

From 'Factions' to Attack Ads – A History of American Politics

Class 8

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What We Will Cover Today

- Finish up on the Political Impact of Television
- Look at some classic political commercials
- Discuss the 1968 Presidential election
- Discuss the 1980 Presidential election
- Discuss Professor Allan Lichtman 13 keys for predicting the winner of presidential elections
 - He has never been wrong on his predictions
- Discuss who will win the next presidential election
- Discuss the Political Impact of the Internet

Political Impact of Television - 3

- Brought celebrity culture into the political realm
 - Led entertainment and sports celebrities to go into politics and embrace political causes
 - Treated politicians in the same way they treated entertainment celebrities – “tabloid politics”
 - Focused policy discussions less on the intrinsic merits or demerits of a proposed policy or how a policy change would affect the public and more on its effect on poll numbers or re-election chances

Political Impact of Television - 4

- Even more than radio and the movies, it changed how people looked upon politicians because it turned politicians into celebrities
 - Before radio (and movies), people were known because they were famous, very successful, or infamous – they had accomplished something that set them apart
 - With television, people became celebrities – known for being known because they appeared in the media

Political Impact of Television - 5

- As celebrities, politicians have often become entertainers
 - Many former politicians have done television commercials and
 - Many current and former politicians have appeared on TV variety shows, soap operas, and sitcoms
- Conversely, many celebrities from the sports and entertainment worlds have gone into politics or run for public office
 - Fred Thompson goes from Senator to Television film star to presidential candidate
 - Ronald Reagan goes from film star and TV host to Governor and then President

Political Impact of Television - 6

- Television turned political campaigns into largely rival television commercials
- These ads generally broke down into four categories
 - Introductory ads – introduce the candidate (and his family) to the public
 - Identification ads – identify the candidate with a certain lifestyle
 - Attack ads – going negative on the opposition candidate and/or issues he espouses
 - Defense ads – ads refuting opposition charges or negative ads

1968 Election

1968 Election

- The 1968 election was a realigning election that took place in a tumultuous year marked by the Tet offensive in South Vietnam, anti-war protests on college campuses, riots in urban ghettos, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, and a riot at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago
- 1968 was a year in which the New Deal coalition assembled by Roosevelt totally fractured, with its left wing alienated by the Vietnam War and its conservative southern wing alienated by civil rights legislation

1968 Election

- The Republicans nominated Richard M. Nixon and Gov Spiro T. Agnew of MD
- The Democrats nominated Hubert H. Humphrey and Sen Edmund Muskie of ME
- The American Independent Party nominated former Gov George Wallace and retired Gen Curtis LeMay

1968 Election – the Republicans

- Despite being opposed by both Governors Nelson Rockefeller and Ronald Reagan, Nixon won the nomination
 - Rockefeller and Reagan were not able to unite in a “Stop Nixon” movement
 - Nixon as a centrist experienced in foreign affairs was acceptable to both Liberal Republicans and Goldwater conservatives

1968 Election – the Democrats

- The Democratic Party consisted of four major factions
 - Labor unions and big-city party bosses – the group that had traditionally controlled the party and feared loss of control. This group strongly supported Humphrey
 - Antiwar college students, intellectuals, and upper middle-class whites who supported McCarthy
 - Ethnic Catholics, Blacks, and Hispanics and some antiwar groups who supported Kennedy
 - Southern white “Dixiecrats” who largely supported Wallace although some supported Humphrey

1968 Election – the Democrats

- Opposition to the war in Vietnam led both Sen Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy to challenge Lyndon Johnson
- Poor showings in early primaries plus Kennedy's entry prompted Johnson to decide not to run for reelection
- Johnson's decision led VP Hubert Humphrey to run

1968 Election – the Democrats - 2

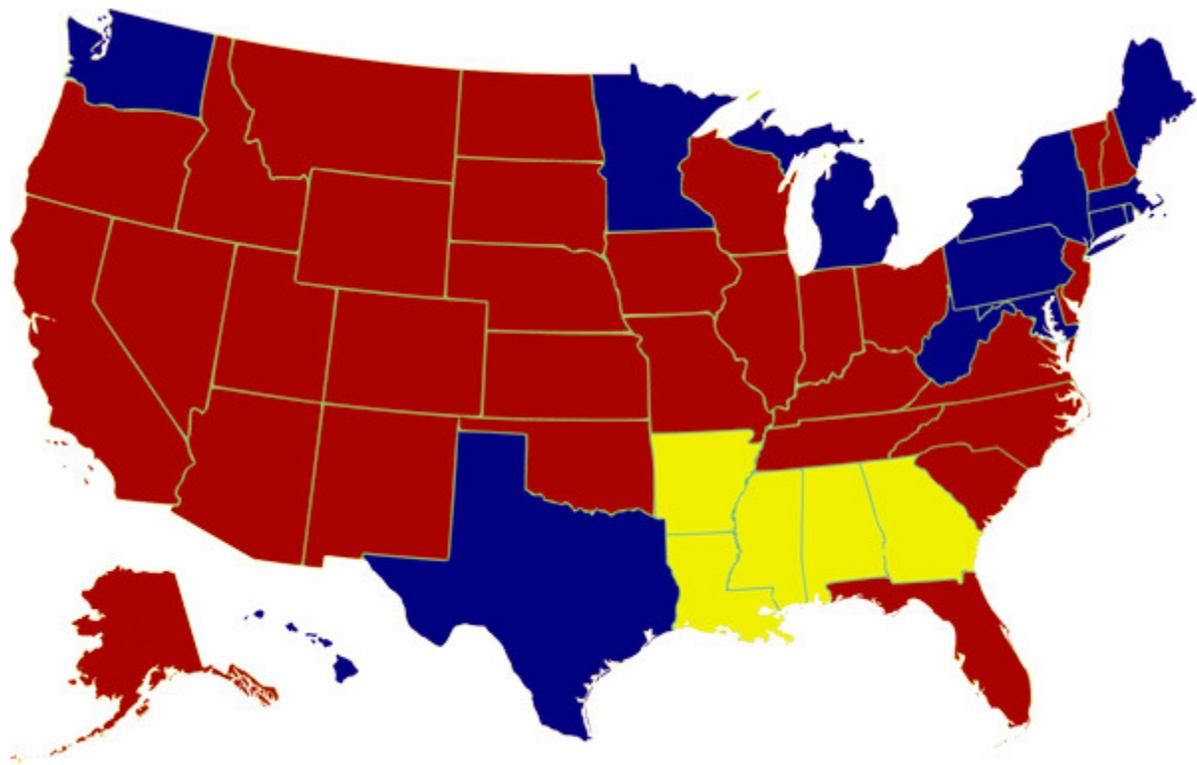
- The death of Kennedy made Humphrey's nomination inevitable
- The Democratic convention battled less over the presidential nomination and much more over the Vietnam War platform plank
 - The result was the total alienation of the McCarthy and most of the Kennedy forces
- The riot that took place outside the Convention left the country with the indelible impression that the Democratic Party could manage neither the country nor its own internal affairs

1968 Election

- Humphrey started way behind in the polls, but was able to largely catch up due to:
 - Humphrey's break with Johnson on Vietnam
 - Labor union mobilization on behalf of Humphrey
 - Popular doubts about Spiro Agnew's qualifications to assume the presidency if the need should arise

1968 Election

- Nixon won a close election victory with 301 electoral votes and 43.4% of the popular vote
 - His winning margin over Humphrey was 510,000 votes out of 73,211,875 cast
- Humphrey won 191 electoral votes and 42.7% of the popular vote
 - Humphrey carried only one southern state – Texas
- Wallace got 46 electoral votes and 13.5% of the popular vote



Significance of the 1968 Election

- The desire to avoid the chaos of 1968 led the Democrats to set up the McGovern Commission to Revamp the convention delegate selection rules
 - Drastically reduced the power of city bosses, union leaders, and professional politicians at future Democratic conventions
 - Produced an increase in the number of states holding primaries to select delegates

Significance of the 1968 Election - 2

- The reforms of the McGovern Commission (which also affected the Republican Party) increased the power of party activists and the ideologically committed in the party
 - It pushed the Democrats to the liberal left
 - It pushed the Republicans to the conservative right
 - It resulted in the nomination of presidential candidates who otherwise would not have been selected – McGovern in 1972, Reagan in 1980, Clinton in 1992, and Obama in 2008

Significance of the 1968 Election - 3

- The old Confederacy which, with few exceptions, had voted solidly Democratic since the end of Reconstruction from now on (except for 1976) voted overwhelmingly Republican in presidential elections
 - Even in 1992 and 1996 when the Democrats nominated another Southerner, Clinton, the Democrats carried only 4 southern states in each of those elections
 - In 2008, Obama carried 3 southern states

Significance of the 1968 Election - 4

- Resulted in the election of Richard Nixon as president
- Nixon was a very polarizing person and president
 - Antagonized Democrats by identifying them with disloyalty and Communists
 - Antagonized Republican Conservatives by his policy of détente and his support of Democratic domestic policy initiatives

Nixon as President

- As president, Nixon
 - By supplying weapons to Israel during the Yom Kippur War, Caused the Arabs to institute the Arab Oil Embargo and OPEC to increase oil prices
 - Gas lines
 - Energy Crisis
 - Presided over, and contributed to, the Great Stagflation of the 1970s

Nixon as President - 2

- Made the following policy initiatives
 - Established détente with the Soviet Union and diplomatic relations with China
 - Established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
 - Appointed 4 justices to the Supreme Court, turning the Court in a more conservative direction
 - Imposed wage and price controls
 - Proposed national health insurance
 - Implemented the first Federal affirmative action program
 - Endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment

Watergate

- Watergate
 - Brought Gerald Ford and later Jimmy Carter to the presidency
 - Discredited the idea of government as a force for good
 - Led to a consequent distrust and cynicism regarding the Federal Government
 - This eventually redounded to the benefit of anti-Washington conservatives
 - Changed how the media covered Washington

1980 Election

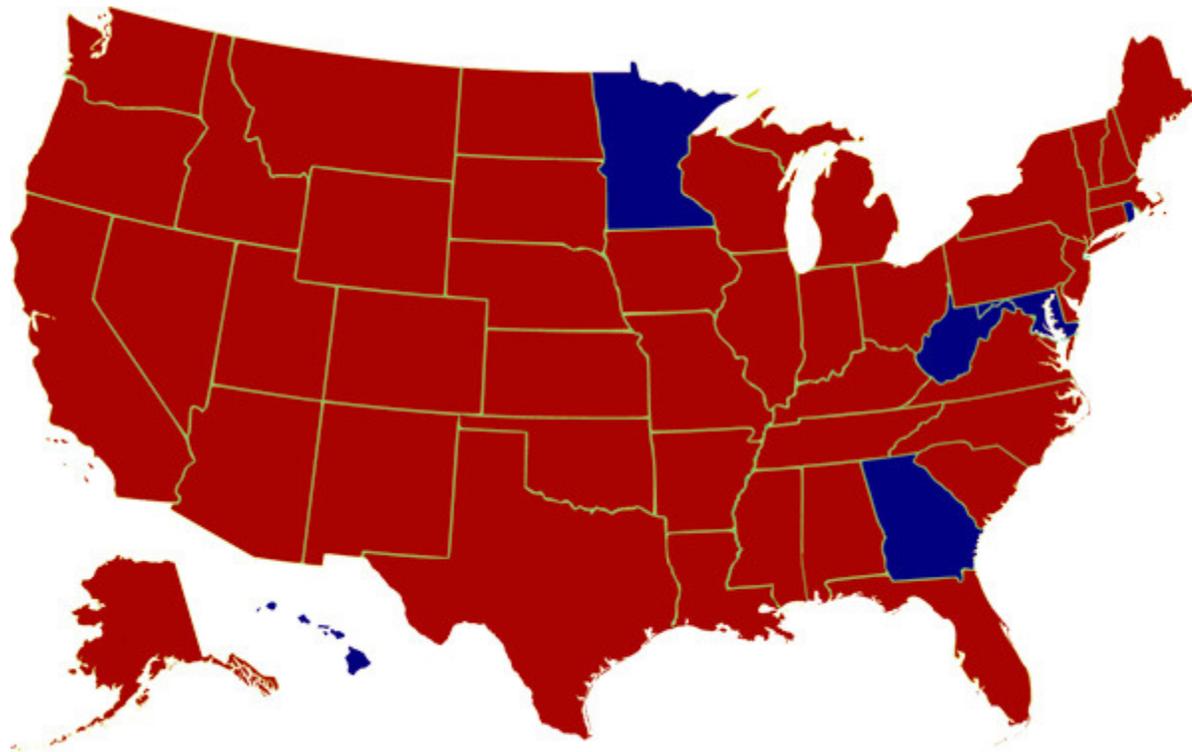
1980 Election

- The Republicans nominated Ronald Reagan and George Bush
- The Democrats renominated Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale
- There was an independent National Union party that nominated John Anderson and Patrick Lucey
 - Protest against the Conservatism of Reagan and the failure of Carter

The 1980 Election

- Took place against the background of the following:
 - 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
 - The Iranian Hostage Crisis
 - The “Stagflation” of the 1970s
 - Double-digit inflation
 - High interest rates
 - High level of unemployment

The 1980 Election



Significance of the 1980 Election

- The “stagflation” of the 1970s proved to be nearly as burdensome to the Democrats as the Great Depression of the 1930s was to the Republicans
 - For the next several elections, the Republicans would run against Jimmy Carter just as the Democrats in several elections ran against Herbert Hoover
- The combination of Vietnam and the failed Iran Hostage Rescue gave the Democrats an image of incompetence in the areas of national security and foreign policy

Significance of the 1980 Election

- Resulted in the election of Ronald Reagan
- Reagan's policies and actions:
 - Led to the triumph of Supply-Side Economics
 - Gave us the Reagan tax cuts (and resulting budget deficits) which reduced the marginal tax rates from 70% to 50%
 - Became Republican economic orthodoxy and led to Grover Norquist's "No Tax Increase" Pledge
 - Broke the Air Traffic Controllers strike
 - Led to private sector and corporate efforts to break the power of unions

Significance of the 1980 Election

- Ronald Reagan's Policies and Actions (cont)
 - Massive Defense Buildup (including Star Wars)
 - Led the Soviet Union to conclude that the Soviet economy could not match the U.S. buildup
 - Led the Soviets to agree to the removal of Intermediate Range ballistic missiles from Europe
 - Impelled Gorbachev to seek to reform the Soviet economy and to introduce democratic reforms to make the economic reforms work
 - Supported large-scale oil drilling to undermine the OPEC monopoly
 - Removed oil price controls on domestic oil

Significance of the 1980 Election

- Ronald Reagan's Policies and Actions (cont)
 - Cut many domestic program budgets
 - The combination of monetary restriction, tax cuts, cheaper oil, and military Keynesianism succeeded in cutting the rate of both inflation and unemployment
 - This convinced Republicans that the solution to Recession was tax cuts and deregulation combined with cutting of domestic programs

Significance of the 1980 Election

- Supported the Afghan insurgency against the Soviets
 - Led to eventual blowback since Islamic militants saw the U.S. as well as the Soviets as enemies
- Supported Saddam Hussein in his war against Iran, saving him from defeat
 - Paved the way for the Gulf War after Saddam invaded Kuwait

Long-term Trends - 1

- Increasing political polarization
 - Republicans drift further to the Right
 - The growing impact of the South in the Republican Party shifted the balance of power in the party
 - Led to the triumph of the Conservatives and marginalization of Republican Liberals and Moderates
 - Democrats drift further to the Left
 - Democrats become ideologically more homogeneous as the Southern Democrats leave and Democrats pick up secular & liberal Republicans alienated by the Republican's catering to the Religious Right and its embrace of a Neo-Conservative interventionist foreign policy
 - Also reflect the impact of narrowcasting media – talk radio, cable TV, and the Internet – and the McGovern reforms (which affected both political parties)

Long-Term Trends - 2

- Increasing Political Disfunction
 - The American political system with its checks and balances requires consensus and bargaining in order to operate and get things done
 - As the parties become more and more polarized, compromise becomes a dirty word and it becomes much harder to achieve any consensus
 - Result: Stalemate and a failure to address long-term problems

13 Keys to Presidential Elections

13 Keys

- The 13 keys concept was formulated by Allan J. Lichtman in his *The Keys to the White House*
- According to Lichtman, the American electorate measures the performance of an incumbent president and party by the consequential events and episodes of the whole term and little by little by what goes on in the campaign

13 Keys

- Lichtman together with Vladimir Keilis-Borok formulated the 13 key concept in 1981
 - Since then Lichtman has predicted the popular vote winner of every election through 2008
 - In a 2008 edition of his book, Lichtman retrodictively applied the 13 key concept to all presidential elections back to 1860 & his system has retrodictively predicted the popular vote winner
 - He also predicted the Democrats would win in 2008, before it was known who the Democratic presidential nominee would be

13 Keys

- The keys are questions that are stated as propositions favoring the re-election of the incumbent party
 - When five or fewer of the 13 propositions are false, that party wins another term in office
 - When six or more are false, the challenging party wins

Key 1 – Incumbent Party Mandate

- Key 1 – After the mid-term elections, the incumbent party holds more seats in the U.S. House of Representatives than it did after the previous mid-term election
 - In 2008, this key was false for the Republicans who lost their majority in the House
 - In 2004, this key was true

Key 2 – Nomination Contest

- Key 2 – There is no serious contest for the incumbent party nomination
 - In 2008, John McCain faced a major challenge to his nomination so in 2008, the key was false
 - In 2004, Bush was not challenged for renomination so the key was true
 - A fight for the challenging party's nomination often enhances that party's chances of winning the presidential election

Key 3 - Incumbency

- Key 3 – The incumbent party candidate is the sitting president.
 - In 2008, Bush was ineligible to run so this key was false
 - In 2004, Bush was running for reelection, so the key was true

Key 4 – Major Third Party

- Key 4 – There is no significant third-party or independent campaign for president
 - Coolidge in 1924, Truman in 1948, and Clinton in 1996 were the only incumbent presidential nominees to survive a major third party challenge
 - In 1996, Perot probably drew more votes from the Republican Dole than he did from President Clinton
 - In both 2008 and 2004, this key was true

Key 5 – Short-term Economy

- Key 5 – The economy is not in recession during the election (Short-term economic indicator)
 - In 2008, this key was uncertain when Lichtman made his prediction, but turned out to be false thanks to the collapse of the housing market in early 2008 and major Wall Street firms in September 2008
 - In 2004, this key was true. The economy was coming back after the impact of 9-11

Key 6 – Long-term Economy

- Key 6 – Real annual per capita economic growth during the term equals or exceeds mean growth during the previous two terms (Long-term economic indicator)
 - When Lichtman made his prediction for 2008, this key was uncertain. It later turned out to be false thanks to the Great Recession that began in 2008 with the collapse of the Housing Bubble and the Wall Street bankruptcies
 - In 2004, the key was false, thanks to the bursting of the Tech bubble in 2000 and the economic impact of 9-11

Key 7 – Policy Change

- Key 7 – The incumbent administration effects major changes in national policy
 - In 2008, this key was false. Bush’s unpopularity and Democratic control of Congress after 2006 stymied Bush’s initiatives
 - In 2004, this key was false. Bush’s tax cuts, Patriot Act, and Medicare Part D fell a little bit short of being a major change in national policy

Key 8 – Social Unrest

- Key 8 – There is no sustained social unrest during the term, sufficient to cause deep concerns about the unraveling of society
 - The last time this was true was in 1968
 - In fact, this key statement has been negative only in three 20th century elections – 1920, 1932, and 1968

Key 9 - Scandal

- Key 9 – The incumbent administration is untainted by major scandal
 - For this key to be negative, the scandal must either touch the president personally or involve several high administration officials and the president mishandling the scandal
 - This key statement was true in both the 2004 and 2008 elections

Key 10 – Foreign or Military Failure

- Key 10 – The incumbent administration suffers no major failure in foreign or military affairs
 - In both 2004 and 2008, this key statement was false due to the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the continued violence in Iraq (as well as the failure to find any WMDs in Iraq)

Key 11 – Foreign or Military Success

- Key 11 – The incumbent administration achieves a major success in foreign or military affairs
 - In 2004, Lichtman says this is true – Both the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan and the Baathist Regime in Iraq had been overthrown and Saddam Hussein had been captured
 - In 2008, this key was false. The Taliban was resurgent in Afghanistan and Iraq had been plagued with violence and political instability

Keys 12 & 13 -- Charisma

- Key 12 – The incumbent party candidate is charismatic or a national hero
 - In both 2004 and 2008, this key statement was false
 - Neither George Bush in 2004 nor John McCain in 2008 was charismatic or a national hero
- Key 13 – The challenging party candidate is not charismatic or a national hero
 - Few candidates reach this threshold
 - There have been only six charismatic candidates since 1860 – James G. Blaine, William Jennings Bryan, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan
 - There have been only two clearly heroic candidates – Ulysses S. Grant & Dwight D. Eisenhower
 - In both 2004 and 2008, this key statement was true
 - Neither John Kerry in 2004 nor Barack Obama in 2008 was charismatic or a national hero

The Keys and 2004

- In 2004, George Bush had 9 positive keys and 4 negative keys
 - Key 6 -The Long-Term Economy Key
 - Key 7 -The Policy Change Key
 - Key 10 - Foreign Policy or Military Failure
 - Key 12 - Incumbent Charisma
- Result: Bush wins a narrow victory – 50.7% of the popular vote vs Kerry's 48.3%

The Keys and 2008

- In 2008, when Lichtman made his prediction, John McCain had 3 positive keys, 7 negative keys, with 3 keys undetermined
 - The only positive keys were the Social Unrest, Scandal, and Challenger Charisma keys
 - The undetermined keys were Third Party, Short-term Economy, and Long-term Economy keys
- Result: Obama elected with 52.9% of the popular vote vs 45.7% for McCain

The Keys and 2012

- Key 1 – Incumbent Party Mandate
 - False. The Democrats have fewer seats after the 2010 mid-term than they did after the 2006 mid-term
- Key 2 – Contested Nomination in the Incumbent Party
 - True. Unlike McCain in 2008 or Carter in 1980, Obama will not face a major challenge for renomination

The Keys and 2012

- Key 3 – The Incumbent President is running for reelection
 - True. Baring unforeseen circumstances, Obama will run for reelection in 2012
- Key 4 – There is no significant Third Party candidate
 - True. If an unlikely Third Party does appear, it most likely will result from Conservatives bolting the Republicans because they nominated George Romney

The Keys and 2012

- Key 5 – The economy is not in recession
 - Undecided. The economy could slip back into recession as a result of either the European debt crisis or as a result of some unforeseen event
- Key 6 – Real per capita growth in this term has exceeded that of the two previous [Bush] terms
 - False.

The Keys and 2012

- Key 7 – Major changes in national policy
 - True. Obama got Congress to enact the biggest economic stimulus in history in terms of \$ as well as a complete overhaul of the nation's health system.
- Key 8 – No sustained social unrest
 - True. Lichtman in his recent prediction for 2012 says this proposition is true.
 - I would treat this key as uncertain given the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations and the possibility that they might turn violent. Also, Tea Party demonstrations might reappear

The Keys and 2012

- Key 9 – President untainted by scandal
 - True. Even if the Solyndra bankruptcy turns into a scandal, it involves only the Department of Energy, not the President personally.
- Key 10 – No major failure in foreign or military affairs
 - True. While many consider the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to be failures, blame for them attaches to Bush who started them, not to Obama who inherited them.

The Keys and 2012

- Key 11 – Achievement of a major foreign policy or military success
 - False according to Lichtman. I would rate this as True. The killing of Osama bin Laden, the related capture of a treasure trove of information on the workings of Al Qaeda, the killing of Anwar al-Awlaki, and the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime in Libya without any American casualties have turned this key in Obama's favor

The Keys and 2012

- Key 12 – Incumbent party candidate is charismatic
 - False. According to Lichtman, Obama “hasn’t used his speaking ability to move the American people during the recession. He’s lost the ability to connect since the 2008 election.”
- Key 13 – Challenging party candidate is not charismatic nor a national hero
 - True. None of the announced Republican candidates for the nomination is in any way charismatic

The Keys and 2012

- According to Lichtman, Obama has won 8 keys and lost 4, with one undecided. Thus, Obama will win the popular vote in his reelection bid, regardless of who the Republican nominee is
- As I see it, Obama has won 9 keys, lost 3, with one undecided. Consequently, Obama will likewise win the popular vote.
- Lichtman's keys apply to the popular vote winner, not necessarily to the electoral vote winner

A Few Criticisms

- The predictive power of the keys has varied from election to election
 - In 1952, Stevenson had 8 negative keys against him, and lost with only 44.4% of the vote to Eisenhower's 55.1%
 - In 1960, Nixon had 9 negative keys against him, but lost the popular vote by only 115,000 votes, with 49.6% to Kennedy's 49.7%
 - In 1968, Humphrey had 8 negative keys against him, but lost the popular vote by only 511,000 votes, with 42.7% to Nixon's 43.4% and Wallace's 13.5%

Political Effects of the Internet

Political Effects of the Internet - 1

- Made anyone with Internet access both a potential publisher and broadcaster
 - Led to a proliferation of political blogs and websites
- Changed how people access and get information
 - Enabled people to obtain information not available in most news media outlets or libraries
 - Enabled people to seek out controversial issues and topics that are ignored by the mass media
 - Abolished information gatekeepers who in the past would bury stories and rumors whose accuracy could not be confirmed or which infringed on the personal privacy of public figures
- Fostered the rapid circulation of information, rumors, and misinformation
 - E.g Birther contention that Obama was born in Kenya

Political Effects of the Internet - 2

- The combination of video cameras, cell phone cameras, and websites like You Tube enabled amateur news gatherers to catch politicians in “gotcha” embarrassing moments and post these to the web
 - Video of George Allen’s “macaca” moment doomed both his Senatorial re-election and 2008 presidential prospects
 - Video of Rick Santorum’s car parked in a handicapped spot had a damaging impact on his 2006 re-election prospects

Political Effects of the Internet - 3

- Enabled individuals and groups with specialized or idiosyncratic interests to find each other, communicate with each other, exchange information, and coordinate their activities
- Facilitated political mobilization
 - Enabled narrow coalitions and interest groups to use the Internet to find and mobilize sympathizers via targeted websites and email responses

Political Effects of the Internet - 4

- Before the Internet, laptop computers, and cell phones, reaching large numbers of voters and getting them to either a political event or the polls required a large bureaucratically-organized political organization – i.e a political machine or party organization
- Now “flash mobs” can be assembled at an event by individuals or small groups and databases used to identify voters likely to vote for your candidate