

## WINNING THE RACE BLACK VOTER TURNOUT IN THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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**Abstract** Estimates of voter turnout indicate that African Americans cast ballots at unprecedented rates in the 2008 presidential election. Given the presence of the first Black major party presidential nominee, this should be no surprise. But were heightened interest, efficacy, and a sense of racial identity due to the candidacy of Barack Obama the main factors contributing to the surge in Black voter turnout? Using data from the 1984 and 1996 National Black Election Studies and the 2008 American National Election Study, which contains a stratified random over-sample of blacks, we argue that party mobilization was a critical force in boosting Black turnout. Attitudinal factors, in contrast, appear to have been less robust in this election than one would assume.

Based on estimates of voter turnout in the 2008 election, the downward trend in voting since the 1960s appears to have reversed itself.<sup>1</sup> Overall, voter turnout among eligible voters was estimated to be 63.6 percent, the highest it has been since 1968 (Lopez and Taylor 2009). Contributing greatly to this boost was the highly mobilized Black electorate. Black voter turnout in 2008 was 65.2 percent—an all-time high—with about 15.9 million Blacks casting ballots. In fact, for the first time in history, Black voter turnout almost matched White voter turnout (66.1 percent), even without controlling for socioeconomic status (Lopez and Taylor 2009).

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1. The 1988 presidential election appears to have been the nadir. Turnout rose in 1992, dipped in 1996, and then rose again in 2000 and 2004 before peaking in 2008.

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Given that the first African-American major party presidential nominee was running for the nation's highest office, the surge in Black electoral turnout should be no surprise. But the specific mechanism by which Black turnout was increased is less obvious. Despite the presence of several different explanations for the surge in Black turnout, much of the news media commentary about the election has focused on the supposed heightened interest of Blacks in the campaign due to the presence of Barack Obama at the head of the Democratic ticket. This popular perspective is backed by considerable social scientific research attesting to the participatory relevance of both interest and shared racial identity. But while we find it plausible that Blacks were more attentive than usual to the 2008 campaign, we are more particularly interested in the extent to which voter outreach promoted Black turnout. Indeed, our specific aim in this article is to estimate the effects of party mobilization on Black turnout in the 2008 election.

Party contacting has, of course, received attention as an explanation for higher turnout in 2000 and especially 2004 (e.g., Bergan et al. 2005). Moreover, news media accounts of extensive and innovative Democratic contacting efforts in 2008 were common. But postelection news media stories and the preliminary scholarly analyses of the 2008 contest have rarely connected party (especially Democratic Party) contacting and increased Black turnout. Instead, the lion's share of the initial studies of 2008 have played up the personal appeal of Obama to younger voters and to Blacks, implicitly assuming that this appeal increases interest in electoral politics and thereby boosts the probability of voting.

The notion that Blacks' political interest is raised by a Black candidate and that this increased interest is, in and of itself, sufficient to promote turnout by driving a heightened sense of shared racial identity and political efficacy is debatable. The truth, however, is that previous research is short on both theory and data when it comes to the complex linkages between Black voter psychology and turnout. In fact, scholars have only recently begun to move in the direction of a more complete model of Black turnout. For example, a quick study of the extant literature shows that most scholarly examinations of elections featuring Black candidates have focused on candidate preference (Williams 1990; Terkildsen 1993; Reeves 1997; Philpot and Walton 2007). Those studies of African-American electoral participation in elections with Black candidates that do exist have been dominated by psychological concepts such as shared racial identity, linked fate, and empowerment; these works certainly do not ignore mobilization efforts, but have only rarely incorporated them into their analytical models. The new millennium has seen a positive change in this respect, with a handful of studies using field experimental designs to establish the importance of targeted Black outreach in elections with Black candidates (see, for example, Gerber and Green 2000; Green, Gerber, and Nickerson 2003). But these studies have tended to examine modest outreach in localized contexts; to our knowledge, no one has evaluated the impact of

Black voter outreach on behalf of a statewide or national African American candidate.

Our goal here is to empirically estimate the impact of party contacting efforts on Black turnout in the 2008 presidential election. We begin by examining the extent to which Black turnout increased in 2008 and contributed to Obama's victory. We then provide a brief overview of the literature on black political participation, before shifting to a discussion of the importance of voter mobilization for Black turnout. The heart of our study, however, is an empirical comparison of Black turnout in 2008, 1996, and 1984, which relies on the 2008 American National Election Study's over-sample of Blacks, along with the 1984 and 1996 National Black Election Studies. We find that party contacting was critical to increased African-American turnout in 2008 and that higher levels of political interest, efficacy, and shared racial identity among Black voters were not necessarily the main story behind the increase in Black turnout.

## Black Turnout and Mobilization in 2008

While many find the issues of mobilization and Black turnout intrinsically interesting, they take on a practical significance in 2008. Indeed, our argument is that even if you set aside the notion that we should know more about Black political behavior because it deepens our understanding of the overall quality of representation, there are compelling practical reasons to be interested in Black political behavior in the Obama-McCain election. In 2008, Obama became the first non-Southern Democrat to win a presidential election since John Kennedy. At the same time, overall turnout in the United States rose from 123.5 million (60.1 percent of the VEP) to 132.6 million (62.3 percent of the VEP). The logical suggestion is that increased Black turnout was a huge part of Obama's win.

Some descriptive data and a little basic math demonstrate the point quite nicely. Using national and statewide voter turnout figures<sup>2</sup> along with estimates of the composition of the electorate and presidential preferences of Blacks,<sup>3</sup> we can calculate the total Black Democratic vote in 2004 and 2008.<sup>4</sup> Nationally, we see that the Black share of the vote went from 11 percent in 2004 to 13 percent in 2008 (see table 1). In addition, support for the Democratic nominee went from 88 percent in 2004 to 95 percent in 2008. This means that the total number of Black votes for the Democratic candidate went from 12.0 million to 15.1 million; close to 3.2 million extra votes for the Democratic candidate

2. From Michael McDonald's website, [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm).

3. From National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll numbers (see <http://www.exit-poll.net/>).

4. Black Democratic Vote = (Total votes)\*(Black percentage of electorate)\*(Black percentage support for Obama). Obviously, the NEP percentage estimates come with a margin of error that could appreciably affect our translation into hard numbers. But the national sample consists of over 14,000 respondents and the state samples are all well over 1,500. The increased percentage of Blacks in the electorate and increased support for Obama over Kerry is consistent with pre-election polling data, as well.

**Table 1.** Estimates of Increase in Black Democratic Voters between 2004 and 2008

	2008 total black democratic votes	2004 total black democratic votes	Net gain due to blacks	2008 Margin for Obama over McCain	% of Obama margin due to gains among Blacks
U.S. National	15,130,190	11,958,273	3,171,916	9,545,998	33.2%
Indiana	173,316	161,782	11,534	28,391	40.6%
North Carolina	941,907	785,091	156,816	14,177	1106.1%
Ohio	608,004	432,617	175,388	258,897	67.7%
Florida	1,055,027	788,481	266,546	236,450	112.7%

NOTE.—Estimates of Black Democratic votes are based on total turnout (based on Professor Michael McDonald's estimates) multiplied by the percentage of the electorate that identified as "Black" (based on Edison-Mitofsky exit polls estimates) multiplied by the Democratic presidential vote share among this cohort (based on Edison-Mitofsky exit poll estimates). Net gains are calculated by comparing 2008 and 2004 figures.

in 2008 were entirely due to Black voters. This increase constituted 33 percent of Obama's total margin over McCain. In other words, if Obama had received Kerry's raw vote among Blacks, he would have won by 5 points rather than 8.

The point is perhaps more striking if we consider some of the battleground states from 2008. In Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, and Florida, the contribution of increased Black Democratic votes to Obama's margin over McCain ranges from a low of 41 percent (Indiana) to a high of 1,106 percent (North Carolina). That is, Obama carried North Carolina by 14,177 votes, but his improvement over Kerry among Black voters was 156,816 votes. Clearly, Obama loses North Carolina and Florida without significant improvement over Kerry's 2004 showing among Blacks. The broader point is not that Obama would have lost to McCain without a boost from Black voters; in fact, he probably would have won the race anyway. But it would have been a very different race.

### **Black Candidates and Black Voter Turnout**

What occurred in 2008 is, of course, the latest chapter in a long historical narrative. Theories of Black political participation have necessarily evolved as Blacks have become more and more politically incorporated. Because of their exceptional position in American society, general theories of political participation simply were not applicable to Blacks. Psychological (Campbell et al. 1960) and socioeconomic (Downs 1957; Verba and Nie 1972) models of voting proved inadequate during periods when African Americans were legally and institutionally prevented from participating in the political process (Walton 1985).

Although many of these barriers have been lifted, their legacy remains. Thus, in the post-Civil Rights era, Black political behavior still does not quite fit into general models of political participation. Rather, scholars of Black politics have had to factor in the consequences of centuries' worth of racism, inequality, and segregation (see Jones 1978). As Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson (1989) put it:

Black politics are influenced by numerous factors outside the black community: the nation's economy, the mass media, national legislation and judicial decisions, the organizational rules of the two parties and the competition between the parties in various regions and states, and state variations in registration and voting procedures. They are also affected by features within the black community: political, social, and religious organizations; political leadership; and the political motivation and resources of individuals (63).

Unlike other groups in society, indigenous institutions that surfaced out of Blacks' unique history play as important a role in determining Blacks' motivation to engage in politics as do individual-level characteristics or other group attachments such as party identification (Dawson 1994; Harris 1999; McDaniel 2008). African Americans' contact with these institutions has created collective

identities, ideologies, and orientations centered on race that influence political attitudes and behavior (Allen, Dawson, and Brown 1989; Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1993; Reese and Brown 1995; Harris-Lacewell 2004).

The importance of racial group-relevant considerations has been particularly noted when it comes to examining support for Black office-seekers. Much of this research falls within the Black empowerment literature which focuses on the extent to which Blacks have “achieved significant representation and influence in political decision making” (Bobo and Gilliam 1990, 378). This body of work focuses primarily on whether living in an area represented by a Black elected official encourages political engagement. While aggregate studies of Black empowerment show only modest increases in political turnout (Gay 2001), studies that rely on individual-level data show significant increases in political trust, knowledge, efficacy and participation (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Tate 2003; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Harris, Sinclair-Chapman, and McKenzie 2006).

A related strand of research looks at political participation when a Black candidate is on the ballot and largely confirms the Black empowerment literature. For instance, a precinct-level analysis of Cook County, IL elections in 1998 demonstrated that “the African-American residual vote rate in electoral contests with black candidates is less than half the rate in contests without black candidates” (Herron and Sekhon 2005, 154). Similarly, Atkins, DeZee, and Eckert (1985), who also use aggregate data, found that in a low-salience, nonpartisan election featuring a Black candidate, turnout in Black precincts was on average higher than it was during a comparable election with two White candidates.

Notice that these studies posit—more or less explicitly—a model of turnout. Black candidates increase political interest among Black voters, which increases a sense of shared racial identity and the desire to support someone from one’s own group, which increases voting. The presence of a Black candidate may also increase Blacks’ sense of political efficacy, which has an additional independent and positive effect on turnout. Given this model, it is not surprising that other research finds that racial identification and other race-relevant considerations are significant predictors of self-reported voting (Tate 1993; Chong and Rogers 2005).

To sum, race-relevant considerations appear to significantly influence Black voter turnout during elections in which an African American is seeking elected office. That’s not to say, however, that race-relevant considerations are the only predictors of voter turnout in these circumstances. For example, membership to Black civic and religious organizations consistently matter as well (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson 1989; Tate 1993; Dawson 1994). But whether our hypothesis is correct—that contact by political parties might also be an important factor in boosting Black voter turnout in elections featuring Black candidates—has yet to be examined with data from 2008.

## Mobilizing Black Voters

Our interest in the influence of party contacting on Black turnout has its roots in much of the classic work in American political behavior. In his quintessential study of Chicago, Gosnell (1935) denoted the importance of elite mobilization to Black voter turnout in elections featuring African-American candidates. Since then, however, Black turnout in these elections has typically been measured as a function of representation, socioeconomic status, group-relevant considerations, and membership to political churches and civic organizations. Only rarely have we returned to the question of whether mobilization by institutions not indigenous to the African-American community matters when Blacks appear on the ballot. This is particularly curious because the broader literature on mobilization indicates that this is a variable worthy of examination.

Research on Black mobilization and turnout has its foundations in the seminal books of the behavioral revolution of the 1950s and 60s. Both *Voting* (1954) and *The American Voter* (1960) were tasked to find out what makes people vote. While neither rested their theses on the behavior of racial and ethnic minorities, each examined sizable minority populations and made attempts to explain some of the findings. True to its psychological roots, *The American Voter* found that efficacy has a strong and positive impact on voting. However, their discussion of Black psychology focuses almost exclusively on the de facto and de jure impediments to the franchise that many Blacks faced at the time. *Voting*, rooted in the sociological/group based tradition, spoke more extensively to Black psychology, stating that the main determinants of Black turnout rested on their racial identity, more so than their class or religious demographics, both of which had stronger effects than race for non-Black respondents.

Building upon these two studies and the myriad of related works, Rosenstone and Hansen published their *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (1993), in which they set out to explain declining voter turnout by looking at the role of strategic mobilization. In addition to the economic, sociological and psychological factors already determined to influence turnout, they argued that “people participate in politics not so much because of who they are but because of the political choices and incentives they are offered” (5). Unfortunately, Rosenstone and Hansen have little to say with respect to Blacks’ propensity to respond to elites’ mobilization attempts—instead they also explain Black voter turnout as a function of psychological and systemic barriers to participation.

Subsequent studies of Black mobilization have demonstrated that African Americans are receptive to mobilization efforts in various forms. In an examination of nonvoting forms of participation, Cohen and Dawson (1993) found a positive and significant relationship between being contacted about participating in politics and actually doing so. Green (2004) found that nonpartisan mobilization efforts using direct-mail and phone calls yielded positive, though modest, effects. Most relevant to our study, Wielhouwer (2000) found that being

contacted by a political party during the 1996 election boosted the probability of voting by 10 percentage points.

But to what extent could political party mobilization account for a boost in Black voter turnout in 2008? Newspaper accounts of campaign activity suggest that the Democratic Party and its presidential nominee did not leave anything to chance. In discussing his candidacy, many have described Obama as part of the new generation of Black leaders. This new group of Black leaders is elite-educated and a generation removed from the Civil Rights Movement. Unlike their predecessors, their campaigning style deemphasizes race and targets a broader base of supporters. Yet Obama and Democratic strategists did not leave to chance that Obama's "natural" constituency would turnout to vote. During both the primary and general elections, Black voters were heavily courted. For instance, although Black voters constituted only about 2 percent of participants in the Iowa Democratic caucus, Obama's outreach effort targeted dozens of Black churches in cities like Des Moines and Waterloo (Zeleny 2008). After Obama won the Democratic nomination, his strategists devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to making sure registered African-American voters who did not vote in the previous presidential election actually made it to the polls in November 2008 (Wallsten 2008).

Still, while these activities were noted in the press during and after the campaign, they were not part of the dominant narrative about Obama's victory. This narrative tended to focus on the success of the Democrats' outreach to White—and especially younger White—voters. Nor has there been any significant scholarly treatment of party contacting on Black turnout. In light of this, the task we take up in the next section is to ascertain the impact of Black voter outreach while controlling for factors such as political interest and group identification.

## **Data and Design**

We draw upon a number of sources to test our hypothesis that party mobilization was an important predictor of Black voter turnout in 2008. First, to establish baseline comparison estimates of Black voter turnout and other measures of political engagement, we utilize the 1984 and 1996 National Black Election Studies (NBES) (Jackson 1997; Tate 2004). Second, to examine Black voter turnout in 2008 we employ the Black oversample of the 2008 American National Election Study. The 2008 ANES interviewed 2,323, including 577 African Americans and 512 Latinos. Black respondents were asked the same questions as other respondents, allowing researchers to make statistically valid comparisons between racial groups. The methodological details for the NBES and ANES surveys are reported in Appendix 1.

It is worth calling attention to the fact that these surveys differ not only in the year conducted, but also in the modes that were used. And while the

question wording is similar in most cases, there is some variation that could also contribute to differences in the observed relationships in each of the data sets. The exact question wording is reported in Appendix 2. Nonetheless, these data offer a unique opportunity to explore the predictors of Black turnout across time.

Our dependent variable is self-reported voter turnout. For both the descriptive and multivariate analyses we used the summary turnout measure provided in the ANES. Responses were coded 0 if the respondents indicated they did not vote in November and 1 if they did. The descriptive analyses also include whether the respondent usually voted over the past 6 years and whether he or she voted in the primary. Of course, using self-reported turnout is not as good as using a validated measure of voting. However, systematic analyses comparing models of self-reported versus validated turnout show only slight differences, with self-reported models marginally inflating the estimated effects of the traditional correlates of the vote (Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986; Presser 1990).

Our main independent variable is party contact, which is represented by “yes” or “no” responses to the following question: “As you know, the political parties try to talk to as many people as they can to get them to vote for their candidate. Did anyone from one of the political parties call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign this year?”

As with turnout, we rely on a self-reported measure of contact. This could inflate our estimates of impact, if those already planning to vote are more likely to recall being contacted. To validate our estimates of the influence of contacting on turnout in 2008, we (a) estimate the contacting coefficient for other years and across racial groups, thereby allowing a relative comparison of effects and (b) estimate the effect of living in a battleground state in 2008 as a proxy for contacting. As demonstrated in other recent studies, residence in a battleground state is a decent surrogate for exposure to the campaign because it is clearly exogenous to the turnout decision (see Iyengar and Simon 2000; Hillygus 2005). If respondents resided in Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, or Georgia<sup>5</sup> at the time the survey was conducted, they received a score of 1 on this variable; all others were given a score of zero.

We are also interested in gauging the impact of several other variables on turnout. First, we include a measure of racial identity in our models, given the prominence of this concept in the literature. For racial identity, we employ the standard measure of linked fate used by Dawson (1994), Tate (1993), and others. The measure asks respondents “Do you think that what happens to Black people/Hispanic-Americans in this country will have something to do

5. These states were chosen based on where the Obama campaign spent a considerable amount of resources courting Black voters in particular Smith 2008.

with what happens in your life?" Responses were coded on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (none) to 1 (a lot).

Second and third, we include measures of political interest and efficacy, assuming that higher scores on these dimensions promote political participation. With respect to race, existing research suggests that Blacks are generally less attentive to and interested in politics than Whites (Kinder and Sanders 1996), even when Black candidates are on the ballot (Clawson and Oxley 2008; Tate 2003). Still, it is not unreasonable—particularly given both the extant literature and the news media narrative concerning Black turnout in 2008—to posit that increased interest among African Americans in the 2008 campaign might be correlated with higher self-reported turnout. To test for this effect, we used the item, "In general, how much attention did you pay to news about the campaign for President—a great deal, quite a bit, some, very little, or none?" Responses ranged from 0 (none) to 1 (a great deal).<sup>6</sup>

As for political efficacy, we follow Lane (1959) who first posited the distinction between internal and external efficacy. External efficacy is the extent to which people believe that government is responsive to their input. Internal efficacy, on the other hand, is the extent to which people believe they are capable of understanding and acting upon politics. This distinction has generally been upheld by systematic analyses (Finkel 1985; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991). With respect to efficacy and race, previous studies indicate that Blacks are slightly less efficacious than Whites. Nevertheless, as with Whites, a sense of political efficacy among Blacks leads to higher rates of political participation (Shingles 1981). Therefore, we expect efficacy to be positively correlated with voter turnout. External efficacy is measured using responses to the following set of items:

- Public officials don't care much what people like me think
- How much do public officials care about what people like you think?

Internal efficacy is measured with responses to the following items:

- Sometimes, politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on
- How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you can't really understand what's going on?

In the 2008 ANES, respondents were randomly assigned to receive one version of the internal efficacy and one version of the external efficacy items. Each item allowed respondents to answer on a 5-point likert scale. For the sake

6. The measure of campaign attentiveness is not, strictly speaking, the exact same as political interest. We use it here for two reasons. First, the measure of political interest refers to "interest in public affairs" and the wording varies over the years. Second, attentiveness is more consistently measured and it correlates extremely well with interest (the correlation coefficient between these two measures from 1988–2008 is .88).

of consistency, all responses were recoded on a 5-point scale ranging from high efficacy (1) to low efficacy (0).

We also include standard control variables for demographic factors known to correlate with turnout. Specifically, we include respondents' age, gender, number of years of education completed, and whether the respondent lived in a Southern state. Given the historical importance of the Black church to African-American political participation (Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1999; McDaniel 2008), we also include a variable for church attendance, measured by the question "Do you go to religious services every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?" Responses were recoded so that "never" was given a value of 0 and "every week" was given a value of 1, with all other responses taking on a value in between.<sup>7</sup>

## Results

### TURNOUT AND PARTICIPATION

As displayed in table 2, self-reported turnout in the 2008 general election was 82 percent for Blacks, 79 percent for Whites, and 63 percent for Hispanics. The difference between Blacks and Whites versus Hispanics is statistically significant. Black turnout in 2008 was 6 points above that reported in 1996 and 3 points above that reported in 1984; these differences are not statistically significant but are consistent with our expectations.

The 2008 data corroborate some of our intuition about the distinct characteristics of Black turnout in the Obama-McCain election. Sixty-nine percent of Blacks claim to have been regular voters between 2002 and 2008. More interestingly, of those who claim *not* to have been regular voters, 62 percent voted in this election. By way of comparison, only 33 percent of Latinos and 39 percent of Whites with similar, limited voting histories reported voting in the 2008 election. This increase in Black voter turnout among nonhabitual voters is unique to 2008; in 1984 and 1996 the percentage of Black voters who reported voting in that year but not the previous year was 55 and 44, respectively.

A few other turnout tendencies merit note. For example, Blacks were much more likely than Whites to vote in person on Election Day in 2008. Fifty-six percent of Blacks voted on Election Day, while only 44 percent of Whites did likewise. Conversely, 36 percent of Whites voted early or by mail, compared to 29 percent of Blacks. These differences are statistically significant. Then there is the matter of participation in the presidential nominating contests. In the 2008 primary elections, 46 percent of Blacks reported voting. This number eclipses the turnout rates of Whites (42 percent) and Hispanics (36 percent),

7. Note that all question wording is from the 2008 ANES. Comparisons to the 1984 and 1996 NBES were limited to occasions on which items were identical or virtually identical.

**Table 2.** Black Participation, Attitudes, and Contacting in 2008

		2008			1996	1984
		Blacks	Whites	Hispanics	Blacks	Blacks
Usually vote in past 6 years	Yes	69%	74%	49%	—	—
Turnout	Voted	82%	79%	63%	76%	79%
Voted in primary	Yes	46%	42%	36%	—	32%
Public officials don't care what people say	Agree	58%	57%	60%	51%	53%
Don't have say about what government does	Agree	55%	48%	50%	41%	50%
Politics are so complicated, people can't understand	Agree	71%	68%	70%	57%	60%
Party contact	Yes	38%	47%	32%	26%	—
Which party contacted	Democrats	75%	33%	56%	52%	—
	Republicans	9%	25%	14%	16%	—
	Both	15%	40%	28%	26%	—
General attention to campaign	A great deal	21%	13%	17%	20%	—
	Quite a bit	22%	25%	23%	23%	—
	Some	16%	29%	23%	35%	—
	Very little	23%	21%	24%	18%	—
	None	18%	12%	15%	3%	—
What happens to black people will have something to do with what happens in own life	Yes	66%	—	—	87.9%	73.5%

SOURCE.—Data are from 2008 ANES (with Black Over-Sample;  $N = 521$  postelection respondents), 1996 NBES ( $N = 854$  postelection interviews), and 1984 NBES ( $N = 872$  postelection interviews).

as well as Black turnout in the 1984 primaries (32 percent)—the year Jesse Jackson challenged Walter Mondale and Gary Hart.

What about other forms of participation in 2008? Were there spill-over effects? Did African Americans engage in other, more demanding forms of participation? Here the evidence is mixed. Blacks were actually more likely than Whites or Hispanics to report going to meetings (12 percent to 9 percent and 8 percent, respectively), displaying a button, lawn sign, or bumper sticker (34 percent to 16 percent and 17 percent, respectively), or working for a campaign (6 percent to 4 percent and 3 percent, respectively). But they were less likely than Whites to contribute money to a candidate (8 to 13 percent) or group (2 to 5 percent) or to talk to someone about the election (42 to 47 percent).

Moreover, the data suggest that 1984 might have been the high water mark for Black participation in presidential politics. When comparing the Jackson to Obama contests, more Blacks report having gone to a meeting (21 percent in 1984 to 12 percent in 2008), working for someone (24 percent in 1984 to 6 percent in 2008), or contributing money (20 percent in 1984 to 8 percent in 2008) in the earlier election.

#### EFFICACY AND INTEREST

As discussed earlier, a common supposition in media commentary about the 2008 election was that Obama's candidacy "connected" with people who had previously been uninterested in or intimidated by the political process. The 2008 data do not offer a great deal of support for this supposition. In fact, measures of internal efficacy—the extent to which one feels cognitively capable of making sense of politics and affecting decision-makers—show a significant decline among Blacks. For example, on average 58 percent of Blacks agreed that "politics are so complicated, people like me can't understand" in 1996 and 1984; by 2008 the percentage increased to 71 percent. In 1996 and 1984, on average 46 percent of Blacks agreed that people "don't have a say about what the government does"; by 2008 the percentage increased to 55 percent. Compared to the 1980s and 1990s, it appears that fewer African Americans believe they are capable of usefully and forcefully interpreting political events and information. It may be that the political context of the 1990s and early 2000s—especially the rise of the Republicans in Congress and the George W. Bush presidency—depressed Blacks' sense of government's responsiveness and their own efficacy.

We also find relatively little evidence that Blacks were disproportionately attentive to the 2008 election campaign. This is surprising, to say the least, especially given not only the historical nature of the campaign but the closeness of the contest. But while 43 percent of Blacks said they were at least "quite a bit" attentive to the presidential campaign, 41 percent said they were "very little" or "not at all" attentive. Forty-three percent of Hispanics, by way of comparison, claim to have been at least "quite a bit" attentive, with 39 percent "very little" or "not at all" attentive. In 1996, the same 43 percent of Blacks said they were at least "quite a bit" attentive and only 21 percent said they were "very little" or "not at all" attentive. Needless to say, the comparison is striking given that the 1996 election seems a decent representation of a low-interest election for Blacks.

#### GROUP IDENTITY

Recall that one possible explanation for increased Black turnout in 2008 is that Obama's candidacy might have raised levels of group identity and driven people to the polls. Table 2 presents some counterintuitive (albeit preliminary)

findings on this count. Compared to earlier years where group identification had appeared to be increasing (from 74 percent in 1984 to 88 percent in 1996), only 66 percent of Blacks indicated that they thought that what happened to other Blacks had something to do with what happened in their own lives. This difference is just outside the conventional range of statistical significance, but it is sobering for any analyst expecting to see heightened levels of group identification among African Americans in 2008. In short, perhaps we should be careful in assuming that a Black presidential candidate automatically increases group identity.

#### PARTY CONTACTING

Of course, our main focus in this study is the role of party contacting on Black turnout in 2008. In particular, we posit that Democrats and Republicans generally, and the Obama campaign in particular, convinced Blacks to vote through aggressive contacting efforts. That is, Obama supporters went door-to-door gathering information on Black voters and mobilizing them to show up on Election Day and cast their ballots to elect the first Black president. The data in table 2 show that contacting rates among Blacks were significantly up in 2008. Thirty-eight percent of Blacks report having been contacted by one of the parties or candidates in 2008, compared to 26 percent in 1996. Moreover, 75 percent of Blacks contacted said it was the Democratic Party that did the contacting, up from 52 percent in 1996. Another one in five said they were also contacted by a nonparty group, which is also quite high compared to figures from previous years. These higher contacting levels in 2008 fit with anecdotal and empirical accounts of greater party outreach in that election (Smith 2008). In the aggregate, then, we see both higher levels of party contact and higher levels of turnout among African Americans in 2008. We next turn to multivariate analyses to see if that relationship holds up at the individual-level once we account for the many other predictors of turnout.

### **Modeling Black Turnout**

In order to obtain a more definitive look at this dynamic, we first estimate logistic regression models of Black, Latino, and White voter turnout in 2008 featuring the key independent variable of self-reported party contacting, as well as measures of group identity, campaign attentiveness, internal and external efficacy, church attendance, age, gender (female), education, and residence in a southern state. This allows us not only to assess the impact of party contacting on Black turnout in 2008, but also whether such outreach was distinctly important for Blacks. We then estimate identical models for Black turnout in 1996, in order to ascertain the extent to which contacting effects have changed over time.

A second model of turnout in 2008 substitutes residence in a battleground state for party contacting. Besides dropping the dummy variable for southern state residence (which cannot be run simultaneously with a battleground dummy), the explanatory variables are otherwise identical. This model allows us to validate the initial model by checking the possibility that our self-reported measure of contact is biased by selective memory processes such that those affected by contacting are disproportionately likely to report it. Besides estimating parameter coefficients for Blacks, we also run the model for Latinos and Whites, facilitating additional comparisons of the impact of outreach across different groups.

Table 3 presents the full models, while table 4 translates the results of the first model into predicted probabilities, rendering the relationship between party contacting on turnout a bit more interpretable. Initially, we see in table 3 that self-reported turnout among Blacks is significantly and positively affected by education, age, and church attendance. These effects are not surprising. More importantly, however, table 4 demonstrates that when holding all other variables at their mean values, our model predicts that Blacks who reported being contacted by a political party in 2008 were 8.2 percentage points more likely to vote than those not contacted by a political party.

Party contact is also a statistically significant predictor of self-reported turnout for Blacks in 1996 and for Latinos and Whites in 2008. Holding all other variables at their mean values, our model predicts that Black respondents to the 1996 NBES who report being contacted by a political party are about 8 percentage points more likely to vote than those not contacted by a political party. For White and Latino respondents to the 2008 ANES, the differences were 11 and 14.8 percentage points, respectively (the confidence intervals overlap for all three groups). In other words, party contact appears to have had an effect in previous elections for Blacks, and its influence in 2008 certainly does not seem to have been confined to Blacks. It is the magnitude of this impact among Blacks, however, combined with the extent of party contact in 2008, that makes the story compelling.

We can use these results to calculate back-of-the-envelope estimates of the impact of Black mobilization on overall Black turnout. Given party contacting of African Americans was 12 points higher than usual in 2008 (using 1996 as an admittedly arbitrary baseline), and turnout among those contacted was 8 points higher among those contacted, our results suggest that overall Black turnout was raised 1.8 points by outreach alone.

Given previous research on Black turnout, it is surprising that the attitudinal variables offer a mixed story for 2008. Our measure of group identity is not significantly correlated with Black or Latino turnout in 2008 or with Black turnout in 1996. Campaign attentiveness is significantly correlated with Black turnout in 1996, but not in 2008. In fact, interest is negatively (though insignificantly) correlated with Latino and White turnout in 2008. Similarly, neither internal nor external efficacy much affects turnout in 1996 or 2008. We do not view

**Table 3.** Predictors of Turnout, by Race

	Blacks 1996	Blacks 2008	Latinos	Whites
Party contact	.588* (.26)	.682* (.29)	.725* (.29)	.785* (.17)
Group identification	.263 (.27)	.469 (.31)	.221 (.29)	—
General campaign interest	2.021* (.30)	.123 (.37)	-.066 (.38)	-.066 (.26)
Internal efficacy	.038 (.26)	-.017 (.42)	.385 (.44)	.819* (.28)
External efficacy	.029 (.29)	.287 (.43)	.091 (.44)	-.141 (.30)
Church attendance	.511* (.31)	1.234* (.37)	.817* (.32)	.704* (.20)
Female	.432* (.20)	.028 (.26)	.805* (.24)	.396* (.15)
Age	.023* (.01)	.024* (.01)	.044* (.01)	.026* (.01)
Education	.316* (.07)	.186* (.06)	.251* (.05)	.337* (.03)
South	-.373* (.20)	-.281 (.26)	-.232 (.25)	-.201 (.15)
Constant	-2.552* (.50)	-2.963* (.91)	-5.393* (.86)	-5.275* (.56)
<i>N</i>	748	483	408	1277
% Correctly predicted	79.5	83.2	72.5	79.4
-2 Log likelihood	670.31	410.45	438.77	1141.61

NOTE.—Coefficients are logistic regression estimates. Voted is coded 0 (did not vote) to 1 (did vote). Starred values are significant at the  $p < .10$  level. Numbers in parentheses indicate standard errors.

SOURCE.—1996 National Black Election Study and 2008 American National Election Study.

**Table 4.** Predicted Probability of Turnout by Contact

	Black 1996	Black 2008	Latino 2008	White 2008
Contacted	87.4	89.3	77.2	87.5
95% CI	(81.4, 91.9)	(83.9, 93.3)	(67.2, 85.0)	(84.4, 90.2)
No contact	79.8	81.1	62.4	76.3
95% CI	(75.7, 83.3)	(75.9, 85.7)	(55.7, 68.2)	(72.4, 79.8)
Difference	7.6	8.2	14.8	11.2
95% CI	(1.2, 13.5)	(1.4, 15.1)	(3.3, 25.5)	(6.4, 15.9)

NOTE.—Predicted probabilities are calculated by evaluating  $X\beta$  at the logistic cumulative distribution function with all variables (except Contact and Battleground Residence) held at their mean values.

**Table 5.** Predictors of Turnout in 2008, by Race

	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Resides in battleground state	1.128* (.32)	.413 (.40)	.112 (.16)
Group identification	.511* (.31)	.182 (.28)	—
General campaign interest	.203 (.38)	−.052 (.38)	−.093 (.25)
Internal efficacy	.051 (.43)	.290 (.44)	.804* (.28)
External efficacy	.339 (.44)	.077 (.44)	−.069 (.29)
Church attendance	1.258* (.37)	.807* (.31)	.658* (.20)
Female	.023 (.26)	.768* (.24)	.378* (.15)
Age	.027* (.01)	.046* (.01)	.032* (.01)
Education	.208* (.06)	.267* (.05)	.368* (.03)
Constant	−3.703* (.93)	−5.579* (.84)	−5.818* (.56)
<i>N</i>	483	408	1277
% Correctly predicted	83.0	70.8	78.4
−2 Log likelihood	402.81	447.406	1167.43

NOTE.—Coefficients are logistic regression estimates. Voted is coded 0 (did not vote) to 1 (did vote). Starred values are significant at the  $p < .10$  level. Numbers in parentheses indicate standard errors.

SOURCE.—2008 American National Election Study.

these results as a definitive assessment of the relative power of these variables on turnout; indeed, additional or alternative measures of these concepts might produce more robust associations. It is also possible, as we noted earlier, that the politics of the Bush era depressed the willingness of Blacks to say that they are interested in campaigns or feel particularly efficacious with respect to the federal government.

Given concerns with the use of self-reported party contact, we re-estimate the model instead using a measure of battleground state status. The results are presented in table 5. Again, the assumption is that people in battleground states were more likely to be contacted compared to those in other states, making such a dummy variable a decent proxy for receiving such outreach. The battleground variable is, in fact, positive and statistically significant for Blacks in 2008. Table 6 shows the key predicted probabilities derived from the model: holding all other variables at their mean values, our model predicts residing in a battleground state increases the probability of a Black voter turning

**Table 6.** Predicted Probability of Turnout by Battleground Residence

	Black 1996	Black 2008	Latino 2008	White 2008
Battleground	–	92.5	74.0	82.3
95% CI		(87.8, 95.6)	(58.5, 86.6)	(78.0, 86.1)
Non-B'ground	–	80.4	66.0	80.7
95% CI		(75.5, 84.6)	(60.5, 71.3)	(77.8, 83.5)
Difference	–	12.1	7.9	1.6
95% CI		(6.6, 17.3)	(–7.5, 21.4)	(–3.2, 5.7)

NOTE.—Predicted probabilities are calculated by evaluating  $X\beta$  at the logistic cumulative distribution function with all variables (except Contact and Battleground Residence) held at their mean values.

out by 12.1 percentage points. The battleground variable is also positive for Latinos and Whites, although the estimated effect does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. It is tempting to interpret these results as demonstrating that campaign efforts were more effective for Blacks, but recall that our battleground variable is based on the existence of extensive Black outreach in a state. In this sense, it is probably not so surprising that it is less robust than the party contact measure for predicting turnout among Latinos and Whites. More broadly, though, these results offer a validation of the findings presented in tables 3 and 4.

The use of a battleground dummy only marginally affects the estimated influence of other factors in 2008. Once again, age, education, and church attendance positively affect turnout. Also, group identity does occur as statistically and positively significant for Black turnout (but not for Latinos). Campaign interest, though, is an insignificant factor for turnout, as is efficacy (with the sole exception of internal efficacy attitudes for White turnout).

In combination, these models offer some important conclusions about Black turnout in 2008. All told, the multivariate analyses demonstrate that younger Blacks probably “held back” overall Black turnout. Conversely, relatively high levels of church attendance throughout Black communities probably boosted overall Black turnout. Perhaps most controversially, the suggestion here is that door-to-door, mail, phone, and Internet activities of the political parties may have been more of a factor in mobilizing Blacks than an amorphous, media-driven buzz surrounding Obama’s charismatic and historic candidacy. Campaign attentiveness, group identity, and efficacy measures did not reach especially high levels among African Americans in 2008, and their influence on turnout was less significant than other factors, including party contacting. Just to be clear, we are not arguing that these attitudinal variables are unrelated to Black turnout. Rather, we find that their influence is secondary compared to other factors, and they are not particularly promising candidates for understanding the rise in Black turnout in 2008. In addition, these findings clearly point out

the need for additional study of the psychological underpinnings of the turnout decision among Blacks.

## **Conclusion**

As Cohen and Dawson argue, “mobilization has been a critical aspect of political participation in African American politics” (1993, 296). Our evidence suggests that in an election featuring a Black candidate, political strategists should not rely solely on group identity to bring Black voters to the polls. In a tight election, party strategists should marshal their resources, knock on doors, send emails, make phone calls, and make sure their supporters actually cast their ballots. We recognize both the flaws in the ability of self-reported contact to capture the nuances in mobilization attempts over the course of a campaign and the inability of correlational analysis to establish causality. Nevertheless, the use of estimates from multiple years and demographic groups as well as an alternative measure of mobilization gives us substantial leverage on understanding the relationship between mobilization and turnout.

Our results also reaffirm the significance of the growing heterogeneity within the African-American community. Much of the scholarship on Black politics has been devoted to demonstrating the importance of race in the political calculus of Blacks, sometimes at the expense of examining other important factors. As a result, many conclude that, with the importance of race being established, there is nothing left to learn about African-American political behavior. We show that Black political attitudes, engagement, and participation—even Black identity—vary over time and not always in predictable ways. For example, we certainly expected that Black turnout would be higher in 2008 than it had been in other recent presidential elections, and that Democratic contacting efforts were both more pervasive and consequential in the Obama-McCain race. Still, the consistency of campaign attentiveness and the decline in internal efficacy and racial identity among Blacks—compared to other racial and ethnic groups, and to historical data from 1996 and 1984—were quite contrary to our expectations.

In sum, these findings indicate that the changes in the country’s politics since the turn of the century have been perplexing for many Blacks. There is a sense that politics is inordinately complex and that the system is rigged for the benefit of the powerful. The success of Democratic Party outreach efforts, however, also shows a belief that personal involvement can affect substantive (and favorable) change.

## **Appendix 1—Sample Information and Methodology**

### 2008 ANES

The 2008 ANES Times Series Study conducted interviews in pre-election and postelection waves. The pre-election interviews lasted seventy-three min and were conducted between September 2 and November 3, 2008. The postelection

interviews lasted approximately ninety-one min and were conducted between November 5 and December 30, 2008. There were no interviews conducted on Election Day. The sample included 2,323 pre-election and 2,102 postelection interviews.

The survey target population consisted of English or Spanish speaking U.S. Citizens of voting age that reside in the forty-eight coterminous United States and the District of Columbia. The cut-off date for voting age was having turned eighteen before October 31, 2008. An Election Day cutoff was forgone so as not to give the impression of an explicit political motivation for the survey (since it was a screening question asked to multiple household members) and to encourage the participation of those without a strong interest in politics and elections.

The 2008 ANES employed a multi-stage sampling design drawing from strata of decreasing size and density. The first stage: **county** had a sampling frame consisting of all counties in the forty-eight coterminous states and the District of Columbia. Counties within the eight largest MSAs were sampled with certainty while selection within the remaining counties was proportional by size. At the second stage: **census tracts** were sampled within the selected counties by probability proportional to size, as was the third stage: **census block groups** with notable mailing addresses in selected census tracts. The fourth stage: **locatable mailing addresses** had a sampling frame of all locatable mailing addresses in the selected block groups stratified by delivery sequence number and subsequently screened for occupancy and eligibility. The fifth and final stage: **eligible persons** consisted of individuals that passed the screen in each eligible household and was stratified by major city, block group size, prior survey experience, race and age.

Please note that we do not use weights designed to deflate the presence of Black and Latino respondents made disproportionately high due to the over-samples. In other words, we compare across representative samples of racial and ethnic groups, and do not use the weighted full-sample.

#### 1996 NBES

The 1996 NBES was a random digit dial survey that was carried out in two waves. The first wave was conducted between July 19 and November 4, 1996 and had a total of 1,216 interviews. The postelection wave was conducted immediately following the election and ended January 6, 1997. The postelection wave consisted of 854 reinterviewed respondents.

Like its predecessor, the 1984 NBES, the population target was all black households with telephones. Respondents were then screened within households for voting age eligibility and U.S. citizenship. Eligibility was determined based on the age achieved on the respondents last birthday.

In an effort to limit “bad” telephone calls and maximize the efficiency of acquiring a black respondent, the 1996 NBES employed a stratified simple random sample with strata decreasing by the density of black residents. The first strata consisted of MSAs with populations of one million or more and black populations of 15 percent or more. The second strata were of southern states excluding the MSAs that fell into strata 1. The third strata was telephone exchanges serving the remaining conterminous United States that had black populations greater than 5 percent, and the fourth strata was of all remaining telephone exchanges in the United States with black populations less than 5 percent. Telephone exchanges in each stratum were then pooled and a RDD sample was taken from each of them, with various techniques employed in each stratum to increase the rate of working telephone numbers contacted.

The response rate for the pre-election wave was 65 percent, though for strata 4 the rate was expectedly lower at 57 percent. For the post election wave the recontact rate was 70 percent with a smaller drop for strata 4 at 63 percent.

#### 1984 NBES

The 1984 NBES was a random digit dialed telephone survey conducted in pre and postelection waves. The pre-election wave consisted of 1,150 interviews conducted between late July and November 6, 1984. The postelection wave attempted to recontact the same individuals and secured 872 interviews. The postelection wave was conducted immediately following the election.

The population for the survey consisted of all black households with telephones. Within households, respondents were selected randomly from all eligible members. Eligibility was determined by having attained voting age by the time of the election and U.S. citizenship.

The sampling procedure was a disproportionate random digit dial design. The design consisted of three strata each with decreasing densities of black residents. The first strata, high black density, consisted of telephone exchanges in all large SMSAs with black densities of 15 percent or more. The second strata, medium black density, consisted of small SMSAs and non-SMSAs in AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, SC, and VA. The final strata, low black density, included all remaining exchanges. Selection from each stratum was then weighted with those in the high density strata three times as likely to be selected versus the low density strata and the medium density strata twice as likely as the low density strata.

The response rate for the pre-election wave was 57 percent, while the recontact rate for the postelection wave was 76 percent.

## Appendix 2—Question Wording

### 2008 ANES QUESTION WORDING

*Efficacy.* I'd like to read you a few statements about public life. I'll read them one at a time. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each of them. 'Sometimes, politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.'

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat

I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat

'Public officials don't care much what people like me think.'

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

'People like me don't have any say about what the government does.'

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

How often do politics and government seem so complicated that you can't really understand what's going on?

1. All the time
2. Most of the time
3. About half the time
4. Some of the time
5. Never

How well do you understand the important political issues facing our country?

1. Extremely well
2. Very well
3. Moderately well
4. Slightly well
5. Not well at all

How much do public officials care what people like you think?

1. A great deal
2. A lot
3. A moderate amount
4. A little
5. Not at all

*Campaign Attention:* In general, how much attention did you pay to news about the campaign for President?

1. A great deal
2. Quite a bit
3. Some
4. Very little
5. None

*Group Identification:* What happens to Black people has something to do with what happens in my life.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly

*Party Contact:* As you know, the political parties try to talk to as many people as they can to get them to vote for their candidate. Did anyone from one of the political parties call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign this year?

1. Yes
2. No

[IF CONTACTED:] Were you contacted by the [DEMOCRATIC PARTY, REPUBLICAN PARTY], or both?

1. Democratic
2. Republican
3. Both
4. Other party (SPECIFY)

*Party Identification:* Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a [DEMOCRAT, a REPUBLICAN/a REPUBLICAN, a DEMOCRAT], an INDEPENDENT, or what?

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
4. Other party (SPECIFY)
5. No preference {VOL}

[IF R CONSIDERS SELF A DEMOCRAT/REPUBLICAN]: Would you call yourself a STRONG Democrat or a NOT VERY STRONG Democrat /Would you call yourself a STRONG Republican or a NOT VERY STRONG Republican?

1. Strong
5. Not very strong

[IF R'S PARTY PREFERENCE IS INDEPENDENT, NO PREFERENCE, OTHER, DK:]

Do you think of yourself as CLOSER to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

1. Closer to Republican
3. Neither [VOL]
5. Closer to Democratic

*Primary Voter:* Did you vote in a presidential primary election or caucus?

1. Yes, voted in primary or caucus
5. No, didn't vote in primary or caucus

*Church Attendance:* People practice their religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, do you pray SEVERAL TIMES A DAY, ONCE A DAY, A FEW TIMES A WEEK, ONCE A WEEK OR LESS, or NEVER?

1. Several times a day
2. Once a day
3. A few times a week
4. Once a week or less
5. Never

*Education.* What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?

[IF HIGHEST GRADE OF EDUCATION IS 0–12 YEARS OR DK:]

Did you get a high school diploma or pass a high school equivalency test?

1. Yes
5. No

[IF HIGHEST GRADE OF EDUCATION IS 13+ YEARS:]

What is the highest degree that you have earned?

1. Bachelor's degree
2. Master's degree
3. PhD, LIT, SCD, DFA, DLIT, DPH, DPHIL, JSC, SJD

*Age:* What is the month, day and year of your birth?

Gender is ascertained through interviewer observation.

State of respondent is ascertained through the selection process.

NBES Question Wording

*Party Contact:* As you know, the political parties try to talk to as many people as they can to get them to vote for their candidate. Did anyone from one of the political parties call you up or come around and talk to you about the campaign this year?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know
4. Refused

*Turnout:* In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. How about you—did you vote in the elections this November?

1. Yes
2. No, didn't vote
8. DK/RF

Group Identification:

Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?

1. Yes (Go to QV1A)
5. No
8. DK
9. Refused/NA

[QV1A] Will it affect you A LOT, SOME, or NOT VERY MUCH?

1. A lot
3. Some
5. Not Very Much
8. DK
9. Refused/NA

*Campaign Interest:* Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you have been VERY MUCH INTERESTED, SOMEWHAT INTERESTED, OR NOT MUCH INTERESTED in following the political campaigns this year?

1. Very interested
3. Somewhat interested
5. Not much interested
8. DK
9. Refused/NA

*Internal Efficacy.* People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly
9. DK/Refused

Sometimes politics and government seem to be so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat

5. Disagree strongly
9. DK/Refused

*External Efficacy.* Public officials don't care much what people like me think.

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree somewhat
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree somewhat
5. Disagree strongly
9. DK/Refused

*Church Attendance:* Would you say you go to church or place of worship EVERY WEEK, ALMOST EVERY WEEK, ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH, A FEW TIMES A YEAR, OR NEVER?

1. Every week
2. Almost every week
3. Once or twice a month
4. A few times a year
5. Never
7. Two or more times a week (VOL)
8. DK
9. Refused/NA

*Age:* What is the month, day and year of your birth?

*Education:* What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?

1. Grade school (Grades 1–8)
2. Some high school, no degree (Grades 9–11)
3. High school degree
4. Some college, no degree
5. Associate's/2 year degree
6. Bachelor's/4 year degree
7. Some graduate school
8. Master's degree
9. Doctorate/Law Degree
10. Refused

*Gender is ascertained though interviewer observation.*

*State of respondent is ascertained through the selection process*

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