The effect of the 2000 election on low-income African American voters

2003

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THE EFFECT OF THE 2000 ELECTION ON
LOW-INCOME AFRICAN AMERICAN VOTERS

by

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B.S. University of Florida, 1980

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ABSTRACT

This research answers the question, "What impact did the 2000 election have on low-income African American voters and how will it affect turnout in future elections?" The analysis focuses on the predominately black, low-income community of Parramore and examines issues of efficacy related to the 2000 presidential election and beyond.

The analysis consists of a survey distributed through various community service agencies and conducted door-to-door in Parramore. Respondents were asked a series of questions related to past voter participation, trust in government, the fairness of the 2000 election and perceived future participation. The responses of the survey were compiled into a dataset and controlled for race. These data were then compared with the 2000 National Election Studies (NES) dataset to determine whether the attitudes in Parramore reflected a national trend.

The analysis showed that nationally, a majority of whites rated the 2000 election as fair and the majority of blacks called it unfair. Additionally, blacks have a much lower level of trust in the federal government than whites. Historical voting data from NES shows that blacks have lower levels of participation than whites and increases in participation have occurred only in years when the ballot featured presidential candidates who were perceived either very positively or very negatively by the black population. Through use of the NES feeling thermometer, the data show that in 2000, blacks were largely motivated by their distrust and fear of the Republican candidate, George W. Bush. The feelings of
disenfranchisement resulting from the election have negatively affected feelings of efficacy among blacks, meaning they will be less apt to participate in future elections.
For Clifford and Marilyn Compton, 
who taught all their children  
the value of standing up  
for what is right.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................ viii
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................... x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ................................................................................................ xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................ 1
CHAPTER TWO: MATERIALS AND METHODS ........................................................................ 8
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW .......................................................................... 11
CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY ......................................................................................... 25
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS ............................................................................................... 36
CHAPTER SIX: THE FUTURE .......................................................................................... 50
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION .................................................................................... 58
APPENDIX: COMMUNITY SURVEY ............................................................................. 61
LIST OF REFERENCES ...................................................................................................... 64
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Fairness of 2000 election by race, Parramore survey sample, N=33 ................. 27

Table 2: Fairness of 2000 Election by race, controlled for education, Parramore survey sample, N=31 .......................................................... 28

Table 3: Question of whether votes cast by blacks in 2000 election were fairly counted, Parramore survey sample, N= 43 .......................................................... 30

Table 4: Question of whether efforts were made to disproportionately keep blacks from voting or to invalidate black votes, Parramore survey sample, N=36 ........................................ 30

Table 5: Did respondent vote in 2000 presidential election, Parramore survey sample, N=43 .................................................................................. 30

Table 6: Did respondent vote in 2000 presidential election, Parramore survey sample, N=35 ................................................................................. 31

Table 7: Respondents’ plans to vote in 2004 presidential election, Parramore survey sample, N= 35 ............................................................................. 32

Table 8: Respondents’ plans to vote in 2004 presidential election, by race, Parramore survey sample, N=33 .................................................................... 32

Table 9: The Relationship between Three Varieties of Social Trust and Social Background Characteristics (means) Burns-Kinder. Scale coded on zero-one interval, with 1.0 representing most trusting and 0.0 least trusting ........................................ 34

Table 10: Does general trust predict political participation? (Burns-Kinder.) Coefficient and standard error on general trust ........................................ 35

Table 11: Fairness of 2000 Election, National Election Studies sample, N=1418 .......... 37

Table 12: Fairness of 2000 election, by race, National Election Studies sample, N=1277 . 38

Table 13: Pre: Election Feeling Thermometer for George W Bush, National Election Studies sample, N=1562 ............................................................... 39

Table 14: Post: Election Feeling Thermometer for George W Bush, National Election Studies sample, N=1383 ............................................................. 40
Table 15: Two categories of political trust by race, National Election Studies sample, N=1275 .................................................................................................................................... 41

Table 16: Fairness of 2000 election by race, controlled for education, National Election Studies sample, N=1275 .................................................................................................................................... 43

Table 17: Fairness of 2000 election by race, controlled for income, National Election Studies sample, N=1137 .................................................................................................................................... 45

Table 18: Fairness of 2000 election by race, controlled for partisanship, National Election Studies sample, N=1255 .................................................................................................................................... 47
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Percent Calling Election "Unfair," by Race ............................................................ 29
Figure 2: Percent of Parramore respondents voting in 2000, by race. ................................. 31
Figure 3: Voter Turnout 1948-2000, Percent among Demographic Groups who responded: "Yes, voted" ............................................................................................................................ 36
Figure 4: Percent of Parramore respondents rating 2000 election 'unfair.' .......................... 38
Figure 5: Pre-Election thermometer, George W. Bush .......................................................... 39
Figure 6: Percent with low political trust by race. .................................................................. 42
Figure 7: Percent rating 2000 election 'unfair' by race, controlled for education .............. 44
Figure 8: Percent rating 2000 election 'unfair' by race, controlled for income .................... 46
Figure 9: Percent rating 2000 election 'unfair' by race, controlled for partisanship .......... 48
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BYV! – Black Youth Vote
NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NCBCP – National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
NES – National Election Studies
NORC – National Opinion Research Center
OBV – Operation Big Vote
VRA - Voting Rights Act
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Research conducted with data from the National Election Studies shows that nationally, a majority of whites rated the 2000 election as fair and the majority of blacks called it unfair. Historically, blacks have a lower level of voting participation than whites and increases in participation have occurred only in years when the ballot featured presidential candidates who were perceived either very positively or very negatively by the black population. In 2000, blacks were largely motivated by their distrust and fear of the Republican candidate, George W. Bush. When Bush was declared the winner of the election, amid accusations of disenfranchisement of black voters, that distrust was confirmed. Therefore, blacks will be much more inclined to have negative opinions about fairness indicators from the 2000 election and, correspondingly, they will be less apt to participate in future elections.

African American voters expect little from the voting process. There has never been an African American president, there has been only one African American governor and 7 percent of the 2003 Congress is African American compared to 12 percent of the population as a whole. The African American candidate running in the Democratic primary for governor of Florida in 2002 attracted just 12 percent of the vote. In a 2000

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1 National Election Studies, http://www.umich.edu/~nes/
National Elections Studies survey, 67 percent of African Americans reported they trusted the government only some of the time or none of the time. The figure for whites was 54 percent. Far from ending during the civil rights wars of the 60s, the struggle for equality is a day-to-day challenge for blacks in America.

The election of 2000 brought questions of discrimination and disenfranchisement back into the forefront. Charges of blacks being turned away at polling places because of improper identification, ballot boxes being left behind at minority polling places, and erroneous listings of ex-felons (who are not allowed to vote in Florida) being distributed to deter the black vote, were immediately raised. Minority groups, Democrats and civil liberties organizations cried foul. They were joined by much of the mainstream media, non-partisan research institutes and a host of lawmakers and congressional committees. While the U.S. Supreme Court’s precedent setting decision halting a recount of votes in some Florida counties effectively decided the election for the Republican candidate George W. Bush, it did little to resolve questions of the role of race in the election’s outcome. Black votes were critical to the process as is evidenced by data from the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2000, the white non-Hispanic population constituted the vast majority of the voting age population (78 percent), followed by blacks (12 percent), Hispanics (7 percent) and Asians and Pacific Islanders (3 percent). According to the Census Bureau, White non-Hispanics had the highest level of voter turnout in 2000, (62 percent), followed by blacks (57 percent),

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Hispanics (45 percent) and Asian and Pacific islanders (43 percent).\textsuperscript{4} The issue of black disenfranchisement is raised in this paper because of the pivotal role blacks played in the 2000 election and the long history of oppression blacks have in the U.S.

Even now, more than two years after the fact, questions remain about the impact voting irregularities had on the election results. A lawsuit filed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) against the state of Florida and some of its counties, resulted in agreements from Broward and Leon counties to provide written explanations to voters when ballots are rejected. An investigation by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found "a strong basis" for concluding that violations of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) occurred in Florida.\textsuperscript{5} The following conclusions were reported:

Black voters were significantly more affected than non-blacks by the disenfranchisement of Florida's voters:

- Statewide, based upon county-level statistical estimates, black voters were nearly 10 times more likely than non-black voters to have their ballots rejected.
- Approximately 14.4 percent of Florida's black voters cast ballots that were rejected compared to approximately 1.6 percent of non-black Florida voters.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid

\textsuperscript{5} U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election http://www.usccr.gov/
• Statistical analysis shows that the disparity in ballot spoilage rates—i.e., ballots cast but not counted—between black and non-black voters is not the result of education or literacy differences. Governor Jeb Bush’s Select Task Force on Election Procedures, Standards and Technology, found that error rates stemming from uneducated, uninformed, or disinterested voters account for less than 1 percent of the problems.

• Approximately 11 percent of Florida voters in 2000 were African American; however, African Americans cast about 54 percent of the 180,000 spoiled ballots in Florida.6

Poor counties with large minority populations were more likely to possess voting systems with higher spoilage rates than the more affluent counties with significant white populations. There is a high correlation between counties and precincts with a high percentage of African American voters and the percentage of spoiled ballots. For example:

• Nine of the 10 counties with the highest percentage of African American voters had spoilage rates above the Florida average.

• Of the 10 counties with the highest percentage of white voters, only two counties had spoilage rates above the state average.

• Gadsden County, with the highest rate of spoiled ballots, also had the highest percentage of African American voters.

6 Ibid
Where precinct data were available, the data show that 83 of the 100 precincts with the highest numbers of spoiled ballots are black-majority precincts. 7

The magnitude of the disenfranchisement, including the disparity between black and non-black voters, is supported by the testimony of witnesses at the Commission’s hearings. These witnesses include local election officials, poll workers, ordinary voters and activists. Among the sworn testimony:

- One potential voter waited hours at the polls because of a registration mix-up as poll workers attempted to call the office of the Supervisor of Elections. The call never got through and the individual was not allowed to vote. A former poll worker herself, she testified that she never saw anything like it during her 18 years as a poll worker.

- A poll worker in Miami-Dade County with 15 years of experience testified, “By far this was the worst election I have ever experienced. After that election, I decided I didn’t want to work as a clerk anymore.”

- A Broward County poll worker testified that in past elections it took about 10 minutes to get through to the elections supervisor. During the course of the November 2000 election, she turned away approximately 40–50 potential voters because she could not access the supervisor of elections.

7 Ibid
• A Boynton Beach poll worker explained how his precinct workers turned away about 30–50 potential voters because they could not get through to the supervisor of elections. He was successful only once during an eight-hour period.  

• The NAACP also alleged that imposters claiming to be from the organization called African American households before the election asking them to vote for George Bush. The NAACP disavowed the calls claiming their non-partisan stance.

After a series of lawsuits, legal filings and impassioned arguments by all sides, the case ultimately ended up in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court which cleared the way for Bush to assume the presidency, even though final national popular vote tallies put him behind Gore by 539,947 votes.

Black civil rights leader Jesse Jackson immediately disavowed the decision by the court and was joined in his outrage by hundreds of blacks and Democratic loyalists.

At a Tallahassee rally the day after the Supreme Court announcement, Jackson said, “The election was essentially taken and stolen. You must get your votes in the public booth, not the private chambers of judges who are your political allies. Today, the emperor has no clothes and no shame.”

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8 Ibid

9 Ibid


David A. Bositis, a research associate at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, DC, a think tank that studies African American issues, said after the election that Bush’s image was perhaps irreparably damaged among blacks.

“Even though George W. Bush won, his status is at least somewhat clouded by what happened in Florida and what happened in Florida would not have happened without the black vote.”

What are the long-term implications of these problems? The African American vote is increasingly being courted by the two major political parties. The role of black votes or the lack thereof is still being debated in the 2002 Republican midterm election sweep. If this critical element of the population has even less faith in the system as a result of the 2000 election, specific strategies will have to be developed to harness that frustration and turn it into participation before 2004. If not, the ideal of equal participation and representation will remain just that.

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13 Crockett, Stephanie, “It’s Too Early to Blame Black Voters for Republican Sweep, Experts Say” http://www.bet.com/articles/1.,c1gb4477-5185.00.html
CHAPTER TWO: MATERIALS AND METHODS

Historically, African Americans have lower voter turnout rates than the population as a whole. This has been attributed to several factors, particularly to a lack of efficacy experienced by members of that group. This paper will explore trends in turnout among members of this group compared to the total population, focusing specifically on the impact of efforts to boost participation prior to 2000. My primary data source is a survey developed to gauge levels of political efficacy and the impact of the 2000 election in the Parramore community of Orlando – a historically black, low-income neighborhood. Survey respondents include clients of the Central Florida Coalition for the Homeless, a non-profit organization that provides food and shelter to qualified low-income individuals; Workforce Central Florida, a non-profit organization that aids the state and federal governments in local workforce development and welfare reform; and clients of the Callahan Neighborhood Center, a multi-use city recreational facility located in the heart of Parramore.

Survey questions and values include:

- Vote – Are you currently registered to vote, yes, no or don’t know?
- Vote 00 – Did you vote in the 2000 presidential race, yes, no or don’t know?
- History – Have you voted in any other presidential race, yes, no or don’t know?
- Vote 04 – Do you plan to vote in the 2004 presidential race, yes, no or don’t know?
• Fair – Do you believe the 2000 presidential race was fairly decided, yes, no or don’t know?

• Equal – Do you believe that every vote carries equal weight, yes, no or don’t know?

• Equalele – Do you believe that every citizen in this country has an equal chance of being elected to political office, yes, no or don’t know?

• Fedright – How often do you trust federal government to do what is right, just about always, most of the time, some of the time or almost never?

• Locright – How often do you trust local government to do what is right, just about always, most of the time, some of the time or almost never?

Results of the Parramore survey suggest that survey respondents overwhelmingly felt the 2000 election was unfair, that votes cast by blacks were not fairly counted and that every citizen of this country does not has an equal opportunity to hold public office. While the majority indicated they would participate in 2004, data from the 2002 midterm elections and the 2003 mayor’s race in Orlando paint a different picture.

I used to the Parramore data as a yardstick against which to measure a national random sample. Would a national sample show similar characteristics – that black voters would be more inclined than whites to find the 2000 election unfair, that indicators such as trust in the federal government would be lower for blacks than for whites and that participation among blacks would be higher in 2000 than in 1996?

To make these determinations I turned to the National Election Studies (NES) pre- and post- 2000 election data, focusing on the question of the fairness of the 2000 election and
controlling for race, education, income and partisanship. I then looked at the trust question and the participation in 1996 and 2000.

However, to fully understand the issues of African American participation, it is essential to start with an historical perspective. By beginning with a look at the unique issues blacks have faced in securing a political voice in this country, examining the Parramore community as a case study and using national data to analyze questions of fairness posed after the 2000 election, this paper will show that the record-high participation of blacks in the 2000 election is not likely to continue in 2004.
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysis of voting and race has necessarily focused on a historical perspective. Indeed it is impossible to separate the issues. Early works have focused on attitudes cultivated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when blacks were routinely looked upon as inferior to whites. In a 1942 study by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), more than half the whites surveyed assumed that blacks were less intelligent than whites. A book published in that era addressed the nation’s treatment of blacks as a moral issue and contrasted the treatment of blacks with the promise of democracy. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* by Gunnar Myrdal documented discrimination toward blacks and spurred additional works detailing disparities in housing, education, life expectancy and other key indicators.


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Black studies grew as an academic discipline during the 70s and 80s. The 1989 publication of *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society*, edited by Gerald David Jaynes and Robin N. Williams, added substantially to published literature in the field. The book reviews literature on racial segregation, racial attitudes and behavior, black social institutions, black political participation, black economic performance, black public health and black educational achievement.

*The Politics of Race: African Americans and the Political System* by Theodore Rueter focuses on the impact of race and politics. He traces black political influence from its earliest days – the Reconstruction. During that time, the black vote in the North became more powerful as disenfranchised blacks left the South. Even in the South, under the protection of federal troops, blacks ran for office and, from 1867 until 1876-77 when those troops were removed, about 800 were elected. But while the 15th amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1870, allowed the federal government to legislate election standards and prohibited the infringement of that right for race or color, many Southern states began developing other standards for the sole purpose of removing blacks from the voting pool. Terrorism, poll taxes, literacy tests, good citizenship tests and grandfather


16 Ibid, page 6

17 US Bureau of the Census 1979: 155
clauses are just a few of the tactics used to keep blacks at home on election days. As disparities were aired, signs of progress began to be seen.

In 1904 the black National Liberty Party was organized and supported a candidate, George Edwin Taylor, for president. 18

In 1948, at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Hubert Humphrey, then mayor of Minneapolis, encouraged the party to “leave the dark light of states’ rights and enter the bright light of civil rights.” As Humphrey spoke, Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina led a convention walkout. He formed his own party and ran for president as a “Dixiecrat.” 19

In 1960, black votes were critical to John Kennedy’s 110,000-vote margin of victory over Richard Nixon. The Gallup Poll estimated that 70 percent of black voters supported Kennedy. Black support could have given Kennedy the margin of victory in 11 states (Illinois, New Jersey, Michigan, South Carolina, Texas, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Nevada.) 20 That year also saw the formation of the Afro-American party which ran two blacks, the Reverend Clennon King and Reginald Carter, for president and vice president. The party, which was organized in Alabama, received 1,485 votes, all from that state.

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19 Ibid

20 Ibid
Largely due to Governor George Wallace of Alabama, race was even more prominent in the 1964 campaign. As governor, Wallace openly opposed desegregation and, in 1962, opposed desegregation of the University of Alabama. When he ran against President Lyndon Johnson for the Democratic presidential nomination, he received 30 percent of the vote in the Indiana primary and 43 percent of the vote in the Maryland primary, showing that his message resonated, even in the north.\(^{21}\)

By 1968 there were several black candidates in the running, including Eldridge Cleaver, minister of information for the Black Panther Party, actor/activist Dick Gregory and Reverend Channing Phillips, who was nominated at the Democratic convention by the District of Columbia delegation.\(^{22}\) George Wallace ran again, this time with the American Independent Party. He won five states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. The ultimate victor, Richard Nixon, focused on winning Southern, white, conservative Democratic votes by making "law and order" one of his central issues. Critics claimed the tactic was racially coded.\(^{23}\)

In fact, race is credited as being one of the fundamental causes of the string of Republican victories beginning in 1968.\(^{24}\) In 1972 George Wallace ran yet again, however his campaign was cut short when he was shot in Laurel, Maryland in May 1972.

\(^{21}\) Ibid, page 18

\(^{22}\) Ibid

\(^{23}\) Ibid

Representative Shirley Chisholm, a Harlem Democrat, became the first “serious” black candidate to compete for the Democratic nomination. She entered ten primaries (including Florida) and averaged 35,000 votes in each state. She received 35 convention delegates or 7 percent of the total black delegates.25

George Wallace returned in 1976, and Florida played a pivotal role in the outcome. Wallace lost to former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter in the Florida Democratic primary and Democratic officials, who were nervous about Wallace’s message and his popularity, threw their support behind Carter. Nearly two-thirds of registered black voters went to the polls and 90 percent of them supported Carter.26

Ronald Reagan defeated Carter in 1980 and began a less than hopeful era for civil rights advocates. He opposed affirmative action and the extension of the Voting Rights Act; reduced federal domestic spending, supported tax-exemptions for segregated schools and reduced taxes for the wealthy.

In 1984 Jesse Jackson entered the national arena, receiving 19 percent of the total primary vote in his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Many blacks, however, supported Walter Mondale for his record of supporting black causes. Ronald Reagan won by a landslide.

25 Ibid, page 19
26 Ibid
Jackson sought the Democratic nomination again in 1988 and, although he won primaries in five states, he lost the nomination to Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts. The Republican candidate, George Bush, ran on a series of race-based issues (crime, welfare, affirmative action) and drew national attention for a series of incendiary ads he ran focusing on the case of Willie Horton, a black convict who, while on furlough from a Massachusetts prison, raped a white woman and stabbed her fiancé. Bush blamed Dukakis’s policies for Horton’s release and won handily.

Bush’s record with blacks went from bad to worse during his presidency. By the 1992 campaign, a poll by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies showed that 84 percent of blacks disapproved of Bush’s performance. Democratic contender Bill Clinton, on the other hand, carried 82 percent of the black vote during the general election.

The strategy of the black voting bloc changed during the 1992 election. Black leaders waited to express their demands until after Clinton’s election, possibly helping him win by deferring speculation that he might capitulate to the needs of a group still viewed suspiciously by a large segment of the population. Clinton made substantial inroads in inclusiveness and won easily in 1996. His term helped lay the groundwork for the election of 2000, a pivotal event for race relations and power politics.

In 2000, Republicans shifted their traditional strategy, which was to win enough white votes to beat the Democratic advantage among non-whites.27 George W. Bush had

27 Mayer, page 45
received a relatively high level of black support in his race for Texas governor in 1998 (28 percent) and strategists thought he had a good chance of overcoming the presumptive Democratic nominee, Al Gore, whose record in the black community was not nearly as strong as his predecessor, Bill Clinton’s. The prevailing theory was a Republican who could take 28 percent of the black vote and half of the Hispanic vote (another area in which Bush was strong) would have an easy path to the White House.\textsuperscript{28} However, Bush walked a tightrope in his efforts to balance the image he was crafting as a “new Republican” – one who would reach out to the minority community – with the white conservative base of the Republican Party. The difficulty quickly became apparent.

In the battle for the Republican nomination, Bush took on Arizona Sen. John McCain who won the first primary, in New Hampshire, by a large margin. In the next race, in South Carolina, both candidates were immediately confronted with two potentially explosive issues – the use of the Confederate flag and interracial dating.\textsuperscript{29} Bush was able to avoid the flag controversy by labeling it a “states rights” issue. But he injected himself into the interracial dating controversy with a visit to ultra-conservative Bob Jones University, which maintained that interracial dating was against God’s will. While Bush’s appearance at the school prompted considerable angst among some of the party’s more moderate members, it

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, page 46

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, page 47
didn’t seem to harm Bush in the state as he won a strong victory as a traditional conservative.\(^{30}\)

In the Democratic primaries, Gore was struggling to reclaim even a portion of the black support that Bill Clinton mustered in the 1990s. In fact, Clinton and Jimmy Carter, the only two successful Democratic presidential candidates in the last two decades, were nominated largely as a result of their mobilization of the black vote. Gore was having more trouble. Blacks recalled his attempts to appeal to conservative whites in 1988. He attacked Jesse Jackson during the New York primaries and, like George Bush, Sr., attempted to use the Willie Horton case against Michael Dukakis. Gore’s primary challenger, Bill Bradley, pushed the race issue in an attempt to shore up support from Democratic base voters. But Gore’s association with Clinton won out in the end and Bradley lost in state after state, rejected soundly by blacks.

After the primary, Gore was advised to campaign strongly in the black community. Counter to that advice he focused more on appealing to centrist whites he thought he could sway from the Republicans. Blacks criticized him for giving up on them and he was roundly bashed after his first televised debate with Bush for not dealing with the race issue. As black radio show host Tom Joyner lamented in a post-debate interview with Gore:

\(^{30}\) Ibid, page 48
During the third debate, Gore came out with a strong statement against quotas but endorsed affirmative action. Bush opposed affirmative action measures that involve quotas.32

Bush's record on race relations was questionable. Former GOP activist Faye Anderson said Bush "would surround himself by black babies, but would not go to speak to black adults, it really tipped his hand to what he is all about – trying to convince white swing voters that he is a different kind of candidate."33

Both parties took extraordinary measures to appeal to black voters. The Republicans spent more than a million dollars on radio ads targeted at the black community and Bush became the first Republican candidate to attend an NAACP convention since 1980.34

But it was the Democrats the NAACP sought to help with an unprecedented advertising campaign designed to bring back the raw emotions of the civil rights era. The most inflammatory ad featured the daughter of James Byrd, Jr., a black man who was tied to a truck by his ankles and dragged to his death during Bush's term as Texas governor. Three white men were convicted of the crime. Byrd's daughter chastised Bush for not following

31 Tom Joyner Radio Show, Oct. 4, 2000

32 Ramstack, Tom, "Clinton Orders Increase in Hispanic Workers," Washington Times, October 20, 2000


34 Mayer, page 53
up on the convictions by supporting hate crimes legislation. The NAACP followed up on the ads by arranging for the daughter to speak to black audiences across the country.35

Even more significant, the NAACP launched its largest-ever voting drive, clearly geared toward motivating Democrats to vote. And it worked. In 2000, 73 percent of registered blacks voted, the highest ever turnout among blacks in the U.S.

What caused the upswing in participation? David Shipler, author of A Country of Strangers, takes issue with stereotypes that paint blacks as being poorly educated and not well informed politically that he maintains can foster low levels of engagement among blacks. He describes them as “measurements of a cruel wind that whips across America.” 36 The consequence of such thinking creates “a corrosive chemistry of low expectations, closed opportunities and ultimate defeat,” he writes. “The judgments that spring from the stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies, creating a reality of failure that is then taken to justify the stereotypes themselves.” 37

Shipler stresses that a sense of efficacy is critical to success. He focuses on the images whites and blacks have of each other and how those images can deter social progress. While racial progress has been made on some levels, he argues that true integration, which he describes as genuine power sharing, has largely failed. “In most institutions, (the armed

35 Mayer, page 56
36 Ibid, page 377
37 Ibid
forces are the chief exception), power is still reserved for whites, and a belief in black cultural inferiority has subtly substituted for the earlier belief in black genetic inferiority."\(^{38}\)

Shipler delves deeper into the psychology behind the anger an oppressed minority cultivates toward the more powerful majority. He describes the effort of honoring a cultural heritage while making decisions to achieve success in the world as one that "tears at black souls."\(^{39}\) And that, he says, begins to explain black anger at efforts toward "color blindness." The acknowledgement of genuine differences in culture and heritage is critical to validating the perspective brought by blacks to the U.S. culture.\(^{40}\) "The real quagmires of blacks' impotence (lie in) their tightly circumscribed political influence and their hollow economic stature."\(^{41}\)

The academic literature has not yet completely examined the residual anger from the 2000 election, nor has it predicted its impact on voter efficacy in the future. While much has been written about the episode, the material has largely been relegated to newspaper accounts, magazine articles and Internet postings. The events of Sept. 11, 2001, occurring less than a year after the election, largely quelled any further election debate and focused the nation's attention on unity rather than anything that could be interpreted as fractious.

\(^{38}\) Ibid

\(^{39}\) Ibid

\(^{40}\) Ibid, page 383

\(^{41}\) Ibid
Among those who have written on the issue, The Black Radical Congress maintains that the biggest loser in the election was the principle of democracy.

The electoral contest between the two major candidates of the capitalist parties, George W. Bush and Al Gore, was essentially decided not by the people, but by the Republican-controlled Florida State Legislature and by five conservative justices on the U.S. Supreme Court. In effect, Gore was elected by the voters, while Bush was selected by the courts. 42

The sting was especially strong because of the diligence with which the African American vote was cultivated in 2000. Concerned about the impending loss of a Democratic president, myriad African American action groups set out to register and inform record numbers of minority voters. The most notable was the NAACP drive. 43

Nationally it identified 2.8 million households that it contacted with literature and phone calls. Bill Maxwell, a black columnist for The St. Petersburg Times, wrote of the impact of that effort in October, 2000.

While listening to a popular South Florida black radio station the other day, I nearly drove my Blazer off the road when I heard this political ad: ‘Look, we know what you think Republicans are like, but we’re working hard to show you who we really are.’ This groundbreaking radio spot is paid for by none other than the Republican National Committee. For good reason, even RNC spokesman Clifford May calls the ad ‘absolutely historic and unprecedented.’ ‘Never in the history of contemporary voting have blacks, as a voting bloc, been courted directly by Republicans.’ 44


43 Ibid

The efforts did have an effect. In addition to the largest-ever national turnout amongst black voters, the black share of the overall vote in Florida rose to 15 percent in 2000 from 10 percent in 1996, meaning 300,000 more black voters participated. Nationally the black share of the vote was 10 percent. Al Gore received 90 percent of that vote.

Given this context, I selected a Central Florida community as a case study for the purpose of studying the impact of the 2000 election. Parramore is predominantly African American (90 percent), comprised almost entirely of renters (88 percent), and extremely poor (overall poverty rate of 47 percent). In some of the census tracts that define the neighborhood, poverty rates are in excess of 60 percent. The average Parramore resident survives on less than half of the annual income available to the average Orlando resident. Marriage rates are low; rates of female heads of household are high; labor force participation and educational attainment are well below the regional averages. Parramore has become a focal point for community service centers in the city, yet many residents have developed a sense of cynicism about “improvement” and “redevelopment” projects planned for their neighborhood. Thirty percent of the 45 respondents surveyed felt that local government could be trusted to do the right thing “always” or “most of the time.” Despite the presence


of numerous agencies, service centers, and other “helping” facilities, the people of Parramore are generally no better off than they were ten or twenty years ago.
Residents of Parramore, an impoverished Orlando neighborhood whose original boundaries are being encroached upon by the region’s busiest interstate, the city’s largest urban redevelopment project and two major sports facilities, are accustomed to outsiders offering promises in exchange for access, opinions or land.

In 2000 Parramore residents were offered yet another series of promises, this time in return for votes. As the Bush and Gore campaigns, seeking every possible advantage, culled through Parramore’s large cache of unregistered voters, residents were promised brighter days ahead with improved opportunities for education, insurance and employment. Gaining a consensus in a community such as Parramore is complicated, however, by characteristics unique to low-income communities: high percentages of transients; a tendency not to send change of address forms to the Supervisor of Elections; and an overall lack of faith in the “system.”

In order to document community views on issues related to the 2000 election, I developed a survey addressing various measurable attitudes listed earlier in this text. Several attempts were made to distribute this survey to assure the most representative results. In August 2001 I distributed the questionnaire to clients of the Central Florida Homeless Coalition, located in the heart of Parramore, where eligible visitors can receive temporary housing and meals. Since I have volunteered in the coalition’s food service program, I was aware of the large numbers of coalition residents who qualify for the meal program. On the designated
Sunday evening I explained my purpose in conducting the survey to nearly 200 residents there to receive the evening meal. I handed out approximately 40 surveys and let the residents fill them out at their leisure. I collected the surveys after the meal ended. When sorting through the responses I noticed that while the respondents were primarily low income, many came from outside of the Parramore area.

In September 2001, in a second attempt to obtain a representative sample, I contacted the Workforce Central Florida, an organization that places qualified low-income applicants in jobs. My surveys were distributed with application materials over the course of a week and returned to me, in bulk, the next week. This approach generated a good response (83), but many respondents turned out to be Hispanics and residents of other neighborhoods. Again, it was apparent another strategy was called for.

Finally, in March 2002, with the help of six undergraduate student recruits, we traversed the Parramore neighborhood one hot Saturday morning, going door to door and person to person and speaking with residents one on one. Some residents filled out the forms themselves while others allowed us to mark their responses for them. This effort produced the core of the information compiled in the Parramore dataset. The final respondent list from all three attempts was 162 surveys, however once they were edited to assure Parramore residency, the total was reduced to 45.

Although the response was relatively small, the information was telling.

In that survey, 52 percent of those questioned (48 percent black) felt the election was unfair
while only 36 percent (38 percent black) felt it was fair.

Table 1: Fairness of 2000 election by race, Parramore survey sample, N=33

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crosstabulating that data by education level, one finds that the few whites who were surveyed were overwhelmingly in agreement that the election was unfair. Black respondents with a high school education were more inclined to call it unfair (53 percent) than either those with less or more education (33 percent each).
Table 2: Fairness of 2000 Election by race, controlled for education, Parramore survey sample, N=31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;HS</td>
<td>Do you believe that 2000 pres election was fairly decided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dk</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Do you believe that 2000 pres election was fairly decided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dk</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;HS</td>
<td>Do you believe that 2000 pres election was fairly decided?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dk</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Percent Calling Election "Unfair," by Race

In a related statistic, 60 percent of those surveyed in Parramore did not feel votes cast by blacks were fairly counted in the 2000 election. And 48 percent felt there were efforts made to disproportionately keep blacks from voting or to invalidate black votes.
Table 3: Question of whether votes cast by blacks in 2000 election were fairly counted, Parramore survey sample, N= 43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dk</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Question of whether efforts were made to disproportionately keep blacks from voting or to invalidate black votes, Parramore survey sample, N=36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dk</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Parramore, 44 percent of those surveyed indicated they voted in 2000.

Table 5: Did respondent vote in 2000 presidential election, Parramore survey sample, N=43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Controlling for race we see that 52 percent of those who voted were black.

Table 6: Did respondent vote in 2000 presidential election, Parramore survey sample, N=35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Percent of Parramore respondents voting in 2000, by race.
Looking forward to the 2004 race, we see that of the 68 percent who indicate they will vote in 2004, 64 percent are black.

Table 7: Respondents' plans to vote in 2004 presidential election, Parramore survey sample, N= 35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Respondents' plans to vote in 2004 presidential election, by race, Parramore survey sample, N=33

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twenty two percent of respondents to this survey rated the atmosphere of their polling places as being intimidating and, during a community meeting, several residents questioned notification of a polling place change just prior to the election. Residents overwhelmingly endorsed the idea of voter education in the neighborhood. Above all, they expressed a desire to be part of any change. Too often, they say, they feel they are used in various
agency efforts to secure grant money or ensure political success.

After the election was over, little had changed. Except a world-weary neighborhood had received another lesson in how the system really works.

One 53-year-old African American man who has lived in Parramore for more than a decade has no doubt who really won the election. “Bush stole it from Gore,” he responded to a survey question. “And Kathleen Harris did the dirty work.” How does this make him feel about voting in subsequent elections? “The rich want the poor man to be down,” he explained. “But the poor people haven’t forgotten. It’s a feeling that travels through the community.” The man said he did not plan to vote in 2004.

Another resident, a 38-year-old black man, wrote: “I’ve always had my doubts about the way votes were tallied and how certain groups actually decide the outcome. The past election proved that my doubts were more than just a feeling.” The man said he did not participate in 2000 and had no intention of participating in future elections.

A 42-year-old black man who was generally pleased with city services but had absolutely no trust in the federal government responded: “I truly believe in the American government ‘system’, but because of the corrupt persons involved it makes the average citizen unwilling to participate. . . Our own citizens lack faith in our own government. It is not necessarily my opinion, but what a great deal of us see with our own eyes! There’s talk, but only a few of us will voice their opinions.”

A 35-year old Native American woman who also had more trust in local government than
the federal government wrote: “I believe the last presidential election was decided by unseen, underground factions that used undesirable methods unknown to the general public to throw the vote to the Republican’s side.”

And a 59-year-old black man: “As long as it took, they could have done it all over. It wasn’t fair.”

Why do Parramore residents have these attitudes and how will they affect future participation? In a special report to the National Election Studies (NES) Board, based on the 2000 NES Special Topic Pilot Study, Nancy Burns and Donald Kinder developed a formula for determining the relationship between three kinds of social trust. The results are coded on a zero-one interval, with one showing the most trust and zero the least. It is clear from the study that blacks and whites varied dramatically in general trust and workplace trust but that the differences practically disappeared in the category of neighborhood trust.

Table 9: The Relationship between Three Varieties of Social Trust and Social Background Characteristics (means) Burns-Kinder. Scale coded on zero-one interval, with 1.0 representing most trusting and 0.0 least trusting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Trust</th>
<th>Neighborhood Trust</th>
<th>Workplace Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Burns and Kinder then developed a scale to measure the effect of general trust on political
participation. The conclusion indicates that general trust has a significant impact on political participation and organizational activity as a whole, but a very limited role in predicting local participation.

Table 10: Does general trust predict political participation? (Burns-Kinder.) Coefficient and standard error on general trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full Sample</th>
<th>People with Full-Time Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>.32 (.22)</td>
<td>.28 (0.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local participation</td>
<td>.03 (.11)</td>
<td>-.01 (0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational activity</td>
<td>.26 (0.07)</td>
<td>.32 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study shows that the area of general trust has a significant influence on political participation. Since blacks rate 21 percent lower in that area than whites, it is not surprising that residents of communities like Parramore would be far less inclined to participate politically than majority white communities.

The Parramore data cause me to hypothesize that a random national sample would find comparable levels of frustration and low levels of trust. In the next section I will compare results of the Parramore survey with national survey data.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

How much have attitudes about race changed over the years? In a 1990 survey, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (NORC) found that 57 percent of non-blacks rated blacks as “less intelligent than whites.”

This study examines the strength of black political power through voting data. In order to establish a national benchmark, statistics from the National Election Study are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Voter Turnout 1948-2000, Percent among Demographic Groups who responded: “Yes, voted”

The 73 percent voting participation by blacks in 2000 is rivaled for record high by two distinct time periods – 68 percent turnout in the midst of the civil rights struggles of 1968 and 67 percent turnout in 1980 and 1992, both years in which candidates seen as “pro-black” were elected.

These elections were followed by periods of lower participation among blacks – a drop of three percentage points between 1968 and 1972, and 1968 and 1976, and a drop of seven percentage points between 1980 and 1988 – when George Bush Sr. won over Democrat Michael Dukakis.

This analysis comes from the 2000 post-election study conducted by the National Election Studies at the University of Michigan. The primary variable is a question asked in that survey: How fair was the November Election? Frequency distribution for this variable shows that 63 percent of those surveyed found the election to be either fair or neither fair nor unfair and 37 percent found it to be unfair.

Table 11: Fairness of 2000 Election, National Election Studies sample, N=1418

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the effect of race on the fairness variable shows a distinct difference between blacks and whites. Fifty six percent of blacks called the election unfair compared to 34 percent of whites.
Since blacks have traditionally been motivated to vote by extreme like or dislike of a candidate, I examined both pre- and post-election feeling thermometers for George W.
Bush. Before the election, the mean thermometer rating for Bush by blacks was 48, compared to a mean of 58 for whites.

Table 13: Pre:Election Feeling Thermometer for George W Bush, National Election Studies sample, N=1562

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race: White/Black</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. White</td>
<td>57.55</td>
<td>1363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Black</td>
<td>47.59</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56.28</td>
<td>1562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Pre-Election thermometer, George W. Bush
The post-election thermometer for Bush is even more revealing, with whites giving him an increased rating of 59 and the black rating falling to 39.

Table 14: Post: Election Feeling Thermometer for George W Bush, National Election Studies sample, N=1383

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58.62</td>
<td>1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>39.31</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56.37</td>
<td>1383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Post-election thermometer, George W. Bush
The 2002 National Opinion Poll, conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, found that in 2000 Bush’s favorable rating among blacks was 29 percent, and his unfavorable rating 55 percent. However, in 2002, those numbers increased dramatically, as he was rated favorably by 50.8 percent of blacks and unfavorably by 38.6 percent. They were still considerably lower than the rating by the general population, of which 72.8 percent viewed him favorably and 23.6 percent unfavorably.\(^5^0\)

On the question of political trust, we see that a large percentage of blacks surveyed in 2000, 59 percent, have a low level of political trust as compared to 55 percent of whites.

Table 15: Two categories of political trust by race, National Election Studies sample, N=1275

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Percent with low political trust by race.

Is race the only factor that accounts for these stark differences? To check I ran the same tests controlling for education, income and party affiliation. We can see very clearly that although education does play a role in the results, its role is one of enhancement of the race variable. For those with less than a high school education, 45 percent of whites and 65 percent of blacks found the election unfair. For those with a high school education, the numbers changed slightly to 44 percent of whites and 64 percent of blacks, still a 20 point difference. However, for those with the highest level of education, the percentage of
whites finding the election unfair dropped to 28 percent and the percentage of blacks to 47 percent, still a 19 percentage point difference.

Table 16: Fairness of 2000 election by race, controlled for education, National Election Studies sample, N= 1275

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education: 3 categories</th>
<th>Race: White/Black</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than HS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than HS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfair</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7: Percent rating 2000 election 'unfair' by race, controlled for education
Running the test for income we see another case of enhancement. Looking at the three categories of income we see that amongst those in the lowest income category, 37 percent of whites and 53 percent of blacks found the election unfair. In the middle range numbers are similar, with 36 percent of whites and 57 percent of blacks calling the election unfair. In the highest income category, the point spread remains similar although the total percentages fall with 29 percent of whites and 52 percent of blacks giving an unfair rating.

Table 17: Fairness of 2000 election by race, controlled for income, National Election Studies sample, N= 1137

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income: 3 categories</th>
<th>Race: White/Total</th>
<th>Race: White/Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. &lt;$15,000</td>
<td>0. Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>1. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfair</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. $15,000-$34,999</td>
<td>0. Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>2. Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. $15,000-$34,999</td>
<td>1. Unfair</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &gt;=$35,000</td>
<td>0. Fair or neither fair/unfair</td>
<td>3. Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &gt;=$35,000</td>
<td>1. Unfair</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &gt;=$35,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And for party affiliation we see, again, that although party played a role, it is not as significant as the race factor. Forty one percent of white Democrats rated the election unfair as opposed to 56 percent of black Democrats. Among Independents the percentages change to 38 percent of whites and 61 percent of blacks. The most interesting phenomenon is with the Republicans, of whom 20 percent of whites and 20 percent of blacks delivered ratings of unfair.

Figure 8: Percent rating 2000 election 'unfair' by race, controlled for income.
Table 18: Fairness of 2000 election by race, controlled for partisanship, National Election Studies sample, N= 1255

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party ID: 3 categories</th>
<th>Race: White/Black</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. White</td>
<td>2. Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. Fair or neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair/unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. Fair or neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair/unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Republican</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0. Fair or neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fair/unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 9: Percent rating 2000 election ‘unfair’ by race, controlled for partisanship.
Will these attitudes affect turnout in future elections? We begin by examining national participation in 1996. NES data show that 76 percent of registered whites voted in that election compared to 65 percent of blacks. Those percentages increased to 75 percent of whites and 73 percent of blacks in 2000.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{51} National Election Studies
CHAPTER SIX: THE FUTURE

So what effect will these attitudes have on turnout in the 2004 election? The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP) has published a preliminary estimate of black voter turnout in 2002 based on anecdotal evidence gathered from its Operation Big Vote (OBV) and Black Youth Vote (BYV!) field sites in 60 cities and 27 states. According to this data, black turnout was about 43 percent compared with 27 percent in 1998. Turnout among whites and other racial groups was 55 percent (up from 36.5 percent in 1998).

However in South Florida, there was a considerable decrease in voter turnout. In Broward County, overall turnout in 2002 was 35.4 percent (20.4 percent among blacks). In Miami-Dade County, turnout was 53 percent (20.3 percent among blacks). In Palm Beach County, turnout was 46 percent (13.8 percent among blacks). 52

At a panel discussion held shortly after the 2002 elections, members of the NCBCP suggested that candidates stop blaming their losses on low voter turnout and focus on creating clear messages and agendas. 53

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53 Conventional Wisdom Challenged In Analysis Of Black Voter Turnout During NCBCP's Recent Post Election Briefing http://www.bigvote.org/postelection.htm
"According to anecdotal evidence collected from NCBCP sites in 60 cities across the country, blacks went to the polls at about the same rate they did in past midterm elections," said Melanie Campbell executive director and CEO of the NCBCP. "You cannot assume that blacks will vote for a particular party. Voters must be educated about a candidate's positions on the issues that matter to them and feel personally connected to a candidate."\textsuperscript{54}

The coalition acknowledged, however, that in order for blacks to make an impact, more than average participation will be required. "We do have to leap tall buildings," said Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. "Those who are behind have got to run faster."

In order to increase participation in the black community, University of Maryland Professor Ronald Walters, said candidates need to address black issues. In 2002, "they didn't hear anyone talking about their issues, employment, the downturn in the economy, health, crime, drug treatment programs," Walters said.\textsuperscript{55}

Some political strategists, while recognizing the problem, are having more trouble agreeing on a solution.

"If the Republican base is energized and the African-American community is not, that spells disaster for Democrats in the South," said Morris Reid, a former aide to Ron Brown,

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid
the late secretary of commerce under President Clinton.  

In recent years, the winning Democratic formula in the South has been for candidates to win 95 percent of an energized black vote, while picking up 42 or 44 percent of the white vote. But Democratic candidates who don’t activate enough blacks to votes will continue to struggle in areas that are turning into Republican strongholds.

In a series of interviews with scholars, political operatives and black community activists, a troubling picture emerged for Democrats: The party is suffering from candidates who often don’t relate to the black community, who don’t campaign there aggressively—sometimes for fear of alienating equally important white swing voters—and who in general mishandle their relationship with the African-Americans. The absence of Bill Clinton, who forged an extraordinary personal and political bond with African-Americans, may also be hurting the party when it comes to turnout. All of those factors appeared to have been in play on Tuesday, where in county after county across the South, black support was solid but not enthusiastic enough to create Democratic victories.

“I think you can assume that African-American turnout (in 2002) was not what they thought it would be,” said Democratic strategist and pollster Celinda Lake. “The other thing is that it looks like [white] born-again Christian turnout was high. They had been

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57 Ibid

58 Ibid
declining over the last 10 years, while African-American and union turnout has been increasing.” 59

But the idea of Democrats pointing fingers at blacks does not sit well with some community leaders, suggesting that the longtime allies have some tension to resolve. “I’m baffled to hear people think it’s the black vote that’s the difference,” said Donna Brazile, Democratic strategist and Al Gore’s campaign manager in 2000. Brazile indicated that Democratic wins in Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Tennessee were evidence of a strong black turnout. 60

Bill McBride, the Democratic candidate for governor in Florida, knew his campaign needed a big African-American showing to have any chance of beating Republican Gov. Jeb Bush. But while his campaign was hoping that in turnout in Florida’s three big, urban counties—Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade—would hit 65 percent, it was actually closer to 45 percent. 61

McBride, a white, middle-aged, wealthy attorney, essentially conceded the black vote to his opponent Janet Reno in the Democratic primary. Then, when he’d won the nomination, he

59 Ibid
60 Ibid
61 Ibid
passed over another primary opponent, state senator Daryl Jones, who is black, for lieutenant governor and picked a white running mate.\textsuperscript{62}

Strategists suggest the choice was made in hopes of winning over white swing voters. Blacks, meanwhile, watched and fumed. When McBride finally campaigned with Clinton in African-American communities four days before the election, it was too little, too late.

Although McBride probably wouldn’t have been saved even with a 65 percent turnout, there were close races in the South, like the campaign for governor in Alabama or the Senate campaign in Missouri, where Democrat Jean Carnahan lost by just one percentage point, where the participation of more black voters would have made a difference.

North Carolina’s Erskine Bowles enjoyed overwhelming support from blacks in published pre-election polls. Yet his Republican opponent, Elizabeth Dole, actually won several major metropolitan counties with sizable minority populations. To many analysts, that indicates the black turnout was not strong.\textsuperscript{63}

Guilford County, North Carolina, for example, is 30 percent black. Despite polls going into Election Day showing Dole was favored by just 7 percent of blacks, she carried Guilford.

In South Carolina, the voter activist group Palmetto Project analyzed votes from predominantly black counties, and concluded that Democratic Gov. Jim Hodges, running

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid
for reelection, lost 11 percent of the black vote he garnered in 1998. Most likely those black voters stayed home, says project director Steve Skardon. 64

The Georgia gubernatorial race presents an interesting case study. Democratic candidate Roy Barnes did better in DeKalb County, which includes Atlanta and is 54 percent black, in 2002 than he did in 1998, increasing his margin of victory there by 16,000 votes. 65

But elsewhere, particularly in smaller counties, a different story played out. In Baldwin County, which is 45 percent black and which Barnes carried in 1998, his vote tally fell 26 percent and he lost the county to his Republican challenger, Sonny Perdue. Small counties such as Coffee, Crisp, Dodge, Toombs and Worth, which each have a black population of 30 percent or more, each went Republican in 2002 after voting for Barnes in 1998. With no evidence that blacks suddenly switched parties, analysts assume that black turnout was not high or was simply overshadowed by a heavy Christian conservative showing. 66

The Orlando Mayor’s race in February 2003 provided another case study. Even though the race evolved into a campaign about race, turnout was lowest in the Parramore community and other black majority districts. 67

64 Ibid
65 Ibid
66 Ibid
67 Ibid
Some African-American leaders cautioned that the 2002 results were not just about blacks. “Black and white, it’s like mashed potatoes and gravy,” commented Brazile. “But you need the mashed potatoes first. Unless you have substantial white support, the black votes won’t make it on their own.”

“A great African-American turnout is just not going to happen every time,” said Matthew Corrigan, a fellow at the University of North Florida’s Center for Public Policy and Leadership. “Democrats relied too much on an extraordinary African-American turnout vs. a decent turnout, and without Clinton around, that’s difficult to do.”

In the 2004 presidential race, there are some indicators that issues important to blacks are at least being discussed. In January, black activist Al Sharpton became the first African American to seek the Democratic nomination since Jesse Jackson, who ran in 1984 and 1988, and L. Douglas Wilder, the Virginia governor who briefly ran in 1992. Former U.S. Senator Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois has also expressed interest in entering the race.

But political operatives like Brazile, the first black campaign manager in a presidential contest, worry that the presence of activists such as Sharpton might do more to hurt the black cause than to help it.

68 Ibid
69 Ibid

Brazile says blacks in key states are more likely to be motivated by recognizable figures from those states than white candidates such as North Carolina Sen. John Edwards or Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry. Her fear is that without more black candidates in the mix, Sharpton will win a number of black votes by default.70

Brazile reportedly persuaded Moseley Braun to consider a run for the same reason.

“The Democratic Party is running on the same tank of gas we had in 1992,” Brazile said.

“We have not broadened the electorate.”71

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The data clearly show blacks are more likely to whites to view the 2000 election as being unfair.

According to Hanes Walton, a political scientist at the University of Michigan, the black presidential vote assumes "a fourfold significance." First, many analysts consider it a measure of black political participation and influence. Second, a cohesive black vote is recognized as being potentially pivotal in a close race, third, the black vote constitutes "a symbolic and substantive expression of black values and preferences through interest-group articulation and preferences," and fourth, the black presidential vote is an instrument of political brokering and bargaining of black leaders, seeking to serve black interests by influencing the presidency. 72

There are many variables that point to a downturn in trust and efficacy, particularly among black voters:

- In Orange County, the percentage of those registered who voted in 1992 was 76 percent. In 2000, that percentage dropped to 68 percent. However, among blacks age 18 and older, 27 percent were registered in 1992 with 21 percent voting. In

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2000 registration among blacks jumped to 32 percent, however the voting percentage remained the same - 21 percent.\(^73\)

- The percentage of blacks who trust the federal government only some or none of the time increased from 65 percent in 1996 to 67 percent in 2000. (whites were 68 percent in 1996 and 54 percent in 2000).\(^74\)

- Correspondingly, the percentage of blacks who trust the federal government most of the time/just about always declined from 35 percent in 1996 to 32 percent in 2000. (whites were 32 percent in 1996 and 46 percent in 2000).\(^75\)

- While the trust in government index for whites rose 6 points between 1996 and 2000 (31 to 37), the score for blacks dropped a point, from 36 to 35.\(^76\)

An analysis prepared for the Democratic National Committee following the 2002 election indicated that while early indicators of low black turnout in 2002 may be exaggerated, there remains a disparity between voting habits of blacks and whites that will have to be addressed before elections can be more closely representative of the citizenship.

"While there was no overall discernable downward trend, (black) precinct turnout continues to trail that of (whites), undermining our ability to win close races," the memo states. "We are failing to build upon and expand our (black) electorate." \(^77\)

\(^73\) Orange County Supervisor of Elections

\(^74\) National Election Studies

\(^75\) Ibid

\(^76\) Ibid
The 2002 analysis shows whites voting an average of 10 points higher than blacks. To narrow that gap, Democrats are now planning to galvanize younger voters – the fastest growing segment of potential base voters.

The memo also warns of tough Republican tactics in 2004.

“Republicans are well-positioning themselves to suppress the turnout of African American voters via their specific negative attacks asserting that African Americans are taken for granted and Democrats are out of touch with the values of the community,” it states. “Unfortunately, many of the post election headlines by ‘black leaders’ criticizing the party’s efforts will find their way into Republican black communications in the 2004 cycle, further helping Republicans dissuade African Americans from voting.”

If history is an indication, a decrease in efficacy, combined with the disengagement black voters experienced as a result of the 2000 election and a continuation of power politics, will likely take years to rectify.


78 Ibid
COMMUNITY SURVEY

We're interested in your opinions. Answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your help.

Please check the appropriate box for the following questions:

1. Are you currently registered to vote? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
2. Did you vote in the 2000 presidential race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
3. Have you voted in any other presidential race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
4. Do you plan to vote in the 2004 presidential race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
5. Have you ever voted in a state governor's race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
6. Did you vote in the March 12 Orlando City Council race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
7. Have you ever voted in a previous city or county race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
8. Have you ever voted in a federal congressional race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
9. Do you plan to vote in the 2002 governor's/congressional race? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
10. Do you believe the 2000 election was fairly decided? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
11. Do you believe your vote did or would have made a difference in deciding the 2000 election? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
12. Do you believe that every vote carries equal weight? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
13. Do you believe that every citizen of this country has an equal chance of being elected to political office? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
14. Based on what you have read or heard, do you think votes cast by blacks were fairly counted in the 2000 presidential election? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
15. Do you think there were efforts made to disproportionately keep blacks from voting or to invalidate black votes? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

16. On the whole, how would you rate the process of voting in Orange County? ☐ Very Difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Neither Difficult nor Easy ☐ Easy ☐ Very Easy
17. If you have voted in Central Florida in the last five years, how would you rate the atmosphere at your polling place? ☐ Very Intimidating ☐ Intimidating ☐ Neither Intimidating nor Friendly ☐ Friendly ☐ Very Friendly
18. If you have not voted in Central Florida in the last five years, how do you perceive the atmosphere at your polling place? ☐ Very Intimidating ☐ Intimidating ☐ Neither Intimidating nor Friendly ☐ Friendly ☐ Very Friendly
19. Do you live in either of the following communities? ☐ Parramore ☐ Callahan-Arlington Heights ☐ Neither
20. If so, how long have you lived there? ☐ 0-4 years ☐ 5-9 years ☐ 10-20 years ☐ 21 years or more
21. There's been a lot of talk about redeveloping Parramore. That means tearing down a lot of older homes to make way for offices (such as Hughes Office Supply) and the Florida A&M Law School. In general, do you think the effect of these initiatives on the community would be: ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Neither Good nor Bad ☐ Bad ☐ Very Bad
COMMUNITY SURVEY

We're interested in your opinions. Answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your help.

22. UCF is looking at getting involved in Parramore on several levels – assisting with environmental problems, providing health screenings for children, working with Habitat for Humanity and homebuyers groups to assist residents in purchasing homes. In general, do you think the impact on the community from UCF’s work on these projects would be:
   □ Very Good   □ Good   □ Neither Good nor Bad   □ Bad   □ Very Bad

23. Do you think your neighborhood would benefit from voter education efforts including voter machine demonstrations and overviews of sample ballots?   Yes □ No □ Don’t know □

24. Do you think voter education in your neighborhood would encourage people to vote? Yes □ No □ Don’t know □

25. How satisfied are you with the following city services in your neighborhood?
   a. Trash collection: □ Very satisfied □ Somewhat satisfied □ Not very satisfied □ Not at all satisfied
   b. Police services: □ Very satisfied □ Somewhat satisfied □ Not very satisfied □ Not at all satisfied
   c. Fire services: □ Very satisfied □ Somewhat satisfied □ Not very satisfied □ Not at all satisfied
   d. City services in general: □ Very satisfied □ Somewhat satisfied □ Not very satisfied □ Not at all satisfied

26. How often do you trust national government to do what is right?
   □ Just about always □ Most of the time □ Some of the time □ Almost never

27. How often do you trust local government to do what is right?
   □ Just about always □ Most of the time □ Some of the time □ Almost never

28. Do you receive any state or federal aid (welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, Social Security, etc)? Yes □ No □

29. Gender: □ Female □ Male

30. Family: □ Never married □ Married □ Divorced □ Separated □ Widowed

31. How many children? _______

32. Do you own your home? □ Yes □ No □

33. Are either your parents, siblings, aunts, uncles or grandparents living with you? □ Yes □ No □

34. Your age: _______

35. Your race: □ White □ Black □ Latino □ Asian □ Other

36. Your education: □ Some High School □ High School diploma/GED □ Technical School graduate
   □ Associate Degree □ Bachelor degree or higher

Please share any additional comments:

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

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LIST OF REFERENCES


