

“Different Strokes for Different Folks”: Implications of Voter Micro-Targeting and Appeal in the Age of Donald Trump

Vincent Raynauld and André Turcotte

Abstract Despite the 2016 US Republican presidential contest being considered by many as “one unlike no others”, this chapter posits that its outcome can be attributed, at least partly, to dynamics that had affected the unfolding of previous American electoral contests. In their chapter, Raynauld and Turcotte explore contemporary political messaging and marketing tactics deployed by candidates running for the presidential nomination. As the Republican electorate was fragmented due to different factors, candidates engaged in hyper narrowcasting in order to reach out and mobilize specific groups of voters. Through the statistical analysis of polling data from key primary states, Raynauld and Turcotte conclude that by occupying narrow political “lanes”, Republican contenders

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collectively weakened their chances of winning, thus allowing Donald Trump to secure the nomination.

Keywords Narrowcasting · Primaries · Vote targeting · Nomination · Political messaging

OVERVIEW

Despite a majority of US polling organizations repeatedly forecasting that Democratic contender Hillary Rodham Clinton would win the US presidency, it was her Republican rival Donald J. Trump who ultimately prevailed on Election Day. At 2h47 am EST on 9 November 2016, CNN projected that the businessman and former reality television star had secured enough electoral college votes to ensure his path to the White House (Vales 2016). While plagued by controversies often fuelled by “provocative pronouncements, attributed comments, distorted facts, and an off-the-cuff [...] speaking style” on and offline (Wells et al. 2016, p. 2) as well as straying off message on several occasions, his atypical approach to electioneering proved successful in a presidential election cycle that was shaped by different contextual factors. Chief among them were high levels of public dissatisfaction and, to some extent, distrust with as well as hostility towards traditional media and political elites (Azari 2016; Gallup 2016), heavy political polarization between and within major political parties (Iyengar 2016; Jacobson 2016), and the role played by social media in different aspects of the campaign. Indeed, several candidates turned heavily to these media channels for voter outreach and engagement as well as for seeking to influence—often successfully in the case of Trump—legacy media’s election coverage (Wells et al. 2016; Chadwick and Stromer-Galley 2016).

In part because of the unusual nature of Trump’s candidacy and his distinct path to victory, it became almost an instant cliché that the 2016 US presidential contest was “one unlike no others”. In this chapter, we suggest that the outcome of this presidential contest can be attributed, at least partly, to a series of interconnected dynamics that have affected the unfolding of previous American electoral contests. Specifically, this chapter explores the 2016 Republican nomination race as a way to shed light upon different forces that contributed to the emergence of Donald Trump among a crowded field of candidates and that led him to win the

Republican presidential nomination. This examination leads us to a questioning of the relevance of recent assumptions guiding contemporary principles of electioneering and political marketing.

That Trump would emerge triumphant out of a presidential nomination campaign so hotly contested was far from a foregone conclusion. Many of the seventeen Republican candidates achieved relative electoral success during the nomination race. They did so through a strategic approach that had proven successful in recent years, especially in a highly competitive field of candidates. They turned to highly professionalized modes of political communication, mobilization, and organizing that emphasized voter segmentation. Their messaging aimed at specific slices of the electorate whose members had a distinct socio-demographic profile as well as frequently narrow interests and objectives. Such an approach relies on dynamics referred to by several authors as “factional politics” (e.g. Cohen et al. 2016; Grossman and Hopkins 2016). Based on work by Polsby (1983), Cohen et al. (2016, p. 701) point out that due to a variety of reasons, “competition in multicandidate fields would incentivize ambitious politicians to mobilize narrow followings, which would then make it difficult for consensus politicians to attract support”.

Building and expanding on this hypothesis, this chapter examines the narrow electoral appeal of Republican candidates during the nomination race through a statistical analysis of polling data from key states. We make the argument that by occupying specific lanes in a crowded electoral field and by targeting micro-segments of the voting public, many Republican hopefuls achieved relative electoral success. However, doing so weakened their chances of winning and paved the way for Donald Trump, who adopted a broader populist messaging and mobilizing strategy that was still somewhat factional in nature (Cohen et al. 2016), to secure the Republican presidential nomination and go on to win the presidency. In this sense, Trump’s victory in the Republican nomination contest raises fundamental questions regarding the relevance of the factional electoral appeal argument in its current form.

FERTILE GROUNDS FOR POLITICAL NARROWCASTING

Recent developments in the US political landscape have led to changes in varying depth and scope in dynamics of public political communication and marketing. Of interest for this chapter are transformations in the structure and composition of the mass mediascape, namely the diversification

and hyper-fragmentation of the political information offered. They have affected how and to what degree individuals and organizations are exposed to, seek out and share information about, perceive, understand, and take part in US politics. During the broadcast era of politics, the presence of a limited number of mass media channels providing largely politically homogenous content had “levelling effects” on the public’s political knowledge and engagement (Bennett and Iyengar 2008, p. 718; see also Chaffee and Kanihan 1997). The “seemingly unlimited political media” environment of the post-broadcast era (McKinney 2013, p. 469)—especially with the growth, development, and popularization of social media—has contributed to the hyper-fragmentation, or compartmentalization, of political audiences. In other words, it has enabled members of the public to independently tailor their political information intake by having access to a diversity of information sources catering to their personal wants and needs (e.g. ideology, partisanship, issues, tone, sources) as well as to increasingly rich, personalized, and interactive media experiences (Chadwick et al. 2016; Blumler and Coleman 2015; Webster and Ksiazek 2012). For example, social media have provided them with outlets to be active politically on their own terms, such as by acquiring, producing, and sharing information as well as connecting and interacting with their peers in highly decentralized and selective ways (Bennett 2015; Boulianne 2015). As noted by Blumler and Coleman (2015, p. 120), this “political communication environment is [...] more porous, fragmented and antithetical to the final word on any subject”.

In this context, political fragmentation can be viewed as the progressive breakdown of broadly shared awareness, perception, and understanding of politics, which is acquired through common political knowledge, concerns, and goals, as well as the emergence of individual-based and ever-evolving micro-political realities—or enclaves—shaped by highly specific and wide-ranging interests and objectives (Bimber 2008, 2012; Bennett 1998). According to Bimber (2008, p. 156), this fragmentation manifests itself in three main ways: (1) “the division of the public’s political action across more ‘channels’ and consequent reduction of exposure to common political messages”; (2) the ability of individuals to self-select and “segregate themselves communicatively into myriad, homogenous in-groups”; (3) decreased capacity of political insiders to design and dictate a broadly accepted agenda to the general public. Other factors unrelated to transformations in the mass mediascape have also helped foster political fragmentation in the USA. Those include the

“breakdown of broad social membership” and allegiances to the traditional political establishment and the growingly central role of communication as “organizational process” (Bennett 2015, p. 152).

The effects of political fragmentation on patterns of political awareness and engagement among the US public, especially younger adults, are many and well documented in the scholarly literature (e.g. Wojcieszak et al. 2016; Turcotte and Raynauld 2014; Bennett 2015). This chapter focuses on how this situation impacts the structure and operationalization of political elites’ voter targeting, outreach, and mobilization in an electoral context. As mentioned previously, it has become almost conventional wisdom among academics and practitioners that the current political environment makes it increasingly difficult for candidates and political parties to shape a coherent, society-wide political agenda with the growing presence of small niches of voters that are constantly being reshaped by the fluidity and ever-evolving nature of the media environment (e.g. Bimber 2008; Serazio 2014). However, it offers them opportunities to develop and utilize political messaging and marketing tactics tailored for “smaller and more homogeneous audiences” that can be reached through specific media channels (Berry and Sobieraj 2013, p. 17), especially with the emergence and sophistication of voter identification and targeting techniques (Strömbäck and Kioussis 2014; Burton and Miracle 2014). Voter targeting can be defined as the “process of subsetting an electorate according to politically salient characteristics and reaching out to groups that comprise high concentrations of receptive voters”¹ (Burton and Miracle 2014, p. 26). Specifically, it allows for the pinpointing of individual voters or groups of voters more like to be receptive to a political message and reaching out to them in order to secure their support (Burton and Miracle 2014). While these narrower forms of electoral appeals, known as narrow-casting or “niche communications” (Frankel and Hillygus 2014), can have positive mobilization and persuasion effects on intended targets, they can have limited or, in some cases, adverse effects on unintended audiences as these messages might be incompatible with or contradictory to their political beliefs or objectives (Hersh and Schaffner 2013).

Building on Hersh and Schaffner’s work (2013), it is possible to identify several complementary factors leading candidates to engage in voter micro-targeting, contact and, to a lesser extent, engagement during electoral campaigns. For example, targeted forms of political communication, mobilization, and organizing tend to be more effective than broad-based messages with generally wide appeal, as demonstrated by

many authors who have explored different dimensions of this dynamic in recent years (e.g. Frankel and Hillygus 2014; Strömbäck and Kiouisis 2014). From a broader perspective, several studies have shown increased levels of personalization in campaign messaging internationally, which represents a shift away from the more conventional top-down, “catch-all” approach to electioneering (van Erkel and Thijssen 2016; Gibson 2015; Serazio 2014). Second, narrowcasting tends to be geared more towards mobilizing core groups of supporters with compatible interests and objectives than identifying, reaching out to, and convincing undecided voters to behave in certain ways politically (e.g. donations, vote) (Hersh and Schaffner 2013, p. 532). This chapter takes interest in the latter factor in the context of the study of the 2016 Republican nomination race. It examines how many candidates mobilized smaller homogenous pockets of voters, which helped them attain some levels of electoral success, but failed to garner wider support.

THE 2016 REPUBLICAN NOMINATION RACE

Following the previously defined factional electoral appeal argument, we argue that instead of opting for a “catch-all” approach to electioneering, many contenders in the 2016 Republican presidential nomination race exploited the highly fragmented nature of the electorate and mobilized clusters—or factions—of voters with narrow preferences and goals through highly crafted voter targeting and messaging (see Cohen et al. 2016). This chapter makes the case that while the adoption of this strategy yielded relative electoral success for many, it paved the way for Donald Trump who purposely or not, decided to follow what turned out to be a modified catch-all approach—which was still somewhat factional in nature (Cohen et al. 2016)—to win the nomination. Despite its clear factional appeal (Cohen et al. 2016), his online and offline populist messaging was marked by “grandiosity, informality, and dynamism” (Ahmadian et al. 2017, p. 49), which could have helped him widen his base of support.

Several scholars have examined patterns of electoral support during the 2016 Republican nomination race, including from the political subcultures perspective (Fisher 2016), the political branding perspective (Oates and Moe 2016), the communication style perspective (Ahmadian et al. 2017; Enli 2017), or the political narrative perspective (Sides et al. 2016). While approaching this phenomenon from different angles, their

work points for the most part towards highly specialized messaging tailored to reach, appeal to, and mobilize niches of voters. This fits recent trends in political campaigning. Candidates are exploiting the structure of the “contemporary electorate”, which is marked by increasingly deep divides along ideological, policy position, and identity lines (Jacobson 2016). More specifically to nomination races, political parties in the USA have been defined as constantly shifting “coalitions of interest groups and activists seeking to capture and use government for their particular goals, which range from material self-interest to high-minded idealism” (Bawn et al. 2012, p. 571). In other words, they are increasingly less governed by a hierarchical internal structure reinforcing cohesion and conformity (Burton and Miracle 2014). It should be noted that the level of division between political parties is even greater than the one within parties (Jacobson 2016).

Several quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches could have been used, including a content analysis of candidates’ messaging online or offline, to characterize dynamics of political narrowcasting described in this chapter. In order to conduct our analysis, we decided to focus on the public’s patterns of candidate support, which are likely to be shaped in part by contenders’ profile as well as appeals and mobilization operations. We rely on a series of primary and caucus polls conducted by the Emerson College Polling Society²—based at Emerson College in Boston, MA—to identify groups of voters more likely to be mobilized and to support specific candidates during key Republican caucuses and primaries. We looked at contests in five states: Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, and New York. The choice of these contests was partly opportunistic, as the Emerson College Polling Society chose to focus on specific contests and we chose the most statistically robust samples. Those five nomination races also provide a broad look at the Republican nomination race at different points in time and stages of the nomination race, including the crucial first two contests. More methodological and analytical details are provided in the next section of this chapter as we turn our attention to our findings.

SETTING THE STAGE: IOWA AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

The 2016 Republican primary season began in Iowa. The Hawkeye State held its caucus on February 1, 2016, and the Republican Party entered a crowded field with seventeen candidates competing for the presidential

nomination. Ted Cruz narrowly won with 27.6% of the votes, ahead of Donald Trump (24.3%) and Marco Rubio (23.1%). No other candidate garnered more than 10% of the votes, which is indicative of high levels of division among the Republican electorate.³ Looking at findings from a survey in the period leading up to the Iowa caucus, it is possible to discern early bases of support for some of the candidates that would prove pivotal in the outcome of the Republican primaries. The findings also point to different approaches taken by the candidates, specifically between Trump and the rest of the field.

Table 2.1 shows that it was already discernible that some of the candidates had little chance of surviving the crowded field. It should be noted that grey cells in all tables indicate that a candidate did not receive support from individuals linked to that category that was significantly higher than for the other candidates. Right from the start, Jeb Bush, Ben Carson, and Marco Rubio had difficulties finding reliable bases of support from which to build their presidential nomination bid. In particular,

Table 2.1 Bases of support for Republican candidates in Iowa Caucus

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Household income</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Main source of info</i>	<i>Social media use</i>	<i>Level of social media activity</i>	<i>Personal communication</i>
Cruz	65+	Men		Lutheran	Social media	Yes		Land line/cell
Trump	25–34	Men	25–75K	Atheist	Internet	Yes	2–5 times per day	Cell phone only
Rubio		Women						
Carson								
Paul	18–24	Women	25K or less	Baptist				
Bush								
Fiorina	25–34	Men	75K+					

Source The Emerson College Study was conducted with a total of 300 adults registered likely GOP caucus voters in Iowa between January 29 and 31, 2016. Methodological details for the Emerson College Study can be reviewed at www.theecps.org. Analysis is restricted to main candidates and identify statistically significant levels ($p < 0.05$) of group support for individual candidates

Bush’s appeal as the old establishment candidate (Azari 2016) and Carson’s outreach to the Evangelical crowd failed to resonate out of the gate. In contrast, Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Donald Trump, and to some extent Carly Fiorina, the only female candidate, appealed to very specific, yet large groups of voters. Ted Cruz had a lead on other hopefuls among older voters—a group historically more likely to be conservative and to vote (Leighley and Nagler 2013)—and was engaged in a three-way battle for the support of males alongside Trump and Fiorina. Cruz also led among those who identified as Lutheran and among those who claimed social media as their main source of news information.

Early in the campaign, Trump was particularly popular among young voters (25–34 years of age) as well as middle-income earners (25–75K per year). He also led among self-identified atheists. He had broad appeal among frequent social media users and those reporting the Internet as their primary source of information. Also noteworthy was Rand Paul’s early popularity among younger voters (18–24 years of age), much like his father Ron Paul who competed in previous Republican nomination races, as well as low-income earners (25K or less). Fiorina’s candidacy was particularly appealing to high-income earners (75K and more).

On February 9, 2016, Trump won the New Hampshire primary with 35% of the votes, well ahead of John Kasich (16%) and other Republican hopefuls (16%) and other Republican hopefuls.⁴ Trump’s decisive victory was to some extent startling but even more surprising is the fact that the building blocks of the Trump winning coalition were already in place at those early days of the primary season. In New Hampshire, white males were largely responsible for Trump’s victory. More importantly, he managed to put in place a coalition of Independent voters aged between 35 and 54 who described themselves as moderate and/or somewhat conservative. As shown later in the chapter, Trump managed to keep that coalition together throughout the nomination contest and those voters largely contributed to his victory on 8 November 2016 (Table 2.2).

Despite his second-place finish, Kasich did not have a reliable group of voters, while Cruz, who finished third, became increasingly dependent on “very conservative” elements of the Republican Party. Rubio did well among women voters, while Bush positioned himself as the clear establishment candidate at that point in the race. Unfortunately, too few of those voters participated in the 2016 primary cycle.

Table 2.2 Bases of support for Republican candidates in New Hampshire Republican primary

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party affiliation</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Political ideology</i>	<i>Ancestry</i>
Cruz	Independent	35–54	Men	Very conservative	White/caucasian
Trump				Moderate/somewhat conservative	
Rubio	Democrat		Women	Somewhat conservative	
Carson					
Paul	Republican				
Kasich					
Bush					
Fiorina					

Source The Emerson College Study was conducted with a total of 289 adults registered likely GOP primary voters in New Hampshire between February 19 and 21, 2016. Methodological details for the Emerson College Study can be reviewed at www.theecps.org. Analysis restricted to main candidates and identify significant levels of support

WINNING AND LOSING THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES

To trace the evolution of the Republican nomination race and better understand the conclusion, we examine support for the candidates in three other primaries: South Carolina, Texas, and New York. These primaries are geographically and politically diverse and span across the primary season until the end of April when there were little to no doubts about the outcome.

The South Carolina Republican contest was held on 20 February 2016. Trump won with 33% of the votes ahead of a much narrower field of candidates. Marco Rubio came in second with 23% of the votes barely ahead of Cruz at 22%. Bush (8%), Kasich (8%), and Carson (7%) trailed far behind.⁵ As Table 2.3 shows, some of Trump’s coalition remained largely intact in South Carolina (Caucasians and men), but his support was somewhat older than in previous contests. Trump did best among voters who were primarily concerned about defeating ISIS. Trump and Cruz divided the Evangelical vote, while Cruz and Rubio fought over the support of those between the ages of 35 and 54 and voters most concerned about economic issues, specifically the deficit for Cruz voters and the job market for Rubio’s backers. Rubio edged out Cruz for second place as a result of his strength among black voters in that state as well as non-evangelical voters. However, the point remains that while

Table 2.3 Bases of support for Republican candidates in South Carolina primary

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Trump	Defeat ISIS	55–74	Caucasian	Evangelicals	Men
Rubio	Jobs	35–54	Black	Non-Evangelicals	
Cruz	Deficit	35–54		Evangelicals	
Bush					
Kasich					
Carson					

Source The Emerson College Study was conducted with a total of 374 adults registered likely GOP primary voters in South Carolina between February 15 and 17, 2016. Methodological details for the Emerson College Study can be reviewed at www.theecps.org. Analysis restricted to main candidates and identify significant levels of support

Trump was appealing to a comparatively wide range of voters, his opponents were narrowcasting their appeal as a way to position themselves as an alternative to Trump and as a way to secure their electoral base.

Donald Trump’s march towards the Republican nomination hit a roadblock in Texas on 1 March 2016. Ted Cruz handily won his state with 43.8% of the votes, ahead of Trump (26.7%) and Rubio (17.7%). None of the other 10 candidates still in the race garnered more than 5% of the votes.⁶ As a native son, Cruz’s victory was expected, but findings from Table 2.4 yield insights as to the reasons behind his victory. They also shed light on the dynamics behind Trump’s continued success.

Unlike previous primary contests examined in this chapter, Cruz drew support from a broader spectrum of supporters. His candidacy resonated with men, those aged between 35 and 54, as well as older voters (75+). He was the candidate most likely to get the support of the Republican establishment and Hispanics. Notably, he was competing with Trump for support among Caucasians. His success revealed his inability to build a broad appeal beyond his native Texas, most likely due to his messaging tailored to appeal to narrow segments of the public. While targeted electioneering may have proven successful in previous years, such an approach proved inadequate in 2016. For his part, Trump finished second as a result of his steady support among his core supporters: men, Caucasians, voters aged between 55 and 74, and voters identifying as Independent as well as Democrats. Those voters had been with him since Iowa and while Trump may have labelled them as the “forgotten voters”, they represented a majority of the available electorate.

Table 2.4 Bases of support for Republican candidates in Texas primary

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Party identification</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Age</i>
Trump	Men		Non-Republican	Race relations/gun control	Caucasian	55–74
Rubio		Spanish				
Cruz	Men	Spanish	Republican	Deficit	Caucasian/ hispanics	35– 54/75+
Bush						
Kasich						
Carson						

Source The Emerson College Study was conducted with a total of 449 adults registered likely GOP primary voters in Texas between February 26 and 28, 2016. Methodological details for the Emerson College Study can be reviewed at www.theecps.org. Analysis restricted to main candidates and identify significant levels of support

Table 2.5 Bases of support for Republican candidates in New York primary

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Personal communication</i>
Trump	Men	Defeating ISIS	35–74	Caucasian	Cell phone only
Rubio				Black	
Cruz		Deficit/Supreme Court nominees	75+		
Bush					
Kasich					
Carson					

Source The Emerson College Study was conducted with a total of 298 adults registered likely GOP primary voters in New York between March 14 and 16, 2016. Methodological details for the Emerson College Study can be reviewed at www.theecps.org. Analysis here restricted to main candidates and identify significant levels of support

Trump’s coalition of voters was also present in his decisive win in New York. As listed in Table 2.5, he was the only candidate with a broad range of supporters while his opponents were trying to stop Trump with either very narrow or no tangible groups to rely on. Specifically, Trump could once again rely on the support of men, Caucasians and those between the ages of 35 and 74 who were concerned about defeating

ISIS while Rubio's support was by then limited to Black voters and Cruz's support to older voters and those concerned with the deficit and Supreme Court nominations. Clearly, Trump was on his way to clinching the Republican nomination and, unbeknownst to most at that time, becoming the 45th President of the USA.

A FRESH LOOK AT CONTEMPORARY ELECTIONEERING

The statistical analysis of the Emerson College Polling Society for five primaries spread throughout the Republican presidential nomination race reveals that most candidates turned to an electioneering approach that was highly factional in nature. It demonstrates quantitatively that they, for the most part, mobilized small and politically homogenous pockets of Republican support, which helped them achieve some levels of electoral success. In particular, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio were able to rally specific groups of voters around their candidacy based on matters relating to religion, media preferences, and political dispositions. However, it prevented them from securing wider support in order to win the nomination. Jeb Bush's appeal as the old establishment candidate, which was more broad-based in nature than his opponents' outreach, did not resonate among Republican voters despite his ability to raise and spend large sums of money on his campaign.⁷ His failed run for the nomination seems to be in line with Bimber's (2008) argument discussed previously in this chapter. It shows the growing importance for candidates to shy away from the consensual approach and carves a political niche in order to position themselves and target, reach out to, and mobilize specific slices of the voting public in a context of hyper political fragmentation and high electoral competition.

Interestingly in the context of this chapter, Trump's ability to build and maintain a coalition of supporters throughout the nomination race, which began in Iowa in February 2016 and ended with the last nomination contests in June 2016, showed that his messaging, mobilizing, and organizing strategy with a populist bent resonated among Republican voters. More importantly, he built this base of support despite his inability to secure traditional Republican political establishment support as well as without raising more funds than many of his opponents⁸ (Cohen et al. 2016). Cohen et al. (2016) point out that his electoral appeal was still highly factional in nature. They argue that his success rested in part on his ability to "parlay an intense but narrow following into a delegate

majority by playing on the penchants of journalists and the dynamics of a sequence of contests” (Cohen et al. 2016, p. 705). We suggest in this analysis that Trump’s successful run was more broad-based than others may have suggested. In other words, he leveraged a modified catch-all electioneering strategy targeting specific factions of the Republican electorate, but also reaching a wider public due to its populist bent. Also of importance was Trump’s active presence on social media that enabled him to bypass traditional legacy media filters and narrowcast his message and mobilization appeals to his followers on his own terms (e.g. Ahmadian et al. 2017; Wells et al. 2016). More research is required and will be conducted on the structure and operationalization of Trump’s messaging and mobilization tactics, both online and offline, as well as his use of data in order to do so.

The growingly fragmented—and polarized—nature of the American political environment is leading candidates to narrowcast to and mobilize narrow factions of voters with distinct interests, preferences, and objectives. While most contenders did so successfully throughout the 2016 Republican presidential nomination contest, Trump distinguished himself from his competition by the populist tone of his messaging, which might have played a central role in helping him garner support across slices of the electorate or appeal to larger groups of voters. Despite being factional in nature, his campaign adopted a modified catch-all approach with a strong populist bent, which proved successful during the Republican primaries and the general election.

This chapter shows that Trump introduced a new dimension to campaigning that needs to be further studied and incorporated into visions and understandings of contemporary approaches to electioneering. The way in which he secured the Republican presidential nomination is not entirely unprecedented. While relying on an atypical populist approach to political campaigning, he still capitalized on dynamics of electoral support that have shaped previous presidential electoral contests in the USA, hence the need to revisit and adapt the factional politics argument. The hostility towards traditional media and political elites among some segments of the public coupled with the “breakdown of broad social membership” (Bennett 2015, p. 152), which has led to diminished political cohesion among the public, has also proven pivotal in his ability to secure the nomination through a highly factional message approach. This political environment, which has extended beyond election cycles in recent years in the USA, might shape Trump’s approach to governing in an era of permanent campaigning. As of early 2017, his tenure

as President of the USA has been marked by dynamics of populist messaging and decision-making tailored to rally his base of support that was outlined in his chapter, an approach that we tentatively refer to as “factional governing”.

NOTES

1. The availability of large volumes of data on individual voters in the USA coupled with growing access to expertise and technical resources to process these data has impacted positively formal political players’ ability to target specific segments of the electorate and to engage in direct marketing over the last decade (see Spiller and Bergner 2014).
2. Emerson College Polling Society was named best collegiate polling organization by Bloomberg who assessed the work of all polling organizations during the 2016 US Presidential primaries (<https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-06-29/ranking-the-2016-presidential-primary-polls-and-predictions?cmpid=yahoo.hosted>).
3. www.nytimes.com/elections/results/iowa (Accessed November 4, 2016).
4. www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com/2011/02/2016-new-hampshire-primary-results-open-thread (Accessed November 30, 2016).
5. www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/primaries/SC (Accessed December 8, 2016).
6. www.elections.texasribune.org/2016/primary-election-results/ (Accessed December 13, 2016).
7. <https://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/candidate?id=N00037006> (Accessed January 1, 2016).
8. <https://www.opensecrets.org/pres16/candidate?id=N00023864> (Accessed January 1, 2016).

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