

Why the crash (and New media) wins it for Obama

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The economic disaster has been a boost for Obama. This is despite recent [efforts](#) by the BBC to suggest that McCain is [fighting back](#) or that race might still do for the Democratic candidate.

I joined my colleagues [Professor Mick Cox](#) and [Mark Duckenfield](#) at an [LSE Ideas](#) meeting with London's international media to talk about the US Elections. They both seemed to think that the game is up for the Republicans thanks in large measure to the "the economy stupid".

As Duckenfield explained, McCain has spent years arguing against regulation and government spending. Those are the two measures that the US people seem to want now to cure the current crisis and they are exactly what the Bush White House is doing.

As Professor Cox said, the Republicans used to win a lot of 'values' votes. But who cares about abortion or gay marriage when you can't pay your mortgage?

As for Obama's race. Well America has changed say the two LSE experts. And anyway, Obama is not a traditional black American politician. He is of mixed parentage and his blackness is Kenyan. And don't forget the swelling Hispanic vote which seems to be swinging to its natural class-aligned preference for the Democrats.

The current agenda just isn't working for the Republicans under these conditions. Voters always blame the incumbents for economic crisis (watch out Gordon). And the obsession with national security slips down your priority list when you might lose your job. Not even Iraq is really playing as a big factor anymore. And we all thought that would be THE issue for 2008.

My suggestion was that Obama's campaign has given him more stability at this unstable time. The fact that he is a very safe, studious and serious candidate now helps. But it also helps that he built his whole campaign from the bottom up, largely through grass-roots Internet campaigning.

I think this has given him a spread of committed and engaged support that will sustain him through any short-term blips between now and polling day.

Obama would never have got onto the Democrat ticket without New Media communications. It gave him access to new and diverse support that enabled him to reach out beyond conventional political organisation. Add that to his formidable Chicago political machine and we can see that he is reaping the rewards. 

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