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Advances in Research Using the C-SPAN Archives

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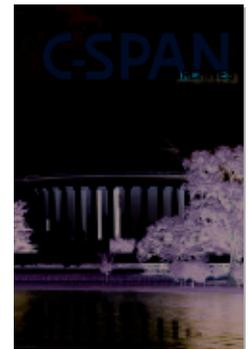
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PREFACE

The chapters in this third edition of the series on research using the C-SPAN Video Library are a diverse set. All these papers were initially presented at a conference at Purdue University in October, 2015. Scholars from communication and political science came together there to present their research and explore ways that the C-SPAN Video Library can be used to advance our understanding of interactions in communication and political science.

This diversity reflects the maturity of research in this third year of the conferences. Scholarship has advanced in that different researchers demonstrate a range of approaches from their disciplines as they grapple with similar underlying questions. Because the conferences are interdisciplinary, we should not be surprised to see such divergent approaches.

In these chapters, we find researchers using experimental research, content analysis, conversational analysis, detailed studies of facial movements,

and language in debates. Readers looking to understand what methods can be used to explore the political phenomena will find them in this book. The unity comes from the common interests of the diverse approaches.

While the approaches may be diverse, the basic questions being asked have much in common. From public attitudes toward Congress, to congressional enactment of legislation, to characteristics of debate language, to how politicians react when in informal settings, these questions all deal with issues of our democratic process.

Jonathan Morris and Michael Joy open the volume seeking to understand more about the public perceptions of Congress. This experimental work teases out the underlying causes for these perceptions. Since Congress is televised, they use this opportunity to understand how conflict and partisanship affect public opinion toward Congress. Since our primary democratic institution remains so unpopular, we need to understand more about the basic causes. Morris and Joy provide that in their chapter.

The second chapter, by Theresa Castor, takes a very different approach. The question here is about congressional influence on Great Lakes water policy. Congressional influence on policy is a common theme in other chapters, but each author addresses the question differently. In Theresa Castor's chapter, her approach is based on a social construction perspective. It is a rich approach that looks at the framing of the issue by the participants.

Robert Kerr uses the C-SPAN Video Library to examine the rhetoric of liberals and conservatives. In a thought-provoking piece he searches the Video Library to find ways that liberal and conservative rhetoric surfaces in political debates. He finds that conservatives dominate the rhetoric and the branding, not only for conservatism, but for liberalism also.

In the chapter by Kropf and Grasset, we find an analysis of gender in U.S. Senate candidate debates. They analyze 942 debate statements from senatorial campaign debates in 2012 and 2014. They find no difference between word choice in debates between male and female candidates.

Stewart and Hall build on the previous work published in Volume 2 of this series by Bucy and Gong. They look at nonverbal and emotional expressions in presidential debates. Their work advances our understanding of appropriate and inappropriate facial displays during debates and gives us an understanding of the analysis of emotion.

Garcia's chapter is the first of two conversational analyses in this volume. The second is by Kurtis Miller. In her chapter, Garcia looks at President Bill Clinton's grand jury testimony. She uses a number of techniques to identify ways that the president evaded or redirected the question. According to Garcia, "These include evasive answering, reframing, reformulating, and extending or deviating from the answering role." She speculates that President Clinton's success in evading blame and his high approval rating may be a result of these techniques.

The chapter by Brown and Gershon is another insightful analysis of congressional behavior in the passage of an important piece of legislation. They analyze the Violence Against Women Act in the 112th Congress. They find that congresswomen dominated the debate, providing an opportunity to compare the statements of Democratic and Republican women. One important conclusion that they reach is that "by examining the content of the bill and lawmakers' articulation of the policy, we soon learn that descriptive representation does not necessarily lead to substantive representation."

Kurtis Miller uses conversational analysis to look at candidate "meet-and-greet" appearances. These "How are you?" sessions are made possible by C-SPAN putting wireless microphones on candidates as they work their way through political crowds. Miller captures the essence of these exchanges by political candidates. These introductions we learn are different from other kinds of introductions. He observes also that "candidates engaging in working the crowd will often have to shift between interactions with general crowd members and interactions with key persons and donors."

Collectively these chapters show the power of the C-SPAN Video Library to drive research on democratic processes. Whether it is congressional debates or candidate debates or formal and informal appearances before a grand jury or a crowd or even the use of liberal and conservative rhetoric, the authors in this volume have found data for their research questions in the Video Library. Each has taken a slightly different research strategy. Perhaps some may think the volume covers an eclectic set of questions, but historically that is what the Video Library reveals. Each scholar can cull data from the collection and together help us advance a diverse research agenda, as the title of this volume suggests.

