

## A) Wilson's Victory in 1912 Election Key

(1) Prevailing Type of Reasoning: Cause-->Effect

Key Word: Because

Cause: TR's egomania

Effect: Wilson's victory

(2)

(3) What are other causes of Wilson's victory besides TR's egomania?  
How clear are the connections between TR's egomania & Wilson's victory?

## A) Wilson's Victory in 1912 Election Key (cont.)

### (4) Other Causes:

Argument A presents very simplistic causation with only a single cause of Wilson's victory: TR's egomania. Presidential elections are inherently complex events where no single cause can explain the outcome. Furthermore, the election of 1912 was especially complex. By relying exclusively on TR's egomania, the author ignores real differences between TR and Taft that explain why TR sought another term and refused to endorse Taft's nomination. TR was dissatisfied with Taft's actions as President and felt that he had betrayed TR's expectations and legacy. To TR, Taft had become corrupted by big business influences that resulted in Taft being way too tolerant and accommodating to big business interests. Even though Schweikart & Allen see no meaningful distinction between TR & Taft except for TR's egomania compared to Taft's humility, TR felt that there were meaningful distinctions. Besides, Schweikart & Allen are mostly just disappointed that no true conservative was in the election of 1912. Related to this, the author pays almost no attention to other candidates. All that the author has to say about Wilson is that he only had to stand aside and neglects that Wilson was a strong candidate in his own right with distinct ideas. Though Wilson & TR both saw danger in big businesses, TR felt they were here to stay and had some virtues and that the dangers could be controlled by regulation. Wilson, on the other hand, felt that big business were an uncontrollable danger and felt that the only remedy was to not have big business, in other words, prevent them from forming and break them up if they do. This perspective undoubtedly appealed to many voters. Furthermore, Wilson's academic background resonated with Progressives who put great faith in expertise. Finally, the author ignores the 4th candidate, Eugene V. Debs entirely. Though not a threat to win the election, he did play an important role. More on that following.

### Clarifying Connections:

The author says that the election was decided because of a splitting of the Republican vote. While this certainly played a role and perhaps even a decisive role, it oversimplifies. The author should have explained how, despite the seeming dominance of the Republican Party, the two major parties were quite evenly matched and that the Democratic candidate, Wilson, was a powerful opponent (see above). In other words it wouldn't take much to swing the election Wilson's way and therefore the splitting the Republican voters could very well be enough to open the door for Wilson. But still, the role of Eugene V. Debs can't be ignored. Debs, the socialist, candidate did pull a lot of voters that in a close election could have been pivotal. The question is, from whom did Debs pull votes. If he pulled primarily voters who would have otherwise voted Democratic, this would amount to a splitting of Democratic votes and thus perhaps offset the splitting of the Republican vote. On the other hand, Debs may have gotten most of his votes from people who would have otherwise voted for the Progressive candidate, i.e. TR. If so, this presents a complicated scenario in which TR pulled votes from Taft, Debs pulled votes TR leaving Wilson with the generally unscathed constituency. Regardless, the author is negligent to leave Debs out of his analysis.

## **B) Progressivism & Democracy Key**

(1) Prevailing Type of Reasoning: Cause-->Effect

Key Word: resulted

Cause: Prog's quest for better gov't

Effect: expansion of democracy

(2)

(3) How clear are the connections between Progressives' quest for better government and the expansion of democracy?

What are other effects of Progressives' quest for better government?

## **B) Progressivism & Democracy Key (cont.)**

### **(4) Clarifying Connections:**

The author does a pretty good job of providing multiple examples of what he calls democratic reforms but he doesn't do much to clarify how those reforms are democratic. It would have been clearer had the author explained how stricter voter registration requirements and use of the secret ballot made it difficult for city bosses and their political machines to corrupt the process through vote buying, voter intimidation and ballot box stuffing. Because of loose voter registration requirements, political machines could easily register and manipulate poor city dwellers, many of whom are newly arrived immigrants with little understanding of American ways, into "voting early and voting often." Furthermore, because of color coded ballots, party workers could keep track of how voters voted and thus making the carrot of vote buying combined with the stick of voter intimidation very effective. Secret ballots and stricter registration requirements undermined these efforts. Similarly, the author should have clarified that initiative and referendum systems gave voters more direct role in law-making and how the recall made elected officials more responsive to voters for fear of being removed from office early. Finally, the author should have, and easily could have, explained how women's suffrage doubled the size of the electorate, direct election of senators means those senators are directly responsible to the people instead of indirectly through state legislatures and primaries allowed the party rank and file members to have a voice in choosing the parties candidates rather than just a small group of parties leaders making such decisions in the proverbial "smoke-filled room". Overall, lots of good examples but examples whose connections are not as clear as they should be.

### **Other Effects:**

The author's "laundry list" of democratic reforms is impressive but equally important other effects are neglected. Many historians point to the paradox of Progressives when it comes to democracy. They definitely passed several democratic reforms which the author addresses nicely. The flip side of Progressives' democracy, however, was their elitism. Progressives were just as concerned with who the voters were. Giving more power to the people via democratic reform, many Progressives felt, also meant that you had to be sure those voters were qualified. Here, Progressives' racist and nativist prejudices manifested in undemocratic reforms. The stricter voter registration requirements impacted primarily uneducated and ignorant people who had greater difficulty maneuvering the more challenging registration requirements. Who were the uneducated and ignorant? Primarily, poor people, non-whites and newly arrived immigrants. Furthermore, "reforms" such as poll taxes and literacy that were ostensibly in place to ensure an invested and intelligent electorate had the effect of excluding many Americans who did have the money to pay the poll tax or the education to pass the literacy test. Again, poor people, non-whites, and new immigrants. Finally, these "reforms" were also practiced, especially in the Jim Crow south, in ways that ensured that even well-educated blacks who were willing and able to pay a poll tax would still "fail" the literacy test. In addition to Progressive concern over the constitution of the electorate, Progressives also placed heavy emphasis on "expertise". Progressives put a great deal of confidence in experts, giving to them unequal power and influence throughout society including government. Perhaps the best example of this is the city manager. Progressives sought to replace democratically elected mayors with city managers who often had at least as much authority as mayors but were appointed by city councils keeping them at arm's length from the people. All together, the author does well to point out the democratic effects of Progressives' quest for better government but ignores the undemocratic effects of the same quest.

The Social Gospel presents a better vision for society than Social Darwinism. Both acknowledge that there is tremendous inequality they disagree strongly as to the causes and value of that inequality.

Progressives' quest for better government resulted in the expansion of democracy in American society. Frustrated at the concentration of power in the hands of fewer and fewer super-rich, super-powerful industrialists and how that concentration of power had led to government that served the interests of those industrialists at the expense of the larger population, Progressives sought to return power to the people. Taking advantage of broad-based grass roots support, Progressives achieved a laundry list of democratic reforms. Progressives attacked the power of city bosses and urban political machines by enacting the secret ballot and stricter voter registration requirements. Progressives forced recalcitrant state government to become more responsive by establishing recall, initiative and referendum systems. In national politics, Progressives extended democracy by granting the right to vote to women, providing for the direct election of senators and moving to primaries as a means of choosing party candidates. Perhaps Progressives failed to achieve the economic reforms they desired but there is no doubt that they made America much more a land of the people, by the people, for the people.

Woodrow Wilson won the 1912 Presidential election because Theodore Roosevelt was an egomaniac. In 1908, having served nearly two full terms as President, Theodore Roosevelt wisely followed the Washingtonian tradition of not seeking a third term. Furthermore, he responsibly prepared William H Taft to continue his work and Republican Party power. However, by 1912, Roosevelt's ego no longer could be contained and he vainly sought the Republican Party nomination despite Taft's rightful claim to the it. Taft had ably continued Republican policies during his four years as President and had even out-trustbusted the "Trustbuster" Roosevelt. After the Republicans appropriately nominated Taft, Roosevelt should have respectfully thrown his support behind his party's nominee. However, Roosevelt's ego demanded a return to the White House so he went off on his own and continued his campaign initially as an independent but eventually as the Progressive Party's nominee. With Republican voters splitting between Taft and Roosevelt, the Democrat Wilson only had to stand aside and let the election fall into his lap.