

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA**

**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

N° :.....



**DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION**

Rise of Digital Media in American Presidential

Election Campaigns

The case of

Barack Obama's 2008 Campaign

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master Degree**

Submitted By: Selma BASTI

Supervised by: Mourad TOUATI

Farhet SAFSAF

Academic Year : 2016 /2017

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We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor *TOUATI Mourad* to accept directing this work.

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Dedication

To family and friends

Safsaf & Basti

Abstract

This dissertation, entitled *The Rise of Digital Media in American Presidential Election Campaigns Barack Obama's 2008 Campaign*, consists of two chapters. It aims at examining the role Mass Media play in presidential election campaigns in the United States of America (USA). First, it traces back the general development of media forms in the American society and examines how this development influenced presidential campaigning through history. This research mainly focuses on the three widely used media forms in the American society, newspapers, Television and the internet. Further, by applying **Media Ecology Theory**, the study investigates how Obama's 2008 election campaign relied on the New Media (the internet) and how the strategic use resulted in an unprecedented movement-like Campaign.

Key words: Digital Media, development of media forms, Media Ecology Theory, Obama's 2008 election campaign.

المخلص

هذه الأطروحة ، بعنوان بروز الإعلام الرقمي في الحملات الانتخابية الأمريكية دراسة حالة حملة باراك اوباما 2008، تتكون من فصلين وتهدف إلى دراسة دور الإعلام في الحملات الانتخابية الأمريكية .أولاً، هذه الأطروحة تفتني التطور العام لمختلف أشكال الإعلام في المجتمع الأمريكي وتدرس أثر هذا التطور على الحملات الانتخابية الأمريكية عبر التاريخ .كما تركز على ثلاثة أشكال لوسائل الإعلام في المجتمع الأمريكي وهي :الصحف ،التلفاز والانترنت .علاوة على ذلك ، ومن خلال تطبيق نظرية "البيئة الإعلامية" يدرس هذا البحث كيف اعتمدت حملة باراك اوباما الانتخابية لعام 2008 على الوسائل الحديثة (الانترنت) وكيف أدى هذا الاستخدام الإستراتيجي يجعلها حملة لم يسبق لها مثيل .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإعلام الرقمي ،تطور وسائل الإعلام ، نظرية "البيئة الإعلامية" ، حملة باراك اوباما 2008.

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General Introduction

Media has been exerting much power on so many levels, especially the political sphere, which can be traced to the very early years of the United States, when the founders gave the newspaper industry its special privileges. Fast forward to the twentieth century, broadcasting was normalized and listeners, for the first time, went out of the direct form of interpersonal communication between them and their counterparts. To this point of time, media pervaded Americans' procedural conduct, but yet to fully grow in complexity. In 1970's, Network anchormen and cable talk-shows were better recognized than the most prominent figures of policy making. Although electoral participation is on a decline, subjection to some output of news is almost universal. In the first half of the 2000's, internet activism began to assume a solid foothold and connection has now proceeded towards a two-way dialogues instead of a one-way broadcasts.

Digital media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, launched afterwards in a time that should certainly be regarded as revolutionary leap in the direction of big data politics. During presidential election campaigns, digital media has become the stage where the candidates express themselves, prove their potentials, and share their programs. Furthermore, they open the door for a larger support which is embodied in raising funds, assembling the "battlefield" volunteers, and increasing the number of votes. Candidates need a smooth communication with their supporters far from any press intervention or influence, a need that is met by the 20th century new media.

The successful campaign Barak Obama ran in 2008 is the best illustration of what is said above. The Democrat's candidate broke the norms and old conventions concerning election campaigns and politics. The Obama campaign was unique at different levels. For, it combined the use of digital media and the multiple efforts of

civic movements' activists. In other words, the campaign organizers made sure that the information circulation is secure and accurate, aiming at convincing and gaining new voters, standing for voters' concerns, and strengthening connections between all individuals involved in the campaign.

Statement of the Problem

During their election campaigns at any level, candidates tend to make use of any possible means just to increase the number of their voters. The use of media in American elections is huge and growing. Many researches were conducted to unveil the role of the fourth estate "Media" in presidential elections in the United States of America. Media were swinging between several roles; from being a watchdog to an independent observer, and to a better stage which is influencing the public opinion.

Other researches were also concerned with how Obama revolutionized election campaigning with his use of social media. However, fewer researches, if not none, were conducted on how social media together with civic movements could make an evolution in election campaigns. Therefore, this research will try to investigate Obama's campaign of 2008 since it was a movement-like campaign that started a new age in presidential election campaigns in the United States of America.

Research Questions

The main question of this research is the way Obama succeeded in revolutionizing the election campaign both through the initiative use of digital media and civic engagement in political sphere?

To answer this question, the following sub-research questions need to be answered:

- 1- In what ways can a new medium affect the choice of American voters?
- 2- How did the new media of this era shift the power from old lobbies to common people?

3- What was exactly attractive to American voters during this campaign?

4- How could Obama's campaign organizers reach this degree of perfection in their use of digital media?

5- What made Obama's campaign a movement-like campaign?

Significance of the Research

In the recent years, attention has been paid to the political life in the USA internally and externally. A commander in chief of the USA is worldwide inquiry for many years and the promoter of this inquiry seemingly is media. Historians and politicians have different views about media, among which there are supporters considering it as the guardian of democracy and opposers claiming that media represent solely the owners' opinions. The main objective of this research is providing explanations about the use of media and social movements as means merely to win a presidential election, regardless to the question whether the candidate is capable of fulfilling the requirements needed to be a president or not . There are other sub-objectives that are concerned with answering the research questions for a further understanding of the issue.

Methodology

The study of media, technology, and communication and how they affect human environments is called "**Media Ecology Theory**" which was proposed by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. The word ecology "implies the study of environments: their structure, content, and impact on people. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore further claimed that each time period has an important medium that defines the essence of the society, which correspond to the dominant mode of communication of the time respectively."¹ In this study, we will apply this theory as Obama's

¹ https://www.revolvy.com/topic/Media%20ecology&item_type=topic

election campaign occurred at the same time the new media comprising tools like: Facebook, twitter and “social networks ushered in new media ecology.”²

Qualitative and some other quantitative data can be used in the collection of historical information. This combination ensures that the limitation of one type of data is balanced by the strengths of the other.

A variety of resources will be used to obtain both primary and secondary information. Documentation is the main source of evidence to be used. The types of documentation to be collected and analyzed for this study include: Pew research reports, blog posts, YouTube videos, posting from social media, text speeches ...etc. Social media is the centre of this research; all social media pages are monitored and documented.

Background of the Study

The aim behind writing this section is to give an overview of the literature and various previous studies about the use of media in political election campaigns. A discussion is provided about the use of old-media forms, and then how technology helped Obama to revolutionize campaigning. This discussion of the existing literature about the research is the foundation of our work.

As a matter of fact, political campaigning changed overtime, a study by Samer EL-Chahabi about “*The Evolving Role of Media in Elections*” shows that the media have always been “recognized as a cornerstone of democracy”. According to EL-Chahabi, the traditional media (print and broadcast) “when free and balanced foster transparency and dissemination of important election information.” On the other hand, the rise of new media also “provides avenues and possibilities of participation citizenship, information and knowledge sharing, and inclusion and

²http://www.media-ecology.org/media_ecology/

empowerment. Both form, for him, can play “a vital watchdog role”, and can be used as a “campaign platformultimately strengthening democracy.”

In order to understand how Obama revolutionized the election campaigning, one should highlight the difference between the old and new forms of media. Jeff Jarvis, in his book *“What Would Google Do?”* asserts that old media sources like radio and newspapers have single author broadcasting their opinions and stories to multiple people. New media, on the other hand, allows for anyone to share his thoughts and news with the others, shifting the paradigm from that of a “one to many” structure to a collective and interactive model of media and information consumption.

Therefore, Obama had successfully used social media in his campaigning. Different platforms like, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter specifically were employed to transmit Obama’s opinion and views to his followers. Diana OWENS’s article *“the Campaign and the Media”* largely emphasizes that “the 2008 Presidential campaign was a groundbreaking election for media”. This election “marked the beginning of the third phase in the evolution of election media, new media, new politics.” Owen adds that what was the most notable development in 2008 election was the use of social media platform which had substantial influence on elections.

However, the effective campaign speeches, alongside with the use of digital media, helped Obama to win the support of many Americans and the praise of the world community. Alfred Hornung confirms that slogans like: “yes, we can” inspired people. Further, Hornung adds that an important reason for the election of a “colored president” is his relation with the Civil Rights Movement. It is no coincidence that managers of his campaign used a T-shirt design in which Martin Luther King figure appears behind Obama’s portrait.

Finally, a study closest to ours “ *The Agenda setting Effect of the US Mass Media During the 2008 Presidential Campaign*” by Thomas Vangshardt gives reasons for which the 2008 election would be “enticing case for yet another study”. Simply put, the 2008 election was historical, first, because Obama was the first African American president. In addition it saw record high turnout which has not been higher since John F. Kennedy ran for president. Finally, it was historical because of its unprecedented convergence between older media and newer media or it is the first “hybrid Campaign”.

Although literature review documents a number of scholarly papers and books that generally focus on Obama’s election, none really answer our question. Building on this academic literature, this paper focuses mainly on Obama’s success in changing the flow of power concerning the media use and his focus on voter involvement and engagement as an integral part of his campaign.

Chapter One

Communication has a crucial role in every aspect of human life. It is the process of transmitting information to the public. Like mankind has evolved through time, means of communication also have followed. Similarly, politics is nothing but communication Karl W. Deutsche, a political scientist, state (Meyer). Communication is established through channels to transmit the messages, these channels are mass media.

The mass media are all the tools and channels of communication for the transformation of information, concepts, and ideas to the public (“Mass Media”). The different forms of media that are known are: Television, books, newspapers, pictures, magazines, radio, internet and recordings. Communicating information through mass media is highly linked to advanced societies as Marshall McLuhan calls media extensions of man. Earlier in the history of United States of America, the importance of media was given in the First Amendment to the constitution which states that: “Congress shall make no law.....abridging the freedom of speech or the press.” In fact, the American media have travelled a long road. In this section we will discuss the three widely used media forms in America and their possible impact on society. These forms are: newspapers, television and internet

I. Media (R) Evolution

I.1.Forms of Media

I.1.1The Printed Media

Among the highly influential forms of media in the USA are newspapers. Newspaper was the first medium that appeared for the purpose of communicating the new information to the public. The "**Publick Occurrences**" was the first newspaper published in colonial America in 1690, but the British government suppressed it so it only lasted for one day. In 1704, the first published newspapers in

the US were called “Boston News-Letter.” This one -page -long newspaper was weekly published. In fact, newspapers of this time were also published to promote support for different policies and ratifying the constitution. By the 1820s, the number of magazines and newspapers has dramatically risen. Around 25 daily newspapers and more than 400 weeklies were published. In 1841, "The New York Tribune" was founded by Horace Greeley and has become the nation’s most influential newspaper. Sharpe competition resulted in “yellow journalism.” Editors aimed at attracting readers that led to sensational and sometimes inaccurate reporting ("The Media and their Message"). However, editors later realized that the best way to attract readers is delivering news without bias and giving them all the sides of a story.

Nowadays, the sale of newspapers is falling. People are more and more looking for news information online and avoid print papers. Younger generations do not seem interested in reading. The average age of reading is 55 and the number is still rising (Dye *et al* 94).

The number of Americans who are using the newspapers is decreasing which is described as problematic, according to the Pew Research Center. A survey by the center found that 36% of US adults got election news from newspapers which are the lower portion than other portions using other different mass media forms. Additionally, more newspapers companies saw a huge loss in 2005. Since 2005, the independent American newspapers market value witnessed a 42% decline (Barthel).

I.1.2. The Broadcasted Media

Perhaps, Television has been ranked as the most common medium of communication and entertainment. With all technological developments, its influence on politics, society and culture is still high. It has always played a crucial

role in the political process especially national election campaigns framing (“Mass Media”). Early television was primitive, and it became more powerful after World War Two. The period between 1952 and 1955 is referred to as the Golden Age, a time period during which meant a big explosion of TV sets. Statistics demonstrate that the number of families who owned televisions has risen from four millions in 1950 to forty one millions in 1958 (Davis 2) . The number of Americans owning TV sets kept increasing with the evolution of cable televising. This medium became the most common believable source of news. Viewers had an abundance of options and choices as cable services gained more popularity. Since 1950, an average household watches television has almost doubled.

Some would even argue that television is the most important medium. It is, in fact, the main source of information for the majority of the public. It is a unique medium; it broadcasts visual content which affects emotional appeals and can show news live from all over the world. Television was a real revolution in communication.

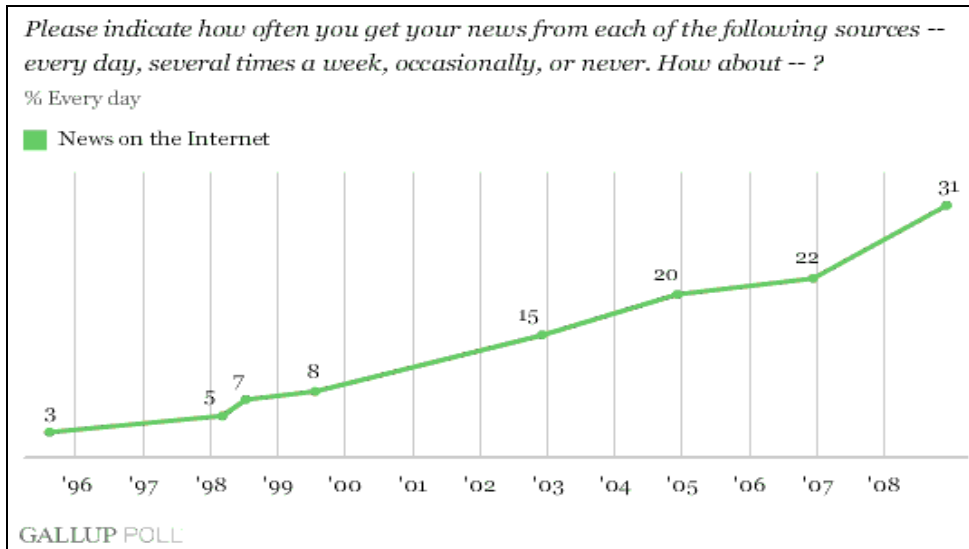
I.1.3. the Digital Media

Another very important type of media is the internet. In the second half of the twentieth century, people have become worldwide connected. With the onset of personal computers and the improvement of graphic programs, the internet gained more popularity. In 1990, Tim Berners -Lee came up with the idea of WWW (World Wide Web). Recently, the inventions of smart phones brought another major change in the lives of people. Now, by a simple click of botton information can be delivered. John Pavlik discussing the internet’s future role states that in order to boost and promote the public engagement in the ongoing political process, it is vital to use the latest technologies to keep the public well informed (Denton 168).

Though television always remains far in the lead as a primary source of information, the internet, however, overtook print for getting news in the USA. A study by the Pew Research Center reveals that Americans prefer getting news from a screen, “TV remains dominant” and it is followed by digital. Whereas the study further shows that news watchers prefer Television, and even news readers have migrated online (Mitchell *et al*).

In fact, the internet succeeded to overpass the radio and the print. In 2006, Washington’s Post reporters John F. Harris and Jim VandeHei left the newspaper and started “*Politico*”, a politically centered website. They were aiming at establishing an innovative news getting way. This site has over 600.00 monthly visitors and about a hundred staff members only in four years (“Understanding Media and Culture”).

Similarly, another study by Gallup, an American research-based, global performance management consulting company, entitled “*Cable, Internet News Sources Growing in Popularity*”, has found that the internet has shown the biggest increase in popularity as a news source. The study demonstrates that among 31% of Americans said that the internet is used as a daily news source. The following chart demonstrates how the internet has increasingly become a primary news source (Morales).



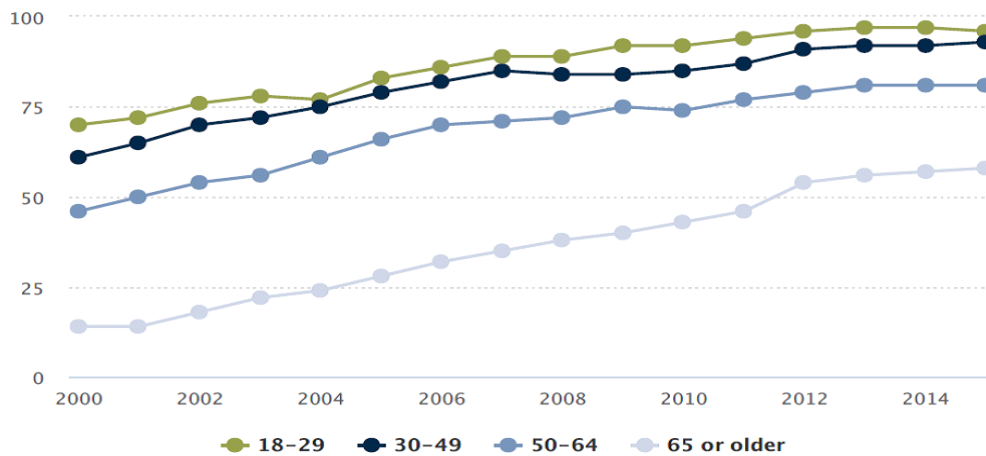
Graph 1: Daily News Sources³

It is possible to say that the use of Internet increased with 50% since 2006 and more than 100% increase since 2002. Gallup found that each time a survey has been conducted since 1995, the use of internet as news source has increased (Morales).

However, it seems very important to say that there is a technology gap in the USA. Age and class play a crucial role in internet access. It has become an integral part of adults' everyday life as the number increased to 84% since 2002. . More specifically, young adults ages 18-29 have always “outpaced” all older groups. However, the older adults showed lower levels of internet use. On the other hand, in 2000 only 14% of seniors used the internet while 58% do today, the Pew Research Center reports after conducting national surveys (Perrin and Duggan).

³<http://www.gallup.com/poll/113314/cable-internet-news-sources-growing-popularity.aspx>

Among all American adults, the % who use the internet, by age



Graph 2: Internet Access by Age⁴

It might be said that amongst the strongest indicators of internet use is the educational level. The Same study further displays that unlike those without a college degree, a huge number of the well-educated has frequently been online (Perrin and Duggan).

I.2. Functions of Media

Media are called the fourth estate. They are becoming more powerful than ever before. The media are essential to democracy and without them democratic elections are unattainable. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Harvard University, describing the power of media states that in Western countries, the power of the executive, legislative and judiciary are overpassed by the power of the press. Media are exerting a huge impact on individuals in society. In this section we will be talking about some of the functions of media in general and some political functions used generally in elections by candidates to influence the audience of voters.

⁴[http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015/)

[2015/](http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/06/26/americans-internet-access-2000-2015/)

I.2-1- Media as Watchdog

One vital function of media is called “watchdog”. Media are important to the transparency of democratic processes. The role of mass media is to provide the people with the information and the evidence of any governmental abuses, inefficiency or outlawed activities and practices (“The Functions of the Mass Media”). For the benefit of the public, usually, journalists control stories through the so called “watchdog journalism.” Watchdog journalism is usually defined as “Independent scrutiny by the press of the activities of government, business and other public institutions, with an aim documenting, questioning and investigating those activities to provide publics and officials with timely information on issues of public concerns” (“Culture and Media”).

Perhaps, the Watergate is the most famous example of media’s watchdog role in earlier history of America. The Washington Post journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Berstein of played an important role in revealing information about the Watergate scandal that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon (“Understanding Media and Culture”).

I.2-2- Media as a Campaign Platform

Candidates and parties are supposed to provide the public voters with all the information linked to the election including their political agendas and future plans. Campaigning is done through the use of mass media by employing different mechanisms ranging from social media tools, to TV debates, political advertising and many others (“Media and Elections”).

The media are tools of communication between the politicians and the public and among the politicians themselves. Swanson and Mancini state : “*Politicians seek to reach out to the public with their images, election platforms, and views on*

election issues; in turn, the public in various ways voices, to and through the media, its views on the candidates and parties contesting the election” (130).

I.2-3- Persuasion and Propaganda

A third function of media is political persuasion. This function is based on the tendency to realize a real influence on the way of thinking behavior of user. Persuasion is defined as direct efforts to change people’s attitude and behavior through communication. It is meant to change and influence people’s opinions, beliefs, perceptions, values and behaviors. Presidential candidates, political parties, corporations, unions, and governments all try to persuade public to accept their political beliefs (Dye and Zeigler 13).

Persuasion can be in the form of propaganda. Propaganda as a concept aims at disseminating ideas to the public in order to influence them (Ejupi and Siljanovska). Most of the time, the word propaganda has a negative meaning because it refers to spreading several types of information but only with a particular aim .The term is also linked to manipulation of the large audience for the benefit of just one person (Dye and Zeigler 13).

The word propaganda is defined by Encyclopedia Britannica as the process through which the public is influenced by manipulating the information. However, whatever the form of propaganda is, positive or negative, it depends on the motivation of those using it and the understanding of those who receives it. Earlier in American history, the American Revolution used propaganda to disseminate its messages through the use of newspapers and pamphlets that glorified the sacrifices at Lexington and Concord. Another example would be Benjamin Franklin’s famous illustration of a severed snake with the caption “**Join, or Die**” to emphasize the unity of the colonies is an early testament to the power of the use of print propaganda ("Media and Elections").Actually, persuasion and propaganda are two

powerful weapons in the hands of politicians. (For more details, See **Appendix 1: Join, or Die Snake**).

I.3- Society in the Digital Age

I.3-1-Digital Media and American Social Life

Internet has become an essential source of knowledge for intellectual and non-intellectual individuals, from the time when computers were considered unusual devices to nowadays' developed phones and tablets (Anderson and Rainie). To some extent, the digital technologies interfere in all the aspects of life including work and education, for this reason, these technologies will surpass the old inventions of writing and reading in their influence on the culture of individuals. Almost 4.8 billion of the world's population owns a mobile phone (Daniells). Media exert a huge impact on humans transforming the tiny details of the person's life as well as his broader activities (Couldry 23). It is believed that a big portion of Americans are online on a daily basis whether through smart phones, tablets, or computers. Furthermore, The Americans' use of technology appears to be constantly changing.

In a digitalized U.S "...it is the pictures of people standing in the middle of a crowd, captivated by what they are reading on their smart phone that best symbolizes the 21st century subject," a picture that summarizes and describes the life of an ordinary American individual (Furedi). Digital media became a corner stone in the American culture. Personal technology usage reached its peak in the recent years, evidenced by the approximately 70 percent of U.S householders who had Internet access in 2009 (people-press.org).

Internet is considered "as means for individual discovery, collective contact and guaranteed mutual surveillance" (Couldry 19). Americans spend 2.7 hours on their mobile phones checking on various social media feeds; that extent of time is

presumed to be double the amount of time they devote for eating and a third of the time asleep (Hepburn Aden). Mark Zuckerberg in 2007 described Facebook as “a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family, and coworkers. The company develops technologies that facilitate the sharing of information through the social graph, the digital mapping of people’s real-world social connections” (Parr).

Simultaneously, Twitter describes itself as “a real time information network that connects you to the latest information about what you find interesting” (twitter.com). Users are left free to choose whoever they want to follow and as a result create their own Twitter circle with whom they can communicate. The United States is known for its harsh sometimes deadly climate change, it is important to pass the word in the right time as quickly as possible which may save many lives; it is Twitter beside other social media that play a crucial role in informing about tornados, floods, or earthquakes.

Dina Fine Maron wrote: “when Hurricane Katrina ravaged the U.S. Gulf Coast in 2005, Facebook was the new kid on the block”. The popularity of Facebook is growing because of such services the social medium provides. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in their report about reaction on hurricane Sandy said that although mobile services were lost when the hurricane reached its peak, Sandy-related tweets sent by users exceeded twenty million (Maron). Digital media became a necessity and a fundamental source of obtaining information and spreading it.

Perhaps, a lot of scholars may agree on the significance of digital media in the Americans’ day-to-day life. For the increasing number of American who are daily using electronic devices. Villegas wrote “...we are texting on our cell phones, chatting over Facebook, or watching our favorite TV shows, we are continuously

interacting with media. This goes for children as well, if not more so” (Villegas 1, 3). Children’s addiction to using digital media seems to be as a result of being exposed to devices, such as laptops, phones, and iPods, with a guaranteed access to internet.

The bedrooms of American children represent an indoors hi-tech bulb that isolates them from interacting in the actual world. Villegas claims that “similar to television, computers and Internet also have the potential of promoting independence and singularity or being used as a means of socializing and connecting” (Villegas 5). A big number of children nowadays own a computer in their bedroom or at least a smart phone that keeps them connected to their virtual private life. They consider the media that surround them as pillars for the walls that may keep adults away and as means of a rapid communication with their friends (Furedi). What about adult America parents in particular, have their lives transformed as well?

American parents appreciate much of the services that digital media can provide perfectly. “Studies show the increased use of TV as baby-sitter while parents do their housework” (Castells 401). A mother commented about the new technologies praising them: “oh it’s just a phenomenal babysitter. If everybody in the house needs to be doing things, it’s fabulous” (Strasburger, Wilson, and Jordan 499). Most of American mothers if not all may agree with this one mother because all they need to reach is satisfaction inside a calm house after a long day. In a restaurant, it is common to see a child holding a smart phone and generally playing games (Villegas 6). This practice is spreading all over the States.

Parents consider social media as an appropriate tool to strengthen family ties, control their children’s use of media, and most of the time exchange experiences about parenthood with friends and relatives. “Apprehensions about children’s health

and safety, particularly regarding sex predators have led to new limits imposed on children's freedom to explore the outdoors" (Furedi). Parents prefer having their children at a home full of technological appliances rather than allowing them to go outside, in order to protect them from any violent offensive attitudes that they might encounter. However, enlarging one's online connections for parents and singles can result in more chances of finding a suitable job, solving emotional problems, or collaborating during crisis.

Results of multiple researches have shown that digital media users who actively interact are most of the time doing the same in real life. It is well known that the distinguished characteristic of social media is the possibility of an immediate reaction unlike traditional media such as TV, radio, and newspapers. It became even easier and cheaper to be a social activist according to Papic and Noonan who wrote: "Instead of attending meetings, workshops, and rallies, uncommitted individuals can join a Facebook group or follow a Twitter feed at home, which gives them some measure of anonymity but does not necessarily motivate them to physically hit the streets and provide fuel for revolution" (Papic and Noonan). Social engagement is about finding people who are mind-like i.e. thinking in somehow a similar way which is a fundamental element in most modern social networks (Mainwaring).

Online activism has its own way of functioning which is probably more effective than its old version. Meetings can be planned and the word may be passed through members smoothly, activists are always posted and informed about any updates, and a continuous attraction of new comers. Participants in such experience are more likely to develop their social interaction skills; since it starts in the virtual life far from any kind of pressure then it moves to the real life ground.

Castells claimed that “in such a world of uncontrolled, confusing change, people tend to regroup around primary identities: religious, ethnic, territorial, national” (Castells 3). In their search for social security, minorities in a melting pot society tend to make groups that stand on shared guiding beliefs and fundamental principles. In this case, the timeless and boundless digital media are the most appropriate stage to gather and to make known of one’s problems. “Approximately two-thirds (65%) of black Americans report having a core social network that is composed entirely of people who are also black, while nearly one-quarter (23%) say their network includes a mix of people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds” (Cox *et al*). The idea of belonging to a certain group of folks on the basis of race and ethnicity exists in the American real life as the study shows.

Recently, the #Black Lives Matter movement was founded by Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza. They describe themselves as “an online forum intended to build connections between Black people and our allies to fight anti-Black racism, to spark dialogue among Black people, and to facilitate the types of connections necessary to encourage social action and engagement” (Cullors *et al*). It appeared as a response to the escalating violence towards the African Americans by white police officers. Through mobilization of people using new social media, activists could, in a short period of time, gain the support of thousands of Americans and even from the white community. They established a well-constructed platform that advocates their cause. “There are now over 26 Black Lives Matter chapters across the United States. From one heartfelt Facebook post, it has spawned a new civil rights movement” (Day). In the 21st century, the impossible is not digital.

I.3-2 Digitalization of the American Economy

Digital media has defined economy in a way that makes it more virtual. "...it is about who controls technology. And as of the moment, that continues to largely be the United States". The leading power of the world politics, military, and economics is the nation where numbers of technology usage are in a constant increase. The United States is fundamentally rich of raw materials but that is not the only reason for her strength; another reason is the recognition of the significance of integrating intelligent technologies in industry. Certainly, the American military power is dependent into a far extent on economics (Ford 72). This latter is a decisive field because it is the country's source of interior prosperity and exterior dominion.

The digital age brought new concepts concerning occupations according to Andrew Keen, whom says "in our Web 2.0 world, the typewriters aren't quite typewriters, but rather net-worked personal computers, and Internet users" are the new generations' name (2). Web 2.0 aims at "bringing more truth to more people, more depth of information, more global perspective, more unbiased opinion from dispassionate observers". It aims at informing a larger audience with more truthful and profound data and different views (Keen 16). "The global process of urbanization that we are experiencing in the early twenty-century is characterized by the formation of a new spatial architecture made up of global networks connecting major metropolitan regions and their areas of influence" (Castells 32). Most of Americans are remarkably preoccupied with digital media, a factor that in a way or another would influence American economics in terms of different industries such as marketing, shopping, and movie making.

Many users of Internet worldwide including Americans may think that web sites provide most of the services for free which turns to be completely the opposite.

“The new winners –Google, YouTube, MySpace, Craigslist, and the hundreds of start-ups all hungry for a piece of the Web 2.0 pie- are unlikely to fill the shoes of the industries they are helping to undermine...”. These new monitors of money in the United States appear to be building powerful kingdoms and this is “in terms of products produced, jobs created, revenue generated, or benefits conferred” (Keen 16, 27). “The network has transformed existing industries, while also driving the emergence of new ones, particularly those that are more knowledge-based or what we might term ‘creative’” (White 78). Moreover, the digital technologies of the time being are suggesting different environment for money making which is based on the amount of time that can be spent online. Chris Anderson is convinced that “digital economics are leading to new markets and marketplaces” (67).

Web 2.0 is the new environ of the new markets and market places. Huge amounts of money are invested in what can be called “a magnified version of Google.” It is a shift towards innovation and modernity that is more profitable. For example, in 2006 over \$500 million were spent in Web 2.0, according to Andrew Keen, mainly in social media such as Bebo, Zimbra, Facebook, Six Apart, and Xanga; nonetheless, all of them provide a free user-generated content. This draws us to ask about the actual value of these social networks that suddenly became in control of America’s economy. Web 2.0 networks provide Americans with no more than a space to tell about their feelings, a link to keep contact with the loved ones, and constant updates concerning fields of interest, but the simplicity of these services somehow contradicts with the fact that these social networks are worth thousands of hundreds of dollars (Keen 136). Commercials had and are still having a key role in rising companies’ rates of benefit but there must be some change under the dominion of the digital technologies.

The chief source of revenue of today's web entrepreneurs is into a far extent through advertising goods, services, and sometimes ideologies. In addition, they are considered entities living in other entities; in other words, web companies are not creating or generating something of their own. Instead, most of the Silicon Valley firms provide an already existing material such as Time Warner and Disney which produce movies, music, and magazines (Keen 135). Andrew White questions the economic methodology of web companies such as Facebook and Google if they do not charge their users. He argues that "the first important thing to note is that those companies that do not charge consumers also do not pay contributors for content. Instead, they make money from advertising" (White 93).

Google nowadays controls mostly everything even conceptualization. "...A company's brand is not what the company says it is, but what Google says it is" (Anderson 109). Seemingly, Anderson's claim is legitimate, given to the fact that the giant search engine Google directs and panels the tastes and interests of its thousands of daily users through offering multiple suggestions. According to Keen, "the Silicon Valley company took \$6.139 billion in revenue and \$1.465 billion in profits in 2005". They are extraordinary statistics regarding the efforts of those tech people whom Keen called 'parasite'. The American web company has made its way to uniqueness crashing its opponents, Anderson describes it as an entity that "taps the wisdom of the crowd itself and turns a mass of incoherence into the closest thing to an oracle the world has ever seen" (Keen 135, 126).

Castells asserts the idea of online shopping being in a state of growth, not against the shopping malls but in coordination with them. He adds "...e-commerce, with billions of dollars of on-line sales in the US over Christmas 1999, is a major, new development." Today's online shopping is widening its circle to include all kinds of goods, that with a simple click one can get their necessary and luxury

demands. This new way of shopping is contributing to the \$12 trillion American economy with the tenth. For example, the brand of Barnes & Noble has a powerful digital platform. Customers can get same-day delivery in Manhattan where the brand has many megastores (Anderson 59). In the digital era, it is common for big companies to have their virtual market which is sometime equally or more profitable than the actual one. Likewise, Hollywood that has a big share in the American economy is affected by the World Wide Web.

Hollywood is a huge industry that is unfortunately fading because the number of Americans willing to pay to watch a movie in a theater is decreasing. “At the Walt Disney Company, domestic ticket sales plummeted from \$1.5 billion to \$962 million between 2003 and 2005...” (Keen 120). This leads us to think that Americans started certainly abandoning theaters. Furthermore, the different technologies are transforming the movie industry dramatically and they are providing a cheaper entertaining ways. YouTube is “a video-sharing website where individual users ... can upload their own video content” (Castells 28). In 2007, a study showed that 48 percent of Americans regularly watches online videos (qtd. in Castells 28). This is a fact that is decimating, the worldwide and American, leading company in the movie industry.

I.3-3 American Politics and Digital Media

The political landscape embraced technological advances since the mainstream of the American population migrated to the virtual world. It is no doubt that the social networks are used by politicians in order to influence attitudes about themselves, set agendas, and even outline results of campaigns (Gale Opposing Viewpoints). Depending on the new technologies of communication, the government expects “...to increase operational efficiencies at reduced costs,

improve services and increase public access to government information” (US Department of State).

Politicians’ primary interest is to make their words, ideas, and ideologies heard by a lot of ears. 577 politicians have created Twitter accounts in the recent years and most of those were in 2009 according to Anonymous (2010). The politics agents are using the new communication means to strengthen their relationship with their followers in all occasions on a continuous basis. Through digital media, politicians keep the interaction alive between them and the American public (The Economist). As a key contributor, Twitter has gained an outstanding prominence in the political community (Smith). The services it provides among which the instant response are considered as boon by politicians who somehow gave up on traditional media such as TVs.

Digital media is always related to the group of networks Web 2.0 which is a wide circle of Internet-based applications. Those applications function as a bond among users which leads to the generation of user content (Kaplan *et al* 61). The users who are involved and consumed by the online life are producers of the network content that is obtainable by everyone without any constraints. Therefore, Gil de Zuniga *et al* argue that people are not only recipients of information but crucial participants in generating various contents (613). Digital platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were significantly acting as a bridge of communication between the Obama organizers and the supporters. These tools were used to attract new voters and provide the latest updates to the followers (Tumasjan *et al*). However, such electronic means of communication are constantly reshaping the government, political activism, and campaigning.

According to Jeffrey Seifert and Matthew Bonham “digital government has the potential to transform governmental efficiency, transparency, citizen trust, and

political participation in transitional democracies.”In other words, the modern American government empowers citizens and makes them feel more responsible. “Openness” is one of the concerns of the new ruling system according to Steve Van Roekel who believes that this will help in engaging the public in building a better America. This is achieved as a result of the availability of different channels like cell phones that will make it easier for the government to disseminate the information to the public .The Internet age facilitated government public interaction. Darrel M. West believes that “by taking advantage of the interactive features of the Internet, digital government would narrow the gap between citizens and leaders, and make people feel more positive about the public sector.”

The technological infrastructure of the United States makes the profound digitalization of the government reachable. “...e-government bureaucrats must work together across agency lines and build an infrastructure that is not particular to a single agency” (West 168, 31). Consequently, a national collaboration is required since it is not an easy task. William J. McIver *et al* believe that “several US government agencies have aggressively adopted information technologies in order to modernize the government's highly fragmented service-centric information infrastructure by improving information flow and the decision-making process” (137). However, the political scene is broader and it encompasses another concept which is political activism. This latter also has been blended with new media and their impact was a subject of discussion for many experts.

Digital media have been used by several individuals and groups in the political body, activists for example have selected social networks as their tools for mobilization and money rising for political issues over the past year (Malik 12). The efficiency of the modern media and other multiple advantages motivated American politicians to transcend simple campaign websites. “In some cases, the mere

popularity of a platform makes it valuable to activists” since getting connected to the World Wide Web became much easier than ever (Joyce 28). Twitter co-founder Biz Stone is convinced that the new ways of communicating can enlarge the zone of activism (Mainwaring).

On-line activities are changing through time; sharing pictures, videos, and personal experiences is common nowadays and it is possible for every ordinary American to do so. However, what the ordinary American can do now beside that is turning into a dynamic political activist. Their tendency toward the network community may be a leading reason to “generating massive amounts of data, as individuals' political conversations, donations, and forms of political organizing” (Farrel 35, 52). Moreover, new things about the utility of digital media are discovered. For instance, “organizers and activists are increasingly learning how to co-opt and leverage online social networks, reinventing and revitalizing social activism, social movements, and contentious politics” (Klekamp 8).

Social networks created a sense of public independence. “While my generation tends to see the world in terms of issues important to Republicans or Democrats, my students often see the world in terms of the issues their friends care about, a political identity built on the passions of people important to them”, says, the director of the center for civic media at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ethan Zukerman. This might be considered as a birth of a new political system. The co-founder of Global Voices tells a story of young activist who used the digital media as first step to voice out her dissatisfaction about females' abuse. According to him, the 22 years old student felt the urge of defending a high school student who was treated in a humane way in Steubenville, Ohio. In an online campaign, 70.000 signs were enough for Carmen Rios to awaken some official associations

(Zukerman). This is an example that would drive to dive deeper in the digital campaigning.

Digital campaigns of the 21st century in the United States seem to be unique and different from the traditional ones. They tend “to encourage interaction and to engage with consumers in a completely new and innovative way” (Rayan and Jones 26). As for the presidential campaigns, they also are getting digitalized, particularly with the introduction of Web 2.0 which “represents the ideological and technological foundation” and the spread of the User Generated Content UGC that “can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social Media” (Kaplan and Haelien 61).

It appears that the constituents of the digital world are meeting the needs of candidates. They have a multitude of popular social media tools like YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace, which can help them to interact with the public, especially the youth, using different methods, manage their campaign platforms and promote themselves (Vitaket *al* 1). In any given campaign, candidates aim at uncovering the reason that may motivate voters to vote and try to use the appropriate means to expose voters to new choices (Polsby 23); “Myspace is definitely one of the tools we'll be using to engage Internet users and we're well aware that young people are the ones who are engaging the campaign through the Internet, more so than other age brackets” said the spokeswoman of the Obama campaign Jen Psaki (Williams).

I.4.The Evolution of Presidential Campaigning

The American presidential elections have thoroughly been reshaped by the mass media. Media have a great impact on the recruitment of candidates and the way they communicate with voters. They determine the way candidates present themselves and they behave during their political campaigns (Dye and Zeigler 145).

In fact, the American presidential elections are long and complex process and demand high effort of hundreds of people and also cost millions of dollars.

In order to assess how Barak Obama revolutionized changed political campaigning, it is needed to trace back the general evolution of presidential campaigning. This section outlines the history of media use in American presidential elections with a special emphasis on how each time has its unique medium.

Earlier in history, the founding fathers have used political campaigning and strategic messaging for persuasion to vote. Candidates could rely on the campaigning efforts of their parties, since the established conventions made it unsuitable for someone to campaign on his behalf. Since only small newspapers and face-to-face conversations were available, candidates and parties had limited technological capabilities (Zabela Eddins). The founding fathers gave the newspaper industry special protections and privileges. Gradually, printers came to play a vital role in politics. At that time, the basic role of the newspapers was limited only to news making and delivering the basic information about the government's activities to the audience.

The period between 1800 and 1860 is referred to as a period of presidential newspaper. At the mass communications level, partisan newspapers were fundamental to American political life. "For God's sake, my dear Sir, take up your pen, select the most striking heresies and cut him to pieces in the face of the public." These were the words that Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1793 to ask for James Madison's help in a fierce newspaper battle that Jefferson was then running against Alexander Hamilton (Anderson).

During the 1800 elections, newspapers were heavily used especially by Thomas Jefferson to promote his candidacy. *The National Intelligencer* is known to be the first political newspaper that was associated directly with a president. From

its establishment, the National Intelligencer was used as a means for supporting the election of Thomas Jefferson. The newspapers' activities were pro-Jefferson, all aimed to increase the vote for Jefferson and they were mainly under one of the three forms: attacking Jefferson's opponent Adams, calling for the public voters or presidential electors in particular states for more votes to Jefferson, and arguments about why the Electoral College vote ought to favor Jefferson based on the results of the popular vote in state elections. Furthermore, The Intelligencer played a major role as reporter of the results of the presidential elections: On December 12, it announced Thomas Jefferson the winner of the election. On the front page, the paper stated: "We have this moment received information from Columbia (S.C.) that the REPUBLICAN TICKET for Electors has been carried by a majority of from 13 to 18 votes. Mr. JEFFERSON may, therefore, be considered as our future President. Friday morning, 9 o'clock" (qtd. in Laracey "The Presidential Newspaper" 9).

By the 1920s, the radio started to dominate enabling the candidates to send their messages and to inform and reach longer voter audience. During this time period, the new medium revolutionized campaigning for two reasons. First, candidates could reach "the untapped American voter who could not read." In addition, the candidates could access voters who lived in less populated areas where newspapers or services could not be provided. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was notably apt at radio rhetoric. Roosevelt used the radio to communicate with American voters regardless of their economic or social class (Brown 19).

Roosevelt was called "the Great Communicator" because he was the first president to make use of the electronic media in his campaign. At many levels, he perfectly used the medium of the time. First, it was used to ease the worries of the American people during the Great Depression and also to directly introduce his policies to the public ("1933: FDR Broadcasts First Fireside Chat"). Roosevelt

realized the importance of this new form of mass media and its power to promote his image.

The radio was effective; however, the onset of the television again changed political campaigning. At that time, it became popular and unique medium because the candidates could be jointly heard and seen on the screens. While earlier candidates used different tools and slogans in their campaigns, now political campaigning turned to be more effective (Zabela Eddins). Television made it possible for the audience to judge the nominees differently unlike before when they could only read or see their photos (Webley).

The election of 1952 was specifically exceptional because its campaigns were the first to create television advertisements. Harry S. Truman, The incumbent president, entered the election as a weak candidate. Eisenhower was the first candidate to employ television advertisement. His “20 Seconds Spot” commercials entitled “*Eisenhower Answers America*” established him as an average man in touch with the people and portrayed him as a skilled leader (Zabela Eddins). After him, the power of television proved strong and could not be doubted. Influenced by Eisenhower, the following candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon depended heavily on television.

The 1960 election was a turning point, the 60 minutes duel between the two radically transformed political campaigns. Media historian Alan Schroder says : “ It is one of the unusual points on the timeline of history where you can say things changed very dramatically, in this case, in a single night ” (Webley) .

The power of television was so strong on the public. John F. Kennedy was born to be on camera, the 43-year- old Kennedy “looked to be radiating health” and wore a dark suit and a wide smile and vivid tan , historian Robert Gilber says (Botelho) .The use of this new medium helped Kennedy win because of the image

he had, James Drukman says , in his article “ *The power of Television Images: The First Kennedy- Nixon Debate Revisited*” , “ Kennedy was bronzed beautifully Nixon looked like death.”

Estimates demonstrate that by 1960, 88% of America household owned televisions. Seventy millions was the number of the debate viewers. The number of voters who participated in the election influenced by the debate reached four millions and among these three millions elected Kennedy. Kennedy, himself, acknowledged the role television played in his victory. He said: “it was the TV more than anything else that turned the tide” (Webley).

Political campaigning was limited to television, radio, and printed press. At the turn of the century, however, the internet started to reshape political campaigning. It became a key source for political and campaign information. Candidates were allowed to use the mass media in a completely new way to send their messages. The audience took an active role in the process. John Hendricks and Lynda Kaid, in their “*Techno politics in presidential campaigning*”, state that unlike the old passive audience, the modern one, referring to the 21st century, is active. It interacts and chooses the information (qtd. in Michaelsen 28).

The internet provided the ideal platform for candidates for several reasons. According to Richard Davis, the internet gave new advantages for candidates first because it revolutionized campaign communication and interaction with voters directly and without mainstream media interference. Moreover, the internet is the best place where candidates can promote themselves, and where they can have greater ability to have control over their messages, policy and goals.

In fact, it was Bill Clinton who first used the internet in his Presidential campaign to communicate with the electorate. Clinton and Al Gore created websites that “featured” speeches, position on politics, ads, and biographies. However, few

Americans were active; therefore, the internet did not have a major role as it has contributed a minor role in the election process. Richard Davis, in his *The Web of Politics: the internet's impact on the American Political System*, states that "Clinton's use of the internet solicited little notice from journalists or the public, few of whom would have been connected online at the time." Thus, the internet was a remarkably new medium though its role was the dissemination of information to constituents (qtd. in Michaelson 28).

Clinton considered himself as "The President of the Dawn of the internet Age". As a presidential candidate, he was the first to create a website, however, it did not allow for engagement with citizens (qtd. in Leuschner 6). The use of internet was innovative, yet it only allowed for "a one-way communication." Nonetheless, the first significant internet campaign was in his second election against Bob Dole in 1996 (Davis 85). Gradually, people began to accept and embrace the new medium. The Pew Research Center revealed that people gradually started to use the internet as a source for gathering news and now more than one in five citizens were online (Smith). Though the voter has not been engaged, this new medium gained acceptance and recognition among the voter audience, and served well in fundraising and communicating information.

The 1996 election marked the first considerable use of internet in political advertising, but it only was a supplemental tool, and the lack of civic engagement was a problem (Davis 118). However, the 2000 presidential election completely witnessed a shift and a transformation in political advertising, chiefly because that fifty percent of Americans were now online (Mitchell *et al*). The candidates, Republican candidate George W. Bush, the incumbent governor of Texas and the Democratic candidate Al Gore, took the internet to a new level and expanded its role. The major internet contribution was in fundraising. Notably, this proved useful

for candidates who had inadequate traditional financial backing from their party supporters. Yet, except for fundraising, both candidates' strategies continued temporarily conventional (Rice).

The internet kept gaining acceptance among the American public. According to the Pew Research Center, Americans use the internet as the prime source to get their political and campaign information. The process of getting the information is facilitated by the emergence of social media under the interactive Web 2.0. This Web helped participants to become content creators rather than content consumers in Web 1.0. This kind of media made it possible for participant to take "an active role and have an active voice of authority" and transmit their opinion to the online public (Rainie and Smith).

Unlike the older web, the Web 2.0 is completely controlled by the candidate and decides what information to be transmitted to their websites. The internet helps voters to directly engage and interact with the candidates and also encourages them to involve in the campaign, *The Journal of Advertising* stated (Kaid). Similarly, the 2004 election campaigns were marked by the internet use. Now, people who are using the internet to get political news and data reached 63% of the population and almost 43 million are using their emails to discuss political issues (Hendrick and Denton). During the 2004 election, both candidates John Kerry and George W. Bush employed the internet to interact with the public, engage and mobilize voters as well as for fundraising (Rice).

Presidential candidates have increasingly become using social media as a prime platform for their campaigns. President Barak Obama harnessed the internet and social media in the 2008 election though it is well know that it was Howard Dean who used the internet in a new and innovative way that established the basis for the movement-like campaign of Obama (Harfoush). Despite his use of older

media forms and had some negative spots, Obama's campaign was based on a positive message—Hope. He beautifully used the internet. To some extent, all his posts and messages conveyed hope messages.

This section discussed how technology has transformed election campaigning throughout the American history. The candidates' strategies and techniques change according to the technological development. During each time period, candidates need to update and use innovative tools to reach the audience to compete. Professor Dr. Emliy Metzgar wrote: "Campaigns need to change with the technologies, going where the voter are going and employing the tools the voters are using" (Metzgar and Maruggi). Similarly, with the advent of social media, the voters are active contributors to the election process. A need urges the candidates to embrace the democratic nature of the new medium and take advantage of all its benefits. Barak Obama was one candidate who utilized the internet and social media more specifically for his advantage, making his campaign an outperformed campaign in the history of American presidential elections.

Chapter Two

The use of **Web 2.0** and social media tools made the 2008 campaign a pioneer in the history of presidential campaigning. Diana Owen, in *The American Elections of 2008*, notes the various technical and organizational innovations of the Obama campaign's use of "new media" along with the decline of the "old media" helped to create their record-setting volunteer and fund-raising effort (Owen X). Similarly, Jennifer Aaker, Stanford Professor, writes that the goals of the Obama Campaign were based into a far extent on digital resources. Obama and his organizers facilitated the integration of the followers in the campaign which led an unparalleled accomplishment in terms of funding and mobilization (16). The Social media were not only used for spreading and dissemination of information about the candidate, but they were further utilized to mobilize, involve and engage voters.

It is well known that the Obama campaign was not the first campaign to make use of the Internet to garner support. However, according to Harris , Moffitt and Squires what makes Obama's 2008 presidential campaign exceptional , "is that they were able to turn widespread online support into record-breaking amounts of cash, volunteers on the ground, and eventually votes in the ballot boxes" (59). Obama understood that "more than any other medium, the Web is by the people, for the people" (Vargas).

Web 2.0 is, unlike the old web and besides integrating different media, a two-way communication and helps users to be active participant and help in the creation of content (Cormode and Krishnamurthy). According to the Us Census Bureau, 69 percent of Americans owned internet by 2009, and about 35 percent of American have consulted the internet to get campaign news (Smith).

II. Leveraging the New Media to win, Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign

II.1. Appealing to the Youth:

The use of social media was crucial in reaching "youth voters". The 2008 campaign is known to be youth oriented campaign. An analysis of National Election Pool Exit indicates that Obama's strength was built upon a group of voters that was

considered unreachable in the past few years. Former presidential candidates found it hard to convince the youth; however, Obama's intelligent online methods attracted younger voters more than ever (Rosentiel). The Same analysis further shows that McCain was supported by voters aged 65 and more. Creating relationships with the supporters was the goal of Obama. Social media tools were used to empower them to engage and interact with his campaign and therefore participate in the democratic process. Rahaf Harfouch, a volunteer on Barack Obama's campaign and who also wrote the book, *yes we Did: An inside look at how social media built the Obama Brand*, argues (qtd. in Parikh 10).

Social networks were not the only innovation. Exit polls demonstrate that 66% of those under the age of 30 voted for Barack Obama (Keeter, Horowitz, and Tyson). President Obama largely succeeded in targeting youth voters. The youth supported Obama for many reasons. Most of his followers were **Millennials**, a generation that is digital native. Obama's strong messages like "yes we can" and videos on YouTube reached their thoughts (qtd. in Leuschner 25). According to Amanda Ruggeri, both States of Indiana and North Carolina went blue mainly because of Millennials .The main reason why Millennials supported Obama is economy. With the 2008 financial crisis the youth was facing more college debts than ever before. Moreover, more than a quarter lacked health coverage. Obama made himself the candidate to represent the struggles and problems of the youth (Ruggeri).

Millennials are known to represent "the most tech-savvy, diverse, educated and interconnected generation in American history" (Sanson 163). Obama's reliance on digital media and technology appealed to them. The impact on youth was historic, "this was more than an election, it became a movement", Tearwood says (Ruggeri). Equally, TIME Magazine described 2008 as the 'Year of Youth'. The

youth segment preferred Obama, usually the least to participate in politics, youth voters gave Obama an increase of 17,000 votes. The youth participation was called as the "muscle of Obama's army" (Drehle).

"Change we can believe in." was the campaign's simple and direct theme. This theme of "change" and "hope" ideally suited to the new medium of the Internet, with its appeal to young people. The campaign's slogan echoed "with the willingness and reasoned intention of many receivers of the message", Harris, Moffitt and Squires point out. Obama used digital methods to reach out to younger voters with his slogan "Yes, We Can". Through MyBO.com, the essence of the message of the campaign was simplified as follows: "I am asking you to believe, not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington", the Web site further adds, "I'm asking you to believe in yours." Obama's words were touching, they addressed his supporters' hearts, and their content could revive the spirit of change that was dying inside every American because of policies followed by the former president (75).

Obama's team worked hard to establish strategic communication through hope and change messages that would attract young supporters and direct them to the polls. Obama aimed at refreshing the American mind and introduce it to a time of prosperity and stability different from the old failing policies. The nation was frustrated with the continued involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan alongside with the economic crisis. Obama believes that there would be an incurable ending if Americans keep following republican ways and the situation would deteriorate for the majority of the citizens. According to the Democrats candidate electing him as a president of the States would be the first step toward a bright future for Americans. His plans aimed at levying more taxes on the wealthier. Obama further adds that "John McCain wants to give more to billionaires, more to corporations that ship

jobs overseas..." Obama was able to incite an imperative among the youth population through his consistent strong messages, "I know that my opponent is worried about losing an election, but I'm worried about Americans who are losing their homes, and losing their jobs, and losing their life savings", Mr. Obama said. He cared more about the middle class and promised to fight for them for every single day in the white house (Baker and Zeleny).

II.2.Exceptional Fundraising Strategy of the 2008 Obama Campaign

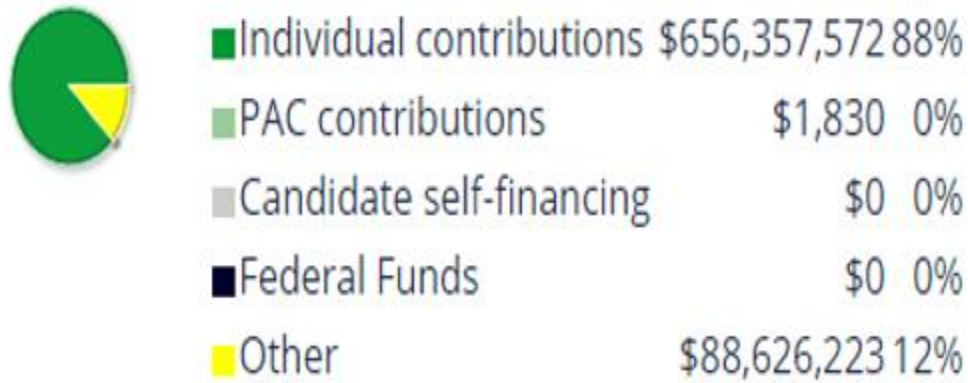
Digital media have been a crucial component in the 2008 Obama Campaign, a campaign that opened a new page in the history of presidential elections. Obama's utilization of social networks was a shortcut to the supporters' minds as well as pockets. In addition, Obama established a well-structured economic policy. Obama and his campaign organizers focused their attention on the wide spread cheap online platforms for fundraising. A decision that was wise enough to make the campaign gain money and popularity. Obama Campaign facilitated the process of fundraising; the following picture was taken from MyBO and it shows statistics concerning the monetary activities of the personalized groups in the website (For more details, See Appendix 2: Fundraising through MyBO).

The Obama Campaign was a movement like based on strong roots on both sides offline and online with a special emphasis on the virtual ground. Mindy Finn, the political strategist, believes that the world has entered a new digital era in which everything has to transform including campaigns, and if candidates want to gain more votes they need to maximize the involvement of supporters (Vargas). A Pew Research study showed that the online activities made by Obama followers were more than those of McCain's and Clintons' supporters (Rainieand Smith). Social networks, such as MySpace and Facebook, widened the circle of interaction; this

feature boosted Obama's hope and change messages .As Time Magazine asserted that social networks like Facebook and MySpace have made the sense of day-to-day life issues broader and Obama took advantage of this significant change. Obama valued any sort of contribution to the campaign be it noticeable or minimal. Internet helped the Obama campaign establish strong relations with supporters all over the States with equal feeds (Tumulty).

To fully understand the success Obama achieved in 2008, it is relevant to compare the numbers he has reached in terms of fundraising with the former campaigns.The chart provides multiple statistics about the previous presidential elections in the United States. The numbers are not stable since they depend on different strategies adopted by the candidates whether Democrats or a Republicans. Obama versus McCain election reached the highest rates regarding fundraising and spending as well (For more details, See Graph 3: U.S 2008 Presidential Election, the Most Expensive Election).

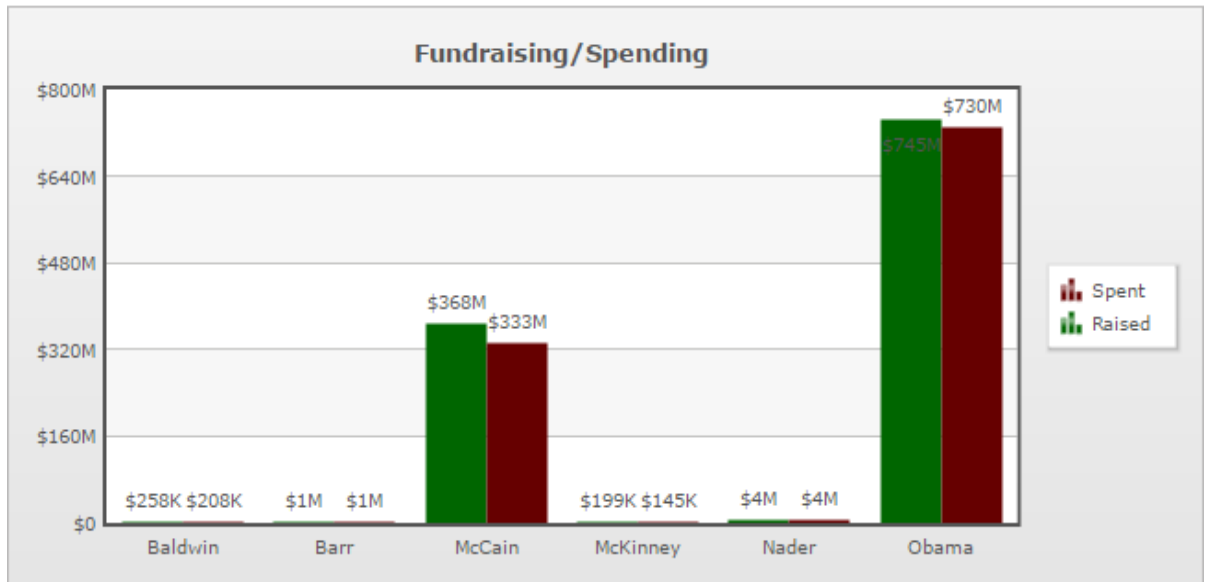
MyBO, the website was the corner stone of the online campaign in 2008. It was created by Chris Hughes who intelligently made it attractive, inspirational, and effective at the same time (Stromer-Galley). The numbers concerning the use of my.barackobama.com are extraordinary; volunteers could raise \$30 million on 70,000 personal fundraising pages in the website (Solop). Furthermore, the Obama Campaign manager David Plouffe believed in the effectiveness of this tool and its ability to make donating easy and constant since it is bound by neither time nor space (Campaign for President). This innovative art work kept people involved and willing to make a contribution at any moment (Johnson). This chart illustrates how individual small contributions made a big difference in the pace of the campaign.



Graph 4: Small Donations Boasted the Obama Campaign⁵

The uniqueness in Obama’s campaigning strategies and methods lies in the sense of communal he created among the volunteers and supporters. These supporters believed in him and considered him closer to them than any other candidate in the past; it led them to donate with a heart full of trust (Bradley). The ninety two percent under \$100 donations were online and decisive, a \$600 million from the total amount of money that was \$770 million (Friedman). Moreover, the feeling of being a member of a strong body motivated the followers to donate more than once (Vargas). It is no doubt that Obama’s investment in the virtual world was a success in terms of financing tactics unlike the case of his opponents. There was a big gap between the numbers that Obama reached in raising money in comparison to the other candidates and the following chart shows that.

⁵ <https://www.opensecrets.org/Pres08/summary.php?cid=N00009638&cycle=2008>



Graph 5: Obama Outnumbers his Opponents in Raising Money⁶

Several political and strategist experts and scholars tended to analyze and study the campaign from a financial angle. In 2009, Sabato quoted Michael Toner when the latter discussed the procedures followed by Obama in 2008:

A decade ago, if someone was impressed with what a candidate said at a debate or a rally and wished to make a contribution, he or she needed to find their checkbook, figure out the payee, determine where to send the check, and get the check in the mail. Today, if someone likes what a candidate says, he or she can make an online contribution on [an] iPhone in a matter of minutes. Moreover, presidential campaign websites today provide donors with the option of making recurring monthly contributions on their credit cards in \$25, \$15 or even \$5 amounts. . . . In this way, the Internet facilitates the making of political contributions separate and apart from public interest in presidential races. Which may partially account for the record-

⁶ <https://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/>

breaking amounts of money that presidential candidates have raised in recent years. (53-54)

The technological advancement is a boon for Obama and his campaign organizers. The role of the new technologies is undeniable in paving the way for Obama to the White House. They gained him money more than anyone could imagine as a result to the direct contact from Obama to the supporters. The coming chart compares the number of donors in 2004 and 2008. We can observe that the Obama Campaign attracted more donors in all the mentioned categories (For more details, See Table1: A Comparison between the 2004 and 2008 Donors).

II.3. Dissemination of Information

The usage of the powerful Web 2.0 through social media tools made the 2008 campaign a significant shift in the history of presidential campaigning mainly because of its use-generated content. With the launch of Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006, social media would play a much more extensive and significant role, on different levels, for spreading and the dissemination of information in the 2008 election campaign than in previous elections (qtd. in Leuschner 17).

II.3.1. BarackObama.com

Barack Obama is known to be the candidate who mostly used social media. Both Joe Raspers and Chris Hughes were employed as Obama's social media team members. They succeeded to handle Obama's presence on fifteen different social media networking. Perhaps, the creation of the website: **BarackObama.com**, usually referred to as **MyBO**, was their major accomplishment. From its outset, The Web site of Barack Obama was a source of strength for the candidate, and made him ahead from his Democratic and Republican rivals.

Only six days after his announcement in Springfield, Illinois, on the steps of the Old Capitol, MyBO was fully functional (Harris, Moffitt and Squires 57). "MyBo" was an integral part of the campaign, Box-Steffensmeier and E.Schier state: "what was truly revolutionary about MyBo was that it was a social-media site designed for the Obama campaign to be used by fieldworkers, volunteers, supporters, and those simply interested in the campaign alike. It allowed its users to contact each other, join groups related to the user's interests, plan events, and donate funds, just to give some example" (Harris , Moffitt and Squires 57). MyBo was considered the best place for Obama supporters to meet and plan actual events on the ground, eventually hundreds of on ground events were generated in the website. Through cheap means and hardly noticed efforts, the campaign budget reached the peak (Aaker and Chang 16).

II.3.2.Facebook

While MyBO was the main innovation and centerpiece of Obama's social media, the Obama campaign understood that it needed a variety of social media platforms to target and interact with its supporters. The campaign organizers particularly focused on Facebook because of its ability to make information go viral. In 2008, Facebook was ranked as the largest social networking site and a prime platform for the rapidity with which messages are disseminated. Monthly, it had 65 billion page views and 20 minutes on the site as member's average per day (qtd. in Leuschner 28).

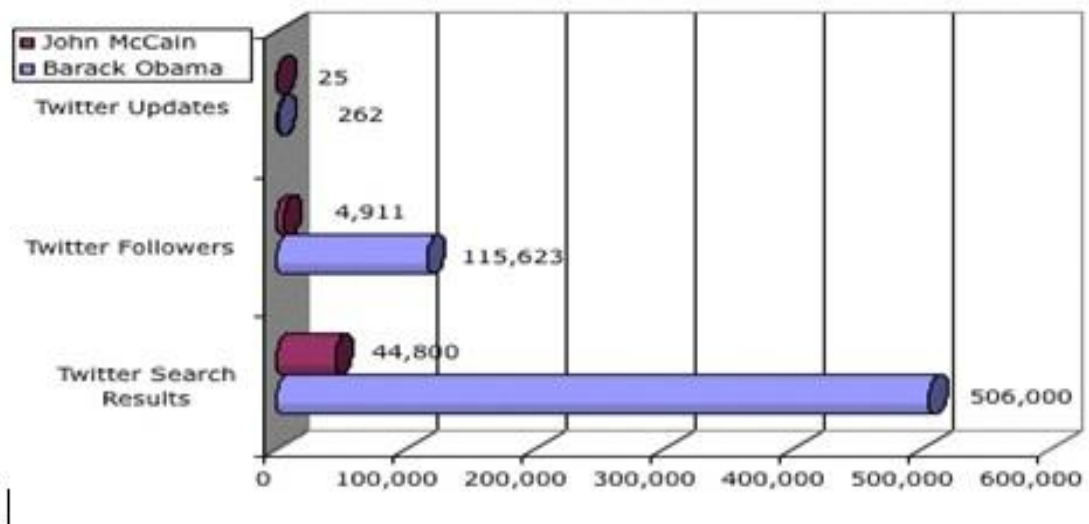
Facebook has been widely used as an aid to political mobilization and organization because of the network power it has. However, from a campaign's perspective, unless the campaign knows who is in its network and, more importantly, what those members can offer the campaign, then members are of little use (Sanson 164). Obama took advantage of this medium by sending an automatic

news feed from the Obama campaign page to the profiles of his Facebook friends, which were in turn seen by the recipients' friends (qtd. in Leuschner 28). Thus, when Obama supporters reshared a campaign link on Facebook or liked a picture or a post from the Obama page, a vast number of users and supporters could see the news and messages that Obama desired citizens to receive in their individual newsfeed. In fact, large amounts of data were stored in Facebook and ready to be recovered at any moment, the thing that made this social network essential to the campaign. Individuals were easily reached through their interest and the groups they join on Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg's invention can be considered as a decisive stepping stone for Obama in his quest for the oval office (Sanson 164).

An important aspect of Facebook is its group function. It played a crucial role to mobilize and organize thousands of effective supporters who created online pages to dissemination information. Farouk OluAregbe, the coordinator of student government services at the University of Missouri-Columbia, initiated a group on Facebook known as "**One Million Strong for Barack**" in 2007. The group passed thousand followers within twenty-four hours and about 325,000 members-groundbreaking by May of the same year. The group grew rapidly because of the viral nature of the Facebook "News Feed". The group administrators succeeded in "encouraging supporters to volunteer, donate and spread materials about the campaign". Groups like "One Million Strong for Barak", according to Sanson, "is laid out in group information, contact information, recent news, photos, videos, posted items and discussion board." As a tool to dissemination information, the groups helped supporters "to learn more, get the latest news and share information with friends." By the end of the campaign, around five hundred unofficial Facebook groups were created to support the candidate (167).

II.3.3 Twitter

Obama was very active in his social media platforms. Although Twitter was not a major focus of the Obama campaign, the platform provided an easy way for the campaign to release information. It was similarly involved in the campaigning process to facilitate the dissemination of information. By November 2008, Obama had nearly 2.4 million supporters, compared to McCain's 640,000. On Twitter, Obama had over 11,000 followers and McCain had less than 5,000 (Blanchard). As the use of a variety of social media platforms to target different demographics with diverse interests was essential, tweets were mainly used to direct followers to the Obama campaign website. The following chart illustrates the differences between Obama's and McCain's Twitter use during the campaign. It is so obvious, according to the chart, that Obama's use of Twitter exceeded that of McCain.



Graph 6: Barack Obama vs John McCain on Twitter⁷

II.3.4 YouTube:

The 2008 presidential candidates quickly realized that social media could

⁷ <http://blog.wheelock.edu/2012-election-women-matter/>

function as “a highly relevant and cost-effective campaign tool when properly employed,” wrote Dr. Emily Metzgar for the Society for New Communications Research. (Metzgar and Maruggi). According to the Pew Research Center, by the end of 2008, the numbers of Americans who perceived campaign information via online videos has reached 39 percent, up from 24 percent before the primaries began in December (Russell). Furthermore, according to Harris, Moffitt and Squires Obama's 2008 election campaign was the first to use YouTube. YouTube played a critical role in the 2008 campaign. Obama uploaded almost every major speech or interview to YouTube (62).

It seems that Barack Obama took advantage of this service for free advertising, the account has uploaded more than 1,850 video clips and reached an incredible 22 million total views (Harris, Moffitt and Squires 62). The campaign's official videos were watched for 14.5 million hours. The use of this free medium saved Obama money, buying the same in broadcast TV hours would have cost the campaign \$47 million (Johnson 15). Therefore, Obama saved money and also allowed him to bypass established media and go directly to viewers where they already were spending a lot of time: online on YouTube (Johnson 15). Later, the same account has been used during the Obama presidency to advocate his agenda (Harris, Moffitt and Squires 62).

Beyond being cost efficient, YouTube was not only used as a platform to disseminate the campaign videos for the presidential candidates, but it was more effective and useful for supporters to create and post their own video content. For instance, the two videos “I Got a Crush...On Obama” and “Yes We Can” featuring musician Will.i.am, received 11.6 and 13 million views respectively (Metzgar and Maruggi). The viral YouTube video, “I Have a Crush on Obama,” was produced by BarelyPolitical.com. It showed Amber Lee expressing her interest in Obama as a

president in a couple of lyrics. Although the video has nothing to do with the campaign, it remarkably promoted Obama's likeability notably more among young YouTube users. Will.i.am, another artist, backed Obama through his hip-hop music in a second video. The music video was set by Obama's "Yes We Can" speech which featured various famous musical artists and actors singing and speaking the words of the speech alongside the footage of Obama's address (Johnson 15).

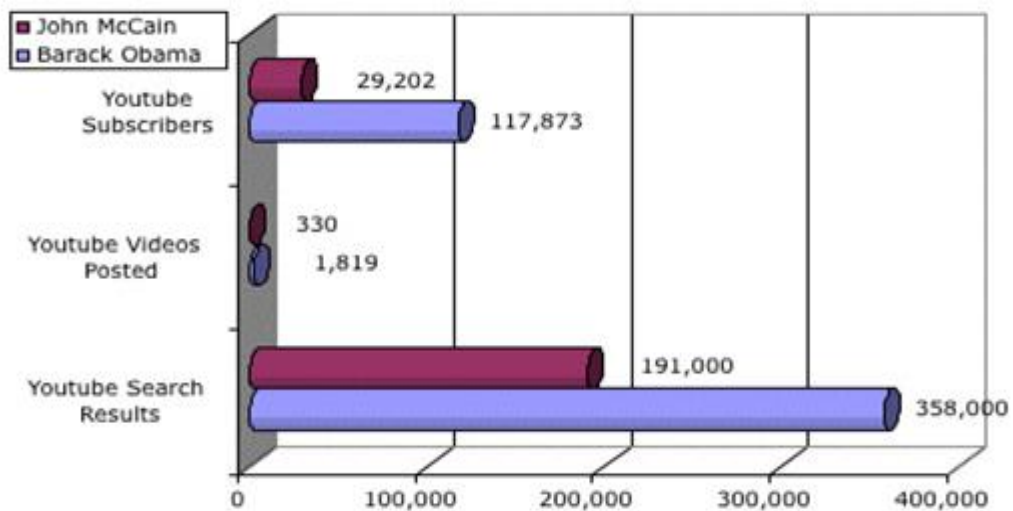
According to Andrew Rasiej, co-founder of the TechPresident blog, a significant change has occurred in the norms monitoring the circulation of information; common people can create and disseminate stories without any constraints. A short video on YouTube can be seen by thousands in a matter of few minutes which is a far reaching goal to the traditional media (Vaidyanathan).

The 2008 election candidates exploited well the new medium, but not quite to the same extent. Realizing how important it is to use YouTube in distributing information, Obama's 2008 campaign broadcasted 1,821 videos on YouTube. McCain, on the other hand, posted 330 videos to his channel (Heffernan). Barack Obama's online video presence far exceeded that of John McCain. M. Box-Steffensmeier and Schier explaining the reasons of disparity between Obama and McCain's video presence state:

There are a number of explanations for this disparity. Obama's video prominence was established during the lengthy Democratic nominating campaign, and remained vital as the contest with Hillary Clinton went down to the wire. McCain had locked up the nomination by early March; his video activity was limited until just before the Republican National Convention and spiked with the announcement of Sarah Palin as his running mate. In addition, younger people, who were heavily in Obama's camp, were more likely to post and view online campaign videos than the older voters who supported

McCain. (23)

It is quite obvious that Obama's use of social media in general outpaced that of McCain. The following chart displays the difference in using the YouTube between the two candidates. Obama had more YouTube subscribers and posted more videos than McCain. Beside this, the chart shows Obama's YouTube search results exceeded that of McCain's.



Graph 7: Barack Obama vs John McCain on YouTube 1 of 2⁸

II.4. The Organizer President: The Civic Engagement

*When classmates in college asked me just what it was that
a community organizer did, I couldn't answer them
directly. Instead, I'd pronounce on the need for
change. . . . Change won't come from the top, I would say.
Change will come from a mobilized grass roots.*

Barack Obama

⁸ <http://adultaddstrengths.com/2008/11/05/obama-vs-mccain-social-media/>

According to Joy Hakim, in his *All the People*, Obama shared a personal story in which he mentioned a question; a question that was asked by one of his colleagues. Obama had a unique explanation for the concept of the great organizer from when he was younger. According to him back then, organization is chiefly linked to bottom-up change.

Obama was called the Organized President. As an organizer, He acquired the skills to motivate and mobilize individuals and make them aware of their capabilities in deciding for the country not relying only on political bodies. To be strong means to be unified no matter what the social status is, to take part in improving America's future people need to feel that they belong to a system that functions harmoniously; these were the core ideas of Obama's ideologies (Dreier "Will Obama Inspire ").

The Obama campaign motivated and engaged hundreds of organizers of different interests among which labor unions, community and environmental organizations, and religious groups. Multiple methods were adopted in order to enlarge the campaign's efficiency scope. In other words, the Obama Campaign utilized old in addition to new tactics in mobilization. On the ground activities such as knocking on doors and meeting in public places and online conferences had one primary aim that is to motivate and engage larger numbers of supporters. (Dreier "Shifting Gears").

Throughout the 2008 presidential elections, the Democrats' nominee broke many records in terms of online presence. Obama brilliantly applied tactics that targeted ordinary Americans who were unhappy with Bush's regime. Supporters felt that they are involved the thing that created a sense of duty toward the campaign; this led them be the most active supporters any campaign has ever had. Many

outsider organizations and groups helped in Obama's victory. Civil rights and women's groups, Environmental organizations, the Sierra Club and US Action for instance, student activists and so many others helped in mobilizing voter and consequently in Obama's win. Despite the several ideological differences that separated civic groups in the American society, the Obama campaign managed to gather them around one point which is change. The participation of Blacks, youth, and other groups in presidential elections witnessed an increase of no equal in 2008. (Dreier "Shifting Gears"). In this section, we will discuss how Civil Rights activist, Environmentalists and women's groups all had hand in Obama's triumph.

II.4.1 The Civil Rights Activism

All the way through Obama campaign, the black community held high empowerment expectations. The blacks were dreaming of the first black president who would take their civil rights concerns into consideration in his policymaking. However, Obama received this remarkable influx of black support not on the basis of addressing issues of specific concern to blacks, but because of his message of hope and change (Osgood and White 269).

Barack Obama carried a message of positive change that was empty of any racial implications promising reforms to Bush Administration abuses. Throughout all his campaign, he avoided any explicit argumentation about the particular challenges facing African Americans, advocating global human and welfare rights (Osgood and White 269). Unlike his opponent John McCain stuck to a "negative race designed to appeal to white". The Obama Campaign strategies were fruitful and beneficial since they got Obama the lion's share in 2008 in terms of votes which was fifty two percent; whereas, McCain's expectations were not realized with the forty six percent of the overall votes (Eskew).

According to Linda Burnham, "Black leadership, money and organizing made a real difference this election. The Obama campaign provided a smart framework and an historic opportunity that engaged Black people". Black organization played a vital role in mobilizing during the campaign, the campaign made "good use of existing Black organizations and seasoned Black veterans as a foundation for jumpstarting organizing during the primaries in so many places like Virginia, Ohio and California, Burnham adds. Further, during the national election, such networks played "leadership roles in Get out the Vote Efforts" (Burnham 55). Many Civil Right activists have supported Obama during his campaign. The incomparable campaign that Barack Obama started early in 2007 fascinated many people like Joseph Lowery. This latter showed his devotion and allegiance throughout the campaign (Haines).

Congressman John Lewis, though at first supported Hillary Clinton, he later announced his support and endorsement to Barack Obama. Obama addressed the millions of viewers to recall earlier moment in 1963. The historical significance of the Civil Rights Movement is undeniable for Obama as an African American. Its activists sacrificed their sleep and even their lives in order to attain social equality which gave Obama the opportunity to run for president. Barack never forgot the sweats of people like John Lewis and others. In front of thousands of viewers, Obama credited John and appreciated him (Eskew).

As a Black candidate, Obama mobilized the black community in an unprecedented way. Even more than the Jesse Jackson campaigns in 1988, blacks teamed up during the campaign profoundly than whites. History demonstrates that the whites have always participated in presidential election more than the blacks; however, the 2008 was extraordinary. Statistics shows that 31 percent of blacks

were reported making campaign contributions compared to 21 percent of whites (Osgood and White 268).

It might be said that throughout all American history, more than any previous Democratic nominee, Obama received the highest percentage of the black vote; two million more blacks turned out in 2008. Moreover, it was during this election that for the first time the proportion of blacks who voted almost balanced that of whites; 65 percent for blacks to 66 percent for whites (Osgood and White 268). Some would argue, however, that Obama's victory wasn't just made possible by civil rights activists. A whole generation of African-American leaders who excelled in the political, sports and entertainment arenas had helped in achieving this (Blake). The popularity of Barack Obama kept increasing among celebrities. A considerable number of famous people endorsed him and called their millions of fans to do so. Rev. Claude Black, Jr, Roger Wilkins, former Secretary of State Colin Powel, golfer Tiger Woods, Bill Cosby, Dennis Haysbert, and others made it clear that their candidate is the Democrat Barack Obama.

In Selma, Alabama in March of 2007, Obama explicitly has acknowledged the efforts of activists and he stated that he appreciates all kinds of sweats that made the campaign more effective; determinations of groups like the "Moses Generation" augmented the reliability of the campaign. ("Talk of the Nation"). Obama thanked and acknowledged the efforts of all men and women like Martin Luther King, John Lewis, Anna Cooper and the Reverend Joseph Lowery who all sacrificed, marched and suffered .Obama praised and honored their martyrdom. He indirectly considered himself one of the leaders of the Joshua Generation and a loyalist to their principles (Remnick). Obama stated that any accomplishment or achievement he makes is solely thanks to the relentlessness of activists like the Moses generation. In a tone of a preacher, Obama acknowledged the hard work of some great leaders who

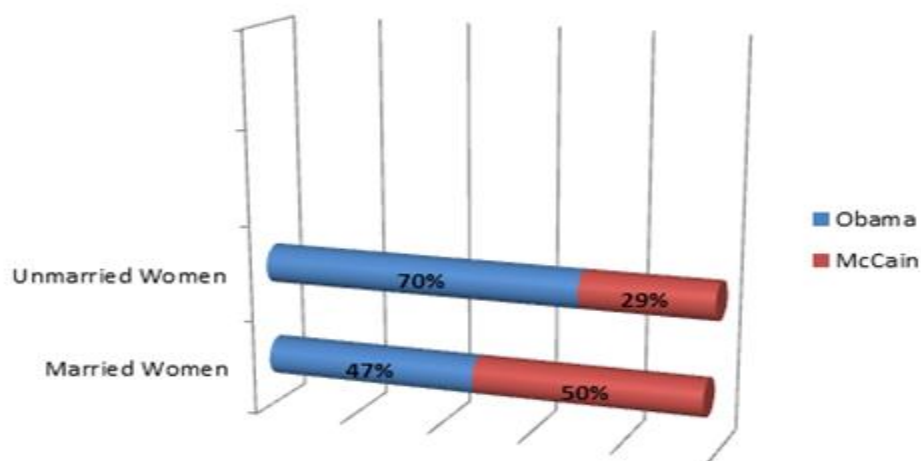
engraved their names in the hearts and minds of a great number of Americans. It is no doubt that there are more hurdles to overcome ahead of African Americans specifically and Americans generally according to Obama. He uttered words full of courage, inspiration, and motivation meant to awaken the souls in the Joshua Generation and to make them feel the serious responsibility that have toward their people, toward their values, and toward their country.

Shortly after the results, the election of Obama has been described in national newspapers as a great achievement for the nation and more specifically for the African Americans. Immediately , The *Chicago Tribune* announced that the election results are: “crowning achievement of the Civil Rights Movement, the triumph of a black candidate in a nation with a history of slavery and segregation” (Smith and Johnson 354) .After hundreds of years of racial subjugation Obama’s election came to epitomize Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream. King's dream that a president , one day in America, would be chosen and judged not by his color but by the content of his character (Osgood and White 261).

II.4.2 Women for Obama

Online campaigning can be considered as the backbone of the Obama Campaign in 2008. It introduced a new passageway to reach a novel active supporters’ environment. Instead of inviting individuals and groups to engage in the political sphere, Obama chose to initiate and take the first step towards followers through developed internet technologies. Further, the Obama Campaign aimed at keeping their brand alive if not discussed at least seen somewhere. They valued the fact that people talk about the campaign and issues related to it (Goodstein). Obama invested time and efforts to pull votes from women despite the fact that a female was the running mate of the Republican candidate McCain Sarah Palin.

In a connected world, social movements are a prominent member in the overall body of the American community. Based on shared goals, feminist organizations were founded long ago. Feminists denounce any kind of separation in the treatment of both sexes. They believe in providing similar chances for women just like those available for men (Basow). Their demands developed from calling to equality with men to claiming right to presidency. Clemens believes that women's institutes are not civic assemblies only but active players in the political scene. Clemens's claim appears strongly right if we analyze some of the numbers concerning women's participation in the 2008 presidential elections. Statistics showed that women contributed in the big victory of the first black president in the history of the United States. Here is a chart that compares the votes that president Obama and McCain polled from both married and unmarried women.



Graph 8: Obama's Lead in Poling Votes from Women⁹

Additionally, the 2008 presidential elections proved that women can make a difference in the final results. It was expected that feminists would side with Hillary against Obama during the primaries; however, this situation caused a state of confusion and divide among feminist activists. Many scholars were convinced that backing Hillary would not strengthen the cause of the women's organizations

⁹ <http://blog.wheelock.edu/2012-election-women-matter/>

(Harris *et al* 252). Obama's feminist support was as result of his clear stance toward gender issues, equality, and health care; in addition feminists and Blacks suffered the same social injustices and a black president might be more feminist than a white one.

Many feminist organizations endorsed the Illinois senator Obama after winning against Hillary Clinton in the primaries. She is away from feminists' considerations said Kim Gandy about Sarah Palin in *The Washington Post* (Mitt). The National Organization for Women endorsement of Obama was not only decisive but historical also. It drove many other organizations to be on the Democrat's side with their thousands of supporters. Furthermore, McCain's unpleasant history regarding women's issues stand as another factor that led feminists to support Obama.

The digital strategies that the Obama Campaign employed led to the spread of a more accurate information about Obama's future plans. They strengthened the ties with the women's foundations via a constant update and a continuous involvement. The growing female connected community provided a solid platform for Obama, 73 percent of women were online much more than online males (Brenner). The social media like Facebook and Myspace were in a way considered as portal that directed participant toward the official website of the campaign MyBO (Stromer-Galley). This latter contained some exclusive features that allowed the followers to create personalized groups among which there was Women for Obama. One of the largest groups, Women for Obama facilitated the circulations of news concerning the campaign events (Sutton).

The following chart displays some numbers about women's participation in presidential elections in the U.S from 1972 until 2008. It is no coincidence that the rates of women who voted for Obama (56%) are higher than those who voted for

McCain (43%), which was as the outcome of the methods the Obama Campaign employed.

Election	Men		Women	
	Dem %	GOP %	Dem %	GOP %
1972	36%	62%	37%	61%
1976	50%	48%	50%	48%
1980	36%	55%	45%	47%
1984	37%	62%	44%	56%
1988	41%	57%	49%	50%
1992	41%	38%	45%	37%
1996	43%	44%	54%	38%
2000	42%	53%	54%	43%
2004	44%	55%	51%	48%
2008	49%	48%	56%	43%

Graph 9: Women Chose Obama the Democrat in 2008¹⁰

As it is observed women voted for the Democrat candidates for the past four presidential election but there was a remarkable increase in the 2008 campaign. Women chose Obama despite the fact that many experts did not expect this decision (Menin).

II.4.3. Environmentalists Got Obama's Back

Barack Obama's ideologies concerning climate issues earned him a positive reputation among environmentalists. He managed to find solutions to their major problems. Unlike McCain, the Democrat's contribution to the matters of environment were undeniable according to the greens. During the 2008 campaign, Obama presented economic plans that were built upon advanced environment

¹⁰ http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/12-from-12-some-takeaways-from-a-wild-election/?upm_export=print

friendly technologies and strategies (Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club). The innovative use of digital tools is another aspect that helped the Obama Campaign increase the number of voters and gain the support of the activists within this community (For more details, See Appendix 3: Sierra Club's Official Endorsement of Barack Obama in 2008).

The illustration of the environmentalists support can be best seen in the efforts that the Sierra Club provided. It is a well-known environmental organization that comprise of more than 750,000 active members with 62 Chapters divided into about 380 local groups (Ganz and Wageman). Early in 2007, members in the Sierra Club such as the training director Liz Pallatto tended to share their experiences about organization and mobilization with the Obama followers; it first started in California, Georgia, Missouri, and then New York (McKenna 80). Those series of leadership training appeared to be effective.

The Obama Campaign was digitalized, organized, and flexible so other volunteers from other social movement could integrate easily and efficiently. The staff organizers made a great campaign out of minor efforts from regular Americans (McKenna 4) which motivated the Sierra Club members to join. The National Field Director for the Sierra Club Bob Bingaman confirmed the efficiency of the tactics Obama adopted; he said that "the Obama campaign is putting together the largest and most sophisticated field operation in presidential history, and there will be meaningful ways for the Sierra Club volunteers to engage" (Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club).

The Democrats candidate was equipped with a large number of digital tools, most importantly the official website that was mentioned throughout the second chapter of this research My.BarackObama.com. Environmentalists for Obama were one of the biggest groups in the website (Fraser and Dutta). It attracted people who

were interested in the environment and its issues among which the Sierra Club activists. Members of the Club worked on a website to help give a shelter to the volunteers who were willing to travel and participate in the campaign events in the big cities; using this website action.sierraclub.org, volunteers could get help and guidance by the Sierra Club members (Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club).

The online ingredients Obama put together seemed to be working successfully. The 2008 Obama campaign was an extension of Howard Dean's 2004 campaign but in a more sophisticated and efficient way as showed above. Obama revolutionized campaigning with the strategic use of the set of tools of social media which were utilized for his advantage. Together with the theme of his campaign, "change and hope", social media tools helped in attracting votes especially the youth who are technology savvy. The campaign team understood that the public is online thus understood the environment in which the medium is used. Different groups and organizations were influenced by the campaign. Therefore, the campaign perfectly followed what Media Ecology theory states that every society is defined and shaped by the time period medium which is the prevailing mode people use to communicate.

General Conclusion

This research shows that the sources of information have been in a constant change in the United States. There was a transition from traditional media toward new media. Newspapers, radio, and TV appear to lose their popularity for more advanced communication technologies. Old media had their momentum in the past years but they could not maintain the central status that they once occupied. According to some statistics that were provided only TV is still a firm contender of the fast spreading digital media.

It can be concluded from the analysis of the data collected that there was remarkable usage of Internet and social media during the 2008 presidential election campaign specifically by the Democrats' candidate Barak Obama. In the light of the different studies referred to throughout the research, it can be observed that digital media played a key role in the victory of Obama over McCain in 2008 presidential election. A new media environment has been created in 2004 as mentioned in the research and it was strongly established in 2008. Obama can be named as the first politician who developed that environment reaching and mobilizing a wide variety of volunteers and voters.

The Obama Campaign used newer tools that were mainly online like social networking and video sharing. It can be concluded that this kind of media could convey Obama's messages of change to what considered to be unreachable electorate in the past. Through platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube Obama Campaign maintained a solid relations with the supporters. In addition, those social networks were used as portals to Obama's official website MyBarakObama.com and which comprises significant services that made the campaign a movement like. We can deduce that the innovative use of digital media by Obama made him the candidate who will bring the change to the Americans.

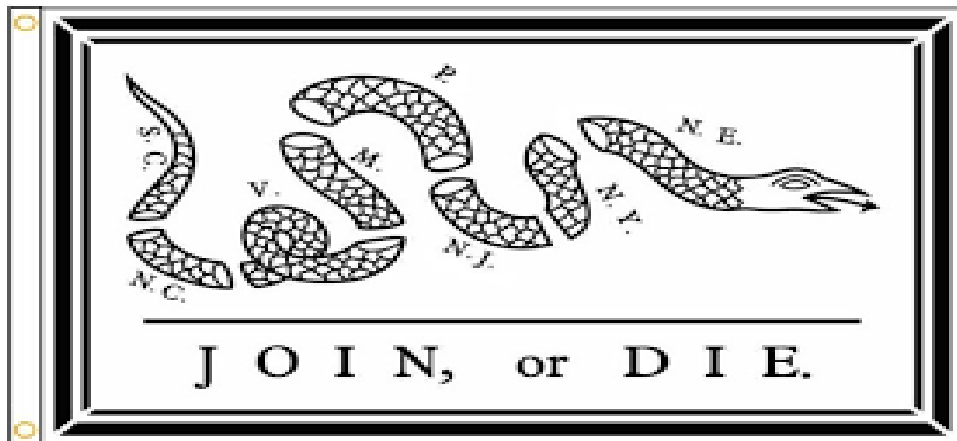
It can be concluded also that the internet helped Obama Campaign to raise considerable amounts of money not only from lobbies, corporations, or businessmen but also from regular Americans. Since it was not limited by place or time, MyBO offered a new way of attracting donors who contributed thousands of small donations. Barak Obama broke all records in the American presidential elections in terms of engaging the youth and other social groups. Cooperative media provided high chances of engagement especially among young voters. Social groups like African Americans, feminists, and environmentalists were also targeted by Obama's online strategies. These groups helped immensely in organization and mobilization through their experiences in the field.

However, while advancing in the stages of our investigation, we faced several limitations. In other words, our research was not conducted in perfect conditions. First of all, the novelty of the topic caused a shortage in the availability of primary resources in terms of books. Second of all, the number of pages we are supposed to respect limited our analysis to the year of elections only, while pre-election and post-election analysis could enrich the study. Finally, we faced a lack of time because the process of collecting data was longer than planned.

This research was conducted regarding the questions asked earlier in the introduction. It had a limited time framework which was the 2008 presidential elections and a specific case study that was the 2008 Obama Campaign. Our exploration of the topic can be just an opening for a further study of the subject matter. Critics suggested that digital media continued their domination over political scene after 2008 chiefly in campaigning. Obama himself depended on social networking for a second time in his 2012 presidential campaign. On the basis of what we have reached through our study other researcher can follow the same path

in investigating Obama's groundbreaking tactics of Internet and social media use in engaging voters once again in 2012.

Appendices



Appendix 1 : Join or Die ¹¹

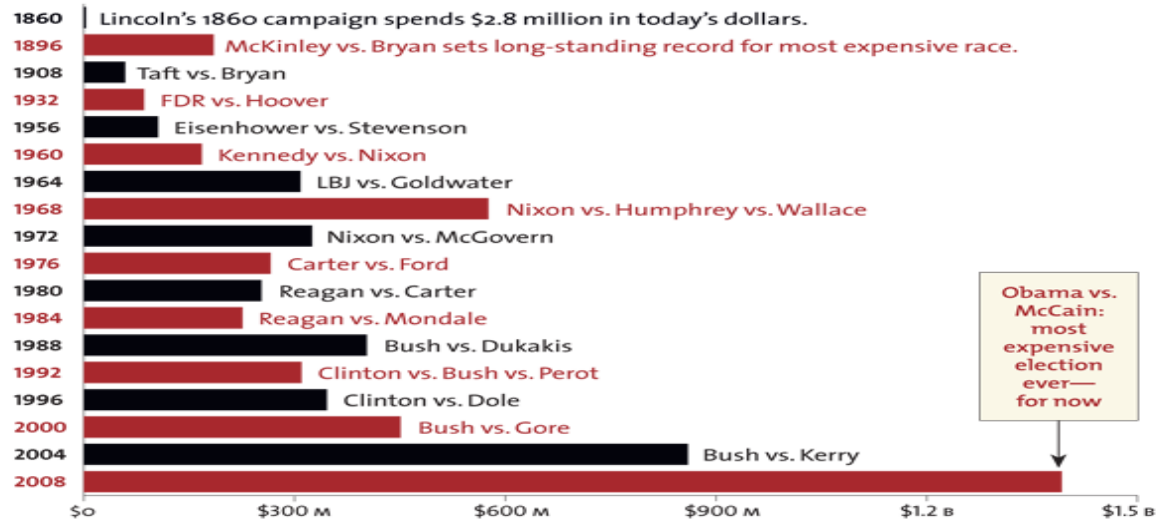


Appendix2: Fundraising through MyBO¹²

¹¹<http://www.apstudent.com/ushistory/docs1751/joindie.htm>

¹²<http://www.graphics.com/article-old/mybarackobamacomkeep-it-local-keep-itreal>

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN COSTS (IN 2011 DOLLARS)



Graph 3: U.S 2008 Presidential Election, the Most Expensive Election¹³

Candidate	Net Individual Contributions	% from <u>Donors</u> who gave this amount in total		
		\$200 or less	\$201-999	\$1000 and up
Obama	452,852,990	26%	27%	47%
McCain	204,436,971	21%	20%	59%
Kerry	215,915,455	20%	24%	56%
Bush	256,081,557	25%	13%	60%

Candidate	Net Individual Contributions	% from <u>Contributions</u> of this amount		
		\$200 or less	\$201-999	\$1000 and up
Obama	452,852,990	49%	18%	33%
McCain	204,436,971	32%	15%	53%
Kerry	215,915,455	37%	20%	44%
Bush	256,081,557	31%	12%	57%

Table 1: A Comparison between the 2004 and 2008 Donors¹⁴

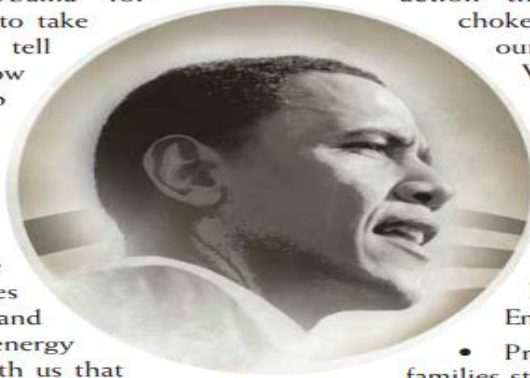
¹³ <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2012/02/historic-price-cost-presidential-elections>

¹⁴ http://www.cfinst.org/press/preleases/08-11-24/realty_check_obama_small_donors.aspx

Obama Is Our Candidate For President

The Sierra Club has officially endorsed Senator Barack Obama for President. We want to take this opportunity to tell you why -- and how you, as a Sierra Club Member, can help Senator Obama and other endorsed candidates get elected this fall.

Simply put, we believe Obama shares our concerns, values and vision for a clean energy future. He agrees with us that it's not time for half steps; that what



America needs is bold, transformational action that will break the chokehold Big Oil has on our economy and Washington politics, and provide short-term relief for American families and long-term solutions for our energy and economy problems.

Highlights of Obama's Energy strategy include:

- Providing relief for families struggling to pay their energy bills: His plan is to provide

continued on page 3

Appendix 3: Sierra Club's Official Endorsement of Barack Obama in 2008¹⁵

¹⁵ Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Sierra Club

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Résumé

Cette thèse intitulée “*Rise of Digital Media in American Presidential Election Campaigns Barack Obama’s 2008*” consiste de deux chapitres. L’étude tente d’étudier le rôle éminent que les mass media puissent jouer dans les campagnes électorales des Etats Unies d’Amérique. En premier lieu l’étude trace le développement des medias dans la société américaine et leurs influences sur les campagnes électorales présidentielles à travers l’histoire. Cette investigation principalement se concentre sur les trois genres de media largement utilisés: les journaux, la télévision et l’internet. De plus avec l’application de la théorie d’écologie de media l’étude tente d’investiguer la campagne électorale 2008 de Barack Obama qui a bien compté sur l’internet à travers une utilisation stratégique sans précédente .