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American Presidential Elections – Mechanism and Campaign Issues with special reference to 2008-2012 elections

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American Foreign Policy is usually outlined and laid out by institutions and organizations, and not by individuals.

The Presidential Candidates of both the Republican and Democratic parties belong to parties which in reality are well established Party Institutions. Their attitudes towards American Foreign Policy in general and American National Security Objectives in particular are almost perennial, constant and unchanged.

Each party has its own philosophy and its fixed goals towards the issues of the National Security Objectives.

Thus, we can say that changing of Individuals at the top of the American political pyramids will not bring about any drastic changes to the fixed objectives of American Foreign Policy. This means that slight changes could take place without affecting the essence of American Foreign Policy objectives.

However, different ways and means could be pursued by the Foreign Policy decision- makers for achieving their country's fixed National Security Aims and Objectives without affecting the essence of their country's Foreign Policy Principles.

Primaries and Caucuses

The U.S. presidential elections take place every four years .This usually takes place on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of the election year. The presidential elections usually coincide with the Senate elections, where one-third of the senators face re-election and the House of Representatives elections, which occur every two years to elect members of the congress.

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The process of being elected President of United States is long, winding, challenging, and (to a large extent) complicated. Campaigning starts early with candidates running at a breakneck pace a year before any votes are cast. This usually starts at the beginning of January of the election year.

First, presidential candidates of each party will have to wage vigorous and sold campaigns, first within their respective parties in order to win that party's nominations for the presidency via the caucuses and primary elections. Primaries and caucuses are held by the 50 states and its six districts: Guam, Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

During the 2008 Presidential elections

The first official election in the 2008 presidential election cycle was the Iowa caucus on Thursday, January 3. Both parties' caucuses are open to only registered party voters, but anyone may register on caucus day. Of Iowa's 57 total Democratic delegates, 45 are tied to the January 3 caucuses and 12 are super delegates. Of the state's 40 total Republican delegates, 37 are tied to the January 3 caucuses and 3 are unpledged RNC member delegates.

On January 8, 2008, the New Hampshire primary was held. It was the first primary to be held in the nation. Since 1952, the primary has been a major testing ground for candidates for both the Republican and Democratic nomination. Candidates who do poorly frequently drop out. It is not a fully open primary; however, undeclared voters –those not registered with any party can vote in either primary.

In fact, Caucuses and Primaries are two different methods which the two political parties use to select delegates to their respective party's national conventions. The winning delegates then select their party's presidential candidates at the next national conventions.

Only 13 states still use the Caucus method for selecting convention delegates. Caucus meetings are closed and mostly dominated by party activists.(1)

Primaries, on the other hand, allow voters a broader participation to express their views. In some primaries you do not have to be a party member to vote.

There are three kinds of primaries :(2)

a- Closed primaries

Voting is confined to party members.

b- Open primaries

Voters of a state can vote regardless of their party affiliation, i.e. voting is not confined to party members, but a person cannot vote in two party's primaries.

c- Blanket primaries

Voters are allowed to vote in both primary elections of the two competing parties.

Super Tuesday

On February 5, about 24 states held simultaneous presidential primary elections.

The Republican and Democratic Primaries During the 2012 Presidential elections

The Mechanism of the primaries is the same in each presidential election season. The only differences would be in the number of the new candidates, as well as their views and attitudes towards the prevailing issues. The new primaries would witness a slight change in the number of the delegates required to attend their party's national convention as well as numbers of delegates needed by each presidential candidate in order to be endorsed officially by their respective party's national convention. There might be some other variable procedural measures.

The first Republican caucus contest of the 2012 election season began with the Iowa caucuses on January 3, while the first primary of the 2012 nomination process was in the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday, January 10.

On the Democratic side, the incumbent President Barack Obama is running uncontested in most states for the 2012 democratic presidential nomination. Up to this date of April 6, 2012, Obama won more delegates totaling 2854 out of the needed 2778 delegates. By July 2012 Obama won all the delegates totaling to 4022 delegates out of the 2,778 delegates to win his party's

nomination to the National Convention. Thus the de-facto Democratic nominee will likely be President Barack Obama. (3)

On the other side, the Republican candidate Mitt Romney has gained 657 delegates out of the needed 1144 delegates. Mitt Romney has won the Maryland, Wisconsin, and Washington DC Republican primaries on April 3, 2012. This trio of wins gave Romney a momentum as a frontrunner in the race for his party's presidential nomination. Romney's success in all of these three primaries raised his chances among his party's leaders to rally behind him. This trio victory also gave Romney a lead over his three Republican contestants, namely Rick Santorum who was a head in the Polls two months earlier. Thus, the defeat of Santorum in these Trio primaries put his campaign in serious trouble (4).

Three weeks later, on April 24, 2012, Romney achieved other four victories in New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Delaware. These victories raised Romney's points to 841 delegates out of the needed 1144 delegates. As expected, Santorum fell well back in his Republican contestant and decided to withdraw from the presidential race, hence giving Romney a greater boost in the Republican primary elections and by July 2012 Romney won more delegates totaling to 1524 out of 1,144 delegates needed to win his party's nomination to the National Convention. Romney's victory gave him the certainty that he would win his Republican Party's nomination for the presidential race to the White House.

President Obama, on the other side, remained uncontested in his Democratic Primary elections. Following the last five primaries, Obama got 4022 delegates out of the needed 2778 delegates. This simply meant that president Obama has already got the needed delegates required for his Party's nomination to the presidency. Thereby, Obama guaranteed his party's nomination in the National Convention for the presidential elections. See the following chart no.1.

Figure1-2012 Primaries and Ccaucuses Rresults
(CNN delegate estimate**)**
Democrats



Barack Obama
Pledged: 3328
Superdels:694
Total: 4022
Needed to win: 2,778

Republicans

Needed to win

1,144



(Out)
Bachmann1



(Out)
Santorum261



Romney1524



(Out)
Huntsman1



(Out)
Gingrich142



(Out)
Paul154

CNN elections 2012.Updated 1:21 a.m. ET, Jul 27, 2012

Campaign Issues of 2008 elections

1- The economy

The 2008 Presidential campaign coincided with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Obama said at a rally in New York, “The economic crisis we face is the worst since the Great Depression, resulting in 760,000 jobs lost in 2008, wages dropping to the lowest level in a decade, and a tightening credit market". Obama further said on a different occasion that the people needed fundamental changes in how they power their cars, heat their homes, pay for doctors, earn a living, guarantee educational opportunities for their kids, and secure their retirement. These and other tough questions required tangible answers. As the Newsday paper put it in its editorial, "The times demand a president who can see promise beyond the peril and articulate that vision for the rest of us". (5)

To start with, both candidates supported the government 700 Billion dollar bailout plan intended to help solve the financial crisis. However, they differed on solving the individual economic issues related to taxes, expenditures, health care, oil and energy, and so on.

Barack Obama unveiled an economic rescue plan for the middle class. At its heart was $60 billion in tax cuts for the middle-Income, and lower- income people. His plan also aimed at creating more jobs and easing the burden on the US households suffering from the economic turmoil (6). Obama called for new spending for public works projects to create more jobs. He wanted to create the extra jobs by temporary tax credits for firms who would create job opportunities in the U.S. Obama therefore proposed that existing businesses would receive a $3000 refundable tax credit for each additional full time employee hired during 2009-2010.(7)

To provide immediate relief for struggling families who were stricken by the financial crisis, Obama proposed a 90-day Moratorium (freeze) on foreclosures for home owners. (8). He also suggested that people could dip into their pension- retirement savings – (tax free) and withdraw up to 15% or $10,000 without any penalty. (9)

Obama wanted to reduce taxes on 95% of the working force in the US. More precisely, he wanted to reduce taxes on anyone whose income fell below $250,000 (10). He also promised to create a 25 billion jobs and growth fund by embarking on programs to repair bridges, roads, and schools, besides other infrastructure projects that have been on hold for decades. (11)

Obama's way to execute his economic plan

President Obama, in his speech on Monday October 3, 2008, outlined the top issues that would face his new administration. Obama presented his vision on the prevailing economic, fiscal, and health problems. He also showed a greater degree of determination that would enable him to implement his new policies. Obama wanted to see Congress act quickly on his proposals following his victory in the 2008 presidential election, an emergency session or in a Lame – duck session after the election.

Obama argued that, ''If Washington can move quickly to pass a rescue plan for the financial system, there is no reason we can't move just as quickly to pass a rescue plan for the middle class that will create jobs, provide relief, and help homeowners". (12)

Obama went on to say that if congress did not act in the coming months, it would be one of the first things he would do as president of the United States. (13) Obama pointed out clearly that he could not wait any longer to begin creating new jobs and to help the homeowners who were badly affected by the financial crisis. He made it clear that his new over policies, along with other economic measures, would start creating new opportunities for work, promoting family incomes, and most importantly, to put America back to path of prosperity. (14)

McCain, generally speaking, did not present a clear -cut economic plan as Obama did. He rather reflected the same old policies of President Bush. Not only had that, but McCain, throughout his 2008 presidential campaign, reflected economic views and ideas similar to Obama's. McCain, for instance, like Obama, supported the $700 billion bailout package plan and he called for more tax breaks and cuts on big businesses. McCain repeated Obama's ideas regarding helping the homeowners who were affected by the mortgage crisis.(15)

He called for buying bad mortgages to refinance them at lower values. His plan would direct the government to buy bad mortgage loans from banks and homeowners. Then they would be converted into low-interest loans, allowing the residents to continue to live in their homes. (16)

McCain spoke vaguely on how to deal with the other issues that he intended to find solutions for, in order to ease people's anxieties. He even echoed Obama's views. McCain suggested ways for retirees to keep their savings, college students to pay their tuition, and every citizen to afford health care. On oil and energy, McCain said that the U.S. needs to reclaim its energy independence by drilling off-shore. (17)

Causes of the financial crises of 2008

The financial crisis which struck the U.S. could be attributed to many factors. Some of which were: Loose monetary policies, excessive capital flows, fuelling of prices, i.e. increase in the market prices. Consequently, home owners with a mortgage could not afford paying their mortgages. This, in return, led to foreclosures of the homes whose owners could not pay their mortgages. This ultimately forced banks to be closed, which eventually led to the collapse of the mortgages market. The financial crisis was compounded with the already existing Economic problems which Americans were concerned with, such as: taxes, jobs, health care, oil and energy, education, war on Iraq, and so on.

2- Health Care

Both Obama and McCain dealt with the health care system in the U.S. Obama proposed more drastic solutions to the health care issue and presented his own solutions.

Obama suggested that if someone has a health insurance plan through his employer, he can keep it and can keep his choice of doctors, but have lower and affordable costs. If a person does not have an employer health plan, he will then have the option of buying into the same kind of federal pool as the members of congress enjoy as federal employees. This will give the person high quality care and choice of doctors, but at lower cost .Obama presented a more drastic proposal to this issue by promising that he would not allow Insurance companies to discriminate on the basis of

pre-existing conditions. This proposal has never been uttered by any president so far, nor has it been mentioned by any executive official before. (18)

McCain, on the other hand admitted that there are 47 million Americans who are without health insurance. He therefore proposed his own solution to the U.S. health care system by suggesting : putting care records online, having more community health centers and more walk in clinics and a $5000 refundable tax credit, so people can use it to get the health care that they want anywhere in America. (19)

McCain described Obama as "Socialist", and compared Obama's economic plan to a 'socialist' program, adding that Obama's plan sounded a lot like 'socialism', McCain further said that spreading the wealth around is a kind of socialism stressing that redistributing wealth in this manner would not help the American economy in the long run. McCain considered tax cuts proposed by Obama as 'welfare', which would not promote the American economy. Republican Jeb Hensarling of Texas said," You will see the greatest wave of socialism that has taken place in my lifetime. The philosophy of 'spread the wealth 'instead of 'creates the wealth' would permeate every part of government."(20)

3- Oil and energy

Nature of the oil and energy crisis

Obama analyzed the U.S. oil and energy situation and predicted that America would face real energy crisis in the future if it did not taken certain drastic precautionary measures in the oil and energy field. He therefore provided his solutions to this issue based on the following oil status: the US has only 3 to 4 per cent of the world's oil reserve, and the US imports more than 60% of its oil. This means that the US uses 25 % of the world's oil.

According to 2009 statistics, the U.S. crude oil imports 9,013,000 million barrels a day (21).However, American crude oil production for the same year was 5,360,540 million barrel a day, while its consumption of the crude oil was far greater totaling 18,810,010 million barrel a day. This simply shows American heavy reliance on the foreign oil imports. (22) Receiving two third of what it needs from the world's crude oil.

Obama's solution

Obama stressed the fact that the U.S. should reduce its dependence on the imported oil for both economic and security reasons. He called for putting resources on projects that would contribute in developing sustainable alternative fuels and green technology, that depend more on solar, wind, bio- diesel, and geothermal energy. (23)

Obama proposed expanding domestic production by the US oil companies. Obama wanted these oil companies to drill on the 68 million acres they are currently leasing. So Obama was asking these companies to drill on the leased lands or lose them. He suggested that the US should look at off-shore drilling in a more economic way to allow the US to get some additional oil. (24). Obama further suggested developing high fuel efficiency cars built in the US, not in south Korea or Japan.

McCain echoed similar ideas regarding his solution to the oil and energy situation in the U.S. He called for eliminating the US dependence on foreign oil by building 45 new nuclear power plants. He also proposed that the U.S. should depend more on other alternative sources for energy such as: nuclear power, wind, tide, solar, natural gas, flex fuel, and hybrid clean coal technology. McCain also repeated Obama's views regarding the necessity of starting off -shore drilling and he made this objective his campaign slogan "Drill Baby Drill". (25)

4- Iraq

The Iraq war is the most important foreign policy issue during the 2008 election for both parties. McCain voted in 2002 for the use of military force in Iraq. And he supported Bush's veto-of-war spending bill that would have withdrawn most US troops by March 2008. McCain was one of the earlier supporters of sending additional American troops to Iraq. He in fact supported President Bush's Policies on Iraq. He therefore did not support the idea of setting a withdrawal time table for American combat forces from Iraq when this issue was raised in the Congress in 2007. McCain therefore supported the January 2007 'troops surge' proposed by President Bush, and he was one of the earliest proponents of this strategy. Once McCain predicted that, under his presidency most US

forces would have withdrawn by 2013. McCain therefore supported the idea of US –Iraqi negotiations for a security agreement that would secure a long term presence of US forces in Iraq.

Obama on the other hand, opposed the use of military forces in Iraq. He voted for a spending bill that would have withdrawn most US troops, and remained a vehement proponent of withdrawing US combat forces from Iraq in general. Obama opposed the January 2007 'troops surge', and wanted to maintain residual forces in Iraq to perform specific missions in the country. He therefore supported the US –Iraqi Security Agreement to regulate US-Iraqi bi- lateral relations following the US combat forces' withdrawal from Iraq. (26).

President Obama's main achievements during his presidency2008-2012

Barrack Obama inherited a set of challenges not seen since Franklin Delonore Roosevelt took office in 1933. Obama faced a broken financial system, an ailing infrastructure, a growing environment crisis, and a troubled economic system. (27)

Following his election in November 2008, Obama determined to go on with his election promises in all the areas he referred to during his 2008 election campaign. Obama first wanted to execute his stimulus economic plan which intended to fix the American economy at all levels: tax cuts, creating or saving 2.5 million jobs in the hope of lowering the soaring rate of unemployment. In the Democrat's weekly radio address, Mr. Obama said; "We'll put people back to work rebuilding our crumbling roads and bridges, modernizing schools that are failing our children." (28) Obama's stand on the issue of reform economy was strongly supported by the Democratic leaders in the congress who had called for a robust economic recovery initiative of up to $300 billion, including major investments in infrastructure to create jobs. (29)

In spite of facing all those challenges, President Obama succeeded in fulfilling most of his urgent election promises in several important fields which raised his popularity even more. For instance President Obama managed to pass laws related to: the economic stimulus, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and the Wall Street Reform Act. What is even more important was

Obama's success in passing his historic act regarding the health care system. Beside that in the foreign policy field, President Obama signed the Start Treaty with the Russian Federation. Even more important than this is that Obama fulfilled his promise of withdrawing all American combat forces from Iraq by the end of 2011.

1- Economy

In the economic field, President Obama achieved a milestone for progress and succeeded in passing many laws in this field. On February 17, 2009, President Obama passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009(ARRA), shortly nicknamed as the Recovery Act, or the Stimulus packag. (30).This act made supplemental appropriations for jobs creation and preservation. It also called for further investment in infrastructure, energy, science, health, and education. The act also included further provisions for providing assistance to the unemployed and more social welfare benefits. The act actually intended to create more jobs immediately and to provide temporary relief programs for those most affected by the recession. The total cost of the economic stimulus package was estimated around $787 billion. The other accomplishment which president Obama achieved in the economic field following his election to the presidency of 2008 was the Dodd–Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which president Obama signed into law on July 21, 2010.The Act brought in financial regulatory reforms, which affected all the Federal financial regulatory agencies and almost all sectors of the national financial services industry.

The Act also intended to deal with the financial crisis that swept the U.S. economy in late 2008. It also aimed to bringing about financial stability to American economic system. This Act tried to achieve these objectives through promoting accountability and transparency in the financial system. The Act also looked forward to protecting consumers from offensive financial services practices (31).Other related economic legislation were the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010 President Obama signed this Act into law on December 17,

2010. This Act was devoted mainly to help the middle class and low income families, through many tax cuts and /or relief measures. (32)

2- The Health Care System

The other main election campaign issue being raised during 2012 elections is the health care system, which had itself been Obama's top campaign issue during the 2008 election. President Obama successfully fulfilled his promise regarding the health care system after his victory in the 2008 elections. President Obama signed the health care system reform into law on March 23, 2010. It is titled as The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). (33) This law which would cost $ 950 billion represented President Obama's most significant and historical achievement during the early period of residency.

The PPACA demanded that individuals who are not covered by an employer or the government – have sponsored insurance plans to retain minimal basic health insurance coverage or pay penalty, unless exempted for religious beliefs or financial need. The milestone of this Act is that it insists on coverage of pre-existing conditions. The new Act gave access to health insurance to more than 30 million Americans.

3- Foreign policy

A- Iraq

President Obama gave the Iraq issue top priority after his victory in the 2008 presidential election. Obama committed himself to put an end to the Iraq War. According to the U.S. Iraqi Security Pact (SOFA), which was signed in November 2008, President Obama fulfilled this objective on December 31, 2011 by withdrawing all U.S. combat forces from Iraq. (34)

The U.S. combat presence in Iraq has been replaced by the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA). The latter was intended to cover a wide range of bilateral cooperation efforts in the fields of defence, health, the environment, science, and technology. (35)

B- The New START

President Obama managed to sign the New START (The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) with the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, in Prague on April 8, 2010, and came into force on February f, 2011 (36). The Treaty is a nuclear

arms reduction treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation with the formal name of Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. It is expected to last at least until 2021.

The New START Treaty replaced the Treaty of Moscow (SORT), which was due to expire in December, 2012. In terms of name, it is a follow-up to the START I treaty, which expired in December, 2009, the proposed START II treaty, which never entered into force, and the START III treaty, for which negotiations were never concluded.

The Main Campaign Issues of 2012 Presidential Elections

Among the top campaign issues of the 2012 presidential elections are: The economy, the health care system, foreign policy, and other local societal issues related to civil and personal liberties.

1- The Economy

The economy is an important campaign issue in any presidential election, but it can make or break this President's re-election chances in the 2012 presidential race to the White House.

The economy includes: unemployment, taxes, the federal government's $14 trillion debt, the U.S. banking and financial system, and many other fiscal policy issues.

As we have seen above, President Obama made drastic and sweeping reforms in the economic sector with attempts at reforming Wall Street and the provision of laws aimed at helping small–business owners and consumers. President Obama compounded his economic reforms with legislations intended to stimulate the economy. However, Republicans still believe that President Obama failed to drop the record-high unemployment rate of 9.1%. President Obama's chances to remain a front runner in the presidential race depend very much on the way he has handled and is handling the Great Recession, which many believe is bringing down the U.S. Economy.

On April 3, 2012, Obama gave his strongest campaign speech so far and referred to Romney by name for the first time in his address by attacking the Republican budget plan passed by the U.S. House of Representatives

Obama said that "one of my potential opponents, Gov. Romney, has said that he hoped a similar version of this plan from last year would be introduced on day one of his presidency", and that Romney was "very supportive of this new budget." (37)

President Obama wanted to say the Republican Party has no new economic plans; all they have is a version of his own economic ideas.

2- The Health Care System

The other main election campaign issue raised during 2012 election is the health care system which was itself Obama's top issue during the 2008 elections. President Obama successfully fulfilled his promise regarding the health care system after his victory in the 2008 election. However, he has to keep up its momentum for the years to come.

Republican candidates during the 2012 election are actually pushing towards "repealing and replacing" much of the health care system. President Obama prides himself for reforming it, and indeed millions of Americans benefited from his health care reforms.

However, the Republicans disapprove of this law and are trying to repeal it. Besides, various courts have ruled that there are certain parts of the law that are unconstitutional.

3-Foreign Policy

President Obama has faced many issues on foreign policy during much of his term. Obama is still formulating strategies for many of those issues and he must deal with them in a more practical and convincing way in order to win his people's satisfaction with his foreign policy platform.

President Obama still has to put his Iraq policy on the right track and be sure that the provisions of the Iraqi Security Pact (SOFA) are well implemented. What is even more important in the Iraqi issue is to guarantee the proper execution of the provisions of the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA).The Framework Agreement covers a wide range of bilateral cooperation between Iraq and the U.S. in the vital fields such as defense, health, economy, education, and commerce. (38) President Obama also had to deal with the Afghanistan issue, which he also promised to give his top priority now and in his next term of presidency.

President Obama also has to face new challenges resulting from the nuclear issue in the Middle East. This is a serious challenge which the President has to confront, but he is entitled to recommend his own perceptions and solutions for the future for different time periods short, medium and long. These challenging issues are compounded by the Palestinian issue which he promised to deal with in a more serious way. President Obama also had to address the newly raised challenges brought about by the Arab democratic uprisings generally called the "Arab Spring". Those movements aimed at withstanding or rebelling the oppressive Regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. In this regard, the Republican candidate Romney promised that he would "pursue a strategy of American strength". (39)

Party' states conventions

The two parties hold their states' conventions from April through June of the election year. At these meetings, each party selects its delegates to the coming national conventions which are usually held in August of the election year.

Parties' National Conventions

The Nominating Process of the candidates to the Presidency

The presidential candidate of each party who gets the needed number of the delegates during the primaries will be his party's nominee to the national convention.

National Conventions are the final party election stage where delegates endorse their presidential candidates for presidency. For the candidates to become a nominee for a president, they should be nominated by a majority of delegates attending the national convention of either party.

During the 2008 presidential elections,

The Democratic Party candidate was to win a simple majority of 2118 delegate votes out of a total of 4234 delegates. The Republican Party candidate was to win a simple majority of 1191 delegate votes out of a total of 2380.

The following figures (2&3) show the number of the delegates of both parties and their types who won the nomination of their party's primaries during the 2008 presidential elections and were endorsed at their party's states conventions. (40).

Convening the National Conventions during the 2008 presidential elections

The National Conventions for both parties are usually held at the end of August of the election year. During the 2008 presidential elections, the Democratic Party held its National Conventional in August between 25-28 while the Republican Party held its National convention on September for the period 1-4.

In the 2008 presidential elections, the Democratic Party candidate was to win a simple majority of 2118 delegate votes out of a total of 4234 delegates. The Republican Party candidate was to win a simple majority of 1191 delegate votes out of a total of 2380.

The following figures (1&2) show the number of the delegates of both parties and their types who won the nomination of their party's primaries during the 2008 presidential elections and were endorsed at their party's states conventions.

The total number of Democratic delegates who attended the party's national election in the 2008 presidential elections was 4234. The Republican delegates numbered 2380. There are three types of delegates who are chosen to attend the national conventions: pledged, unpledged, and super delegates.

The Democratic Party delegated 3409 pledged delegates, plus 825 super delegates, totaling 4234

The Republican Party assigned 1917 pledged delegates, plus 463 unpledged delegates, (41) totaling 2380.

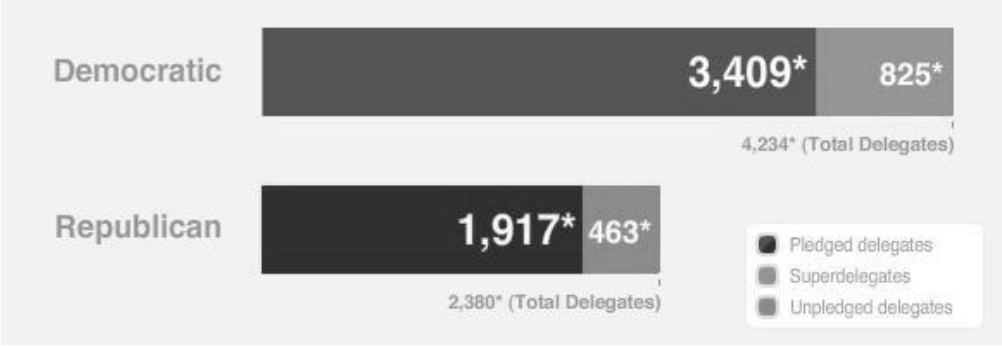
The pledged delegates are selected with the understanding that they will support a particular candidate at their respective party conventions. However, pledged delegates are not actually bound to vote for the candidate.

The super delegates are usually Democratic members of congress, governors, national committee members, or party leaders (such as former presidents and vice presidents).

During the 2008 presidential elections, Obama obtained the needed 2201 delegates out of the total 4234 delegates who attended the national convention. McCain also obtained the required 1575 delegates out of 2380 delegates who attended their party's national convention.

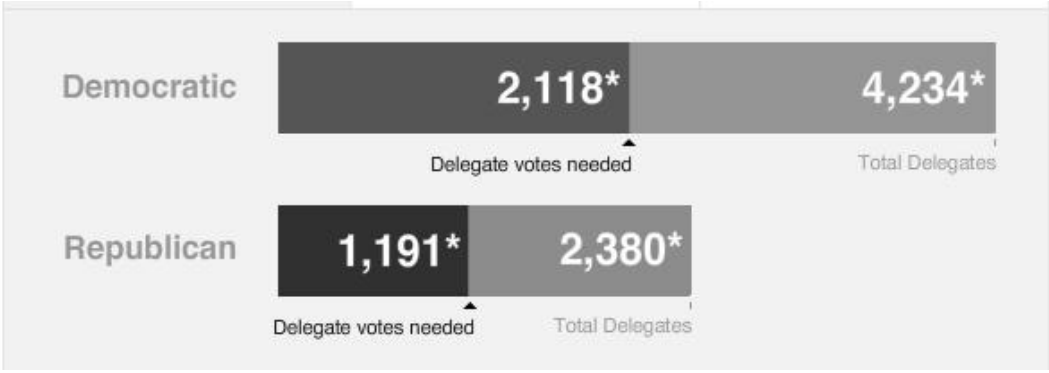
After the presidential candidates have won their party's nomination for the candidacy of the presidency at the national convention, then the two winner candidates usually one from each party will have to wage another fierce and challenging campaign against each other for the race to the White House. The following (figures2&3) shows the Democratic and the Republican delegates who attended the National Conventions during the 2008 presidential elections.

Figure2: Democratic and Republican delegates to the National



Conventions

Figure3: Types of the states' delegates to the national conventions



National

CNN ELECTIONS 2008

Conventions of the two parties during the 2012 presidential elections

The National Conventions for both parties are held at the end of August of the election year 2012.

The 2012 Republican National Convention was held during the week of August 27, 2012 in Tampa, Florida. During the Convention delegates officially nominated Romney and Paul Ryan for President and Vice president respectively for the 2012 elections. Prominent members of the party delivered speeches and discussed the convention theme. "A Better Future."

The convention lasted from August 27 to 30, 2012. According to the convention website, it hosted 2,286 delegates, 2,125 alternates, and 15,000 credentialed members of the media. The convention CEO was William D. Harris.

Mitt Romney, former Governor of Massachusetts clinched the Republican presidential nomination in Texas primary on May29, 2012 and became the party's presumptive nominee. Two weeks before the convention, on August, Romney announced Paul Ryan as his running mate. The decision makes Ryan the major parties' first vice presidential candidate from Wisconsin.

Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich formally released their delegates in the week before the convention and encouraged them to vote for Romney. Ron Paul retained his delegates, as part of an overall strategy to influence the party. The final composition of several delegations was subject to ruling of the Committee on Contests.

Sununu officially nominated Romney for re-election on 29th 2012.Boehrer; the speaker of the House of Representative announced the number of votes Romney received in the convention was 2,061 votes more than the majority of the votes entitled to be cast at the convention.

The 2012 Democratic National Convention was held from September 4 to 6, 2012, in Charlotte, North Carolina, in which Prominent members of the party delivered speeches delegates of the Democratic Party chose the party's nominees for President and Vice President in the 2012 United States national election.

On April 3, 2012, President Barack Obama won the Maryland and District of Columbia primaries, giving him more than the required 2,778 delegates to secure the presidential nomination. He had previously announced that Vice President Joe Biden would be his vice presidential running mate in his re-election bid.

Bill Clinton officially nominated Obama for re-election and Obama was nominated unanimously by the 5,556 delegates of the convention.

Debates and televised addresses

Following the National Conventions the winning presidential candidates wage very vigorous and challenging campaigns, along with three televised debates .These activities are important political events because they give the candidates opportunities to tell the people about their future plans, should they be elected as president. The presidential candidate of both parties' tries hard to present his views about the main issues, mostly of common interest to the people affecting their daily lives. Simultaneously, they try to present more positive and solid rescue plans for the urgent prevailing issues, such as the economy, health care, education, foreign policy, and so on.

The 2008 presidential elections witnessed three nationwide televised debates between the presidential candidates following their party's national conventions. The first televised debate was on September 26, 2008, at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. This debate concentrated on Iraq and the other economic issues. The second debate was on October 7, 2008 at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. The third debate was on October 15, 2008 at Hofstra University. (44) The presidential debates saw one televised debate between the then vice presidential candidates Biden and Sara Palin. (45)

2012 Presidential Televised Debates

The 2012 presidential elections witnessed three presidential debates between President Obama and Governor Mitt Romney. The same election cycle witnessed one vice presidential debate between the vice president Joe Biden and the presumptive Vice president the congressman Paul Ryan.

Tickets for each debate is controlled by the Commission on Presidential Debates and are *extremely* limited since the debates are primarily produced for television. The majority of tickets are distributed to host university students and faculty through a lottery system. Each debate was broadcasted live on the main TV channel networks.

The first presidential debate was held on October 3, 2012 and was hosted by the University of Denver, Colorado. The debate focused on domestic policy and was divided into six time segments of approximately 15 minutes each on topic selected by the moderator and announced several weeks before the debate. The main segments of the debate included topics on: Taxes, Unemployment, Deficit, Obama Health Care, Role of the Federal Government and education.

The first of three presidential debates reached more than 70 million viewers watched on television at home-the highest number for a first debate since 1980. That year, 80.6 million watched the only debate between President Jimmy Carter and the Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan.

The second Presidential debate took place on October 16, 2012 and was hosted by Hofstra University in Hempstead. New York. The moderator was Candy Crowly (CNN chief Political Correspondent). The second presidential debate took the form of a town meeting, in which citizens asked questions of the candidates on foreign and domestic issues. Candidates each had two minutes to respond, and an additional minute for the moderator to facilitate a discussion. The town meeting participants were undecided voters selected by the Gallup Organization.

The third presidential debate was held on October 22, 2012 at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. The moderator was Bob Schieffer (Host of Face the Nation CBS). The format for the debate was identical to the first presidential debate and focused on Foreign Policy.

The Vice presidential debate took place on October 11,2012between The Vice President Joe Biden and the Republican Vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan. It was hosted by Center

College in Danville –Kentucky. The moderator was Martha Raddatz (ABC News chief correspondent).

The debate covered both foreign and domestic topics and be divided into nine time segments of approximately 10 minutes each. The moderator asked an opening question, after which each candidate had two minutes to respond. The moderator used the balance of time in the segment for a discussion of the question.

Following the televised debates in each presidential campaign, the American people has an opportunity to closely see, watch, and hear the two leading candidates for the presidency debating the critical issues facing the nation. The televised debates are also effective ways to inform and involve voters in the political process.

The presidential debates have great impact on the voter's attitude and inclination towards each of the Presidential candidates. That impact could generate a change in the level of rating support towards the candidates. For instance the first debate narrowed the gap between the two presidential candidates to the minimum in comparison the pre first debate. This was due the results of that debate which gave great lead to Romney over President Obama to the extent that major Polls including CNN Poll showed that 67% of the registered voters said that Romney won the debate in comparison to 25% of the voters aid that President Obama won the debate. These figures obviously gave dramatic lead to Romney over President Obama in the presidential race to the White.

Two national Polls released Monday October 8, 2012 suggested Republican Presidential nominee Mitt Romney got a jump out of the first presidential debate on October 3, 2012. According to Gallup Polling survey released on Monday 8, 2012, 49% of the likely voters say they back Romney, with 47% they supporting President Obama. Similar figures released by CNN poll also showed a lead for Romney over Obama. In this poll 49% voted for Romney while 47% voted for Obama. (46)

In the last two presidential debates most polls showed that President Obama won the debates .According to Gallup Polling survey released on October 19, 2012 showed that President Obama

won the second presidential debate. In this poll 51% voted for Obama while 38%voted for Romney. (47)

International CNN Poll on who won the final debate released on October 22, 2012 showed that 48% voted for Obama while 40% voted for Romney. The CNN Poll of the polls carried a national survey on October 22, 2012 showing that both candidates were tied 47% to 47% each. (48)

By all means, in following weeks, Romney's poll numbers rose steadily, bringing him even with Obama in an aggregate of major national surveys and moving in front in key battleground states such as Florida and North Carolina.

The Popular Vote

a- 2008 elections results

In the 2008 Election Day- Tuesday, November 4, 2008- U.S. citizens cast their votes in all 50 states and D.C. (This is called the popular vote). However, early voting took place even a head of this date.

Early voting began in certain states such as Colorado, Nevada, and Texas ended on Friday few days earlier than the actual voting day. North Carolina's early voting ended Saturday, and Florida's ended Sunday. Early voting in Ohio and Indiana -- states where polls showed a neck-and-neck race – ended late Monday. The following day i.e Tuesday (the voting day), or rather late that night, the press announced the winner.

But the US constitution requires that the president and vice president be elected through the 'electoral college'. Thus, on December 15, 2008 members of the U.S. 'electoral college' meet in each state to cast their votes for the president and vice president.

On January 6, 2009 electoral votes are officially sent to the US congress, and in a joint session the president of the senate declares the name of the winner of the presidency.

b- 2012 elections results

In the 2012 Election Us citizen cast their votes on Tuesday, November 6, which commonly known as the popular voting. Late on that day, the name of the winner to the presidency is announced publicly. It is President Barrack Obama .However, the US

Constitution demands that the president and vice president be elected through the 'electoral college'.

Therefore, 'electoral college' members in each state meet on December 15, 2012 to cast their votes for the president and vice president.

On January 6, 2009 electoral votes are officially sent to the US congress, and in a joint session the president of the senate declares the name of the winner of the presidency.

Electoral College

We have the popular vote and the electoral vote. The citizens of the United States do not elect their president directly. When Americans cast their votes for a presidential candidate, they are in fact voting for their state' electors.

As a group these electors are known as the 'electoral college'. It is the 'electoral college' who elects the president and his running mate, the vice president.

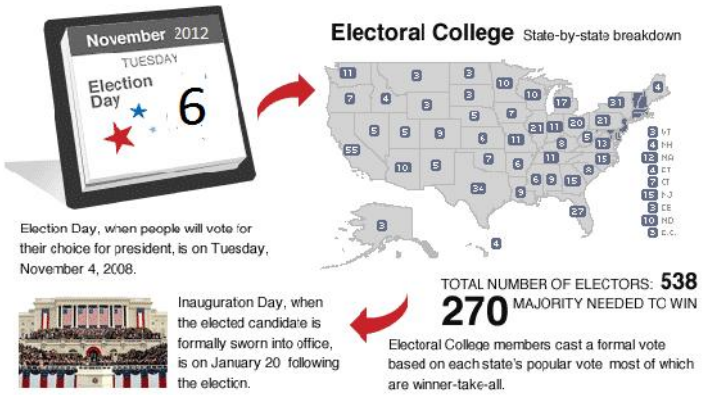
Who are the members of the Electoral College?

Each state has as many electors as it has members in the US senate and the House of Representatives combined. There are 535 voting members of Congress, of which, the House of Representatives has a membership of 435 and the Senate has a membership 100. Each state has two senators plus the numbers of representatives allotted the state by the most recent census.

However, the five U.S. territories are not represented in the Electoral College. Following the ratification of the Twenty-third Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1961, the District of Columbia was also granted three electoral votes: two for the Senate and one for the House equal to the number of those held by the least populous states. According to this formula, the total number of electors became 538.

Each party within a state selects a slate of electors who are usually nominated by party conventions in the primary elections, or by party organizations. California holds the most electors (55) while several states have only (3) Electors. (270) Electoral votes are needed to win the presidency. (See figure 4).

Figure No.-4- 270-The Magic Number



Mechanism of the 'electoral college' voting

On Election Day in the first Thursday of the first week of November of the election year, voters throughout the country go to the polls to choose the electors in their states. In many states the names of the electors do not even appear on the ballots. The voters see only the names of the candidates for president and vice president.

Nevertheless, voters who favor the Republican (or Democratic) candidate for president actually vote for the Republican (or Democratic) electors in their states. This is called the Popular Vote.

The presidential candidate who wins the most popular votes in each state normally wins all of that state's electoral votes (538 votes-for all 50 states and DC. This is known as the 'winner- take-all'. However, presidential candidates can become a president if they win the magic Number of 270 (as shown in the above figure no.4).

What happens if no one candidate reaches the 270 electoral votes?

If no one candidate reaches the 270 electoral votes, then the election is taken to the House of Representatives to be decided. The House will then choose the president from among the candidates receiving the highest electoral votes.

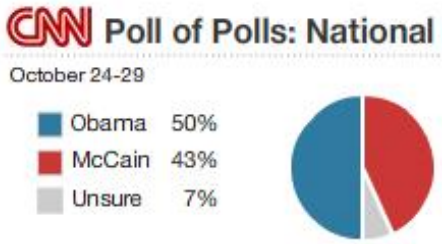
Each state has one vote in the House. The majority of states must agree on one candidate. As for the vice president, the senate chooses the vice-president from the two higher candidates giving senator one vote.

Finally, on January 20, following the November election, the newly elected president celebrates his Inauguration day.

Who won the2008 presidential elections?

During the 2008 presidential election, we found that the results of the polls were precise to the extent that they gave an exact picture of who would be the presidential winner. For instance, most of the polls that were carried on Sunday, November 2, 2008, a few days before the national voting showed that President Obama had an 8 point lead over John McCain (47). This clearly meant that Obama would earn 51% of the national votes compared to 43% for McCain, and consequently Obama would be elected as the president. Political analysts took these percentages seriously and regarded them as creditable enough to say without hesitation that Obama would be the next president despite the results of the Tossups states (see figures 5&6).

Figure -5- Poll of the Polls results 2008 Presidential elections



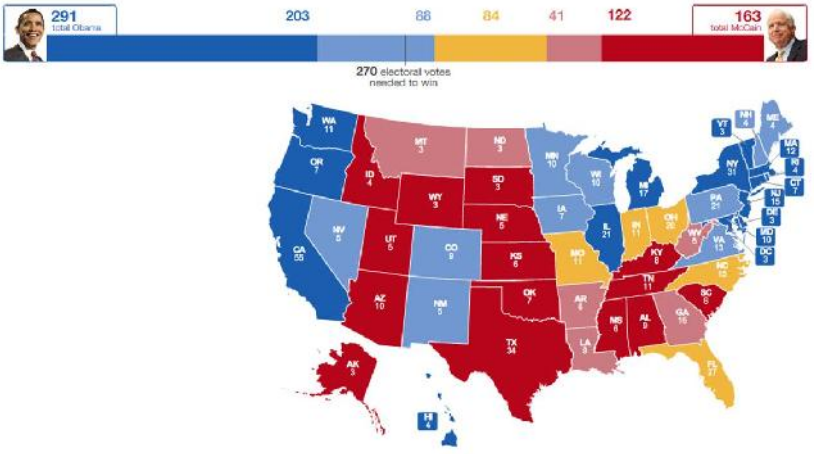


Figure-6-The Electoral Map prediction in October 2008

CNN ELECTIONS 2008

Obama's Safe Areas

Obama's electoral base was made up of traditional Democratic strongholds in the Northeast, the Mid-east, and the West Coast. Most of these states did not vote Republican in a presidential general election since the 1980s, and the Capital, District of Colombia has never supported a Republican for president.

Obama's safe areas covered a relatively small portion of the nation geographically, but the electoral votes from California, New York and Obama's home state Illinois carried more than a third of the total votes needed to win the White House.

Leaning toward Obama

The Pacific Northwest hasn't voted Republican since 1984. McCain's moderate reputation on certain issues had given Obama an edge.

McClain's Safe Areas

McClain's electoral base was made up of traditional Republican strongholds in the South, the Great Plains, and the Interior Mountains west, where states like Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming had not supported a Democratic presidential candidate.

Leaning toward McCain

McCain held a slight advantage in several traditional Republican states stretching across the Sunbelt, which made Obama more competitive in these states.

Tossups States

These were the most competitive battlegrounds that could determine the election results. They were made up largely of Florida, Ohio, Colorado, and Virginia.

Predictions of the 2008 elections based on the polls' results

The Tossups states which represented 84 electoral votes were not guaranteed for either candidate. However, McCain would not have gotten the 270 majority needed in the electoral college no matter how many of those Tossup states would have gone to McCain on the election day. That result would not have been changed even if McCain had gotten all the tossup states' votes. This simply meant that Obama would not be affected by the results of the

tossup states as he had already reached the 270 majority electoral number required for winning the presidential race.

According to the electoral map (fig. -5-), Obama would win 291 Electoral Votes with 163 for McCain and another 84 Electoral votes up for grabs by the Tossup states (see the electoral map .(fig.-5-).

What did this mean?

Based on the above statistics Obama was the winner. HOW?

The total Electoral Votes	538
Obama was projected to obtain	291
McCain was projected to obtain	174
270 majority electoral votes needed to win	
The Tossup states	84

The actual electoral results of the 2008 elections

The final electoral results of the 2008 presidential elections were compatible with the national poll's predictions, which predicted Obama's victory. President Obama won 365 electoral votes, far exceeding the needed 270 electoral votes representing 53% percentage of the total votes; McCain obtained only 173 electoral votes' far less than the needed electoral votes for winning the presidency (48).

Early Predictions on who may win 2012 presidential elections

There are many public opinion centers that momentarily carry nationwide surveys during presidential campaigns. Their surveys deal with different aspects of the election race such as: the voting behavior, candidates' rating, popularity, efficiency, credibility, and the top election campaign issues. Findings of the national polls play pivotal roles in giving a general picture of the societal stance on the aforementioned aspects and issues. Their findings are credible and can be relied on for future predictions on the efficiency and popularity of many prevailing cases and issues. Sometimes, results of the National surveys and interviews. In most cases, their findings prove to be relatively accurate or at least near to reality, as in the case with the 2008 presidential elections.

The same criterion could be applied to the 2012 presidential elections, taking into account that certain un-expected variables may happen which could flip the formula upside down.

Generally speaking, the decisive factor in determining the final presidential results is the polling day on in November 6, 2012 when American voters cast their popular votes. On that date only, one can be for sure who the real winner is in the presidential race to the White House.

However, one can predict and infer certain results related to the projected winner of the 2012 presidential candidates. The incumbent, President Barack Obama, is running unchallenged in most states for the 2012 Democratic presidential nomination. Up to this date of April 5, 2012, Obama won all the delegates, totaling 2854 out of the needed 2778 delegates. And by July 2012, the total delegates which president Obama won were 4022 out of the 2,778 delegates needed to win his Party's nomination to the National Convention. Thus, in reality, the Democratic nominee for the 2012 presidency was definitely President Barack Obama without any challenging candidate from his Democratic party.

The Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, won 657 delegates out of the needed 1144 delegates in the primary elections up until April 5, 2012. Mitt Romney won the Maryland, Wisconsin, and Washington DC Republican primaries on April 3, 2012. This trio of wins gave Romney the impetus to become the likely victor in the race for his party's presidential nomination. Romney's success in all of these three primaries elevated the chances of his party's leaders to unite behind him. This Trio victory also gave Romney a lead over the 3 closest Republican contestants, especially namely Rick Santorum, who was at the top of the public opinion polls in the two months before. Thus, Santorum's loss in these three primaries put his campaign in a serious dilemma And he finally had to withdraw from the presidential race on April 4, 2012.

Later on, Romney won extra delegates in the primaries of four states: New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, which were held on April 24, 2012. From these, Romney's score climbed to 841 out of the needed 1144 delegates. Because of these victories for Romney, Gingrich had also to withdraw from the

presidential race on May 2, 2012 leaving his contestant Romney as the only presidential candidate in the Republican Party.

Romney won more delegates on May 29, 2012 in the primaries of nine States: Nebraska, West Virginia, North Carolina, Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Texas. Romney's score of the delegates up to May was 1172 out of the needed 1144 delegates to win. By July 2012 , Romney gained more votes from his party during those primaries and finally his score of his party's delegates became 1524 delegate out of the 1,144 delegate needed to win his party's nomination to the National Convention. Thereby, guaranteeing his party's nomination for the presidency.

Based on the above mentioned figures, one can easily say that Obama and Romney were the only two contestants in the presidential race going into the day of the general election on November 6, 2012, which decide the real winner of the presidency.

In addition to the for-mentioned results, the early polls can also be indicative of who would more likely become the presidential winner. The early polls released in late March and early April of 2012 showed that President Obama has a lead over Romney in the primary elections and most likely in the general elections as well. The NBC/Marist Poll released on March, 2012 showed that Romney trailed well behind Obama in the Wisconsin poll. According to the results of this poll, President Obama topped his rival Romney 52% to 35% among registered voters.

The NBC/Marist Poll released on March 30, 2012, indicated Romney edged out his other Republican contestants with 40% support from the primary voters. Rick Santorum came in the second place with 33%, followed by Ron Paul with 11% while Newt Gingrich got 8%. Again, according to a survey released by CNN/ORC International on March29, 2012, President Obama would beat Romney by 45% to 40% in a hypothetical match-up between the two candidates.

An earlier poll released by Quinnipiac University on March, 2012 showed that President Obama defeated the Republican candidate Rick Santorum in Pennsylvania by 48% to 41%. In that same month March, 2012, the Quinnipiac University poll showed that President Obama had an advantage over the Republican front-

runner Mitt Romney in Florida. The survey released on March 28.2012 showed that Obama was leading over Romney by 49% to 42% in Battleground Florida (49).

However the post presidential debates' results reversed those figures. Most polls released after those debates gave slight lead to President Obama over Romney in the polling surveys. And in certain cases showed that both Obama and Romney were tied to 45% each.

In addition to the polls, there are other factors that can be used to indicate the stronger candidate for presidency. Among those factors are the previous career and the professional achievements of the individual candidates. The Republican candidate Mitt Romney's past experience was only as the governor of Massachusetts. President Obama on the other hand, has had proven experience and gained a wealth of knowledge during his four years of presidency. Furthermore, President Obama promised to deal with many top campaign issues during his 2008 election campaign, and he committed himself to find solutions to them immediately following his election to the presidency. It seems that President Obama has lived up to his words.

President Obama achieved historical reforms in the health Care system and the economy. He also kept his word regarding the U.S. presence in Iraq. He fulfilled his promise in this field by withdrawing all American combat forces from Iraq by the end of 2011. These and other related accomplishments increased his popularity and gave him more credibility.

In the 2012 election campaign, president Obama bragged about his achievements and promised that he would preserve them and would further promote them into more tangible results. He even promised to augment his achievements and bring about more progress and prosperity in the country.

As we have already stated above, Romney won the first presidential debate on October 3, 2012, thereby narrowing the gap between the two presidential candidates. This fact was further supported by the results of the registered voters who were interviewed immediately after the first debate. The results of the Polls on who may have won the debate showed that Romney gained

67% of the registered voters, while President Obama obtained only 25% of the voters who were interviewed.

Most polls released in the weeks succeeded the presidential debates showed that the two presidential candidates are pretty close. The CNN Poll of the Polls national survey carried on October 22, 2012 showed that presidential candidate Obama obtained 47% of the projected votes and Romney got votes 48% .In Ohio which is a very critical state Obama got 48% of the projected votes while Romney obtained 45% of the registered projected voters. It is a very good sign that President Obama would win One of the most important swing states in the election day on November 6,2012 and would give him additional electoral votes.(See figures -7&8).

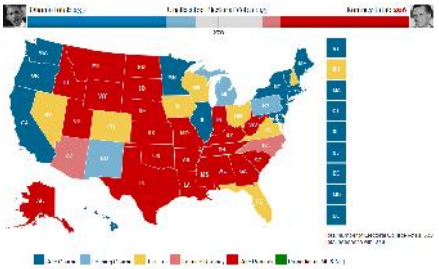
Figure-7-8 CNN Poll of the Polls Results October 2012



An electoral map released in the weeks that preceded the popular voting showed that Romney has achieved more electoral votes totalling 206 votes in comparison to237 to president Obama These figures raised Romney's hopes for winning the presidency.

The total Electoral Votes are 538 votes, but the needed electoral votes to win is 270 electoral votes .Obama is projected to have obtained by the last week of October 237 votes while Romney 206 electoral votes. According to these projected figures, President Obama would need 33 electoral votes in order to win the presidency, while Romney would require 76 electoral votes. (See figure 9).

Figure 9-Electoral Map on who may would have won 2012 presidential elections (before casting the popular votes)

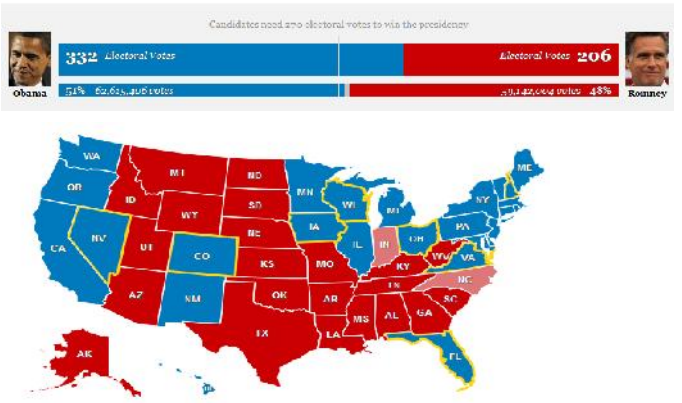


CNN ELECTIONS 2012

Barack Obama won the Presidency in 2012

The results of the polls kept fluctuating, as seen in figure 8, till the very last day that preceded casting the popular votes. Nonetheless, Obama won a historical Presidential election for the second term and he became the 44th president of the United States of America. President Obama obtained 332 electoral votes which is more than the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. Mitt Romney obtained only 206 electoral votes. (See figure10).

Figure 10- Obama has won the 2012 presidency



CNN ELECTIONS 2012

باللغة العربية

- انتخابات الرئاسة الامريكية- ألاهداف والألية مع اشارة الى انتخابات

يذهب الناخب الامريكي الى صناديق الاقتراع مرة واحدة كل اربع سنوات لانتخاب الرئيس الامريكي وذلك في الاسبوع الاول من شهر تشرين الثاني من السنة الانتخابية. ويتوجب على مرشحي احزاب الرئاسة الامريكية خوض سلسلة من الانتخابات التمهيدية والتي تبدا في بداية الاسبوع الاول من شهر كانون الثاني من السنة الانتخابية. وتستمر الانتخابات التمهيدية حتى نهاية المؤتمرات القومية للاحزاب الرئيسة في شهر اب من السنة الانتخابية تتم فيها تسمية مرشح رئاسي واحد عن كل حزب من الحزبين الرئيسيين . وبعد تسمية المرشحين الاثنين من قبل الحزبين الجمهوري والديمقراطي تبدأمرحلة حاسمة من الانتخابات الرئاسية بينهما وحتى يوم الاقتراع الشعبي في شهر نوفمبر/ تشرين الثاني من السنة الانتخابية والتي يتم بها انتخاب الرئيس الامريكي.

تشهد انتخابات الرئاسة الامريكية طرح قضايا مختلفة ذات صلة بالبعدين الخارجي والداخلي للولايات المتحدة الامريكية. وتتنوع تلك الامور والقضايا سواء على الصعيد الاقتصادي، الضمان الصحي ، الضمان الاجتماعي او غيرها من امور مستجدة تمثل المزاج المجتمعي السائد خلال السنة الانتخابية. وفي كل الاحوال ينبغي على مرشحي الرئاسة الامريكية مواجهة تلك الامور منفردة او مجتمعة والتطرق لها خلال الحملة الانتخابية وطرح تصوراتهم حيالها.

فلقد شهدت انتخابات الرئاسة الامريكية لعام ٢٠١٢ طرح امورا عديدة متشابه من حيث العناوين او مختلفة نسبيا تعكس الحاجات والمطاليب الانية أوالمستقبلية للفرد الامريكي والتي تهم حياته اليومية وذلك في ضوء الظروف الاقتصادية والاجتماعية السائدة خلال السنة الانتخابية . فلقد طرحت في انتخابات الرئاسة الامريكية لعام ٢٠١٢ قضايا تتصل بالاقتصاد، والنظام الصحي والبطالة، والتضخم ونسب النمو الاقتصادي والعجز المالي والمشكلة الاكبرالركود الاقتصادي الذي اورثته الازمة المالية الكبرى التي هزت اركان المجتمع الامريكي برمته والتي كادت ان تفضي الى كارثة اقتصادية حقيقية فضلا عن الامور المتصلة بالسياسة الخارجية الامريكية كالعراق وافغانستان.

فلقد واجه الرئيس الامريكي اوباما تلك القضايا وقدم تصوراته ومقترحاته في كيفية التصدي لها والحلول المقترحة لمعالجتها . فلقد تطرق الرئيس اوباما لتك الامور ووعد بايجاد حلول لها سيما تلك المتصلة بحرب العراق والتواجد الامريكي في هذا البلد

اضافة الى موضوع النظام الصحي والرعاية الاجتماعية والضرائب والنظام التعليمي وضمان استمراية الطلبة في الدراسة عبر تشريعات وقوانين تضمن لشريحة الطلبة مستقبلهم العلمي والمساهمة الجادة في بناء المجتمع.

لقد نفذ الرئيس اوباما الكثير من وعوده الانتخابية بعد فوزه في انتخابات العام ٢٠٠٨سيما المتصلة بالانسحاب الامريكي من العراق وكذلك نجاحه في سن قانون جديد للرعاية الصحية والذي يعتبر اكبر انجاز رئاسي له في تاريخ الولايات المتحدة الامريكية . بيد ان الجمهوريين عارضوا ذلك القانون وما زالوا يلوحون بالغائه في حالة فوزهم في الانتخابات الرئاسية لعام ٢٠١٢.

ونجح اوباما كذلك في سن قوانين اقتصادية مهمة تتصل بالضرائب والبطالة والرعاية الاجتماعية والنظام المالي والمصرفي. فضلا عن ذلك تمكنه من التصدي للازمة المالية التي عصفت ببلاده قبيل انتخابات الرئاسة الامريكية لعام ٢٠٠٨ .وتمكن الرئيس اوباما من انقاذ المؤسسات المالية الامريكية من الانهيار والافلاس عبر مجموعة من القوانين التشريعية التي اسهمت في رفع المستوى المعاشى للفرد فضلا عن منحه الامان والاستقرار بعائدية املاكه . فلقد مكن الرئيس اوباما الفرد الامريكي من الاحتفاظ بعقاره المدين به للدولة او للمؤسسات المالية وتجنيبه بيعه لعقاره او مصادرته foreclosures بسبب عدم قدرته على دفع اقساط القروض العقارية للبنوك او المؤسسات المالية الدائنة .

ان تلك الانجازات التي حققها الرئيس اوباما خلال فترة الاربعة سنوات من ادارته و رفعت من رصيده امام الشعب الامريكي الذي ظل يتطلع الى المزيد من الانجازات "الاوبامية". وقد اسهمت تلك الانجازات في بقاء شعبية الرئيس اوبام متصدرا مراكز استطلاعات الراي العام الامريكية بالمقارنة مع غريمه من الحزب الجمهوري رومني.

بيد ان الاشهر الاخيرة من ادارة الرئيس اوباما بدأت تشهد تزايدا نسبيا في اعداد العاطلين عن العمل وفق الاحصاءات الرسمية التي رافقت الاسابيع الاخيرة من الحملة الانتخابية. كما ان الفترة الاخيرة من الانتخابات الرئاسية بدات تشهد ظهور احصاءات متزايدة حول العجز المالي الامريكي، والاقتراض والدعوة لتقليص الضرائب على اصحاب

الدخول المرتفعة . فضلا عن ظهور ارقام لمبالغ مالية كبيرة خصصت للطاقة النظفية واخرى لقانون الضمان الصحي الذي اكتسب اسمه باسم الرئيس اوباما.

لقد استغل المرشح الرئاسي الجمهوري رومني تلك الاحصائيات ليستخدمها بدهاء ضد غريمه اوباما في المناظرة التلفزيونية الاولى في ٢٠١٢/١٠/٤. وامام هجوم رومني ضد الرئيس اوباما في تلك المناظرة التلفزيونية وسرعة استخدامه للاحصائيات الرسمية حول البطالة والضرائب والانفاق العام . وقد حاول الرئيس اوباما الرد على هجوم غريمه رومني بهدوء الامر الذي ولد انطباعا لدى الرأي العام في وقت لاحق بان غريمه رومني هو الذي ربح المناظرة الاولى. وبذلك فقد ارتفعت شعبية رومني وبنسبة ٦٧% لدى الناخبين المحتملين و المسجلين. بينما تراجعت تلك الشعبية بالنسبة للرئيس اوباما لتصل الى٢٥% مسجلتا ادنى مستوى لها خلال السنوات الاربعة من ادارة الرئيس اوباما.

ان الرئيس اوباما تمكن من اعادة السيطرة على مجريات الامور بعد المناظرة الثانية والثالثة واللتان اسهمتا في رفع رصيده الانتخابي في استطلاعات الراي العام. بيد ان رصيد رومني في استطلاعات الراي ظلت مرتفعة في الاسابيع الاخيرة التي تلت تلك المناظرات التلفزونية والتي وصلت الى مستويات متقاربة مع منافسه اوباما. وفي معظم استطلاعات الرأي التي اجريت في الاسبوع الاخير الذي سبق الانتخابات اوضحت تقدم اوباما بفارق ضئيل على غريمه رومني او حتى تعادلهما في بعض نتائج تلك الاستطلاعات.

وعلى الرغم من التقارب الشديد في استطلاعات الرأي بين مرشحي الحزب الديمقراطي براك اوباما ومرشح الحزب الجمهوري مت رومني ، فقد فاز الرئيس براك اوباما بولاية ثانية الى البيت الابيض. وبذلك يصبح براك اوباما الرئيس ال ٤٤ للولايات المتحدة الامريكية .

The Summary

American Presidential Elections-Mechanism and Campaign Issues with Special Reference to 2008-2012 Elections

Every four years the US citizens go to the polls to cast their votes for a new president. This usually takes place at the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of the election year.

The presidential election usually coincides with the Senate elections where one-third of the senators face re-elections as do all of the members of the House of Representatives. The Congressional elections occur every two years to elect members of the Congress.

The period between the beginning of the Presidential race and Election Day is very long, challenging and complicated.

Presidential candidates of each party will have to wage vigorous and strong campaigns among themselves within their respective parties in order to win first their respective parties' nomination for the presidency via a series of caucuses and primary elections. Secondly, the presidential candidates with the highest delegates, one from each party, have to be nominated officially by their respective parties at their party's national conventions.

After the presidential candidates have won their party's nominations and are officially nominated by their parties for the presidency at those parties' meetings, then the remaining two winner candidates, usually one from each party, will have to wage another fierce and challenging campaign between themselves until the national election day, when US citizens start casting their popular votes for a new president in November of that year. Usually the candidate who wins the popular votes gets all the electoral votes and thereby will become the president of the United States of America.

During the 2008 presidential elections, president Obama faced many campaign issues which he promised to find solutions to once he was elected to the presidency.

President Obama did fulfill most of his election campaign promises following his victory in the 2008 presidential election. President Obama's implementation of his election promises raised his popularity even more and made him more optimistic for a new term in the White House. Bringing this heritage of achievements and popular support with him, President Obama promised his people that he would promote, enhance, and preserve his achievements once re-elected to the White House in the 2012 presidential elections.

President Obama achieved historical reforms in the health Care system and the economy. He also kept his word regarding the U.S. presence in Iraq. He fulfilled his promise in this field by withdrawing all American combat forces from Iraq by the end of 2011. These and other

related accomplishments increased his popularity and gave him more credibility.

In the 2012 election campaign, president Obama bragged about his achievements and promised that he would preserve them and would further promote them into more tangible results. He even promised to augment his achievements and bring about more progress and prosperity in the country.

Based on the above promises and accomplishments, one would have can predicted that Obama was likely to be re-elected to the presidency in November of 2012. The post presidential debates Polling results' reversed those figures as they gave slight lead to President Obama over Romney in the polling surveys.

The results of the Polls on who may have won the debate showed that Romney gained 67% of the registered voters, while President Obama obtained only 25% of the voters who were interviewed thereby narrowing the gap between Romney and president Obama for the first time since the presidential race began at the beginning of the election year. And in many national poll surveys showed that both Obama and Romney were tied to 45% each.

The results of the polls kept fluctuating till the last day that preceded casting the popular votes. Nonetheless, Barack Obama won a historical presidential election for the second term and he became the 44th president of the United States of America.

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