Coverage of the 1996 general presidential elections in "Newsweek" "Time" and "U.S. News & World Report"

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The Coverage of the 1996 General Presidential Elections

in Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report

by

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Studies of media coverage of presidential elections in 1992 and 1996 concluded that voters wanted more coverage of issues and less horse-race coverage. This study examined the coverage of the presidential election of 1996 in the three biggest news magazines in the United States, *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, from their Aug. 19, 1996, issues to Election Day. The study examined the magazine articles in relation to the above two coverage categories, evaluating how useful the coverage was to voters and if the coverage was according to voters' media preferences.

Some 178 articles were analyzed for this study. The articles were divided into three categories: articles about the race itself or the candidates' campaign strategy; articles about the issues that were brought up during the campaign; and other articles not included in the other two categories, for example the candidates' life histories. Some journalists from the three magazines were also interviewed for the study.

The study concluded that *U.S. News & World Report* had the best overall campaign coverage, mainly because of its extensive issue coverage. *Newsweek* and *Time* gave the Dick Morris scandal too much coverage and *Newsweek* had too many race-related articles.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Many voters decide whom they will vote for in political elections based on what they see, hear and read in the media. Because presidential elections are the most important political elections in the United States, much research has been done to clarify the expectations voters have of the media and the media’s performance in delivering to voters what they want. Voters have indicated in many cases that they are dissatisfied with the media’s performance.

An overwhelming majority of the American public, 93 percent, do not encounter presidential or vice-presidential candidates anywhere else except in the news.1 According to a Media Studies Center survey that appeared in the first 1996 election Briefing issue, the news media were shown to be the predominant source of campaign information for most voters, with 67 percent of respondents getting most of their information about presidential elections from the media. “Conversations with others” was the second most common way of getting election information, with 9 percent of respondents relying on that source.2

The most common criticisms appearing in voter surveys is that there is too much horse-race coverage -- including polls of who is leading and commentary of the strategies candidates use to win -- and too little issue coverage. One extensive study about media performance in the 1996 campaign, Lethargy '96, put it this way:

2The Media & Campaign 96 Briefing No. 1, April 1996, by The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, p.6.
In short, voters were saying that they did not want the kind of horse-race-driven, commentary-laden coverage that seeks to define the campaign for voters. They yearned instead for concise, accessible and continuing summaries and follow-ups of where the campaign and the candidates stood.³

Surveys also show what kinds of stories most interest or do not interest voters. In a study cited in the third Briefing issue by the Media Studies Center, 77 percent of respondents said they were very interested in stories about candidates’ stances on issues and 72 percent said they were very interested in stories about how the outcome of the election might affect them. Only 27 percent were interested in stories about third-party candidates.

Stories on campaign strategy were unpopular, with only 26 percent saying they were very interested in them and 33 percent saying the media had given too much attention to those types of stories. Voters also indicated they want to see in-depth profiles of the people they are considering voting into office, including their voting records,⁴ but 68 percent said the candidates’ personalities were covered too much.⁵ Another survey revealed half of the respondents thought there was too much attention given to who’s

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³Lethargy ‘96, p. 100.
⁵The Media & Campaign 96 Briefing No. 3, September 1996, by the Media Studies Center, P. 10. Survey: Media Studies Center/Roper Survey on Voters & Media. The survey of 2,007 registered voters was taken between Jan. 19 and Feb. 10, 1996. Lawrence McGill, director of research and administration at the Media Studies Center, said that the center does not define terms for their respondents. Therefore, every respondent defined “personality” as he or she saw fit.
ahead and who’s behind in the presidential campaign, while only 7 percent thought too little attention had been given that subject.6

In early 1996, during the last presidential election, veteran journalist James Fallows entered the debate on political coverage with his book _Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy_. In it he indicted news media for sloppy journalism and argued that the way media portrays politicians, candidates and elections alienates voters from the political process.7 Fallows argued that the media tends to reduce everything to the game of politics rather than delve into the deeper meaning. For example, instead of discussing a terrorist attack and why it occurred, the media tends to explore these issues only briefly before going to questions such as “How will this help X in the polls?” or “What impact does this have on the next election?”

Fallows got a chance to put his theories of “public journalism” into practice when he became the editor of _U.S. News & World Report_ in September 1996, when the general election campaign of Bill Clinton and Bob Dole was in full swing. Public journalism advocates a strong connection between the media and the public, in which the press seeks out citizens’ concerns, asks what issues they would like to see covered and what questions they would like to have their political candidates answer.

The coverage in _U.S. News_ was certainly different from that of _Time_ and _Newsweek_, but was it all what voters wanted?

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6 _Lethargy '96_, p. 100.
Whether journalists provide the information voters need and want about candidates may provide the answer to whether voters become involved in the political process and thus uphold the basic foundations of American society.

Media play a crucial role in getting people involved in the political process, but it hasn’t been doing all it can do in recent years. Studies by the Annenberg School for Communication and the Annenberg Public Policy Center have concluded that “public cynicism about the political process and the press is elevated by strategic reporting.” Strategic reporting could also be called horse-race reporting, and voters have said they want less of that type of election coverage, as noted above.

Strategy coverage often portrays candidates as self-serving, or running for office only for personal gain. Strategy coverage also implies the electorate is merely watching the unfolding of events and not participating in the campaign by learning and comparing the candidates’ issue stances. Research has also shown that strategy coverage is often the most common type of campaign coverage. Of all campaign stories in the New York Times, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times from Sept. 1 to Nov. 1, 1996, 44 percent focused on campaign strategy and only 27 percent focused on issues.

These studies support veteran journalist James Fallows’ arguments in his book Breaking the News, mentioned above, that media undermines American democracy by

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making voters less interested in politics. In his book, Fallows also defines what he thinks is real journalism and how the press can get back in touch with the public.

Fallows writes that the essence of real journalism is the search for information of use to the public.\textsuperscript{11} The press should provide the information citizens need to make sense of public problems.\textsuperscript{12} Fallows notes that in town hall meetings in 1992 where “ordinary people” asked questions directly from the candidates, the questions were about the “what” of politics: “What are you going to do about the health care system?” Or, “What can you do to reduce the cost of welfare?” The reporters asked mostly about the “how”: “How are you going to try to take away Perot’s constituency?” Or “How do you answer charges that you have flip-flopped?”\textsuperscript{13}

Fallows decries the press’ focus on the “pure game of politics”\textsuperscript{14} and their ignoring the impact of politics or legislation on people’s lives. To remedy the disparity in what the people want to hear about (issues, impact of legislation) and what the press provides (tactical political analysis), Fallows advocates public journalism: paying more attention to what citizens want the press to cover.

In addition to staying in touch with the public, media should provide context that gives meaning to information, Fallows writes.\textsuperscript{15} Four major elements are essential to establishing this context. The first is perspective, or what is important vs. what is urgent;

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{10}“1996: Better or Worse?” \textit{Tracking the Quality of Campaign Discourse}-No. 17, Nov. 4, 1996, Annenberg School for Communication, Annenberg Public Policy Center, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Breaking the News}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Breaking the News}, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 22.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 130.
the second is placement in time, or providing background for today’s events; third is similarities and differences, or fitting events and situations into patterns.

“Usefulness” is the fourth context provider. “Useful information helps people understand what can be changed and what must be endured,” Fallows writes. Useful information gives people the tools they need to feel in control of their lives.

But not all news has to be “news you can use,” with recipes and guides to fixing your car. Journalism asks people to pay attention to things outside themselves, and that will be worthwhile only if it helps people understand and cope with events that affect them, Fallows says.

However, this is where the press fails the most, Fallows writes. “The message of today’s news coverage is often that the world cannot be understood, shaped or controlled, but merely endured or held at arm’s length.” The foreign news is mostly a series of unconnected disasters. And in political coverage, news often sends the message that even if politicians aren’t crooks who can be indicted, they scheme endlessly for advantage and talk about issues only if it serves their ends for gaining power.

The Annenberg and Media Studies Center studies struck a similar chord: Voters are tired of strategy and horse-race coverage and want more issue coverage. If the information is relevant to their daily lives, people will read the issue pieces with great interest, as the following story illustrates.

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16 Ibid., p. 140.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 141.
A series of stories called “America: What Went Wrong?” published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in October 1991 drew wide attention. The series ran for nine days and dealt with a complex subject: government economic policy. Yet, as the series came to a close on Oct. 21, people were pushing their way into the *Inquirer’s* front lobby to get additional copies to mail to their out-of-town relatives and friends.

In the days to come, as parts of the series were reprinted in more than 50 papers across the country, the *Inquirer* was swamped with requests for reprints. People from all walks of life wanted copies, among them Ralph Nader and Gregory Peck. In the end, the paper distributed nearly 400,000 reprinted copies of the series. The paper had to pull in staff from all departments to work overtime to ship out reprints.

The point of the series was that the concentration of corporate power, abetted by Washington’s rules on international trade, taxation, deregulation and other complex issues, had produced massive job layoffs and a shrinking of the American middle class. The articles were documented in detail and illustrated with examples of Americans who had fallen victim to policies they could barely understand, let alone influence.

As illustrated by the reaction to the series, people are interested in issues that affect them. One study done in 1997 by ASNE asked readers if they were interested in the “investigation of important issues.” Seventy-two percent said they were “extremely” or “very” interested.20

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20The story and study figures were taken from a series of American Journalism Review News Link articles called *The State of the American Newspaper, Part 9: What Readers Really Want*. “Hocus Focus” was the name of the subgroup of stories by Charles Layton and the name of the cited article was “Out of the Box: Boldly going after the news may be the most successful tactic of all.” The Web address of the article is http://ajr.newsl ink.org/special/9-16.html.
Journalists themselves also note that there is generally too much horse-race coverage and not enough issue coverage during campaigns. But somehow the media tend to forget their good intentions in between the elections. Howard Kurtz of the Washington Post put it this way:

The biggest critics of press coverage of campaigns are in the press themselves. It’s interesting that we rarely act on that hammering and self-flagellation of our performance every four years.

The prescription for better campaign coverage is pretty clear: less obsessive focus on polls and horse races, more attention to issues, less absorption with the meaningless flap of the day. And yet it seems we have an awfully hard time weaning ourselves from the same sort of coverage we’re used to. One encouraging trend here is the extent to which some news organizations work under the rubric public journalism and are making a concerted effort to talk to voters and other ordinary folks, as opposed to the endless supply of clever quotes from political handlers and insiders.

While some of these efforts are a bit of self-promotion, they do have the effect of almost forcing us to focus on what real people care about, which is certainly not the endless maneuvering that’s mainly the interest of political junkies.

If I had to pick one single thing to upgrade the level of coverage, it would be to try to translate the back and forth of political combat into stories ordinary people care about.21

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Richard Ben Cramer, author of “What It Takes,” a book about the 1988 presidential candidates, echoed Kurtz’s assessment that the media need to focus more on the issues and less on the horse race:

[Journalists] must spend a lot more time on the questions the voters really care about, which are: Who are these guys, and what do they mean to do? Anything else, for instance poll results in Illinois or tactics in a forthcoming series of commercials, is inside baseball and fundamentally stupid.22

Jonathan Karl, a CNN correspondent, said the media needs to focus more on how the current issues will affect people’s lives in the future:

I think the single most important thing we can do is force the candidates to face the real issues of the day. We need to ask them how these issues will affect us 20 years from now - how they will affect future generations. Too often we focus on the horse race and not enough on how the next generation will be affected by what’s being done now.... Also, I think the media could lose some of its cynicism. Often it’s the commercials and candidates that are seen as cynical, but part of that cynicism comes from the media themselves.23

Jonathan Alter, senior editor and columnist for Newsweek, agreed the media needs improvement:

22Ibid.
23Ibid.
If we make what is important interesting, then we have succeeded. The American public likes to be titillated, but they also want basic information. They are complaining about not getting a hearty enough meal from the press.\textsuperscript{24}

Media professionals seem to be aware of the task ahead of them. But good intentions don’t always translate into what will happen in real political coverage. Even though Fallows held strong views, it is unlikely the coverage in \textit{U.S. News & World Report} was perfect in delivering voters what they wanted.

However, James Fallows himself did not change the magazine much when he became editor in mid-September 1996. In the afterword to the vintage edition to \textit{Breaking the News}, Fallows explains that part of the reason he took the post was that “[t]he franchise already held by \textit{U.S. News} is more suited to the concepts laid out in this book than those of most other magazines.”\textsuperscript{25} Fallows praises the magazine’s focus on “news you can use,” the practical articles about money, health, travel and education, and the deeper “usable” news that put world events into perspective.\textsuperscript{26}

Shortly after Fallows became editor, the \textit{Columbia Journalism Review} discussed the situation at \textit{U.S. News} in an extensive article. \textit{The Washington Post} had given its verdict: The magazine under Fallows looked just like it did before. Fallows himself admitted to not trying to turn the magazine into a “good public journalism experiment” but said he would “try and make this a good magazine” and try to make “important

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Lethargy ’96}, p. 106.  
\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Breaking the News}, p. 286.  
\textsuperscript{26}\textit{Ibid.}
matters more interesting.” The CJR article writer goes on to observe that biggest changes at *U.S. News* happened as Fallows hired and fired writing talent and section editors.\textsuperscript{27}

Even after Fallows was fired from his post at the end of June, 1998, the staff turnover was the change journalists commented on, not any radical change in the focus of news coverage. About half of the magazine’s top editors left with Fallows and the new editor, Stephen Smith, hired replacements in a hurry.\textsuperscript{28} Harold Evans, *U.S. News*’ editorial director, said that the replacement of Fallows did not signal a change in direction in the magazine, which has prided itself on being issue-oriented and less concerned with trendy cover stories than its larger competitors.\textsuperscript{29}

Fallows’ firing was Evans’ decision and was attributed to editorial differences between Fallows and *U.S. News* owner Mortimer Zuckerman. Those who know Zuckerman said he believed Fallows “polluted the news columns with opinion, was too detached from the week’s news and drove dozens of talented people out of the magazine.” Under Fallows, the magazine drew praise for its trend-setting reporting on science, religion and social policy, but when there was only one page about the attempted


coup against former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, “talk grew louder that Zuckerman
felt Fallows was blowing off important stories.”30

Nevertheless, U.S. News seemed to give readers more issue coverage and less
horse-race coverage than the other major news magazines, Time and Newsweek, did
during the 1996 general presidential elections. U.S. News also made an effort to include
some “unfiltered coverage” of the candidates, something voters wanted more of in the
coverage.31

The criticisms of the media’s campaign coverage prompt a closer look at the 1996
election coverage. Television, newspaper and Internet coverage has received a lot of
attention, but one area of media coverage, print news magazines, has not been extensively
studied. If the media need improvement, all outlets need scrutiny.

Better election coverage would most likely get more people involved in the
political process. Most people would view this development as beneficial to the whole of
society. By placing emphasis on campaign strategy, the media make voters more cynical
of the political process and less likely to get involved. Voters also want the media to
provide useful campaign coverage: discussion of issues and how they affect voters.

Therefore, to see if the news magazines delivered the type of coverage voters
wanted and to see how the other magazines fared compared to U.S. News, I have analyzed
articles about the 1996 presidential campaign that appeared in the three major American
news magazines, Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report. Although television is
the medium of choice for most American voters, print media and news magazines are

also important sources of campaign information. A media Studies Center study found that 21 percent of voters participating in the study said they learned “a lot” and 33 percent said they learned “some” about campaigns and candidates from news magazine articles.\textsuperscript{32} In other words, more than half of those who participated in the study said they read about the campaign from news magazines. So even though voters may not look at news magazines first when they need information, the magazines provide an important supplementary source of campaign news for voters.

Circulation figures alone suggest that the magazines reach a sizable portion of the voters in this country. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, the combined circulation at the end of 1995 for the three news magazines was about 9.6 million. \textit{Time} had the largest readership of the three with a circulation of about 4.08 million. \textit{Newsweek} had 3.16 million and \textit{U.S. News} 2.33 million.

Because TV is the most influential medium for voters, it might have made more sense to study the networks instead of news magazines. However, there are many studies about TV news' election coverage already. James Fallows’ presence as one of the top three news magazines’ editors provided added interest to a study of news magazines, even though he may not have significantly changed the magazine’s focus: The publication already had a history of being more issue-oriented than the other two magazines. Also, as noted above, news magazines reach a sizable audience. Magazine articles can be studied at leisure. The important points can be read again, whereas what escapes the ear in TV

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{The Media & Campaign 96 Briefing} No. 4, October 1996, Media Studies Center, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{32}\textit{The Media & Campaign 96 Briefing} No. 4, October 1996, Media Studies Center, p. 3. Source: Media Studies Center/Roper Survey on Voters & Media, September 1996.
coverage is lost, unless you record the program on tape and review it later, something few voters are likely to do.

In addition, news magazines bring a perspective to the presidential campaign that newspapers and TV might not bring. Magazine writers have more latitude to explain events, to add “color” and to offer context than do newspaper reporters. It is interesting to note each week of the campaign what these three leading news magazines decided to cover. As becomes clear from the following study, the magazines varied in their judgment of what deserved to be covered and how much coverage to give each major news event.

Because TV is the most popular medium, the media studies mentioned could have cited criticism that was mostly directed at TV coverage. The studies didn’t often clearly differentiate between the different media when they surveyed voters. Nevertheless, news magazines are widely read, as stated above, and therefore it is safe to assume they were also targets of the principal media criticisms at least to a point.

I have examined the news magazines’ coverage first on a week-by-week basis and evaluated whether they supplied voters with information and coverage they wanted. I did not differentiate between “news” articles and “commentary” articles because news articles invariably contained commentary and vice versa, and both kinds of articles could be equally informative. In addition, first-person commentary articles are a regular feature of this medium.

To help sort out the kinds of articles and see the overall trends in coverage, I also analyzed the articles themselves, 178 in all, and divided them into three categories: horse race, issues and other. This reflects the simple requests of voters uncovered in the media
studies: I wanted to see how much of each type of coverage the magazines included in their coverage.

As noted earlier, voters wanted less horse-race coverage and more issue coverage. Another major and recurring criticism of the media has been that there is and has been too much focus on the candidates’ personal lives.33

I chose not to include in my study the question of whether there was too much emphasis on the candidates’ personal lives mainly for one reason. There is no set definition of what coverage of personal lives means. Kathleen Collins, a research coordinator at the Media Studies Center in New York, thinks the term encompasses more than scandal coverage, i.e., scandal stories as well as stories about political candidates’ personal history. Lawrence McGill, director of research and administration at the Media Studies Center, said that the term “personal” was not defined for the surveys’ respondents and it could therefore have meant different things to different people.34 Even though voters said in 1996 that there was too much personal coverage of the candidates, 60 percent said that covering the Dick Morris scandal was the right thing to do.35 This conflicting information also cast doubts on whether there was indeed too much personal coverage of the candidates in the media.

The term “useful” can also mean different things to different people, McGill said. However, I would argue that issue stories and articles exploring the effects of the issues

33Lethargy ’96, p. 100. Source: Media Studies Center/Roper Center Survey on Voters & Media, September 1996.
34I talked with Kathleen Collins on May 24, 1999. Because Lawrence McGill could not take my phone call, Kathleen Collins asked my questions for me and reported back to me what he had said.
on voters is useful information for them so they can better live their lives and be
motivated to get involved in the workings of society and the political process. James
Fallows said that usefulness is a key to providing context and issue-based coverage is, by
definition, more useful to the voters than coverage focusing on campaign strategies. And
John Costa, editor in chief if The Bulletin in Bend, Ore., said that newspaper editors are
increasingly facing the question of how to provide useful information to readers --
"useful" meaning information readers can use to make informed decisions when faced
with choices in their lives. Therefore, I decided to also examine how useful the
magazines' coverage was to voters, or how much issue coverage and information about
candidates' stances the magazines included so voters could make an informed choice
about whom to vote for.

I also talked with some of the journalists who covered the 1996 campaign for the
magazines to provide added context for my study.

In my study, I was looking for coverage that did not overwhelm the reader with
too much horse race and that was relevant and useful to the voters (i.e. had many articles
about issues), because that was the type of coverage voters indicated they wanted. After
an overview of the coverage, I divided the articles into categories to better see whether
the coverage was according to voters' preferences.

Whether the media provide coverage voters need and want may be key to whether
they become involved in the political process and are inspired to vote, thus upholding the
basic foundations of society.

\[36\] From comments made by John Costa in a meeting on July 28, 1999.
I found that *U.S. News & World Report* had the most useful, or issue-oriented coverage of the three magazines and *Newsweek* overloaded its coverage with too much horse race. *Time* didn’t have quite as many issue articles as *U.S. News*, but also didn’t overwhelm readers with too much horse-race coverage. The following study will support these statements.
II. OVERVIEW OF COVERAGE

The study begins with the Aug. 19, 1996, pre-convention issues and ends with the Nov. 11, 1996, issues of the magazines. This was the crucial period when the final battle was fought between the incumbent Democratic president and his Republican challenger.

Without the primaries, the analysis could focus more tightly on the race where the stakes were the highest, i.e., the candidates were running for the presidency itself, not the party nominations. The press, too, had a more important part to play at that stage because of the high stakes involved. There was a surge in campaign coverage at this time, which clearly indicated that the campaign became more important. For example, the seven issues of Newsweek from July 1 to Aug. 12, 1996, had 19 articles altogether that could be classified as campaign articles. The seven issues of Newsweek from Aug. 19 to Sept. 30, 1996, had 32 campaign articles. And because an incumbent president was running for re-election unopposed by any of his fellow party members, there were virtually no campaign articles about him during the primaries. The campaign coverage during the primaries was focused on the Republican race for party nomination, so including that coverage wouldn’t have presented a good overall view. Also, the “issue” articles during the primaries weren’t easy to label specifically as campaign-issue stories. After the Aug. 19 issues the playing field was clear, the Republican nomination had been decided, both major candidates were in the news and issues were discussed visibly within the framework of the presidential elections. With the surge in campaign coverage, voters were also more likely to pay more attention to the elections and the candidates than before. All in all, it
made more sense to start with the Aug. 19, 1996, magazine issues and the pre-Republican National Convention stories than with the primaries.

All three magazines began with a heavy focus on Bob Dole’s and Jack Kemp’s personal sides, their family background, life experiences and personalities. *Time* led with three long stories tracing the candidates’ history from Dust Bowl Kansas, in Dole’s case, to Kemp’s rise from football to political stardom. This approach was appropriate, since voters want to see in-depth profiles of the people they are considering voting into office.\(^37\) *Newsweek* focused a bit more on the horse race aspect of the campaign from the start, introducing polls and graphics to illustrate how far Dole would have to go to defeat Bill Clinton and where he stood that week. The writers asked whether Kemp would hurt Clinton’s hold on the voters and questioned whether Dole would deliver on his promise of a 15 percent tax cut and still balance the budget, the same question *Time* and *U.S. News* raised.

The following week the focus changed to the race as the Republican candidates enjoyed the “convention bounce,” i.e., the increased support immediately after the convention, and competition started in earnest. All magazines carried horse race-oriented stories, although *Time* took exception by continuing to emphasize the personal appeal of the candidates, such as what impression Dole made with his speech, pointing out how harsh he may have sounded: “Dole invited into the hall the God of Old Testament, and all around the room the faithful stirred.”\(^38\)

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While lamenting the careful stage-management and the apparent lack of any real convention news, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News* detailed the Republicans’ strategy. *Newsweek* introduced the crucial group of voters both parties were trying to win over, the “soccer moms” or white middle-class women, and concluded that Clinton was far ahead with women voters. The strategy and soccer mom stories seemed to be exactly the kind of coverage voters said they didn’t like to see. *Newsweek* also included an article about the losing battle America was fighting against drugs, with the attention on Clinton and his lack of drug-war leadership.

The Sept. 2 issues directed the spotlight toward Clinton as the Democratic National Convention approached. *Time* and *Newsweek* presented the president as more mature than he had been in the beginning of his presidency, and also mentioned the vice president. *Time* took a detailed look at Clinton’s political wizard, Dick Morris, explaining his rise to politics and his consulting history.

Both *Time* and *Newsweek* evaluated Clinton’s first four years in issue articles, noting how he learned from his past mistakes to “think small now,” or to leave the dreams of the future for what is attainable here and now. His health-care reform plan died in congressional committees in his first term and now he talked about smaller matters such as teen curfews and more cops on the streets. In a *U.S. News* editorial, Mortimer Zuckerman asked, “Does he still feel your pain?”39 All three magazines asked whether the American people should rehire Clinton and concluded that he would be tough to beat because of the healthy economy.

Time picked up the drug story, arguing that Clinton hadn’t done enough to combat the drug problem. In this article Time’s Michael Kramer told how Clinton vowed to change Bush’s drug policy and wanted to give much more money to education and treatment programs but did little about those issues and the drug problem had become bigger than ever.\textsuperscript{40} Meanwhile, U.S. News doubted the effectiveness of Dole’s economic plans, pointing out that his proposed massive tax cuts would almost certainly drive up the budget deficit.

With the week of Sept. 9 came the Dick Morris scandal, which shifted the spotlight from the Democratic convention itself to how the Clinton campaign might be affected by it. The scandal broke on the eve of the Democratic convention. The Star tabloid had been contacted by Sherry Rowlands, a call girl who offered the paper an exclusive story about her relationship with Morris. After the tabloid succeeded in taking a few photographs of the couple, the paper published Rowlands’ story, which led Morris to resign as Clinton’s top political adviser.

Time gave a detailed account of how Morris’ alleged affair with a hooker came to light. The paper’s story of the affair, claiming among other things that the Clinton adviser had let Rowlands listen in on presidential phone calls, led to Morris’ resignation and denouncement of the Star’s “yellow journalism,” as he termed it. Time focused on how the scandal could affect the Democratic race and gave the scandal more play in its pages than it gave to the convention itself. In a verbatim question and answer article Morris refused to discuss sensationalistic journalism and outlined instead his ideas that helped

save Clinton’s image. Eileen McGann, Morris’ wife, forgave her husband in a short first-person account of the dramatic week.

Among the extensive Morris coverage in the other two magazines, U.S. News let the incident go by with two short articles, and this seemed the right thing to do, because even though voters indicated that the Morris scandal needed to be covered, they also said they didn’t like excessive dirt-digging and wanted to see issue stories. U.S. News separated the news and issues raised in the convention from the Morris details and had separate articles for the convention and the scandal. It is also unlikely that one adviser’s fate could have made the difference between Clinton’s staying in the White House or having to leave. It was necessary to cover the scandal but it simply wasn’t that big of a deal. Newsweek and Time had four in-depth articles each on the matter.

In contrast, U.S. News commented how the Democratic convention concentrated on families, parents and children’s welfare and education. The writers profiled a few voter groups and found soccer moms, young voters, African-Americans and blue-collar workers all favoring Clinton. David Gergen’s editorial pointed out how “the party of the people” ignored the inner city poor of Chicago.41 As for the Morris scandal, U.S. News concluded it wouldn’t affect the outcome of the election, whereas Time speculated extensively about how Clinton could be hurt: “When Morris fell, he hit Clinton where it hurt - in all the misgivings about the President’s character that Republicans attempt to bundle into an issue.”42

Time and Newsweek also made clear that the convention concentrated on families, focusing on issues such as literacy for all 8-year-olds and saying that the reason to fight crime is to prevent children's lives from being shattered by violence. In other coverage, Time photographers took readers along for a ride at the Clinton campaign trail, and both parties were reprimanded for some of their speeches calling for more good old-fashioned morals, because it looked like the politicians were just out to get votes and there were no real feelings behind their words. This story seemed to be just the type the voters said they disliked, because it discussed the politicians' voiced views as a strategy ploy to gain power.

Newsweek's Robert Samuelson suspected Clinton could cut Social Security and Medicare in a second term and columnist Meg Greenfield suggested that the Democrats were hypocritical in their family-values message. Meanwhile, Time ran an article about Dole's attacks against teachers' unions. The Dole campaign was reiterating the perceptions that the rich and powerful unions who resist change are part of the problem, not the solution, to America's education crisis. The article brought into focus another facet of the education debate and as such was a voter-mandated addition to Time's coverage.

The week after the Democrats' convention and the Morris scandal, Time and Newsweek started hinting Dole would need a miracle to win as the writers speculated how Dole could use the Morris scandal to get more support for himself. All three magazines had short follow-up articles on the scandal. However, U.S. News started its extensive

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issue coverage and began running verbatim excerpts from candidates’ speeches in this issue, which was largely due to the influence of James Fallows, who took over as editor in mid-September.

*U.S. News* outlined what each candidate would do for America’s youngsters, from giving school vouchers to parents so they could send their child to any school they wanted in Dole’s case to both candidates’ proposals for lowering juvenile crime rates. Writer Gordon Witkin argued that the Gulf War was partly responsible for taking the public’s eyes off the drug problem.\(^4\)\(^5\) Witkin cited studies that showed how the media and the public were so engrossed in the war that during and after it the nation’s drug-abuse problems were not reported as extensively as before.

The magazines covered a variety of issues, from education reform to campaign fund raising. The Sept. 23 issue of *Newsweek* advised Dole on how to save his campaign and exposed the candidates’ negativity toward each other in political TV ads. These types of stories, dealing with campaign strategy, were what voters didn’t want to see in their coverage. Columnist Jonathan Alter argued that welfare reform could be the issue to make or break Clinton in historians’ eyes.\(^4\)\(^6\)

*Time* and *U.S. News* had articles on education and *Time* took a look at how well Dole repaid his big campaign contributors with political favors. Clinton’s expensive fund-raising dinners received only a third of a page. *Time*’s Karen Tumulty wrote how

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vulnerable GOP congressional candidates were hearing the distant death knell for Dole and were "cozying up to the president."47

In *U.S. News*, Dole touted his tax cuts and Clinton emphasized his family-friendly attitude in the verbatim selections. Columnist John Leo wrote about how Catherine Hickey, superintendent of New York’s Catholic schools, accepted the challenge from the head of American Federation of Teachers to educate the toughest 5 percent of students.48 Schools and education was one of the hot-ticket issues of the election. Leo argued that the politicians’ fear of endangering the church-state separation was the principal reason why Hickey wasn’t taken up on her offer. The last-page editorial urged the educational systems not to resist positive change.

The last September issues were not driven by any single event on the political front. The Sept. 23 coverage discussed above lacked a coherent focus, although there were many articles on educational issues. But issues dominated the coverage and there was enough enterprise reporting to save readers from boredom created by the lack of gripping horse-race news, because polls showed Clinton was leading with a wide margin.

*U.S. News* covered the crime issue in detail, featuring a discussion of both candidates’ opinions. Both wanted to get tough on crime, but neither had visionary solutions to problems such as overcrowded prisons. *U.S. News* had only a small picture with a story about Dole’s fall over a decorative railing in Chico, Calif. *Newsweek* had a large picture of the event, obviously symbolizing Dole’s losing campaign, with its article saying how Dole’s losing could bring in a Democratic Congress as well. Time ignored the

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incident, which was just as well, since the fall wasn’t any fault of Dole’s and he didn’t get a scratch. Age wasn’t the issue here, because the fall could have happened to anyone. He wasn’t stumbling all over the campaign trail -- this was an isolated incident.

*Time* and *U.S. News* ran stories about the negative campaign ads *Newsweek* had carried a couple weeks earlier. *Time*’s and *Newsweek*’s coverage was scantier this week while *U.S. News* carried the ball with its issue coverage, especially the cover story on crime, which told what each candidate would do to reduce crime and gave an overview of how much crime is committed in America.

The Oct. 7 magazines prepared for the presidential debates. *Time* gave pointers to only Dole. *Newsweek* profiled the candidates’ governmental interactions and had Clinton strategist James Carville and Dole’s Mike Murphy giving the opposite side debate advice, something intriguing for the readers, no doubt, but not something voters expressly wanted to see covered. *U.S. News* gave both candidates advice not only on the strong debatable issues, but also on what clothes to wear to the debate; again, a light article not necessarily of much interest to voters.

The other campaign coverage varied greatly from one magazine to the next. *Time* detailed the California debate on affirmative action, tipped the readers on what lawsuits Hillary Clinton had pending against her and suggested Clinton was really a hedgehog posing as a fox. Hedgehogs, according to this *Time* writer, are political figures with one big campaign theme whereas foxes, like Dole, promote several issues at a time. This was

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probably not an article voters wanted to see, but underlined the fact that even news magazines have to try to provide entertainment and light pieces to their readers.

*Newsweek* told readers Hillary Clinton could be making a comeback to serious policymaking with a nonformal role in shaping welfare reform. It suggested the candidates should be debating over the size and role of government. *U.S. News*, on the other hand, continued with its focus on the issues and moved from crime to education. Both issues were cover stories and were the types of stories voters wanted to see. *U.S. News* received many positive letters to the editor about its education reform articles, plus some negative letters in response to an opinion piece arguing why vouchers wouldn’t work.

*U.S. News* also acquainted the readers with a new group of voters not many seemed to be aware of: legal, naturalized aliens. How to deal with legal and illegal immigration was one of the issues in this campaign, along with education reform.

The coverage after the debates contained debate analysis in varying amounts. *Newsweek* asked “Is it over?” on its cover. Neither candidate scored a big victory and even though Dole didn’t lose, he didn’t win either. That spelled trouble for a candidate far behind his rival. The magazine analyzed the debate itself and then told readers that the candidates dodged health care and campaign reform issues.

*Time*, on the other hand, limited its debate coverage to a photo essay on how the candidates prepared for the debate. Studies show that voters learn the most about candidates from live presidential debates, and not having any post-debate summary
seemed a mistake. Instead, *Time* had a cover story about Lori Lucas, a representative of the group both parties wanted behind them: the working mothers.

*Time* received many letters to the editor about this article, both angry and supportive. Some had a problem with dumping the average working mother in the same boat with Lori, a woman who has a small child out of wedlock, has divorced twice and has a live-in boyfriend. Others thought *Time* did a great job in letting others see the stressful life of a working mother who doesn’t get any help from the government and often doesn’t have the time to follow politics. The story wasn’t exactly what voters wanted, because it had more horse-race elements than issue elements, but as a profile of what average Americans are facing and why they don’t follow politics very closely, it could have been interesting to readers. At least it was provocative and got readers thinking about issues facing working mothers in America.

*U.S. News* continued with issue coverage and kept readers up to date on what was happening with the campaign. Columnists reported that Dole expected a late surge in the campaign and advised him to get connected with the younger crowd. The magazine revealed Clinton’s welfare-to-work program wasn’t as easy to put into practice as it would seem to be on paper and that Kemp was running a positive, yet unnoticed, campaign.

*Newsweek*’s Oct. 21 issue wondered if Dole would start attacking Clinton’s character and concluded that he wasn’t a very good mudslinger. Clinton’s seemingly lax attitude toward the drug problem surfaced along with prophetic rumblings of the

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*The Media & Campaign 96 Briefing*, No. 4, October 1996, Media Studies Center, p. 3.
Democratic campaign-finance scandal. *Time* echoed the campaign-finance theme and told readers how candidates can get help from independent special-interest groups and never have to pay for or report any campaign help directly. *Time* reported how Kemp was shunned after a debate loss to Gore and shifted its sights to the increasingly likely second term for Clinton with speculations of what a new Cabinet would look like.

Like *Newsweek*, *U.S. News* wondered if Dole would try to save his campaign by starting the mudslinging and pointed out Clinton doesn’t have a mandate for a second term.

The hot news item in the late October magazines was President Clinton’s mysterious Asian money connection. Some articles were clearly issue stories and others personal stories. *Newsweek* focused this week on campaign financing, the Clinton money scandal and Kenneth Starr. The cover story outlined the Clintons’ connections to the East and revealed that the wealthy Riady family had steered $1 million to Clinton and his party after 1991 under suspicious circumstances. *Newsweek* also presented the possible changes in the coming new Clinton Cabinet.

The finance scandal took a back seat in *Time* and was barely mentioned in *U.S. News*, which was somewhat surprising, since it was clearly important news. *Time* focused more on the horse-race aspect of the campaign, speculating how much of California Dole could win over and predicting that the fight to legalize the medicinal use of marijuana could soon spread over the whole nation from California. Dole finally questioned his

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opponent’s moral character in San Diego but polls showed voters still liked Clinton’s friendly personality more, whatever his shortcomings.

Likewise, *U.S. News* asked if Clinton was fit to be president. The half-page verbatim selection from one of Dole’s campaign speeches asked the same question while Clinton touted his visionary view of the future as better than his opponent’s. An article examined how Dole was alienating women voters. And columnist Gloria Borger concluded that “small-time pandering is all that seems left in this election.” The result of the election was becoming more obvious and nobody was having heated debates about any issue.

Nearer to election time, the magazines started recognizing the inevitable outcome in the presidential race and acknowledged the public’s and the press’ growing boredom with the campaign. Writing about boredom made the coverage boring, even though the boredom was a definite fact. Nevertheless, surveys show the election was much more closely followed than the O.J. Simpson trial. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said they followed the 1996 election “very” or “somewhat” closely, whereas sixty percent said the same for the Simpson trial. Therefore, the stories about a bored electorate might not have been as justified as the magazines let readers understand.

*U.S. News* argued that old-time wedge issues, like crime and abortion, “have lost potency for the Republicans” and that this was one reason for Clinton’s being so far ahead. The magazine also took a look at campaign financing beyond the Huang/Riady

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scandal and concluded that the real movers in this business are Japan and some European nations, which spend millions in trying to shape American policy.

*Time* showed Clinton as the idol of the young and Dole as the antiquated veteran while profiling their stands on key issues like welfare and taxes. *Newsweek* told readers Dole would lose, warning that the Democrats might be up to taking over the Congress as well as the White House. It joined *Time* and exposed more details about the Democratic money scandal.

The last issues before the election results were published in the magazines were the Nov. 11 issues. Even though it might seem from the date that these were post-election issues, the magazines must have gone to print before the election results were known, because *U.S. News*, for example, ran a story on how to dazzle your conversation partners with political quips, giving the smartest responses in different post-election scenarios. The next issues were full of President Clinton’s victory stories.

*Newsweek* pooled the ideas of prominent journalists and businessmen about what could be done to reconnect voters to politics and gave the update on the Democratic soft-money scandal.

The only campaign-related articles in the Nov. 11 *Time* were four campaign-finance/scandal stories, mostly issue articles, on both Democrats and Republicans. *U.S. News*, on the other hand, disregarded the money scandal and gave only some humorous

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advice on how to be a political pundit in analyzing the election results, as noted above.
David Gergen bid farewell to Dole and his generation in the editorial.\(^{53}\)

Overall the coverage in all three magazines included coverage voters wanted. Every magazine had its share of issue stories and gave readers a comprehensive look at the total picture.

However, there were individual differences between the magazines. On the surface, \textit{U.S. News} responded to voters' expressed desire for more issue coverage and less horse-race coverage. \textit{Time} also struck a good balance between the two kinds of stories and had more issue stories than other kinds of articles. \textit{Newsweek}'s horse-race coverage far surpassed other coverage.

Most interesting was the magazines' treatment of the Morris and the foreign money scandals. \textit{Time} was the most enthusiastic in covering the scandals. Maybe this is the type of news that sells, since \textit{Time}'s circulation is almost a million more than \textit{Newsweek}'s and nearly two million more than that of \textit{U.S. News}. \textit{Time} let the Morris scandal heavily overshadow the Democratic convention coverage, speculating how it would affect Clinton. \textit{Newsweek} followed suit, but slightly less aggressively: There were no verbatim Morris/McGann interview articles in \textit{Newsweek}.

Meanwhile, \textit{U.S. News} didn't let the scandal interfere much with the convention coverage. The Morris news was presented in a few separate articles.

The same pattern was repeated with the campaign-finance scandal. \textit{U.S. News} didn't have much campaign-finance coverage. However, this was not only a scandal but a

campaign issue that affected both parties and thus should have received more attention. *Newsweek* had articles about the money scandal, but not as many as *Time*, which dedicated a good part of the Nov. 11 issue to campaign financing. At this point the articles probably didn't influence voters very much and the magazines might have been available only after the election, anyway.

Another conspicuous difference between the magazines was the heavy focus *U.S. News* gave to issues such as education, vouchers, public vs. private schools, crime and drugs, which was exactly what voters said they wanted to see. The verbatim speech selections from candidates were also a worthwhile addition to the coverage, and an attempt to give voters some "unfiltered" coverage, something they wanted more of.\(^5\)\(^4\)

Although *U.S. News* reported extensively on the issues, it did not neglect to tell readers about what the candidates were like, about their personal histories or campaign events. The magazine's coverage was quite balanced, except that there could have been more campaign-finance coverage.

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III. ANALYSIS WITH CATEGORIES

As was noted earlier, voters wanted less horse-race coverage and more issue coverage than what they had been getting from the media. Voters want campaign coverage to talk about the candidates' issue positions and how the outcome of the election will affect them. In this further analysis, the articles about the presidential race have been divided into three categories and the overall coverage evaluated in light of the findings. The question is, were there too many horse race articles and too little information about issues? The previous section answered these questions to some extent but the following is a more in-depth discussion of each magazine's coverage.

An article was assigned to a category based on its major focus, whether it mainly talked about the campaign strategies of the candidates (horse race), issues or some other aspect of the campaign, for example the candidates’ personal life histories. To clarify the categories, here are examples from Newsweek to illustrate what kind of writing would be categorized under each subject.

"Get Ready to Rumble" in the Sept. 16 issue is a good example of a horse-race story. It is a two-page report on how Dole was doing.

A month ago Dole seemed to be a genuine threat to Bill Clinton. He’d unveiled an eye-catching economic plan, picked the bouncy Jack Kemp as his running mate, staged a smooth convention—and pulled within a few polling points of the president. But since then nothing has worked. (Newsweek, Sept. 16, 1996, p. 46.)

"The Politics of Drugs: Back to War" was the first story exclusively in the issue category in Newsweek, appearing in the Aug. 26 issue. It has a lot of horse-race qualities to it but the focus was on the issue and what was being done to combat drugs: "As the Clinton-Gore campaign made haste to explain, drug use is actually down compared with 1985, when cocaine was at its peak."

Other research has divided articles in a similar way. A study by the Annenberg School for Communication and the Annenberg Public Policy Center divided leads in newspaper articles into strategy and issue leads.

A sample strategy lead was: "As he starts the final leg of what is likely to be his last campaign, Bob Dole, the notoriously undisciplined campaigner, says he has figured it out: 'We just need to keep pounding the message and pounding the message.'"

A sample issue lead was: "President Bush tonight conceded that Americans have been trapped 'in a long, dreary, slow-growth economy' but differed sharply with his opponent, Bill Clinton, on how to get job-producing growth again."

The criteria for dividing articles into categories in this study was basically the same: If the article talked about strategy, or who was ahead and who behind, it was considered a horse-race story. If the article talked about the issues, it was considered an issue story.

If the article didn't fit into either of those two categories, it was slotted into the "other" category. "How He Got His Groove" in the Sept. 2, 1996, issue of Newsweek is
an example of a story in the “other” category. The article focuses on the history of how Clinton climbed up in the job-approval ratings.

Luck played a part. He was fortunate in his enemies. Gingrich’s army overreached, and their general turned out to be more juvenile, and less popular, than the president himself. And there was a tragic political gift, the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. (Newsweek, Sept. 2, 1996, p. 23.)

Any article about the personal history of the candidates was also slotted in the "other" category.

To summarize the factual findings of this analysis, Newsweek’s coverage concentrated on the horse-race part more than on the issues. Time had more issue articles than horse-race articles or “other” articles, but nowhere as many as U.S. News, which had nearly as many issue articles as horse-race and “other” articles combined.

3.1 Newsweek’s coverage

The following table summarizes the points for each category in Newsweek. Every article was assigned under at least one category and received one article point. Some articles were assigned equally under two categories, in which case each category got one

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point. This is why the total number of points adds up to more than the number of articles studied.

\[\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Category} & \text{Horse race} & \text{Issues} & \text{Other} \\
\hline
\text{Points} & 29 & 17 & 17 \\
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\end{array}\]

Total number of articles studied: 61

The horse-race category was a definite winner. *Newsweek* ran more horse-race stories than *Time* or *U.S. News*. The race aspect received about 46 percent of the magazine’s total election coverage.

*Newsweek* presented polls from the start. The speculation in the Aug. 19 issue of how Kemp could hurt Clinton and help Dole may have been superfluous to many voters, as may have been the ever-present poll figures on the top and bottom of many articles. The readers needed to know the figures but not all the time.

*Newsweek* introduced the soccer moms or white middle-class women as a crucial voter group and said Dole was losing because he wasn’t appealing to voters on the right issues. The Republican and Democratic national conventions were largely treated with horse-race type of coverage. The horse-race/issue stories about how Dick Morris helped Clinton fashion his strategy were also important. However, one of the topics that could have received less horse-race coverage was the poorly run Dole campaign.
It was evident from the start that Dole would have to work hard to catch Clinton, and when it seemed evident that that wasn’t going to happen, *Newsweek* ran a series of doom articles, starting from the Sept. 16 issue.

“Get Ready to Rumble”\(^{57}\) was a bona fide horse-race story: “Once again lagging badly in the polls, Bob Dole and his campaign are trying to shake themselves awake before it’s truly too late.”\(^{58}\) The article came complete with a graphic detailing “Dole’s Daunting November Geography,”\(^{59}\) revealing that Dole would lose most states if the election were held at that time. Dole was very much behind in the polls and needed a real boost to get on top. However, “Pretty Close to Awful”\(^{60}\) bewailed Dole’s “fading campaign” and started the woeful race stories that after a while might have made the readers fed up.

In the next issue, Dole was advised to buy TV time, talk plainly to voters, promise to address governmental spending and make tough decisions.\(^{61}\) In the Sept. 30 issue Dole was shown “crashing to earth” in the Chico incident,\(^{62}\) the writer commenting, “Dole could use some luck, but isn’t getting any.”\(^{63}\)

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\(^{58}\)Ibid., p. 46.

\(^{59}\)Ibid., p. 47.


\(^{63}\)Ibid., p. 29.
The Oct. 14 magazine carried an extensive horse-race story, headlined “Does Dole Have a Prayer?” It carefully concluded that he might not. The article sported a minute-by-minute debate highlights section that showed neither candidate outshine the other.

The rest of the campaign featured little horse-race coverage because, according to the polls, the race was hardly a race anymore. *Newsweek* did comment in the end what a lackluster campaign it had been.

Because Dole had been so far behind Clinton in the polls, some potential Dole-backers might have felt that Dole had no chance anyway and voted for Clinton instead. Polls could become a self-fulfilling prophecy to some extent. But because the gap between the two candidates was so obviously wide, the polls probably didn’t have much effect on the outcome.

About 27 percent of *Newsweek* coverage was about the issues. Dole’s proposed tax cuts, drugs, public vs. private schools and the president’s past job performance made for entirely acceptable issue coverage. *Time*’s and *U.S. News*’ issue coverage wasn’t visibly better at this stage, although *U.S. News* had more extensive issue stories later.

However, it seemed that *Newsweek*’s issue coverage lacked depth in some aspects. The most coverage any issue received was a few one-page articles, except for the president’s performance report and the money scandal spin-offs. The Democrats’ family-friendly policies were briefly introduced as were Clinton’s views on welfare. At least the issues the candidates dodged in the debates, such as the size and role of government, got

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some coverage. The readers also got a peek preview of how the new Clinton Cabinet might shape up.

In “other” Newsweek campaign coverage, which made up 27 percent of the magazine’s coverage, Dole and Kemp were profiled in personal articles before the Republican convention. Clinton and Gore were featured before the Democratic convention.

These articles were there to provide a service: to introduce the candidates, especially Kemp. Both Newsweek and Time ran stories on Kemp’s selection and separate stories on Dole’s and Kemp’s backgrounds. U.S. News left out the vice-presidential selection story and had an extensive article on Dole’s personal history, but made also clear that the running mates were an odd couple.

After the Republican convention was through and the nation prepared for the Democrats, the personal-background articles on Clinton provided context for the campaign and background for the president’s views on issues, for example how his views on welfare and foreign policy were shaped.

Al Gore took a back seat in the coverage. It would have been interesting to know how he had grown during the four years he had been with Clinton from a political point of view as well as from a personal one. Newsweek ran only one short profile article about Gore in its pre-convention issue. Perhaps he wasn’t as intriguing as Kemp with his background as an NFL quarterback.

Since the Morris scandal was more of a personal embarrassment to Clinton than a political one (Morris’ downfall came as a result of personal indiscretions, not political bunglings) and many of the articles emphasized Morris personally rather than as the
former Clinton adviser, much of the Morris coverage was neither horse-race or issue coverage. *Newsweek*’s coverage of the Democratic convention was clearly overshadowed by the incident, which had little to do with the Clinton presidency. Discussion of Morris crowded out convention news.

Subsequent “other” articles included a story about the vice-presidential candidates that neatly summarized the candidates’ chief passions, economics for Kemp and saving the earth for Gore.

The Democratic fund-raising news brought up the question of how much money coverage is too much. However, this was a major news item that greatly affected the candidates, so the extensive coverage was justified. Articles about where the candidates get their money and how they get it provide needed information to voters because sometimes political favors are traded for money and voters need to know what their representatives are doing. In this case where there were possibly illegal campaign contributions and fund-raising practices, voters needed to know if their potential representatives may have been breaking the law.

*Newsweek* told about the money mess also with a general campaign-finance reform in mind. All was not pure scandal mongering. Overall, *Newsweek*’s coverage of the scandal was relevant.

3.2 *Time*’s coverage

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Horse race</th>
<th>Issues</th>
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Points 14 24 18

Total number of articles studied: 54

Horse-race stories got 25 percent of *Time*’s coverage, which is visibly less than in *Newsweek*. Very few horse-race articles ran before the mid-September issues when the magazine started to detail Dole’s campaign troubles. However, there should have been fewer articles about Dole’s impending doom, but *Time* didn’t focus on that nearly as much as *Newsweek*.

Two important stories in the Nov. 4 issue, one a horse-race article and the other an issue article, summed up the differences between the candidates and their standings on key issues very well.

Issues took up about 43 percent of *Time*’s election coverage. The best individual issue articles were in the Nov. 4 magazine.

The first issue stories were, much like in *Newsweek*, about Dole’s tax cut proposal, the drug war, what Clinton had learned in the past four years and his welfare policy.

The Sept. 9 magazine was full of campaign coverage. Most of it centered on Morris but *Time* also picked up on the family theme in the Democratic convention and summarized the teachers’ grudges against Dole. The issue coverage was similar to *Newsweek*’s in that a number of issues were paraded in front of the readers but none got in-depth coverage.

Education and the drug problem were somewhat cursorily covered. *Time* excelled in its in-depth coverage of the money mess near the end of the campaign. The articles
didn’t offer much more information than the *Newsweek* articles but had definitely more material than the *U.S. News* coverage.

*Time*’s “other” coverage constituted about 32 percent of the total *Time* presidential election coverage, a figure similar to *Newsweek*’s. However, *Time*’s “other” articles were heavily concentrated in the first part of the race. After the Sept. 9 issue there was only a handful of those types of articles and most of them were about the money scandal.

*Time* went to great lengths to thoroughly introduce Dole and Kemp to the voting public. These early personal-background stories were twice as long as *Newsweek*’s.

Whereas *Newsweek*’s first introductory stories were full of horse-race comments and poll figures, *Time* concentrated fully on the personal side. The very first article sported some quotes in a sidebar the candidates said about each other.\(^6^5\) Dole said, for example, that Kemp is “holding out for a deduction on hair spray.” Focusing on the candidates’ past rivalry certainly made for riveting reading.

The same Aug. 19 issue included a 10-page article about the “soul of Dole,”\(^6^6\) tracing his personal history from a wounded war veteran to the Senate. At this point in the campaign it was important to acquaint the voters with their candidates and *Time* did an excellent job with that. The magazine concentrated more on the issues later.

Another positive aspect about *Time*’s coverage at the beginning was that there was slightly more emphasis on Al Gore than in *Newsweek* or in *U.S. News*. Jack Kemp had

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much news value as the unexpected vice-presidential candidate and he automatically got a lot of press, but voters also needed to read about the other vice-presidential candidate.

What made *Time*’s coverage unique was the profile on Dick Morris that didn’t appear in the other magazines. *Time* as well as the others covered the Morris scandal but *Time* covered the adviser before his fall from grace. Morris got the cover of the Sept. 2 issue as well as of the following issue, when the scandal broke.

Dick Morris was certainly an intriguing subject. Despite that, *Time* may have given him too much coverage, especially after the scandal. Much of the reporting about the Democratic convention was colored by the Morris scandal.

One of *Time*’s longer campaign stories was in the Oct. 14 magazine, “Desperately Seeking Lori.”° It introduced a working mother and her problems and discussion of issues such as daycare and taxes was woven into the article. It was an example of good enterprise reporting. As was pointed out earlier, *Time* got a lot of positive, as well as some negative, feedback for the story.

Most of the campaign-finance stories were slotted into the issue category since fundraising was one of the issues in the campaign. Only one campaign-finance article was more of a scandal story. It provided a detailed look at John Huang and his fund raising for the Democrats.

3.3 *U.S. News & World Report*’s coverage

U.S. News & World Report

Category | Horse race | Issues | Other
---|---|---|---
Main points | 28 | 34 | 10

Total number of articles studied: 63

U.S. News presented a stark difference in coverage. Over a third or 39 percent of the articles were horse-race stories. That is less than in Newsweek and more than in Time. In the beginning of the coverage the focus was mainly on the horse-race aspect of the campaign, but the emphasis turned to issues from the Sept. 16 magazine onward, a change attributed by staffers in part to the magazine’s new editor, James Fallows.

Instead of focusing on the personal side of Jack Kemp in the Aug. 19 issue, U.S. News focused on the horse race and how Kemp could help Dole win. U.S. News’ emphasis on the horse race was roughly the same as in Newsweek at this point and there were definitely more race stories than in Time. However, U.S. News didn’t run the figures, charts and poll results that Newsweek ran from the beginning.

Horse-race coverage continued through the Republican and Democratic conventions. While the Democratic convention coverage was heavily dosed with the Morris news in the other magazines, U.S. News kept the scandal and convention separate and focused on the horse race in its convention stories.

From the Sept. 16 issue on, horse race fought a losing battle with issues. There were also as many as nine articles that had to be assigned in both the horse race and issue categories equally. One of these stories appeared on the Sept. 30 magazine with drugs as the issue. President Clinton said in an MTV interview that he would inhale if he got the
chance. Dole used the quote in his political ads, which brought the horse race into the picture. The previous horse-race story in the same magazine dealt with campaign ads.

Legal immigrants, the voters nobody seemed to acknowledge, and Dole’s losing campaign got horse-race coverage in October. Horse race and issues intersected in the immigrant story. The writers also speculated what kind of a president Dole would be and offered advice on how to turn the campaign around. There was a brief look at Kemp’s campaign trail and further conjecture on whether Dole should play the “character card,” or begin attacking Clinton’s character. Dole failed to do that in the San Diego debates, a fact the writers lamented: It could have brought some new life into the sagging campaign.

All the horse-race articles fitted well into the coverage as a whole.

There was definitely enough horse-race coverage in *U.S. News* but it didn’t overwhelm the reader like *Newsweek*’s coverage did. The magazine followed the main campaign events and kept abreast of what was happening and what the situation was without drowning the voter in poll figures.

Issues constituted almost a half, or 47 percent, of the total coverage in *U.S. News*, which was more than in either of the other magazines. The focus of the coverage changed to issues quite soon after brief initial horse-race dominance.

The issue coverage started with three one-page articles about Dole’s proposed tax cuts. The family issues were discussed in connection with the Democratic convention. Another issue story decried the Democratic party’s ignoring convention city Chicago’s inner-city problems.

From the Sept. 16 issue on, almost every story was either an issue article or a combined issue and horse-race story. The verbatim selections from the candidates’
speeches that started from this magazine issue were also slotted either solely in the issue category or in both categories. The verbatim texts were one page in length, with half a page for each candidate.

The verbatim selections were an important addition to *U.S. News*’ election coverage. They told what the candidates thought about a variety of issues in their own words. Of course the journalists at the magazine had to select the quotes. Among the issues Clinton and Dole discussed were the deficit, drugs, the size and role of government and morals. Each verbatim selection gave a glimpse into the message of each candidate.

*U.S. News*’ issue stories included articles on what the candidates promised to do for children, the drug war, public vs. private schools and a cover story on crime. Educational issues were very thoroughly covered. The stories were lengthy and made the candidates’ stances clear.

“Other” articles constituted only about 14 percent of the total article points. *U.S. News*’ personal-background coverage of the candidates may have been scanty, but it was enough. Horse race and issue articles also revealed much of the personal side. *U.S News* gave a well-rounded picture of the candidates’ past and also presented them as individual people, and that made the personal-background coverage adequate.

A change took place in mid-September when James Fallows became the new editor of the magazine, but even before his coming *U.S. News* had its own distinctive style of presenting news. For example, the other two magazines featured both Dole and Kemp on the covers of their Aug. 19 issues, whereas *U.S. News* had only Dole on the cover. Kemp stole much of the spotlight only because he was the unexpected vice-presidential candidate, but *U.S. News* seemed to have still focused more on the main
candidate, Bob Dole, which was clearly understandable. The Aug. 19 issue also had a personal-background story about Bob and Elizabeth Dole.

The next “other” articles surfaced on the Sept. 2 magazine. The first of two stressed the fact that “Dole seldom mentions the word ‘Congress,’ because that institution is as popular as a flu epidemic.” The story didn’t fit into the other two categories and the article mainly discussed Dole and how he operates. The second is about Bill and Hillary Clinton, written in the same style as the personal-background article about the Doles. These two articles about the presidential candidates and their wives summed up their personalities and the work that was most important personally to them in an almost cozy yet informative and comprehensive way.

The next “other” articles were about the Dick Morris scandal. There were three short articles on him altogether. Needless to say, the other magazines gave the scandal much more coverage. On the Sept. 9 issue, Time first of all had scandal information throughout its main Democratic convention story. There was a question and answer-formatted interview article with Morris and an article written by his wife, Eileen McGann, about the week’s events. One article contained detailed information about how the Star tabloid obtained the scoop on the story. Newsweek had everything Time had, except for the Morris interview and McGann article. U.S. News barely mentioned Morris in its main Democratic convention story in its Sept. 9 issue and had one small article about Morris, the scandal and his history with Clinton. There was also a one-page columnist’s piece about Morris. But U.S. News’ coverage about the scandal was adequate, in that it didn’t miss anything vital.
An article in the Nov. 4 magazine urged Dole to let loose and say what he really believed, as Walter Mondale did before his big defeat. This was labeled an “other” story because it didn’t talk about issues and it didn’t talk about the horse race. The last article, the editorial, bid farewell to Dole’s generation in politics.

*U.S. News* had the best issue coverage of the three magazines and the best overall coverage of the campaign from the point of view of voter concerns as expressed in earlier campaign surveys. The horse-race aspect wasn’t overstressed, the main issues were well covered and the personal-background articles were interesting and not too numerous.
IV. INTERVIEWS WITH JOURNALISTS

I talked with journalists at the three magazines who either directed the 1996 campaign coverage or covered it. I hoped to put my study more into perspective and see if the journalists held the same views of the coverage as I did.

Newsweek’s Jonathan Alter is a senior editor at Newsweek who wrote weekly articles about the campaign. He said that in its weekly articles the magazine would cover the news and try to project forward what was going to happen. He defended Newsweek’s focus on polls by saying that polling is just a part of the political process, especially when election time is near. Campaigns are very much tied to them and it is not good for the press to ignore poll figures, he said, because campaigns are very much tied to them. He also said the magazine did its own polling and didn’t rely on polls the candidates supplied. He didn’t think the magazine focused too much on the horse race. From Labor Day to the election, it’s a horse race, he said.

Although Alter thought the heavy horse-race focus was entirely justified, I don’t think it provided the “hearty meal” he said voters want in coverage. There should have been more issue stories.

Alter said the Dick Morris scandal was so thoroughly covered because he was the architect of Clinton’s campaign. When the scandal broke, it was big news. The sexual element added flavor to it, he said. “Was it overcovered? Maybe,” he said, admitting the magazine might have had too many articles on Morris and the scandal.

Alter also said he thought there was enough issue coverage in Newsweek. He absolutely didn’t think that Time had more issue coverage than Newsweek, but said U.S.
News might have had more because "they do that sort of thing," but thought Newsweek satisfied readers just as well. He also correctly pointed out that amid the Morris scandal coverage there was discussion of the issues Morris helped bring to front to help Clinton win the public’s favor, such as more cops on the streets and more free cell phones distributed to neighborhoods to more effectively report crime.

While Newsweek lacked a strong overall goal as to what the coverage should accomplish, a theme in the coverage was weather Dole could come back from behind Clinton, Alter said. Newsweek tried to cover the campaign’s strategy, substance, mishaps, personalities and handlers, he said.

Alter had a voice in directing the magazine’s coverage as a senior editor, but did not have final say in the coverage. He was, nevertheless, one of the few people who were totally involved in the campaign coverage and knew everything about the magazine’s policies. The only thing Alter would have done differently in the coverage was to include more coverage of the questionable Democratic fund-raising practices. Knowing what is known now about Clinton’s fund raising, Newsweek should have focused more on it, he said. The magazine did have a cover on the money scandal, he pointed out.

As for feedback, the magazine usually gets some feedback on the coverage, but it’s mostly people writing to express their opinion on the subject, not on the coverage of politics, Alter said. He said that they care what their readers think, but that “it’s our decision, not theirs, how we cover a campaign.” The magazine doesn’t do focus groups or surveys. “That’s marketing, not journalism,” he said.68

68The telephone interview with Jonathan Alter took place on June 4, 1998. Alter also answered some questions by e-mail on June 17.
Priscilla Painton, an assistant managing editor who directed *Time*’s 1996 campaign coverage, said she was “extremely pleased” with the magazine’s coverage. They wrote every week about whatever was in the news and what they anticipated would happen, she said. She said there had been enough issue coverage.

Painton said the magazine’s goal had been to make readers understand the character of the candidates, what their values were and based on that, what kind of a president each of them would make.

*Time* was the only magazine to profile Dick Morris before the scandal broke and had much coverage of the scandal itself. He deserved so much coverage because he was the man behind Clinton’s comeback, Painton said. Morris made Clinton look like someone who cared about parents’ problems and came up with something new every week that Clinton could do to help families, she said. His hiring said more about Clinton than anything else and when he had his downfall, that said a lot about Clinton himself and who he surrounded himself with, she said.

If Painton had to cover the election again, she wouldn’t change anything. She said that the magazine had given readers a rich sense of who the candidates were and that is what they had tried to accomplish.69

Nancy Gibbs, a senior editor at *Time* magazine who also wrote many of the campaign stories, said she didn’t think the Morris scandal was overcovered. She said that because *Time* had been the one to cover Morris as the wizard behind Clinton’s comeback

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69The telephone interview with Priscilla Painton took place on June 3, 1998.
before the scandal broke, they felt obliged to be equally thorough in the other end of the story.70

Gibbs said *Time* didn’t publish some personal details about the candidates because they were too personal or were irrelevant to the campaign. She didn’t want to cite any examples, but Dole’s Chico fall could have been one of them.

Gibbs said the feedback from readers was remarkably positive and most letters were about the contents of the stories or what people thought about the issues discussed rather than about how the campaign was covered, Gibbs said. She said *Time* doesn’t conduct reader surveys to see what issues they would like to see covered and said the criticism that comes from within the industry, from fellow journalists, is more important. The special report on the most wanted woman in America who represented American voters, Lori Lucas, got a lot of positive feedback from colleagues.71 Many journalists said that it was a remarkable story and wished they had thought of doing something like that, she said. Newsweek said the article was a nervy thing to do. *Time* also received a lot of positive feedback from colleagues and Dole’s representatives for the “Soul of Dole” story, a 10-page personal article about the candidate that ran before the Republican convention.72 Some even said it was the single best piece done about Dole, she said. She also said no coverage could ever be perfect, but couldn’t think of anything specific she would have liked to change.

70The telephone interview with Nancy Gibbs took place on June 19, 1998.
Gibbs thought it was a good idea for *U.S. News* to include verbatim selections of the candidates’ speeches in its coverage. Alter didn’t think it was a bad idea either, but John Walcott disagreed. Walcott was formerly an assistant managing editor, director of election coverage before Labor Day and later senior writer at *U.S. News & World Report*. He was not happy with the magazine’s coverage after James Fallows took over as editor in mid-September, 1996, and criticized Fallows heavily. He especially took issue with Fallows’ decision to recall reporters from the field back to Washington, which shifted the coverage “back to the Beltway” and produced stories from Washington’s point of view. Walcott wouldn’t have included any verbatim selections in the coverage because, he said, the speeches are pre-written, usually by someone else than the candidate, and are more like advertisements for the candidates. The verbatim speech selections were “a meager attempt at what was somebody’s idea of good journalism,” Walcott said. He said people are seriously interested in issues, and some of the issues in this campaign were the economy and immigration. The magazine’s focus was on the issues during the campaign, although he would have done even those stories differently, having more grass-roots coverage and talking to voters in the field rather than have stories written from only a Washington point of view.

Walcott said he was extremely skeptical of public journalism and thought focus groups and surveys are imperfect devices of finding out what readers want. “Our business is reporting, not listening to pollsters to do our work for us,” he said.

*U.S. News* had markedly less coverage about the Morris sex scandal than the other two magazines. Walcott said this was a definite decision made by the editorial staff. They weren’t interested in covering scandals or making trouble for President Clinton, he said.
If Walcott could have covered the campaign his own way, he would have focused more heavily on the Democratic fund-raising. As it was, *U.S. News* let the issue go by with little coverage.\(^7^3\)

Brian Duffy, former assistant managing editor at *U.S. News* who directed the election coverage after Labor Day, said Fallows wanted to focus more on the issues rather than on the horse-race aspect of the campaign, which is also what Duffy wanted to do.\(^7^4\) (Walcott wasn’t replaced because he wanted to do more horse-race stories. Walcott said he stepped down from directing the campaign coverage because he disagreed with Fallows on how the issues should be covered.) Duffy also said the verbatim selections from the candidates’ speeches were beneficial to the readers in that people could read the actual words from candidates instead of always having reporters filter their message.

Duffy said he didn’t hear any complaints about *U.S. News*’ coverage and said the magazine has a reputation for “just the facts” coverage. Duffy didn’t think the magazine’s coverage changed very much after Fallows came in and said they “pretty much continued with what John (Walcott) was doing.” He said Fallows definitely wanted a lot of issue coverage and “wasn’t into horse-race coverage.” Some of the issues the voters were interested about in this election were the economy and crime, Duffy said.

Katie Crocker, director of media relations at *U.S. News*, said that the magazine doesn’t do reader focus groups or surveys on what kind of coverage they would like to

\(^7^3\)Telephone interviews with John Walcott took place on June 2 and 15, 1998.
\(^7^4\)The telephone interview with Brian Duffy took place on June 17, 1998.
see. She said doing focus groups is extremely expensive, and said Fallows didn’t do these kinds of surveys or focus groups, either.\textsuperscript{75} Fallows verified this.\textsuperscript{76}

Fallows said that there were three ways he kept in touch with the readers of \textit{U.S. News}. The first way was through the magazine’s Web site. The site included a lot of citizen involvement information, how the readers could get involved in what was going on in their state, and readers could send e-mail to the magazine and give feedback.

The second way to keep in contact was through the unusually large volume of letters to the editor the magazine received, Fallows said. The third way was through reader surveys that the magazine had done over 25 years. The surveys had revealed that readers wanted less entertainment and more fact nuggets and information that concerned their lives, Fallows said.

Fallows said that the 1996 election was a different kind of election for him to cover because he became editor so late in the race and even by September the outcome already “seemed ordained.” He said he didn’t change the coverage much and said that his goal had been to find interesting and valuable information to voters about the election issues. That kind of issue and information-based coverage was in keeping with the tradition of the magazine, he said, and it was at least just as interesting as coverage of the campaign tactics.

Fallows said that of course there are things he would change if he could cover the election again. He couldn’t cite any specific examples of stories, but said that there had been a lot of turmoil at the magazine when he had come in because many of the writers

\textsuperscript{75}The telephone interview with Katie Crocker took place on May 24, 1999.
\textsuperscript{76}The telephone interview with James Fallows took place on July 22, 1999.
left. He said that it was largely a personnel matter. Having great writers on the staff such as Steven Waldman, Ronald Brownstein and Elise Ackerman would have made a big difference in the coverage, had they been at the magazine in 1996, he said.

Fallows said he has a personal policy not to talk about the other two big news magazines, but said that Newsweek is generally more geared toward more celebrity and entertainment coverage than U.S. News. (I agreed.)

Fallows thinks that the most useful campaign coverage the media can provide to voters is giving people “information that makes the outcome of election seem important to them.” The media could do a better job covering elections by emphasizing what’s at stake and finding creative ways to get the voters engaged in what the outcome of the election will mean to them personally, he said. This requires coverage of the candidates’ stances on issues: What will happen to health care, will there be more taxes, and so on, if one candidate is elected, versus another.

Now that the 2000 elections are around the corner, Fallows thinks there are two main areas where news magazines can improve their election coverage. First, he would have the most talented writers spend time trying to explain matters of substance in the campaign in their stories, such as is a tax cut a good idea or not. Secondly, he would like to see journalists think about the criticisms to the coverage they are going to get once the election is over and build their judgment while they are covering the election.
V. CONCLUSION

I found the magazines’ campaign coverage much better and more interesting than I thought I would find it based on the media studies I looked at, but *Newsweek* did overemphasize the horse-race aspect of the campaign. *Time* and *Newsweek* also could have included more in-depth issue articles in their coverage.

Even though Jonathan Alter suggested otherwise, I think that the issues in the campaign, few though they perhaps were compared to other presidential campaigns, got a back seat to horse-race coverage in *Newsweek*. Generally, the writing style in *Newsweek* articles included a lot more horse-race elements than the writing in the other two magazines.

The theme that was very visible in *Newsweek*, whether Dole could make a comeback, was part of that strong horse-race coverage. There could certainly have been less of that kind of coverage. I think some Dole supporters might have been so discouraged by the bad news that they didn’t even bother to vote.

On the other hand, in elections where the candidates have an even race, the poll figures might make supporters vote in bigger numbers. The horse-race coverage can work both ways.

The best horse-race coverage of the three magazines was in *U.S. News* and *Time*, mainly because the magazines didn’t emphasize the horse-race aspect of the campaign too much. There also were a lot of stories in *U.S. News* that combined the horse-race aspect and the discussion of issues, which was appropriate. The horse-race aspect couldn’t really be ignored, and what better way to report on it than in connection with issues.
The issues that were particularly well covered in the news magazines were crime, education and drugs. The candidates didn’t debate much about the size and role of government or about the deterioration of the inner cities.

The magazines didn’t much investigate the reasons why crime, drugs and education had become campaign issues. *U.S. News* went beyond the other magazines in covering those issues. For example, an editorial pointed out how the Democrats ignored their convention city Chicago’s inner-city problems.

And regarding *Time*, it could still be argued that the magazine presented some of its best issue coverage and summaries late in the Nov. 4 issue when most voters had probably already made their decisions. But at least they had those stories. Neither of the other news magazines had such thorough summary articles on the candidates and issues. Overall, *Time*’s coverage was what voters surveyed said they wanted with good issue stories and not too many horse-race articles. Extensive scandal coverage was also justified to some extent, although Morris received maybe more coverage than he was worth.

The media plays an extremely important role in raising issues for the electorate and the candidates. There should also be a healthy exchange of ideas between the media and the public, because if the media cover issues of interest to the voters, they are also more likely to become involved in the political process.

The way the magazines handled their issue coverage as a whole was relevant to readers. The issues of crime, drugs and education are certainly central to life in the United States and overall, the stories provided a lot of information on what the candidates intended to do about the problems in those three areas.
U.S. News’ approach to the campaign under Fallows was valid, in spite of the criticisms. The approach wasn’t any worse than that of the other magazines, and I still think it had the best issue coverage of the three. The verbatim selections presented the candidates’ views on a variety of issues in their own words and the selections were a welcome addition to the magazine’s coverage.

None of the magazines had huge gaps in their coverage and each gave an adequate overview of the candidates, the issues and the campaign events.

However, Newsweek could have de-emphasized the horse-race aspect of the campaign and U.S. News could have paid more attention to the fund-raising scandal. The story deserved more attention. But U.S. News still had the best overall campaign coverage.

In conclusion, readers could better prepare themselves for election time by getting their news from as many sources as possible. TV shouldn’t be the sole source of information. In addition to newspapers and magazines, radio and the Internet can be excellent sources of campaign information. The Internet has the best capacity to offer the unfiltered news the voters wanted more of. The nature of the medium allows speech and debate transcripts to be available in their full length on Web sites. The different media can complement each other and provide the best overall coverage for the voters for making their decisions.
VI. APPENDIX

The following is a list of all the articles that were analyzed for this study.

*Newsweek*

Aug. 19, 1996

1) “Just the Ticket?” 6 pages, pp. 22-27, Dole/Republicans

Category: Horse race


Category: Issues

7) “Pangloss For Veep” 1 page, p. 70, Dole,Kemp/Rep. Category: Horse race

Aug. 26, 1996


Category: Horse race


10) “Playing to the Squeeze” 1 page, p. 29, Dole/Rep. Category: Horse race


Sept. 2, 1996


14) “What Mr.Smooth Is Teaching Mr. Stiff” 1 page, p. 26, Gore/Dem.
15) "Parochial Concerns" 1 page, p. 27, ab. Catholic schools, no parties represented

Category: Issues

16) "Should We Rehire This Man?" 6 pages, pp. 36-43, Clinton/Dem. Category: Issues

Sept. 9, 1996


Category: Horse race

18) "The Morris Meltdown" 5 pages, pp. 32-37, Morris/Dem. Category: Other

19) "Where Real People Live" 1 page, p. 38, Morris/Dem. Categories: Horse Race, Issues

20) "Dancing With the Enemy" 1 page, p. 43, Dem. Category: Horse Race

21) "Virtual Inspiration" 1 page, p. 45, Clinton/Dem. Category: Other

22) "No Work, No Workfare" ab. 1 page, pp. 46-47, Dem. Category: Issues

23) "A Secret Agenda?" 1 page, p. 57, Clinton/Dem. Category: Issues

24) "The Family Values Party" 1 page, p. 82, Dem. Category: Issues

Sept. 16, 1996


26) "Sifting Through the Rubble" 1 page, p. 50, Morris/Dem. Category: Other

27) "Pretty Close to Awful" 1 page, p. 51, Dole/Rep. Category: Horse race

Sept. 23, 1996

28) "How I'd Try to Save Dole" 1 page, p. 41, Dole/Rep. Category: Horse race

29) "The Limits of Negativity" 1 page, p. 42, Clinton/Dem. Category: Horse race

Sept. 30, 1996
31) “Crashing to Earth” about 2 pages, pp. 28-30, Dem./Rep. Category: Horse race
32) “Stewing on the Sidelines” ab. 2 pages, pp.30-31, Perot. Category: Horse race

Oct. 7, 1996
33) “At Close Range” and “Advice from Across the Aisle” ab. 3 pages, pp. 38-41, Dem./Rep.
Category: Horse race
34) “The Role of a Lifetime” 1 page, p. 43, Hillary/Dem. Category: Other
35) “The Debate We Need” 1 page, p. 61, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues

Oct. 14, 1996
Category: Horse race
38) “Politics Without Pols” 1 page, p. 36, Clinton/Dem. Category: Horse race
40) “Pot Shots in the War on Drugs” 1 page, p. 42, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues

Oct. 21, 1996
44) “A Reluctant Campaigner” ab. 1 page, pp. 36-37, Dem. Category: Issues
45) “Here’s the Straight Dope” 1 page, p. 37, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues
46) “Soft Money, Easy Access” ab. 1 page, p. 40, Dem. Category: Other


49) “The Voters Look Away” 1 page, p. 96, Dem./Rep. Category: Horse race

Oct. 28, 1996


52) “Next Year’s Model” 3 pages, pp. 34-36, Dem. Category: Issues

53) “A Starr-Crossed Term?” 1 page, p. 38, Dem. Category: Other


Nov. 4, 1996


57) “A Man Not of This Time” 1 page, p. 30, Dole/Rep. Category: Other

58) “Now, the Taiwan Axis” 1 page, p. 32, Dem. Category: Other

59) “Where the Anger Went” 1 page, p. 33. Category: Horse race

Nov. 11, 1996

60) “Bored to the Bone” 4 pages, pp. 38-42. Category: Horse race

61) “Calling All Lawyers” 2 pages, pp. 46-47, Dem. Category: Other
Aug. 19, 1996

4) “Calculating Dole: 15% or Bust” ab. 1 page, pp. 52-53, Dole/Rep. Category: Issues

Aug. 26, 1996

5) “A Spoonful of Sugar Helps the Medicine Go Down” ab. 3 pages, pp. 16-19, Dole/Rep. Category: Other
6) “Welcome to the Hard Truths” ab. 1 page, p. 19, Dole/Rep. Category: Other

Sept. 2, 1996

7) “Sitting Pretty” 5 pages, pp. 18-22, Clinton/Dem. Category: Other

Sept. 9, 1996

13) “Skunk at the Family Picnic” 7 pages, pp. 24-30, Morris/Dem. Category: Other
14) “Even If This Destroys Me...” ab. 1 page, p. 32, Morris/Dem.
Category: Horse race


Category: Other

16) “Carried Away with Kids” 1 page, p. 34, Dem. Category: Issues


20) “Does the Morris Thing Matter?” 1 page, P. 78, Dem. Category: Other

Sept. 16, 1996


Category: Horse race

Sept. 23, 1996

22) “Parochial Politics” ab. 3 pages, pp. 30-33. Category: Issues


Category: Issues


26) “Every Man for Himself” 1 page, p. 37, Rep. Category: Horse race


Sept. 30, 1996


Oct. 7, 1996

31) “Hushed on the Stump” ab. 1 page, p. 48, Hillary/Dem. Category: Other
Categories: Issues, Horse race
Category: Horse race
34) “When Foxes Pose as Hedgehogs” 1 page, p. 63, Dem./Rep. Category: Other

Oct. 14, 1996

37) “Desperately Seeking Lori” 8 pages, pp. 44-52. Category: Other

Oct. 21, 1996


Oct. 28, 1996

42) “Marijuana: Where There’s Smoke, There’s Fire” ab. 1 page, pp. 36-37.
Category: Issues
43) "The Trouble with Character" ab. 2 pages, pp. 38-40, Dem./Rep.

Category: Other

44) "A Case of Mud Lust" ab. 1 page, p. 40, Dem./Rep. Category: Horse race

45) "The Foreign Foul-Up" ab. 1 page, p. 42-43, Dem. Category: Issues

46) "Clinton's Cuban Road to Florida" 2 pages, pp. 45-46, Clinton/Dem.

Category: Horse race

Nov. 4, 1996

47) "Two Men, Two Visions" 6 pages, pp. 30-36, Dem./Rep.

Category: Horse race


Category: Issues

49) "Where They Stand" 2 pages, pp. 44-45, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues

50) "We'll Talk When It's Over" and "Edging Closer" 1 page, p. 47, Dem.

Category: Other

Nov. 11, 1996


52) "Meanwhile, on the Other Side" ab. 1 page, pp. 34-35, Rep. Category: Issues

53) "Were Trade Missions for Sale?" ab. 1 page, p. 36, Dem. Category: Issues

54) "The Cash Machine" 3 pages, pp. 39-41, Dem. Category: Other

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U.S. News & World Report
Aug. 19, 1996

1) "Eyes on the Prize" ab. 7 pages, pp. 22-30, Dole/Rep. Category: Other

2) "The Yin and Yang of Republican Politics" ab. 2 pages, pp. 35-36, Kemp/Rep. Category: Horse race

3) "Economic Elixir or Voodoo Economics?" 1 page, p. 38, Dole/Rep. Category: Issues

4) "The Valley of the Dolls" 1 page, p. 39, Dole/Rep. Category: Horse race

5) "Who's the Real Bob Dole?" 1 page, p. 64, Dole/Rep. Category: Other

Aug. 26, 1996


7) "Off to the Races" ab. 6 pages, pp. 20-26, Rep. Category: Horse race


9) "What They Aren’t Telling Us" 1 page, p. 60, Dem./Rep. Category: Horse race

Sept. 2, 1996

10) "Training an Ear to the Sounds of Silence" 2 pages, pp. 10-11, Dole/Rep. Category: Other

11) "Coming of Age" ab. 5 pages, pp. 22-27, Clinton/Dem. Category: Other


13) "Does He Still Feel Your Pain?" 1 page, p. 64, Clinton/Dem. Category: Horse race

Sept. 9, 1996

14) "The Year of the Great Parental Pitch" 2 pages, pp. 6-7, Clinton/Dem. Category: Issues


17) “A Master of Resurrections Suddenly Falls from Grace” ab. 1 page, p. 27, Morris/Dem. Category: Other


19) “A Bridge to Nowhere” 1 page, p. 64, Dem. Category: Issues

Sept. 16, 1996

‘Verbatim’

20) “The Deficit: ‘You Do Care’”, “Drugs: ‘He Sets the Moral Tone’”

1 page, p. 16, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues

21) “Kinderpolitics ‘96” ab. 5 pages, pp. 51-58. Category: Issues

22) “Why This Country Is Losing the Drug War” 1 page, p. 60. Category: Issues

23) “Singing a Song of Himself” 1 page, p. 62, Morris/Dem. Category: Other

Sept. 23, 1996

‘Verbatim’

24) “They Trust the Government”, “We Said Yes...And They Said No”

1 page, p. 18, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues

25) “A Challenge the Schools Didn’t Take” 1 page, p. 32. Category: Issues


27) “Schools Our Kids Deserve” 1 page, p. 108. Category: Issues

Sept. 30, 1996

‘Verbatim’
28) "It All Begins With Education," "We Had a Family Structure"
   1 page, p. 21, Dem/Rep. Category: Issues


30) "Accentuating the Negative-Quietly" 2 pages, pp. 43-44, Dem./Rep.
   Category: Horse race

31) "Wishing to Inhale" 1 page, p. 45, Dem./Rep. Categories: Issues, Horse race

32) "A Social Contract For Schools" 1 page, p. 76. Category: Issues

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33) "For Kids: 'Parks, Not Poison','End of the IRS as We Know It"
   1 page, p. 18, Dem./Rep. Category: Issues

34) "Writing Murphy’s Law" ab. 2 pages, pp. 30-32 (immigration). Category: Issues

35) "The Voters Nobody Seems to Know" ab. 2 pages, pp. 32-34. Category: Horse race

36) "Talking Heads-and Points" ab. 2 pages, pp. 36-41, Dem./Rep.
   Category: Other

37) "Of Credibility and Character" 1 page, p. 43, Dem./Rep. Category: Horse race

38) "Schools that Work" 7 pages, pp. 58-64. Category: Issues

39) "Why Vouchers Won’t Work" 1 page, p. 66. Category: Issues

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40) "Government Should Apologize", "We Are on the Right Track"

42) “Take this Job and Love It” 3 pages, pp. 45-47. Category: Issues


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45) “‘Pushing Back the Frontiers’”, “‘You Are Liberal, Mr. President’”


47) “Leadership by Litany” 1 page, p. 43. Category: Issues

48) “The Fine Art of Digging Dirt” ab. 1 page, pp. 44-46. Category: Horse race

49) “Singing the Blues in the Spook House” ab. 1 page, p. 46. Category: Issues

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‘Verbatim’

51) “‘A Growing Gap in Integrity’”, “‘We Just Have Different Views’”

Category: Horse race


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55) “In the End, a Chance to Sing” 1 page, p. 9, Dole/Rep. Category: Other
‘Verbatim’

56) “‘We Are All the Creatures of God’”, “Wake Up, America”
1 page, p. 11, Dem./Rep. Categories: Horse race, Issues


58) “Voices from the Gallery” 4 pages, pp. 28-36. Category: Horse race


60) “As Foreign Money Goes, It’s Peanuts” 1 page, p. 42. Category: Issues


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62) “Schmooze you can lose” 1 page, p. 44, Dem./Rep. Category: Horse race

63) “New Keepers of the Flame” 1 page, p. 80, Dem./Rep. Category: Other