CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Communication has been given considerable attention in nations where socio-economic improvement are of extreme urgency, ‘An expanding media system’, Lerner argued, spreads attitudes favorable to social change and through other mechanism these ideas will promote development. Increased literacy is assumed to increased media exposure which in turn should stimulate participation and voting’.

In developing countries like India, information has come to occupy a central place in efforts to improve living conditions. Information disseminated by the mass media and other channels is used for different purposes including distributing political propaganda. The communication system can hold a political system at its mercy and the character and control of its mass media and its system of communication can decide the type of political system. Mass media is a social institution and its functional character will differ according to the political, economic and social structure of the country.

Media in a democratic society is the most important liaison between the government and the citizens. Mass media has always been exquisitely used as a political communication tool by the governments to reach the citizens and vice versa, there by molding the perception and also to achieve goodwill among the citizens for the continuation of rulers in power.

Political Communication has broadly defined by Denton & Woodward as pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision) and official sanctions. (Mac Nair, 1995).
All forms of governments, functions through a process of political communication. In a democratic society the political communication process is more peaceful and has more public participation. The significant elements of political communication process are the political organizations, media and citizens. Among these elements, the mass media is the most essential tool of political communication. Mass media act as a liaison between the political organizations and the citizens of the state. Mass media directly influences the voting behavior of the electorates (the citizens) by informing the deliberations of the politicians in the parliament (law making body) and the policies undertaken by them as political actors.

First element is the political actors those individual who inspire organizations and institutional means to influence the decision making process. They seek to do this by attaining institutional political power in government or constituent assemblies, through which preferred policies can be implemented. The second element in political communication is to persuade the target audience, without which no political message will not have any relevance. Media organization is the third element in political communication.

In a democratic country like India the private press helps to mould the opinion of voters. It remains by far the most important public opinion creating agency particularly during elections. In India the role of the press as a political educator has been significant because of the prestige it has come to acquire from its part in the freedom struggle. By arousing public interest in issues of the day it has made people realize the value of voters and the desirability of voting and thereby contributed to a large extent to political participation and political responsibility.

Lenin defined the press, the collective agitator, propagandist and political organizer, the communist parties’ voice to the people. The press said Stalin, ‘is the prime instrument through which the party speaks daily, hourly with the working class. Press may equally be a powerful instrument of persuasion for political indoctrination. It is recognized that the relationship between the press and the government is an extremely important relationship in political process.
In free societies, press provides a forum for the discussion of political issues. The political role of the press in underdeveloped countries is important, for it can act as a unifying factor in a country lacking national cohesion. It can contribute to the growth of democratic institutions and political stability, crucial to national development. It can also act as a medium for voicing community objectives and raising civic consciousness, which are the basis of democracy and social advancement. It can also be a conduit for flow of ideas from the leader to the people and from people to government. The Press becomes an instrument of political, social and economic progress.

Thomas Jefferson’s speeches and lectures show a sincere belief in the open society and political communication. He believed that the people had common sense and reliable judgment and if well informed will soon correct them. Politicians might offer wisdom, but the trust and best insight to be found in the people themselves. The way to keep the people from making mistake was to give them full information about politics and government through the press.

The foremost objective of the press in a democracy is to preserve and strengthen the democratic way of life. The press should be directed at inculcating among the people faith in democratic institutions, such as free and fair elections, rule of law, independence of the judiciary, freedom of the press and secular character of the state. A rapidly developing economy within the framework of political democracy demands the identification of the press with the national goals. Political democracy is characterized by popular sovereignty exercised through free elections by the rule of law and by respect for civil liberties.

The functioning of governmental institutions have been a concern of all forms of states; be it democratic, autocratic and of monarchic systems. The rulers of the nation-states have always been in touch with the citizens since they, are the most important part of any sovereign state. It depends upon the feedback from the citizens that determines the success or failure of a ruler.

In a democratic society, the public has the freedom to choose their representatives and elect them to the law making body like the legislative and
parliamentary institutions. In comparison with the iron fist approach of autocratic and communist governments, the uniqueness of the democratic nations are its liberal press. All democratic nations have given the liberty for press to function in a more judicious, responsible, law abiding and objective manner. Media in the democratic nations enjoy freedom to express its opinions on the government policies, unlike in autocratic states where it faces stringent censorship regulations.

**Role of Media in political decision making:**

Research has proved that the media have a central role in politics and political decision making and the communication has much to contribute to understanding of political behavior. The study of political communication and its impact dependent on the data and analysis of many different fields and disciplines. It is believed that the media have large, important and distinctive role in affecting the political decisions of the voting public. The emphasis on the centrality of the media in politics is a major contribution of communication and media to the understanding of political behavior

**Aims and Objectives of the study**

The present study intends to explore the impact of political communication on voting behavior in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu.

1. To find out the impact and the role of media, especially newspapers and television on the political decision making process (voting) in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

2. To find out the impact of election manifesto on voting behavior of the people in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

3. To find out the views of the voters on the newspaper trend of the misuse of news columns for the purpose of personality cult than for development purpose.

4. To find out the impact of demographic factors on various policies implemented in the Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
5. To find out the most preferred political leader to rule Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

6. To find out the impact of socio-economic policies implemented by the contemporary governments and political parties on voting behavior of the voters in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

7. To find out the impact of election campaigns on voting behavior during election.

8. To find out the objectivity of newspapers and television channels in matters of political news reporting in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

9. To find out the impact of socio-economic, political and religious issues, development programmes, and its political communication through newspapers and television channels and its impact on the voting behavior of the voters in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Limitations of the study:

Though various classical studies have conducted on the effects and impact of mass media on voting behavior in American context and in the other developed countries, only very few efforts were made in India. Moreover even the countries which have conducted the voting studies were unable to identify the real factors which affected the voting behavior of individuals due to the absence of adequate parameters to measure the complexity of political communication on voting behaviour.

The lack of adequate studies on the political communication and voting behavior in India also posed problems for the researchers to get adequate amount of literature for the present study.

In spite of all these limitations the researcher has taken pain to consult with research guide and several communication experts in the country at every stage of
the research procedure. Thus the researcher has tried to minimize the possible flaws of the study.

The empirical documentation of voting patterns began to accumulate after the World War II, known as ‘classic’ voting studies make a strong care for the impact of political communication on voting behavior.

The first of this evidence came from the surveys of voters that have considered as the landmarks in the empirical study of political behavior. Eric County, 1940 (Lazeresfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1948) and Elmira, New York, 1948 (Berelson, Lazaresfeld & McPhee, 1954). They had opportunities to examine the various influences on the political decision making of voters.

Despite the role of newspapers which conveyed the news of politics and public affairs to the public, their anxiously anticipated endorsements and the well-established place of commentators and news discussion forums on radio (Kobland, 1999), the authors concluded that influence of the mass media was slight. What mattered most was personal history, which had its strongest expression in party allegiance people repeatedly, voted for the candidates of the same party.

Four out of five voters made up their minds before presidential campaigns began (Katz 1971). This further protected the individuals from external opinions, whether from media or associates. Maverick voters tended to fall in to three categories. One group was made up of the politically unanchored, who were uncertain and undecided while usually uninformed and largely uninterested in politics, and who often in the end would not vote.

The second group considered to be prodigals, who frequently reverted during the campaign from a choice different in party from those they had voted previously. The third group was made up of those who persisted in their defection.

People usually discussed politics with those similar in outlook and perspective and thus these experiences usually reinforced initial beliefs. Later research (Katz Lazarsfeld, 1955) recorded that information from the media often was filtered through others. These opinion leaders usually shared same outlook and
perspective as those with whom they conversed. The result was that most of the information reaching the individual ordinarily had a agreeable and reinforcing cast.

As Kraus and Davis (1976) insightfully observe in their extraordinarily comprehensive examination of the empirical evidence on the effects of mass communication on political behavior, the mass media largely were perceived as conveyors of events whose importance lay in their inherent characteristics and not in their construction or framing the media or in the fact that without the media they would secure the attention of far fewer children and adolescents. Thus the importance of the presidential election campaigns and the first televised presidential debates between Kennedy and Nixon in 1960 were all interpreted as having some role in political socialization and drawing the attention and interest of young persons to political events, but they were not seen as particularly representing phenomenon attributable largely to the mass media (Eston & Dennis, 1969, Hess & Torney, 1967 (Kraus and Davis, 1976)

The Media Effect Research:

The media effect has a natural history shaped by the circumstances of time and place. It has also been influenced by several environmental factors, including the interests of governments and law makers, changing technology, the events of history, the activities of the pressure groups and propagandist, the ongoing concerns of public opinion and even the findings of social science. From the turn of the century till 1930s, powerful effects were credited to media to shape opinion and belief, to change habits of life and mould behavior more or less according to the will of their controllers. (Bauer & Bauer, 1960) This was not based on scientific research but on observation of the press and of the film and radio that intruded into many aspects of everyday life as much as public affairs.

The era of research into media effects continued until the early 1960s. Many separate studies were carried out into the effect of different types of content and media. Hovland (1949) for instance, reported a series of large scale experimental studies that assessed the value of using film material to ‘indoctrinate’ American military recruits to support for Second World War.
Star and Hughes (1950) reported a campaign designed to improve public support for the UN. Lasarsfeld et al (1944) and Berelson et al (1954) initiate a long tradition of investigating the effectiveness of democratic election campaigns. The effect research continued to the research into the harmful effects of media, especially television on children when it arrived in the 1950s. (Kraus and Davis, 1976)

Over the course of time, the nature of research changed, as methods developed and evidence and theory suggested new kind of variables. Researchers began to differentiate possible effects according to social and psychological characteristics. The outcome of this kind of this research was dissolution of the media effect. (E.g. Berelson, 1959).

The summary of research by Joseph Klapper, published in 1960 seems to set a seal on this phase of research. It concluded that mass communication does not ordinarily serve as necessary or sufficient cause of audience efforts, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors (1960). It is stated that the failure of research to find powerful effects could be well be attributed to the complexity of the process and the in adequacy of research design and methods.

**Powerful media effect discovered:**

There was plenty of contemporary evidence of circumstantial nature that media could indeed have important social effects and be an instrument for existing social and political power.

In relation to public opinion effects Lang & Lang (1981) argue that minimal effect conclusion is only one particular interpretation which has gained undue currency ( Chaufee & Hoehheimer, 1982) Lang & Lang Write: ‘ The evidence available by the end of the 1950s, even when balanced against some of the negative findings, gives no justification for an over all verdict of ‘media impotence’. (1981:659). In this view, the ‘no effect’ myth was due to a combination of factors. Most notable was undue concentration on a limited range of effects, especially short-term effects on individuals (for instance, during elections), instead of on broader social and institutional effects, and the undue weight given to two publications. Katz

One reason for the reluctance to accept a ‘minimal effect’ conclusion was the arrival of television in the 1950s and 1960s as a new medium with even more power of attraction and with major implications for social life.

Early investigation had relied heavily on a model in which correlations were sought between degree of exposure to media stimuli and measured changes of or variations in attitude, opinion, information or behavior, taking account of numerous intervening variables.

The renewal of effect research was marked by a shift of attention towards long term change, towards cognitions rather than attitude, affect and towards collective phenomenon such as climates of opinion, structures of belief definition of social reality ideologies cultural patterns and institutional forms of media. Attention also focused on intervening variables of context disposition and motivation. Effect research benefited from growing interest in how media organizations proceed and shaped ‘content’ before it was delivered to audiences.

Though there are many contributors for the newer theories of effect, it was Noelle-Neumann (1973) who coined the slogan return to the concept of powerful mass media which serves to identify this phase of research. The upsurge of critical theory in the 1960s also made an important contribution by crediting them with powerful legitimating and controlling effects.

Research on media texts and audiences and on media organizations in late 1970s brought new approaches to media effects known as ‘social constructionist’ (Gamson & Modigliani 1989), media having their most significant effects by constructing meanings.

The last phase of media research like the theory of ideology and false consciousness and the ideas established by Noelle-Neumann (1974) in her ‘Spiral of Silence’ theory, has two main thrusts. The first media construct social formations and secondly people in audience construct their own view of social reality and their
place in it, in interaction with the symbolic constructions offered by media. The approach allows both for the power of people to choose, with a terrain of continuous negotiation in between. It is a formulation of effect process well with mediation perspective.

**The effect of mass communication on political behavior**

Media’s role as political actors has been significant in recent times in a democratic society. But the press freedom in any society is impossible to be absolute. Freedom is a right that is accompanied by responsibility. At no time should journalists be allowed to use press freedom to engage in any activities that may harm other people and society. Because the infringement of other people’s rights through the abuse of press freedom occurs frequently in reality, the right and obligation of press freedom should be protected by law.

The Tiananmen Square case represents the epitome of China’s concerns over the ideas of press freedom particularly those associated with the western spirit and practices and the dangers they pose to the authority and legitimacy of the communist party. At one end, press freedom is considered universal, regardless of the country or the political system.

Press freedom is believed to be context sensitive, subject to determinants of political and social conditions specific to each country. In this view press freedom is not absolute but relative. It is delimited by social structure and national idiosyncrasies, such as historical experience, political philosophy and institutional development. The idealistic view press freedom as a cornerstone of democracy. The press in a democratic society is free to pursue truth, even though it may prove to be uncomfortable. On the other side press freedom is functional in that it has consequences for individuals, groups or society as a whole because of sensationalism, invasion of privacy, unethical methods of newsgathering or violation of national secrecy. It could be harmful and undesirable, depending on how press freedom can be used and its impact on the society.
In developing world, national progress and social stability should have priority over everything else, including people’s right to know and the media’s access to information. For example, in China press freedom is allowed as long as it is conducive to national development and social stability and cannot be used for unrealistic and distorted reports. This position is deeply rooted in the history of the press freedom, the relationship between the state and media and contemporary social and political commitments in China. In China the practice of press freedom differs with the western world.

Although John Stuart Mill’s idea of liberty ran deep in the western libertarian journalistic practices, Marx and his collaboration, Friedrich Engel’s greatly influenced the conceptual approach to politics and journalism in many third world nations.

Marxism- Leninism had a significant impact on communist revolution both in China and the former Soviet Union. The ideology guided all aspects of the society and paved the ground work for the relationship between state and mass media.

In his early years Marx advocated libertarian idea of complete press freedom. In these later years he became more authoritarian. For Marx, journalism was a weapon to resist the ruling political forces. The press was the instrument of the government and the communist party which owned and directed their functionaries. Press criticism was tolerated as long as it did not threaten the communist ideology.

Freedom was the freedom to support the system, to find and correct its flaws, and to protect and solidify the socialist ideology. Individuals and the mass media and other social institutions were subordinate to the state.¹ (McNair, 1995)

In legitimizing the communist party’s control over the media, Lenin asserted that a socialist consciousness could not emerge spontaneously among the working class. Rather correct consciousness had to be inculcated by the communist party; the party press could fulfill the role of ideology education, policy direction and mass mobilization. Further Lenin reflected absolute freedom of the press. The conception
of press freedom as a relative to political circumstance and ideological unity laid the cornerstone for the communist party in the former Soviet Union.

Evolution of television in 1950s as a popular medium in United States of America boosted the process of political communication, by mass media as political actors. It was estimated to have 25 million television viewers in 1952, during the time of presidential election campaigns. The success of Presidential candidate Eisenhower remains as a classic example of media as a political actor in the political communication process. The television channels had a live broadcast of ‘Eisenhower Answer’s America’ programme, which covered the political campaign of Eisenhower as presidential candidate. The televisions covered Eisenhower’s skill in answering the questions of the citizens on spot, compared to his opponent Adlai Stevenson. The campaign coverage by the media particularly on television had direct impact on the voting behavior of the electorates in U.S.

In India also, public is continuously exposed to political reports disseminated through various mass media channels. Hardly a day passes without political news in national, state and local newspapers, magazines and in television channels. Political issues, public policy debates, party papers, candidates’ news conference, presidential and prime ministerial speeches, deliberations of parliament and state, combine to form weekly diet for mass media consumption in India. A democratic society relies upon voter decisions to elect representatives and upon mass communication network to inform the electorate.² (Sidney Kraus & Dennis Davis, 1976)

In a democratic polity, it is a pre-requisite to have a well informed citizenry capable of taking independent positions on political questions. According to the classical model of liberal democracy, the chief responsibility for information is a key component. An individual acquires knowledge, develop attitudes and promote values through political communication. It determines his political activity, influences his political behavior, shapes his political understanding, widens his political spectrum and makes him confident to play an effective role in the political system.
During election time, the press gives more stress in communicating more political relevant information to the people. The whole election process is widely covered by the newspapers. The newspaper is both a leader in politics and a reporter of political phenomenon.

P.F. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues, who studied voting behavior in the Presidential Campaign of 1940 in the United States found to their surprise, very little evidence of direct influence of the mass media campaign of changing people’s votes. They found rather that the basic impact of the mass media campaign was to reinforce the original voting intentions, the people were selective, and they paid attention only to those messages in the newspapers and the radio which reflected their original pre-dispositions.

Lazarsfeld study showed that people voted in groups, i.e. the persons belonging to the same family, church, social group, tended to vote in the same manner. This homogeneity character of the social groups assures that people living in similar social and economic conditions are likely to share similar needs and interests. This was revealed by frequent reference to discussions rather than to radio or the newspapers when the respondents were asked to report their recent experience. This shows that face-to-face communication influences the individual more effectively than messages from mass media.

In any society political communication both expresses and sustains the institutions of governance, the polity itself (i.e., the political system), and the political culture reflected in the character of those institutions and the polity. During the period when the study of political communication was dominated primarily by the voter persuasion paradigm, institutional, systemic, and cultural variables figured in the calculations of scholars seeking to explain voting choices, not prominently. As political communication research moves beyond the study of individual decisions made in response to electoral campaigns and the factors surrounding them, scholars are examining communication by, between, and within political institutions, systems and cultures with increasing frequency.
Although the early generations of voting studies did not ignore political institution’s endeavoring to explain voting choices, it is fair to say that they offered political institutions short shift. As Key and Munger noted, the pioneering study The People’s Choice (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944) developed a “school of analysis that tends to divert attention from critical elements of electoral decision” toward a “focus of analysis under the doctrine of social determinism” that “comes to rest broadly on the capacity of the ‘nonpolitical group’ to induce conformity to its political standards by the individual voter” (Key & Munger, 1959, p.281). The result is to isolate the electorate from the “total governing process” and to “make electoral study a nonpolitical endeavor” (p.297). A perusal of subsequent voting studies indicates that institutional analysis played a relatively minor part in the construction of the voter persuasion paradigm.

As numerous ‘state of the art’ reviews have demonstrated, the variety of institutional factors hinted at by *The American voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960) that might affect voting have rarely been explored in their own right, let alone as mediators of political communication. Weisberg (1986) examined three decades of issues of three leading political science journals- the American Political Science Review, The Journal of Politics, and the American Journal of Political Science- to determine the principal content of articles dealing with voting. Of 39 articles published, 9 (23%) dealt with institutional factors in any way in the decade 1946 – 1955; 23 of 91 (25%) did so in the 1956-1965 decade; and 56 of 242 (23%) did so from 1966 to 1975.

**Systemic Conceptions of Political Communication**

Political Communication not only expresses and sustains political institutions; it is also a means of fulfilling the interests and functional requirements of those institutions within polities (i.e., larger political systems). Thus it is no surprise that scholars have argued that a useful way to study political communication is to focus upon function political communication plays within and across political systems. Coincident with the dominance of the voter persuasion paradigm in the 1950s and 1960s, and also very much influenced by the same
concern with mass media effects in individual behavior that was a part of that paradigm, there evolved among political scientists an interest in the role communication plays in political development. Stimulated by the organization and financial assistance of the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council, scholars prepared conceptual schemes and comparative analyses of political systems in areas of the world undergoing striking social and political changes in Asia, Africa and Latin America. (3) (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990).

Certainly one of the most influential of the conceptual frameworks generated for the comparative analyses of developing political systems was the work of Gabriel Almond. Almond (1960, p.7) defined the political system as

The system of interactions to be found in all independent societies which perform the functions of integrations and adaptation (both internally and vis-à-vis other societies) by means of the employment, or threat of employment, of more or less legitimate physical compulsion.

Such a political system- ‘the legitimate, order maintaining or transforming system in society’ – consists of ‘inputs’ related to claims for the employment of legitimate compulsion and ‘outputs’ related to the exercise of legitimate physical compulsion, ‘however remote the relationship may be,’ for example, public recreational facilities supported by taxation (Almond, 1960, p.7).

In his conceptual scheme Almond spelled out in detail the various functional requirements, both inputs and outputs that sustain the polity. Output functions include rule-making, rule application, and rule adjudication, interest aggregation, and a fourth- political communication. Almond made clear that all of the functions performed in the political system occur by means of communication. But, he argued, modern political systems develop differentiated means of communication separate from the structures performing other functions: ‘just because of the fact that all the political functions are performed by means of communication, political communication is the crucial boundary maintenance function’ (Almond, 1960, p.46). There are covert communications in all political institutions- legislatures,
bureaucracies, political parties, interest groups, and so on – but the differentiation of autonomous communication structures regulates and controls covert messages by publicity.

A set of differentiated political communication structures involved in boundary maintenance on behalf of a political system involves formal and informal means. Linking his conceptual scheme directly to the voter persuasion paradigm, Almond describes how early voting studies provided evidence that the emergence of the specifically modern media of mass communication had so captured the imaginations of scholars that they had developed a model of the communications process which counter posed a society or an electorate consisting of atomized individuals to a system of mass media which were assumed to monopolize the communication process. (Almond, 1960, p. 20) (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990)

It was, however, a ‘tribute to the faithful empiricism’ of their research that, when findings did not conform to the mass persuasion model, researchers uncovered the informal network of face-to-face communication, “the two-step flow of communication” (Katz, 1957), that rounded out the specification of the formal and informal structures that perform the political communication function in modern political systems.

Almond’s framework thus accorded a key and transcendent function to political communication in comparative analyses. It was applied by a generation of noted comparative scholars including Lucian Pye, Myron Weiner, James Coleman, Dankart Rustow, and George Blanksten. Pye (1963) and his colleagues, again under the auspices of the Committee on Comparative Politics, employed a compatible approach in a series of studies exploring the relationship of communication to political development throughout the world. Almond and Powell (1966) elaborated the overall Almond framework in light of empirical findings and Fagan (1966) did the same for the analysis of political communication within that framework.

Although certainly one of the most influential when viewed as stimulating a single program of comparative research in political communication, the Almond
framework was not the only one applied. Prior to Almond’s conceptualization, Lerner (1958) had drawn upon theories of social types, mass communication, and psychology to conduct his groundbreaking study of the role of mass communication in modernizing the Middle East, a study giving analytical status to the concept of empathy. And fashioning a more detailed framework encapsulated in the question, “Who says what, through what channels (media) of communication to whom and with what results?” (Smith, Lasswell & Casey, 1946), Doob (1961) reported research on political communication in African settings. (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990).

However, two systemic conceptions of political communication derived during the dominance of the voter persuasion paradigm should be singled out, because each attempted to go beyond the paradigm and each is implied in current calls to do so. One involved the theorizing of Karl Deutsch, who moved from the analysis of the role that communication plays in nation-building (1953) to construction of an elaborate framework for the study of all of politics as communication driven (1963). Instead of grounding his thinking in structural functional analysis per se, Deutsch derives his view of political systems from cybernetics theory. As noted, Almond recognizes that communication occurs in the performance of all input and output functions in a political system, but opts to examine as political communication a separate boundary-maintenance set of activities and the structures that perform them. For Deutsch all of governance consists of communication and control, defined in cybernetic ways, and thus the appropriate model of a political system is a communication model that captures the political process of steering, self-awareness, self-learning, self-closure, power and growth. Communication for Deutsch is not a political function but all of politics.

Political Culture: The Merging of Foundations, Messages, and Institutions in Political Communication Studies:

The initial publication in 1835 of Tocqueville’s classic work, Democracy in America, yielded an insightful blend of historical and comparative analysis of the influence of cultural factors on political behaviour. For more than a century scholars
reflecting on the relationship of culture to politics did little more than repeat Tocqueville’s views. Or create such nebulous categories as ‘national character’ (Barker, 1949) or ‘political community’ (Grazia, 1948) to account for patterns of political behavior. But in the late 1950s and 1960s researchers turned to the systematic and empirical examination of political culture, that is ‘specifically political orientations – attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of the self in the system’ (Almond & Verba, 1963, p.13; see also Kim, 1964). (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990)

Studies of political culture flourished in the 1960s. One reason was that diverse political cultures could be explored using many of the tried – and – true (or so they seemed at the time) assumptions and techniques of the voting studies that were at that time providing social investigation with a scientific imprint. To research individual orientations meant there was an easily identified and isolable unit of analysis that could be examined with the techniques of survey research. Moreover, in keeping with the early voting studies that ‘involve or imply some kind of psychology’ (Berns, 1962, p.22), political culture studies opened the door for explanatory psychological variables: ‘We can only stress that we employ the concept of culture in only one of its many meanings: that of psychological orientation toward social objects’ (Almond & Verba, 1963, p.14, italics in original). And, as with the voting studies, those psychological variables become ‘attitudes’ with ‘cognitive,’ ‘affective,’ and ‘evolutional’ dimensions. Finally, this individually centered, psychological focus on attitudes toward social objects appeared to solve a vexing problem in comparative research, namely, how to explain distinctive patterns of political behavior without losing sight of the culture in which they are embedded. By definition, if political culture consists of patterns of psychologically based political orientations, that is, those ‘attitudes toward the political system and its various parts,’ then measuring individual attitudes toward the system and its institutions measured the culture as well-be it in the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, Italy or Mexico. Thus the comparative analysis of institutions and systems would be advanced by comparing the attitudes of citizens toward them. (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990)
Language and Politics:

The study of political language begins with the paradox that silence is fundamental to politics. This is a common enough observation in music and poetry, where beauty and effect are most perfectly attained in the moment of silence. In music it may simply be clearer that silence demarcates the boundaries of all sounds. Interruption and alteration distinguish tone, pitch, and rhythm, bringing ‘the arts of the Muses’ to the ear and mind. Silence is not simply ‘the space between’ sounds. It is the spatial and symbolic dimension that makes them audible.

The relationship between speech and silence, ambiguity and suspicion, is often felt intuitively in political language. The ‘really important’ conversation is never heard. It takes place behind closed doors, in the silent corridors of power, or in the nods and feints of smoke filled rooms. The real meaning—‘the truth’—lies elsewhere: in what is not spoken; what is suppressed in the defendant’s testimony or the politician’s position paper and press release; the classified document rather than the published, censored version, the sullen shrug or lie rather than the sworn statement, the ‘silent woman’ in traditional cultures (Key, 1975, pp. 127-129).

On the other hand, everyone has heard the cynical remark that ‘politics is all talk’, ‘implying’ ‘all talk and no action’. Contradicting these notions, many scholars argue that language is a paradigm of political action and offers a perspective for theoretical inquiry into social and political life (Corcoran, 1979; Dallmayr, 1984a, 1984b, 1987; Habermas, 1984, 1987; Nelson, 1988; O’Barr, 1976). The notion that ‘talk’ and ‘political action’ are mutually exclusive should not be too quickly dismissed. In the view, that ‘mere talk’ is a waste of time and an obstacle to political action, speech is regarded as a diversion from a common enterprise for the public good.

The antecedents to the ‘power of persuasion’ were despotism, intrigue, violent coercion, and plain murder— all forms of action quite consistent with public silence. The Athenian democracy in its Periclean form was based upon an endless dialogue between rulers and citizens, as were the theories of justice reflecting that experience developed by Plato and Aristotle. Statesmanship, even by philosopher
kings, was the art of learned discourse in which public life was to be guided by policies and laws having their effect through communication rather than the force of arms. Thus the adage ‘politics is all talk’ is both sophistic and cynical. It expresses impatience with democratic life and doubts the efficacy of popular government. It is a preference not simply for action but for the power of despotic action. Even tyranny, by contrast, is often popular and based upon eloquence and charisma: more talk. (8) (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990)

Political scientists, together with journalists, social critics and the rare linguist (Bollinger, 1980; Burgess, 1975) have often focused moral scrutiny on manipulation, propaganda, or sheer mendacity in public discourse. The ambiguity, imprecision, prolixity, and ignorance of bad writing and speaking are often identified as political problems bordering on cultural subversion and a loss of freedom (Chase, 1938; Orwell, 1947). Moralistic, and hominem criticism normally operates outside of a linguistic or theoretical framework (Corcoran, 1975) other than the broad assumptions of liberal rationalism. Nevertheless, there are underlying compatibilities in the moral viewpoints of an enlightened, articulate rationality; the ideological perspectives acknowledged by some linguists (Chomsky, 1987, pp.57-136); and the deconstructionist critiques of illegitimate power, exploitation and social deformities of capitalist society that are asserted to arise from theories about the structure and production of language and meaning. (9) (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990).

Election Campaigns as Occasions for Civic Education

In the United States, democratic theorists have often pointed to the electoral process as one that might produce an informed citizenry and represent a form of effective participation. The combination of a broadly extended franchise, periodic and robust campaigns, regular and competitive contests among elites for public office, and minimal barriers of entry to the electoral struggle are believed by many to result in an electoral process that is both informative and consequential.

Though it is plausible, and comforting, to believe that the electoral process leads to a more informed citizenry, the educative value of American election
campaigns has remained largely unexplored, empirically. Most research on American election campaigns has focused on measuring the amount of change in popular beliefs and attitudes that occurs during campaigns and on unraveling the process by which voters make candidate choices. Largely ignored has been research devoted directly to figuring out whether, to what extent, and in what circumstances American election campaigns contribute to ‘enlightened understanding’ and ‘effective participation’.

Although most political observers extol the educative virtues of election campaigns and embrace, in general terms, the ideals of an informed and participatory citizenry, contemporary democratic theorists are themselves a good deal more divided about what our educative and participatory goals should be. At the risk of oversimplification, it may be instructive to contrast two prevailing schools of thought on what electoral democratization means.

One theoretical approach, which has been called the ‘democratic elitist’, ‘contemporary theory of democracy’, and ‘equilibrium democracy’ approach, places primary importance upon developing political mechanisms for preventing tyranny. Given that goal the most important occasion for political participation is thought to be elections. To prevent tyranny it is necessary that elections are held frequently, require competing elites or teams of elites to subject their claim to political authority to popular review, and provide the citizenry with a choice of whom they wish to authorize to make binding, political decisions. (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990)

In terms of civic education this approach’s aspirations are quite modest. Citizens should be aware of electoral requirements, possess enough information to distinguish among the choice of candidates, and be motivated enough to cast periodic ballots. Participation beyond the casting of a ballot is a good deal more suspect. Because these theorists generally believe that the populace possesses serious political limitations, more extensive popular participation can conceivably yield unwise and undemocratic results and is discouraged beyond the point necessary to prevent tyranny.
Critics of this approach have pointed out that the expectations of the populace’s political capabilities than with improving those capabilities and that political quiescence, apart from casting votes, comes close to being a virtue. It is not that these “contemporary” or ‘equilibrium’ democrats believe citizens should be misinformed, uninformed, or totally apathetic; rather, they are more willing to accept levels of civic education and participation adequate solely for preventing tyranny.

In contrast to this ‘equilibrium democracy’ school of thought is the approach of those who view democracy as an opportunity for both preventing tyranny and encouraging personal self-development. Variously called ‘developmental democrats’ or participatory democrats’ these theorists believe that it is not enough only to prevent tyranny but that participation in politics should increase the citizenry’s political capabilities, including such attributes as political sophistication, tolerance, support for democratic values, and appreciation for the public interest. In this view, enhancing civic education becomes an important goal and the function of participation is to prepare citizens for, and allow them to make, programmatic decisions themselves. The more ‘participatory’ versions of this approach have direct decision making in mind, in places other than governmental institutions; the less participatory versions are more interested in representative systems based on better-informed citizens choices.

One major distinction between this approach and the democratic elitist approach is that the developmental democrats are much more interested in improving civic education and equipping citizens to make significant political choices. Similarly, the quality and effect of campaign communication is judged differently by the two theoretical approaches. While the democratic elitists are content with a flow of campaign communication that allows citizens to distinguish among competing elites, the developmental democrats are more interested in campaign communication that allows citizens to distinguish among competing elites, the developmental democrats are more interested in campaign communication that allows voters to learn about public policy choices and confer programmatic
mandates. It is the developmental democrats, then, who have greater concerns about, and hopes for, the educative effect of campaign communication. To them, campaigns should be a significant occasion for civic education - for the development of the political capabilities of the citizenry. Though equilibrium democrats have a less ambitious view of campaign communication they, too, have an interest in an electoral process that is educative in some important respects.

Despite the importance of civic education for both theoretical approaches to democracy, the educative potential and effects of campaign communication have been given short shift of late by electoral researchers.11 (Swanson, David L & Nimmo, Dan, 1990)

**Polls and News Coverage:**

The spiral of silence assigns a central role to the mass media. They are the means by which the public is informed of the results of polls, which constitute an unambiguous articulation of the balance among contending view points. News coverage is equally important. The amount of attention given to a partisan group, viewpoint, candidate or political party signal’s importance. Mode of coverage then is said to govern the perceived public support the group of person enjoys. In the case of television, camera treatment was said to have an influence by varying in the degree to which a candidate was portrayed as powerful, in control, able to command the attention of public, articulate, informed, a convincing communicator, admirable and likable and a man or woman able to lead.

Thus the spiral of silence is a theory of situational factor, and the perception of facing an opposition that is growing stronger is insufficient to bring it into play. The sheriff paradigm called for decision making under conditions that varied in social make up. The stimulus that was the subject of the decision making was unfamiliar and ambiguous, and the decision making occurred in settings that varied in regard to the participation of other persons. It permitted the examination of judgment made alone, as part of a group and again alone after having participated with others in the making of such judgments. Thus it provides an opportunity to examine the role of others in the reaching of judgments by individuals. The
empirical documentation of voting patterns that began to accumulate after World War II is what is often called the ‘classic’ voting studies- makes a strong case for a substantial role for personal experience in the political behavior of Americans. The personal experience typically has been interpreted as the paradigm in scope and power with what might be experienced and learned from use of mass media.

The first of this evidence on a large scale came from the survey of voters that have become looked upon as landmarks in the empirical study of political behaviour. (Eric county, 1940, Lazerfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1948) and Elmira, Newyork, 1948 (Berelson, Lazaraesfeld and Mcphee, 1954). At the time they were regarded as opportunities to examine the various influences on the political decision making of voters with clinical accuracy.

The role assigned to personal history became even more prominent in political decision making with apparently clear identification in the evidence on political socialization of the family as the major influence on children and adolescents (Hyman, 1959, Kraus & Davis, 1976).

Political Socialization:

Kraus & Davis in their essay ‘political debates’ argue that as part of the democratization of human society and the resultant development of new political institutions, the media has fallen on a transaction list role, providing the inference for interaction between citizens and their political leaders. They say that these have been a gradual demise of political party control and an increased role of the mass media in communicating with the people. This has caused an increase in issue voting consistent with the democratic theory, which is grounded on the assumption that the people can be trusted in making informed choices of candidates if they are given the right to do so. (12) There is a movement away from the initial watchdog stand taken by the media followed by the role of the advocate or accuracy to that of an interventionist.

The intervention is especially visible during election campaign since the political functions of the media, especially of television which assume greater
visibility and significance during periods of intensified political communication. These developments taken together have resulted in the increased dependency of politicians and voters on the media and its messages. This has brought about an age of press politics, one dominated by a political media complex. As McLead and Rosicki have concluded, ‘the centre of the new political system appears to be the media.’ For better or worse, the mass media seem to have gradually taken on the role of brokers in election campaigns. Media professionals aid in developing campaign messages and commission of the polls and create commentating which pretend to reveal what the public thinks about their would be leaders.

According to Blumber, in the socio-political system in competitive democracies we may encounter the following situations in political communication involving various news values. A privileged position in political communication output is given to the news of already established power holders. Sometimes the news value justification for such near automotive coverage is not easy to spot. The unusual practice of reporting or broadcasting the views of the ‘kingpins or queen pins’ as the case may be, no matter how redundant or irrelevant it may be, while ignoring a valid suggestion by a lesser known politician is an example in case.

Gurevitch and Blumber present an ‘alternative analytical framework’. According to them, ‘media disseminated political communication is derived from interaction between two sets of mutually dependent and mutually adaptive actors, pursuing divergent purposes, whose relationship with each other are typically role regulated.’ The two sets of actors being the media and the political communicators, respectively. This interaction gives rise to a shared culture while specifies how each should behave towards the other. Their divergent purposes provide a potential for disruption of total communication process, which in turn may need to be controlled by some mechanism of conflict management in other words a mediator.

The third party in this interaction is the audience. The concept of audience roles has risen from attempts to apply the uses and gratifications approach in the study of voters orientation to the political contents of the mass media. Studies
revealed that different receivers of political information are motivated by different expectations and develop different orientations to the political contents of the mass media. Studies revealed that different receivers of political information are motivated by different expectations and develop different orientations towards it; thereby playing different roles in a political communication system. Investigating such orientation of political communication in Britain, Blumber identified four such audience roles that might be applicable to political communication system of other competitive democracies. (15)

They include -

- the partisan, who seeks reinforcement of his existing beliefs,
- the liberal, who seeks guidance in deciding how to vote,
- the monitor, seeking information about features of the political environment (such as party policies, current issues, qualities of political leaders)
- the spectator who seeks excitement of other forms of affective satisfaction.

Today this power of the media is personified by the television with its incomparable reach and potential for persuasion.

**The Media Effect Research:**

Over the course of time, the nature of research changed, as methods developed and evidence and theory suggested new kind of variables. Researchers began to differentiate possible effects according to social and psychological characteristics. The outcome of this kind of research was disillusion of the media effect. (e.g. Berelson, 1959)

The summary of research by Joseph Klapper, published in 1960 seems to set a seal on this phase of research. It concluded that mass communication does not ordinarily serve as necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors (1960). It is stated that the failure of
research to find powerful effects could be well be attributed to the complexity of the process and the inadequacy of research design and methods. \(^{(17)}\)

**TV and Political Behavior:**

The advent of television has revolutionized political communication by presenting the opinion leaders and politicians engaging debates in our drawing rooms. In an age where society is obsessed with the real, the authentic, TV compensates for the ‘less of the real through the substitution of reality with reality effects.

Perhaps the political debates on TV are due to this reality effect where the receiver seems to give his information direct from the source. For the public, televised debates are perhaps the only opportunity to watch and judge the candidates in a face to face contest. In these events, the usual media gatekeepers are by passed and the voters are given a chance to assess the issue positions, personal qualities and programmes of the candidates. \(^{(18)}\)

But these debates are not simple and straight forward exercises, because of the incompatibility between the commercial and political functions of the media. Commercial media must operate within a set of social relations, which they in turn serve to reinforce. It is these that are considered inimical to the very process of democratic politics. \(^{(19)}\)

Politics is what possible and has become commodity like soap powder, a single issue can be packaged in an easily consumable and saleable form. Political advertising has gained an upper hand over political news because it has fine turned to the requirements of popular entertainment. In the 1950, the influence of television on voting behavior become clear with the significant fill up it gave to the election campaign of Eisenhower in the U S Presidential election. Later in 1960, Kennedy won a closely contested election against Nixon. Kennedy scored over Nixon in the television debates due to his charismatic screen persona. The listeners of the same debate on radio thought that Nixon had come out on top. The eventual victory of the Kennedy unveiled the hitherto untapped potential of the television.
Studies by Baker and Norpoth showed that politicians with a more positive debate style were in a better position to win the debates. Overall, researchers have concluded that debates are not likely to influence candidate evaluation or voter intentions especially when compared with party identification and prior candidate preferences. However, it is evident that debates can prove helpful to undecided voters who are more interested in specific issues than in party affiliation and who pay close attention to the debates and local and national television news.

Though television broadcasting started in India in 1959, TV was not used as an effective medium for political communication till the nineties. The 1996 General Election could be seen as India’s first TV election as it saw a classic deployment of strident television propaganda. Doordashan’s hard sell on Narasimha Rao, Jaya TV’s election campaign on Jayalalitha.

**Agenda-Setting Function of the Press:**

Political leaders certainly are aware of the role the press in campaigns. They usually adapt to the practices and prejudices of the press. In 1968 Richard Nixon did what many would have regarded as impossible only a few years earlier. He returned from the politically dead to become President in an election squeaker. It was, some said, a “new” Nixon, or as political reporter Joe McGinnis put it more simply, a Nixon more able to understand, or use, the press. Mr. Nixon was more approachable. On occasion he even smiled at reporters. He was seen in a bathrobe. Mr. Nixon was – the reporters themselves had to admit it-human. By a close vote he won over Senator Hubert Humphrey. Through press news, comment, and advertising, information about issues and personalities spreads throughout the land. This point out to the hypothesis that the press itself has some power to establish an agenda of political issues which both candidates and voters come to regard as agenda setting power of the press.

The general notion of agenda-setting- the ability of the media to influence the salience of events in the public mind- has been part of our political culture for at least half a century.
The assumption that the mass media dominate in creation of “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads” as Walter Lip Mann pointed has asserted by presidential observer Theodore White in *The Making of the President, 1972.*

The power of the press in America is a primordial one. It sets the agenda of public discussion; and this sweeping political power is unrestrained by any law. It determines what people will talk and think about- an authority that in other nations is reserved for tyrants, priests, parties and mandarins.

The press does more than bring these issues to a level of political awareness among the public. The idea of agenda-setting asserts that the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public. What the press emphasizes is in turn emphasized privately and publicly by the audiences of the press. (21) This concept of an agenda setting function of the press redirects our attention to the cognitive aspects of mass communication, to attention, awareness, and information. While there was justification for earlier emphasis on attitude change, it was precisely that emphasis on the affective aspects of mass communication that led to the law of minimal consequences.

Attitudes concern our feelings of being for or against a political position or figure. Cognition concerns our knowledge and beliefs about political objects. The agenda setting function of mass communication clearly falls in this new tradition of cognitive outcomes of mass communication. Perhaps more than any other aspect of our environment, the political arena- all those issues and persons about whom we hold opinions and knowledge- is a secondhand reality. Especially in national politics, we have little personal or direct contact. Our knowledge comes primarily from the mass media. For the most part, we know only those aspects of national politics considered newsworthy enough for transmission through the mass media.

Even television’s technological ability to make us spectators for significant political events does not eliminate the second hand nature of our political cognitions. Television news is edited reality just as news is an edited version of reality. And even on those rare occasions when events are presented in their entirety, the television experience is not the same as the eyewitness experience.
Our knowledge of political affairs is based on a tiny sample of the real political world. That real world shrinks as the news media decide what to cover and which aspects to transmit in their reports, and as audience decide to which news messages they will attend.

**Concept of Political Theory:**

Contemporary political theory is largely responsible for the development and use of such concepts as power, political system, political socialization etc. (citation G R Poornima, Dept. of Political Science, New Fort, Bangalore, Sapna Publication, March 2008.)

The main concern of contemporary political theorist is to avoid the political theory from being looked upon as an intellectual exercise and replace it by a search for the development of general principles.

Contemporary political theory is aimed at offering an explanation of what politics is all about and general understanding of political world. Political theory now includes the study of circumstances and environment, individual and family. Political theory is an abstract idea which may be true or false subject to proof. But the theory of democracy that emerged 5000 years ago with the emergence of city states continues to grow bigger and stronger largely due to its acceptance. The histories of political theories reveal that it is an attempt made by thinkers to bring out the complexities of man’s political life.

Earnest Barber is of the view that political thought is the thought of the community relating to political life at a particular period of history. It is the view expressed by scholars, writers and statesman. Political thought as explained Leo Strauss is conditioned by the historical context. A thinker is the ‘child of his age’ and political theory is a systematic attempt to offer an analytical explanation of the phenomenon of politics.

Democratic socialism is opposed to capitalism and is learned on the principle equality and it upholds different kinds of rights. It believes in giving civil, political and economic rights to citizens.
But democratic socialism is criticized for the concentration of excessive powers in the hands of the government which may lead to totalitarianism. When the power is more, there is always a temptation and tendency to misuse the power. Thus the individuals may loose their liberty and freedom as officials enjoy wide powers in the name of social welfare impose more restrictions on them. Democratic socialism curbs individual initiative, it kills individual freedom leading to degeneration of character and personality. But at the same time it upholds the dignity of human personality.

Marx is considered to be the most celebrated and the most controversial thinkers of revolutionary socialism who single handedly imported an ‘ism’ to the world. Karl Marx was the first scientific thinker. Marxism may be defined as a set of political and economic principles founded by Karl Marx in order to lay scientific foundations of socialism.

Marxism is primarily a philosophy of human freedom. It aims at the liquidation of the conditions of domination in society. Freedom lies not only in securing material satisfaction of human needs, but also removing the conditions which are against the development of human personality.

**Communism and Press Freedom:**

According to the dictionary of modern journalism in China ‘press freedom in any society is impossible to be absolute. Freedom is a right that is accompanied by responsibility. At no time should journalists be allowed to use press freedom to engage in any activities that may harm other people and society. Because the infringement of other people’s rights through the abuse of press freedom occurs frequently in reality, the right and obligation of press freedom should be protected by law’

The Tiananmen Square case represents the epitome of China’s concern over the ideas of press freedom, particularly those associated with the western spirit based on Libertarian concept and practices and the dangers they pose to the authority and legitimacy of the communist party.
At one end press freedom is considered universal, regardless of the country or the political system. Press freedom is believed to be context sensitive, subject to determinants of political and social conditions specific to each country. In this view press freedom is not absolute but relative. It is delimited by social structure and national idiosyncrasies, such as historical experience, political philosophy and institutional development. The idealistic view takes press freedom as a cornerstone of democracy. The press in a democratic society is free to pursue truth, even though it may prove to be uncomfortable. On the other side press freedom is functional in that it has consequences for individuals, groups or society, or a whole because of sensationalism, invasion of privacy, unethical methods of news gathering or violation of national secrecy. It could be harmful and undesirable, depending on how press freedom can be used and its impact on the society.

In developing world, national progress and social stability should have a priority over all else, including people’s right to know and the media’s access to information.

For example in China press freedom is allowed as long as it is conducive to national development and social stability and cannot be used for unrealistic and distorted reports. This position is deeply rooted in the history of the press freedom, the relationship between the state and media and contemporary social and political commitments in China. In China the practice of press freedom differs with western world.

Although John Stuart Mill’s idea of liberty ran deep in the Western libertarian journalistic practices, Marx and his collaborator, Friedrich Engel greatly influenced the conceptual approach to politics and journalism in many third world nations.

Marxism – Leninism had a significant impact on communist revolution both in China and former Soviet Union. The ideology guided all aspects of the society and paved the groundwork for the relationship between state and mass media.
In his early years, Marx advocated libertarian idea of complete press freedom. In his later years he became, more authoritarian. For Marx, Journalism was a weapon to resist the ruling political forces. The press was the instrument of the government and the communist party which owned and directed their functionaries. Press criticism was tolerated as long as it did not threaten the communist ideology.

Freedom was the freedom to support the system, to find and correct its flaws, and to protect and solidify socialist ideology. Individuals and the mass media and other social institutions were subordinate to the state.

In legitimizing the communist party’s control over the media, Lenin asserted that a socialist consciousness could not emerge spontaneously among the work class. Rather correct consciousness had to be inculcated by the communist party, the party press could fulfill the role of ideology education, policy direction and mass mobilization. Further Lenin reflected absolute freedom of the press. The conception of press freedom as a relative to political circumstance and ideological unity laid the cornerstone for the communist party in the former Soviet Union.

The mass media played a larger role than other persons when what was being conveyed was merely information without interpretation about what has occurred – that is knowledge of newsworthy events. Thus the data began to hint that the media would have considerable influence under two conditions. When such knowledge was sufficient to survey opinion and when personal sources were absent. (Lazarsfeld & Menzel 1963, Page 29)

**Issue voting**

The evidence began to point to an even more extensive role for personal experience. Personal convictions and beliefs about issues joined the broader ideological aspect of party allegiance to guide voters. Specific passions thus joined fundamental dispositions. The analysis of post world war II elections by V.O Key (1961, 1966) was particularly prominent in advancing this interpretation. (page 30, George Comstock, 2005)
Events experienced by voters were critical in Key’s interpretation, and thus party loyalty seeming by was diluted by the issues that voters might employ in discriminating between the candidates. This perspective was seen by some (Kraus & Davis, 1976) as an enormous challenge to and essentially a refutation of the view that voting represented stable behavior traceable to political socialization, party allegiance and personal experience devoid of influence from the mass media.

The choices of a rational voter presumably would reflect the three major influences on voter behavior set forth in the recent and masterful review of the psychology of voting by Kinder (1998).

1) Material Interest
2) Sympathies and Resentments
3) Political Principles

These three pillars on which rest the voting behavior and political action of individuals do not stray from the governance of personal experience. They are the concrete expression of cognitive legacies of political socialization, party allegiance and social influence.

Socialization, allegiance and influence of those with whom one associates would create the framework of values and loyalties, dispositions and preferences and evaluations and judgments by which pragmatic interests, symbolic gestures and the adoption of particular political philosophy translate into specific opinions and votes. The rationality of voters, then, could be readily interpreted as the consequence of personal experience. (George Comstock- Psychology of media and politics, page 31).

Preference for and allegiance to a political party were products of upbringing dating back to childhood, the maintenance of which was dually located in the delimited influence of the mass media and the personal influence both of those who interpreted and passed on information and of those with whom one associated.

By the 1970s the data on personal experience as a predictor of voting behavior indicated that significant changes. Voters more often split their tickets
among candidates from different parties (Devries & Tarrance, 1972) and became more volatile in shifting between parties from election to election (Dreyer 1971-72, Rusk Weisberg 1972)

The traditional forces identified in the early voting studies – socialization, party and social influence continued to exert force.

Although the mass media are often central in the dissemination of news about what has transpired, their influence on the judgments and opinions of individuals is small. Political dispositions are largely rooted in personal experience where socialization by parents, the resulting allegiance to one or another political party and ideological outlook and the social influence of those with whom one associated play major roles.

There is considerable support for the notion of a quasi-statistical surveillance of the opinion environment if we go beyond research on the spiral of silence. Robinson and Levy (1986 a, b) found in surveys that knowledge about the news often depends on interpersonal discussion, and this would certainly imply that one stream of information circulating by this means would be judgment about public opinion. Günter (1998) experimentally demonstrated that favorable and unfavorable media depictions of an issue shift beliefs about public opinion, with support perceived as rising or falling as a function of favorable coverage. There is little reason to believe that the polls disseminated with such regularity by the media are not usually taken as accurate reflections of what the public is saying (Lavrakas & Traugott, 2000; Mann & Orren, 1992), although under some circumstance they may not be very good predictors of what the public will say or do, such as voting for a particular candidate, at a later point in time (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999; Crespi, 1989). In each case, individuals are reaching judgments about what others think either from what they experience or what they encounter in the media.
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