CHAPTER 15 *Mitchell S. McKinney*

Engaging Citizens Through Presidential Debates: Does the Format Matter?

The following rather tortuous exchange occurred among Texas Governor George W. Bush, Vice President Al Gore, and debate moderator Jim Lehrer during the second presidential debate on October 11, 2000, in Winston Salem, North Carolina:

BUSH: Yes, I agree. I just, I think there's been some, some of the scientists, I believe, Mr. Vice President, haven't they been changing their opinion a little bit on global warming? A profound scientist recently made an, made a . . .

LEHRER: Both of you, both of you now have violated . . .

GORE: But the point is . . .

LEHRER: Excuse me. Both of you have now violated your own rules. Hold that thought.

GORE: I've been trying so hard not to.

LEHRER: I know. I know. But about—you're not, under your rules, you are not allowed to ask each other a question. I let you [*Gore*] do it a moment ago. And now you [*Bush*] just . . .

BUSH: Twice.

LEHRER: Twice, sorry. OK. [*Laughter*]

BUSH: One, I thought I . . .

GORE: That's an interruption, by the way.

LEHRER: Yes, that's an interruption. OK. But anyhow, you [*Gore*] just did it. So now we're even . . .

BUSH: I'm sorry.

LEHRER: That's all right. It's OK.

BUSH: I apologize, Mr. Vice President. But . . .

LEHRER: And you're not allowed to do that either. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry. Go ahead, finish your thought.

BUSH: I . . .

LEHRER: People care about these things, I've found out.

BUSH: Of course, they care about it. Oh . . . you mean these rules.

LEHRER: Right, exactly right. [*Laughter*]

LEHRER: Go ahead.

BUSH: I . . . of course there's a lot of . . . I mean, look, global warming needs to be taken very seriously, and I take it seriously.

As illustrated by this exchange, the rules for a presidential debate may sometimes seem more important than the actual debate of campaign issues. Indeed, the specific terms of debate engagement have often been the subject of heated and protracted wrangling among the candidates. Now that our quadrennial presidential debates are seemingly institutionalized, the question of whether or not candidates will actually meet in debate has been replaced by disputes regarding when, where, how, and with whom they will debate. Following the late-summer conventions at which the two major political parties officially nominate their standard-bearer for the upcoming fall election, the general election phase of a presidential campaign begins traditionally with the now requisite "debate over the debates" in which candidates jockey for advantage by proposing and negotiating debate particulars designed to complement one's communicative strengths and further one's campaign strategy (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000, p. 143).

While candidates and their handlers routinely spar over how the now expected presidential debates should be structured, scholars, too, have devoted a great deal of attention to this question. The extant presidential debate literature is replete with analysis as to what is wrong with televised presidential debates and numerous suggestions for fixing these deficiencies.[1] Common criticisms have included the inability of candidates to develop sustained and in-depth argument because of abbreviated response times, as well as multiple and often unrelated topics raised in a single debate. Other debate format flaws identified include insufficient opportunity for follow-up questioning, thus allowing candidates to avoid responding to particular queries; or tight controls on candidate responses that prohibit direct candidate exchange or clash, thus limiting comparison of campaign issues. Finally, one of the most frequent complaints of the traditional televised debate structure has focused on the role and performance of the panel of journalist questioners. Often, instead of debating one's opponent, presidential candidates have instead found themselves arguing with a journalist engaged in a game of "gotcha" with questions deemed convoluted or irrelevant by the public (Lamoureux, Entrekin, & McKinney, 1994).

Within the past decade, the structure of presidential debates has evolved significantly from the early "joint press-conference" encounters to include more recent innovations such as the town hall debate introduced in 1992, as well as the more informal

candidate chat debate utilized for the first time in 2000. In fact, each of the three 2000 Bush-Gore exchanges utilized a different debate structure. The first debate was perhaps the most traditional with the candidates standing at podiums for 90 minutes responding to questions from moderator Jim Lehrer. In this exchange, candidates were granted a maximum two-minute response followed by a one-minute rebuttal from their opponent. After each response and rebuttal, the moderator could then extend discussion of the topic for 3.5 minutes. In the second debate, the candidates were seated at a table for what moderator Jim Lehrer referred to as a "conversation," creating a more informal debate dynamic. In this debate the candidates were each allowed a maximum of two minutes to respond to questions, followed again by the 3.5-minute discussion period for each question or topic. Finally, the town hall debate featured the candidates strolling about the stage and responding in two-minute segments to the queries of "undecided" citizen questioners. Also in this debate, the moderator sometimes allowed an extended 3.5-minute discussion period for questions the candidates wished to pursue in more detail.

Now that the central issue every four years surrounding our presidential debates seems to be what type of debates we will have—rather than *if* debates will take place at all—a useful question to consider is whether or not the debate format actually matters. Does it matter, for example, how long candidates are allowed to respond, or if they stand or sit or walk around while responding, or if the questions are asked by a citizen or a journalist? The 40-year history of presidential debates, marked by quadrennial candidate bickering over the specifics of debate planning, suggests that format certainly matters to the candidates. Yet, what of the tens of millions of viewers who watch these televised events, do they care if a particular debate format is adopted over another? Do certain formats contribute to greater voter learning? Also, does debate structure affect the actual content of a debate; or more precisely, does a debate format affect the communicative performance of the candidates?

The purpose of this chapter is to examine these issues, and in particular, to review the available scholarly analysis to help answer the primary question, "Does debate format matter?" As the various essays and studies contained in this volume explore different topics relating to the engagement of citizens in political and civic life, it is necessary that we consider the extent to which the structure of televised debates—as instruments of voter education—is responsive to public needs. This chapter, therefore, will conclude with specific recommendations for developing candidate debates that are designed to engage and educate the public.

Does Debate Format Matter?

From many years of careful research, we know that the type of debate staged seems to matter a great deal to the public. When format innovations were first introduced in

1992 by the current sponsor and organizer of our televised presidential debates—the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD)—a team of communication scholars undertook an ongoing systematic collection and analysis of viewer response data from a national sample of voters to determine viewer reactions to debate formats, perceived learning from different types of debates, as well as desired changes that could make debates more useful to the public. Carlin and McKinney (1994) first reported the results of a 1992 study in which 625 citizens provided their reactions in focus group discussions conducted throughout the nation during the candidates' "debate over the debates" and reactions following each of the '92 presidential and vice presidential debates. These findings were reported to the CPD and used by the Commission in planning the 1996 and 2000 debates. Similar studies of citizen reactions to debates were conducted during both the 1996 and 2000 debate series (this analysis has been reported in several sources, including Carlin, 1999; Carlin, 2000; Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000; McKinney, Spiker, & Kaid, 1998; McKinney & Lamoureux, 1999; McKinney, Dudash, & Hodgkinson, in press).

A number of general conclusions can be derived from citizen responses to the '92, '96, and 2000 debate series. First, citizens expect debates to take place and claim that these encounters provide them with information not available from such other campaign communication sources as televised party conventions, news coverage of the candidates and campaign, or candidate ad messages. Also, citizens are turned off by the candidates' usual "debating the debates" that seems to precede each debate series. While the public understands that candidates haggle about debate particulars in order to achieve some perceived advantage over their opponent, citizens feel as if the candidates are attempting to hold the public's debates hostage, childishly refusing to debate unless they get exactly the type of forum they desire. Citizens do not seem to support federally mandated debates, yet they do support an independent debate organizer so that the candidates are not allowed to control completely the debate planning process.[2]

In terms of the types of debates that the public finds most useful, there seems to be wide agreement that the often used panel of journalists as questioners is inferior to a single moderator who should attempt to facilitate actual interaction between or among candidates. Citizens feel strongly that debate discussion should reflect a public policy agenda, focusing on campaign issues most relevant to the public instead of campaign strategy or matters relating to candidate image or character—the very topics that many journalists seem to favor. Also, citizens would like to have debates that cover a focused set of topics (approximately four or five, with each topic discussed 15 to 20 minutes apiece). There is widespread agreement, too, that a town hall debate addresses issues of greatest public concern, and that undecided citizens do not engage in "softball" or uninformed questioning of the candidates—as often charged by media critics of the townhall forums. Rather, these undecided citizens are thought to pose questions that are more easily understood, and therefore useful, to the many debate viewers who may not follow the campaign as closely as a journalist or political junkie.

Citizens do believe there is a need for a journalist or expert to be involved in at least some of the debates, in order to raise questions that undecided citizens may not be equipped to address. Citizens, overall, prefer a debate series featuring a variety of debate formats (three-four debates), and believe that while a particular type of debate may favor the communicative style or strengths of an individual candidate, a variety of formats will most likely be fair to all candidates.

In addition to this line of research examining citizen evaluation of debates, a limited amount of empirical analysis has been conducted in order to test possible relationships between debate format and content. Whereas it is true, as noted earlier, that format critique represents one of the major areas of presidential debate research, much of this analysis appears in the form of critical commentary in which the analyst identifies perceived deficiencies in existing debate designs, argues these structural flaws somehow prevent candidates from engaging in "true" debate, and finally, provides recommendations for developing a "better" debate model. Actual empirical evidence regarding presidential debate format effects on communication outcomes is quite limited.[3] As debates remained virtually unchanged until the 1990s, until then sticking largely to the standard "joint press-conference" design, the scant systematic analysis of debate formats is somewhat understandable. Yet, from the limited findings that are now available, the answer is becoming increasingly clear that debate format does in fact matter in several important ways.

While general-election presidential debates have been somewhat slow in adopting more innovative format designs, primary campaign or intraparty debates that often include multiple candidates have frequently employed a variety of format structures. Pfau (1984) conducted what may be the earliest empirical analysis of debate formats when he compared four debates that took place during the 1984 Democratic primary, each utilizing a different structure. Pfau hypothesized that different debate designs would affect various communication outcomes, including both moderator/questioner and candidate communicative behaviors. Employing content analysis, he examined the focus, fairness, and clarity of moderator (vs. journalists') questions, as well as the occurrence of clash among candidates, quality of candidate responses, evidence used to support candidate claims, and direction or focus of candidate responses. His findings, in general, confirmed that different debate formats produced differences in communication outcomes, concluding, "Format and procedure is an important variable. Some approaches to political debates facilitate clash; some do not. Some approaches elicit substantive responses; some do not" (p. 13).

In analyzing possible format effects in general-election debates, perhaps the most systematic analysis is the program of research by Diana Carlin and colleagues examining the influence of debate format on candidate clash (e.g., Carlin, Howard, Stanfield, & Reynolds, 1991; Carlin, Morris, & Smith, 2001). This analysis addresses the contention that televised debates are devoid of actual candidate clash and direct comparison of issue positions. Carlin et al.'s findings reveal that direct candidate clash does, in

fact, occur in presidential debates; however, particular format features do seem to influence the ability of candidates to engage in such clash (and clash is said to occur when candidates offer analysis of their own versus an opponent's issue positions, and also through direct attack of an opponent's positions).

Furthermore, Carlin et al. (1991) found in their comparative content analysis of the presidential debates in 1960, 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1988 that candidate clash is limited when format design limits rebuttal times; clash is also limited when the same or similar questions are not posed to both candidates. More recently, Carlin, Morris, and Smith (2001) found that the actual type of question asked of candidates influences candidate clash. Specifically, "comparative" questions asked by debate moderator Jim Lehrer in the 2000 debates resulted in more clash than did the less comparative questions put to the candidates by the citizen questioners in the town hall debate. Finally, when comparing the amounts of clash that occurred in the three distinct debate formats utilized in 2000, the more formal podium debate contained the greatest overall level of candidate clash, and the more conversational chat debate featured the least amount of clash.

Following the introduction of citizen questioners in the 1992 town hall debate, Eveland, McLeod, and Nathanson (1994) compared the questions asked by citizens to those questions proffered by journalist during the '92 debate series. When judging the conciseness and clarity of questions, the Eveland et al. analysis claimed that while reporters were more concise with their questions (based primarily on number of words per question), both citizens and journalists were equal in asking so-called unclear questions (based on such criteria as "poor word choice, non-sequiturs, and disjointed phrases"). Journalists' questions were also found to be more argumentative, accusatory, and leading than those from undecided citizens. Finally, when analyzing question topics, journalists asked more questions relating to foreign policy and candidate character while citizen questions focused more so on domestic issues and government policies.

In 1996, with two distinct types of debates held between President Clinton and Senator Bob Dole—the first a more traditional podium debate with questions asked by single-moderator Jim Lehrer and the second a town hall debate with questions asked by undecided citizens—Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco (2000, p. 76) conducted a comparative content analysis of the two debates and found three significant content differences. First, the town hall debate contained significantly less candidate attack; also, the two candidates developed significantly more issue (versus image) appeals in the town hall debate than in their podium debate; and finally, the town hall debate featured significantly more candidate-positive (versus opponent-negative) discourse than did their podium debate.

The Kaid et al. (2000) study confirms similar findings from Benoit and Wells's (1996) analysis of the attack and defense strategies utilized by President George H. W. Bush, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, and independent candidate H. Ross Perot in the 1992 debates. Specifically, Benoit and Wells (1996) found that the town hall debate

contained the least amount of candidate attack of the three '92 presidential debates, concluding "the format of the debates—and in particular when audience members are able to clearly express their desires to the candidates—can affect the nature of persuasive attack produced by the rhetors" (p. 59).

Hart and Jarvis (1997) examined candidates' discursive debate styles—using Hart's text-based analysis program DICTION—and found noticeable differences in candidates' language choices based on debate format. Specifically, when comparing the 1992 and 1996 town hall forums to the more formal "press panel" debates, their lexical analysis revealed that town hall discourse achieves a higher "realism" score (defined as "language describing tangible, immediate, recognizable matters that affect people's everyday lives"), features language appealing to "present concern" (language "more grounded in the moment"), employs more personable and less complex language, and language that is less aggressive and less exhortative (uses more "ambivalent" words).

First, the less aggressive and less exhortative language use in townhall dialogue concurs with similar conclusions from the previously cited studies (cf. Benoit and Wells (1996) who found fewer candidate attacks and more acclaiming in the 1992 town hall debate; Kaid et al.'s (2000) analysis that found less attack and fewer opponent-negative appeals in the 1996 town hall debate; and Carlin et al. (2001) who found less candidate clash in the 2000 town hall debate). Second, the Hart and Jarvis (1997) description of town hall debates as somewhat "pedestrian"—debates characterized by language that is more personable and grounded in the more concrete, tangible matters that affect people's everyday lives—seems to support claims made by citizens (e.g., Carlin & McKinney, 1994; McKinney & Lamoureux, 1999) that these debates are preferable because the candidate-citizen interaction occurs on a level that is more understandable for the public and is focused more on issues that citizens claim to care about.

In a direct test of the relationship between debate format and issues discussion, Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco (2000) conducted an experimental study of the two 1996 debates, examining the degree to which the issues discussed by Clinton and Dole in their podium versus town hall debates corresponded to those issues that voters thought were most important. Using a nationally drawn sample of debate watchers (Debate 1, n=222; Debate 2, n=145), respondents were asked before watching the debate to identify what they felt were the most important issues in the 1996 campaign. At the conclusion of the debate, respondents were asked to list the specific issues they recalled the candidates stressing in the debates. The responses given by the debate viewers to these open-ended queries were grouped into categories and used to form issue agendas or a rank ordering of issues according to those most frequently mentioned. Like traditional agenda-setting research, these issue agendas were then compared using rank-order correlations (Spearman rho) to determine how similar or dissimilar the agendas were to each other.

The Kaid et al. (2000, p. 76) findings suggest a rather clear debate format effect relating to issue agendas. In the first debate, conducted by single-moderator Jim Lehrer,

the public's predebate agenda had little relation and an insignificant correlation with the agenda of issues that respondents felt were discussed during the debate. Alternatively, in the town hall debate the viewers' predebate issue agenda was significantly correlated with the rank order of issues stressed in the debate itself. This difference in the issue agenda agreement between the first and second debate supports the notion that a town hall format, in which individual citizens are allowed to ask any question they wish of the candidates, taps more directly into the issue priorities of ordinary voters.

Finally, McKinney, Dudash, and Hodgkinson (2003) tested viewer learning from exposure to the three 2000 presidential debates, examining both issue and image learning, and included type of debate format as an independent variable in their analysis. Recall, again, that the 2000 debate series featured three distinct debate types, including the podium, chat, and town hall debates. When comparing respondents' overall issue and image learning from the three debates combined, their study found that approximately two-thirds of all claims of learning were evaluations of candidate image, compared to one-third reported issue learning. However, when looking at the type of learning that occurred following each of the three debates, the evidence provided by McKinney et al. (2003) suggests that format does have an effect on debate learning. Specifically, the chat debate appears to create the type of communicative dynamic that allows viewers to focus less on candidate performance and image considerations, and more on issue appeals. While the chat debate resulted in an almost equal amount of reported issue and image learning, the podium and town hall debates resulted in almost three times as many candidate image observations than claims of issue learning.

In summary, the limited amount of debate format research suggests that the actual structure of a debate does, indeed, matter. First, it is clear that the public prefers, and feels it benefits from, certain types of debates over others. Second, the existing content analytic research also suggests different debate formats produce different communicative outcomes. These studies reveal that the more formal podium debates conducted by a moderator/journalist seem to encourage greater candidate clash (direct comparison of competing issues positions) as well as more aggressive and attack-oriented discourse. When the public is included in the debate dialogue, however, candidates seem to reduce their level of clash and attack, adopt a more personable or "humanizing" style, focus more on issue (rather than image) discussion, and engage in the debate of issues that are of greatest concern to the public. Finally, limited evidence suggests that the debate structure may also influence the type of learning—issue versus image—resulting from debate exposure.

Future Challenges

The 40-year history of televised presidential debates may best be characterized by the old advertising slogan, "You've come a long way, baby!" Indeed, the most recent

Bush–Gore debates of 2000 had very little resemblance to the inaugural Kennedy–Nixon encounters in 1960. One constant throughout the past four decades, however, has been the continued struggle for control of these key campaign events. While the candidates have traditionally been most successful in exerting their influence over the debate process, recent history has demonstrated something of a shift in this struggle for control of debates. Beginning in 1992 with direct public involvement through town hall forums, to the introduction of several format features called for by the public (such as the exclusion of the panel of journalist questioners and the expansion of candidate response times), and finally, a debate sponsor in 2000 that was unwilling to acquiesce to candidate demands, the balance of power in the presidential debate process seems to be shifting from candidate to public interests.

Now that debates are an expected, and publicly demanded, feature of presidential campaigns, and now that we have finally begun to experiment with alternate types of candidate encounters that may better serve public interests, the future of televised presidential debates seems hopeful. The goal must not be to identify a "perfect" debate structure or design, as such a task would be impossible because competing demands—the "perfect" debate for candidates would undoubtedly fall short of public expectations. Instead, we should strive for debates that attempt to balance the needs of those involved—including the interests of the candidates, media interests, and most importantly, citizen interests. The privileging of public interests is perhaps best argued by CPD Executive Director Janet Brown when she noted, "These [debates] are the single set of political events that the public still thinks belongs to them" (Marks, 2000).

In continuing to find ways for the public to be involved with and claim some "ownership" of *their* presidential debates, the CPD should continue to press for experimentation of debate designs that facilitate direct public involvement. Although the town hall format has been used successfully during the '92, '96, and 2000 debate series, there may be additional formats that could include citizen voice and allow voters to set an agenda for the debate dialogue. A variety of debate experiments are used frequently in lower-level (local and state) campaign debates, utilizing multiple methods for including citizen participation. Such debate exchanges have allowed "average" citizens—often selected persons on the street—to question candidates via video and live satellite links, or the ability to question candidates during a televised debate via e-mail communications. The public's issue agenda has also been incorporated in debate discussions through the use of a panel of public "experts" who represent concerns that have been expressed by the public (e.g., a panel of questioners consisting of health care providers and patients, senior citizens, teachers, parents, etc.).

A frequent criticism of the existing town hall format voiced in multiple focus group discussions (see McKinney & Lamoureux, 1999; Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2000, p. 228) centered on a sometimes parochial or localized nature of the debate discussion, whereby undecided citizens of a particular city or area of the country would focus on

issues that may not be as significant to citizens throughout the entire nation. In the 1996 San Diego town hall debate, for example, with a large military presence in the San Diego community, multiple questions were asked during that debate relating to the military and defense industry, including specific questions regarding military pay, military downsizing, and closed-base conversion. An Oklahoma voter articulated this shortcoming of the town hall forum when he noted, "With this audience participation, you're getting the mood of a certain group of people, which is not reflective of the whole country. So the things that are of interest to the people in San Diego may not be of interest to another part of the country" (Kaid et al., 2000, p. 229). A possible remedy for the localization of the town hall discussion might be to construct an "American town hall" debate in which undecided citizens from throughout the country, or at least located in selected regions of the country, are allowed to question the candidates. This type of dispersed questioning could also be done via satellite or electronic communications.

As the practice of televised presidential debates, especially within the past decade, has undergone great changes, scholars now need to reflect these changes in their debate analysis. While the previous review of debate format research indicated a small yet growing body of scholarship, many important questions remain unanswered. For example, a central contention with the question of "Does format matter?" is the issue of how differing debate structures may affect voter learning. The existing empirical evidence supporting the notion that particular formats do, in fact, facilitate greater voter learning is based largely on citizen's perceptual claims from focus group discussions. While such qualitative data provide important analysis of voter reactions to debates, the type of experimental study that is commonly employed to measure voter learning from debate viewing should be conducted to buttress existing findings.

The extant debate research demonstrates rather convincingly that viewing debates produces increased learning of candidates' issue positions as well as influences voters' impressions of candidates' image (for summaries of such research, see Benoit, McKinney, & Holbert, 2001; Benoit, McKinney, & Stephenson, 2002; McKinney, Kaid, & Robertson, 2000). Interestingly, a common feature of the existing research is that such analysis is based almost entirely on data collected from the *first* debate televised in a particular series. The frequent rationale for this study design is supported by the usual trend that the first debate in a multidebate series most often garners the highest viewership and is thus selected for analysis. When successive debates in a multidebate series were structured largely the same as the first debate, such data collection efforts may not have been problematic. Now that our debate series feature distinct types of debates, relying on claims drawn from responses to one particular type of debate is limited. As the preceding review of debate format studies illustrated, there are clear content and candidate communication differences based on differing debate structures. It seems likely, as suggested by McKinney et al. (2003), that these

different communicative outcomes may have differing effects on viewers' learning from debates as well as assessment of candidate image. Future research designs should approach debate study with format as a key independent variable, testing the extent to which such dependent measures as issue learning, candidate image evaluations, as well as other debate content and viewer reaction variables may be influenced by format.

Conclusion

With so much thought to be so wrong with our current electoral system (such as those nasty candidate attack ads, declining voter participation, the influence of "big money" in campaigns), televised presidential debates may represent a true success story in campaign communication. The public has now witnessed debates in seven successive presidential elections; there is ample evidence to suggest that the public uses these key campaign events in making their voting decisions; and recent developments demonstrate that debates are becoming increasingly responsive to public needs. The continuation of this success story, however, requires the commitment and diligence of all concerned parties.

First, our candidates must realize how important debates are to the electorate and be willing to meet face-to-face with their opponents and argue why they deserve the public's trust and vote. Our debate sponsor, currently the Commission on Presidential Debates, must continue to rise above particular party interests and continue to act as an independent arbiter of debate decision making, serving primarily as a representative of public interests. Also, scholars should continue their systematic analysis of debates, translating their research findings into useful information that might enlighten media pundits who need to better understand how debates work as well as provide the debate sponsor with sound evidence for planning future debates. Finally, and perhaps most important, citizens must stay involved in the debate process, demanding that candidates engage in useful debate dialogue. Beyond the presidential debates that occur every four years, direct citizen involvement is needed on the nonpresidential level to help develop a tradition of campaign debates among candidates for state and local elections. Here, citizen groups might join with local media organizations or partner with other civic organizations to sponsor debate forums.

The very principle of democracy is perhaps best demonstrated in campaign debates in which those desiring to be our leaders must stand (or sit) before the public and give reasons why we should grant them the greatest form of power in our democracy—our vote. Yes, televised presidential debates have come a long way since 1960, and with citizen interest and involvement in the debate process, the next 40 years should be even more exciting!

Notes

1. As Carlin (1994, p. 6) notes, format critique represents one of the major areas of presidential debate analysis. Various format studies and commentary include Bitzer and Rueter (1980, chap. 6), Carlin, Howard, Stanfield, and Reynolds (1991), Carlin, Morris, and Smith (2000), Edelsky and Adams (1990), Hellweg and Phillips (1981), Hellweg, Pfau, and Brydon (1992, chap. 2), Hogan (1989), Jamieson and Birdsell (1988, chaps. 4, 6, & 7), Kraus (2000, chap. 3), Martel (1983), McCall (1984), Meyer and Carlin (1994), and Pfau (1984).
2. For specific discussion of citizens' reactions to the candidates' "debating the debates" strategies, see Lamoureux, Entrekin, and McKinney (1994).
3. The debate format research reviewed in this chapter focuses on televised *presidential* debates. In 1992, a rather interesting format experiment was tried with the *vice presidential* debate that included candidates Al Gore, Dan Quayle, and James Stockdale. In this debate, candidates were allowed to directly question and respond to each other. This experiment was described by Kay and Borchers (1994, p. 99) as "immature children in a sandbox," and has never been used on the presidential level. At least three studies (Beck, 1996; Bilmes, 1999; Bilmes, 2001) have explored how the "freewheeling" nature of the debate affected the candidates' communication and interaction patterns.

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