

Third Edition



# PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN POLITICS

John H. Kessel

# **Presidential Campaign Politics**

## ***Coalition Strategies and Citizen Response***

**THIRD EDITION**

**John H. Kessel**



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## *Preface*

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While writing this book I tried to combine flesh-and-blood politics with serious analysis. An attempt to combine substance and method can be awkward and imperfect, but the alternatives are either to shift readers away from the fascinating realm of political maneuver, or to deny readers the real explanatory power of sophisticated methodology. As V. O. Key put it: "Method without substance may be sterile, but substance without method is only fortuitously substantial."

I have tried to make clear that coalition strategies and citizen choice are equally important parts of the same political process. In recent decades, there has been much more research and writing on voting behavior than on political parties. An unhappy consequence has been the appearance of many "electoral" studies that rely almost completely on voting data. Political scientists who wouldn't write a word about voting without a national sample and multivariate analysis unhesitatingly offer off-the-top-of-the-head surmises about party activities. Equally careful analyses of parties and voters are essential to understand the linkage between coalition strategies and citizen response.

I have tried to unite a concern for politics with some attention to the development of theory. I argue that *why* something happens is sometimes explained by internal structure, sometimes by external environment, and sometimes by both. *When* it happens is explained by the temporal pattern of the acting unit. This is a simple theory, but it is sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the subjects. It also permits a comprehensive treatment of presidential nominations and elections within one theoretical framework.

These were my goals when I wrote the first edition of *Presidential Campaign Politics*, and they still are. But while my goals have remained constant, two revisions have produced a book with a substantial amount of new material. Just about half of the pages in this edition are new since the first edition was published.

Analyses of the 1980 and 1984 campaigns have been substituted for accounts of earlier campaigns. The new analyses of nomination and electoral politics still follow a temporal outline, but they are a little longer. This permitted me, for example, to deal with the more complex strategic choices involved in a three-candidate race in 1980. I was also able to say something about all eight of the aspirants who entered the Democratic lists in 1984, and to follow them as the fortunes of nomination politics favored first one and then another. The probit analyses continue to serve as accurate models of vote choice. Eighty-seven percent of the Reagan-Carter choices were correctly predicted, as were ninety percent of the Reagan-Mondale decisions. In general, the 1984 analysis showed that Mr. Reagan was popular with the voters, but his policies were not.

I have also incorporated major studies by other scholars. In the second edition, I added material from the Cotter, Gibson, Bibby, and Huckshorn study of state and local party organizations. In this edition, I have been able to draw on the Miller-Jennings analysis of increasing conservatism among party elites and to include the first report of the seventeen-year socialization study by Jennings, Niemi, and Markus. In both editions, I have relied on Herbert Alexander's continuing documentation of the changing role of campaign finance. My hope is that these additions adhere to my original goal of combining flesh-and-blood politics and serious analysis in the same book.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any book such as this depends as much on the research milieu in which it is written as much as it does on the thoughts of the author. I have been extremely fortunate in having colleagues at Ohio State with strong research orientations. Those whose work is most closely related to campaign politics—Herbert Asher, Aage Clausen, and Herbert Weisberg—have been more than generous with their time and counsel when I have come to them with questions and puzzlements. Thomas Boyd, Thomas Jackson, Bruce Moon, Barbara Norrander, Stephen Shaffer, Evelyn Small, Gerald Stacy, Kenneth Town, Barbara Trish, and Steven Yarnell have all been responsible in one way or another for analyses that appear between these covers. Stephen Shaffer and Steven Yarnell made particularly important contributions to the analysis of political activists; Stephen Shaffer, Barbara Norrander, Thomas Boyd, and Barbara Trish did so for the analysis of vote choice; Thomas Boyd helped with the material on party identification.

A number of people were generous enough to lend data sets. I should like to thank Richard Hofstetter for allowing me to use his 1972 surveys of political activists and voters, Aage Clausen for the use of his congressional scales, Doris Graber for allowing me to use some of her media analyses, Jeane Kirkpatrick for access to data on convention delegates, and Herbert Weisberg for data pertaining to party identification. I should like to thank Warren Miller and Kent Jennings for giving me an advance look at their *Parties in Transition*:

*A Longitudinal Study of Party Elites and Party Supporters*, and allowing me to incorporate some of their principal results. Steven Rosenstone shared his data on candidates' issue positions from *Forecasting Presidential Elections*, and was more than patient in providing counsel on their proper use. I also wish to acknowledge *The New York Times*' willingness to let me use data they had assembled on attitudes of 1984 convention delegates and the general public. And data on citizen reaction came, thanks to the National Science Foundation, from the Center for Political Studies through the auspices of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Having the data sets is of little use without access to data analysis capabilities. Here, too, many people have been helpful. Richard McKelvey was kind enough to send his probit analysis program, and Forrest Nelson and John Aldrich (the latter on repeated occasions) helped me understand how to use probit analysis. Herbert Weisberg helped remove a block from the OSIRIS CLUSTER program so a large input matrix could be used, rewrote a section of the CLUSTER program to assure that each case would end up in the cluster with which it was most closely associated, and coached me on the use of the MDSCAL program. The Polimetrics Laboratory at Ohio State helped me get my data in and out of the computer; James Ludwig helped me time and again when his special expertise was needed. In addition to general gratitude to the authors of the OSIRIS and SPSS programs, a special word of thanks ought to go to Norman Nie and his SPSS colleagues for the COMPUTE (and other similar) statements that allow nonprogrammers to manipulate data to meet particular needs.

As I was beginning to work on the second edition, Kristi Andersen encouraged me to begin using a computer as a text-editor. My move from a typewriter to a computer was facilitated by the Polimetrics Laboratory, and particularly by James Ludwig's willingness to provide the software and advice necessary to convert thoughts into SCRIPT files, and to get the files onto computer tape.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge financial assistance that has allowed me to collect data and analyze them. The National Science Foundation has supported my work with three grants, GS-2660, GS-35084, and SES 80-24079, to study presidential politics. Ohio State University provided time by granting me professional leave during 1980-81. The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research gave me a Washington base by welcoming me as a Visiting Scholar during 1980-81, and again during the summer of 1982. And the Earhart Foundation gave me a fellowship research grant that allowed me to devote Winter Quarter 1983 to full-time writing.

Kristi Andersen, Richard Fenno, and Fred Greenstein all offered helpful reactions as this book was taking shape. Philip Converse, Richard Niemi, and Herbert Weisberg provided illuminating criticisms of the part on the Citizen in Presidential Elections. John Bibby, Stephen Brown, and Samuel Patterson read the entire original manuscript and showed me many ways it could be improved. Critical reaction and counsel on subsequent editions has come



from Allan Cigler, William Crotty, Richard Fenno, Daniel Fleitas, Susan Howell, Loch Johnson, Joan McLean, Joseph Pika, Samuel Patterson, Steven Rosenstone, and Herbert Weisberg. No one named in these paragraphs is responsible for the interpretations in the book, but all should be given credit for trying to make it better.

Finally, and above all, my thanks go to Maggie for all the love and understanding she has shared with me since 1954.

*John H. Kessel*



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*Part One*

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**Nomination Politics**





## Chapter 1

# Early Days and Initial Contests

### FIRST STIRRINGS

#### *Republican Hopefuls*

In the summer of 1986, Republican roads led to Michigan, and most of them veered to the right. An idea had come to Republican State Chairman E. Spencer Abraham. If, he thought, Michigan picked its delegates before any other state, presidential candidates might pay court to Michigan Republicans. Therefore, he arranged a filing deadline for May 27 and the selection of precinct delegates on August 5, a full two years before the 1988 Republican convention. Sure enough, Vice President George Bush, Representative Jack Kemp, the Reverend Marion G. (Pat) Robertson, and their delegate-recruiting political action committees all came to the party.

George Bush, a moderate candidate in 1980, was (for better or worse) a captive of President Reagan's reputation. "My view," Bush explained, "is the best thing for me to do is to support this president, which I can do enthusiastically from a philosophical standpoint and do it from my view as to how one ought to act" as vice president. Congressman Jack Kemp, who had been advocating tax cuts for more than a decade in speeches around the country, tried to take advantage of his greater independence to suggest that he ought to be regarded as Ronald Reagan's true heir. Pat Robertson, a popular television evangelist who like Bush was the son of a U.S. senator, was giving prayerful consideration to running for president. In the meantime, he was maintaining a heavy speaking schedule in the South, where his evangelical base was concentrated.