestion of the presence of any radically new campaigning strategies.

### **Virtual ethnography**

Ethnography is primarily "a genre of writing that uses field work to provide a descriptive study of human societies" (Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnography>. Accessed 1 December 2008). For some cultural and social anthropologists, this methodology is

considered “the essence of the discipline” (Ibid.). The twin concepts of *participatory research* and *immersion* are key aspects of this technique. A traditional ethnographer would typically embed themselves within a particular community by living within it for a sustained period: “the fieldwork usually involves spending a year or more in another society, living with the local people and learning about their ways of life. Ethnographers are participant observers. They take part in events they study because it helps with understanding local behavior and thought” (Ibid.).

*Virtual* ethnography is in contrast, primarily an *online* research method, which “extends the traditional notions of field and ethnographic study from the observation of co-located, face-to-face interactions, to technologically mediated interactions in online networks and communities” (Available: <http://www.virtualknowledgestudio.nl/conferences/virtual-ethnography/>. Accessed 5 December 2008). Virtual ethnography differs from traditional ethnography in two important ways. First, it is not bound within any particular spatial location because “it challenges the traditional notion of a field site as a localised space and moves it into the realm of online or computer-mediated communications and interactions” (Ibid.). Second, cultural immersion and participation on the part of the researcher are not requisites because the virtual ethnographer can choose the extent of immersion and interaction with research subjects: “almost since its inception, online ethnographies have been conducted that are purely observational, in which the researcher is a specialised type of lurker”. (Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual\\_ethnography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_ethnography). Accessed 1 December 2008).

Some scholars define virtual ethnography as synonymous with “netnography” or “webnography” referring exclusively to online communities located in cyberspace (Kozinets 2002:4). Kozinets highlights that, “Netnography, or ethnography on the Internet, is a new

qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to the study of cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated communications” (Ibid.). At least four types of online communities have been highlighted as potential research subjects for netnographers. They include: electronic message/bulletin boards; independent web pages; electronic mailing lists united by particular themes; and multi-user chat rooms (Ibid.).

### *Virtual ethnography as a tool for understanding political campaigns*

In a 2002 study on ‘hyper-media organisations’, Howard (2002: 551) describes the emergence of an ‘e-politics community’ that “specialises in building new media tools for explicit political use”. He explains that:

This community outfits political campaign staff with new tools for organising volunteers and collecting donations, builds and analyses extensive databases on voter preferences and behavior, and projects political ideology through new media by designing, operating, and interlinking technology. They build private intranets, publicly accessible websites, and delivery systems for actualities, logistical information and campaign propaganda (Ibid.).

Virtual ethnography – with its exclusive focus on digitally mediated interaction - is an indispensable tool for understanding this new cybernetic dimension to political campaigning. In particular, it allows us to look at how virtual communications flow dynamically within and between campaign staff and grassroots supporters, and to analyse the nature and content of those flows. This can shed light on many practical aspects of ‘e-politics’ - for example, about how information technology can be used by campaigners to: build grassroots movements with decentralized structures; recruit members from external online networks; link disparate support networks to one another; create cultural buzz, enthusiasm, and ‘hip-ness’; increase local ownership of campaigns; and provide guidance and digital tools to empower grassroots volunteers.

As information technology continues its trend towards increasing accessibility and sophistication, it is reasonable to assume that 'e-politics' will only grow in prominence within the study of political campaigning. It is not unreasonable to imagine for instance, virtual ethnography blending with other social science disciplines (such as psephology) to provide a deeper picture of political campaigning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. For example, if voter behavior and/or turnout are becoming increasingly affected by online communications in chat rooms and social networking sites, then it is easy to imagine psephologists turning to virtual ethnography to shed light on this process.

### *Research focus*

The main question guiding the virtual ethnographic research will be whether Obama's use of digital communications technology represented a revolutionary innovation within the field of political campaigning? This is a key question because many have hailed Obama's campaign as revolutionary due to the way in which digital mediums were used reach out to voters and donors. Examples of these potentially 'revolutionary' aspects include: the innovative use of SMS and mobile phone technology; the use of online networking sites to recruit grassroots support, engage youth, and generate a 'buzz'; the smashing of campaign fundraising records through online appeals; innovative use of online video messaging; and the development of new campaign related software for blackberries, PC's and iphones. In particular, many believe that Obama has 'democratised' the field of campaign finance and revolutionised it. Before Obama, Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential bid was heralded as revolutionary for its use of information technology to raise funds and grassroots support. However, as Thomas (2008) highlights:

Joe Trippi, the unorthodox political genius who created the Dean Internet juggernaut, often said that if the Dean campaign was like the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk, then Obama was the Apollo program—in other words, in one

cycle skipping over commercial aviation, jet travel and supersonic transport to go straight to the moon.

Virtual ethnography provides a perfect tool for us to analyse the use of information technology within Obama's campaign. As Christine Hine (2000: 65) highlights: "Virtual ethnography involves intensive engagement with mediated interaction. This kind of engagement adds a new dimension to the exploration of *the use of the medium* in context" (emphasis added). Crucially, Hine recognises here that virtual ethnography can be used not only to analyse cultures manifesting online, but also to understand the *uses* of information technology in new contexts. This is an important observation given that the boundaries of this study are quite narrow. There is no scope here to deal with, say, the cultural implications of the internet on society generally, or with the psychological impact of the internet on the identity of the self. Rather, the focus is on the impact of Obama's use of information technology in the 2007/08 election cycle on the field of political campaigning.

### *Methodological considerations*

Kozinets highlights that, "as a method, netnography is faster, simpler, and less expensive than traditional ethnography, and more naturalistic and unobtrusive than focus groups or interviews (2002: 1). Further. "Netnography provides marketing researchers with a window into naturally occurring behaviors, such as searches for information by, and communal word-of-mouth discussions between, consumers. Because it is both naturalistic and unobtrusive - an unprecedentedly unique combination not found in any other marketing research method - "netnography" allows continuing access to informants in a particular online social situation" (2002: 3).

However, this method is not without its limitations. One key problem involves an innate difficulty in generalising results to groups outside the online sample. This is due to: a

narrow focus on online communities; an inability to offer the full and rich detail of lived human experience; an over reliance on the researcher's interpretive skill; and a lack of informant identifiers present in the online context (Ibid.). However, this study is largely immune to these weaknesses because the focus is quite narrow – looking specifically at how technology was used to scale up funds, coverage, and volunteers, and to create, track and manage data for the campaign. This provides a clear empirical research boundary that will yield a strong body of hard evidence to back up our conclusions.

### *Sampling and data series*

Units of analysis will include: reports and statistics released by media, think tanks and research institutions, as well as information released directly from the campaign team (such as e-mails, blogs, web postings, press releases, internal strategy documents, and video messaging). The focus of analysis will include:

- Candidate-related hits on official campaign websites and major online sites such as *YouTube*
- Data on levels of online fundraising achieved and on levels of campaign investments in online marketing and outreach
- membership of online supporter networks (such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *MySpace*)
- Articles and reports detailing the extent of electronic mailing lists, methods through which they were created, and the uses applied to them
- Documented examples of technological innovation employed within 'new media departments' in campaign teams (such as new software developments and innovative use of existing software)
- Data on use of mobile communications technology as a political campaigning tool (such as targeting of supporters through mobile phones and blackberries)

- Data referring to the role of information technology within campaign vision and strategy
- Journalistic articles and interviews referring to the use of digital communications technology within the 2008 Presidential campaign generally.

The information will be primarily collected through online search engines. This methodological approach will include a mix of quantitative and qualitative findings.

Quantitative data will focus on statistics referring to the use of digital communications technology to:

- a) Spread campaign messages and propaganda
- b) Raise funds
- c) Recruit grassroots volunteers.

Qualitative data will use reports, news feeds, and press releases released by the campaign team, the media, think tanks, and research institutions in order to analyse how digital communications technology was used to:

- a) Create 'buzz', support, and excitement for the campaign,
- b) Create 'mini media events',
- c) Create a sense of local ownership amongst supporters,
- d) Generate feelings of intimacy between the candidate and supporters.

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be used to study how information technology was used to co-ordinate grassroots movements, and facilitate tracking, data basing, and logging.

Many of the above factors will overlap and blur, because the strategy adopted by the Obama campaign team synergised various different tactics into one fluid whole. In fact, the level of integration within different campaign departments and staff with different skills and

remits is a theme that will be analysed in depth in the coming section. This is because it provides one possible argument in favour of calling this campaign 'revolutionary', as it may call into question the separate qualities attributed to different markets within the theoretical framework and could imply the presence of new levels of technological and strategic synergy that can legitimately be classified as 're-inventive'.

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# Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Data Analysis

## Part 1: Content Analysis

The theoretical framework adopted in this thesis summarises political campaigning as a *process of selling candidates to voters, interest groups, donors, the media, and party organisations, in a context of value based conflicts and structural constraints imposed by the external environment*. This framework posits the political candidate as a central figure (or 'product') being 'sold' to 5 key 'markets' in search of money, coverage, partnerships, public endorsements and votes. The framework has also provided a historic backdrop with which to analyse how trends in campaign theory and strategy have evolved over time. It has been argued that using this information, we can begin to imagine a 'revolutionary' campaign as one that:

- a. calls for a redefining of key tenets of the framework, or
- b. show similarities with historic campaigns that have been described as 'revolutionary' - such as new fundraising or communications strategies and/or novel uses of technology.

### *Presentation of data*

The research investigation begins with a content analysis of speeches and e-mails comparing Obama's lexicon to that of John McCain. The key research question for this section is *whether there is anything in the content of Obama's communiqués that could be seen to indicate the presence of a re-inventive or 'revolutionary' communications strategy*.

The content analysis dissects three randomly selected speeches and three randomly

selected e-mails of Obama and John McCain, issued at the start of July, September and November 2008. The e-mails consist in direct mails sent out to supporters. Both speeches and e-mails have been selected chronologically, representing the first ones available for each of the three months in the time frame. All texts have been combed for words or phrases that can be seen to relate to either: positive messaging, negative messaging, or fundraising. This process of scanning texts and grouping lexicon into themes is by definition subjective. However, care has been taken to place words and phrases in their proper intended context and also to use unambiguous examples with very clear meanings. Further, a full version of the coding frame along with complete copies of all speeches and e-mails used has been provided in the appendix, making the process as transparent as possible.

The categories used relate to the *intentions* of the speaker. Thus, 'positive messaging' refers to words or phrases designed to illicit a *positive* emotional response in the audience - for example, feelings of optimism, encouragement, empowerment, social inclusion, unity, or self confidence. Negative messaging refers to words or phrases designed to illicit a *negative* emotional response - for example, feelings of pessimism, fear, discouragement, distrust, anger, or hatred. Finally, fundraising refers to words or phrases designed to illicit donations from the audience. A summary of the coding frame is presented below in figure 4. The full version is provided in the appendix (See appendices 13 - 16).

Candidate	Type of Text	Positive messaging	Negative messaging	Fundraising
<b>Barack Obama</b>	Speeches	241	84	0
	e-mails	21	6	41
	<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>John McCain</b>	Speeches	230	244	0
	e-mails	31	11	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>22</b>

**Figure 4** Coding frame summary

### *Analysis of speeches*

The random sampling method employed here means that no effort has been made to choose speeches of equivalent length or similar contexts (other than the date). This is because trying to 'match' speeches to one another in this way would have implied greater interference on the part of the researcher in the selection of data and compromised the objectivity of the process. Further, there is no guarantee that it would have led to a more illuminating data series.

Obama's three speeches were given on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2008. They were delivered respectively in: the Council for Faith Based Neighbourhood Partnerships in Ohio; The American Association for Retired Persons in Washington DC; and the Veterans Memorial Arena in Washington D.C. McCain's speeches were given on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the 4<sup>th</sup> of September and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2008. They were delivered respectively in: the National Sheriffs' Association's 68th Annual

Conference in Indianapolis; The Republican Presidential Nomination Acceptance Address at the Xcel Energy Centre in Minnesota; and the University of Miami in Florida. Obama's speeches comprised respectively 1415, 1284, and 2916 words, whilst McCain's comprised 2599, 4358, and 946 words respectively. In total Obama's three speeches made up 5615 words as against McCain's 7903 words. Full copies of these speeches can be found in the appendix (See appendix 1 to 3, and appendix 7 to 9).

The coding frame illustrates that *no funding appeals whatsoever* could be found in *any* of the speeches for either candidate. It also shows that Obama's speeches contained **241** instances of positive messaging and **81** instances of negative messaging, whilst McCain's speeches contained **230** examples of positive messaging and **244** examples of negative messaging. Of the 63 different types of negative messages appearing in Obama's speeches, 6% of the examples found (just 4 out of 63 words and phrases) accounted for 17% (15 out of 84) of the total instances of negative messaging. Obama's most commonly used negative words were: *fear* (3), *tired* (3), *Iraq* (4), and *war* (5). Further, 7% (6 out of 88) of the types of positive words or phrases used by Obama accounted for 37% (91 out of 241) of the total instances of positive messaging for Obama's three speeches. The key positive words for Obama were: *together* (10), *partnership* (10), *faith* (13), *care* (14), *help* (21), and *change* (23).

Of the 81 negative words or phrases used by John McCain just 6% (5 words) accounted for 37% of the total instances of negative messaging in his three speeches (a total of 90 out of 244 negative messages). McCain's top negative words were: *violence* (8), *war* (8), *criminal* (18), *crime* (21), and *fight* (35). Of the 76 different types of *positive* words or phrases used by McCain the top six represented 73 out of the 240 total instances of positive messaging in McCain's three speeches. That's 8% of the positive words or phrases representing 30% of the total positive messaging. The top six positive words or

phrases used by McCain were: *opportunity* (8), *honor* (8), *better* (10), *law enforcement* (15), *change* (15), and *justice* (17).

It is not surprising that both candidates use certain key words and phrases to reinforce positive and negative messages. Repetition of different sound-bites is a commonly adopted campaign tactic, designed to provide consistency in terms of messaging, and to reinforce particular issue and imaged based marketing strategies, designed to sell candidates to specific audiences. However, the comparison between the speeches of both candidates does yield some interesting findings. The most obvious point is that the negative messaging adopted by McCain appears to *far* outweigh that of Obama. 74% of the 325 speech related hits in Obama's coding frame are positive, whilst 51% of McCain's 474 hits are negative. Obama's most common word in the coding frame is 'change', which appears a total of 23 times, whilst McCain's most common word is 'fight', appearing 35 times. In a further stark contrast we see that Obama does not repeat *any* negative words or phrases more than five times, whereas McCain repeats at least *ten* negative words or phrases over 5 times. Another key point is that Obama places much more emphasis on what supporters are capable of doing for *themselves*, with phrases such as 'you can' and 'we can' appearing frequently in his speeches and not at all in McCain's.

Several tentative conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly, we can assume that for both campaign teams, these speeches were not seen as opportune moments to illicit direct appeals for funding. The theoretical framework employed assumes candidates seek several key things from their five markets – money, votes, public endorsements, positive coverage and partnerships. Given that not a single appeal for funding was made in any of the speeches it is reasonable to assume that the speech writer's strategy – at least with these particular speeches – was primarily about gaining votes and positive coverage, rather than money. A second tentative conclusion is that Obama's campaign focused more

on positive rather than negative messaging, seeking to reinforce optimism and unity, and relying repeatedly on concepts such as 'change', 'partnership', 'together' and 'faith'. Further, we can see that Obama cleverly empowered people to feel that they were capable of affecting change with phrases like 'you can' and 'we can' and 'yes, we can'. Finally, these findings suggest that McCain's campaign was more combative and negative, praying more on the politics of fear and insecurity in an effort to position their candidate as the only man tough enough to protect Americans from their multiple enemies in a dangerous world. This is evidenced by the prevalence of words such as 'fight', 'criminal', and 'crime'. Even much of McCain's *positive* rhetoric relates to fighting – for example, 'law enforcement' and 'justice' (two of his most common positive themes) are strongly related to the concept of fighting crime. McCain's speeches are littered with clear attempts to position himself as the toughest and bravest candidate, referring repeatedly to his military record and his ability to fight for what's right. Typical McCain statements include: "I've been fighting for this country since I was seventeen years old, and I have the scars to prove it. If I'm elected President, I will fight to shake up Washington and take America in a new direction from my first" (McCain 2008a), or "I don't mind a good fight. For reasons known only to God, I've had quite a few tough ones in my life" (McCain 2008b). In contrast typical Obama statements include for instance, sentences such as: "you can give this country the change we need" (Obama 2008a), or "if you want change - if you want to restore that fundamental promise we've made from generation to generation, then I ask you to give me your vote on November 4th. And if you do, I promise you - we will change this country together" (Obama 2008b). If you dissect these messages from Obama you can see that he is very careful not to place too much emphasis on himself as the agent of change. Rather, he requests support whilst carefully explaining that he seeks to work 'together' with supporters, thus implying that he is working *with* them as an equal partner and emphasizing that *they* are the ones who have the power to affect change. This is a message that has been reinforced by Obama at every juncture throughout his campaign.

Obama's key campaign themes have been highlighted as 'change' and 'hope', but an important subtext has been this concept that people need to take ownership of their own political reality. This may not be a revolutionary tactic but it is a very interesting one, and it has coincided with the spread of one of the most decentralised and extensive grassroots movements that any US candidate has witnessed in recent history. In contrast, McCain's key theme – at least within these speeches - was definitely 'fight'. One could argue that 'fight' is not an altogether 'negative' concept and this is where the coding frame does get rather subjective. For example, 'fighting for what's right' could be seen as a concept which actually empowers people to work towards a better and brighter future, and these are often the contexts in which McCain uses the word. However, the word here has been characterized as negative because fighting (even in the positive sense of fighting for what's right) implies the presence of negative forces which need to be combated and also implies a path that is going to be turbulent and combative as opposed to peaceful. The violent connotation of the word is present in the subtext of McCain's speeches, even if the word is not being used literally (as in physically fighting), because 'fighting', no matter how you look at it, is a word that implies battle and friction. In contrast words like 'partnership', 'faith' and 'help', which keep popping up in Obama's speeches, focus on people coming together to support one-another and effect change through peaceful means.

None of this proves conclusively that Obama's campaign was revolutionary. Even if his campaign did focus more on positive than negative messaging, it is unlikely that he is the first candidate in history to win a Presidential election in this way. For instance, the historical backdrop in section one shows us that 'educational' campaigning focusing more on issues, than on slander and sleaze, gained prevalence in the late 1800's. Moreover, we have not seen evidence of any innovative fundraising or merchandising tactics at all being employed in any of Obama's three speeches. We do not, for instance, hear Obama beginning any of these speeches by asking the audience to get out their cell phones and

blackberries to text instructions to their friends to 'donate now', as he has in some cases been reported to have done. One *could* argue that Obama has re-invented political campaigns by showing the world how effective it is to base your campaign on the concept of 'change'. For example, a new Italian political party was launched in 2008 under the name 'Party Change'. However, Obama certainly did not invent this concept and is by no means the first politician to have based a campaign on it. Thus, it would be a huge leap to suggest that branding himself as a harbinger of change has in any way reinvented political campaigning, even if it may have sparked a trend and popularized the word for the moment. However, there is one facet of Obama's messaging that does seem rather innovative – namely, the way that he encourages people to take ownership of the campaign. This is especially so in light of the extent to which this actually happened. Our key research question is whether this content analysis indicates the presence of any radically new communications strategies and, in terms of the speeches analysed, it would seem that this is the one area could benefit from further investigation. There appears to be a strong and conscious attempt by Obama to get to people to feel that they are not a passive 'audience' but an active team of people who are going to go out and create change themselves, not just by voting but in the much fuller sense of becoming activists. The subliminal message is that people are capable, powerful, and know what to do and how to do it. In order to unpack the true impact of this though, it is necessary to analyse how it interlinked within broad strategic objectives of the campaign, and this is something that will come to light more fully in Part 2.

### *Analysis of e-mails*

All the e-mails analysed were direct mails issued to supporters. Of the three e-mails in the coding frame, Obama's contained 21 instances of positive messaging, 6 instances of negative messaging, and 41 instances of fundraising. In contrast, McCain's contained 31

positive messages, 11 negative messages, and 22 fundraising related messages. The first striking aspect of this is that Obama's e-mails had less positive messages in them than McCain's. However, McCain's e-mails still had nearly twice as many negative messages as Obama's. Further, Obama had nearly twice as many fundraising related messages in his e-mails as McCain. This could explain why he had less positive messages, as there would have been less space left over. The top three words appearing in Obama's e-mails are: help (9), give (6) and donate (6). McCain's top three words are: support (10), reform (7), and service (5).

These findings suggest that while *both* candidates were using direct mails to illicit donations from supporters, Obama was doing so more fervently than McCain. In light of the fact that Obama raised unprecedented sums from online donations, this focus on e-mail fundraising could be seen as one part of a fundraising strategy that has genuinely reinvented political campaigning. Statistics show that Obama raised a grand total of \$750 million for his campaign, of which over \$500 million were raised online, smashing all previous online fundraising records (Available: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org). Accessed 18 January 2009). Of this, over \$120 million came through small donations totaling less than \$200 a piece, much of which came through as a result of e-mail solicitation (Ibid.).

Arguably however, it was the *breadth* of Obama's mailing list, the way these lists were gathered, and the way that e-mails were linked with a much broader online fundraising strategy that was pivotal, rather than the actual content of the e-mails. A recent study on the impact of direct marketing appeals suggested that "people are either going to donate to your cause or not, for reasons that have little to do with the appeal letter's contents" (Available: <http://www.nonprofitfundraisingblog.com/2008/03/direct-mail-fundraising-to-enc.html>. Accessed 19 January 2009). Thus, the content of Obama's e-mails alone is insufficient to provide evidence of a genuinely revolutionary communications strategy.

After all, even if he was asking for money more times, he was not doing anything drastically different to John McCain or to many predecessors in terms of content. In order to put the e-mail fundraising campaign in proper perspective a more detailed account of the over all new media strategy is required, and this will be provided in the virtual ethnography in the coming section.

### *Summary of content analysis*

Content analysis of Obama's speeches and e-mails alone has failed to produce conclusive evidence of genuinely revolutionary campaigning. This is perhaps understandable because past revolutions in political campaigning (such as that employed by Mark Hanna in the late 1800's) have often centred around new methods of fundraising and new uses of technology, which are things that content analysis is unlikely to pick up on. One could argue that content analysis alone is in fact an inadequate tool to analyse change within political campaigns, because it has trouble moving beyond descriptive analysis of the rhetoric and spin which campaign teams emit, and this is an area where we might be unlikely to find anything truly revolutionary. In contrast, a virtual ethnography is capable of shedding light on *how* information technology is used to spread messages to hundreds of millions of supporters, voters, donors, and volunteers. Nonetheless, analysing how messages are spread without looking at the content of those messages puts the cart before the horse. It is impossible to attribute the success of a campaign solely to the use of technology because that technology is being used to sell a specific product – namely, *the candidate and their message*. Thus, if the messaging is deficient, it is difficult for any amount of technological or strategic wizardry to succeed. Something about Obama's message captivated millions upon millions of American's and any analysis of his campaign is incomplete without an analysis of what he was actually saying. While the content analysis has not in itself provided conclusive evidence of re-inventive campaigning tactics

we have learned that the messages being communicated by Obama seemed more geared towards uniting and co-coordinating citizens, whilst McCain seemed more concerned with gearing them up for battle. It not unreasonable to assume that Obama's messages played a huge role in igniting the grassroots volunteer movement known as 'Obama's army', which many have lauded as revolutionary in its size, scope, and decentralized nature. By using simple positive messages like 'yes, we can', Obama was able to brand himself as the more positive candidate. Crucially, he also used this type of phrasing to make his supporters feel *empowered* to take action. This helped spark one the largest and most decentralised grassroots movements in US political history and *may* represent a new and innovative success with the field of political campaigning.

However, saying 'yes we can' in a speech is not in itself a revolutionary tactic. The genius at the heart of Obama's campaign lies at the intersection where messages and technological wizardry combined to produce true innovation. Thus, the virtual ethnography is the missing chain in the link needed to understand how revolutionary this campaign really was. We need to understand how this type of messaging slotted into a broad and comprehensive strategy that harnessed the power of information technology to unprecedented degrees. The *content* of this man's message alone did not reinvent the art of political campaigning as we know it. However, when linked with the results of the virtual ethnography this content analysis will provide a much richer picture of the overall campaign strategy, allowing us to bring into focus how the tactics of speech and e-mail writers synergised with those of technological 'wizzes' to produce true innovation within the field of political campaigning.

## Part 2: Virtual Ethnography

The recent election victory of Barack Obama has arguably come about on the back of one of the most technologically savvy campaigns in human history. In particular Obama shocked observers around the world by raising over *\$500 million* online. (Available: <http://www.opensecrets.org>. Accessed 18 January 2009)

Andrew Rasiej, founder of *Personal Democracy Forum* - an online site about how politics and technology intersect – states that: "Obama's success online is...about how our society has changed, how our media ecology has changed, just in the past four years" (Rasiej in Vargas 2008a). As one journalist highlights: "from controlling the canvassing operations to corralling e-mail lists, organising meetings and overseeing national phone drives, Obama's web network is the most ambitious, and apparently successful, internet campaign effort in any presidential race in the web's short history" (Lai Stirland 2008).

The success of Obama's online strategy has been partly facilitated by the fact that information technology itself is becoming cheaper, more accessible, more user friendly and much more widespread. This is a global phenomenon occurring in large swathes of the world and the US is no exception. The table below shows the steady increase in internet usage in the US in the new millennium.

YEAR	Population	Users	% Pop.	Broadband	Usage Source
2000	281,421,906	124,000,000	44.1 %	n/a	ITU
2001	285,317,559	142,823,008	50.0 %	n/a	ITU
2002	288,368,698	167,196,688	58.0 %	n/a	ITU
2003	290,809,777	172,250,000	59.2 %	n/a	ITU
2004	293,271,500	201,661,159	68.8 %	n/a	Nielsen//NetRatings
2005	299,093,237	203,824,428	68.1 %	n/a	Nielsen//NetRatings
2007	301,967,681	212,080,135	70.2 %	n/a	Nielsen//NetRatings
2008	303,824,646	220,141,969	72.5 %	n/a	Nielsen//NetRatings

**Figure 4.1** Internet usage in the U.S.

Available: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/am/us.htm>. Accessed 19 January 2009

We can see from this table that internet usage in the US jumped from 44.1% to 72.5% of the population between 2000 and 2008. This represents an increase of almost 100 million internet users in the US alone over an eight year period. This explosive growth has been mirrored in many other nations in the 'North' and also in many parts of the 'South'. This is changing the way that people access information about politics.

A new study on online political behaviour in the US in 2008 found that 62% of registered voters regularly used the internet (via computer) as a source for presidential election information, surpassed only by television's 82 percent (Available: [http://www.cisco.com/en/US/solutions/collateral/ns341/ns525/ns537/ns705/ns827/ES\\_WP.pdf](http://www.cisco.com/en/US/solutions/collateral/ns341/ns525/ns537/ns705/ns827/ES_WP.pdf). Accessed 20 January 2009). Other sources voters used included: newspaper/magazine (49 percent), radio (30 percent), and cell phone/mobile device (4 percent). Further, "about 30 percent of registered voters reported using online video to follow presidential election coverage and 75 percent of these online video users felt that watching video online enabled them to follow presidential election news and events more closely" (Ibid.). Arguably, this has laid the foundations for a new era of 'e-politics' in which

candidate's ability to manipulate information technology will become, at least within technologically developed nations, increasingly crucial to electoral victory.

Faulkner (2008) argues that "The Obama campaign is distributed and bottom-up in a way that is the clearest example of what a post-broadcast, distributed and participatory democracy is going to look like". Further, he explains that "the evolution in campaign tactics happening right now closely parallels what's happening in the military, corporations, government and other large organisations. The dropping costs and increasing reliability and flexibility of information technology are having profound effects on how these organisations make things happen." (Ibid.). This virtual ethnography will analyse how Obama took advantage of this cheaper, more flexible and more reliable era in information technology to create an organic and interactive digital platform capable of garnering votes, money, coverage, and grassroots volunteers on a mass scale.

### *Contracting 'hyper-media' organisations*

Howard (2002: 551) describes the emergence of 'hyper-media organisations' that form part of a new 'e-politics community' that "specialises in building new media tools for explicit political use". *Obama for America* contracted the services of just such a hyper – media organisation to help it win the 2008 election. The company, going by the name of *Blue State Digital (BSD)*, had also been hired by Howard Dean in 2004 to build what was then considered to be a ground-breaking internet fundraising platform. Obama contracted them to manage the online fundraising, constituency building, issue advocacy and peer to peer online networking aspects of his 2008 Presidential primary campaign (Available: [www.bluestatedigital.com](http://www.bluestatedigital.com). Accessed 20 January 2009). This company advertises its service as follows:

BSD's Online Tools Suite is the most effective Internet community solution available for candidates, cause-related organisations, and companies. Our tools combine fundraising, advocacy, and constituency-building capabilities into a comprehensive, action-oriented suite that will help you raise more money, grow your community faster, lock in constituent loyalty through social networking, and motivate your constituents to build public and legislative support behind the issues that matter to you. (Available: [http://www.bluestatedigital.com/casestudies/archives/obama\\_for\\_america\\_2008/](http://www.bluestatedigital.com/casestudies/archives/obama_for_america_2008/). Accessed 20 January 2009).

Their website displays a prominent case study of the Obama 2008 Presidential campaign explaining that "to date, the campaign has used the *BSD Online Tools* to mobilize well over a million donors to contribute over \$500 million online, to motivate over 2 million social networking participants, and to create and promote more than 200,000 events across the country" (Ibid.). Key features of BSD's online campaigning tools include:

- 'True match technology' - a gift-matching program that brings together new donors and their matching donors personally, so that they can meet, communicate, and reinforce one another's commitment to their common cause;
- user friendly fundraising software that includes outbound segmentation by gift and activity history, detailed tracking by source code, and real-time statistics;
- a *BSD* 'management dashboard', which enables authorized staff to control the look and feel of landing pages, create new fundraising and action campaigns, produce an outbound e-mail fundraising program, manage a community content and blog program, and carry out other initiatives with the click of a mouse (Ibid.).

*BSD* justifiably conclude that: "the community-driven communications platform built and operated by *BSD* at <http://MyBarackObama.com>, which exploits all the capabilities of the *BSD* online tools suite, is arguably the most effective online campaign Web site in history" (Ibid.).

### *Obama's New Media Department*

In addition to contracting the services of *BSD*, Obama also hired Chris Hughes the 24 year old co-founder of *Facebook* to work on the social networking aspect of his campaign. Hughes worked within *Obama for America's* New Media Department, headed up by 27

year old Joe Rospars, who had been contracted directly from *BSD* (Vargas 2008a). At *Obama for America*, Joe Rospars “led a wide-ranging program that integrated design and branding, web and video content, mass e-mail, text messaging, and online advertising, organising and fundraising” (Available: [www.bluestatedigital.com](http://www.bluestatedigital.com). Accessed 20 January 2009). Amongst other things, this department developed the content for Obama’s official website and designed an online advertising campaign to draw internet users to that site. A critical group called the ‘analytics team’ tracked all the web traffic coming in and out of the site in order to judge which e-mails were getting the best responses and which online adverts were generating the most web hits. Vargas argues that “If the site was the car, the analytics team served as its mechanic, tuning and tweaking as needed in a 24-hour online cycle. Usually, campaigns hire outside vendors to do all this work. Not Obama, whose campaign mirrored a Silicon Valley start-up” (Vargas 2008b).

Obama’s new media department synergized different technological innovations into a fluid and coherent whole that created its own positive feedback loops. Different people in the department headed up different things – such as text messaging, social networking, e-mailing lists, video messaging, web maintenance, online advertising, and online fundraising – but they all worked closely together, understanding that the technology they were using enabled them to inter-link their workloads and strategies in new and exciting ways.

### *Online video messaging*

Obama has his own online TV channel on Youtube, headed by Kate Albright-Hanna, who runs his video team. “So far, Albright-Hanna's group has ... uploaded about 1,110 videos on Obama's *YouTube* channel -- more than four times what's available on Senator John

McCain's channel. For months, Obama's 37-minute race speech following the furore over the remarks of his former pastor has remained the channel's most watched video, seen more than 4.7 million times" (Vargas 2008a). Vargas goes on to explain that "what's striking about Obama's channel is the breadth of its content. Though most of the videos are centred on the candidate -- his speeches and rallies, his TV and online ads, his TV appearances - many others feature his supporters" (Ibid.). This fact chimes with the findings of the content analysis in Part 1-- which suggested that Obama's speech writers were consciously trying to give supporters a feeling of ownership within the campaign, and that Obama was careful to reinforce the message that it was his *supporters* who were the agents of change, working in equal partnership with his campaign staff. Albright – Hana explains that "early on, we wanted to capture the sense that this campaign is not just about Obama" (Ibid.). This theme of empowering supporters and turning them into activists by giving them a feeling of ownership appears repeatedly throughout the broad spectrum of Obama's communications – both digital and non-digital. This is a deliberate strategy employed in order to mobilize a vast army of grassroots volunteers.

According to TubeMogul.com, which tracks online videos, the videos on Obama's *YouTube* channel have been viewed almost 52 million times. When watching a video on this channel there is an option to click on a "contribute" button and, using a credit card, donate anything from \$15 to \$1,000 using a system called Google Checkout. When you do donate you are asked to give your phone number and e-mail address. McCain's channel, whose videos have been viewed a mere 9.5 million times, doesn't offer any such option. This is a typical example of Obama totally out-doing his opponent in terms of joined up thinking and creativity when it comes to technology.

## *Text messaging and mobile phones*

Obama's text messaging programme was headed up by Scott Goodstein. Many were cynical about the potential of this. Unlike e-mails or *YouTube*, text messages are not free. Most Republicans saw this as a little more than a costly gimmick – at most generating a few mini-media events, which could best be created by other means. The result was that McCain's campaign had no text messaging programme at all.

Vargas (2008a) notes that "Clinton and John Edwards had texting programs, too, but they didn't take them this far" (Ibid.). The extent of this campaign was largely an experiment - something largely new and untested that they could not be sure would work. As far back as 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Obama's new media manager Joe Rospars stated that "the reality is, I don't think there's a campaign or a political organisation right now that has figured out how to smartly use this technology. There's going to be a lot of experimentation" (Vargas 2007).

Here are some key facts about Obama's text messaging campaign (Available [www.reverb.progressivetech.org](http://www.reverb.progressivetech.org). Accessed 20 January 2009):

- A million people signed up for Obama's text-messaging program
- On the night Obama accepted the Democratic nomination at INVESCO Field in Denver, over 30,000 phones among a crowd of 75,000 were used to text in to join the program.
- On Election Day, every voter who'd signed up for alerts in battleground states got at least three text messages.
- Supporters on average received five to 20 text messages per month, depending on where they lived — the program was divided by states, regions, zip codes and colleges — and what kind of messages they had opted to receive.

Obama's campaign also provided a totally new free software application for the popular iPhone: "tap the top button, 'call friends', and the software would take a peek at your phonebook and rearrange it in the order that the campaign was targeting states, so that friends who had, say, Colorado or Virginia area codes would appear at the top. With another tap, the Obama supporter could report back essential data for a voter canvass ("left message", "not interested", "already voted", etc.). It all went into a giant database for Election Day" (Thomas 2008). Tellingly, "within a week of its launch, the tool broke into the Top Ten free downloads on iTunes" (Available: [www. reverb.progressivetech.org](http://www.reverb.progressivetech.org). Accessed 20 January 2009).

Obama's use of mobile phone technology proved an unprecedented success in terms of expanding mailing lists, addresses, publicizing information to supporters, and activating grassroots volunteers. During the 2008 campaign trail Goodstein himself sent at least 12 texts to supporters asking them to provide names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for the campaign – for example a text sent on 23 July 2007 read: "Watch Barack debate tonight live on CNN! 7pm EDT. REPLY back with your name and your thoughts during & after the debate,". On 11 September 2007, a text read: "Please REPLY to this message with your five-digit zip code to receive local Obama campaign news and periodic updates" (Ibid.).

Goodstein says that "South Carolina was a defining moment in what we were going to do with text messaging -- not just with young voters but with all voters" (Ibid.). During a speech in early November 2007, minutes before Oprah Winfrey and Obama addressed a crowd of around 29,000 supporters in Columbia, S.C., supporters were asked to take out their cell phones and text "SC" to 62262, Obama's short code (Ibid.). The objective was simply to enter thousands of mobile phone numbers into the campaign team's records for use at a later date. Vargas (2008a) explains that "in the following weeks, Goodstein sent

texts to the numbers he'd collected and asked supporters to make phone calls, volunteer in precincts and vote on January 26 in South Carolina. Obama won that state by 28 points". Text messaging also enabled Obama's team to answer important questions from supporters – for example, about where polling booths were located or when and where particular rallies were being held.

In a much reported manoeuvre, Obama announced his Vice Presidential pick via text message directly to supporters. Thomas (2008) highlights that this "wasn't just a trick to do something flashy with technology and attract media attention. The point was to collect voters' cell-phone numbers for later contact during voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts. Thanks to the promotion, the campaign's list of cell-phone numbers increased several-fold to more than 1 million". Obama's text messaging programme is a true depiction of innovative campaigning, unlocking the political power of cellular phone technology to unprecedented degrees. It is more than likely that this will become a common feature of U.S Presidential campaigns in future.

### *Merchandising*

Unlike his opponent, Obama's website prominently displays literally dozens of Obama branded trinkets - including T-shirts, flasks, stickers, hats, buttons, and tops - that can be purchased on an online 'Obama store' ([www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com) Accessed 1February 2009). Further, the branding is available in different languages including Spanish and Hebrew, and the store also features men's, women's and children's collections (Please refer to appendices 17 and 18 for details of this). There is even a special collector's line of women's T-shirt called 'Runway To Change' designed by the world famous singer Beyonce Knowles, that cost around \$60 each (instead of the usual \$25). These limited

edition T-shirts feature catchy slogans such as 'dare to dream' that play on some of campaign's themes. In addition there is a section of the online store called 'Artists for Obama' which sells dozens of posters featuring creative images of Obama designed by myriad artists. All of these posters are sold out at present ([www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com) Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2008). This level of sophistication for politically branded merchandise is rare.

At pivotal moments throughout his campaign, such as his inauguration and during ballot casting, Obama branded merchandise of all shapes and sizes could be found in shops and street stands of right across the country. Since his Presidential election this trend has accelerated, with Obama's face featuring prominently across the length and breadth of the United States. There is now a wealth of street art, graffiti, posters, clothes, badges, stickers, key rings, cups, saucers, and even tattoos stamped with visuals of Obama. Some of this represents formally branded merchandise produced by *Obama for America*, and some represents cultural expression or sales gimmicks. Obama is very much in fashion, and the merchandising strategy of his campaign is blending with popular culture and lifting him to the iconic status more typical in regions that have long histories of deifying their leaders, such as parts of Latin America or Asia.

As with all aspects of the campaign, merchandising was integrated into a holistic strategy for action oriented data gathering that would make use of all available technology to propagate this candidate's cause. Halperin (2008) explains that "merchandising became an organising tool when customers were required to supply their contact details before they bought. That information enabled the campaign to stay in touch with potential voters by e-mail, telephone and direct mail. Beyond that, it was used to solicit more contributions, organize volunteers, keep supporters informed about the latest campaign news and, above all, make sure they turned out to vote".

## *E-mailing*

Obama's e-mail list contains upwards of 13 million addresses, a huge increase on his predecessor senator John Kerry, who had just 3 million addresses four years ago (Vargas, 2008b). Further, "over the course of the campaign, aides sent more than 7,000 different messages, many of them targeted to specific donation levels (people who gave less than \$200, for example, or those who gave more than \$1,000). In total, more than 1 billion e-mails landed in inboxes" (Ibid.).

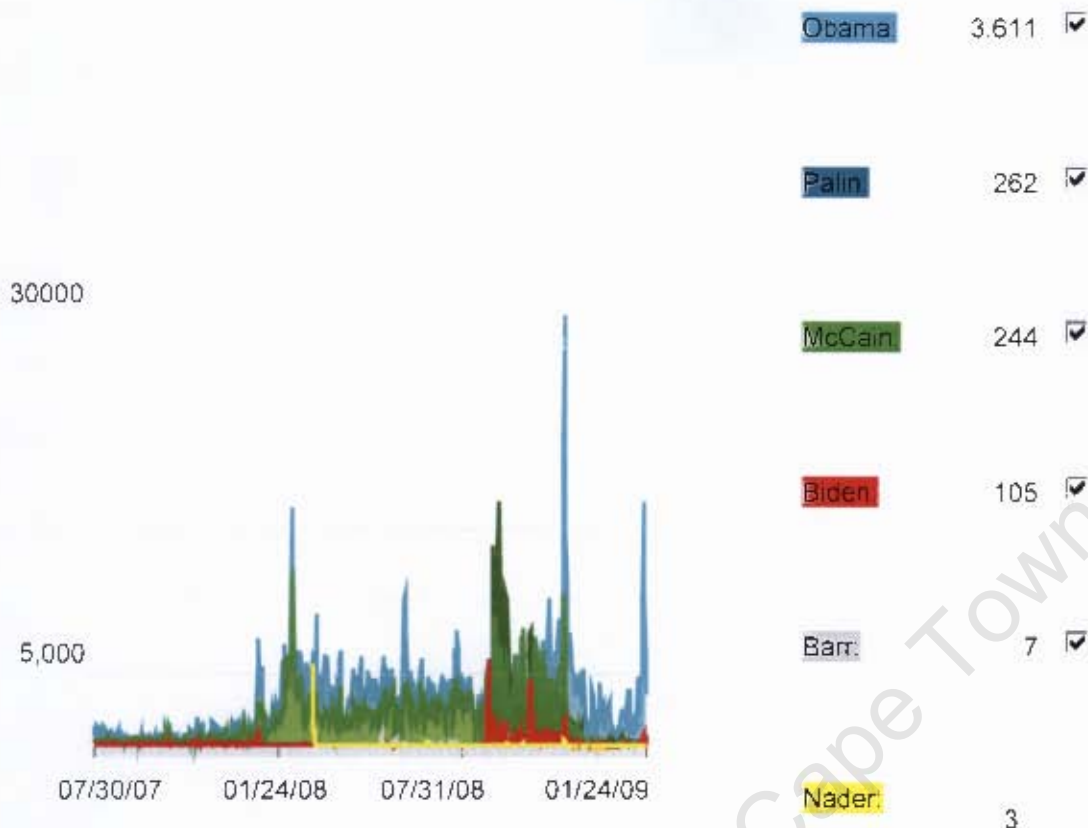
These e-mails were a key part of Obama's online fundraising strategy, as suggested by the content analysis in which just 3 e-mails contained over 40 words or phrases with specific fundraising intentions. As highlighted in section 1, it was the *creation* of the mailing list, rather than the content of the mails, that was the key to this strategy's success. In order to build such an extensive mailing list Obama's team synergised various innovative methods under a common goal. E-mail addresses were collected at every opportunity using every available gadget. Anyone wishing to buy official Obama merchandise from the campaign team had to provide an e-mail address. Likewise, people who signed up for Obama's text messaging programme, were asked to provide e-mail addresses, as of course, was anyone seeking to create an account on his social networking site, or to donate money online. In addition, Obama's extensive presence on myriad social networking sites, created a formidable platform through which to collect e-mails. Moreover, as his army of grassroots volunteers grew on his own socnet site he was able to use *them* to gather e-mails to add to his list (in exchange for more points on their 'make a difference' ranking).

There is nothing new about e-mailing supporters to request funds, but Obama took this strategy to unprecedented levels by creating the mother of all mailing lists – representing 13 million people who could be tapped repeatedly for small donations, which ended up

totalling over \$120 million. The dynamic web of inter-linking strategies used to create this list is an example of trail blazing innovation within the field of political campaigning – as inventive as anything we have witnessed in recent history.

### *Blogosphere*

The graph overleaf compares how often the Democratic and Republican candidates for president and vice president, plus the three main third party candidates, are mentioned by name in the blogosphere, tracked daily. The dominating swathes of blue indicate that Obama far outweighed any of his contemporaries or rivals in terms of internet chatter he generated over 2008. The massive peak in January reflects frenzied chatter over his Presidential inauguration. Being the most talked about candidate is not by definition always a good thing as the chat can be both positive and negative. What it does show, however, is that Obama was the candidate generating the most interest and speculation online – and it is reasonable to assume that at least part of this resulted from a cutting edge online marketing strategy that made effective use out of key aspects of the blogosphere – most notably social networking sites, also known as ‘socnets’.



**Figure 4.2** Candidates in the Blogosphere  
 Available: [www.techpresident.com](http://www.techpresident.com). Accessed 21.1.09

### Social Networking sites

A new vocabulary is emerging to chronicle Obama's New Media operation. This includes terms such as 'Obama 2.0', which describes the transition of *Obama for America* from a campaigning organisation to one that is now in power, as well as anagrams such as 'OPO's' (online political operatives), and 'triple O' (Obama's Online Organisers). Vargas states that "If Triple O had a motto, it would be: "Meet the voters where they're at." (Vargas 2008a). Obama's presence within a vast variety of social networking sites was a key aspect of this strategy. As Melber (2008) highlights "Obama ultimately built a large, interlocking network of supporters across several sites, from *Facebook* and *BlackPlanet* to the official pages at *MyBo*".

Obama was the first candidate to have profiles on *AsianAve.com*, *MiGente.com* and *BlackPlanet.com*, social networking sites targeting the Asian, Latino and black communities (Ibid.). Further “His presence on *BlackPlanet*, which ranks behind *MySpace* and *Facebook* in terms of traffic, is so deep that he maintains 50 profiles, one for each state. On ALforObama, his Alabama page on BlackPlanet, for example, supporters can read an updated blog, watch *YouTube* videos and learn more about his text program” (Ibid.).

Obama has over 5 million supporters on social networking sites, maintaining a strong presence in over 15 online communities (Available: <http://www.reverb.progressivetech.org/?p=345>. Accessed 21 January 2009). Further, “On *Facebook*, where about 3.2 million signed up as his supporters, a group called *Students for Barack Obama* was created in July 2007. It was so effective at energizing college-age voters that senior aides made it an official part of the campaign the following spring” (Ibid.). The table below displays the staggering extent to which Obama completely outstripped his opponent in terms of his virtual presence on social networking sites.

Social Media Website	Barack Obama	John McCain	%	Lead
Facebook searches	567,000	18,700	2932	Obama
Facebook Supporters*	2,444,384	627,459	290	Obama
Facebook Wall Posts*	495,320	132,802	273	Obama
Facebook Notes*	1,669	125	1235	Obama
MySpace searches	859,000	319,000	169	Obama
MySpace Friends*	844,781	219,463	285	Obama
MySpace Comments*	147,630	none	147,630	Obama
Twitter searches	506,000	44,800	1029	Obama
Twitter Followers*	115,623	4911	2254	Obama
Twitter Updates*	262	25	948	Obama
Friend Feed	34,300	27,400	25	Obama
Youtube Videos Posted*	1,819	330	451	Obama
Youtube Subscribers*	117,873	29,202	304	Obama
Youtube Friends*	25,226	none listed	25,226	Obama
Wordpress.com	19,692	14,468	36	Obama
Flickr	73,076	15,168	382	Obama
Flickr Photostream*	50,218	No Profile	50,218	Obama
Flickr Contacts*	7,148	No Profile	7,148	Obama

**Figure 4.3** Barack Obama's presence on social network sites

Available: <http://adultaddstrengths.com/2008/11/05/obama-vs-McCain-social-media>. Accessed 20 January 2009. Accessed 21 January 2009

This table looks at several measures of online presence within seven popular interactive sites: *Flickr*, *Wordpress*, *YouTube*, *Friend Feed*, *Twitter*, *MySpace*, and *Facebook*. On every single measure Obama completely demolishes McCain. On *Facebook* and *MySpace* for instance, Obama has nearly three times as many supporters as McCain. Obama's *YouTube* friends number 25226 to McCain's zero. The list goes on in a similar vein for each and every measure.

In addition to a massive presence on external networking sites Obama also created his very own one – *my.barackobamaobama.com*. "It's sort of *MeetUp* meets *Facebook* meets *MySpace* in one area" says grassroots supporter (Lai Stirland 2008). Below is a copy of

what the first page looks like. The giant '1/10' reflects the ranking that my fictional character received for 'Making a Difference'. The table beneath shows why I hold this dismal ranking, illustrating exactly how many events I have hosted and attended, how many doors I have knocked on, the number of blog posts I have made within the Obama socket, the amount of Obama related groups I have joined and (crucially) how much money I have raised for Obama.

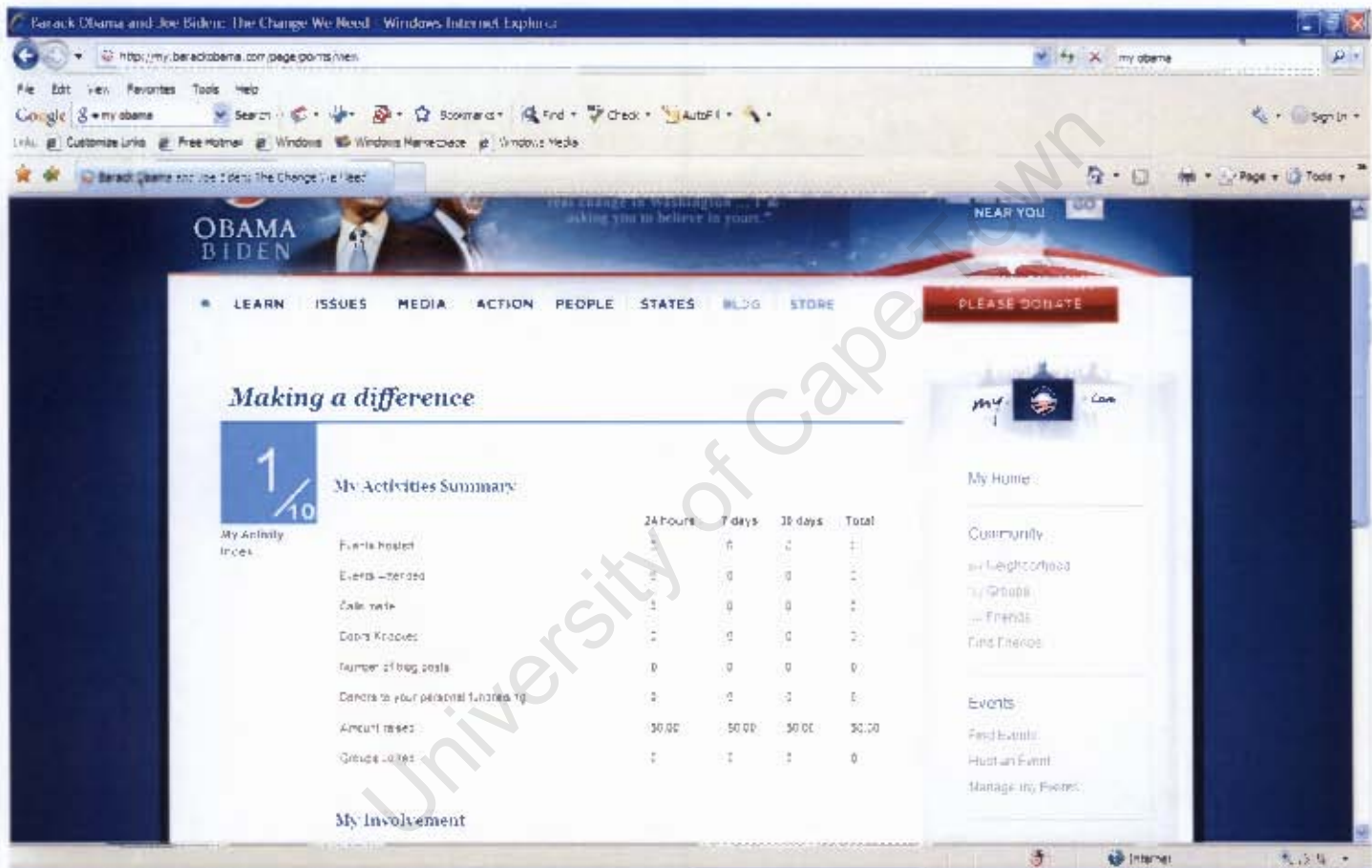


Figure 4.4 Barack Obama's website  
Available: [my.barackobama.com](http://my.barackobama.com). Accessed 21 January 2009.

In addition to a clear visual record of how much 'change' you have affected (or in this case *failed* to affect), this site boasts a wide range of user friendly tools to help grassroots volunteers organize on behalf of Obama. For example, clicking on the events link on the right hand column opens up a form guiding you through a step by step process of how to organize an event for Obama. Filling out the form (which is very quick) automatically generates a nice looking invitation to all the friends in your virtual address book asking them

to attend the event. Similarly, there is a fundraising link, which takes you to a user friendly step by step fundraising kit. Here you set your own fundraising targets (step 1), and then send an automatically generated invite to all your virtual friends, which asks them to help you meet your target by donating to Obama's campaign (step 2). The site then allows you to track donations in real time as they come in, and increases your score on the 'make a difference' ranking automatically as this happens. Similar tools exist for canvassing voters, organising meetings, spreading messages, and signing others up to the site. All the while the user friendly software guides you through the process, generating lovely looking invitations, which look like they have been made by you, and make you feel clever and capable.

The results of this tool are stunning. No less that 2 million profiles were created on mybarackobama.com (Available: <http://www.reverb.progressivetech.org/?p=345>. Accessed 20 January 2009). Furthermore, during the campaign cycle, 200,000 offline events were planned, about 400,000 blog posts were written and more than 35,000 volunteer groups were created (Ibid.). In addition "Some 3 million calls were made in the final four days of the campaign using MyBO's virtual phone-banking platform. On their own MyBO fundraising pages, 70,000 people raised \$30 million. The campaign even set up a grassroots finance committee that was inspired by the national finance committee's high-dollar bundlers" (Ibid.). In all Obama is estimated to have recruited over 1.5 million volunteers (Berman 2008). ABC News political correspondent Rick Klein states that "no president in history has ever had anything close to this" (Ibid.).

These statistics are record breaking, and Obama's New Media Department was one of the key driving forces behind them. His social networking site is just the kind of innovative tool that is redefining political campaigning. Its huge success in activating and empowering volunteers to gather votes, publicity, money and coverage for Obama leaves us in

absolutely no doubt that McCain placed himself at a huge disadvantage by not creating something similar. This mistake is unlikely to be repeated ever again in any US Presidential race. Obama has brought political campaigning into the information age by using software like this and showing to the world just how effective it can be in recruiting and empowering volunteers. It is more than likely that this kind of candidate centred networking site will become an indispensable aspect of all Presidential campaigns in the US and beyond in the coming years - much like 'normal' websites are today. It is also likely that we will see similar tools emerging more broadly within NGO's and businesses as a way of engaging supporters and customers.

The unprecedented scale of Obama's social networking programme is truly revolutionary. Obama hired the co-founder of *Facebook*, 24 year old Chris Hughes, to run this side of his campaign and the results were extra-ordinary. It has already been shown that Obama was able to engage record numbers of volunteers, donors, and voters with this strategy. It also provided a fantastic mechanism for engaging groundbreaking numbers young people in his campaign. Statistics show that record numbers of youths came out in support of Obama in the 2008 election - about 22 to 24 million young Americans went to the polls, up by at least 2.2 million from 2004 (Available: <http://www.civicyouth.org/?p=322> Accessed 17 January 2009). Further, 18% of all voters were young and they favoured Obama over McCain by a ratio of 66% to 32% (Ibid.). A demographic that was previously seen to be relatively apathetic suddenly began organising political fundraising events en mass, canvassing peers and friends in their neighbourhoods and schools, and voting in record numbers. (Available: <http://www.reverb.progressivetech.org/?cat=10>. Accessed 20 January 2009). The online think tank 'CIVIC' explains that "young voters favoured the winner of this election by more than a two-to-one margin, forming a major part of the winning coalition. This gap in Presidential choice by age is unprecedented. The average

gap from 1976 through 2004 was only 1.8 percentage points, as young voters basically supported the same candidate as older voters in most elections” (Ibid).

A recent study on the online behaviour of youths entitled *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media* (Bittanti 2008), shows that “the ‘serious’ stuff adults hope kids will do online (researching papers and so on) are only possible within a framework of “hanging out, messing around and geeking out”. Thus, “all the ‘time-wasting’ social stuff kids do online is key to their explorations and education online” (Ibid.). Furthermore, we are told that “kids can be ‘hanging out’ online, always in constant contact with their friends through private communications like instant messaging or mobile phones, as well as in public ways through social network sites such as *MySpace* and *Facebook*” (Ibid.). This indicates that firstly, social networking sites are a key aspect of youth culture online (because they are an important way of ‘hanging out’), and secondly, that they can provide a context for more serious learning. The implications of this are that social networking sites are indeed a fantastic way for the right kind of candidate with the right type of branding and message to engage young people in their campaign – and Obama showed this to be absolutely the case. He used social networking sites to take his campaign to where the youth already were, leveraging the power of the internet to engage an entire demographic of the population with his campaign – and energizing it with the vibrancy that only the young can bring. This revolutionised the art of campaigning by highlighting just how important social networking sites are in attracting the youth vote, and also changed the US political landscape by bringing record numbers of young people into the political process.

## *Fundraising*

After winning the Democratic nomination, “Obama declined public financing and the spending limits that came with it, making him the first major-party candidate since the system was created to reject taxpayers' money for the general election”. (Available: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org). Accessed 18 January 2009). He went on to raise an unprecedented \$750 million, smashing all previous campaign fundraising records (Ibid). Vargas (2008b) explains that over two thirds of this was raised online: “Barack Obama raised half a billion dollars online in his 21-month campaign for the White House, dramatically ushering in a new digital era in presidential fundraising”. In order to raise this sum “3 million donors made a total of 6.5 million donations online adding up to more than \$500 million. Of those 6.5 million donations, 6 million were in increments of \$100 or less. The average online donation was \$80 and the average Obama donor gave more than once” (Ibid.). As one journalist explains: “Obama didn't merely shatter all previous records. He made them irrelevant. In 2000, John McCain sent ripples through the political world by raising around \$6 million on the Web. Four years later, Howard Dean was considered a high-tech revolutionary when he took in \$27 million in e-bucks, while John Kerry raised an impressive \$84 million. Remember, those figures are for entire election cycles; in one good month, Obama topped them all combined” (Halperin 2008).

Of the \$750 million Obama raised over \$656 million came from individual donations, \$1580 came from PAC contributions, and just over \$85 million was classified as ‘other’ (Available: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org). Accessed 18 January 2009). Obama likes to give the impression that the majority of the money he raised came from small donations made by ordinary citizens. A repetitive theme throughout his campaign was that he had ‘turned down’ money from lobbyists because his campaign had been funded by ordinary hard working Americans. This could lead one to imagine that the success of Obama's e-fundraising

strategy has revolutionised political campaigning by democratising campaign finance and smashing the power of corporate lobbyists.

The truth is far murkier. Obama, by unlocking the fundraising power of the internet to unprecedented degrees, *has* revolutionised campaign finance and created the *potential* for democratizing it. However, he has not smashed the power of corporate lobbyists because he took tens of millions of dollars from them himself. As Vargas (2008b) explains, “Obama also raised millions from traditional campaign bundlers -- rich, well-connected fundraisers” Further, although the bulk of the money was raised online “some of those bundlers, of course, also arranged for donations to be made online, so there is some overlap”.

*Opensecrets.org* highlights that “since the start of 2007, his campaign relied on bigger donors and smaller donors nearly equally, pulling in successive donations mostly over the Internet” (Ibid. Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2008). Thus, not all (or even a clear majority) of online donations were classified as small donations. There is also a further \$250 million raised offline to account for, much of which came from large corporations – including commercial banks, law firms, and other businesses. This is something you will *not* find in Obama’s speeches or in any of his blogs or web pages. There is a complete white wash by Obama and his aides on this topic, but it is a fact nonetheless, and it potentially undermines the sincerity of his rhetoric. The table overleaf highlights the campaign contributions received by Obama from special interest groups.

Rank	Industry	Total
1	Retired	\$45,422,248
2	Lawyers/Law Firms	\$42,336,367
3	Education	\$22,600,433
4	Misc Business	\$16,019,578
5	Securities & Investment	\$14,039,592
6	Health Professionals	\$11,457,850
7	Business Services	\$11,254,369
8	Real Estate	\$10,235,978
9	Civil Servants/Public Officials	\$8,340,052
10	Computers/Internet	\$8,287,761
11	TV/Movies/Music	\$8,245,151
12	Printing & Publishing	\$6,131,138
13	Misc Finance	\$5,605,525
14	Democratic/Liberal	\$5,562,367
15	Other	\$3,791,347
16	Hospitals/Nursing Homes	\$3,241,944
17	Commercial Banks	\$3,199,207
18	Non-Profit Institutions	\$2,894,069
19	Construction Services	\$2,766,207
20	Insurance	\$2,185,727

**Figure 4.5** Campaign contributions for Barack Obama during 2008 election cycle  
 Available: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org). Accessed 18 January 2009

As we can see, Obama accepted (amongst other donations): over \$11 million from 'business services', over \$20 million from the even murkier category of 'miscellaneous businesses', over \$3 million from commercial banks, over \$8million from public officials,

over \$14 million from securities and investment companies, and over \$40 million from law firms. It is interesting to see a seeming absence of agri-business, energy sector, tobacco firms, and military contractors in there, which suggests he may have more scruples than his Republican counter-parts in terms of who he accepts checks from. However, it is possible that some donations from these sectors were hidden under the category of 'miscellaneous businesses'. Further, having more scruples than his Republican counterparts is not saying much. Bush was seen as one of the most corrupted and 'purchased' Presidents in US history, accepting 10's of millions from the energy sector, the Christian Right, and military contractors.

Obama made a giant leap forwards in terms of his fundraising methods and this is something that will impact broadly upon how future campaigns are financed. However, in terms of smashing the power of lobbyists he has taken one step in the right direction that will not be consolidated unless and until new laws are enacted. The internet will not significantly reduce the power of lobbyists whilst politicians are allowed to censure *themselves* in terms of who gives them money. What is needed is a regulatory system that places legal caps on campaign finance from lobbyists. Until this is in place candidates will simply use the internet to top up existing donations – making campaigns richer and more powerful than ever before, without decisively breaking the power of corporate PACs and lobbyists. Obama has stated that he would reform campaign finance laws and now has a chance to make good on his promise. The extent to which this is achieved will be one clear marker as to whether he is able to translate rhetoric into reality.

## *Grassroots volunteers*

It has already been shown that Obama used technology to recruit an unprecedented 1.5 million grassroots volunteers, dubbed in the US media as 'Obama's army'. If votes and money were the two key things Obama was asking of his supporters, time and energy were probably the third and fourth. His team solicited volunteers through every available medium using text messages, voice mail, telephone conversations, e-mails, blogs, adverts, video messaging, and good old face to face canvassing. Further, once those volunteers were recruited they were given tools to help them go out and solicit votes, money, and other volunteers, using the medium(s) of their choosing.

Lai Stirland (2008) describes the "massive grass-roots get-out-the vote effort undertaken by the Obama campaign in the potentially decisive states of Ohio and Texas". Further she explains that "at the centre of it all is a hub of online networking tools enabling a wide spectrum of volunteers all over the country to get together in self-organized groups to help their candidate" (Ibid.). As one activist highlights "There really was no infrastructure, and now it's all over the place -- within three weeks we have this million- person door-knocking campaign" (Ibid.). Another supporter - Ian Davis from Texas - explains that "this technology encourages offline organising, and it's a means for community members to network, and to do all of the old-fashioned organising that we would never otherwise have had the time or resources to manage"(Ibid.). In a typical example, Davis organised a 'debate-watching party' at a pub in his home town, advertising it using the toolkit on Obama's social networking site - an estimated 1,000 people showed up and he and his fellow volunteers used the event to sign up attendees for get-out-the vote tasks, like door-knocking, block walking and waving campaign signs on street corners (Ibid.).

On Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 2009 Obama announced on his *YouTube* channel the creation of a new organisation called 'Organising for America', which he went on to describe as "the organisation that will build on the movement that you started on the campaign". He went on to say that "volunteers, grassroots leaders and ordinary citizens will continue to drive this organisation, helping us bring about the changes we proposed during the campaign" (Available: <http://www.youtube.com/user/BarackObamadotcom>. 20 January 2009). This is a clever way for 'Obama 2.0' to maintain the involvement and support of these volunteers to support the new President. As Cillizza (2009) states "it's clear that Obama recognises the power that his e-mail list, which boasts more than 13 million names, represents in American politics and is working to ensure it stays within the control of a small group who are charged with protecting the Obama brand".

The recruitment and empowerment of grassroots activists through the internet was an unprecedented success and yet another example of how technological innovation and social messaging fused to produce a re-inventive campaign tactic. Obama was very clear about what he wanted his supporters to do and about the methods he was offering them to do it, calling on people "to organize your friends, your neighbours and your networks" (Ibid.). They responded in their millions and the impact of this is likely to reverberate throughout the field of political campaigning for decades.

### *Synergising and interlocking campaign strategies*

Obama's campaign team used technology and common sense to synergise multiple tactics into a co-ordinated whole. This is something that has always happened within campaigns because the things they seek - coverage, money, votes, endorsements, volunteers, and partnerships - overlap, and the nature of a campaign focuses disparate

tactics behind the incredibly clear, neatly time bound, and simple goal of winning an election. However, Obama's team used logic and technological wizardry to take this process to new heights. In this sense it was very much aligned to key political, economic, and scientific trends developing in our increasingly globalised world. The world has been getting smaller and more inter-linked since the 1980's as nations and regions fuse their economic, financial, and in many cases political systems to unprecedented degrees. The spread of information technology has compressed space and time close to zero, annihilating geographic barriers, and facilitating planetary flows of capital and information that traverse continents and seas instantaneously. The tendency within this process is one of synergy and integration – and this is something that is fuelled by science and reflected within it. In particular, there is a trend now for the production of portable and computerized multi-media gadgets designed for personal use. The blackberry and I-phone are key examples of this – small, light, user friendly devices, that can do many things at once, serving as an address book, music library, personal computer, telephone, camera, and video player rolled into one.

Obama's campaign embedded this strategy of systems integration and technological fusion at its core, producing spell binding results. What is clear is that the text messaging, video messaging, social networking, e-mail fundraising, and merchandising strategies were all entirely interlinked. The key strategy was to expand contacts data-bases at every opportunity, and to use every available means to categorise people into groups that could be easily targeted by State, interests, and political leaning. For instance, supporters texting their name to 62022 would usually get a call asking them to volunteer, as well as asking for their email address so they could be tapped for funds at a later date. Similarly, anyone seeking to make a donation, buy a piece of merchandise, or sign up to any of Obama's social networking pages or sites is asked to provide their email address and telephone number. Further, anyone signing up to myobama.com will get access to a host of tools

designed to help supporters gather e-mail addresses and contact details from friends that can be passed on to Obama's team, whilst they track everyone's activities in real time. *Obama for America* can be classified as a deeply integrated multi-media organisation. By synergising and inter-locking technology and strategies to unprecedented degrees, they have created a dynamic digital platform to facilitate the collection of votes, money, and grassroots volunteers that far outstripped anything ever witnessed in any political campaign. The result was a positive digital feedback loop of contact details, virtual support networks, and online activists, which snowballed into one the biggest and decentralised grassroots fundraising and campaigning movements in US political history and left the Republicans looking like cavemen. New websites are now emerging with names like *techrepublican.com* describing their mission of "identifying Republicans and conservatives throughout the world who are using the Internet to bridge that great partisan digital divide" (Available: [www.techrepublican.com](http://www.techrepublican.com). Accessed 20 January 2009). It is very likely that we will begin to see a flurry of qualifications, courses, conferences and literature related to how politicians and NGO's can harness the power of the internet to spread messages, raise money, and recruit volunteers. Just as Mark Hanna brought the art of political campaigning into the Industrial era in the late 1800's, Obama has brought it into the information age in 2008. This will always be seen as a pivotal campaign in political history, and certainly in the US, it seems more than likely that we can now talk about a 'post-Obama' era in political campaigning.

### *Summary of virtual ethnography*

It has been argued in Part 1 of this section that while Obama's message seemed more positive than that of McCain, the most interesting feature of his message was the emphasis on placing his supporters at centre of his campaign. At each opportunity we

heard (and still hear) Obama emphasizing the power of ordinary citizens to make a difference – not just by casting a ballot – but by actively organising themselves and their colleagues, family members, neighbours and peers. The virtual ethnography has shown that this rhetoric has been backed by a host of user friendly tools spanning several mediums designed to empower grassroots volunteers to actively organize on behalf of Obama. Further, in many cases this has enabled people to campaign online from the comfort of their living rooms. New candidate centred software has been designed to harness the power of mass consumption gadgets (such as blackberries, I-phones, and PC's) within a holistic strategy that sought mutually reinforcing goals – chiefly, the garnering of votes, money and volunteers. From video messaging, online merchandising, digital advertising, and internet phone calls, to text messaging, e-mails, and social networking sites, Obama's new media team left no stone unturned in their quest to expand their data-bases and provide people with simple user friendly tools designed to activate them politically. The result has been a new media programme that leveraged the power of information technology to unprecedented degrees, generating more money than any other candidate on record, and record numbers of grassroots volunteers. We have witnessed new software programmes and new methods of synchronizing technology, accompanied by a message of empowerment that cleverly positioned Obama as the *co-ordinator* (rather than 'almighty leader') of what was portrayed as a bottom up grassroots movement for change. By creating a nationwide web of digitally empowered activists, millions strong, Obama was able to position himself at the centre of a broad based political movement that had a grass roots and participatory feel. The repeated emphasis of phrases like 'you can', 'we can', 'your movement' and 'your victory' shows how important it is for him to maintain this perception of being *within* rather than 'on top' of the movement, because this is the soul of the message and the brand of change which he has marketed to America and to the world. Technological innovation chimed with Obama's messaging and reinforced it – branding him as a hip and modern candidate, and providing practical tools to help

energise his campaign, raise money, mobilize youth, and fuel a grassroots army of active supporters. The results are unlike anything ever seen in any political campaign – and the testimony to this is the array of record breaking statistics generated. In terms of technological innovation, energising youth, recruiting volunteers, and fundraising this campaign was quite simply off the charts. If this is not a revolutionary and re-inventive campaign then nothing is.

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## Chapter 5: Conclusion

It has been argued here that a revolutionary campaign would either call for a redefining of the framework put forward in Chapter 2 and/or show marked similarities with other historic campaigns, including for example, novel uses of technology or new communications and fundraising strategies. The initial framework seems more or less intact. Obama's campaign can still be seen through the lens of a candidate reaching out to five key markets in search of votes, money, endorsements, partnerships, and coverage. What has happened is that boundaries between some of those markets have been blurred to greater degrees than ever before – in particular that between voters and funders. Further, perhaps most importantly, a wealth of evidence has been produced to show that Obama's campaign did employ new fundraising and communications strategies, and that it did use technology in groundbreaking new ways. This suggests, very powerfully, that Obama has revolutionised political campaigning. The evidence in favour of this argument is so strong that it is difficult to come to any other conclusion.

The genius of the campaign was that it turned Obama's greatest potential weakness into an awesome strength. A black candidate with a Kenyan father who grew up in Hawaii, with a last name that rhymes with 'Osama', and the middle name 'Hussein', seemed a very unlikely prospect for President. However, by making 'change' the focal point of the campaign – his team turned weakness into strength. His unusual background and story and his race *helped* market him as the voice of change. He looked different, he sounded different, and his campaign was different. By using such obviously innovative tactics, the campaign was able to reinforce this message that Obama was summoning a wind of

change that could sweep America out of the cultural, political, and economic hole in which it found itself. Information technology was harnessed as a formidable tool to gather and store data, organise and empower volunteers, and communicate with new groups of people in new ways. However, it was also a clever form of branding – helping give the campaign an image of being modern, hip, and in touch with young people. In this sense it complemented the campaign communications strategy, and this is where we see a clever synergy occurring between speech writers, and technological ‘geeks’. The results of this led to records being smashed in terms of voter turnout, youth engagement, fundraising, and the mobilisation of volunteers.

One could argue that Obama was propelled to power by historic forces rather than by innovative campaigning. George Bush’s approval ratings were the lowest of any U.S. President in living memory, and the economic crisis that hit the world in 2008 served Obama more than it did McCain. However, as stated in Chapter 2 the relationship between history and political campaigns is dynamic. Campaigns influence history even as they are influenced by it. Political genius is about having one’s finger on the pulse of history and seizing one’s moment within it. Further, this campaign made history on *several* levels, independently of the victory it helped facilitate. Even if Obama had *lost* the election his campaign would still have been revolutionary. That history has been made and that campaigns will be different in future is undeniable.

Thus, in terms of practice *and* theory, we can legitimately speak of a new ‘post Obama’ era in political campaigning. This begs the question as to what impact this might have on politics in the US and beyond, more generally? Certainly it is likely that future campaigns will place a much stronger emphasis on information technology. Further, we are likely to see an increase in the prevalence and number of organisations such as *Blue State Digital*, that specialise in political, candidate centric software and online strategies. In addition, we

can speak of a likely increase in the political use of text messaging, video messaging, online advertising, and online networking through external 'social' sites. Moreover, more and more candidates around the world are likely to have their own social sites in future. Some analysts conclude that all this may offer more opportunities for politicians to listen to citizens, and Obama is keen to play to this perception. Amongst other things, he has created a new cabinet level position in the form of a 'Chief technology Officer', part of whose role is ensure that "we use all available technologies and methods to open up the federal government, creating a new level of transparency to change the way business is conducted in Washington and giving Americans the chance to participate in government deliberations and decision-making in ways that were not possible only a few years ago" (Available: <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/technology/>. Accessed 28 January 2009).

Core elements of Obama's technology strategy include:

1. Ensure an open Internet.
2. Create a transparent and accountable democracy.
3. Encourage a modern communications infrastructure.
4. Prepare all of our children for a 21st century economy.
5. Improve America's competitiveness.
6. Employ science and technology to solve our nation's most pressing problems.

Figure 5 Barack Obama's technology strategy  
Available: <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/technology/>. Accessed 28 January 2009.

Obama has also announced the creation of a new organisation called 'organising for America' – designed to manage the huge grassroots volunteer programme that helped get him elected. Obama says that this is a way to keep Americans engaged in politics and to give them a political voice (Ibid.). The online social networking site will no doubt be a key tool in moving this process forwards. However, we have yet to see any concrete policy proposals for how these volunteers would be engaged with actual decision making processes (if at all) and whether they would have any power in terms of their 'voice'. Thus,

this could easily turn into a kind of fan club - where Obama supporters get together and continue to organise in his favour, without really contributing to policy formulation or debate in any meaningful way. Whether technology will be used to create a more participatory platform for democracy in the US or abroad is an open question at best. Certainly the technology exists to facilitate more interactive and direct contact between politicians and the citizenry. Moreover, we now have a sitting US President who created a formidable and highly interactive digital communications platform that hundreds of millions of Americans can access. This could open up opportunities for more consultation with the public and for the public to express their voice more directly to politicians. However, whilst the decision making structure remains centralised it is unlikely that we will see a genuine increase in public participation in actual policy making. After all, even if politicians listen, it does not mean that they will act on what they hear or that politics will become more of a two way process. It will be interesting to see whether Obama proposes any innovative new policies to increase public participation in democracy beyond just 'listening' – for example local decision making bodies at the level of neighbourhood and district that imply a genuine decentralisation of power. This is something that would chime very neatly with the themes of his campaign, and which could be greatly facilitated through technology. However, we have yet to see any radical new policy measures in this area, so there is reason for cynicism in terms of the extent to which this participatory agenda will really carry through.

One other aspect that deserves particular attention is campaign finance. Obama raised \$120 million through small donations of less than \$200 each. This makes ordinary voters major donors in a political campaign for the first time in US history. It is possible that Obama has scraped the tip of an ice – berg here that will radically redefine politics in the new millennium, and continue to liquefy that theoretical barrier between voters and donors. Chapter 4 highlights that the \$500 million Obama raised online came from 3 million

donors, with the average donation representing \$80 per person. Current U.S censures estimate the U.S population at just over 303 million (Available: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>. Accessed 28 January 2009), meaning that less than 1% of the population contributed to Obama's campaign. If a candidate could unleash \$80 contributions from even just 5 % of the population, this would imply ordinary citizens providing in excess of 1 billion dollars of campaign contributions for a single candidate. The impact of this could literally redefine the rules of the political game. In 2004, over \$2.1 billion was spent lobbying Congress (Obama 2006b). This is a huge sum and it is a disgrace. However, this represents the entire congress. If a single candidate could leverage in excess of 1 billion dollars from ordinary voters in one campaign cycle, they would have no need to go cap in hand to lobbyists requesting contributions. Of course they could get greedy and try to top up these astronomical donations with private sector contributions. However, if they felt that this would jeopardise donations from citizens then it would not make economic sense to do so. Further, the availability of this kind of cash pool would make it much easier for politicians to push through campaign finance reforms. If voters become the *main* contributors of political campaigns, then this could seriously diminish the political power of big business over the long term, halting and reversing the trend of rising private sector influence in government that has continued unabated in the US for at least the last 100 years.

Obama claims he has smashed the power of lobbyists already but this is an exaggeration. As shown in Chapter 4 his campaign accepted tens of millions of dollars from special interest groups, and campaign finance reform has not yet been enacted in law. However, the imagined scenario above of increasing voter dollars flooding campaign coffers, and diminishing political power of corporations is not inconceivable. We may have just seen, in Obama's campaign, the rapid speeding up of a new trend in politics. The spread of information technology continues apace, as does the increasing sophistication and

availability of cheap and easy to use software and wireless gadgets. Further, political expertise in leveraging this technology to turn voters into donors continues to develop in leaps and bounds. Obama has shown how far online political fundraising can come in just 1 election cycle – moving from \$43 million (raised online by John Kerry in 2004) to \$500 million dollars raised online by Obama in 2008. This is likely to concentrate political minds across the globe, and unleash unprecedented levels of focus, study, and attention on how to leverage the power of information technology for political use. Thus, one can reasonably predict that tectonic shifts are underway that will radically redefine the way that future campaigns will be waged, and potentially democratise campaign finance to unprecedented degrees. As stated in Chapter 4, this will only happen if politicians draft new legal caps to halt once and for all, campaign contributions from lobbyists and special interest groups. Obama has a chance to do this now and he has promised that he would. This will be one of the biggest tests as to whether the hope and change he sold to the electorate was real.

The fact remains however, that the political power of corporations is not yet diminishing because no new laws have been drafted and because Obama himself accepted tens of millions of dollars from lobbyists. It is easy to get over-excited about Obama. One could be tempted to make the jump from thinking that a revolutionary campaign equals a revolutionary President who will revolutionise politics in America. However, this is not necessarily the case. For instance, we need to bear in mind that he was not an independent or politically obscure candidate, but a well connected Senator from the Democratic Party. Thus the bi-partisan mould of U.S politics remains firmly intact. Obama likes to speak about his campaign as if it were hatched in the cornfields of Iowa, which is of course patent nonsense. For example, he frequently comes out with statements such as: “What began as a whisper in Springfield soon carried across the corn fields of Iowa...” (Obama 2008c). In truth, Obama would never have announced his bid for President if he

had not managed to win over wealthy and influential supporters within his own party and in the private sector beforehand. Even if voters continue funding campaigns en masse, this does not imply the destruction of the 'old boys' network that manages politics in Washington. History shows us that such elites are very resilient to change. There were also many aspects of this campaign that were not new at all – such as the important role that image played, as shown by the frequent appearances Obama his wife and children, and the photo shoots of him playing basketball.

Thus, it is important to realise that Obama is not necessarily revolutionising 'America' in the broader sense, and that many core aspects of the political communications arena remain in place. Campaigns are still a quest for power of the few over the many. Special interest groups still pour tens of millions of dollars into them. Money is still pivotal, as there are no proposed caps on TV ads, and no system for allocating air time fairly between candidates. The internet has created a direct line of communication between candidates and citizens, but large amounts of start up cash is still required to truly harness its fundraising and messaging power. Barack Obama was not some obscure independent candidate whose campaign rose up in a cornfield. He was a powerful senator of the mainstream Democratic Party. US politics is still locked into a bi-partisan system, and there is no significant change of personnel at the highest levels.

In sum, the art of campaigning has been utterly revolutionised and there are rays of hope in this – as shown by the record highs in terms of youth participation, voter turnout, voter fundraising, and grassroots volunteers. This presents opportunities for genuine change that could make politics more open, transparent and democratic. However, what we have witnessed is a revolution in campaigning and not a political revolution. Obama has yet to prove that he will be able to bring about the hope and change which he promised to his supporters.

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## Appendix 1: Barack Obama's speech #1

Ref: Remarks at the Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

Date: 1 July 2008

City: Zanesville, Ohio

Venue: East Side Community Ministry

Available online: [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/07/01/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obama\\_107.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/07/01/remarks_of_senator_barack_obama_107.php)

Accessed January 4 2009.



"You know, faith based groups like East Side Community Ministry carry a particular meaning for me. Because in a way, they're what led me into public service. It was a Catholic group called The Campaign for Human Development that helped fund the work I did many years ago in Chicago to help lift up neighborhoods that were devastated by the closure of a local steel plant.

Now, I didn't grow up in a particularly religious household. But my experience in Chicago showed me how faith and values could be an anchor in my life. And in time, I came to see my faith as being both a personal commitment to Christ and a commitment to my community; that while I could sit in church and pray all I want, I wouldn't be fulfilling God's will unless I went out and did the Lord's work.

There are millions of Americans who share a similar view of their faith, who feel they have an obligation to help others. And they're making a difference in communities all across this country – through initiatives like Ready4Work, which is helping ensure that ex-offenders don't return to a life of crime; or Catholic Charities, which is feeding the hungry and making sure we don't have homeless veterans sleeping on the streets of Chicago; or the good work that's being done by a coalition of religious groups to rebuild New Orleans.

You see, while these groups are often made up of folks who've come together around a common faith, they're usually working to help people of all faiths or of no faith at all. And they're particularly well-placed to offer help. As I've said many times, I believe that change comes not from the top down, but from the bottom-up, and few are closer to the people than our churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques.

That's why Washington needs to draw on them. The fact is, the challenges we face today – from saving our planet to ending poverty – are simply too big for government to solve alone. We need all hands on deck.

I'm not saying that faith-based groups are an alternative to government or secular nonprofits. And I'm not saying that they're somehow better at lifting people up. What I'm saying is that we all have to work together – Christian and Jew, Hindu and Muslim; believer and non-believer alike – to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Now, I know there are some who bristle at the notion that faith has a place in the public square. But the fact is, leaders in both parties have recognized the value of a partnership between the White House and faith-based groups. President Clinton signed legislation that opened the door for faith-based groups to play a role in a number of areas, including helping people move from welfare to work. Al Gore proposed a partnership between Washington and faith-based groups to provide more support for the least of these. And President Bush came into office with a promise to "rally the armies of compassion," establishing a new Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

But what we saw instead was that the Office never fulfilled its promise. Support for social services to the poor and the needy have been consistently underfunded. Rather than promoting the cause of all faith-based organizations, former officials in the Office have described how it was used to promote partisan interests. As a result, the smaller congregations and community groups that were supposed to be empowered ended up getting short-changed.

Well, I still believe it's a good idea to have a partnership between the White House and grassroots groups, both faith-based and secular. But it has to be a real partnership – not a photo-op. That's what it will be when I'm President. I'll establish a new Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The new name will reflect a new commitment. This Council will not just be another name on the White House organization chart – it will be a critical part of my administration.

Now, make no mistake, as someone who used to teach constitutional law, I believe deeply in the separation of church and state, but I don't believe this partnership will endanger that idea – so long as we follow a few basic principles. First, if you get a federal grant, you can't use that grant money to proselytize to the people you help and you can't discriminate against them – or against the people you hire – on the basis of their religion. Second, federal dollars that go directly to churches, temples, and mosques can only be used on secular programs. And we'll also ensure that taxpayer dollars only go to those programs that actually work.

With these principles as a guide, my Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships will strengthen faith-based groups by making sure they know the opportunities open to them to build on their good works. Too often, faith-based groups – especially smaller congregations and those that aren't well connected – don't know how to apply for federal dollars, or how to navigate a government website to see what grants are available, or how to comply with federal laws and regulations. We rely too much on conferences in Washington, instead of getting technical assistance to the people who need it on the ground. What this means is that what's stopping many faith-based groups from helping struggling families is simply a lack of knowledge about how the system works.

Well, that will change when I'm President. I will empower the nonprofit religious and community groups that do understand how this process works to train the thousands of groups that don't. We'll "train the trainers" by giving larger faith-based partners like Catholic Charities and Lutheran Services and secular nonprofits like Public/Private Ventures the support they need to help other groups build and run effective programs. Every house of worship that wants to run an effective program and that's willing to abide by our constitution – from the largest mega-churches and synagogues to the smallest store-front churches and mosques – can and will have access to the information and support they need to run that program.

This Council will also help target our efforts to meet key challenges like education. All across America, too many children simply can't read or perform math at their grade-level, a problem that grows worse for low-income students during the summer months and afterschool hours. Nonprofits like Children's Defense Fund are working to solve this problem. They hold summer and afterschool Freedom Schools in communities across this country, and many of their classes are held in churches.

There's a lot of evidence that these kinds of partnerships work. Take Youth Education for Tomorrow, an innovative program that's being run by churches, faith-based schools, and others in Philadelphia. To help narrow the summer learning gap, the YET program hires qualified teachers who help students with reading using proven learning techniques. They hold classes four days a week after school and during the summer. And they monitor progress closely. The results have been outstanding. Children who attended a YET center for at least six months improved nearly 2 years in reading ability. And the average high school student gained a full grade in reading level after just three months.

That's the kind of real progress that can be made when we empower faith-based organizations. And that's why as President, I'll expand summer programs like this to serve one million students. This won't just help our children learn, it will help keep them off the streets during the summer so they don't turn to crime.

And my Council for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships will also have a broader role – it will help set our national agenda. Because if we are going to do something about the injustice of millions of children living in extreme poverty, we need interfaith coalitions like the Let Justice Roll campaign standing up for the

powerless. If we're going to end genocide and stop the scourge of HIV/AIDS, we need people of faith on Capitol Hill talking about how these challenges don't just represent a security crisis or a humanitarian crisis, but a moral crisis as well.

We know that faith and values can be a source of strength in our own lives. That's what it's been to me. And that's what it is to so many Americans. But it can also be something more. It can be the foundation of a new project of American renewal. And that's the kind of effort I intend to lead as President of the United States".

University of Cape Town

## Appendix 2: Barack Obama's speech #2

Ref: Remarks at the AARP Life@50+ National Expo (American Association of Retired Persons)

Date: 6 September 2008

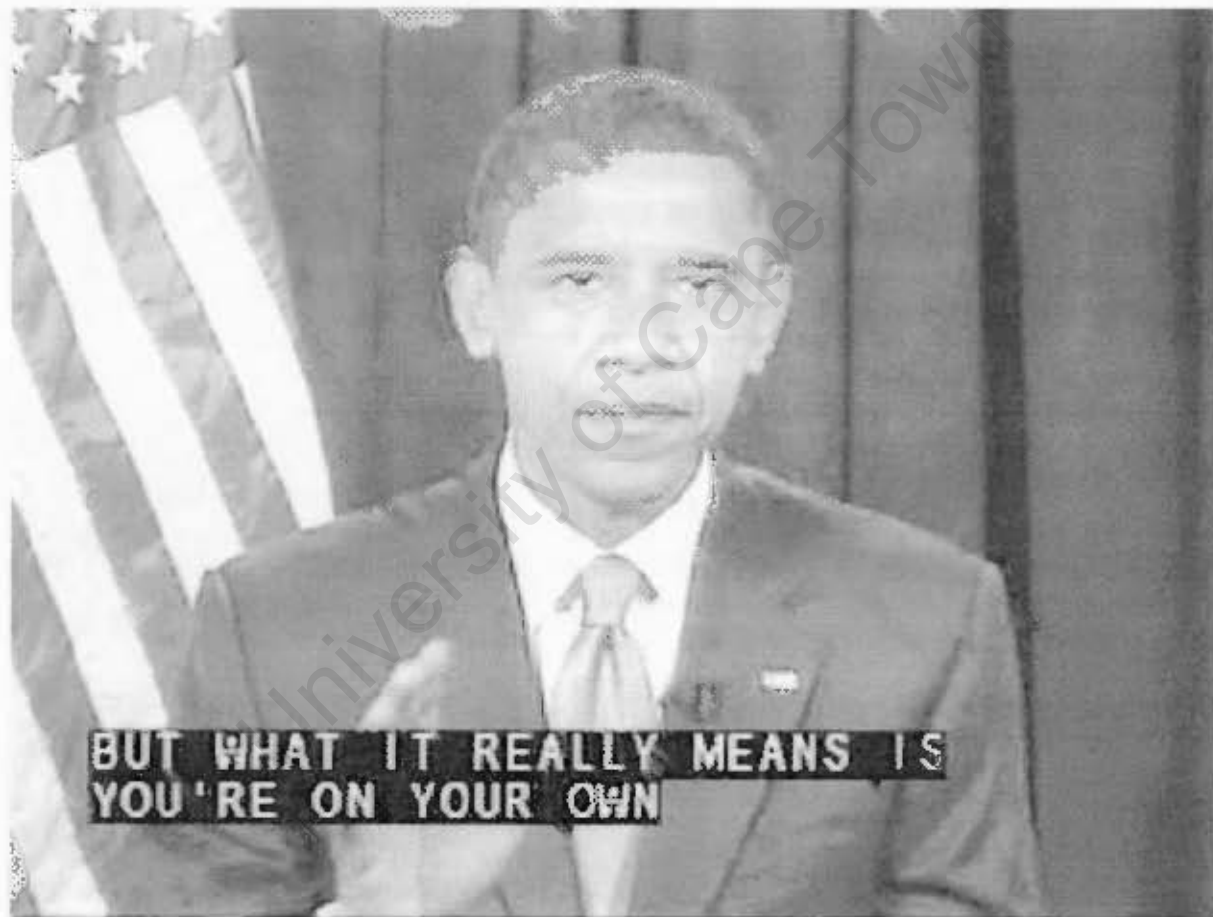
City: Washington D.C.

Venue: Live session via satellite

Available online: [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/09/06/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obama\\_70.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/09/06/remarks_of_senator_barack_obama_70.php)

Accessed 4 January 2009,

## REPLAY: Obama Speaks at Life@50+ Event (8:30 a.m. ET, Sept. 6)



"Hi, everybody. Thank you, Bill, for that warm introduction, and for your friendship and leadership. I want to acknowledge Evelyn Gooden, the Illinois AARP State President, for her years of devoted service to the people of my home state. And congratulations to all of you in the AARP on fifty years of fighting tirelessly to improve the lives of those over fifty.

For generations, we have worked to keep a simple promise in this country - that those who have worked hard their entire lives have the right to retire with dignity and security.

That is the promise my grandparents knew. When my grandfather returned from serving his country in World War II, he was able to go to college on the GI Bill, buy their first house with a loan from the federal

That is the promise that Michelle's parents knew. After her father passed away, her mother was able to live comfortably due in part to his pension as a shiftworker.

That was the promise that FDR made. And it was a promise that Washington kept for decades while folks like my grandparents and Michelle's parents moved through the ups and downs of middle-class life.

But today, that promise feels like it's slowly slipping away. You feel this in your own lives. More Americans are out of work and more are working harder for less. More have lost their homes and more are watching their home values plummet. You're paying college tuition that's beyond your reach while supporting your aging parents. And as you plan for your future, you're finding it's harder to save and it's harder to retire.

That's because, for eight long years, there's been a very different philosophy in the White House. They call it the Ownership Society, but what it really means is you're on your own. Job shipped overseas? Tough luck. Pension disappeared? That's the breaks. No health care? The emergency room will fix it. You're on your own.

Now, let there be no doubt. The Republican nominee, John McCain, has worn the uniform of our country with bravery and distinction, and for that we owe him our gratitude and respect. But the record's clear: John McCain has voted with George Bush 90 percent of the time. And I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to take a 10 percent chance on change.

And since he's not offering much change, that's why you didn't hear much about his plans for the future this week. You didn't hear much about their health care plan that would actually tax your benefits for the first time ever, or about their plan that would privatize Social Security and gamble your retirement, or how they plan to fix the economy they've ruined or help you live comfortably in your later years. Because, in the words of John McCain's campaign manager, this election "isn't about the issues."

Well I'm running for President because I believe this election is all about the issues. It's not about me, or John McCain, it's about you. It's about your lives. It's about your future.

And securing your future starts with protecting Social Security - today, tomorrow and forever. Now, John McCain said that the way Social Security works is, and I quote, "an absolute disgrace." Wrong. For millions of Americans, it's the very difference between a comfortable retirement and falling into poverty. More than half of seniors depend on it for more than half of their income. And as the first baby boomers become eligible for benefits this year, there are steps we can take to secure its future for generations to come.

That doesn't mean embracing George Bush's failed privatization scheme, as John McCain has. Privatizing Social Security was a bad idea when George Bush proposed it, and it's a bad idea today. It would take the one rock-solid, guaranteed part of your retirement income and gamble it on the stock market. That's why I stood with AARP against this plan in the Senate, and that's why I won't stand for it as President.

But his campaign has gone even further, suggesting that the best answer to the growing pressures on Social Security might be to cut cost-of-living adjustments or raise the retirement age. I will not do either. There's another option that is fairer to working men and women without putting the burden on those who have already earned it.

Right now, the Social Security payroll tax is capped. That means most middle-class families pay this tax on every dime they make, while millionaires and billionaires only pay it on a very small percentage of their income. That's why I'll work with members of Congress from both parties to ask people making more than \$250,000 a year to contribute a little bit more to keep the system sound. It's a change that would start a decade or more from now, and it won't burden middle-class families. In fact, 99% of Americans will see absolutely no change in their taxes - 99%.

Now, even if we keep Social Security strong for future generations, it's still not enough to help seniors on fixed incomes who are struggling with the rising cost of everything from gas to groceries. That's why I'll make retirement more secure by eliminating income taxes for retirees making less than \$50,000 per year. This would completely eliminate income taxes for 7 million seniors. And I will cut taxes - cut taxes - for 95% of all working families in this country. Now is the time to give the middle-class a break.

Now is the time to finally provide affordable, accessible health care for every single American - because you shouldn't have to worry about being one illness away from bankruptcy. If you like the health care you have, you'll see lower premiums under my plan. If you don't have health care, you'll be able to get the same kind of coverage that members of Congress give themselves. And as someone who watched my mother argue with insurance companies while she lay in bed dying of cancer, I will make certain those companies stop discriminating against those who are sick and need care the most.

Now is the time to also strengthen and preserve Medicare, and these reforms will do just that. In addition, I will allow the government to negotiate with drug companies to lower costs for seniors, and we'll allow reimportation of drugs from other countries and ensure their safety, lowering costs for all consumers.

Now is the time to help families care for their aging parents by enacting a real long-term care plan that lowers costs and guarantees that all Americans receive quality care in their later years; to end the outrage of CEOs cashing out while workers watch their pensions disappear; to encourage savings, investment and wealth creation for our younger workers by enacting automatic workplace pensions.

As President, these are the policies I will pursue so that older Americans can continue living the longer, better, more productive lives that they have every right to expect.

AARP, that's how we'll renew Americans' confidence in a secure retirement. That's the change we need. But I need your help to make it happen. So if you're ok with the next four years looking just like the last eight, then I am not your candidate. But if you want change - if you want to restore that fundamental promise we've made from generation to generation, then I ask you to give me your vote on November 4th. And if you do, I promise you - we will change this country together."

University of Cape Town

### Appendix 3: Barack Obama's speech #3

**Ref:** Remarks of Senator Barack Obama one day before election day

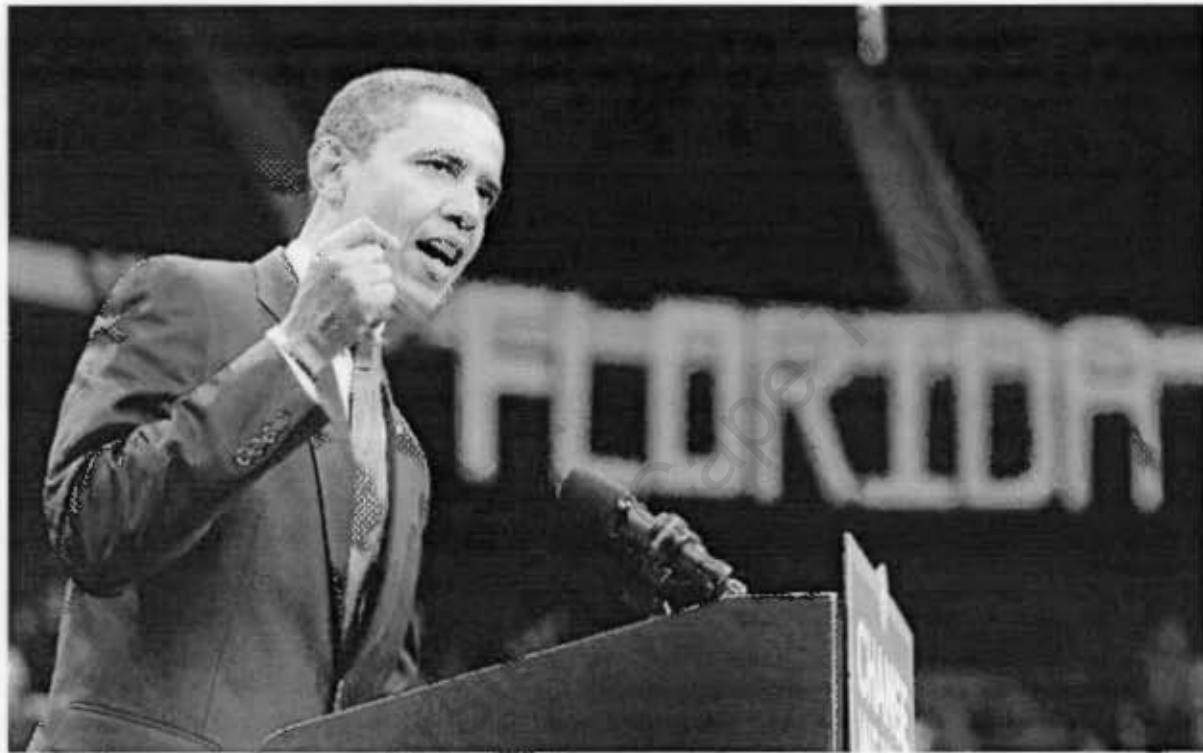
**Date:** 3 November 2008

**City:** Jacksonville, Florida

**Venue:** Veterans Memorial Arena

**Available online:** [http://www.barackobama.com/2008/11/03/remarks\\_of\\_senator\\_barack\\_obama\\_156.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2008/11/03/remarks_of_senator_barack_obama_156.php)

Accessed 4 January 2009



Democratic presidential nominee U.S. Senator Barack Obama speaks during a campaign rally at Veterans Memorial Arena November 3, 2008 in Jacksonville, Florida. (Joe Raedeli/Getty Images)

www.15

It's great to be back on the First Coast. I have just one word for you, Florida: tomorrow.

After decades of broken politics in Washington, eight years of failed policies from George Bush, and twenty-one months of a campaign that has taken us from the rocky coast of Maine to the sunshine of California, we are one day away from change in America.

Tomorrow, you can turn the page on policies that have put the greed and irresponsibility of Wall Street before the hard work and sacrifice of folks on Main Street.

Tomorrow, you can choose policies that invest in our middle-class, create new jobs, and grow this economy so that everyone has a chance to succeed; from the CEO to the secretary and the janitor; from the factory owner to the men and women who work on its floor.

Tomorrow, you can put an end to the politics that would divide a nation just to win an election; that tries to pit region against region, city against town, Republican against Democrat; that asks us to fear at a time when we need hope.

Tomorrow, at this defining moment in history, you can give this country the change we need.

We began this journey in the depths of winter nearly two years ago, on the steps of the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois. Back then, we didn't have much money or many endorsements. We weren't given much of a chance by the polis or the pundits. We knew how steep our climb would be.

But I also knew this. I knew that the size of our challenges had outgrown the smallness of our politics. I believed that Democrats and Republicans and Americans of every political stripe were hungry for new ideas, new leadership, and a new kind of politics - one that favors common sense over ideology; one that focuses on those values and ideals we hold in common as Americans.

Most of all, I knew the American people were a decent, generous people willing to work hard and sacrifice for future generations. I was convinced that when we come together, our voices are more powerful than the most entrenched lobbyists, or the most vicious political attacks, or the full force of a status quo in Washington that wants to keep things just the way they are.

Twenty-one months later, my faith in the American people has been vindicated. That's how we've come so far and so close - because of you. That's how we'll change this country - with your help. And that's why we can't afford to slow down, sit back, or let up, one minute, or one second in the next twenty-four hours. Not now. Not when so much is at stake.

We are in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. 760,000 workers have lost their jobs this year. Businesses and families can't get credit. Home values are falling. Pensions are disappearing. It's gotten harder and harder to make the mortgage, or fill up your gas tank, or even keep the electricity on at the end of the month.

At a moment like this, the last thing we can afford is four more years of the tired, old theory that says we should give more to billionaires and big corporations and hope that prosperity trickles down to everyone else. The last thing we can afford is four more years where no one in Washington is watching anyone on Wall Street because politicians and lobbyists killed common-sense regulations. Those are the theories that got us into this mess. They haven't worked, and it's time for change. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

Now, Senator McCain has served this country honorably. And he can point to a few moments over the past eight years where he has broken from George Bush. But when it comes to the economy - when it comes to the central issue of this election - the plain truth is that John McCain has stood with this President every step of the way. Voting for the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy that he once opposed. Voting for the Bush budgets that spent us into debt. Calling for less regulation twenty-one times just this year. Those are the facts.

After twenty-one months and three debates, Senator McCain still has not been able to tell the American people a single major thing he'd do differently from George Bush when it comes to the economy.

John McCain just doesn't get it. Remember what he said when he was here on September 15th?

That day, more than 5,000 jobs were lost and more than 7,000 homes were foreclosed on. The day before, former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan said we were in a "once in a century" crisis.

And yet, despite our economic crisis, John McCain actually came here, to Veterans' Memorial Arena, and repeated something he's said at least sixteen times on this campaign. He said - and I quote - "the fundamentals of our economy are strong."

Well, Florida, you and I know that's not only fundamentally wrong, it also sums up his out-of-touch, on-your-own economic philosophy. It's a philosophy that says we should give a \$700,000 tax cut to the average Fortune 500 CEO and \$300 billion to the same Wall Street banks that got us into this mess. It's a philosophy that says we shouldn't give a penny of relief to more than 100 million middle-class Americans. And it's a philosophy that will end when I am President of the United States of America.

Look, we've tried it John McCain's way. We've tried it George Bush's way. Deep down, Senator McCain knows that, which is why his campaign said that "if we keep talking about the economy, we're going to lose." That's why I'm talking about the economy. That's why he's spent these last weeks calling me every name in the book. Because that's how you play the game in Washington. When you can't win on the strength of your ideas, you make a big election about small things.

So I expect we're going to see more of that in the next twenty-four hours. More of the slash and burn, say-anything, do-anything politics that's calculated to divide and distract; to tear us apart instead of bringing us together. Well, that's not the kind of politics the American people need right now.

Florida, at this moment, in this election, we have the chance to do more than just beat back this kind of politics in the short-term. We can end it once and for all. We can prove that the one thing more powerful than the politics of anything goes is the will and determination of the American people. We can change this country. Yes we can.

We can prove that we are more than a collection of Red States and Blue States - we are the United States of America. That's who we are, and that's the country we need to be right now.

Florida, I know these are difficult times. But I also know that we have faced difficult times before. The American story has never been about things coming easy - it's been about rising to the moment when the moment was hard. It's about rejecting fear and division for unity of purpose. That's how we've overcome war and depression. That's how we've won great struggles for civil rights and women's rights and workers' rights. And that's how we'll write the next great chapter in the American story.

Understand, if we want to meet the challenges of this moment, we need to get beyond the old ideological debates and divides between left and right. We don't need bigger government or smaller government. We need a better government - a more competent government - a government that upholds the values we hold in common as Americans.

The choice in this election isn't between tax cuts and no tax cuts. It's about whether you believe we should only reward wealth, or whether we should also reward the work and workers who create it. I will give a tax break to 95% of Americans who work every day and get taxes taken out of their paychecks every week. And I'll help pay for this by asking the folks who are making more than \$250,000 a year to go back to the tax rate they were paying in the 1990s. No matter what Senator McCain may claim, here are the facts - if you make under \$250,000, you will not see your taxes increase by a single dime - not your income taxes, not your payroll taxes, not your capital gains taxes. Nothing. Because the last thing we should do in this economy is raise taxes on the middle-class.

When it comes to jobs, the choice in this election is not between putting up a wall around America or standing by and doing nothing. The truth is, we won't be able to bring back every job that we've lost, but that doesn't mean we should follow John McCain's plan to keep promoting unfair trade agreements and keep giving tax breaks to corporations that send American jobs overseas. I will end those breaks as President, and give them to companies that create jobs here in the United States of America. We'll create two million new jobs by rebuilding our crumbling roads, and bridges, and schools. I will invest \$15 billion a year in renewable sources of energy - in wind and solar power and the next generation of biofuels. We'll invest in clean coal technology and find ways to safely harness nuclear power. And we'll create five million new energy jobs over the next decade - jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced.

When it comes to health care, we don't have to choose between a government-run health care system and the unaffordable one we have now. If you already have health insurance, the only thing that will change under my plan is that we will lower premiums. If you don't have health insurance you'll be able to get the same kind of health insurance that Members of Congress get for themselves. And as someone who watched his own mother spend the final months of her life arguing with insurance companies because they claimed her cancer was a pre-existing condition and didn't want to pay for treatment, I will stop insurance companies from discriminating against those who are sick and need care most. That's the change we need. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

When it comes to giving every child a world-class education, the choice is not between more money and more reform - because our schools need both. As President, I will recruit an army of new teachers, pay them more, and give them more support. But I will also demand higher standards and more accountability from our teachers and our schools. And I will make a deal with every American who has the drive and the will but not the money to go to college: if you commit to serving your community or your country, we will make sure you can afford your tuition.

And when it comes to keeping this country safe, we don't have to choose between retreating from the world and fighting a war without end in Iraq. It's time to stop spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq while the Iraqi government sits on a huge surplus. As President, I will end this war. I will ask the Iraqi government to step up for their future, and I will finally finish the fight against bin Laden and the al Qaeda terrorists who attacked us on 9/11. I will never hesitate to defend this nation. And I will make sure our servicemen and women have the best training and equipment when they deploy into combat, and the care and benefits they have earned when they come home. That's what we owe our veterans. That's what I'll do as President.

I won't stand here and pretend that any of this will be easy - especially now. The cost of this economic crisis, and the cost of the war in Iraq, means that Washington will have to tighten its belt and put off spending on things we don't need. As President, I will go through the federal budget, line-by-line, ending programs that we don't need and making the ones we do need work better and cost less.

But as I've said from the day we began this journey, the change we need won't come from government alone. It will come from each of us doing our part in our own lives and our own communities. It will come from each of us looking after ourselves, our families, and our fellow citizens.

Yes, government must lead the way on energy independence, but each of us must do our part to make our homes and our businesses more efficient. Yes, we must put more money into our schools, but government can't be that parent who turns off the TV and makes a child do their homework. We need a return to responsibility and a return to civility. Yes, we can argue and debate our positions passionately, but all of us must summon the strength and grace to bridge our differences and unite in common effort - black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American; Democrat and Republican, young and old, rich and poor, gay and straight, disabled or not.

In this election, we cannot afford the same political games and tactics that are being used to pit us against one another and make us afraid of one another.

Despite what our opponents may claim, there are no real or fake parts of this country. There is no city or town that is more pro-America than anywhere else - we are one nation, all of us proud, all of us patriots. The men and women who serve on our battlefields may be Democrats and Republicans and Independents, but they have fought together and bled together and some died together under the same proud flag. They have not served a Red America or a Blue America - they have served the United States of America.

It won't be easy, Florida. It won't be quick. But you and I know that it is time to come together and change this country. Some of you may be cynical and fed up with politics. You have every right to be. But despite all of this, I ask of you what has been asked of Americans throughout our history.

I ask you to believe - not just in my ability to bring about change, but in yours.

I know this change is possible. Because I have seen it over the last twenty-one months. Because in this campaign, I have had the privilege to witness what is best in America. I've seen it in the faces of the men and women I've met at countless rallies and town halls across the country, men and women who speak of their struggles but also of their hopes and dreams.

I still remember the email that a woman named Robyn sent me after I met her in Ft. Lauderdale. Sometime after our event, her son nearly went into cardiac arrest, and was diagnosed with a heart condition that could only be treated with a procedure that cost tens of thousands of dollars. Her insurance company refused to pay, and their family just didn't have that kind of money.

In her email, Robyn wrote, "I ask only this of you - on the days where you feel so tired you can't think of uttering another word to the people, think of us. When those who oppose you have you down, reach deep and fight back harder."

Florida, that's what hope is.

That's what kept some of our parents and grandparents going when times were tough. What led them to say, "Maybe I can't go to college, but if I save a little bit each week, my child can. Maybe I can't have my own business but if I work really hard my child can open up one of her own." It's what led those who could not vote to say "if I march and organize, maybe my child or grandchild can run for President someday."

That's what hope is - that thing inside that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that there are better days ahead. If we're willing to work for it. If we're willing to shed our fears. If we're willing to reach deep inside ourselves when we're tired, and come back fighting harder.

Don't believe for a second this election is over. Don't think for a minute that power concedes. We have to work like our future depends on it in the next twenty-four hours, because it does.

But I know this, Florida, the time for change has come. We have a righteous wind at our back.

And if in these final hours, you will knock on some doors for me, and make some calls for me, and go to [barackobama.com](http://barackobama.com) and find out where to vote. If you will stand with me, and fight by my side, and cast your ballot for me, then I promise you this - we will not just win Florida, we will not just win this election, but together, we will change this country and we will change the world. Thank you, God bless you, and may God bless America."

## Appendix 4: Barack Obama's e-mail #1

Date: 1 July 2008  
From: David Plouffe BarackObama.com ([info@barackobama.com](mailto:info@barackobama.com))  
To: Carolina Araujo ([carito\\_araujo@hotmail.com](mailto:carito_araujo@hotmail.com))  
Subject: One more thing

The crucial midnight deadline is just hours away.

The results of our fundraising from this month will be used to gauge our strength against John McCain and the RNC.

But there's another reason why every dollar you give right now is so important -- we're building the first 50-state presidential campaign in a generation.

By making your first contribution before the midnight deadline, you'll be investing in the growth of this unprecedented movement at a time when the resources are needed the most.

Please show your support by making a donation of \$25 right now:

<https://donate.barackobama.com/midnightdeadline>

It's been less than four weeks since Barack became the presumptive Democratic nominee, and here's what supporters like you have already made possible.

- Staff and offices in 21 states
- 134 campaign offices open across the country
- Nearly 1,000 field staff on the ground, supported by more than 3,500 Obama Organizing Fellows

And we are literally growing every day.

Your contribution today is an investment in the organization and staff we'll need to expand our operation in all 50 states.

Every single staff member on the ground and every single new office we open will help us to register more new voters, bring more volunteers into our campaign, and build our grassroots movement all across this country to help Democrats win up and down the ballot in November.

That's why a dollar you give today to help us build our campaign will do more and have more of an impact than a dollar you give in October or November.

Make a contribution of \$25 to invest in our 50-state campaign:

<https://donate.barackobama.com/midnightdeadline>

Thanks for everything you're making possible.

David

David Plouffe  
Campaign Manager  
Obama for America

**DONATE**

## Appendix 5: Barack Obama's e-mail #2

Date: 1 September 2008  
From: Barack Obama ([info@barackobama.com](mailto:info@barackobama.com))  
To: Carolina Araujo ([carito\\_araujo@hotmail.com](mailto:carito_araujo@hotmail.com))  
Subject: Help Gulf Coast residents and first responders



Carolina --

Today, the thoughts and prayers of all Americans are with those in the path of Hurricane Gustav -- and many of you are asking what you can do to help.

We do not yet know what the impact of Hurricane Gustav will be, and we hope with all our hearts that the damage will not be as great as it was three years ago.

But we know there will be damage, and there is something you can do right now.

Your financial support will strengthen organizations like the American Red Cross that are evacuating Gulf Coast residents and planning to help communities get back on their feet.

*Make a donation to support the American Red Cross today.*

At times like this, it is our compassion and resilience that define who we are as a nation.

Please give whatever you can afford, even \$10, to make sure the American Red Cross has the resources to help those in the path of this storm.

<https://donate.barack-obama.com/redcross>

Thank you for your generosity, and I hope you will join Michelle and me in praying for the safety of those in the path of the storm and the first responders who are doing all they can to ensure the safety of their communities.

Barack

**DONATE TO THE RED CROSS**

## Appendix 6: Barack Obama's e-mail #3

Date: 2 November 2008  
From: Barack Obama ([info@barackobama.com](mailto:info@barackobama.com))  
To: Carolina Araujo ([carito\\_araujo@hotmail.com](mailto:carito_araujo@hotmail.com))  
Subject: Your backstage pass



Carolina --

When you look back on Election Day years from now, you'll tell your friends and family that this was the moment you helped make history.

You could also have a story to share about how you were right in the middle of it at the big Election Night event in Chicago.

You could be one of 5 first-time donors to go backstage on Election Night, as long as you give -- in any amount -- before Sunday at midnight.

If you're selected, you and a guest will be flown to Chicago, put up in a hotel, and given a front row seat to history.

And if you make a donation of \$30 or more today, you'll also receive a "Change the World" T-shirt:



Donate any amount and you could join Barack on Election Night

This election will come down to what we do -- or don't do -- in the next few days.

John McCain and the Republican National Committee had \$20 million more in the bank than our campaign and the DNC combined as of October 15th. They are pouring it into crucial battleground states, and we're facing an onslaught of negative attacks.

Your support will have a huge impact.

Step up during this historic moment, and you could be there on Election Night.

Will you donate \$30 or more today?

As a bonus, we'll send you a special edition Change the World T-shirt:

<https://donors.barackobama.com/front-row>

Everything we've worked nearly two years for will be decided between now and Tuesday, November 4th.

Let's make history.

Barack

P.S. -- If you can't make a donation, you can help get us across the finish line by volunteering to help get out the vote:

<http://my.barackobama.com/november>

**LAST CHANCE TO DONATE**

University of Cape Town

## Appendix 7: John McCain's speech #1

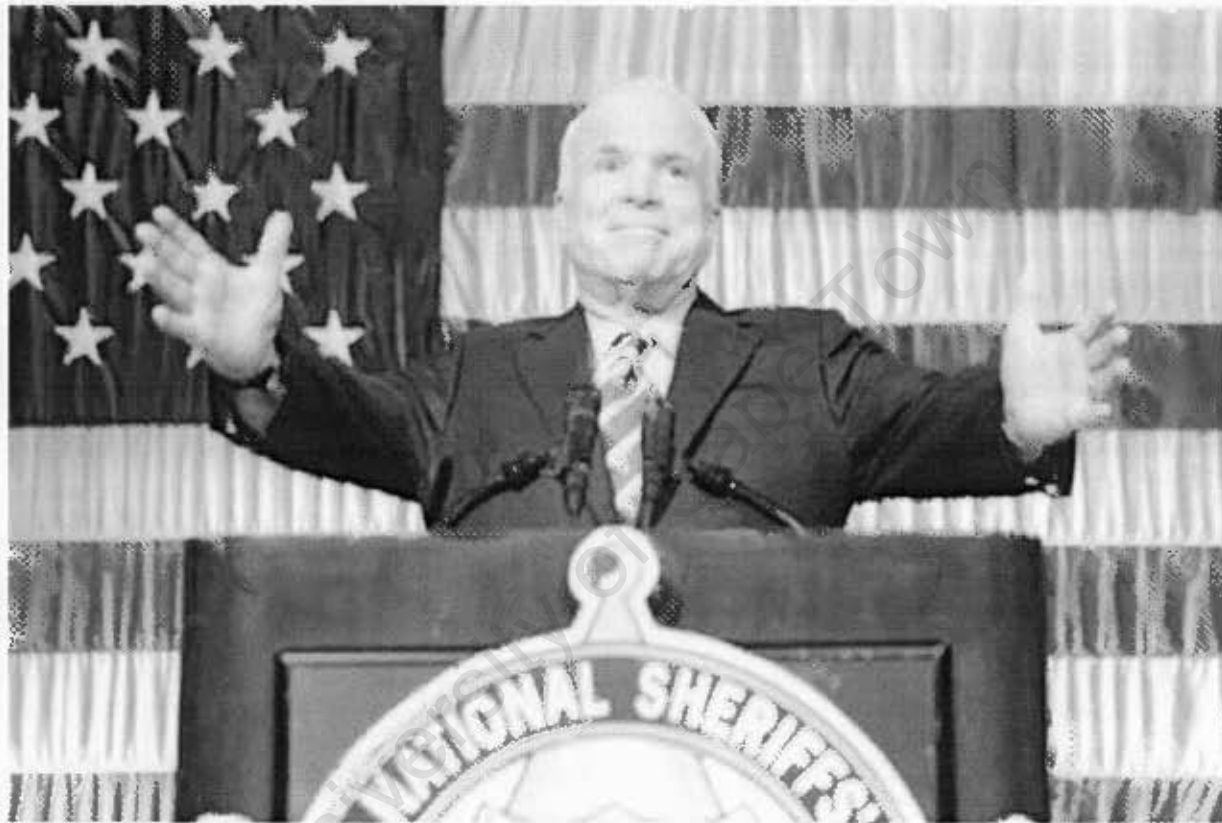
Ref: Remarks at the National Sheriffs' Association's 68th Annual Conference in Indianapolis

Date: 1 July 2008

City: Indianapolis, Indiana

Venue: Indiana Convention Center & RCA Dome

Available online: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=77594> Accessed 5 January 2009



"Thank you, Sheriff Webre, for the kind introduction, and thank you all very much. I appreciate the warm welcome to Indianapolis, and I am proud to be in the company of more than two thousand sheriffs and deputy sheriffs. I'm very honored, and have never felt safer.

There is a small fraternity of occupations that deserve every citizen's gratitude, every day. And sheriffs and deputy sheriffs are charter members. Some functions of government take place far from public view, and success and failure can be hard to measure. But that is never true in your calling. In law enforcement, the standard is always 100 percent success, and there is no such thing as "close enough" for government work. Protecting innocent citizens from those who would do them harm is the most elementary responsibility of government. Law enforcement work is often hard, sometimes heroic, and always necessary. We are all in your debt, and I thank you for your service.

When President Ronald Reagan came before this organization in 1984, he spoke of a "new mandate from the American people." He described some of the social theories of the preceding decades, and how these fashionable ideas had fostered a permanent criminal class of violent repeat offenders. In the 1960's and 70's, violent crime had increased throughout most of our country. In some cities, people felt as if their neighborhoods were under hostile occupation. At the federal level, President Reagan offered a different approach to criminal justice, focused on vigorous enforcement and stricter sentencing. Criminal justice reform is a part of the Reagan revolution that is often forgotten today. But over time, America became a better, safer, and more just country because of those reforms. And you're the ones who helped to make it happen.

Many of our cities became safer during the 1990's, thanks to the resolute action of city and county leaders such as my friend Rudy Giuliani and his police commissioner Bill Bratton. During both Republican and Democratic administrations, Congress continued to supply states and localities with new resources. Under legislation I've supported, we have also sought to increase penalties for repeat felons who commit crimes with a firearm, or commit violent crimes on behalf of a criminal gang. We have worked to improve the National Instant Criminal Background Check System for firearms purchases. And we have sought to increase the fines criminals must pay into the Federal Crime Victims Fund and bar all criminals from profiting from their crimes.

We also expanded public registry requirements for convicted sex offenders -- because to prevent and punish the exploitation of children, the surest policy is zero-tolerance. When anyone is convicted of a sexual assault on a child, they should stay in prison for a long time, and their names should stay forever on the National Sex Offender Public Registry. When they are released -- if they are released -- they should be tracked both in their physical movements and in their Internet usage. And under a bill I have authored as a senator, and intend to sign into law as president, we're going to get serious against Internet predators: Anyone who uses the Internet in the commission of a crime of child exploitation is going offline and into prison for an additional ten years.

In protecting children and in all criminal justice policy, at both the state and federal level, we have shown how much can be achieved when consistent principles are applied and both parties work together. And this spirit will be needed in meeting the challenges of our own time. The overall trends in crime are small comfort to the more than six million victims of violent crime in America each year, or to the more than 18 million victims of property crime. In an enterprise measured by the standard of 100 percent success, there is no time to linger on the progress of the past. We need to stay on the offensive against crime, and especially crimes of violence.

The federal government has its own well defined set of law-enforcement concerns, such as multi-state criminal syndicates, terrorist cells, government corruption, and the protection of America's borders. And from the standpoint of state and local law enforcement, often the best service our federal government can render is to do these things and do them right. Presidential leadership is essential in all of these responsibilities. But nowhere is the influence of a president more critical to law enforcement than in the power of judicial nominations.

It will fall to the next president to nominate hundreds of men and women to the federal courts. These choices will have far-reaching consequences for all Americans, and perhaps especially for law enforcement. When a serious crime is investigated, prosecuted, and punished, it takes many hours and the best efforts of police, trial courts, and juries. Yet one badly reasoned opinion, by one overreaching judge, can undo it all. Just like that, evidence of guilt can be suppressed, or a dangerous predator released because of judge-made laws having little or nothing to do with the requirements of the Constitution. Even worse, when such opinions issue from the highest court, they set a precedent for many more injustices, and they add one more obstacle to the work of law enforcement.

We saw such presumption again just last week in a matter before the Supreme Court. In the considered judgment of the people of Louisiana and their elected representatives, the violent rape of a small child is a capital offense. There is nothing in our Constitution to contradict that view. But five justices decided the people's judgment didn't take into account "evolving standards of decency," and so they substituted their judgment for that of the people of Louisiana, their legislators, their governor, the trial judge, the jury, the appellate judge, and the other four justices of the Supreme Court.

It's a peculiar kind of moral evolution that disregards the democratic process, and inures solely to the benefit of child rapists. It was such a jarring decision from the Court that my opponent, Senator Obama, immediately and to his credit expressed his disagreement. I'd like to think this signals a change of heart on his part about his votes against the confirmation of two of the four dissenters in the case, Justice Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts. More to the point, why is it that the majority includes the same justices he usually holds out as the models for future nominations? My opponent may not care for this particular decision, but it was exactly the kind of opinion we could expect from an Obama Court.

Should I be elected president, I will look for accomplished men and women with a proven record of excellence in the law, and a proven commitment to judicial restraint. They will be the kind of judges who believe in giving everyone in a criminal court their due: justice for the guilty and the innocent, compassion for the victims, and respect for the men and women of law enforcement.

In all of criminal justice policy, we must put the interests of law-abiding citizens first -- and above all the rights of victims. And when we formulate criminal justice policy, words of praise for the good work of local law enforcement are not enough. We must give active support to officers of the peace across America, by

providing the tools you need to meet new dangers. Even as crime has diminished in some areas, including New York and other major cities, crime is spreading in many small and mid-sized jurisdictions. And the general numbers in crime reduction conceal one of the most disturbing facts of all -- the rise of new, better organized, and more widely dispersed gang violence and transnational gangs. Once largely confined to major cities, the threat of gang violence is now well known to sheriffs and corrections officers across America. And in all cases of violent crime, in both urban and rural areas, it's the poorest among us who are most vulnerable.

To meet all of these challenges, and others, you will need assistance, critical resources, and new technologies that often only the federal government can provide. And one of the most critical of these resources concerns the radio spectrum. So that police, fire-fighters, and other public safety agencies can freely communicate with one another, we will build a long overdue national, interoperable public safety broadband network. You and all your colleagues in law enforcement need seamless communication across every agency and jurisdiction for emergency response. For more than a decade now, I have tried to persuade the Congress to provide dedicated radio spectrum and funding for communications equipment to local, state, and federal law enforcement officers. Just last year, I introduced a bill that provided for more than twice the capacity that the FCC has currently set aside for public safety. Special interests in Washington want the FCC to auction off more of that spectrum than I do. But no matter what price it might fetch at auction, it should be available for fighting crime and saving lives.

The Congress, too, needs to get its priorities straight, and that begins by supporting the priorities of front-line law-enforcement personnel. As it is, funds distributed by the Department of Justice are too often earmarked according to their value to the re-election of members of Congress instead of their value to police. This is especially true in the case of grants allocated under the Byrne program -- many of which are urgently needed to interdict drugs and track the movement of violent gangs. The result is that millions of dollars are wasted every year, and a lot of good ideas and programs in local law enforcement never get funded.

Earmark spending bills are the broken windows of the federal budget process, and by ending these abuses we set a new tone and we set much greater reforms in motion. Earmark spending runs against the public interest in many ways, and especially when public safety is in the balance. And that's why, as president, I will veto every bill with earmarks, until the Congress stops sending bills with earmarks. It may take a while for Congress to adjust, but sooner or later they'll figure out that there's a new sheriff in town.

Law enforcement professionals know best what they need in the field. And today, what's often needed most are more personnel and better technologies for tracking criminals, gathering data, and sharing vital information. We need to make certain that every agency is working with others where necessary, so that the miscommunications and missed opportunities before 9/11 are never repeated. To protect our energy supply, air and rail transport, banking and financial services, we need to invest far more in the federal task of cyber security. In this new century, and especially with the threat of terrorist attacks, every state, local, and federal agency concerned with public safety should have access a shared repository of information. In the case of any suspected terrorist, we must make certain that law enforcement knows who they are, where they are, and what they're up to.

We know as well that tens of thousands of felons -- in custody and at large -- entered our country illegally. Why has it fallen to sheriffs and other local officials to protect their citizens from these foreign-born felons? Because our federal government failed to protect our borders from their entry, and this serious dereliction of duty must end.

Our compassion for laborers who entered this country unlawfully -- our understanding of their struggles, even as we act to secure the border -- speaks well of America. But this respect does not extend to criminals who came here to break our laws and do harm to people. Through the Criminal Alien Program, we have made some progress in recent years. Too often, however, states are left to deal with the high costs and excessive regulation involved in deportation proceedings, and many local officers are left waiting for immigration agents to show up on site. So, as president, I will expand the Criminal Alien Program. We will require that the federal government assume more of the costs to deport and detain criminal aliens -- because this is a problem of the federal government's own making.

As if all of these challenges were not enough, another has arisen because of your own hard work and success these past 25 years in sending serious offenders to prison. Many are due for release, and just last year some 750,000 inmates reentered society. Unless we change our approach over the next four years, these released prisoners are likely to reoffend in very high numbers, committing millions of new crimes and finding millions of new victims. And we need to be as committed in preparing them for freedom as we were in taking that freedom away.

Maybe you have heard the story of an ex-inmate named Don Cox, who received a sentence of 90 years for being an accomplice to a murder right here in Indianapolis in 1978. Mr. Cox would likely have spent the rest

of his life in prison, had it not been for the efforts of another man named Tim Streett. In the short version of a powerful story, Mr. Streett is the son of the victim, and had even been a witness to his father's murder. He is also a witness to the possibilities of redemption. After years of bitterness, Mr. Streett sought out the prisoner. In time, he even became his friend. And it was he who asked prosecutors to seek parole for Mr. Cox. As Tim Streett explains his change of heart, "Anger and bitterness -- that can build up. But true forgiveness says, 'I forgive you, and it's over.'"

Across a prison and jail population of 2.3 million souls, there may be some who will never find or even seek this path. But the way should be open to all. This was the spirit of the Second Chance Act of 2007, a law designed to make the walk out of prison, past the gates and razor wire, a one-way journey. Ex-convicts need more than a few bucks and a bus ticket out of town. Many will need job training, a place to live, mentors, family counseling, and much more. Beyond government, there are churches and community groups all across our country that stand ready to help even more. And these groups will have the committed support of my administration.

With so many sentences about to expire, and so many second chances about to be offered, the stakes are high for our country. And nobody understands that better than sheriffs, their deputies, and other officers of the peace. Great challenges lie ahead of you, and you will meet them as those who carry the badge of law enforcement always have -- with courage and with honor. I thank each one of you for the dedication you bring to a hard job. I thank all of you for your commitment to the cause of justice. And I thank you for your kind attention here today."

University of Cape Town

## Appendix 8: John McCain's speech #2

Ref: Republican Presidential Nomination Acceptance Address

Date: 4 September 2008

City: St. Paul, Minnesota

Venue: Xcel Energy Center

Available online: <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/campaign2008/rnc2008/speeches/mccain.html>

Accessed 5 January 2009



"Thank you. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

Tonight, I have a privilege given few Americans: the privilege of accepting our party's nomination for president of the United States. Thank you. Thanks. And I accept it with... Thank you. I -- and I accept it with gratitude, humility, and confidence.

In my life, no success has come without a good fight, and this nomination wasn't any different. That's a tribute to the candidates who opposed me and their supporters. They're leaders of great ability who love our country and wish to lead it to better days. Their support is an honor that I won't forget.

I'm grateful to the president of the United States for leading us in these dark days following the worst attack in American history.

The worst attack on American soil in our history and keeping us safe from another attack that many -- many thought was inevitable.

And to the first lady... And to the first lady, Laura Bush, a model of grace and kindness in public and in private.

And I'm grateful to the 41st president and his bride of 63 years for their outstanding example ... for their outstanding example of honorable service to our country.

As always, I'm indebted to my wife, Cindy, and my seven children. You know, the pleasures of family life can seem like a brief holiday from the crowded calendar of our nation's business. But I have treasured them all the more and can't imagine a life without the happiness that you've given me.

You know, Cindy said a lot of nice things about me tonight. But, in truth, she's more my inspiration than I am hers.

Her concern for those less blessed than we are -- victims of land mines, children born in poverty, with birth defects -- shows the measure of her humanity. And I know that she will make a great first lady.

My friends, when I was growing up, my father was often at sea, and the job of raising my brother, sister and me would fall to my mother alone. Roberta McCain gave us her love of life, her deep interest in the world, her strength, and her belief that we're all meant to use our opportunities to make ourselves useful to our country.

I wouldn't be here tonight but for the strength of her character. And she doesn't want me to say this, but she's 96 years young.

My heartfelt thanks to all of you who helped me win this nomination and stood by me when the odds were long. I won't let you down. I won't let you down. I won't let you down.

To Americans who have yet to decide who to vote for, thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to win your trust. I intend to earn it.

And, finally, a word to Sen. Obama and his supporters. We'll go at it -- we'll go at it over the next two months -- you know that's the nature of this business -- and there are big differences between us. But you have my respect and my admiration.

Despite our differences, much more unites us than divides us. We are fellow Americans, and that's an association that means more to me than any other.

We're dedicated to the proposition that all people are created equal and endowed by our creator with inalienable rights. No country -- no country ever had a greater cause than that. And I wouldn't be an American worthy of the name if I didn't honor Sen. Obama and his supporters for their achievement.

But let there be no doubt, my friends: We're going to win this election. And after we've won, we're going to reach out our hand to any willing patriot, make this government start working for you again, and get this country back on the road to prosperity and peace.

I know these are tough times for many of you. You're worried about...

Please, please, please. My friends, my dear friends, please. Please don't be diverted by the ground noise and the static. You know, I'm going to talk about it some more. But Americans want us to stop yelling at each other, OK?

These are tough times for many of you. You're worried about keeping your job or finding a new one, and you're struggling to put food on the table and stay in your home.

All you've ever asked of your government is to stand on your side and not in your way. And that's what I intend to do: stand on your side and fight for your future.

And I've found just the right partner to help me shake up Washington, Gov. Sarah... Gov. Sarah Palin of the great state of Alaska.

And I want to thank everyone here and all over America for the tremendous, wonderful, warm reception you gave her last night. Thank you so much. She deserves it. What a great beginning.

You know, she has an executive experience and a real record of accomplishment. She's tackled tough problems, like energy independence and corruption. She's balanced a budget, cut taxes, and she's taken on the special interests. She's reached across the aisle and asked Republicans, Democrats, and independents to serve in her administration. She's the wonderful mother of five children. She's -- she's helped run a small business. She's worked with her hands and knows -- and knows what it's like to worry about mortgage payments, and health care, and the cost of gasoline and groceries. She knows where she comes from, and she knows who she works for. She stands up for what's right, and she doesn't let anyone tell her to sit down.

I'm very proud to have introduced our next vice president to the country, but I can't wait until I introduce her to Washington. And let me just offer an advance warning to the old, big-spending, do-nothing, me first, country second crowd: Change is coming.

I'm not -- I'm not in the habit of breaking my promises to my country, and neither is Gov. Palin. And when we tell you we're going to change Washington and stop leaving our country's problems for some unluckier generation to fix, you can count on it.

And we've... We've got a record of doing just that, and the strength, experience, judgment, and backbone to keep our word to you.

You well know I've been called a maverick, someone who ... someone who marches to the beat of his own drum. Sometimes it's meant as a compliment; sometimes it's not. What it really means is I understand who I work for. I don't work for a party. I don't work for a special interest. I don't work for myself. I work for you.

I've fought corruption, and it didn't matter if the culprits were Democrats or Republicans. They violated their public trust, and they had to be held accountable.

I've fought the big spenders... I've fought the big spenders in both parties, who waste your money on things you neither need nor want, and the first big-spending pork-barrel earmark bill that comes across my desk, I will veto it. I will make them famous, and you will know their names. You will know their names.

We're not going to allow that while you struggle to buy groceries, fill your gas tank, and make your mortgage payment. I've fought to get million-dollar checks out of our elections. I've fought lobbyists who stole from Indian tribes. I've fought crooked deals in the Pentagon. I've fought tobacco companies and trial lawyers, drug companies and union bosses.

I've fought for the right strategy and more troops in Iraq when it wasn't the popular thing to do. And when the pundits said -- when the pundits said my campaign was finished, I said I'd rather lose an election than see my country lose a war. And thanks -- thanks to the leadership of a brilliant general, David Petraeus, and the brave men and women he has the honor to command ... that -- that strategy succeeded, and it rescued us from a defeat that would have demoralized our military, risked a wider war, and threatened the security of all Americans.

I don't mind a good fight. For reasons known only to God, I've had quite a few tough ones in my life. But I learned an important lesson along the way: In the end, it matters less that you can fight. What you fight for is the real test.

I fight for Americans. I fight for you. I fight for Bill and Sue Nebe from Farmington Hills, Michigan, who lost ... lost their real estate investments in the bad housing market. Bill got a temporary job after he was out of work for seven months. Sue works three jobs to help pay the bills.

I fight for Jake and Toni Wimmer of Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Jake... Jake works on a loading dock, coaches Little League, and raises money for the mentally and physically disabled. Toni is a schoolteacher, working toward her master's degree. They have two sons. The youngest, Luke, has been diagnosed with autism. Their lives should matter to the people they elect to office. And they matter to me. And they matter to you.

I fight for the family of Matthew Stanley of Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. Matthew died serving our country in Iraq. I wear his bracelet and think of him every day. I intend to honor their sacrifice by making sure the country their son loved so well and never returned to remains safe from its enemies.

I fight to restore the pride and principles of our party. We were elected to change Washington, and we let Washington change us.

We lost -- we lost the trust of the American people when some Republicans gave in to the temptations of corruption. We lost their trust when rather than reform government, both parties made it bigger.

We lost their trust when instead of freeing ourselves from a dangerous dependence on foreign oil, both parties -- and Sen. Obama -- passed another corporate welfare bill for oil companies. We lost their trust when we valued our power over our principles.

We're going to change that. We're going to recover the people's trust by standing up again to the values Americans admire. The party of Lincoln, Roosevelt and Reagan is going to get back to basics.

In this country, we believe everyone has something to contribute and deserves the opportunity to reach their God-given potential, from the boy whose descendents arrived on the Mayflower to the Latina daughter of migrant workers. We're all God's children, and we're all Americans.

We believe -- we believe in low taxes, spending discipline, and open markets. We believe in rewarding hard work and risk-takers and letting people keep the fruits of their labor.

We believe... We believe -- we believe in a strong defense, work, faith, service, a culture of life ... personal responsibility, the rule of law, and judges who dispense justice impartially and don't legislate from the bench.

We believe in the values of families, neighborhoods, and communities. We believe in a government that unleashes the creativity and initiative of Americans, government that doesn't make your choices for you, but works to make sure you have more choices to make for yourself.

I will keep taxes low and cut them where I can. My opponent will raise them. I will open... I will open new markets to our goods and services. My opponent will close them. I will cut government spending. He will increase it. My tax cuts will create jobs; his tax increases will eliminate them. My health care plan will make it easier for more Americans to find and keep good health care insurance. His plan will force small businesses to cut jobs, reduce wages, and force families into a government-run health care system where a bureaucrat... where a bureaucrat stands between you and your doctor.

We all know that keeping taxes low helps small businesses grow and create new jobs. Cutting the second-highest business tax rate in the world will help American companies compete and keep jobs from going overseas.

Doubling the child tax exemption from \$3,500 to \$7,000 will improve the lives of millions of American families. Reducing government spending and getting rid of failed programs will let you keep more of your own money to save, spend, and invest as you see fit. Opening new markets and preparing workers to compete in the world economy is essential to our future prosperity.

I know some of you have been left behind in the changing economy, and it often seems that your government hasn't even noticed. Government assistance for the unemployed workers was designed for the economy of the 1950s. That's going to change on my watch.

Now, my opponent promises to bring back old jobs by wishing away the global economy. We're going to help workers who've lost a job that won't come back find a new one that won't go away. We will prepare them for the jobs of day -- of today. We will use our community colleges to help train people for new opportunities in their communities.

For workers in industries -- for workers in industries that have been hard-hit, we'll help make up part of the difference in wages between their old job and a temporary, lower paid one, while they receive re-training that will help them find secure new employment at a decent wage.

Education -- education is the civil rights issue of this century. Equal access to public education has been gained, but what is the value of access to a failing school? We need... We need to shake up failed school bureaucracies with competition, empower parents with choice. Let's remove barriers to qualified instructors, attract and reward good teachers, and help bad teachers find another line of work.

When a public school fails to meet its obligations to students, parent -- when it fails to meet its obligations to students, parents deserve a choice in the education of their children. And I intend to give it to them. Some may choose a better public school. Some may choose a private one. Many will choose a charter school. But they will have the choice, and their children will have that opportunity.

Sen. Obama wants our schools to answer to unions and entrenched bureaucrats. I want schools to answer to parents and students. And when I'm president, they will.

My fellow Americans, when I'm president, we're going to embark on the most ambitious national project in decades.

We're going to stop sending \$700 billion a year to countries that don't like us very much, and some of that money...

We'll attack -- we'll attack the problem on every front. We'll produce more energy at home. We will drill new wells off-shore, and we'll drill them now. We'll drill them now.

We'll -- we'll -- my friends, we'll build more nuclear power plants. We'll develop clean-coal technology. We'll increase the use of wind, tide, solar, and natural gas. We'll encourage the development and use of flex-fuel, hybrid and electric automobiles.

Sen. Obama thinks we can achieve energy independence without more drilling and without more nuclear power. But Americans know better than that.

We must use all resources and develop all technologies necessary to rescue our economy from the damage caused by rising oil prices and restore the health of our planet.

My friends ... it's an ambitious plan, but Americans are ambitious by nature, and we've faced greater challenges. It's time for us to show the world again how Americans lead.

This great national cause will create millions of new jobs, many in industries that will be the engine of our future prosperity, jobs that will be there when your children enter the workforce.

Today -- today, the prospect of a better world remains within our reach. But we must see the threats to peace and liberty in our time clearly and face them as Americans before us did: with confidence, wisdom, and resolve.

We have dealt... We have dealt a serious blow to Al Qaeda in recent years, but they're not defeated, and they'll strike us again, if they can. Iran remains the chief state sponsor of terrorism and is on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons.

Russia's leaders, rich with oil wealth and corrupt with power, have rejected democratic ideals and the obligations of a responsible power. They invaded a small, democratic neighbor to gain more control over the world's oil supply, intimidate other neighbors, and further their ambitions of re-assembling the Russian empire.

And the brave people of Georgia need our solidarity and our prayers. As president, I'll work to establish good relations with Russia so that we need not fear a return to the Cold War. But we can't turn a blind eye to aggression and international lawlessness that threatens the peace and stability of the world and the security of the American people.

We face many dangerous threats in this dangerous world, but I'm not afraid of them. I'm prepared for them.

I know how the military works, what it can do, what it can do better, and what it shouldn't do. I know how the world works. I know the good and the evil in it. I know how to work with leaders who share our dreams of a freer, safer and more prosperous world, and how to stand up to those who don't. I know how to secure the peace.

My friends, when I was 5 years old, a car pulled up in front of our house. A Navy officer rolled down the window and shouted at my father that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. I rarely saw my father again for four years.

My grandfather came home from that same war exhausted from the burdens he had borne and died the next day. In Vietnam, where I formed the closest friendships of my life, some of those friends never came home with me. I hate war. It's terrible beyond imagination.

I'm running for president to keep the country I love safe and prevent other families from risking their loved ones in war as my family has. I will draw on all my experience with the world and its leaders, and all the tools at our disposal -- diplomatic, economic, military, and the power of our ideals -- to build the foundations for a stable and enduring peace.

In America, we change things that need to be changed. Each generation makes its contribution to our greatness. The work that is ours to do is plainly before us; we don't need to search for it.

We need to change the way government does almost everything: from the way we protect our security to the way we compete in the world economy; from the way we respond to disasters to the way we fuel our transportation network; from the way we train our workers to the way we educate our children.

All these functions of government were designed before the rise of the global economy, the information technology revolution, and the end of the Cold War. We have to catch up to history, and we have to change the way we do business in Washington.

The -- the constant partisan rancor that stops us from solving these problems isn't a cause. It's a symptom. It's what happens when people go to Washington to work for themselves and not for you.

Again and again -- again and again, I've worked with members of both parties to fix problems that need to be fixed. That's how I will govern as president. I will reach out my hand to anyone to help me get this country moving again.

My friends ... I have that record and the scars to prove it. Sen. Obama does not.

Instead -- instead of rejecting good ideas because we didn't think of them first, let's use the best ideas from both sides. Instead of fighting over who gets the credit, let's try sharing it.

This amazing country... This amazing country can do anything we put our minds to. I'll ask Democrats and Independents to serve with me. And my administration will set a new standard for transparency and accountability.

We're... We're going to finally start getting things done for the people who are counting on us, and I won't care who gets the credit.

My friends, I've been an imperfect servant of my country for many years. But I've been her servant first, last, and always. And I've never... I've never lived a day, in good times or bad, that I didn't thank God for the privilege.

Long ago, something unusual happened to me that taught me the most valuable lesson of my life. I was blessed by misfortune. I mean that sincerely. I was blessed because I served in the company of heroes and I witnessed a thousand acts of courage, and compassion, and love.

On an October morning, in the Gulf of Tonkin, I prepared for my 23rd mission over North Vietnam. I hadn't any worry I wouldn't come back safe and sound. I thought I was tougher than anyone. I was pretty independent then, too.

I liked to bend a few rules and pick a few fights for the fun of it. But I did it for my own pleasure, my own pride. I didn't think there was a cause that was more important than me.

Then I found myself falling toward the middle of a small lake in the city of Hanoi, with two broken arms, a broken leg, and an angry crowd waiting to greet me. I was dumped in a dark cell and left to die. I didn't feel so tough anymore.

When they discovered my father was an admiral, they took me to a hospital. They couldn't set my bones properly, so they just slapped a cast on me. And when I didn't get better and was down to about a hundred pounds, they put me in a cell with two other Americans.

I couldn't do anything. I couldn't even feed myself. They did it for me. I was beginning to learn the limits of my selfish independence. Those men saved my life. I was in solitary confinement when my captors offered to release me. I knew why. If I went home, they would use it as propaganda to demoralize my fellow prisoners.

Our code said we could only go home in the order of our capture, and there were men who had been shot down long before me. I thought about it, though. I wasn't in great shape, and I missed everything about America, but I turned it down.

A lot of prisoners had it much worse... A lot of -- a lot of prisoners had it a lot worse than I did. I'd been mistreated before, but not as badly as many others. I always liked to strut a little after I'd been roughed up to show the other guys I was tough enough to take it. But after I turned down their offer, they worked me over harder than they ever had before, for a long time, and they broke me.

When they brought me back to my cell, I was hurt and ashamed, and I didn't know how I could face my fellow prisoners. The good man in the cell next door to me, my friend, Bob Craner, saved me. Through taps on a wall, he told me I had fought as hard as I could. No man can always stand alone. And then he told me to get back up and fight again for my country and for the men I had the honor to serve with, because every day they fought for me.

I fell in love with my country when I was a prisoner in someone else's. I loved it not just for the many comforts of life here. I loved it for its decency, for its faith in the wisdom, justice, and goodness of its people. I loved it because it was not just a place, but an idea, a cause worth fighting for. I was never the same again; I wasn't my own man anymore; I was my country's.

I'm not running for president because I think I'm blessed with such personal greatness that history has anointed me to save our country in its hour of need. My country saved me. My country saved me, and I cannot forget it. And I will fight for her for as long as I draw breath, so help me God.

My friends, if you find faults with our country, make it a better one. If you're disappointed with the mistakes of government, join its ranks and work to correct them. Enlist... Enlist in our Armed Forces. Become a teacher. Enter the ministry. Run for public office. Feed a hungry child. Teach an -- an illiterate adult to read. Comfort the afflicted. Defend the rights of the oppressed. Our country will be the better, and you will be the happier, because nothing brings greater happiness in life than to serve a cause greater than yourself.

I'm going to fight for my cause every day as your president. I'm going to fight to make sure every American has every reason to thank God, as I thank him, that I'm an American, a proud citizen of the greatest country on Earth. And with hard work -- with hard work, strong faith, and a little courage, great things are always within our reach.

Fight with me. Fight with me. Fight for what's right for our country. Fight for the ideals and character of a free people. Fight for our children's future. Fight for justice and opportunity for all.

Stand up to defend our country from its enemies. Stand up for each other, for beautiful, blessed, bountiful America. Stand up, stand up, stand up and fight.

Nothing is inevitable here. We're Americans, and we never give up. We never quit. We never hide from history. We make history.

Thank you, and God bless you, and God bless America."

University of Cape Town

## Appendix 9: John McCain's speech #3

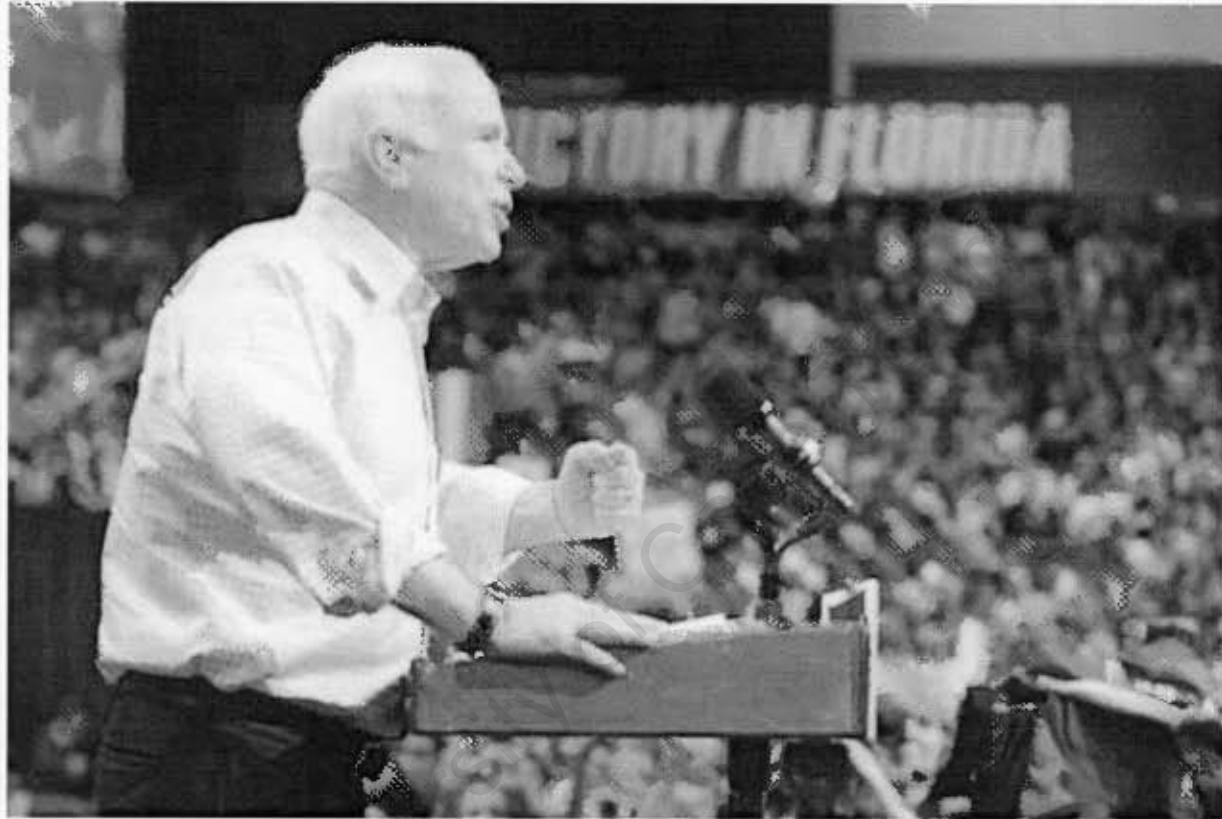
**Ref:** Remarks in Miami, Florida

**Date:** 3 November 2008

**City:** Miami, Florida

**Venue:** University of Miami

**Available online:** <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=84748> Accessed 5 January 2009



"Thank you! My friends, it's official. There's just one day left until we take America in a new direction!

We need to win Florida on November 4th, and with your help - we're going to win here, and bring real change to Washington. I need your help. Volunteer. Knock on doors. Get your neighbors to the polls. With your help, we can win. We need a new direction, and we have to fight for it.

I've been fighting for this country since I was seventeen years old, and I have the scars to prove it. If I'm elected President, I will fight to shake up Washington and take America in a new direction from my first day in office until my last. I'm not afraid of the fight, I'm ready for it.

We're going to cut taxes for working families. And we will cut business taxes to help create jobs, and keep American businesses in America. Senator Obama's massive new tax increase would kill jobs and make a bad economy worse. I'm not going to let that happen. We need pro-growth and pro-jobs economic policies, not pro-government spending programs paid for with higher taxes.

If I'm elected President, I won't spend nearly a trillion dollars more of your money. Senator Obama will. I'm going to make government live on a budget just like you do. And I will veto every single pork barrel bill Congress passes.

I'm not going to spend \$750 billion dollars of your money just bailing out the Wall Street bankers and brokers who got us into this mess. Senator Obama will. I'm going to make sure we take care of the working people who were devastated by the excesses of Wall Street and Washington.

I have a plan to fix our housing market, to get home values up and keep people in their homes. That's the American dream and I'm going to protect it.

## Appendix 10: John McCain's e-mail #1

Date: 16 July 2008  
From: John McCain ([info@johnmccain.com](mailto:info@johnmccain.com))  
To: Carolina Araujo ([carito\\_araujo@hotmail.com](mailto:carito_araujo@hotmail.com))  
Subject: McCain Aces 2: Probably Not The Final Chapter

*A sequel that will more than likely spawn "McCain Aces 3: A New Beginning," "McCain Aces 4: John vs. Barack" and the classic "McCain Aces Part VIII: McCain Takes DC."*

McCain Team,

I'm excited to announce today that our campaign is re-launching the popular 'McCain Aces' group. 'McCain Aces' recognizes those of you who are generously supporting John McCain's campaign.

With any donation today of \$25 or more, your name will be added to the 'McCain Aces' section of our website. Our virtual wall of recognition is a public statement of your support for John McCain and his plan to reform our government and bring prosperity to all Americans.

I cannot stress enough that your immediate support for John McCain is more crucial than ever. Senator Barack Obama is raising record amounts of campaign money and is aided by special interests like big labor and MoveOn.org who are set to spend hundreds of millions of dollars against John McCain. Combined, they will spend nearly one billion dollars to defeat John McCain on Election Day.

Please follow this link to give \$25 or more to become a 'McCain Ace.' Once you've made your contribution, your name will appear at [www.JohnMcCain.com/McCainAces2](http://www.JohnMcCain.com/McCainAces2).

It's always taken courage to stand with John McCain, a man who always puts the needs of his country above his own self interest, and I sincerely hope you will stand with John McCain by becoming a 'McCain Ace' today. Thanks again for your support.

Thanks,

Rick Davis  
Campaign Manager

P.S. Today, it's more important than ever to stand with John McCain. We're re-launching our popular 'McCain Aces' supporter group to give you the opportunity to publicly show your support for John McCain. With any donation of \$25 or more, your name will be added to our website at [www.JohnMcCain.com/McCainAces2](http://www.JohnMcCain.com/McCainAces2). Please join us today!

## Appendix 11: John McCain's e-mail #2

Date: 4 September 2008  
From: John McCain ([info@johnmccain.com](mailto:info@johnmccain.com))  
To: Carolina Araujo ([carito\\_araujo@hotmail.com](mailto:carito_araujo@hotmail.com))  
Subject: McCain Accepts

My Friends,

Tonight, I was deeply honored to accept the Republican nomination for President of the United States. I am proud of my record of service to our country and would be humbled to continue my service as your next president.

I have often said that I owe my country more than she has ever owed me. I am deeply indebted to our country. I never let a single day go by without giving thanks for the freedoms we are so fortunate to have as citizens of the greatest nation on earth. This is just one of the reasons I have always put the needs of our country before my own self-interest.

I'm very fortunate to have found a true partner in this election, Governor Sarah Palin. Governor Palin and I have a lot in common. One thing in particular is the nickname "maverick." I've been a maverick in Washington and I can't wait to have another maverick join me on the ticket and in the White House as we stand up to the status quo that has stifled reform for so long.

My friends, our nation is in deep need of reform. Our government is broken and Governor Palin and I, along with other Reform Republicans, are ready to lead; ready to shake up Washington and bring this needed reform. Our ticket, from top to bottom, is ready to break our country's dependence on foreign oil, ready to reform the tax code and reduce your taxes, and ready to support our men and women in uniform.

Unfortunately, Democratic operatives have chosen to spend this week attacking us. They have stooped lower than anyone could have imagined. And with just 60 days left in this election, we must respond to these attacks with the truth. McCain-Palin Victory 2008 is a fund set up to do just this; to set the record straight and get the truth out to all Americans who support our cause.

Will you help our cause by following this link to make a generous contribution of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1,000 or more? Any amount you can give today will go a long way in responding to these shameful attacks.

The McCain-Palin Campaign and the rest of our ticket for reform are ready to serve our country. With your help and support, we can make this happen on November 4th. Stand with us now and join our team.

Sincerely,

John McCain

P.S. I have spent my life in service to my country and with your help, I will be able to serve her a little while longer as the President of the United States. I have found a dynamic partner in this election, Governor Sarah Palin. We're ready to lead our Party to victory this November and to govern effectively afterward. We ask that you join our cause today by following this link. Thank you.

## Appendix 12: John McCain's e-mail #3

Date: 3 November 2008  
From: John McCain ([info@johnmccain.com](mailto:info@johnmccain.com))  
To: Carolina Araujo ([carito\\_araujo@hotmail.com](mailto:carito_araujo@hotmail.com))  
Subject: Make History Tomorrow

My Friend,

From the time I entered the Naval Academy at age seventeen I have been privileged and honored to serve my country.

Vote Throughout my years of service, I've been faced with challenges where I could have taken the easy way out and given up. But I'm an American and I never give up. Instead, I choose to show courage and stand up and fight for the country I love. Today, I am asking you to stand with me and to fight for our country's future.

Our country faces enormous challenges and our next president must be ready to lead on day one. My lifetime of experience has prepared me to lead our great nation. I'm prepared to bring solutions to our economic challenges, bring our troops home in victory and improve our nation's healthcare system.

Time and time again, my country has saved my life and I owe her more than she has ever owed me. I have chosen to show my gratitude through a life of service to our country and tomorrow, you will have a choice before you.

I humbly ask you to make the choice that will allow me to serve my country a little while longer by casting your vote to elect me as your next President of the United States.

Finally, I ask that you never forget that much has been sacrificed to protect our right to vote. We must never forget those Americans who, with their courage, with their sacrifice, and with their lives, have protected our freedom. It is my great hope that you will exercise your right to vote as an American tomorrow.

I thank you for your kind support, your dedication to our cause, and most importantly I thank you for your vote.

With sincere appreciation,

John McCain

### Appendix 13: Coding frame - Barack Obama's speeches

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Afford your tuition	1
		American renewal	1
		Benefits	3
		Better days	1
		Better government	1
		Bringing us together	1
		Businesses more efficient	1
		Care	14
		Change	23
		Civil rights	1
		Clean coal technology	1
		Come together	2
		Communities	3
		Community	8
		Confidence	3
		Create five million new energy jobs	1
		Create jobs	1
		Create new jobs	1
		Create two million new jobs	1
		Cut taxes for 95% of all working families	1
		Determination	1
		Dignity	1
		Dreams	1
		Empower	2
		Empowerment	1
		Ending poverty	1
		Faith	13
Faith-based groups	7		
Faith-based organisations	1		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Faith-based partners	1
		Feeding the hungry	1
		Gain	1
		Give them more support	1
		Grow this economy	1
		Help	21
		Helping struggling families	1
		Higher Standards	1
		Improve	2
		It's about your life	1
		It's about you	1
		It's about your future	1
		Live comfortably	2
		Long-term care plan	1
		Lower costs	4
		Making a difference	1
		More accountability	1
		More competent government	1
		More money into our schools	1
		More productive lives	1
		New commitment	1
		New ideas	1
		New kind of politics	1
		New leadership	1
		Partnership	10
		Patriots	1
		Pay them more	1
		Progress	2
Protecting Social Security	1		
Proud	2		
Quality care	1		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Renewable sources of energy	1
		Safely harness nuclear power	1
		Safety	1
		Saving our planet	1
		Secure Retirement	2
		Securing your future	1
		Security	9
		Service	5
		Serving your community	1
		Stop discriminating	1
		Strength	5
		Succeed	1
		Support	6
		Together	10
		Unity of purpose	1
		Values	6
		We are one	1
		We are one nation	1
		We can	9
		We will change the world	1
		We will change this country	1
		Wealth	3
		Women's rights	1
		Work together	1
Worker's rights	1		
Yes we can	1		
You can	5		
<b>Total words associated with positive messaging</b>			<b>241</b>
2	Words associated with negative messaging	9/11.	1
		Al Qaeda	1

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
2	Words associated with negative messaging	An absolute disgrace	1
		Bankruptcy	1
		Battlefield	1
		Bin Laden	1
		Bled	1
		Broken politics	1
		Cancer	2
		Crime	2
		Debt	1
		Depression	1
		Devastated	1
		Died	1
		Difficult times	2
		Divide a nation	1
		Dying	1
		Etrenched lobbyists	1
		Extreme poverty	1
		Fear	4
		Gamble your retirement	1
		Genocide	1
		Great Depression	1
		Greed	1
		HIV/AIDS	1
		Home values are falling	1
		Humanitarian crisis	1
		Illness	1
		Injustice	1
		Iraq	3
Iraqi government	2		
Irresponsibility	1		
It's harder to make the mortgage	1		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
2	Words associated with negative messaging	It's harder to retire	1
		It's harder to save	1
		Keep them off the streets	1
		Lost their homes	1
		Lost their jobs	1
		Make us afraid of one another	1
		Mess	2
		Moral crisis	1
		No health care	1
		No one in Washington is watching anyone on Wall Street	1
		Old ideological debates	1
		Out of work	1
		Pension disappears	1
		Poverty	2
		Powerless	1
		Promoting unfair trade agreements	1
		Raise the retirement age	1
		Republican against democrat	1
		Rising costs	1
		Sacrifice	2
		Security crisis	1
		Sick	2
		Struggling	2
		Tired	3
		To tear us apart	1
		Vicious political attacks	1
War	5		
Working harder for less	1		
Worst economic crisis	1		
2	Words associated with negative messaging	You are on your own	2

Democrats are talking about taxing your 401k contributions. I'm going to protect people's retirement, not tax it. I'm going to protect Social Security. I'm going to protect Medicare. And I'm not going to let this Congress tax away your retirement savings.

If I'm elected President, we're going to stop spending \$700 billion to buy oil from countries that don't like us very much. We are going to create millions of new jobs with alternative energies. We will lower the cost of energy with every energy alternative - wind, solar, tidal, hybrid cars, clean coal, safe nuclear power, and environmentally safe offshore drilling. Senator Obama opposes drilling. When I am president, we will drill offshore, and we will drill now.

Senator Obama told Joe the Plumber - or as they say in little Havana: Pepe el Plomero - that he wants to quote "spread the wealth around." He's running to be Redistributionist in Chief. I'm running to be Commander in Chief. Senator Obama is running to spread the wealth. I'm running to create more wealth. Senator Obama is running to punish the successful. I'm running to make everyone successful.

This is the fundamental difference between Senator Obama and me. We both disagree with President Bush on economic policy. The difference is that he thinks taxes have been too low, and I think that spending has been too high. My friends, I'm not George Bush. If Senator Obama wanted to run against George Bush, he should have run four years ago.

If we are going to change Washington, we need a President who has actually fought for change and made it happen. The next President won't have time to get used to the office. We face many challenges here at home, and many enemies abroad in this dangerous world.

Senator Biden has warned that Senator Obama would be tested with an international crisis, and at the same time, Democrats in Congress are talking about deep defense cuts. We have troops fighting in two wars, and their answer is to lower our defenses and put someone in office who our enemies will test.

I've been tested, and I've passed that test. Senator Obama hasn't. He's been wrong during this whole campaign. He said he would sit down unconditionally with dictators like the Castro brothers. When Russia invaded Georgia, Sen. Obama said the invaded country should show restraint. He opposed the surge strategy that has worked in Iraq and will work in Afghanistan. When I am president, we are going to win in Iraq and win in Afghanistan, and our troops will come home with victory and honor.

Let me give you some straight talk about the election. America faces a big choice, and there's just 1 day left. The pundits have written us off, just like they've done before, and my opponent is measuring the drapes in the White House. They may not know it, but the Mac is Back! And we're going to win this election!

I'm an American. And I choose to fight. Don't give up hope. Be strong. Have courage. And fight. Fight for a new direction for our country. Fight for what's right for America.

Fight to clean up the mess of corruption, infighting and selfishness in Washington.

Fight to get our economy out of the ditch and back in the lead.

Fight for the ideals and character of a free people.

Fight for our children's future.

Fight for justice and opportunity for all.

Stand up to defend our country from its enemies.

Stand up, stand up, stand up and fight. America is worth fighting for. Nothing is inevitable here. We never give up. We never quit. We never hide from history. We make history. Now, let's go win this election and get this country moving again."

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
<b>Total words associated with negative messaging</b>			<b>84</b>
3	Words associated with fundraising	0	0
<b>Total words associated with fundraising</b>			<b>0</b>

University of Cape Town

Appendix 14: Coding frame - Barack Obama's e-mails

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Bring our troops home	1
		Courage	3
		Fight for our country	2
		Freedom	2
		Hope	2
		Improve our nation's health	1
		Prosperity	1
		Reduce your taxes	1
		Reform	7
		Service	5
		Solutions	1
		Truth	2
		Victory	3
<b>Total words associated with positive messaging</b>			<b>31</b>
2	Words associated with negative messaging	Attacks	3
		Challenges	3
		Defeat	1
		Dependence	1
		Our Government is broken	1
		Sacrifice	2
<b>Total words associated with negative messaging</b>			<b>11</b>
3	Words associated with fundraising	Contribution	2
		Dollars	2
		Donation	2
		Give	4
		Money	1
		Raising record amounts	1
		Support	10
<b>Total words associated with fundraising</b>			<b>22</b>

## Appendix 15: Coding frame - John McCain's speeches

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Accountability	1
		Better	10
		Better days	1
		Better technologies for tracking criminals	1
		Brave	2
		Change	15
		Change is coming	1
		Civil right's	1
		Clean-coal technology	2
		Commitment to judicial restraint	1
		Communities	4
		Compassion	3
		Confidence	2
		Courage	5
		Create jobs	5
		Cut taxes	2
		Cyber security	1
		Decent wage	1
		Empower	1
		Equal	2
		Excellence in the law	1
		Faith	3
		Fight for your future	1
Fighting crime	1		
Fix our housing market	1		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Fraternity	1
		Free	6
		Get home values up	1
		God-given potential	1
		Goodness	1
		Happiness	1
		Honour	8
		I fight for Americans	1
		I fight for you	1
		I work for you	1
		Improve	2
		Independent	3
		Invest	3
		Justice	17
		Keep people in their homes	1
		Law enforcement	15
		Liberty	1
		Low taxes	3
		Lower the cost of energy	1
		Neighborhoods	2
		Opportunities	8
		Patriot	1
		Peace	7
		Personal greatness	1
Prosperity	3		
Protecting innocent citizens	1		
Qualified instructors	1		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Rescue our economy	1
		Respect	3
		Reward good teachers	1
		Safe	6
		Safer	4
		Safety	5
		Saving lives	1
		Security	5
		Service	4
		Stand on your side	1
		Strength	3
		Stricter sentencing	1
		Strong	3
		Success	7
		Successful	2
		Transparency	1
		Trust	7
		Values	3
		Victory	1
		Vigorous enforcement	1
We are all Americans	2		
We make history	2		
Wealth	4		
Wisdom	2		
<b>Total words associated with positive messaging</b>			<b>230</b>
2	Words associated with negative messaging	9/11.	1
		Afghanistan	2
		Afraid	2
		Aggression	1
		Al Qaeda	1
		Anger	1

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
2	Words associated with negative messaging	Angry	1
		Attack	6
		Birth defects	1
		Bitterness	2
		Bombed	1
		Child exploitation	1
		Child rapists	1
		Cold War	2
		Corrupt	1
		Corruption	6
		Crime	21
		Criminal	18
		Dangerous	6
		Dark days	1
		Demoralise	2
		Dependance	1
		Die	1
		Died	2
		Disasters	1
		Drugs	1
		Enemies	5
		Entrenched bureaucrats	1
		Evil	1
		Failed school bureaucracies	1
		Failure	1
		Fear	1
		Fight	35
		Fighting	7
Firearms	2		
Gang	5		
Georgia	2		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
2	Words associated with negative messaging	Hate	1
		Hostile	1
		International crisis	1
		Internet predators	1
		Intimidate	1
		Iran	1
		Iraq	4
		Land mines	1
		Make a bad economy worse	1
		Mess	2
		Nuclear weapons	1
		Offenders	4
		Oppressed	1
		Poverty	1
		Predator	2
		Prison	7
		Prisoner	7
		Rancor	1
		Rape	1
		Russia	4
		Scars	2
		Selfish independence	1
		Sex offenders	2
		Sexual assault	1
		Solitary confinement	1
		Struggle to by groceries	1
		Struggling to put food on the table	1
		Terrible	1
Terrorism	1		
Terrorist	1		

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
2	Words associated with negative messaging	Terrorist attacks	1
		Terrorist cells	1
		The excesses of Wall Street	1
		Thread	6
		Tough problems	2
		Tough times	1
		Troops fighting in two wars	1
		Victims	7
		Vietnam	2
		Violence	3
		Violent	8
		War	8
		Worried about keeping your job	1
		Worst attack in American history	1
		Worst attack in American soil	1
<b>Total words associated with negative messaging</b>			<b>244</b>
3	Words associated with fundraising	0	0
<b>Total words associated with negative messaging</b>			<b>0</b>

**Appendix 16: Coding frame - John McCain's e-mails**

Code	Category	Word-Theme	Frequency
1	Words associated with positive messaging	Bring our troops home	1
		Courage	3
		Fight for our country	2
		Freedom	2
		Hope	2
		Improve our nation's health	1
		Prosperity	1
		Reduce your taxes	1
		Reform	7
		Service	5
		Solutions	1
		Truth	2
		Victory	3
<b>Total words associated with positive messaging</b>			<b>31</b>
2	Words associated with negative messaging	Attacks	3
		Challenges	3
		Defeat	1
		Dependence	1
		Our Government is broken	1
		Sacrifice	2
<b>Total words associated with negative messaging</b>			<b>11</b>
3	Words associated with fundraising	Contribution	2
		Dollars	2
		Donation	2
		Give	4
		Money	1
		Raising record amounts	1
		Support	10
<b>Total words associated with fundraising</b>			<b>22</b>

Appendix 17: Barack Obama's merchandising

 **OBAMASTORE**

**CLEARANCE SALE**  
*up to*  
**50% OFF**



Appendix 18: Barack Obama's merchandising

 OBAMASTORE

