

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 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

General Impact of Television

- Like radio in its initial phases, it created a top-down uniform mass popular culture
 - In some respects, this led to high-quality programming, especially news programming
 - Politically, it exposed people to opposite points of view and to candidates of both major parties

Impact of Cable & Satellite TV

- The multiplicity of channels changed TV from a broadcasting medium to a narrowcasting medium
 - Instead of three major networks offering similar-type programming, there were dozens of specialized channels that focus on topics that appeal to small audiences
- All-news channels (like CNN, MSNBC, Fox News) did to network news departments what TV did to newspapers and news magazines
 - It ended their reign as news sources and led the networks to focus on entertaining features, news analysis, and news commentary

Political Impact of Television - 1

- Changed the nature of political campaigns
-1
 - TV enabled candidates to reach the voters directly without the need to use intermediaries
 - Before television (and radio), candidates had to resort to mediators such as political parties and newspapers to reach the electorate
 - Along with primaries, the disintermediation that TV introduced weakened the political parties and diminished the political clout of newspapers

Political Impact of Television - 2

- Changed the nature of political campaigns – 2
 - Along with primaries, TV changed political conventions into coronations of a nominee chosen long beforehand
 - TV made debates a key element in the political campaign
 - TV led the media to portray campaigns as horse races

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

1980 Election

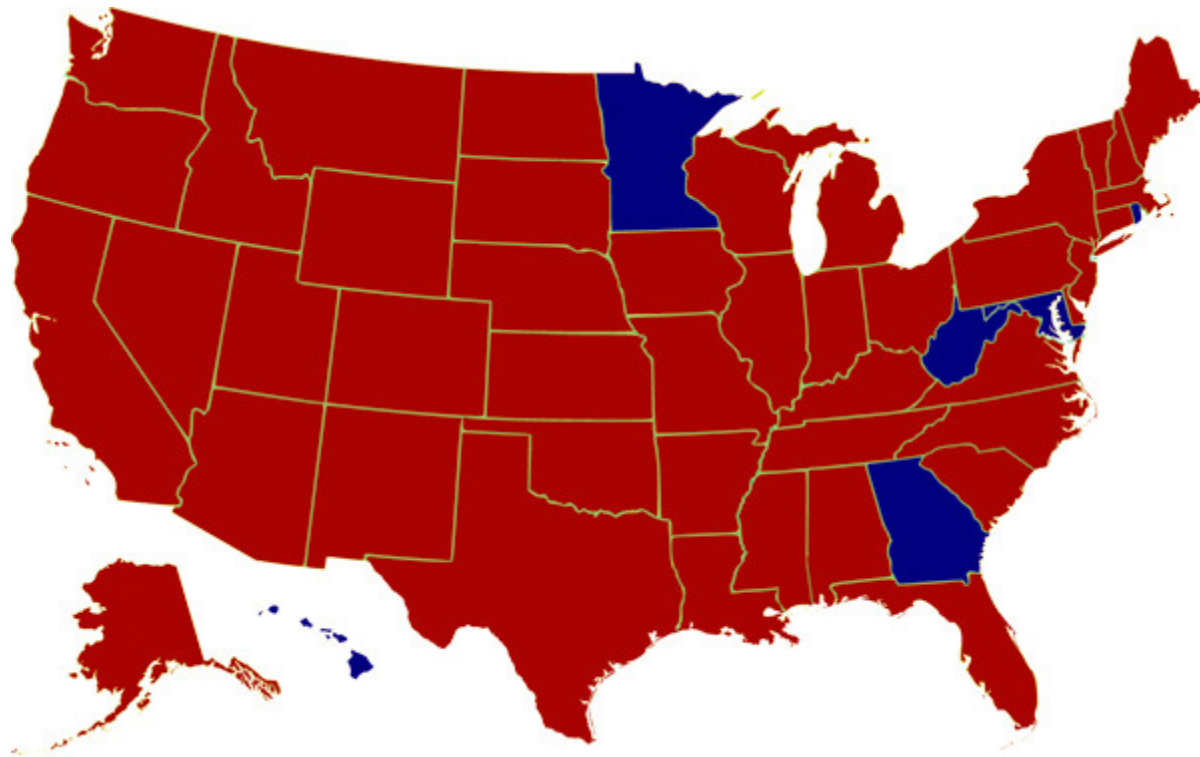
1980 Election

- 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 which reduced the marginal tax rates from 70% to 50% (and the resulting budget deficits)
 - 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)
 - Supported large-scale oil drilling to undermine the OPEC monopoly
 - Removed oil price controls on domestic oil
 - Supported the development of new oil extraction technologies
 - 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

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

- Ronald Reagan's Policies and Actions (cont)
 - 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
 - Democrats drift further to the Left
 - 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 Dysfunction
 - 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

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
- Fostered the rapid circulation of information, rumors, and misinformation

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

The Impact of Fox News

Origins of Fox News

- Conservatives had always complained that the news media had a liberal bias
 - Surveys indicated that most reporters were liberals who favored Democrats
 - Newspaper consolidation fostered a prevailing liberalism by eliminating the more conservative afternoon papers
- This, despite the fact that most newspapers in their editorials endorsed Republican candidates over Democrats

Origins of Fox News - 2

- Radio and Television tended to take their cues on what was newsworthy from the newspapers, adding only video to the stories
 - Initially there were only 3 networks which broadcast just half an hour of news each day
 - Radio and TV were subject to the “fairness doctrine” which said that equal time had to be provided whenever a political opinion was expressed
 - This had a chilling affect on the expression of political opinions and also on candidate debates

Origins of Fox News - 3

- The only media where there was a robust expression of divergent political opinion was the news magazines
- The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of new forms of broadcast media which reduced the need for the “fairness doctrine”
 - UHF television (which increased the number of channels from 13 to 80)
 - Cable TV (and the emergence of channels which broadcast only on cable)
 - FM radio (which led music programming and listeners to desert AM radio)

Origins of Fox News - 4

- In August 1987, the FCC abolished the “fairness doctrine”
- This permitted the rise of conservative talk radio, beginning with Rush Limbaugh
 - Limbaugh realized that he could do an entire show consisting of nothing but controversial (and conservative) opinions without having to offer equal time to other views

Origins of Fox News - 5

- Limbaugh developed links to conservative think tanks and politicians who now had an outlet for their studies and views
- One of Limbaugh's friends was Roger Ailes, a Republican political consultant and producer who long dreamed of a conservative TV network.
 - After initial failures, in 1996 he succeeded with Fox News

Most Trusted Media Outlet, 2015 (Percent)

Note that a majority of Republicans listed Fox News while the Democrats were split among a variety of media outlets

Most Trusted Outlet	Republicans	Democrats
ABC	10	14
CBS	8	11
CNN	10	21
Comedy Central	0	6
Fox	56	11
MSNBC	2	6
NBC	2	6
PBS	7	18
Other	6	7

Fox Audience

- Fox is especially popular among Republican seniors
 - According to Nielsen, the median viewer of Fox News is 68 years old
 - Viewers of Fox News are much more Republican than viewers of other broadcast media
- Fox viewers generally have a distinct set of political attitudes and voting patterns
 - As much anti-liberal as they are conservative

Fox Audience - 2

- A number of surveys have found that Fox viewers are less well-informed and more likely to have factually untrue beliefs than those who receive their news from mainstream sources
 - Compared to other media, Fox viewers were more likely to believe the following:
 - It is not clear that Obama was born in the U.S. – a 31% difference vis-à-vis other broadcast media
 - Most scientists do not agree that climate change is occurring – a 30% difference

Effects of Fox News

- The introduction of Fox News to a cable system
 - Increased voting support for Republican candidates
 - Caused both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to increase their support of Republican policies

Effects of Fox News - 2

- It has become a kingmaker in Republican presidential politics
 - Support by Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes is essential for winning a Republican presidential nomination
- It has pushed Republican candidates to the Right
 - Given a platform for politicians to voice views that appeal to the base but are outside the political mainstream

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 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 2012, this key was false for the Democrats who lost their majority in the House in 2010
 - In 2016, this key is false

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 2012, Obama was not challenged for renomination so the key was true
 - In 2016, Hillary Clinton does face a challenge, but the question of how serious a challenge Bernie Sanders is remains to be seen
 - 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 2016, Obama is ineligible to run so this key was false
 - In 2012, Obama 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 2004 and 2008, this key was true
 - In 2016, this key seems likely to be true unless Jim Webb catches fire or Donald Trump decides to run as a third-party independent

Key 5 – Short-term Economy

- Key 5 – The economy is not in recession during the election (Short-term economic indicator)
 - In 2012, this key was true since the economy was recovering from the collapse of the housing market and major Wall Street firms in 2008
 - For 2016, it is still too early to say

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)
 - In 2012, this key was true since the two terms of the Bush Administration were marked by the Great Recession of 2008 and the impact of 9-11
 - In 2016, this key remains to be determined

Key 7 – Policy Change

- Key 7 – The incumbent administration effects major changes in national policy
 - In 2012, this key was true. Obamacare represented a major change in national policy
 - In 2016, this key is false. Facing a Republican House since 2010 and a Republican Senate since 2014, Obama has been able to effect few and only minor changes 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 2012
 - This key will likely be true in 2016

Key 10 – Foreign or Military Failure

- Key 10 – The incumbent administration suffers no major failure in foreign or military affairs
 - In 2012, this key was true since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were inherited by Obama and blame for them was heaped upon Bush
 - Concerning 2016, it is too early to tell
 - So far the key is true
 - Benghazi, while tragic, is not in the same category as the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam, or Iraq
 - Syria, while a disaster, is a disaster that has been produced by others, not by actions of the United States

Key 11 – Foreign or Military Success

- Key 11 – The incumbent administration achieves a major success in foreign or military affairs
 - In 2012, this key was true
 - In 2016, so far this key is false

Keys 12 -- Incumbent Party Charisma

- Key 12 – The incumbent party candidate is charismatic or a national hero
 - In 2012, this key statement was false
 - Barack Obama in 2012 could not be considered a charismatic figure 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
 - In 2016, neither Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders is charismatic

Key 13 – Challenger Charisma

- 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
 - Neither John Kerry in 2004 nor Barack Obama in 2008 was charismatic or a national hero
 - None of the 2016 candidates can be considered charismatic except Donald Trump

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

- When Lichtman made his prediction in 2011, Obama has won 8 keys and lost 4, with one undecided.
- As I see it, Obama won 10 keys and lost 3.
- Result – Obama won the election with 51.1% of the popular vote and 332 electoral votes to Romney's 47.2% of the popular vote and 206 electoral votes

The Keys and 2016

- As of now, 5 of the keys are false (1-Incumbent Party Mandate, 3-Incumbent President, 7-Policy Change, 11-Foreign/Military Success, 12-Incumbent Party Charisma)
- As of now, 8 of the keys are true
- It is possible, but not likely, for 5 of the True keys to switch to False and 1 False key to switch to True

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%