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*The Impact of Televised Presidential  
Debates on Voters' Decision; a  
Comparative Study of the 1960 and the  
2016 Debates*

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated first and foremost to my family, especially my mother and father for their continuous support and patience in addition to their endless love. Also, I dedicate this work to my only sister Wided; who believed in me and encouraged me more than anyone did, and my bothers.

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**Abstract**

The present dissertation dealt with the televised presidential debates in the United States. The research's objective was to investigate the impact of the debates on the voters. It highlighted the historical background and the development of these televised debates. The research focused on two case studies; the presidential elections of 1960 and those of 2016, that witnessed very dramatic and exciting debates between very powerful and important candidates. Moreover, it made an examination of their performances and speeches during the debates. The data analysis targeted all the recorded results and statistics to check the extent to which these televised debates had influenced voters' decision in the Election Day.

تناولت هذه الرسالة المناقشات الرئاسية التلفزيونية في الولايات المتحدة. وكان هدف البحث هو دراسة تأثير المناقشات على الناخبين. وقد سلطت الضوء على الخلفية التاريخية وتطور هذه المناقشات التلفزيونية عبر الزمن. وركز البحث على دراسة كل من الانتخابات الرئاسية في عامي 1960 و 2016، و التي شهدت مناقشات مثيرة بين مرشحين أقوياء ومهمين. علاوة على ذلك، أجرى البحث دراسة لأدائهم وخطبهم أثناء المناقشات. وقد استهدف تحليل البيانات كل النتائج والإحصاءات المسجلة للتحقق من مدى تأثير هذه المناقشة التلفزيونية على قرار الناخبين في يوم الانتخابات.

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Identification</b>
CNN	Cable News Network
CPD	Commission on Presidential Debates
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEC	Federal Election Commission
GOP	Grand Old Party
JFK	John Fitzgerald Kennedy
MSNBC	Microsoft National Broadcasting Company
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
US	United States
USA	United States of America

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## **Introduction**

Citizens of the United States are granted a combination of rights and duties which are stated in the Constitution. One of the major rights which the government protects is the right to vote, sovereignty and the freedom of expression. Citizens from all parts of the country are granted the right to vote in the matters of national interests. Presidential elections were made every four years to include the fifty states and the districts of the country. Before the Elections Day, party members and candidates go through a series of preparations and campaigns to increase votes and support. Becoming a president of the world's most powerful country could never be easy; yet, it is not impossible!

Televised presidential debates are one of the major events in the elections. They are defined as the formal discussions held late in the electoral circle organized and sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), which was established in 1987 and had run every presidential debate held since 1988. The main focus of these debates is the candidate's performance, personality and the political agenda of his political party. Candidates should provide arguments for their ideologies in the most controversial issues in the country, and which attract the public attention and center of interest. Besides, these debates are believed to be an attempt to get the public support and to benefit the most of them. It is also important to mention that the target audience of these debates was the ambivalent voters who had not decided yet on which candidate to vote.

In the US, these debates were the most dramatic part in the elections' process; thus, they attract huge numbers of watchers. According to the statistics made by the Commission on Presidential Debates, the number of people watching these debates since 1960 to 2016 was varying between 37.5 and 84 million people. These numbers emphasized the significance of debates for citizens to better recognize the candidates and make the appropriate. So, it is very

important to question if these debates can impact the voter's decision and the extent to which they matter.

The selection of a president is based on many criteria side-by-side with internal and external factors around the voter. Presidential debates were the most worthy mentioned external factors ever since they became part of the elections. This study is designed to shed light on the role of the public opinion in making national decisions and the roles of the televised presidential debates on them. Besides, it is constructed based on a comparative study between the electoral debates of 1960 and 2016 to be able to reach the desired purpose.

Although, there were other ways to recognize a political candidate and his agenda, televised presidential debates became a best tool for such aim. They became a medium through which candidates could express their ideologies and beliefs in an environment that provided a natural and fair atmosphere to face each other while being watched and judged by a huge number of audiences. Nevertheless, the nature of these debates as live programs might put the candidates under a big stress and pressure while debating in front of camera. As a result, they had to make sure to be well prepared long time before the debate's day.

The first major objective of the present dissertation was to shed light on the importance of the candidates' performance during a televised debate. Because of the difficulties they face, candidates must make lots of efforts to express their political agenda in a convenient way. The watchers used to depend on the every action made by the candidate on TV to understand his personality and to get a clearer image of his character. They look for some sort of characteristics which are usually required to be in the candidate who is willing to be next president of the country. Their appearance, language and charisma will make great difference in terms of performance. So, candidates were the central focus of all the televised presidential debates.

The second objective of this study was to show the significance of the presidential debates as the bridge that connected both candidates and the citizens. On one hand, a candidate was given the chance to convince as much as possible of citizens to vote for them. In that, debates were the best means for a candidate to show himself as fit for the office among others. The camera is used to communicate the target audience. They were asked to take advantage of every moment against each other avoiding any kind of errors and mistakes that might cause them to lose the race.

The research addresses very important questions related to the televised debates. Not only citizens who should know everything related to these debates, candidates also should be well informed about them to be able to benefit most of them. Questions like: “what is the real purpose behind the establishment of these debates? In what ways they can influence the audience? Do presidential debates provide beneficial opportunities for both; the candidates and the voters? Do electoral debates manifest the real intents of the candidates? Do negative evaluations of one candidate affect positively the other opponent?” should be well answered and well understood by both sides; thus, this study is about to clarify them well.

The research is divided into three interrelated chapters, each one of them was related to following chapters. The first chapter deals with an overview of the historical background of the United States’ presidential elections, the political parties and how and when did the televised presidential debates come into function as essential part in politics. The second chapter is centered on the case study of the presidential debates of Kennedy Vs Nixon. This chapter talks about the role of the great debate in the results of the 1960 elections. Additionally, I tried to conclude how it impacted the presidential elections in the following years. The third chapter was about the second case study of Clinton Vs Trump in 2016; it includes the analysis of the televised debates between both candidates.

The theme of the present research had been widely discussed through different periods of time and by many scholars. So, it makes use of Noam Chomsky's book entitled *Language and Politics* in which he defined the term debate in relation to electoral campaigns. Chomsky is a very famous and important figure in all the fields especially politics and linguistics. He also gave his point of view about the American party system in one of his conferences; which was watched to add reliability and credibility to this study. In addition, it is based on the works of many other important researchers who studied the televised debates of both case studies. Gary Donaldson wrote his book *The First Modern Campaign: Kennedy, Nixon, and the Election of 1960*; in which he gave important points and analysis to the elections of that year in which the Americans were introduced to the first televised presidential debate in the history of the US politics.

Campaigns in the United States had noticed a great change as Kreimendahl stated. She believed that one of the basic elements of this change is the development of media. It became the basic element and the political engine. Party members and candidate's assistants make a special effort to gain the support of powerful media sectors. Mainly, this was due to the fact that media became the bridge between the voters and the political party involved in a political race. Kreimendahl believed that the media extension is the main reason for the decrease of the party affiliation's significance; however, it strengthened the power of the party organization.

Though it had been sixty years since the Great Debate, debates were an inseparable part of the presidential elections' process. They had been held in every election since 1976. Media had widely contributed in raising the significance of such debates. It gave it a special attention during the presidential campaign. Thus, people and voters had become paying more attention too. Yet, debates have the ability and power to change the voters' sensation to the candidates but it rarely changed their opinions. However, the undecided voters will depend on the

opportunity provided by the debates by giving them the chance to evaluate the debaters from the direct show of the debate on television.

This research had carried out a historical, descriptive method in the first chapter. In addition, it made use of the comparative and analytic approaches in the second and the third chapters. The study was based on different data collection tools including some statistics and graphs to provide the needed evidence for the objectives of the research. They provided many reliable criteria that added credibility to the research. The primary sources were a collection of videos, and scholarly journals and the secondary sources included books, articles of news websites and academic journals. Both sources were used to develop the understanding of the problem and provide support in reaching the desired goals of the study.

In every democracy, citizens are supposed to make decisions in relation to their daily life and well being. A citizen had never been living in isolation from others and his actions should be made on this basis. Most importantly, they should make their voices heard not only for their benefit but also for the benefit of the others. Nowadays, it has become much easier for voters to know and search about everything they want to understand in relations to making a political decision. Televised presidential debates are one of those means by which voters formulate an idea about the candidates and their ideologies. Consequently, this study reveals the role of these debates on the voters' decision and if it impacts the outcomes of elections.

Candidates for the presidential elections represent a certain political party to which they belong. In early times, the first writers of the American constitution did not take into consideration the political parties, because there were no parties during that period of time. However; after the development of voting rights in addition to the influence of the western countries on the new world, the political parties emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. As

a consequence, many constitutional regulations and laws were added to the Constitution after long discussions and debates.

## **Chapter One**

### **A Historical overview of American Presidential Elections**

Throughout history, the presidential elections were the most important and attractive events in American politics. Since the end of the cold war, the United States became the only central power of the world. As a result, not only American citizens were concerned with the elections; actually, the whole world became concerned too. In fact, American presidential elections would always result a president to the United States and a leader to the rest of the world. He would occupy the highest office in the most powerful country in the world.

Presidential elections are those formal processes by which citizens participate in selecting a candidate to be their president. Also, they were defined as the means or act of electing a candidate to become the president and hold the head office in the White House and serve for the benefit of both; the citizen as an individual and for the benefit of the nation as a whole unity of individuals. The president had been granted a combination of powers that would allow him to participate in the decision making in public affairs. Citizens were and will be considered as an essential part in the elections' process. They vote on the candidate who they believe to be the most adequate to become the president of their country. Thus, it was up to the candidates, the campaign, and the party's members and assistants to do their best to gain public support.

#### **1. American Presidential Elections**

At the indirect elections, citizens in the fifty states of America and the District of Columbia cast their votes for the members of the Electoral College. The first American presidential elections were held on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1789. George Washington won the race and had become the first president in the United States. Among the 13 colonies; New York, North



Carolina and Rhode Island were not part of these elections because they did not finish by the dead line. (Deskins, Walton and Puckett 10) At that time, elections' process was not as complex as it is nowadays. Its process got through many modifications and changes through history because of many events and circumstances.

At the time of the first presidential elections in the US, only few people in the 13 colonies had the right to vote due to the restriction imposed on citizens by the government preventing large numbers of people from voting. According to the Share America website, only 6 percent of the citizens had the right to vote. Only the landowners, white men over the age of 21 who lived in the new world at that time had the right to vote. However, this percentage had a highly noticeable improvement due to many events and changes throughout the history of the country. Nowadays, more citizens gained their right to vote and the legal age to vote became 18 years.

### **1.1. Origins, Names, and Symbols of the Political Parties**

Political parties were one of important characteristics of the western democratic systems. For a long time, these parties shaped a bridge between the government and its citizens. Political parties in the United States were opposed by the founding Fathers. They were viewed as weak factions that would seek to use the powers, which the government would grant for them, and authority to fulfill their personal needs on the coast of citizens' rights and benefits. Besides, if a party had a large public support, it might turn against the government. Thus, political parties were considered as a threat to the country when unity was needed most (Hoadley 9).

It was important to mention that in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Whigs and the Democrats parties were the first established major parties in the United States. The idea of establishing a political party was hard to be accepted at that time because it was revolutionary

at the domain of politics and full of doubts. The political parties were faced by many oppositions and obstacles due to many reasons (Epstein 6) as mentioned above. However, this fact did not stop the ambitions and desires of politicians to gain more powers and influence through them. Thus, the very first parties took long in the history to become the way they are organized nowadays.

The Whigs party was one of the two active parties during 1834-1854. The party was lead by its major advocate Henry Clay (Gold 39). It was brought to existence during the time of Henry Clay and American System of the National Republicans' platform in 1832. The name 'Whigs' was taken from the British Anti-monarchist party. The Whigs were a party interested in aristocracy, wealth and economics mainly. However, this did not decide its affiliations and principles. The majority of its members were qualified and business men; so, they had good financial resources. The party had a great influence with high status though it did not last for long period of time (Gold 63).

Moving to the Democratic-Republican Party, it was the other major old and modern-day political party in the United States. It had roots back to 1792, and it was founded by Thomas Jackson and James Madison as an opposition to the Federalist Party. Together with other members, they brought the first Antifederalists and the moderate federalists (Cornelison and Yanak 134). Gold stated that the majority of its members were farmers and artisans. Unlike the Whigs who were charged for their economic interests, the Democrats were social conservatives and classical liberalists. Though it included many wealthy members also, the Whigs were financially better than the Democrats at that time. Besides, the Democrats had less number of high status members but it had many qualifications that helped keeping the party to last until today (63).

In contemporary world politics, the major parties became the Democrats and Republicans. They were descendents of the previously mentioned party, the Democratic-Republican Party. As it was mentioned in (Nelson 778), the political parties' evolution had been confusing concerning the names of the American parties. Complexity about these parties was not limited with their names; actually, the whole party system in the United States is complicated and hard to be comprehended for many people. However, it was believed that this intricacy had many advantages especially if one thought of the unity of the country.

The origins of the names of the two parties were different. First, The Democratic Party was traced to the age of Thomas Jefferson. This party had two names "Republican or the Democratic-Republican. However, in 1830, President Andrew Jackson abandoned the 'Republican' portion of the name. Thus, the party's name had become the Democratic Party. Second, the Republican Party was founded in 1854 by an antislavery group of people. They established the party and named themselves the Republicans. It was the original party from which nowadays Republicans came (Nelson 778).

Both parties had some shared aspects and distinct ones; however, differences seemed to be more than similarities. Symbols were one of the important and remarkable signs of distinction between both. The Republicans had the Elephant and the Democrats Had the Donkey. The Republican Elephant, as (Nelson 778) pointed, was used at the beginning to refer to the silliness of the Republican vote. But later, Thomas Nast and others used the characteristics of the elephant as being strong and huge in size to refer to the political control of the GOP after the Civil War. Moving to the Democratic donkey, the symbol was used during the 1830s. Andrew Jackson was referred to as "jackass" by his adversaries. Unexpectedly, Jackson was proud of that nickname since donkeys are tough, courageous, and clever. The symbol was revived during the 1870s in *Harper's Weekly* magazine. Actually, many recent historians linked the symbol also to the survival of the party all this time.

## 1.2. Evolution of Political Parties and the Two-Party System in USA

The main false impression about American politics is that the two-party system had been there from the beginning. In fact, this thought is totally wrong. In 1789, the United States did not have a two-party system. The country had the first president George Washington, who had no political party. Later, during his terms, Thomas Jefferson founded the first real political party. He named it the Democratic-Republican Party, with which he challenged John Adams. After that in 1828, the war-hero Andrew Jackson became the first president of the Democratic Party which was new at those times (Epstein 6).

In America, it had never been strange to describe this party system as central point of an “American civil religion”. The two-party system in the United States became a basic notion that goes hand in hand with American political system. The major two parties of that system were the Democratic and the republican parties. They have what was called “Duopoly”, meaning that they had domination over the American politics and shared it between them. Elections were and still standing for these two parties through marginalizing any other third party, because they might form a threat to both; the Republicans nor to the Democrats (Disch 4).

According to (Schmidt, et al 303), the main reason for the two-party system endured had to do with: “(1) the historical foundation of the system, (2) political socialization and practical considerations, (3) the winner-take-it-all electoral system, and(4) state and federal laws favoring the two-party system.” This system; however, did not last with no contestants. American third Parties had been there repeatedly. Each of those minor parties emerged as a reaction to a specific event in the American history. They all had an impact either in the economy or the society of the United States.

It was strongly believed by Noam Chomsky that the United States did not have a two-party system. He stated; in one of his recorded press conferences, that: “Democrats and republicans aren’t a category-the Republicans and Democrats differ... they are two factions of the same party.” From this saying, he emphasized that the two dominant political parties in America were groups belonging to the same party, having the same principles and goals. He added by saying: “We have a one-party state with two somewhat different factions with a lot of overlap.” Additionally; when he was interviewed by Adam Jones, he said on the same matter that: “In the United States, the political system is a very marginal affair. There are two parties, so-called, but they’re really factions of the same party, the Business Party. Both represent some range of business interests.” His beliefs obviously came from a long studies and interpretations of the history and origins of the dominant political parties.

### **1.3. Constitutional Laws and Processes of Presidential Elections**

The American Constitution consisted of all most every detail related to elections, precisely the presidential ones. It discussed the citizens’ right to vote and the requirements that would grant their ability to participate in the public affairs’ decisions. The act of voting became a right and duty for all citizens in any democracy. Moreover, the Constitution stated the process of the elections, their period, the duration of the term for presidency, the qualifications and characteristics required for anyone who would like to be nominated for the presidency, and all the other details related to the presidential elections a year before their start to the day of the announcement of the results. The constitution provided all regulations and law to ensure the clear and fair demonstration of all presidential elections.

According to the US Constitution; the Fifteenth, the Twenty-Fourth, and the Twenty-Sixth Amendments discussed the characteristics of citizens who are granted the right to vote in elections. First, the right to vote can never be denied or taken because of the race, color, or

previous condition of servitude of the citizen; that is for being a slave previously. Second, the right to vote could never be denied because of the sex or gender of the citizen. Third, citizens must be of eighteen years or older. Finally, their right would not be taken for failure to pay poll tax or any other type of taxes.

Article II section one of the Constitution determined the term of the presidency for the President with the Vice-President. The term was set to be four years for both from the day they were appointed. Besides, the Article stated that each state will appoint Electors who were equal in the number with the whole number of the Congress members. According to this Article, no member of the Congress, either being a Senator, a representative or an officer of trust or profit to the United States can be an elector at the same time. The congress was granted the power of determining the time of choosing electors and the day in which they shall cast their votes; thus, all the electors throughout the states will vote at the same day.

The twelfth Amendment stated that the electors shall meet in the states to which they belong and vote by ballot. Here the electors should vote for a president who was not an inhabitant of their respective state. Additionally, The Electoral College was required to make separate lists for the candidates of the presidency and distinct lists of those to be voted for as Vice-Presidents and each of the lists mentioned above should be signed and certified. So, the ballots for the president were distinct from those for the Vice president. Next, the president of the Senate should open the certificates and the votes with the presence of the Senates and the representatives and then the votes shall be counted.

This Amendment proclaimed that, the candidate for presidency with the highest number of votes, or majority of the whole number of the Electors will be appointed as the president. If he did not get the majority, then the House of Representatives should vote by ballot on one of the two who have the highest number of votes. The votes in this exception shall be counted as one

state representation equals one vote, and the candidate should have two-thirds of the states' votes at least to win, the majority of the states in this case is necessary.

Moreover, the Twelfth Amendment stated that the Vice-President also needed to win the majority of votes of the whole Electors. If he did not win the majority, the Senators should choose one of the two with highest numbers of votes in the list of candidates. The candidates for Vice-President should get at least two-thirds of the whole number of Senators. The majority of the Senators' votes was necessary too. The final regulation related to the elections in this Amendment was that a person who was constitutionally not qualified to be a president may not be eligible to become a Vice-President.

In the twentieth Amendment, the 1<sup>st</sup> section determines the time and date of the end of the terms for both the President and the Vice-President. The 3<sup>rd</sup> section states the cases and conditions under which the Vice-President replaces the President in addition to the condition in which the Congress by law appoints a qualified person to act as president. Also the twenty-second Amendment determines the limitation of terms for the President and the limitation of the period during which a person replaces President. However, the law in this Article is not applicable until the Article becomes operative.

Many Amendments and Articles included and discussed many other details, cases and laws related to the President, Vice-President and the Congress members' roles in the elections and the restrictions imposed on each. The Constitution writers and established those laws only to ensure the Rule of law above all and to provide equality and unity among all citizens and the subjects of the country. The process in which American presidential elections were designed could be described in many ways, but it could never be referred to as an easy process. Complexity is one of the main characteristics of their presidential elections.

## 1.4. Electoral Campaigns

Primaries and caucuses are considered to be a major step during the elections' process. Gore provided the definition and the distinction between a caucus and a primary. On the one hand, caucuses were one of the most used ways of presidential nominees' selection. However, nowadays only ten states still use this process. They could be organized either by the state or by the political party and citizens could support candidates openly, and the result of the caucus is used to decide the nominees for state and national conventions of all political parties. The caucus includes only citizens who are registered voters and each voter participates at the caucus of the political party to which he belongs.

Unlike primaries, caucuses have a very complicated process. Each state had its own different system of caucuses. It involved meetings that were programmed over long period of time; sometimes weeks or even months. In small states, the delegates were passed directly to the state convention be nominated in the national convention. However, in the large states, there should be at least an additional step before going to a national convention. Usually, the number of participators in the caucuses was noticed to be lower than in the primaries (Nelson 204).

On the other hand, a primary was defined as a state level process of delegates' selection. First, citizens are to cast secret ballots to deliver their votes. Next, the results shall be used to decide the nominees for the national convention of all parties. A primary may have two forms; it could be an open process as well as it could be a closed one. Unlike the closed primary, an open primary is designed for all registered voters without taking into consideration their political affiliation; they can vote to any candidate they want even if he was from a different party to which they belong. Nevertheless; in a closed primary, citizens could vote only to a candidate of the same political party to which they belong. Yet, the



common thing between both processes is that all political parties hold the primaries and caucuses on the same day (unless indicated).

In 1971, The Federal Election Campaign Act was introduced in the Senate on May 6, 1971, and the Act was approved by the majority of the Senate vote on August 5, 1971. It came to function in 1972 to replace all the previous laws. Actually, the Act did not put restrictions on the entire spending of a party campaign; it rather restricted their spending on all the types of media advertising. It imposed limitation on how much money a candidate is allowed to use in his electoral campaign. Nevertheless, the Act was reformed in 1974. It founded the Federal Election Commission, limited presidential campaign spending and many other limitations and financial restrictions were imposed under the 1974 amendments (Schmidt, et al 356).

According to the official website of the Commission; in 1975, the Federal Election Commission was created by Congress to manage and implement the Federal Election Campaign Act. The FEC is responsible to reveal all information related to the campaign finance, to impose the limitations and prohibitions on donations, and to supervise the public financial support of Presidential elections.

The Commission included six members chosen by the President and confirmed by the Senate and called Commissioners. Each member of the Commission was allowed a six-year term. Every two years, two members shall to be replaced by other members; that is every two years two members are subjected to be changed. According to the law, no more than three commissioners may represent the same political party. In addition, a minimum of four votes was required for any official Commission action to take place. The six members should work full time, and they meet in two ways. The first way was the closed sessions; in which they talk about some issues that must remain confidential. The second way was that they meet in public to make policy and vote on key legal and administrative decisions and issues (Ballotpedia).

## 1.5. The Electoral College

Researchers provided almost the same definition to the Electoral College. The definition of the term Electoral College given by Shea was a good and relevant. He said: “The term “electoral college” was not used in the Constitution, shown here, but it was a term used for the electoral process today. “College” was taken from the Latin word collegiums, which meant a group in which each member had equal power and authority.” The term did not exist literally in the constitution; however, it came to be used to refer to the electoral process nowadays (10).

In May 1787, there was a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia that had approved the elections of the president by what had become known as the Electoral College (Schulman 118). It became one of the major elements constructing the electoral system in the United States. It was never a place, but rather a process and a system which was established by the founding fathers as a compromise between electing the President in addition to the Vice President by a vote in Congress or by qualified citizens’ votes. Its role was stated in the constitution. The Electoral College consisted of 538 electors, and the majority of 270 electoral votes was required for a candidate to win, as stated in the Constitution.

The Electors’ selection was a two-part process. The first was when the political parties in each state made a list of possible Electors; sometime, this procedure takes place before the general elections. The second step was on the Election Day. The voters in each state were asked to select their state's Electors by casting their ballots for President. The Process of this Electoral College includes citizens of the fifty states of America and the District of Columbia voting for the President and his Vice. Citizens are actually voting for the representatives from the political party of the candidates. Those representatives are called electors. Next the

electors will elect the President and the Vice President who are normally from the same political party to which they belong (Shea 4).

The number of Electoral votes in each state was mentioned in the Constitution to maintain the balance among all states. Burgan said: “The process for choosing the president is outlined in Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution. Each state’s number of electors is based on the number of people it sends to Congress. Since each state has two senators and at least one House representative, each state has at least three electoral votes. No Congress or other government official can serve as an elector” (18-19).

The most remarkable thing about the Electoral College was that it had a very complex body of processes. This intricacy was a result of many factors to strengthen it. Bennett believed that this complexity actually was working for its own benefit to make compromises between the federal and the state powers. He provided four main elements which were considered as sources of the complexity in the Electoral College. The first factor was the compromises about dividing the powers between the federal government and fifty one states including the District of Columbia. The second factor was the fact that the Electoral College was a group of separate self-governing bodies became another source of complexity. These bodies’ formats were chosen according to each state’s decision. The third factor was the continuous doubt about many elements of the Electoral College elements. All humans, by nature, were believed to reject anything just because of one element they did not like about it, despite the many good qualities it had. Thus, many elements and qualities about the Electoral College were not investigated or fully understood (Bennett 180).

## 2. The Concept of Political Communication

The concept of political communication was defined in many ways. McNair referred to it as: “a visual mean of signification, such as dress, make-up, hairstyle and logo design, i.e. all those elements of communication which might be said to constitute a political ‘image’ or identity” and not only the written or the spoken statement. Thus, Political communication did not depend only on what was said or stated to the audience and the voters but also it contained what they observed and visualized. It referred to the combination of aspect which constructs the political ‘image’ (4).

Hence, it could be said that the political communication was a well planned step. The politician or the candidate should make deliberate preparations to make a successful political communication, and to accomplish certain objectives. McNair stressed that political communication consists of “communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives”; “communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspaper columnists”; “communication about these actors and their activities, as contained in news reports, editorials, and other forms of media discussion of politics” (4).

For Tuman; in his book *Political Communication in American Campaigns*, he limited the term political communication as being the process of discussion through which political information was distributed. He saw it as being related to “elections and the most rhetorical artifacts of elections in modern age.” It emphasized the use of political speeches, the role of political debates and the participation of all forms of mass media. The political communication was directed to focus on the less interested people in politics, whose number was diminishing gradually (Tuman 8).

## **2.1. Presidential Debates**

The candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties were used to be invited to perform in the formal discussions which were called presidential debates. Chomsky called them “performances” (443). Those debates became of a central attention by citizens and voters from the all parts of the United States. Schantz stated that:” the central events of contemporary presidential campaigns are the presidential and vice presidential debates.” He added that:” These debates have consistently attracted huge television audiences over 60 million people.” (28) His view was confirmed by the statistics made by the Commission on Presidential Debates on the number of people watching these debates. In 1960, the number was 37.5 million; however, in 2016 the number became over 84 million people.

Undoubtedly, presidential debates became of significance mainly because the two major parties had decided to make use of them. At the early beginning, candidates had always been hesitant about either to perform a debate or not; the majority had escaped such clashes, including President FDR during 1940s and President Dwight Eisenhower in 1950s. Both of them refused the invitations to debate because they feared to slip or make mistakes that might cost them to lose (The State of the Presidential ...). In 1960, most of the American houses had TV and both candidates were very excited to take the chance of debating. Usually, debates were prepared in a specific format that may decide the number of debates to be held every time a general election was held. In addition, it may decide the date, time, and place for every debate.

## **2.2. The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD)**

The Commission on Presidential Debates was a private, neutral, nonprofit organization, and tax-exempt which was founded in response to the lack or poor quality of presidential debates. The organization was qualified and used under federal law to sponsor presidential

and vice-presidential debates. According to the official website page of the Commission, the CPD was an independent organization, it was not controlled by any political party or outside organization and it did not endorse, support or oppose political candidates or parties. Moreover, it did not receive financial funding from the government or any political party. The CPD had sponsored every debate in every presidential election since 1988.

In addition to its efforts to ensure that debates provided the best feasible information to citizens, the CPD's primary goal was to ensure that general elections debates were run fairly between and among the leading candidates in the United States. The Communications Act of 1934 section 315 imposed the equal opportunity for candidates for the same office to have equal time. Nonetheless, the debates of 1960 between JF Kennedy and Nixon had broken the Act. According to this Act, all the other candidates should have the same opportunity with Nixon and Kennedy. The congress reacted by provisionally hang the 315 section (Farah 5).

Following the year 1960, debates went through many regulations; the major one was that of 1975. The decision was called the Aspen Institute and it was made by the FCC, in which the Federal Communications Commission decided that televised debates would be free from the equal-time obligation as long as they were not sponsored by any broadcaster. This decision cleared the stage for the debates of 1976 to take place after 16 years of halt. The debates of that year as well as the debates of 1980 and 1984 were sponsored by the League of Women Voters. The League made some changes in the rules of debating; it did not allow front-runners of the major parties to evade from debating. Thus, presidential debates did not go through the halt in the following years (6).

Later in 1985, under the demand of the bipartisan National Commission on Elections, the sponsorship of Presidential debates was given to the two major parties. The CPD was established in 1987 by the chairmen of the Democratic and Republican Parties to take control

of the Presidential debates. Farah added that the Commission “proudly” claimed that it is free from any political control; however, it was not “honorable” as it argued to be. He believed that: “The CPD is a corporate-funded, bipartisan cartel that secretly awards control of the presidential debates to the Republican and Democratic candidates, perpetuating domination of a two-party system and restricting subject matters of political discourse.” Under the sponsorship of this commission the minor parties candidates were and still excluded from the debates to get rid of any additional competition (6).

The impact of this Commission was remarkable in organizing the presidential debates at all levels. It made sure that the competition was fair and candidates were treated equally. Its main role was to serve and work for the advantage of the Republican and the Democratic Parties. The CPD was not that ideal organization, it had always been under the control and management of members from the two major parties in the United States.

### **2.3. Broadcasting Electoral Debates, Media Coverage**

Television was the major medium for American politics. McKeenver and Davies, stated that: “American politics without television is unthinkable.” The role which media played in any country’s politics was never denied but rather it was a vital one. In fact, voters were always updated with political news from all the different types of media. In addition, policy makers considered media as crucial part in the “art of political persuasion” (137).

As it was argued by Jamieson and Birdsell debates with opponents was seen inappropriate in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This type of clash was beyond belief to candidates especially those who were not ready yet to carry their case openly with voters (84). Candidates had never viewed positive outcomes from these debates, all they saw was “minuses”. Nevertheless, they had advantages for both the voters and the candidates. Starting with the voters’ benefits, debates exposed the personalities, preferences, and priorities of the candidates through their verbal

and non-verbal performance. In addition, people who watched them showed better knowledge about candidates, ideologies and beliefs than those who did not watch them. Moving to the candidates' benefits, debates provided a free opportunity for them to further explain and justify their political orientations and goal to gain more support (161).

Broadcasting debates and the political campaign in general was and will always be there. It provided both, citizens and candidates with the opportunity to have a direct relation. Candidates made use of it to influence the public while citizens made use of it to get everything they need to know in relation to president selection. Thus, broadcasting debates had a great significance in connecting both sides in the electoral process.

#### **2.4. The Introduction of Televised presidential Debates**

The development of the public television broadcasts in the United States was not fast as it was in the European countries especially in Britain. In the UK, the television broadcasting started in 1936; however, in the US it appeared in 1939 and was stopped for some time because of the war to begin again in 1946. Like the radio stations, television stations were aiming at making financial profits through advertising. As the television and other broadcasting technologies got developed through time, it gave the presidential elections; precisely campaigns, a higher dimension. The federal law of "equal opportunity" for politicians to advertise their ideologies and campaigns was imposed to all television stations; however, those candidates are asked to pay for every moment they appear on TV (Vile 43).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> c political elections, debates were not significant as they are nowadays because radio and television did not exist at that time. All news and information related to political events, elections, or parties were held by newspapers or spread in occasional public meetings. Newspapers; then, were partisan and run by one of the political parties; thus their reports were



subjective to support their own political party. Generally speaking, debates existed that time but they were limited to the Congress where they discuss the key issues of that time.

Before the year 1960 there was little attention given to presidential debates. However, the growth and development of the radio in the early 1900s brought about a remarkable growth of interest in the political debates (Trent, et al 261). In 1952, the first nationally televised debate was made between the representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties. They answered two questions for each of them at the League of Women Voters' yearly conference. Two months after this debate, Senator Blair Moody requested the presidential candidates of both parties to perform a debate. Although NBC and CBS agreed to offer free time for the debate, both candidates refused to debate (Presidential Debates ...).

The year 1960 was a turning point in the course of American history. Actually, this was the year of the first televised presidential debate in the United States. It was performed by the Republican Vice President Richard Nixon and Democratic Senator John Kennedy. It was the most interesting event that characterized the 1960 campaign. Donaldson believed that the elections of the year had a different path; however, the debates caused a very surprising result. They were broadcasted in both, TV and radio, and it attracted attention and gave presidential elections a new path (125).

However, in the following years from 1960 until 1976, debates went through a gap of continuity. The interruption was caused by some reasons. On the one hand, the front-runners refused to face their opponent on the same stage. Politicians did not want to share the attention floor which television provided for them. In addition, they feared the dynamic nature of such debates that their chances to win could be minimized due to any failure in performance or answers. Richard Nixon was among those who rejected the debates. The debates got a widespread support of the public; they asked for them in the 1964, 1968 and in the 1972 elections. Yet, those who supported Nixon in the Congress figured a well prepared

plan to help him skip them. They passed some federal communications laws; among which the Communications Act of 1934, which required equal time opportunity for all candidates, even for minor parties' candidates (Freeley and Steinberg 367).

After the 1960, Americans started to view the benefits which resulted from these debates. Thus, televised debates were back again to the floor of interest of the public opinion and political racers for presidency. Since 1976, every presidential election campaign included a series of televised presidential debates which had its distinctive dramatic events.

## Chapter Two

### Presidential Debate of 1960, the First Modern Campaign

The United States presidential elections of 1960 marked the end of Dwight D. Eisenhower's two terms as President. And Eisenhower's Vice President was Richard Nixon. The latter was the Republican candidate of the 1960 elections who faced the Democrats' John F. Kennedy, who was Senator of Massachusetts. These were the first presidential elections in which Alaska and Hawaii participated, having been granted statehood, respectively, on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 21<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. It was also the first elections in which both candidates for president were born in the 20th century. Many in the Nixon camp, including President Eisenhower, urged the vice president to reject the debate proposal and deny Kennedy invaluable national exposure. But Nixon confidently agreed to share a platform with his rival on nationwide television (1960 Presidential Election).

During a televised debate, the candidates usually tended to keep it as a discussion built up between two sides competing about might provide made the most convincing arguments. However, the real goal of each candidate was to address the voters or the citizens who were watching them on TV. Thus, this way of debates offered competitors benefits to attract as many as possible numbers of supporters. Additionally, the television station played a good role in this kind of debates since it provided the significant information needed by the audience without making them notice that they are a part in the "trialogic communication process" as "secondary participant" (The Kennedy Nixon Debate ... 4).

According to Wihbey and Ordway in the Journalist's Source Organization's website article, another important fact about the debates that should be known is the purpose of watching them. They argued that the purpose of watching televised debates was different in two ways. First, reporters often intended to find out the winner and the loser at the end of the

debate. They would analyze if the candidate looked “big enough” to become the next president or not. Second, viewers attempted to extract two opinions; if one of them was a better choice compared to his opponent or not. This distinction showed to some extent that there was a strong direct connection between the televised debates and the voters’ decision.

### **1. American Politics and Television Broadcasting**

Researchers were arguing about whether there was a concrete proof that the media had an impact on the majority of the voters’ decision or not. Biagi, on the one hand, believed that there was no concrete evidence. However, in the Kennedy vs. Nixon televised debates people strongly believed that media, especially TV, had changed the results of the elections. The political debates held in 1960 were the first in the history of American politics. Thus, people were influenced with the innovations brought with that event in concerning the relationship between politics and media. Yet, Biagi admitted that the performance of Kennedy one of the major causes for his “narrow victory” in the race (263).

Actually, the televised debate of 1960 had shown a great power of media and television in influencing the voters and the voting behavior. On the other hand; the Time magazine website published that without the first televised debate, Kennedy would never win the race against the handsome Irish-American Vice President Richard Nixon. He was not well known at the time, whereas Nixon was better known especially that he had more connections with the media during the campaign of former president Eisenhower. The victory of Kennedy had impacted political campaigns, media and the political history and gave it other dimensions. It was considered at this point in the timeline of the American politics’ history as “the dramatically changing” event (Webley).

In his book, Swint explained that the 1960 debates are historically important for many reasons. It is the incident when media and TV started becoming the manager for political campaigns. Only after this era when people confidentially could say that television had a fundamental impact on the results of the presidential elections. Before 1960, not all Americans had television in their houses; thus, most citizens were collecting the information about politics, elections, and candidates from newspapers, pamphlets and radio channels. One could never deny the fact that the Eisenhower's campaign was innovatory when the political parties used TV advertisements to "sell their candidates." Following the 1956 elections, 87 percent of the Americans had television in their houses. The debates of 1960 and the intensive media coverage on them were the main reasons for the increase of the number of the politics' followers on television to rise. As a result, most Americans became addicted to getting the political information from television rather than from radio and newspapers (8).

The presidential debates of 1960 had a deep influence in the history of the United States' politics. The "expectations game" was the main reason for the deep impact made. In fact, Nixon was much known and famous than young newly introduced Kennedy. Nixon was known as the strong and tough vice president of Eisenhower. He was famous for the "kitchen debate" which was of great influence at large scales. In addition, the most ironic fact about him was that he played a major role at increasing the power of television in politics especially at the 1956 President Eisenhower campaign. Thus, expectations were drown on the victory of Richard Nixon; however, it was Kennedy who won at the end of the race for presidency (Swint 8).

## **2. The Great Debate**

Mathews; in the MSNBC website, added that whenever Americans thought of John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, they brought to mind the Great debate held between both, which marked the changing point in the history of American politics. After World War II, two young war heroes were back to their mother country. One of them was Democrat young man from an aristocratic family in Boston, who was a real war hero. The other one was an ordinary young man that earned a grocery store in Southern California. Many historians and writers pointed that both candidates had a special relationship before, during and after the elections of the 1960.

Mathews in his article referred to the story which draws both candidates together as “pretty fabulous”. At the day of their first debate, they were both on the midnight train back to Washington. They stopped at a local diner and had hamburgers. People were astonished on the way both acted and looked like. Actually, they were acting like very normal people in a way that one could never distinguish the rich young man from the other one. They were friends for long years before and after they faced each other. Proudly, they proved that political rivals could “get along together” and earn respect for the each other.

### **2.1. Televised Debates Tipping the Scales of the Results**

As cited in the History News website, the debates of the 1960 elections; precisely the Great Debate, did not only impact the history of the United States, they also had a great influence on the outcomes of the elections. Actually, the results were very surprising to many people; since the expectations were down on the fact Nixon is the next president of the United States. Those debates were seen also as a sign for a big change that was about to happen in politics, history, media and television powers.

Webley had posted the opinion of President Kennedy on the role of media in his campaign including television. The President after four days of showing the results and Kennedy won, he admitted the significance of the media and television that had contributed in his victory by a “narrow margin”. He stated that: "It was the TV more than anything else that turned the tide." Thus, debates had become the most interesting events and attractive shows in the United States. Not only because they have such a good influence on the voters' decision, but also because they provide a dramatic race floor for the candidates and followers.

The Great Debates of Kennedy vs. Nixon had a remarkable impact on the audience's decision while voting. Political researchers had agreed that the first debate fastened the support for President JF Kennedy. Newcomb stated that: “voters in 1960 did vote with the Great Debates in mind. During the elections, over half of all voters reported that the Great debates had influenced their opinion: 6 percent reported that their vote was the result of the debates alone. Thus, regardless of whether the debates changed the elections result, voters pointed to the debates as significant reason for electing Kennedy” (1258). Undeniably, a 6% is seen as a small percentage, but still it is a proof that there was an impact on voters in a way or another.

Molly Crab added the reasons why President Kennedy won the elections were strongly related to the mass media efforts and the televised debates which he had with Nixon. She first stated that most Americans had TV sets in their houses and the fact that citizens were excited about the first debates to be shown on television, in fact this first debate left a great impact on them. Moreover, she believed that the way in which JF Kennedy used the language was “charming, entertaining, relatable, and used casual language”; and this was believed to be attracting to voters. However, Nixon's language in the first debate was “straight forward, stronger vocabulary, and attacked Kennedy”; and this did not help very much.

Actually, debates were seen important in terms of persuasion. To some extent, they were effective for the challenger, especially if he was less known for the public. The best example for this idea was that of John F. Kennedy. The other possible area for debates' impact was the agenda setting. Debates could limit national issues for the citizens to help them decide. Usually, this may work for the benefit of the party and its candidate; by providing better arguments on the issues of national interest to convince voters with their ideologies.

## **2.2. Great Lesson from a Great Debate**

After the first televised presidential debate between JF Kennedy and Richard Nixon, both parties depended on polls to learn about the impact of these debates on voters' position before and after the debate took place. There was a slight difference but many people agreed on their significance. So, Nixon and his party worked hard for the next debate to win more voters and change the impression that he left due to his performance. The Republican candidate freshened up his appearance for the next debates; even during the following years, he remembered the lesson very well. When he received the invitation for the next presidential debate in 1968, he declared himself "tanned, rested, and ready" (Gidlow).

Sides in Washington Monthly Magazine added that nearly all the political critics viewed the televised debates as "game changers". It was a common notion about the presidential debates. A candidate may ensure victory if he and his party made a well-prepared answer given at the right time, as well as, they may lose if they made a slip at any important moment. Actually, every in every political debate we find that precise moment or moments. He believed that the special moments in the first 1960 debate are: when Gerald Ford said that "there is no Soviet domination of eastern Europe", when Michael Dukakis answered the question about if he would support the capital punishment if his wife was murdered, when George H. W. Bush was looking at his watch, and when Al Gore groaning.



Nixon learned from the mistakes he made in Chicago and tried to show a better image to the audience through wearing dark suit and using make-up. Nixon also took a much more aggressive standpoint in the remaining debates, abandoning the genteel style he tried in the first debate. His experience with the first debate and the following debates was a significant lesson; not only for him but also for the other candidates in the following years. They became more careful towards them, by devoting more time and efforts preparing for these discussions.

Finally, it can be said that the impact of the televised debates, the debates of 1960 had, without doubt, contributed at Kennedy's victory. They are considered as the key element for his victory. However, recent studies do not agree with such result. He won with very close percentage to that of Richard Nixon. Against such a powerful and famous candidate like Nixon, Kenney had really benefited from the debates well.

### **3. Effectiveness of Candidate's Nonverbal Communication**

In the series of the debates of Kennedy vs. Nixon, it was known that they were the first to be recorded and presented to the audience via both radio and television. Voters were split into two groups. Based on what was widely spread and interpreted by researchers, people; who followed the debates through radio, were convinced that it was Nixon who would win the elections. Mainly, that was because his speech was so close to what many people wanted. Nevertheless, people who watched TV saw that young Kennedy was the one to be the next president of the United States. Basically, this was because his performance and appearance were of great impact rather than what was said by both competitors.

The body language and appearance were the other factors that were not less important than any other factor that may have an impact on the voters and the outcomes of election. Crabb described the body language and appearance of Kennedy as attractive, warm appearance, confident, well dressed man who used makeup. He showed up a friendly but very strong

personality by looking directly into camera. Nevertheless, she described Richard Nixon as sweaty, pale, nervous, suit blended in, older in age compared to Kennedy. He refused to wear makeup, and was extremely unused to television. Truly, both candidates were far different from each other, they way acted in front of the camera and the kind of impression they left in the minds of the audience.

As stated by Gidlow, the debates in 1960 gave Kennedy the look of a winner. Instead of looking in the eye of the journalist who was asking him the questions, he practiced the art of looking directly into the camera while talking as if he was addressing the audience in a very confident way, providing them with “straight answers. President Kennedy’s performance to some extent gave the audience a powerful impression that he was the one to be trusted for the office and that he was the best choice compared to his competitor. The most repeated and truthful story about the debates of 1960 was that after the first debate most people who listened to it on radio were pretty sure that it was Nixon who will be the next US president, while most people who watched it on TV believed that Kennedy is going to be the next winner of the office. In fact, Kennedy was a perfect TV speaker who appeared young, healthy, handsome, and balanced. However, Nixon wore a gray suit and looked unhealthy and skinny because he was recovering from the flu and had lost weight, and suffered from a knee injury. So, candidates are always committed to show up on TV in their best look they in order to persuade as many voters to choose them as possible!

According to Higdon, after the first televised debates researchers started working on the influential factors of the debates, especially the power of the body language of the candidates on the viewers. So, the reasons of the failure of Nixon in the first debate started to reveal. That event served as a good example of how body language could make or break a candidate. As the interest in this study continued, citizens, politicians and critics became more aware of those nonverbal behaviors and to what purpose they were precisely used. As a result, the

audience will get more information about the candidates, especially to grasp all things beyond what was spoken in the debate (Higdon 2-3).

During the following debates Nixon performed better and showed up healthier thanks to what Webley called the "milkshake diet" that helped to make him look fatter than before. However, it was strongly believed that he could not delete the picture he had inserted in brains of the audience at the first debate. Webley agreed that after the first debate of 1960 candidates could no longer risk to discount the powerful ability of television at the campaign. Seemd like it was not only Nixon who learned the lesson, but rather all the candidates in the following years' debates did.

Ted Sorenson in Campaigns and Elections weekly newsletter gave about thirteen lessons from the 1960 presidential elections. The best and most needed ones for this research were the three following advices or lessons. First, the best thing to be made before a debate was to have "good rest, good health, and good review of the substance and data on major issues". So, the candidate should make a strong unbreakable positions and responds. Second, a candidate should always accept and welcome all invitations to debate his opponent, especially if his opponent is better known, even if he was experienced with such televised debates. Third, a candidate should never waste time or worry about ridiculous attacks from minor sources, because usually their only aim is to shake his image.

Beyond what the debate meant for the political parties or critics, both candidates were aware of the importance of what they were about to perform. Both candidates were certain that there was something to be gained behind debating. However, it was up to them to do what they could to win the advantage of debating and avoid losing votes. Thus, they became required to take care of their body language and appearance as much as they do with their spoken one. Both debaters worked hard and prepared as much as possible to provide the best

picture any candidate would present to voters. Yet, the final decision went to the hands of the citizens.

#### **4. Presidential Debates Following the 1960 Debate**

After the first televised presidential debate, people became more attracted to watch them more than ever. Truly, the impact of these debates was very deep at every American house. Through the following years, every family had TV set, thus, interest in radios and newspapers was decreasing. Citizens shifted to depending on the television to get the information they needed about politics. Yet, debates were the floor that provides natural image on the candidates; either presidential or other candidates, so that citizens would make the appropriate choice on the one they would vote for.

In 1988, the United States held the 51<sup>st</sup> presidential elections. The race for presidency was between the Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis and the Republican Party candidate George Herbert Walker Bush. The elections took place at the first Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1988. Bush scored a massive victory in the elections and became the President with 426 Electoral College votes for 111 votes. The media coverage was restricted under a rule that was not documented; personal affair and lives of the candidates was out of their business. They were not allowed to uncover or expose the hidden things behind the scenes. During these elections this rule was taken to its highest levels. And even before that, Kennedy had many affairs with women but it was kept out of the news. However, due to many reasons this rule had vanished gradually (Shea and Harward 155). One of the main reasons was the Watergate Scandal; in which a group of burglars were suspected to pledge with the Richard Nixon trying to steal secret documents and wiretap phones. They were arrested inside the Watergate building in Washington D.C. (Watergate Scandal).

During these elections there were only two presidential debates. The first debate was peaceful and both candidates had a purpose to achieve; President Bush wanted to win the trust of the voters while Dukakis wanted to show voters that he was strong and powerful with his opponent and that he was not an extreme cold blooded person, like he was charged for by the Republicans and media. Yet, in the following debate, Dukakis had proved this charge (Kraus 69). He was senseless and wooden person, as described by the CNN Time politics newspaper, when he said that he would favor a penalty death for a person who raped and murdered his wife. Bush was not doing very well in the first debate, however, after the answer of Dukakis of the first question in the second debate he did not have to perform well because it was the fundamental, turning point in the race and the debates. After that, the polls started to work for President Bush to win.

Toner in the New York Times published that the 1992 presidential elections were the 52nd presidential elections held in the United States. It took place on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992. In these elections, there were three main candidates; George H. W. Bush for the Republicans, Bill Clinton for the Democrats, and an independent candidate Ross Perot. The campaign contained three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate. Mr. Bill Clinton became the 42<sup>nd</sup> president of America and broke the 12 years of Republican rule in the White House. According to the Federal Election Commission, Clinton won with 370 Electoral vote and former President Bush had 168 Electoral votes while Mr. Perot had 0 votes.

The 1960 presidential elections provided the opportunity for citizens to witness the first televised presidential debates, whereas, the 1992 presidential elections provided the very first presidential debate to be held between three candidates all together on one stage in three different occurrences. President Clinton was the likely to be the winner of the debates. However, Perot was the candidate who had the lowest percentages of face threat thought units according the statistics. The 1992 elections had introduced a new format for presidential

debates which is the town hall debates and the format was used for the first time during the presidential elections of 2000 (Dailey, et al 67-68).

According to the Commission on Presidential Debates, in the 1996 general elections' campaign there were two presidential debates and one for vice presidential debate. The race was between for the Democratic Party's candidate Bill Clinton, the Republican Party's candidate Robert Dole and the Reform Party's H. Ross Perot. It was President Clinton who won the elections for a second term. The statistics published in the American Presidency Project's website showed that he won with 49.2 % of public votes while Mr. Dole had 40.7%, and Perot had only 8.4%. President Clinton collected 379 Electoral votes while Dole Collected 159 and Perot got 0 Electoral votes.

Since the first televised presidential debate, this was the sixth consecutive presidential election in which candidates had nationally broadcasted debates. In the first debate, it was Clinton who began the opening statement first, during which he showed up that he was the candidate who had all the characteristics of a good debater. He spoke about his presidency term and his progress and achievements, which was an undeniable fact. In addition, he presented himself as being able to serve again for the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The debate's watching rates were lower than the one of 1992 due to many reasons, including the appearance of a new third party figure and people were interested to learn more about him. As in the first debate, in the second, Clinton proved that he was a successful debater. He developed a theme which was discussed through both debates. However, Dole did not develop one. Yet, it can be said that both debaters succeeded in delivering the real aims of a debate (Denton 101-119).

As published in the American Presidency Project, the presidential elections of 2000 were the 54th elections in the US. It was held on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The race was between two major candidates; The Republican party candidate was George W. Bush, the son of the former

US President George H. W. Bush, and the Democratic Party candidate was Al Gore. The elections' result was the closest in the American history, with a 47.9 percent and 48.4 percent in the favor of George W. Bush. The victory was very narrow, President Bush the son had 271 Electoral votes while Al Gore had 266 votes and one elector from the District of Columbia refrained as stated in the American Presidency Project website.

The debates started on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2000. The debaters used different ways to attack each other. The only remarkable thing about the debate was that Bush focused on attacking Al Gore' character and leadership skills, it was through asking questions on the character and leadership of Clinton's government. However, Gore focused his direct and indirect attacks on the proposals and policies of his opponent. Generally speaking, these debates proved to be temperate because both candidates chose to use less direct attacks. In the first debate, as it was expected, Gore performed well because he had previous experiences with debates; but media reporters believed that it was President Bush who won the first debate. However, in the second debate Gore was less contradicting with Bush; actually, he was at the same lane with Bush which made the audience think that Al Gore had no precise agenda or policies as Bush had. Yet; in the third debate, Gore tried to make the distinction with Bush but he did not express it in a solid and convenient way to the watchers (Dailey, et al 74-77).

The 55th presidential elections in the United States were held on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004. The race was between the Republican Party candidate George W. Bush for a second term and, Democratic Party candidate John Kerry. According to the CPD, the general elections included three presidential debates and one vice presidential. Yet, President Bush won a second term by 50.7% to 48.3 % for his opponent and had 286 Electoral votes. This time also the results were close like those of 2000.

In the first debate, President Bush did not perform well as he was expected to do. Kerry was a good debater in the first debate, and this had contributed for him to decrease the power and support which Bush enjoyed before the debate. However, in the second and third debates, Bush made a good progress and succeeded to turn the tables for his side. Consequently, polls showed that the numbers of supporters had increased gradually. According to Friendenberg, both candidates did well in the three debates and provided strong and memorable arguments. Thus, the debates were a good opportunity for Kerry which gave him great advantages and contributed for the winning of President Bush a second term after his recovery from the first debate (Denton 127-128).

Classroom in the National Constitution Center website argued that according to the Twenty-Second Amendment of the US Constitution, a president was limited to serve only two terms. Thus, President Bush had his second term in 2004 and he is ineligible for another term. The 56th presidential elections of the United States were held on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The candidates were Democratic Party nominee Barack Obama and the Republican Party nominee John McCain. Results, as published by the American Presidency Project, showed that President Obama had a decisive victory on the presidency by 365 Electoral College votes against 173 for McCain, and a popular vote of 52.9 percent against 45.7 percent. He became the first African American president in the history of the United States after a campaign that lasted for about two years.

The Commission on Presidential Debates had announced that there will be three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate in the general elections. The first debate was on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in the University of Mississippi. The main topics for this debate were Foreign Policy and National Security. The second debate was on October 7<sup>th</sup>, at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. The debate generally was about all topics related to the nation at all levels. The last debate in this elections was held on October 15<sup>th</sup> in Hofstra



University at Hempstead, New York. The main topics for this debate were the Economy and the Domestic Policy.

Moving to the 2008 presidential elections, it was one of the most interesting presidential elections in the history. According to the US News website, the elections were historic mainly due to following main reasons. First, Barack Obama was the first African-American to be ever elected for the highest office in the United States. Second, Joe Biden was the first Roman Catholic ever to serve as vice president. Third, there was a 64.1% voter turnout rate, which was the highest rate since 1908. Fourth, the nation had the highest numbers of African-American voters and Hispanics than ever. The last reason is that President Obama collected money more than any candidate in the history of the United States.

The 57th American presidential elections were held on November 6<sup>th</sup> between the Democratic candidate President Barack Obama racing the Republican candidate Mitt Romney for another term for presidency. As stated in some statistics published in the New York Times website, Obama succeeded again and won his second term in the 2012 presidential elections by 332 Electoral votes against 206 votes for Romney. He gained the support of 51.1 percent whereas his opponent had 47.2 percent.

As believed by Blake, in the Washington Post newspaper website, most people agree that Mitt Romney won the first debate against President Obama when many people expected the opposite. In fact, Obama seemed to be not having a good time during the debate and looked exhausted. He did not talk about his big points that would attract the citizens' interest or attention. Yet; in the second debate, as published by Welsh, in the US News and World Report media company website, President Obama showed clearly that he was well prepared for the second debate. He was a better debater than he looked in the first debate. Both

candidates were performing well in the second debate; thus, it is up to the audience to decide which one was the winner.

In the third debate, Dickerson appointed that Obama was the winner of this debate. However, Romney believed that he was the winner of the third debate. President Obama was exposing his agenda very strongly and clearly but Romney; simply, avoided making mistakes or any foolish actions. Later, polls made by the CBS on the undecided voters showed that they gave Obama 53 percent as a winner and 23 percent for the Republican nominee. Also, the CNN poll showed the same conclusion about who won the night, Obama had 48 percent and Romney had 40 percent (Romney Rasing?).

According to Chinni in the NBC News website, the televised presidential debates are the main and final attempt for candidates to influence the voters' decision. Due to the debates' shows, the citizens will have a more comparative image on both candidates while arguing on the main issues of public interest. He used a combination of diagrams that summarized the results of polls made by the NBC News/ WSJ to figure out whether the presidential debates make a difference on the voters' decision after watching the debates or not. The figure 1 below provides some polls' results before and after presidential debates from 1992 to 2012.

## How Much Do Voters Shift Post-Debate?

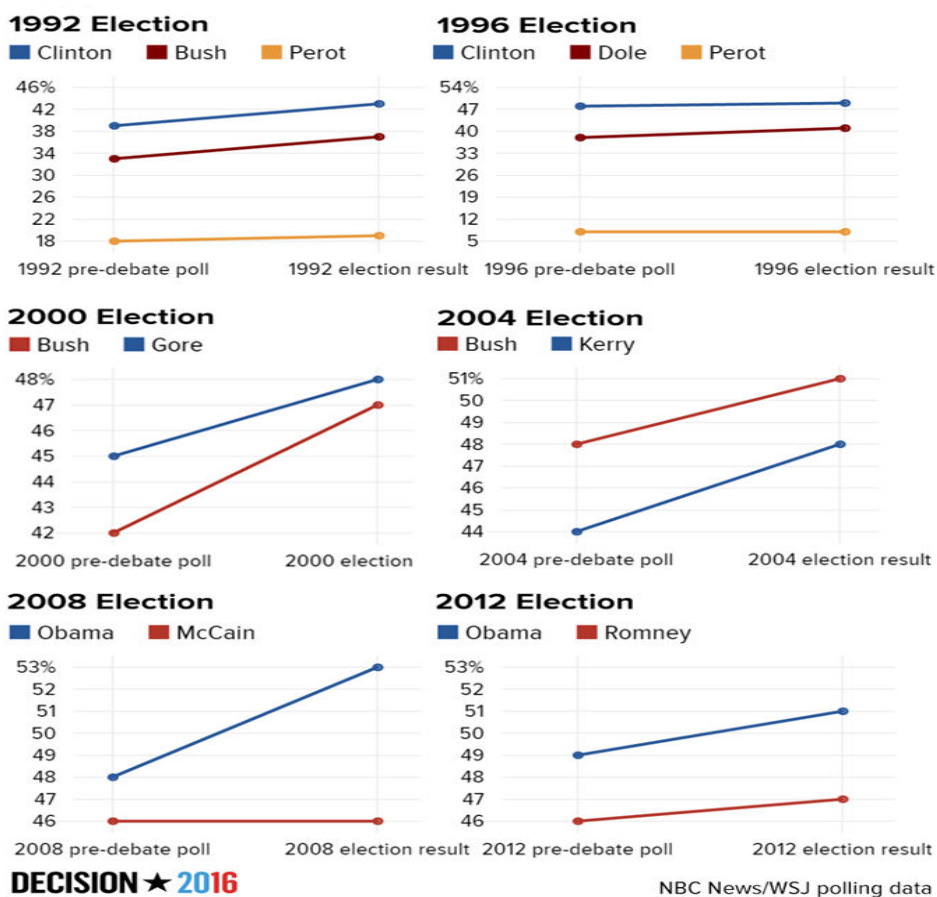


Fig. 1. How Much Do Voters Shift Post-Debate? NBC News/WSJ Polling Data. Web. 12 May 2017.

Figure 1 shown above provides the polls results made by NBC News/WSJ from 1992 to 2012. It gives statistics on people before and after the debates. The purpose of these polls results is to prove that debates do matter and they have an impact on the citizens. The difference between the pre-debates polls and the elections results is not that big in the years 1992 and 1996. However, in the following years the difference increases much more than before. This signifies the fact that the debates became more influencing through the years and the impact kept on increasing.

According to Chinni in the NBC News website, the televised presidential debates are the main and final attempt for candidates to influence the voters' decision. Due to the debates'

shows, the citizens will have a more comparative image on both candidates while arguing on the main issues of public interest. He used a combination of diagrams that summarized the results of polls made by the NBC News/ WSJ to figure out whether the presidential debates make a difference on the voters' decision after watching the debates or not.

The 1960 presidential elections were a turning point in the history of American politics. The main event of that year was the Great Debate between President Kennedy and Richard Nixon. Both candidates were invited to go through a series of the first televised presidential elections. Nixon was famous at that time because he was the vice president of President Eisenhower; thus people were familiar with him as being a suitable character and candidate to be elected as president. Kennedy on the other hand was still young and his carrier had just begun; people were not very familiar with him at that time. Nevertheless, the televised debates gave the opportunity to both candidates to get closer to citizens and take the campaign to the next level. The 1960 elections results proved that televised debates can do much impact on the voter's decision.

Kennedy prepared hard for the debates and performed better than what how Nixon did. Though Nixon was older and more experience at the field of politics, Kennedy was able to steel lights from him. Nixon looked ill and tired; whereas, Kennedy looked handsome, strong and very promising to do better in office. He succeeded to get the trust of the Americans to vote for him. Many had expected that it Nixon who is going to be the next president but Kennedy won. Many scholars and politicians were convinced that his victory was a credit to the televised debates and the way in which both candidates performed in front of the camera. Not only Richard Nixon who had admitted the debates' value and took the great debate as a lesson that he would never forget, also the next candidates in the following years did. Thus, elections gained more attention than it had before 1960 mainly due to the debates and the difference they can make on voters.

## Chapter Three

### Chapter Three: Presidential Debates of 2016

The American presidential process of president selection became known for its complexity and the long time of preparations and expectations about who might be the next president of the country. Usually, elections were launched at February when both the Republican and the Democratic Parties launch the selection contenders in competitions managed and funded by the party itself in all American states and districts. Those contests generally last for about five months till the selection of the candidate. Later, after a candidate was chosen, the party members including the candidate spend the summer campaigning for the presidency. Generally, the long period of time of campaigning cost the party a big budget (America's Crazy ...).

In the American presidential primaries and caucuses, the more a candidate won the state contests, the more delegates support would be guaranteed at the national convention. In the 2016 presidential campaign, the series of presidential primaries and caucuses were made between February and June 2016, staggered among the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. This nominating process was also an indirect election, where voters casted ballots for a slate of delegates to a political party's nominating convention, who in turn elected their party's presidential nominee. According to Andrews in the New York Times, both Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump had collected enough votes to demand their right for their parties' nomination for presidency. Donald J. Trump officially accepted the Republican Party's nomination on July 22. Hillary Clinton was officially nominated on July 26 at the Democratic Convention.

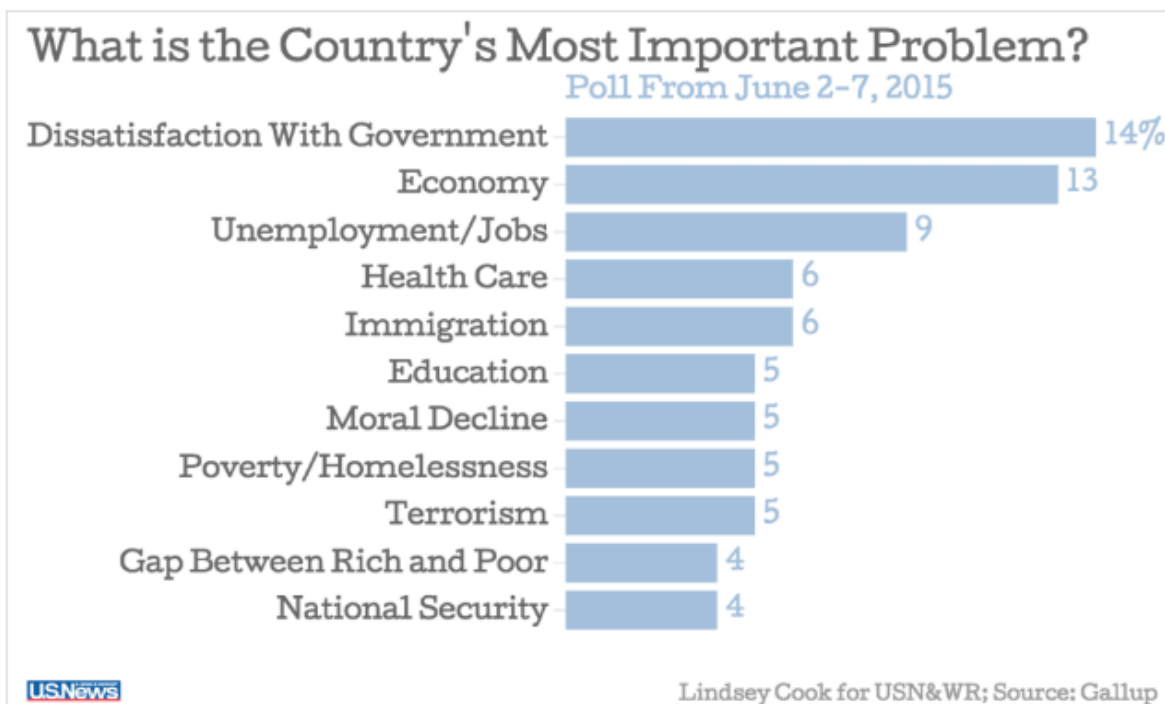
## 1. Overview of the 2016 Presidential Elections

In early presidential elections and debates, candidates' agenda and future plans were key elements that would attract the voters' attention. Basically, voters depend on the debates and television live shows with the candidates to get to know more about what the candidates are planning to bring new for the benefit of the nation. These criteria would contribute in their decision about which of the contenders is the most appropriate selection. However; in recent elections, people and the media coverage went to other dimensions including the private lives of the candidates. Attempting to deliver the public with all details related to them. Yet, people became less interested in the big issues of their daily life which are needed more to be known and which really needs to be the only matter to decide which candidate to select.

The 2016 American presidential elections were the 58th quadrennial elections. The elections were held on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 between the Republican businessman Donald Trump against the Democratic former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for presidency office; and the Republican Indiana Governor Mike Pence against U.S Senator from Virginia Tim Kaine for the vice-president office. Trump took office as the 45th President, and Pence as the 48th Vice President, on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Both candidates; Clinton and Trump, were the clear winners in the 2016 primaries and caucuses. And they were officially nominated during the two parties' conventions in July. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are still considered as two of the most unpopular candidates in modern American history (US Election 2016 ...).

Cook in the U.S News and World Report website stated that the most important issue of the 2016 elections was that of immigration. The importance had increased even more after the announcement of the elections' results and Trump taking the office. Immigration had always been a problem at all levels in the United States; especially, at the social and economic levels.

Yet, the economic plans for the nation and “the way government operates in Washington” were the key issues that decided the winner of the presidency. The figure 2 below showed the percentages of citizens about what issues they think they were important for the country.

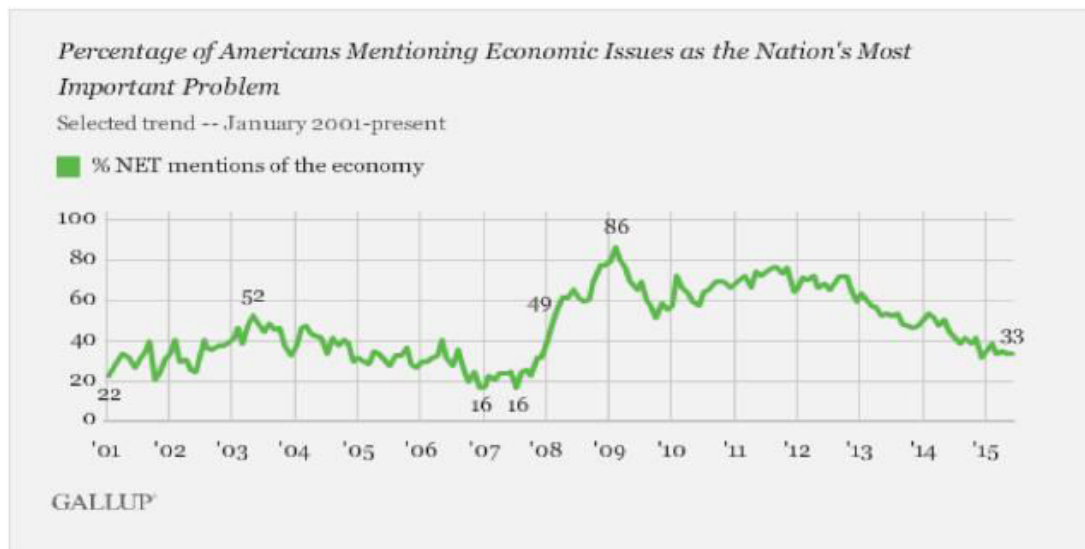


LINDSEY COOK FOR USN&WR; SOURCE: GALLUP

Fig. 2. What Is the Country's Most Important Problem? Gallup. Web. 12 June 2017.

Cook made a survey with American citizens asking them an open-ended-question about the key issue of the nation for them without relating the question to the elections. As figure 2 shows, people are concerned with dissatisfaction on the government more than economic status. And this is unusual since the economy had always been the main interest of the public in the past.

The figure 3 gives the variation of the extent to which economic issue matter for national interest from the years 2001 to 2015.



COURTESY GALLUP

Fig. 3. Percentage of Americans Mentioning Economic Issues as the Nation's Most Important Problem. Courtesy Gallup. Web. 12 June 2017.

Figure 3 provided by Cook shows the percentages of people who believed that economic matters are the main issue for them. The years are organized from 2001 till the year 2015. In 2001, there are only 22 percent of people who believed that economy is the major issue. The lowest percentage is 16 percent in 2007 to 2008. Yet from 2008, the percentage starts to increase till it reaches 86 percent in 2009. Since 2009, the number of people is decreasing; however, it is still higher than before.

According to Haskins and Sawhill in the Brookings website, there were eight national issues that should be addressed in the 2016 presidential elections' campaigns. He collected a combination of papers written by a group of scholars in one book to identify those issues. Those issues in his opinion were the Economic Growth, Taxes, The National Debt, Health, Defense, The Financial System, Economic Mobility, and Infrastructure. What was most noted at these proposed issues was that most of them were related to the financial and economic status of the country. They believed that the candidates should put their objectives and agenda



clear for the citizens about how they would reduce debts and increase the revenues (Eight Big Issues ...).

Patrick Healy stated in his article at the New York Times website that the most prominent key fact from the presidential debates is that both parties do not just disagree on solutions to domestic and foreign policy issues, they do not even agree on what are the significant issues are. He reinforced his view with what Mr. Kushner said: “Issues facing the country are always complicated,” he added, “but talking about them calmly and clearly is a crucial part of leadership.” This indicates that it is no problem to disagree on what issues are of significance, because at this point it is the role of the candidate and his ability to attract the public opinion for it and give it a major position.

## **2. Donald Trump Vs Hilary Clinton**

### **2.1. First Debate**

In the Telegraph News website a collection of critics gave their opinions and analysis to the first presidential debate that was managed between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. It took place on Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016; in Hofstra University, Hempstead in New York City. Those views had explained and decided who won and who lost the first debate. The article was made by seven reporters five of them believed that it was Hillary Clinton who won the first debate, whereas, only two reporters believed that it was Donald Trump who won.

Those who thought it was Clinton who won the debate said that her performance was solid and strong with her eyebrows raised in comparison to her opponent. She did not waste any opportunity to attack him while he was just “prone” to those sharp claims provided by Mrs. Clinton. Reporter Harriet Alexander described Clinton as being confident and very pleasing to her team with whom she worked very hard to be well prepared. What was most noted about

her was that she acted like someone who was enjoying the debate, and this had manipulated Mr. Trump many ways (Who Won (and Lost) the First ...).

Nevertheless, those who believed that Donald Trump was clever and won the audience argued that the claims were loose and most of them are not real. They believed that voters lean to his side because he was spontaneous and had a brilliant way of contradictions. He was the kind of an unexpected candidate on the fight stage. However, Stanley stated about his way of debating that it was “the role he was born to play” simply. The audience became more eager and excited to know what he was about to say or do next and what he would be doing as a president. At the start, he attacked Clinton at the begin for her refusal to support “the law and order”, and the way he was confident when he discussed his economic plans and criticized the trade deals; which according to his experience was harmful for the economy of the nation, might be reasonable and repetitive at the minds of undecided voters. (Who Won (and Lost) the First . . .).

The figure shown below gave the polls on citizens, who had watched the first televised debate between Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Trump, about who was the winner of the debate.

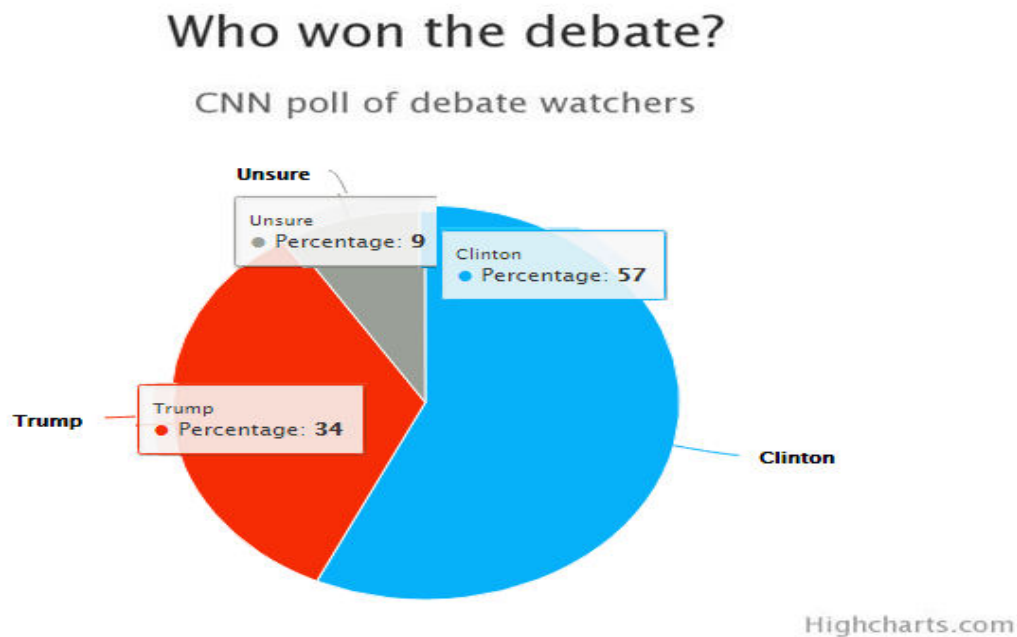


Fig. 4. Who Won the Debate? The Telegraph News. 27 Sept. 2016. Web. 12 June 2017.

Figure 4 shows the percentages of polls about who won the first televised presidential debate between both candidates. The results show that 57 percent of people agree that Hillary Clinton won the first debate against Trump who have only 34 percent.

## 2.2. Second Debate

The second debate took place on Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016; in Longwood University, Farmville in Virginia. It was not so different from the first one only in few actions. In the first one, there was saluting and handshakes. However, in the second they just had saluted each other with no handshaking. Donald Trump in this debate was attacked by sexual charges and other claims and rumors; yet, Clinton was not safe from attacks as well. He accused her for being offensive to her husband. President Trump performed in a satisfying way for his loyal corroborators. While Clinton was trying to keep him under her hand; she was the one who avoided the handshaking in addition she scarcely interrupted him and used harsh words

instead, especially when she spoke about the prominent Republicans who were about to give up on him and remove him from being a candidate (Here's Who Won the Second . . .).

The confrontation had ended with somehow good words, in that, they were asked to say something good that they respected about each other. Clinton said that she respects his children and that they are “incredibly able and devoted”, she thinks that this says a lot about Donald Trump. She said that she nearly does not agree with anything he said or did, but she did respect him for his children. on the other side, Trump considered what she said about his children as a nice compliment, he was not sure that she meant a compliment of that but he had always been proud of his children and so he considered that as a compliment! He also said that he respected Clinton for her strength and respected her tenacity for never giving up. Trump additionally stated: “She is fighter, I disagree with much of what she is fighting for, I do disagree with her judgment and many cases, but she does fight hard and she doesn't quite and she doesn't give up, and I consider that to be a very good trade” (Second debate video).

### **2.3. Third Debate**

The third presidential debate of 2016 was scheduled on Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. It took place in university of Nevada, Las Vegas in Nevada State. The format of the third debate was decided to be identical to the first debate. CNN Polling Director, Jennifer Agiesta, published in the CNN Politics website an article entitled “Hillary Clinton wins the third presidential debate, according to CNN/ORC poll.” She argued that Clinton won the concluding debate according to the poll of the audience. This victory was the key element that decided which candidate made the winning campaign. Actually, she believed that it was because the undecided voters will be monitored with the last performance, arguments, and plans they had

seen during the three presidential debates of 2016. She stated:

Overall, 52% who watched tonight's matchup thought Clinton did the best job, to the 39% that thought Trump did. That's a tighter margin than in the first two debates. After the first debate, 62% of those who watched said Clinton won, 27% Trump, followed by a 57% Clinton to 34% Trump margin for the town hall debate held October 9.

Besides, she provided other statistics about the positions and decisions in the issues posed in the debate in relation to the voters' interests, and which candidate they feel attached with:

Half of voters (50%) who watched Wednesday's debate said Clinton agreed with them more on the important issues, while 47% thought Trump did, but by wide margins, they thought Clinton had the better understanding of the issues, 61% to 31%, and was better prepared to handle the presidency, 59% to 35%.

The debates were very dramatic and dynamic for watchers, some moments were expected and many others were surprising at a high level. Hillary Clinton was well prepared, and avoided any wrong foot to the extent that she looked ideal in comparison to Donald Trump. Yet, he had a strong temper was his ally. Despite all the good work and long hours if not months of preparations made by Hillary Clinton, it was Mr. Donald Trump who won the elections and, to many citizens, the debates too.

### **3. How Did Donald Trump Win the Elections?**

Many people and even reporters had been wondering about who might have voted for President Donald Trump. In the article published by the BBC News; it is believed that Mr. Trump was supported by angry, white men, who were secretly or openly racists. According to some statistics provided by the BBC News website, 58 percent of the white voters and 53

percent of the men had chosen Donald trump. However, Hillary Clinton had 88 percent of black voters, 65 percent of Hispanics, and 54 percent of women of the votes. Yet, Donald trump had challenged and smashed all anticipations and won the electoral votes against Hillary Clinton. To some extent the results of the elections were strange to everybody (Reality Check . . .).

In the CNN Politics website, Agiesta had argued that according to the polls results of the CNN and the ORC Hillary Clinton was the winner of the third debate. Watchers were split on two groups about who was more truthful and reliable to the office during the debate. In the first debate, 47 percent said that it was Trump and 46 percent thought that it was Clinton. The result was close in many cases; yet, in the second debate, 53 percent was for Clinton and 40 percent was for Trump. The Difference was very clear and proved that Clinton was a winner even at the third debate. Moreover, polls showed that 52 percent of the watchers believed that Clinton was the best performer and 39 percent said Trump was.

Mrs. Clinton was a heavy and solid competitor for President Trump. Clinton was intelligent and harsh in the three debates. Yet, results of the elections had shown that the debating skill were not enough this time. Her preparations were based on convincing voters that Trump was unfit to run the office. People believe that this strategy brought about some disadvantages for her campaign. Citizens were unable to decide or understand what plans she was going to make if she became president. She focused on destroying Trump's reputation and provided less information about her agenda. In fact, even the voters who supported her or those who were loyal to the Democratic Party were unable to say "what exactly she stood for and what she planned to do, or what her legacy might be." However, it was true who Trump was not at the same spot with many Americans but he was clear and straightforward (Why Donald . . .).

Kreig had published in the CNN Politics website 24 theories about how Donald Trump did win the 2016 elections. Among the long list of possibilities and theories, the shared one with other researchers, like Michael Moore, was the theory that he won because of the white racist men and women. Angry white men were unable to accept the fact that a woman will be a president after 240 years of man rule over the presidency. In addition, to the white racists who wanted the white supremacy in the president's seat. Those racists were hoping to succeed in what was claimed to be "take our country back." Women at this side will be less minor group in their society along with their white companions.

### **3.1. The Impact of the Debates on Voters**

Julian Zelizer published in the CNN Politics Website that presidential debates of the 2016 fall were be different from those of the preceding elections. He argued that presidential debates were no more influential on voters' decision if one compares the polls' results before and after the debates. Nevertheless, he expected that the Clinton vs. Trump debate will be of big impact and importance. He believed previous American candidates or presidents had never been anything like Donald Trump; so, maybe it was one of the reasons he won the elections. Zelizer expected that the debates between both 2016 candidates would be very "intense, dramatic and contentious"; hence, voters were disturbed and anxious about the debates. Thus, he thinks that the polls will have unexpected results than ever. In addition, he mentioned other factors which will contribute in increasing the significance of these debates. These factors were; the internet's effect, the celebrity factor, and the fact the debates became a battle field for both to attack each other with all possible ways.

Anderson, in the Jamaica Observer Newspaper website, published an article to discuss the possible impact that may be caused by the presidential debates on the voters' decision while voting. He described the Clinton vs. Trump debates as an unusual, angry and bitter. He stated

that it was very different from any other US presidential debates. He believed that these debates were close to the ones shown in the Third World countries; in that, the format and the way candidate attacked each other were not of a country like America. The only aim for which debaters had spent their efforts and time for was to succeed in the mudslinging game in which they were participating. The audiences watched those debates seeking to find out which candidate was the one who has the qualities of the president of what both Clinton and Trump refer to” a great country”. Anderson emphasized the fact that the mudslinging strategy used by both candidates was not helpful for them as much as it harmed them. Thus, debaters might lose the support of the decided and the undecided voters.

Prokop in the Vox website was no exception to discuss the issue debates impact when it came to voters’ decision. He argued that there was evidence that the presidential debates do have an impact. In fact, the difference of such debates was not that big; however, it still matters since there was a shift in the results of the polls before and after the debates’ shows on TV. Even if it was a slit change in percentages, but in a close race; like the one between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, the impact was very important. And the candidate who was a winner with slit difference before the debate may become a looser if anything wrong happened during the debate. Thus, debaters should never ignore those debates even if the impact was not of a considerable amount.

### **3.2. The Role of Media**

The 2016 elections had become very attractive inside and outside the country because it had always been the center of media coverage. All kinds of the social media were reporting everything related to the elections and debates exclusively, in that, it attracted the attention of categories of followers. Guest in the ADWEEK website published an article about the nature of relationship between media and politics; he argued that the candidates and social media



have a double-edge relationship. Politician used the different types of social media to get close as far as possible to the citizens everywhere. And the social media had developed a special interest in politics and elections more than it used to be. He added that in the recent elections' campaign, it was Donald Trump who won the social media. He gave another dimension for this tool usage. It needs many skills to do the blooming caused by President Trump on social media.

According to Kapko in the CIO website, the social media especially the Twitter and Facebook had played an exceptionally hug role in the 2016 presidential campaign. The social media had some business problem and numerous disadvantages; though, they had shaped a political conversation and covered elections more successfully than any precedent political events in the history of the United States. Clinton and Trump used the Twitter to power up and motivate citizens even those who were less interested in voting. He added what Irina Raicu, an internet ethics program director, said about the importance of social media: "We have also seen that social media can enable the easy, fast and widespread dissemination of misinformation."

#### **4. Why Did Hillary Clinton Lose the Elections?**

The Democrats were terrified and surprised of losing the elections. The big question was: how did Clinton lose the race? The party members blamed all circumstances but never blamed Clinton or themselves. They suspected that Russia was attempting to manipulate the elections. Actually, Aaron Bandler in the Daily Wire mentioned few reasons that could possibly be the reason why she lost the race. The first, Hillary was a awful candidate. She was the only one who could lose the elections against someone like Trump. She was surrounded by scandals and corruption very badly. The second, the FBI director James Comey's announcement about the probe on Clinton's e-mails, which he wanted to do after the elections but he changed his

mind. Clinton thought that his action led large number of undecided voters to vote for Trump eventually. Finally, she was confident that she would be the next president of the United States; thus, she took a break for a whole month during the campaign. In fact, the reasons for her loss were too many to be limited by any expert.

According to Ed Smith in the *New Statesman* magazine, Donald Trump did not win the elections. Simply, it was Hillary Clinton who lost them. He argued that Clinton deserved to lose because there was nothing brilliant of what she said. There were no specific plans or agenda. While Trump said three memorable things out loud: “less immigration, a new protectionism and more infrastructure spending.” In addition, he had plenty of financial and economic plans for the benefit of the country; since he had long years of experience in the field. It was true that Donald Trump became as Smith called him “gleeful ungentlemanliness”. He has rarely showed up politeness on TV. He was always been harsh and rude in many ways. However, the elections were not a fight between the good and the evil; they were between “vulgarity and devious vulgarity.”

Hillary Clinton had publicly given up the presidency to Donald J. Trump , admitting the pain of her loss in the race. She wanted her supporters to accept the reality that Mr. Trump became the next president of the country. She wanted them to be open minded and accept him as the leader by saying: “We owe him an open mind and a chance to lead.” She described the winning of Trump in the elections as a “painful loss,” she said: “This is painful, and it will be for a long time,” Clinton had nothing to do left but to wish for President Trump the good luck and the success to be faithful to the country and to all Americans (Highlights of Hillary’s . . .).

## 5. Outcome of the Presidential Elections: Fears and Protests

It was Donald Trump who won the 2016 presidential elections, and became the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. As published by the Globe and Mail website, he had 306 Electoral College votes; however, Hillary Clinton had only 232 votes. His supporters were celebrating in the next morning while others were deeply disappointed and shocked because they thought that what he was not fit for the responsibility he was about to take. Markets and streets were boomed by the news of the result in the next morning and social media was no exception. President Trump received congratulations from the former President Barack Obama in addition to the presidents of other countries. The following figure shows the results of the 2016 presidential election.

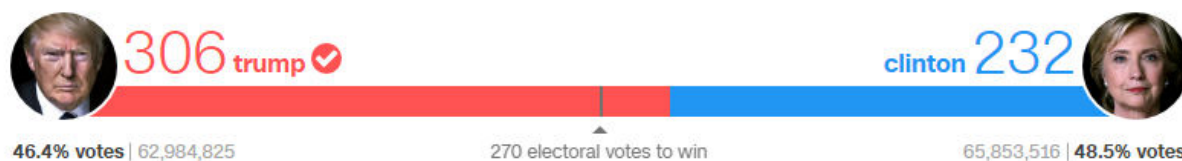


Fig. 5. Presidential Results of 2016. The CNN Politics. Web.11 June 2017.

Figure 5 represents the results of the 2016 presidential elections. Donald Trump wins the race by 306 Electoral votes while Hillary Clinton have 232 votes. It also gives the number of people who voted for each of the candidates and the percentages. Surprisingly, Donald Trump becomes the president after a long fight for presidency against the tough Hillary Clinton.

After the announcement of the results of the 2016 elections, there have been protests against Donald Trump. Thousands of people, who were against the newly assigned president, were unsatisfied at all. As a result, few protests turned to violent rebellions. Lemieux, in the Conversation website, had published a research on those protests and their origins and causes. He believed that for the purpose of understanding it, he should examine the public

expectations at different stages. The first stage was the negative perception on candidates; candidates along with the campaign were just focusing on making their competitor look illegitimate for the presidency office. The second stage was the false perception of victory; mainly, when all analysts and researchers expected that it would be Clinton who was going to win the elections.

The third perception was the perception of stolen elections. And this had caused anxiety among all citizens. Supporters of Hillary Clinton received the news in a big surprise believing the claims of Clinton and her party that the elections were stolen by Trump and that there were secret hands behind her loss. The fourth perception was the perception of competency. In other words, all the Americans; either political experts or not, expected that Donald Trump and his government would not be competent to assume responsibility for the country. Thus, he believed that the reason for those protests was strongly related to the perceptions he proposed, which step by step lead to the reactions of people in the streets.

The 2016 presidential elections were again another central event in the history of the United States politics. The media was always there covering the news to citizens and people around the world. The candidates were solid and considered to part of the most hated candidates in the country. They went through series of televised debates in which they attacked each other at all levels especially the personal one. People were confused about who might become the next president. The majority of citizens were expecting Clinton to win the race; however, Trump was using new tactics to attract the votes which were different from those of his opponent. Thus, he broke the expectations and won with slight difference.

Many reasons were stated by political researchers and critics to explain the results of the election, but many people were unsatisfied. The reactions of people who were against Donald Trump were not kept inside their houses. They were taped on videos published on the social

media. Also, they went out to the streets protesting against him mainly because of his decisions concerning the immigrants and the Muslim people living in America.

## Conclusion

The American presidential debates did not exist in early times of the US political system. Before the 1960 elections, debates were contempt and people were not interested in them. In fact, they had no role to play at any elections campaign. Before the television age, people; politicians; critics or researchers saw that there was no use from them at all. However, in the mid-1900s people started to buy TV and media was about to make a historical jump at the field of politics. In the year 1960, the country was centralized on a very big event that made politics and campaigns change forever.

Americans were engaged at the presidential race between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. Both candidates were invited to perform in the first televised presidential debate in the United States. Nixon was not very much convinced with it but his assistants and many of the party members encouraged him to accept it; whereas, Kennedy had welcomed the idea. Actually, the debates were later called the great debates for many reasons. At that time, Kennedy was not very known as Nixon used to be, but the series of debates had a major role for both candidates and considered as a revolutionary step to the country. Not every American family had televisions at their houses; however, many of them had watched those debates because the idea was innovative at that time.

In fact, people were surprised of the power which the debates had during the 1960 presidential elections. Kennedy had benefited as much as he could from these debates. As it was widely believed, he was not very famous or popular but these debates had offered all what he needed to get to people. He was prepared well for these debates and showed a solid and strong character that attracted many people, especially those who had watched the debates on TV. His performance was powerful and his efforts had lasted for very long time. Nevertheless, Nixon was not very good performer in front of the TV at the first debate. People

who listened to the debates on the radio were very convinced that he was going to be the next winner of the office. Yet, the results of the elections proved something very different of what was expected.

Kennedy was the winner of the elections of the 1960. The credit of this victory went to the role played the debates. The good preparation and use of that opportunity went back to Kennedy with the advantage of winning the race. After the elections, Nixon had acknowledged the impact of the debates and their influence on the voters' decision. He learned a lesson which he would never forget. Performance, preparation and the strong charisma were among the important factors for a debater to succeed. He must have many characteristics that would make voters view him as qualified and trust him to be in office taking care of the well being of the country.

Media had proved its power and influence in politics. People after this innovation became interested more in getting most of the information they needed about political events or candidates from television rather than any other type of media. Moreover, people became more interested in politics due to media and television. All categories of the society became exposed to the political updating more easily than early time before TV. Nowadays, media became more developed than ever and people became more connected to each other because the internet facilitated getting news and data more than television did in the 1960s. The purpose of the broadcasting debates was not only to make the old people informed, it was also to attract the youth too. Media was an important element which connected the citizens with their candidates; yet, audiences should be selective and critical about what they receive from this too.

The presidential elections of 2016 were no exception in making a historical event in the American politics. The candidates of this campaign were considered among the most hated

candidates of the United States politicians and the most interesting ones. The debates they went through were full of scandals and mudslinging on each other. What debates were made for the first place was to give the citizens a live and more natural image about their candidates to facilitate for them the process of decision making by casting their ballots. Candidates were supposed to give general ideas about their future plans for the well being of the country and talk about specific issues that are of national interest. However, in the debates of 2016 candidates were focusing on how to make people believe that their opponent was not legitimate for their trust. Yet, the results were nationally and internationally surprising and beyond all expectations.

Both presidential elections in this research were historical and unprecedented. The winners were unexpected for the citizens due to many reasons which were different for each case and its circumstances. The debates in both races were dramatic and dynamic each time the contesters showed up on television. However, they were different in many aspects. In the 1960 elections, the candidates were controlling themselves in front of the camera and behind the scenes. They had a relationship full of respect towards each other with no problems or hatred. They shaped a model for other politician proving that presidential competitors can be friends despite their distinctive political affiliations.

Moving to the 2016 elections, they were not only dramatic; actually, they were called epic too. The candidates were had no control on themselves in front of the camera. They had no friendship or any sort of good relations with each other. They attacked each other at every occasion they had with no respect to any personal affairs. Clinton and her assistants spent their full time to disclose all the hidden secrets of Trump in an attempt to convince voters that he was not trustworthy. The debates had been deviated from the real purpose they were made for. They became a stage mudslinging rather than discussing the issues of national interest.



American televised presidential debates were one of the most exciting events in the elections process. Many people prepare themselves to watch them to get more information than what they want to know. After the debates, people spent many hours of thinking and discussing their content everywhere. The impact of these debates was real and proved in many concrete evidences provided by the polls of many companies and commissions. Either it was a big or small change in the polls' results before and after any debate, still they do matter. They became a double-edged weapon for the party's candidates and members. So, candidates and their assistants gave significance to these debates and prepared themselves to perform in the best way they could to increase the numbers of the supporters.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

2nd Article of the Constitution

Article II

Section 1.

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

The Congress may determine the Time of choosing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

## Appendix B

### Elections Amendments

#### 12th Amendment

#### Amendment XII

The Electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate; The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted;--The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice.... The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed, and if no person have a majority,

then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President to the United States.

## **Appendix C**

19th Amendment

Amendment XIX

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

## **Appendix D**

20th Amendment

Amendment XX

Section 1.

The terms of the President and Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

## Section 2.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

## Section 3.

If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

## Section 4.

The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

## **Appendix E**

22nd Amendment

Amendment XXII

Section 1.

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

## **Appendix F**

23 rd Amendment

Amendment XXIII

Section 1.

The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in



addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

## **Appendix G**

24th Amendment

Amendment XXIV

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

## **Appendix H**

25th Amendment

Amendment XXV

Section 1.

In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.

## Section 2.

Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.

## Section 3.

Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

## Section 4.

Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written

declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. There upon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

## **Appendix I**

26th Amendment

Amendment XXVI

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

<<https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/provisions.html>>

## Appendix J

Top ten highest rated presidential debates since 1960 to present

RANK	YEAR	NETWORK	DATE	CANDIDATES	VIEWERS P2+  (MILLIONS)
1	1980	ABC, CBS, NBC	Oct. 28	Carter - Reagan	80.6
2	1992	ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN	Oct. 15	Bush - Clinton - Perot	69.9
3	1976	ABC, CBS, NBC	Sept. 23	Ford - Carter	69.7
4	1988	ABC, CBS, NBC	Oct. 13	Bush - Dukakis	67.3
5	1984	ABC, CBS, NBC	Oct. 21	Reagan - Mondale	67.3
6	1992	ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN	Oct. 19	Bush - Clinton - Perot	66.9
7	1988	ABC, CBS, NBC	Sept. 25	Bush - Dukakis	65.1
8	1984	ABC, CBS, NBC	Oct. 7	Reagan - Mondale	65.1
9	1976	ABC, CBS, NBC	Oct. 6	Ford - Carter	63.9
10	1976	ABC, CBS, NBC	Oct. 22	Ford - Carter	62.7

**Note: There were no televised Presidential debates for the years 1972, 1968, and 1964.**

<<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2008/top-ten-presidential-debates-1960-to-present.html>>