were 6.5 million. Most important, unlike their early predecessors, these newcomers tended to be well-educated, middle-class people, including many women. The result: an influx of ambitious couples eager to focus "their energies and earnings" on the raising of their offspring.

Today, such Asian-American families enjoy a competitive edge. Couples tend to stay married; in 1980, 27 percent of American white women had already been divorced by age 32, while only 14 percent of Asian-American women had been divorced by age 55. Asian-American households tend to be small; in 1980, 1,358 children, on average, were born to every 1,000 white women aged 15-44, compared to 1,164 for the Asians.

These small, close-knit families produce motivated students: In 1980, only 17 percent of all white American men had graduated from college, compared to 32 percent of Asian-American men. Thus, Asian-Americans are conspicuous in "upper-status occupations," notably in science and engineering. One indicator: In 1980 only 24 percent of all U.S. whites were managers, professionals, or executives; no less than 33 percent of native-born Chinese-Americans and 26 percent of native-born Korean-Americans and Japanese-Americans had comparable jobs.

PRESS & TELEVISION

Unwiring Cable

"Wiring the Constitution for Cable" by Thomas W. Hazlett, in *Regulation* (1988, No. 1), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Cable television has provided increasingly popular alternatives to the programs of the three major broadcast networks and independent stations. Currently, 51.1 percent of American households subscribe to a cable TV service. Hazlett, an economist at the University of California, Davis, notes that while consumers may see cable TV as a "nifty new competitor" for ABC, CBS, and NBC, city officials view it as a local "natural monopoly" under their control, a utility like the telephone or electric company. The result: higher prices for subscribers and a dent in the First Amendment.

The first U.S. cable TV system was created in Mahoney City, Pennsylvania, in 1948. Beginning around 1960, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) imposed tight restrictions on the fledgling industry. Then, in 1972, when the FCC began to remove limits on the program content and the number of channels a system could carry, cable companies began to lobby city halls for municipal franchises.

Financially ailing municipalities saw cable TV as a godsend; New York City's Mayor John Lindsay called cable franchises "urban oil wells under our city streets." To gain more revenue, many cities, towns, and counties mandated cable-TV monopolies awarded to the "best" bidder. Not surprisingly, some prospective franchise owners bribed local officials (resulting in a nationwide FBI probe); others gave unrealistic pledges to win contracts. In Sacramento, for example, United Tribune Cable promised to plant 20,000 trees and spend $90 million on various civic projects.

Yet, in Sacramento and elsewhere, franchise holders never supplied such "economically infeasible" services to the host city; in 21 of the 30 largest cable-TV markets, tortuous "give-back" renegotiations have resulted in cable TV that costs subscribers more and provides less than what cable operators originally promised. The "give-back" process has resulted in long delays. For example, New York City has been studying cable since the late 1960s, but only 20 percent of the city's homes were wired for cable by mid-1987.

In 1984, the FCC began to restrict local government control of cable prices and programming. Municipalities were discouraged from impeding cable's new rivals, such as satellite dishes or private systems in apartment complexes. Recently, several California courts have held that cable TV is not a utility, but an "electronic publisher," whose competitors are protected by the First Amendment. With great implications for the nation's 5,000-6,000 municipal cable-TV franchises, the constitutional issue has yet to be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Television and the Primaries

"How the Press Covered the Primaries" by S. Robert Lichter, in *Public Opinion* (July-Aug. 1988), 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Has TV coverage distorted the presidential selection process?

Not during the 1988 primary elections, according to Lichter, co-director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. He evaluated 1,338 campaign stories (over 35 hours of airtime) on the major networks' nightly newscasts from February 1987 through June 7, 1988, when the major Democratic and G.O.P. primaries ended.

As always, most of the coverage focused closely on the campaign itself. No less than 537 stories on ABC, CBS, and NBC discussed who was ahead in the "horse race" among the candidates; 312 were devoted to general campaign matters, and 280 concentrated on candidates' strategy and tactics. But the networks did not ignore "the issues"—there were 215 stories that dealt with policy questions. The Iran-contra affair, with 114 mentions, was most popular, followed by taxes (97) and unemployment (85).

Overall, 56 percent of the coverage of the Democratic contenders was favorable, compared to 53 percent for the Republicans. Jesse Jackson garnered the most applause; 74 percent of the mentions about him from all sources (including candidates, their families and campaign staffs, as well as reporters, election analysts, and voters) were positive. The G.O.P favorite was Bob Dole, with 64 percent positive coverage from all sources. Comments from journalists themselves (about one-seventh of all assessments) were favorable to Democrats two thirds of the time and to Republicans half the time.

Did TV's "frontloading" of coverage of early primaries (Iowa, New Hampshire) give undue "momentum" to the Iowa winners—Dole and Rep. Richard Gephardt (D.-Mo.)? No, says Lichter. True, more network TV stories were done first about Iowa and then New Hampshire than about all the later primaries; both Dole and Gephardt jumped 12 points in the polls after their victories in Iowa. But "momentum" from these early triumphs