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What Happened to Hope and Change?

A Poll of 2008 Voters

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PROJECT-
VOTE

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Executive Summary

What Happened to Hope and Change? examines views on government and public spending held by 2008 voters, a more demographically diverse voting population than any in recent history. What this report reveals is that the majority of mainstream Americans have starkly different opinions and expectations about the role of government, particularly on economic matters, than the more widely (and loudly) reported beliefs of the mostly white, wealthier conservatives known as “Tea Party” sympathizers.

More importantly, our report captures the views of a large and growing component of the electorate: African American voters, young voters, and lower income voters. These groups all turned out in significant and perhaps decisive numbers in 2008, yet are too often overlooked by pollsters and pundits. They share sharply different opinions than the anti-government views of “Tea Party” sympathizers, and together they constitute a numerically larger portion of the electorate. Yet the story of this newly emerging electorate has largely not been told, and their voices are not being heard in the current din.

This report summarizes the findings of a poll, conducted in July-August 2010 by Project Vote, surveying 1,947 Americans who cast ballots in 2008, including oversamples of black voters, low-income voters, and voters under the age of 30. The findings reveal that most Americans *are* dissatisfied with the current state of the country, but a clear majority of them want their government to do *more*, not less.

In contrast with the population that identifies as sympathetic with the “Tea Party”:

- More voters agree that, “government should work to provide for the needs of all citizens” than they do with the statement that, “government should do no more than provide national defense and police protection, so that people are left alone to earn whatever they can.”
- A majority favor requiring wealthy Americans to pay more social security taxes and taxes on investments.
- A clear majority believe that to address the federal budget deficit, combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan should be ended.
- A clear majority think government should spend more or the same on income security programs such as food stamps.
- A strong majority think government should spend less on tax breaks for the oil and gas industry.
- A strong majority trust the federal government to ensure that banks and credit card companies treat customers fairly and to protect consumers from fraudulent business practices.
- A strong majority believe the minimum wage should be raised.
- They overwhelmingly plan to vote in 2010.



The findings are even more striking among the key demographic groups that increased their participation in 2008: blacks, lower-income Americans, and voters under the age of 30.

Black voters, lower-income voters, and young voters surveyed said:

- A strong majority approve of Barack Obama's job performance.
- A majority support government spending to stimulate job growth.
- They strongly favor ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- A strong majority agree that government should work to provide for the needs of all citizens.
- A strong majority believe the federal government should work to ensure that all able and willing Americans have work.
- They overwhelmingly support raising the minimum wage.
- They overwhelmingly plan to vote in 2010.

These voters— representatives of what some have called the “rising American electorate”—have become a force to be reckoned with in American politics, yet their voices are still largely unheard in the American media. These are people who voted in 2008, but in 2010 the media is not speaking for them, and politicians, for the most part, are not speaking *to* them.

By concentrating on the “Tea Party” minority, the media has amplified their voices. Overwhelmingly white, Tea Party sympathizers are almost universally dissatisfied, yet they have the least reason for dissatisfaction. A strong majority of them say their personal financial situation is fairly good or very good; they are more likely to be residentially stable and married, with no children living at home; three out of four went to college; almost all are working or retired; and they make more money on average than the other groups. Only six percent reported having to worry about buying food for their families in the past year, compared to 14 percent of voters nationwide, 37 percent of blacks, 21 percent of youths, and 39 percent of low-income voters. Virtually every Tea Party sympathizer plans to vote in 2010.

As should be clear from these responses, and the full report that follows, these “Tea Party” voters do not speak for all Americans, and they are severely disconnected from the experiences and views of lower-income, black, and young Americans. The fascination with the Tea Party on the part of reporters, pundits, and politicians does a disservice to our nation; it buries any discussion of the needs and concerns of the average American, and almost completely overlooks the views of younger, lower-income, and black voters who cast ballots in 2008 and will play an increasingly important role in American democracy in the future.

This report helps ensure that the voices of the emerging American electorate are heard, and provides a reminder that these Americans will turn out to vote—as they did in 2008—if they hear from politicians who listen to their views and speak to their concerns.

What Happened to Hope and Change?

A Poll of 2008 Voters

The story of the constituencies that turned out to vote in such unusually large numbers in 2008, and what they expect from government, is one that mostly has been missed in discussions of that historic election. Larger than the “Tea Party” movement, a surging electorate of minorities, youth, and lower-income Americans could have a significant impact on the outcome of elections in 2010 and beyond.

And yet, it is the Tea Party movement that dominates the mainstream media’s current framing of the mood of the electorate. Voters are angry, we are told, because they want smaller government and a permanent moratorium on spending on everything but the military. They demand less government interference in their lives, lower taxes on the rich, less favoritism toward minorities and the poor, and sealed borders.

This is a far cry from the message of “hope” and “change” that characterized the extraordinary election of the nation’s first African American president. A savage recession that has wiped out trillions of dollars of value in the savings and assets of ordinary Americans and seven years of war have taken their toll. Americans have a right to be angry. But different groups of Americans may be angry about different things. In particular, we have heard very little about the views of those groups that decisively increased their participation in the electorate two years ago. What do *they* think about the economy and what are *their* preferences and priorities for the role of government? The outsized attention to the Tea Party phenomenon has distorted our understanding of putative voter anger and instead become the story itself.

This fascination with the Tea Party message obscures the actual dearth of information about what the rest of the American electorate thinks about public affairs. Moreover, the mainstream media’s obsession with the Tea Party buries a related problem: for the most part, the media has missed the significance behind the shifting racial and socioeconomic class dynamics of voter engagement in the 2008 election. As a consequence, heading into the 2010 congressional midterm elections, the views of traditionally under-represented groups who were mobilized in record proportions in 2008 have been drowned in tea.

These two failures – the inattention to significant changes in the composition of the 2008 presidential voting population, and the routine indifference of the mainstream media to the opinions, policy preferences, and issues mostly of concern to minorities and the working class – cry out for a response.

Our report discusses the findings from a new survey conducted by Project Vote to address the media bias that favors the Tea Party narrative above all others as an explanation for what’s wrong in the U.S. and what Americans want from government. First, we review who voted in 2008 and discuss the context for polling what some call the “rising American electorate” of racial and ethnic minorities, lower-income Americans, and youth. Whereas Tea Party sentiments appear to be concentrated among older, better-off white Americans—a segment of the larger population that is in decline—racial minorities, working class, and younger voters more than rival the Tea Party in size and are sure to grow larger.¹



It is time for a broader more balanced assessment of the range of views held by Americans toward the role of government, especially in regulating the economy. The second part of our report describes the core findings of our survey and assesses their meaning.

Who Voted in 2008?

The 2008 election is significant not only because an African American was elected president, but because change in the composition of the voting population was decisive. Disadvantaged groups and youth reversed historic trends and increased their voting participation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, the 2008 voting population was the most racially and ethnically diverse in U.S. history.² Non-white groups increased their share of the voting population over 2004 rates by nearly three percentage points, from 19 percent to 22 percent. Significantly, the turnout rate for African Americans³ practically equaled that of whites (64 percent for blacks compared to 65 percent for whites), with African American women casting ballots at the highest rate of all voter groups.⁴ In total, there were two million more African American voters in 2008 than 2004, a 15 percent increase. Turnout rates were lower among Latinos than blacks, but also on the rise, from 47 percent in 2004, to 49 percent in 2008 (see table 1).⁵

In addition, there were 2.3 million more “youth” voters, or voters under the age of 30 in 2008 compared to 2004. This represents an 11 percent increase in the total number of youth voters, with African Americans increasing their share of the youth voter cohort from 14 percent to 16 percent, and Latinos growing from 9 percent to 11 percent of youth voters in 2008. (White youth decreased as a share of all youth voters, from 72 percent in 2004 to 68 percent in 2008, see table 2.)

When we look at that portion of the voting population that voted for the first time in 2008, we see a similar pattern signaling a shift in the composition of the electorate. While the proportion of the population voting for the first time was virtually unchanged between 2004 and 2008 (11 percent in 2004 and 12 percent in 2008), the percentage of minority and low-income groups voting for the first time surged. In 2004, 17 percent of all black voters told survey researchers they were voting for the first time; in 2008, that number was 19 percent. Even more impressive, among Latinos some 22 percent voted for the first time in 2004, while 28 percent said they were voting for the first time in 2008 (see table 3).

But the most significant (and encouraging) change in the “first time” voter group occurred along class lines. First time voters among the lowest income group—those with annual family income of \$15,000 a year or less (median income for a family of four is around \$60,000 a year in 2010)—nearly doubled their proportion among all voters in this income category, from 18 percent in 2004, to 34 percent in 2008. Among the least educated group, those with a high school diploma or less, first time voters also increased their relative size, from 18 percent in 2004 to 22 percent in 2008, with most of the expansion of first time voting occurring among those lacking a high school diploma. No other income or education groups experienced these rates of change in their patterns of participation (see table 3). Change in the composition of the first time voter group is summarized in table 4.

And What Do They Think?

What does this new electorate think about the issues of the day – about high unemployment, massive waves of home foreclosure, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the moral and financial failures of Wall Street, unprecedented oil spills, national health care, and shrinking public education budgets? Are people angry about government spending, or are they angry about government inaction to enforce shared responsibility and address community problems? Do these voters believe more in market solutions, or do they worry more about the penetration of government by market forces?

To date, little has been known about the policy preferences and attitudes toward government among the rising constituencies of the 2008 electorate. Their views have been ignored by the mainstream media, drowned out by the spectacle of angry, older white people wrapped in the American flag, wearing three-pointed hats and knickers; they have been overshadowed by the brash display of weaponry, and by posters doctoring the image of Barack Obama to make him look like Adolf Hitler or warning government to keep their “hands off my Medicare!”

Neglect of the views of minority groups and the poor is nothing new. Indeed, scholars of public opinion have made important contributions to our understanding of group differences, but it hardly can be said that they have paid sustained attention to the subject. This is due in part to the difficulty of defining class in survey research and the problem of “exclusion bias” that occurs when less advantaged respondents (who may have difficulty forming and expressing opinions, or may find survey questions confusing or intimidating) tell survey researchers they “don’t know,” when in fact they have opinions and political needs. This bias tends to make American public opinion seem less egalitarian than it actually is.⁶

Pollsters report anger about the size and spending patterns of the federal government. However, there are indications that these views are not shared by all Americans, and especially may not be shared by the groups that expanded their participation in the last presidential election.

For example, a March 2010 Pew Research Center survey found that, despite falling trust in government, some 56 percent of respondents said that government does not do enough to help average Americans. While majorities said that the “federal government has gone too far in regulating business and interfering with the free enterprise system,” 61 percent also said they believe it is a good idea for the government to more strictly regulate the way major financial companies do business, and about half of all those identifying as Republicans (52 percent), Democrats (52 percent) and Independents (47 percent) said that Wall Street gets more attention than it should from the federal government.⁷ Clear majorities of lower-income Americans (57 percent of those with income of \$30,000 a year or less), blacks (64 percent), women (55 percent), and those under the age of 30 (58 percent) said that federal programs that address major problems should be maintained, compared to majorities of higher-income Americans (55 percent of those with income of \$75,000 a year or more), whites (53 percent), men (52 percent), and older people (i.e., 51 percent of the 50 to 64 years of age group) who believe that federal programs should be greatly cut back to reduce the power of government.⁸

Americans are deeply concerned about the federal deficit, government spending, and taxes. But poll after poll finds not only conflicted but unstable opinions about how to address the current economic crisis. In April 2009,



a USA Today/Gallup poll found that majorities of Americans (53 percent) approved of the expansion of the government's role in the economy. At the same time, a majority of those who approved also said they wanted the federal government's role reduced once the crisis is over. However, the question provokes different responses depending on how it is phrased. When asked about whether the president's proposals to address economic problems called for too big an expansion of government spending, 55 percent agreed. When the word *power* was substituted for *spending*, some 55 percent said they thought that the president's proposals called for the right amount of expansion in government power.⁹ But even this view was unstable. By September 2009, only 37 percent agreed.¹⁰

These and other studies inform our own survey of attitudes among American voters toward the role of government. Unfortunately, most of these other studies do not include large enough samples of minorities, youth, or low-income Americans to draw reliable inferences about the policy preferences of these groups. Most sample either all adults, self-reported registered voters, or people whom pollsters estimate are "likely" to vote in 2010. Moreover, we know of few post-election public affairs surveys of 2008 voters.¹¹

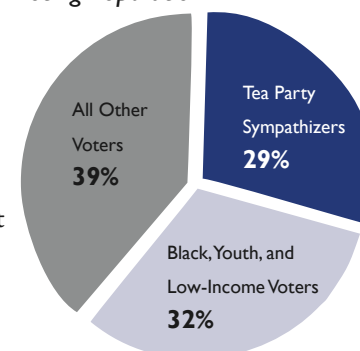
Project Vote's study moves in new directions in this respect. Our survey is based on a nationally representative sample of 2008 voters drawn from state voting records. We also draw special samples (oversamples) of African American voters, low-income voters, and voters under the age of 30, which allows us to make reliable comparisons among these rising populations to the national sample as a whole. In addition, we are able to compare all four of these populations to a self-identified segment of the 2008 voting population that now sympathizes with the Tea Party movement. (See appendix 1 for a demographic profile of all groups.)

Survey Results

We estimate that taken together, African Americans, low-income and "young" voters (under the age of 30) comprise nearly a third, or 32 percent, of the 2008 voting population. This is larger than the 29 percent of those who report that they have heard about the Tea Party movement and agree or "strongly" agree with its message (see chart 1).

Our survey focuses questions in three main areas: well-being and the direction of the country, economic policy preferences, and issues of private vs. public sector responsibility. (For a description of our survey methodology, see appendix 2.) As illustrated below, the major finding of this survey is the clear and stark difference in attitudes toward government that set apart those traditionally under-represented groups from voters identifying with the Tea Party movement. (Full final poll results are available at www.projectvote.org/voter-poll-results.) The electoral groups who significantly increased their participation in 2008 strongly favor government regulation of the economy and a role for government in protecting people against market instabilities. These views are nearly the mirror opposite of Tea Party supporters who are now well known for their strong distaste for government regulation of corporations, markets, and the economy, overall.

Chart 1
Composition of the 2008
Voting Population



Survey Results

Well-Being and the Direction of the Country

By a large majority (73 percent), voters are dissatisfied with the direction of the country. This is the best evidence from our survey of the pessimistic mood of the public as echoed in media reports. Perhaps as to be expected, Tea Party sympathizers are almost universally dissatisfied (93 percent).

“All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Satisfied	22.7	40.8	34.8	29.3	6.5
Dissatisfied	72.9	51.7	59.2	64.0	92.9
Don't Know/Not Sure	4.4	7.4	6.0	6.7	.5
N	1,029	504	464	542	301

As a mark of this dissatisfaction, Americans across all groups studied agree that the economy is not doing well. Four in five voters say that the economy is fairly bad or very bad. Black voters are slightly less pessimistic, with two-thirds saying the economy is bad or very bad, while Tea Party sympathizers are much more pessimistic: nine out of ten say it is bad or very bad.

“How would you rate the condition of the national economy these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Very good	1.4	3.5	.7	2.3	.3
Fairly good	17.3	26.5	20.3	19.7	6.5
Fairly bad	40.6	36.7	53.3	37.1	30.4
Very bad	39.5	30.4	24.5	38.9	62.8
Don't Know/Not Sure	1.2	2.9	1.3	1.9	0
N	1,031	506	465	545	301

Moreover, large majorities, especially among Tea Party sympathizers, believe the national economy is staying the same or getting worse.

“Do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Getting better	25.5	32.8	38.3	23.4	9.9
Getting worse	31.0	19.6	19.8	30.2	52.8
Staying about the same	42.7	46.3	41.3	44.7	36.1
Don't Know/Not Sure	.8	1.3	.7	1.7	1.1
N	1,032	509	466	545	301



Survey Results: Well-Being and the Direction of the Country

Yet, low-income voters (29 percent), young voters (35 percent), and especially black voters (41 percent), are noticeably less dissatisfied than all voters, and two or three times more likely than Tea Party sympathizers to say that they believe the economy is getting better.

Whether pessimism about the economy is rooted in real understandings of national economic performance or simply reflective of the media's portrayal of the trends remains to be seen. When we ask voters about their own experiences and financial prospects we get a sharply different picture, and a puzzling contradiction emerges. A large majority of Americans (71 percent), including, young voters (70 percent)—whom we might expect to express concern because of patterns in their labor market participation—rate their personal financial situation as fairly good or very good.

This contradiction between perceptions of current and future national economic performance and one's own financial stability is most distinctive among Tea Party sympathizers. They rate their financial situation higher than any other group. Fully three out of four say that their own finances are good or very good.

“How would you rate your personal financial situation these days? Would you say very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Very good	13.0	9.8	8.7	7.5	14.2
Fairly good	58.4	44.0	60.8	35.5	61.3
Fairly bad	16.8	21.4	18.8	26.3	13.5
Very bad	8.6	21.8	10.9	28.3	5.9
Don't Know/Not Sure	3.3	3.1	.8	2.4	5.1
N	1,015	505	463	538	298

Perhaps the explanation for this lies in their actual financial situation. Only a third of Tea Party sympathizers report annual family income at the national median of about \$60,000 or less, and 17 percent report family income of \$100,000 a year or more. The story is different for African Americans, youth, and, not surprisingly, lower-income voters, who are categorized as such precisely because they report family income of \$30,000 a year or less. Three in five blacks, and nearly half of all young voters, report income below the national median.¹²

Annual Family Income

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Less than \$15,000	7.7	21.8	11.1	42.9	1.7
\$15,000 to \$29,999	10.9	21.1	15.3	57.1	10.6
\$30,000 to \$60,000	22.2	18.3	20.4	0	22.0
\$61,000 to \$79,999	14.5	12.0	14.6	0	14.3
\$80,000 to \$100,000	9.5	7.3	8.7	0	10.0
\$101,000 to \$249,000	11.8	5.6	9.4	0	13.2
\$250,000 or more	2.7	.6	.7	0	4.1
Don't Know/Refused	20.7	13.2	19.8	0	24.3
N	1,032	509	466	546	301

Survey Results: Well-Being and the Direction of the Country

To further probe the question of personal well-being, we asked, “Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?” Harsh differences—in this case, material and class differences—appear to separate the “surge” voter groups under discussion from those affiliating with the Tea Party. Nearly two in five African American voters, as well as two in five low-income voters, said they faced this frightening situation at some point over the previous year. One in five young voters said the same, compared to just one in twenty voters sympathizing with the Tea Party movement.

“Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Yes	13.8	36.9	20.8	38.8	5.2
No	86.1	61.9	78.8	61.0	94.5
Don't Know/Not Sure	.2	1.1	.4	.2	.3
N	1,014	500	463	544	295

As many commentators have noted and as academic research supports, economic conditions and the perceptions of voters about the likely direction of the economy play important roles in the electoral fortunes of the parties, and especially in the prospects of incumbent politicians running for re-election in mid-term congressional contests. Perhaps it is not surprising that a strong majority of black voters (81 percent) and low-income voters (58 percent) say they would vote for a Democrat running for Congress. And based on what we know about adherents to the Tea Party, it also is not surprising that those voters strongly favor the Republicans (by 74 percent).

“If the election for Congress were being held today, which party’s candidates would you vote for in your congressional district—the Democratic Party’s candidate or the Republican Party’s candidate?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Democrat	41.4	81.4	51.8	58.2	7.8
Republican	37.0	4.9	30.5	24.5	74.2
Don't Know/Not Sure	21.5	13.7	17.7	17.3	18.0
N	1,027	500	462	543	300

If support for President Obama is any indicator of support for congressional Democrats, it is interesting to note the erosion in support for Democrats among younger voters who played an important role in his electoral coalition. Three in five young voters currently approve of the way Obama is handling his job as President, but only 52 percent, a bare majority, say they would vote for a Democrat in the upcoming elections. Democrats still enjoy a small plurality of support at 41 percent compared to 37 percent favoring the Republicans.



Survey Results

Economic Policy Preferences

In this harshest of recessions, much of the public debate over national economic policy has been framed as a set of choices between Keynesian spending policies and dire predictions about federal deficits and debt. At the national level, voters in our survey are essentially split between their preferences for additional stimulus spending (45 percent) and deficit reduction (49 percent). A clear majority of young voters (56 percent), low-income voters (57 percent), and especially black voters (62 percent) diverge from the stalemate, however, and favor stimulus spending. Tea Party sympathizers have a much stronger preference for reducing the deficit (79 percent).

“If you were setting priorities for the government these days, would you place a higher priority on spending more to stimulate job growth, or a higher priority on reducing the budget deficit?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Spend to stimulate economy	44.8	62.1	55.5	56.5	18.8
Reduce budget deficit	48.5	31.1	39.6	36.3	78.6
Don't Know/Not Sure	6.8	6.8	4.9	7.2	2.6
N	1,021	507	464	543	299

2008 voters strongly favor infrastructure spending (68 percent to 28 percent) at this time. At 71 percent, Black Americans and young Americans are slightly more supportive than the national average of 68 percent. Notably, a bare majority of Tea Party sympathizers (51 percent) also agree.

“As you may know, the federal government has taken several steps to address economic problems facing the nation. Do you approve or disapprove of the government spending tax dollars...to substantially increase spending on roads, bridges, and other public works projects?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Approve	68.2	70.7	70.6	67.3	51.4
Disapprove	28.0	27.4	26.2	29.1	43.1
Don't Know/Not Sure	3.8	1.9	3.2	3.6	5.5
N	1,031	506	466	545	301

Another area of rare agreement is public education. By a significant margin, nationally and across all groups analyzed here, voters strongly support spending the same or more for public education, though Tea Party sympathizers are somewhat less enthusiastic in this regard.

Survey Results: Economic Policy Preferences

“And what about your state government, do you think your state government should spend more, spend less, or spend about the same as it does now...on public education?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Spend more	64.5	89.6	84.3	71.2	40.9
Spend less	10.8	1.3	3.1	6.4	26.0
Spend about the same	22.7	8.3	12.5	21.5	30.4
Don't Know/Not Sure	2.0	.9	.2	.9	2.7
N	1,029	507	465	543	298

Minimum wage, income security, bail-outs, and foreclosures

In the area of income support and an affirmative role for the federal government in ensuring a decent standard of living, Tea Party sympathizers express views against government action that are well outside the mainstream of those expressed by the majority of voters.

Voters are sophisticated; they observe and make clear distinctions in questions about government spending and assistance. In general, with some exceptions, they are in favor of government spending to support people weathering the current economic crisis, and against government spending to prop up large American corporations and Wall Street financiers.

Most voters, and especially the rising 2008 electoral groups, support income security programs and want government to set the minimum wage above the poverty line. Tea Party adherents are strongly against these policies. By a factor of more than two-to-one, 2008 voters strongly favor the government establishing a minimum wage that keeps a full-time worker above the poverty line (68 percent). Support significantly increases among low-income voters (76 percent), young voters (77 percent), and black voters (84 percent). Among Tea Party sympathizers, only 41 percent support a government-mandated, above-poverty level minimum wage, while the majority (54 percent) oppose it.

“Do you favor or oppose having the government set the minimum wage high enough so that no family with a full time worker falls below the official poverty line of about \$18,000 a year for a family of three?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Favor	67.7	84.2	77.0	75.8	41.4
Oppose	27.2	12.2	20.4	20.4	53.5
Don't Know/Not Sure	5.1	3.6	2.6	3.8	5.0
N	1,030	508	465	543	300

A majority of voters (58 percent) support spending the same amount or more for income security programs like food stamps. Support for such programs increases among young voters (68 percent), low-income voters (75 percent), and black voters (74 percent). Among Tea Party sympathizers, however, support for such proposals

Survey Results: Economic Policy Preferences

drastically declines. Only a third (33 percent) of Tea Party sympathizers support the same or more spending on income security programs, while 62 percent favor cuts.

“Do you think the federal government should spend more, spend less, or spend about the same as it does now...on income security programs for less well-off Americans like food stamps?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Spend more	19.8	39.4	25.4	37.5	5.5
Spend less	37.5	21.3	27.5	20.4	61.7
Spend about the same	38.1	34.1	42.7	37.9	27.9
Don't Know/Not Sure	4.6	5.2	4.4	4.1	4.9
N	1,029	505	466	544	300

Finally, a majority of black voters (69 percent), low-income voters (58 percent), and young voters (57 percent) believe the federal government should ensure jobs for all those able and willing to work, while only 42 percent of all voters and just 15 percent of Tea Party sympathizers agree with that statement.

“Do you think the federal government should provide jobs for everyone able and willing to work but who cannot find a job in private employment?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Yes	41.7	69.0	56.9	58.4	14.6
No	53.3	26.2	39.7	36.2	82.1
Don't Know/Not Sure	5.0	4.8	3.3	5.3	3.3
N	1,028	508	466	544	301

On the issue of foreclosures and government assistance, voters are more divided. A majority in our national sample (54 percent) do not favor government spending to help people who are under water on their mortgages, though when pressed on the question of whether they favored government helping homeowners who were defrauded, a majority of those who initially said they disapproved changed their minds.

“Do you approve or disapprove of the government spending tax dollars...to help homeowners facing foreclosures on mortgages they cannot afford?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Approve	39.8	69.7	54.5	61.3	13.3
Disapprove	53.8	26.6	40.7	33.3	81.0
Don't Know/Not Sure	6.4	3.7	4.8	5.4	5.7
N	1,027	508	465	543	300

Survey Results: Economic Policy Preferences

Asked only of those who said they disapproved:

“Should homeowners get help with their mortgages if lenders deceived them about the terms?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Yes	55.1	78.0	69.6	55.4	42.9
No	38.6	18.6	29.3	38.8	48.5
Don't Know/Not Sure	6.3	3.4	1.2	5.8	8.6
N	545	134	189	180	239

Notably, black voters, young voters, and low-income voters as a group diverge from national trends in their support of government spending to help homeowners facing foreclosure. In contrast, four out of five (81 percent) Tea Party sympathizers strongly oppose such efforts.

Where support for government policies to protect low wage workers and boost their income is strong, and where voters are somewhat ambivalent about government spending to stave off the foreclosure crisis, clear majorities of all groups studied disagreed with the federal government's use of tax dollars to support the auto industry.

“Do you approve or disapprove of the government spending tax dollars...in an effort to keep the automakers General Motors and Chrysler in business?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Approve	25.9	42.2	36.2	32.3	12.2
Disapprove	70.9	54.0	60.7	64.0	86.4
Don't Know/Not Sure	3.22	3.8	3.1	3.8	1.4
N	1,030	508	466	545	301

The anti-big-business brand of economic populism is not limited to the Tea Party. Clear majorities of all voters (68 percent), black voters (56 percent), low-income voters (59 percent), as well as Tea Party sympathizers (83 percent) disapprove of the federal government's use of tax dollars to prop up Wall Street and the financial markets. (Young voters are basically split on the issue; only two percentage points separate young voters who support the decision to bail out the banks [48 percent] as compared to those who disagree with the decision [46 percent]).

“Do you approve or disapprove of the government spending tax dollars...in an effort to keep Wall Street institutions and the financial markets secure?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Approve	25.9	37.0	47.9	34.2	14.7
Disapprove	68.3	56.4	45.6	58.6	83.1
Don't Know/Not Sure	5.8	6.6	6.6	7.2	2.2
N	1,030	508	465	544	300



Survey Results: Economic Policy Preferences**Reducing the Federal Budget Deficit**

A signature issue animating Tea Party anger toward the policies of the Obama administration is the mounting federal budget deficit. To be sure, there are real reasons to be concerned about government debt, and a vigorous debate ensues among economists about how much is too much. We tested a variety of ideas about how best to achieve deficit reduction. And on these issues, again, Tea Party sympathizers stand out as representatives of a minority view.

The majority of all voters, as well as African American (68 percent), young (60 percent), and low-income voters (60 percent) favor or strongly favor increasing taxes on investment income to address the deficit. Only 29 percent of Tea Party sympathizers agree.

“Requiring wealthier Americans to pay more in taxes on profits from their investments.”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Strongly favor it	25.7	31.4	21.5	32.0	10.1
Favor it	32.0	36.4	38.1	28.0	19.1
Accept as last resort	12.7	11.9	15.6	10.1	15.9
Strongly oppose it	27.0	18.0	22.3	28.0	52.7
Don't Know/Not Sure	2.6	2.4	2.6	1.9	2.2
N	1,029	509	466	544	300

The majority of voters, including African Americans (75 percent), young (72 percent), and low-income (68 percent) voters, support ending combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as a means of reducing the federal deficit. Again, only 38 percent of Tea Party sympathizers agree, while 34 percent strongly oppose it and 25 percent accept it only as a last resort.

“Ending combat in Iraq and Afghanistan by withdrawing combat troops.”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Strongly favor it	30.4	44.3	38.3	39.2	17.0
Favor it	29.1	30.5	33.5	28.5	21.1
Accept as last resort	18.2	10.1	14.1	11.2	24.9
Strongly oppose it	18.6	11.4	12.4	18.0	33.8
Don't Know/Not Sure	3.7	3.7	1.7	3.1	3.3
N	1,032	507	465	544	300

Survey Results: Economic Policy Preferences

Finally, the majority of all voters, as well as all groups studied except Tea Party sympathizers, favor or strongly favor increasing the payroll tax on Social Security by those earning more than \$107,000 a year.

“Increasing the Social Security payroll tax paid by those earning more than \$107,000 a year.”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Strongly favor it	18.5	19.5	14.8	22.0	10.0
Favor it	35.1	45.4	40.3	38.1	28.5
Accept as last resort	17.4	12.2	20.7	14.0	20.0
Strongly oppose it	26.8	19.6	21.7	23.1	39.6
Don't Know/Not Sure	2.2	3.3	2.4	2.8	1.9
N	1,029	506	466	545	300

Voters are split on whether to hold the Bush administration (39 percent) or Congress (33 percent) responsible for the budget deficit. Just 14 percent of all 2008 voters hold the Obama administration responsible. Among Tea Party sympathizers, however, 31 percent blame the Obama administration and 47 percent blame Congress. A decisive majority of black voters (71 percent) and a near majority of low-income and young voters (49 percent each) blame the Bush administration.

“Who do you think is mostly to blame for most of the current federal budget deficit...the Bush administration, the Obama administration, Congress, or someone else?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Bush administration	39.3	71.3	48.6	48.8	9.2
Obama administration	14.0	2.1	6.7	9.6	31.0
Congress	32.8	12.9	18.6	22.2	47.3
Someone else	9.5	9.6	20.3	13.1	7.5
Don't Know/Not Sure	4.4	4.1	5.8	6.3	5.0
N	1,028	505	464	543	300



Survey Results

Public & Private Sector Responsibility

Our third area of investigation concerns perceptions of public versus private sector responsibility in these difficult economic times. This is yet another means of assessing the degree to which the new voter groups who expanded their participation in the 2008 election have an alternative perspective on what they want from the government compared to the anti-government mantra of the Tea Party.

For example, when asked to choose between two alternative statements summarizing opposing ideas about the federal government's role in society and the economy, strong majorities of black voters, young voters, and low-income voters agree most with the statement that government should work to provide for the needs of all of its citizens. Only one in five Tea Party sympathizers agree. In opposition to these new voter groups, as well as voters nationally, three quarters of Tea Party sympathizers instead favor the statement that government should limit its role to national security and police service.

“Some say, ‘Government should work to provide for the needs of all citizens,’ while others say, ‘Government should do no more than provide national defense and police protection, so that people are left alone to earn whatever they can.’ Which comes closer to your view of government?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
1st statement	50.4	70.8	58.5	60.5	20.1
2nd statement	41.8	24.3	38.5	34.9	73.7
Don't Know/Not Sure	7.8	4.9	3.0	4.7	6.2
N	1,029	509	466	544	300

Most scholars would agree that trust in government is important to democratic governance. Over the last several decades, many commentators and scholars alike have observed a long downward slide in this measure of societal well-being. Our survey asks questions about trust. But we also probe the degree of confidence voters have in the private market actors whom Tea Party ideologues advance as the alternative to government decision-makers. Trust in government is better understood in the context of its alternatives. And across a range of issues, the majority of voters say they trust government more than the private sector to provide protections and ensure fairness in economic activity. On these issues, however, Tea Party sympathizers again stand alone in their championing of the private sector to do what the rest of the electorate wants and expects government to do.

For example, a majority of all groups studied except Tea Party sympathizers have greater trust in the federal government to ensure that credit card companies treat consumers fairly.

Survey Results: Public & Private Sector Responsibility

“Who do you trust more...to ensure that banks and credit card companies treat customers fairly... the banking and credit card industries, or the federal government?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Banking/credit card industries	29.9	22.2	33.5	28.8	50.0
Federal government	63.0	73.2	62.1	62.8	39.8
Don't Know/Not Sure	7.1	4.6	4.4	8.3	10.1
N	1,026	508	466	543	298

Majorities of all groups studied except Tea Party sympathizers also have greater trust in the government than in the private sector to ensure the food supply is safe...

“Who do you trust more to ensure that our food supply is safe, the government or the food industry?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Government	55.6	60.0	53.6	56.2	42.7
Private sector	32.9	32.1	38.8	34.5	42.4
Neither	9.6	6.5	6.7	7.5	13.3
Don't Know/Not Sure	1.9	1.4	.9	1.8	1.6
N	1,031	508	466	545	301

...and to protect consumers from fraudulent practices.

“And what about fraudulent business practices – who do you trust more to ensure that consumers are protected from fraudulent business practices, the government or private businesses?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Government	61.7	72.9	66.6	62.1	42.7
Private sector	23.9	20.5	25.2	26.6	37.9
Neither	11.7	5.7	8.0	9.7	16.0
Don't Know/Not Sure	2.6	.9	.2	1.6	3.4
N	1,029	509	465	543	300

Finally, a majority of all groups studied except Tea Party sympathizers believe that government rather than free market forces is the better instrument to penalize businesses that engage in racial discrimination.



Survey Results: Public & Private Sector Responsibility

“Should the government penalize businesses that discriminate against racial minorities, or is it better to rely on free market forces to penalize businesses that discriminate?”

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Government	50.3	75.5	61.1	55.8	29.2
Private sector	35.9	15.8	31.0	28.8	56.8
Neither	7.3	4.0	5.0	10.4	7.6
Don't Know/Not Sure	6.6	4.7	2.8	5.1	6.3
N	1,029	503	464	541	300

Conclusion

As our survey shows, the story of the 2008 election is not over; in fact, it has hardly begun. Whatever else it may be, the Tea Party movement embodies a backlash against the preferred policies and shared perspectives of the voters who increased their participation in the last presidential election. These voter groups historically have embraced an expectation that government, and especially the federal government, should take an active role in providing some protections against the hardships created by the market.

The 2008 election did not set a turnout record, though turnout was high, nor can it yet be considered a realigning election, though the pattern of red and blue in the electoral map was altered. But in a number of important ways, as evidenced by the findings of our survey, the 2008 election signaled a shift away from the core tenets of four decades of conservative ideology that diminishes governmental responsibility and democratic accountability in favor of market solutions to social problems.

In this regard, the mainstream media's focus on the Tea Party, to the exclusion of all other groups who are part of the electorate, is a disservice to public understanding. Concentrating attention on a shrinking segment of the population—that part that is older, whiter, better off, and better educated—has helped bury an important story about “hope” and “change.”

The surging populations of the 2008 electorate are also dissatisfied with the way things are, but they are angry and discontent because they want government policies that support the needy, that improve our infrastructure, that address the problems of public education, that raise the minimum wage, and that stave off foreclosures. The voices of this shifting American electorate must be part of the public debate, their opinions should be heard, and policy-makers and opinion leaders harm the democratic process when they ignore these voters.

Table 1*Voting Eligible (Adult Citizen) Population**Estimated Electoral Participation Rates by Race, Education, Income, and Age**2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections*

	Voted (Turnout Rate)		Registered, But Did Not Vote		Eligible, But Not Registered		Don't Know	
	2004	2008	2004	2008	2004	2008	2004	2008
Race								
White	67.2	66.1	7.9	7.4	15.0	13.6	1.9	1.4
Black	60.3	65.2	8.6	4.9	14.3	11.6	3.5	1.8
Latino	47.2	49.9	10.7	9.5	26.6	23.9	3.8	2.7
Asian	44.4	47.0	7.5	7.8	27.9	23.4	3.9	2.3
Other	54.9	56.5	11.4	9.8	24.1	19.7	2.1	2.1
Education								
High School or Less	51.5	50.8	10.9	9.7	24.6	23.1	3.2	2.3
Some College/2-Yr. Degree	68.9	68.0	8.0	7.3	12.7	11.6	2.1	1.6
College Graduate	77.5	77.0	14.6	4.2	7.7	6.0	1.2	.7
Postgraduate	84.2	82.7	3.1	3.1	4.1	3.6	6.6	.5
Annual Family Income								
Under \$15,000	48.7	51.5	13.6	12.0	28.4	27.1	3.2	1.9
\$15,000-\$29,999	58.3	58.4	10.3	10.4	24.1	21.9	2.4	1.8
\$30,000-\$49,999	64.8	64.1	9.3	8.7	18.6	18.5	2.4	1.8
\$50,000-\$74,999	71.7	71.0	8.0	7.3	14.0	13.4	1.5	1.3
\$75,000-\$99,999	77.0	75.7	5.8	5.8	11.4	10.5	1.2	1.3
\$100,000-\$149,999	80.7	78.1	4.7	5.7	8.6	8.6	1.0	.9
\$150,000 or More	80.8	81.2	4.7	4.4	6.6	6.2	1.2	.5
Age								
18-29 Years	49.0	51.1	11.0	10.1	25.9	22.3	4.4	3.1
30-39 Years	60.4	61.3	8.9	7.8	18.5	16.6	2.4	1.6
40-49 Years	66.8	64.9	7.5	6.6	15.0	13.8	1.9	1.7
50-64 Years	71.6	70.1	6.2	5.6	11.8	11.0	1.4	.9
65 Years or Older	71.0	70.3	8.3	7.1	11.1	10.4	1.3	.9

Note: Data are weighted. Respondents may have answered “don’t know” to either the registration or the voting question, or both. Refusals and non-responses are included in the calculations, but not reported here. See, “Attachment 16, Source and Accuracy Statement for the November 2008 CPS Microdata File on Voting and Registration,” (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2008/sa2008.pdf>) for details on the treatment of sampling and non-sampling error in the CPS voter files.

Source: Current Population Survey, November 2008: Voting and Registration Supplement machine-readable data file, conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2009).



Table 2

*Composition of Youth Voter Group
(18- to 29-Year Olds)
By Race, Education, Income
2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections*

	2004	2008
Race		
White	72.4	68.0
Black	14.4	16.3
Latino	8.7	10.7
Asian	2.1	2.5
Other	2.4	2.5
Education		
High School or Less	30.5	29.7
Some College/2-Yr. Degree	44.9	42.7
College Graduate	20.9	23.1
Postgraduate	3.8	4.5
Annual Family Income		
Under \$15,000	13.2	11.4
\$15,000-\$29,999	15.6	13.7
\$30,000-\$49,999	22.4	21.4
\$50,000-\$74,999	22.0	21.4
\$75,000-\$99,999	12.3	13.8
\$100,000-\$149,999	9.1	11.3
\$150,00 or More	5.4	7.0

Note: Data are weighted. See, "Attachment 16, Source and Accuracy Statement for the November 2008 CPS Microdata File on Voting and Registration," (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2008/sa2008.pdf>) for details on the treatment of sampling and non-sampling error in the CPS voter files.

Source: Current Population Survey, November 2008: Voting and Registration Supplement machine-readable data file, conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau [producer and distributor], 2009).

Table 3

*Proportion of Voters Who Voted for the First Time
By Race, Education, Income, and Age
2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections*

	2004	2008
Race		
White	8.8	8.1
Black	16.9	19.2
Latino	21.9	27.7
Asian	29.9	28.9
Other	17.7	16.2
Education		
High School or Less	17.8	21.8
Some College/2-Yr. Degree	10.7	12.4
College Graduate	8.4	5.8
Postgraduate	5.5	4.3
Annual Family Income		
Under \$15,000	18.0	34.4
\$15,000-\$29,999	15.7	15.3
\$30,000-\$49,999	12.7	11.3
\$50,000-\$74,999	10.0	8.9
\$75,000-\$99,999	6.0	10.0
\$100,000-\$149,999	6.7	7.1
\$150,000 or More	7.4	6.9
Age		
18-29 Years	41.7	42.6
30-39 Years	8.8	9.8
40-49 Years	6.2	5.1
50-64 Years	2.4	3.3
65 Years and Older	2.5	1.1

Note: Data are weighted. The error due to sampling depends on the number of respondents in each group. For most questions, the margin of error is +/- 2-4 points. In addition to sampling error, difficulties in conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error.

Source: 2004 National Election Day Exit Poll, Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International, National Election Pool Poll #2004-NATELEC, November 2, 2004; 2008 National Election Day Exit Poll, Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International, National Election Pool Poll #2008-NATELEC, November 4, 2008, available at Roper Center for Public Opinion; author's calculations.

Table 4

*Composition of First Time Voter Group
By Race, Education, Income, and Age
2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections*

	2004	2008
Race		
White	60.2	53.9
Black	17.6	20.3
Latino	16.3	18.3
Asian	3.6	4.5
Other	2.3	3.0
Education		
High School or Less	42.0	46.2
Some College/2-Yr. Degree	30.9	33.1
College Graduate	19.1	14.1
Postgraduate	8.0	6.6
Annual Family Income		
Under \$15,000	12.7	18.5
\$15,000-\$29,999	21.5	15.5
\$30,000-\$49,999	25.7	19.0
\$50,000-\$74,999	21.2	16.8
\$75,000-\$99,999	7.6	13.4
\$100,000-\$149,999	6.5	9.2
\$150,000 or More	4.8	7.5
Age		
18-29 Years	63.7	65.5
30-39 Years	14.1	15.7
40-49 Years	12.8	9.5
50-64 Years	5.8	7.8
65 Years and Older	3.6	1.5

Note: Data are weighted. The error due to sampling depends on the number of respondents in each group. For most questions, the margin of error is +/- 2-4 points. In addition to sampling error, difficulties in conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error.

Source: 2004 National Election Day Exit Poll, Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International, National Election Pool Poll #2004-NATELEC, November 2, 2004; 2008 National Election Day Exit Poll, Edison Media Research/Mitofsky International, National Election Pool Poll #2008-NATELEC, November 4, 2008, available at Roper Center for Public Opinion; author's calculations.



Notes

- ¹ Media surveys suggest some 18 to 35 percent of all Americans claim an affinity to the Tea Party movement. See, Kate Zernike and Megan Thee-Brenan, "Poll Finds Tea Party Backers Wealthier and More Educated," *New York Times*, April 14, 2010, 1; "CNN/Opinion Research Poll," *cdn.turner*. Opinion Research Corporation, Released February 17, 2010, available online: <http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2010/images/02/17/rel4b.pdf>; "Tea Partiers Are Fairly Mainstream in Their Demographics," Gallup.com, April 5, 2010, available online: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/127181/tea-partiers-fairly-mainstream-demographics.aspx>. African Americans and Latinos comprise about 21 percent of the adult citizen population in the U.S.; those with a high school diploma or less are 42 percent of the voting-eligible population, while citizens with annual family income of \$30,000 a year or less are 26 percent. One in five adult citizens is under the age of 30.
- ² Douglas R. Hess and Jody Herman, "Representational Bias in the 2008 Election," Project Vote (Washington, D.C., November 2009), available online: <http://www.projectvote.org/reports-on-the-electorate/440.html>. See also, Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor, "Dissecting the 2008 Electorate: Most Diverse in U.S. History," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., 2009, 5, available online: <http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/dissecting-2008-electorate.pdf>.
- ³ We use the terms "African American" and "black" interchangeably.
- ⁴ The turnout rate for eligible black women was 69 percent, followed by 68 percent for white women, and 64 percent for white men. See also, Lopez and Taylor, "Dissecting the 2008 Electorate," 2009.
- ⁵ Turnout is self-reported and measured as the total number of ballots cast divided by the adult (18 years old and over) citizen population for each group.
- ⁶ On exclusion bias, see John Brehm, *The Phantom Respondents* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Adam J. Berinsky, *Silent Voices: Public Opinion and Political Participation in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Larry M. Bartels, "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 40:1 (1996), 194-230. For a recent treatment of egalitarian leanings in public opinion, see Benjamin I. Page and Lawrence R. Jacobs, *Class War? What Americans Really Think About Economic Inequality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

- ⁷ Fifty-eight percent said the federal government had gone too far in regulating business; notably, this number was down from 73 percent who held this view in 1995. See, Pew Research Center, "The People and Their Government: Distrust, Discontent, Anger and Partisan Rancor," April 18, 2010, 30-33, available online: <http://people-press.org/report/606/trust-in-government>.
- ⁸ Pew, "Distrust, Discontent, Anger and Partisan Rancor," 28.
- ⁹ Frank Newport, "Americans OK With Short-Term Government Growth," Gallup, April 15, 2009, available online: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/117523/Americans-Short-Term-Government-Growth.aspx>.
- ¹⁰ "Government," Gallup, September 11-13, 2009, available online: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/27286/Government.aspx>.
- ¹¹ The Campaign for America's Future and Democracy Corps are an important exception. They have produced a number of post-election surveys of the 2008 electorate, sampling from the voter files. See, for example, Stanley Greenberg, James Carville, and Peyton M. Craighill "Deficits and Economic Recovery," August 12, 2010, available online: <http://www.greenbergresearch.com/index.php?ID=2482>.
- ¹² Academic research has long found an upper-class skew in the American electorate compared to the population at large. With respect to median income, this pattern is evident in our survey as well. Only 41 percent of our national sample reported annual family income at or below the national median.

Appendix I

Demographic Profiles of the 2008 Voting Population

	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Race					
White only, non-Hispanic	73.8	0	63.0	49.9	92.3
Black only, non-Hispanic	11.7	100.0	18.7	19.6	.6
Hispanic, any race	10.5	0	11.2	24.7	4.5
Asian only, non-Hispanic	2.3	0	3.0	2.8	1.5
Other	1.6	0	4.2	3.0	1.1
N	1,032	509	466	545	301

Education					
Grade school or less	1.1	2.9	.2	3.3	0
Some high school	3.1	8.8	2.3	8.8	2.3
High school	19.6	21.1	9.9	30.3	18.8
Some college	29.4	31.9	44.3	36.8	28.9
College graduate	27.6	23.1	35.2	15.5	30.8
Post graduate	18.9	11.6	8.1	5.1	18.3
Don't Know/Not Sure	.4	.6	0	.2	.8
N	1,015	501	465	542	295

Annual Family Income					
Less than \$15,000	7.7	21.8	11.1	42.9	1.7
\$15,000 to \$29,999	10.9	21.1	15.3	57.1	10.6
\$30,000 to \$60,000	22.2	18.3	20.4	0	22.0
\$61,000 to \$79,999	14.5	12.0	14.6	0	14.3
\$80,000 to \$100,000	9.5	7.3	8.7	0	10.0
\$101,000 to \$249,000	11.8	5.6	9.4	0	13.2
\$250,000 or more	2.7	.6	.7	0	4.1
Don't Know/Refused	20.7	13.2	19.8	0	24.3
N	1,032	509	466	546	301

Marital Status					
Married	62.7	34.2	16.2	31.0	76.0
Widowed	7.9	10.7	.5	14.0	5.8
Divorced	8.9	10.5	1.4	13.6	7.8
Separated	.9	4.2	.4	3.1	.6
Never married	15.9	34.7	73.4	31.9	8.5
Living with partner	3.3	5.3	7.5	5.6	.8
Don't Know/Not Sure	.4	.4	.6	.7	.6
N	1,014	501	464	543	295



	National	Blacks	Youth	Low Income	Tea Party
Residency at Present Address					
Less than 6 months	2.0	4.8	12.3	7.4	.6
6 months to 1 year	3.5	4.6	13.1	8.3	2.5
1 to 3 years	11.5	17.1	20.3	15.8	8.4
3 to 5 years	11.0	14.0	9.9	11.9	10.5
5 to 10 years	19.0	18.4	14.3	14.1	20.0
More than 10 years	52.7	40.5	29.8	41.9	57.4
Don't Know/Not Sure	.3	.6	.2	.6	.6
N	1,017	502	464	545	295

Employment Status					
Working now	47.0	37.9	57.7	27.6	50.0
Temporarily laid off	2.9	3.1	2.6	4.7	1.1
Unemployed	4.1	10.4	9.1	14.8	2.2
Retired	30.4	21.8	.6	25.4	33.6
Disabled	5.5	15.7	.7	13.0	3.0
Homemaker	4.9	1.7	1.9	3.8	5.5
Student	4.4	8.9	26.1	9.8	2.8
Other	.7	.3	1.1	.2	1.4
Don't Know/Not Sure	.1	.2	.2	.8	.3
N	1,014	502	462	545	294

Age					
18 to 29 years	16.5	23.1	100.0	26.6	7.4
30 to 39 years	9.1	10.5	0	7.2	7.9
40 to 49 years	11.5	14.1	0	9.6	13.6
50 to 64 years	31.7	31.3	0	26.5	35.1
65 years and over	31.3	21.0	0	30.2	36.0
N	1,032	509	466	545	301

Gender					
Male	46.5	39.1	46.1	46.0	57.3
Female	53.5	60.9	53.9	54.0	42.7
N	1,032	509	466	545	301

Appendix 2: Methodology

Discovery Research Group, an experienced market research firm based in Salt Lake City, Utah, conducted this study of the 2008 voting population for Project Vote between July 7 and August 11, 2010.¹ Voters were randomly selected from randomly drawn samples of the entire 2008 voting population, consisting of approximately 127 million records compiled and verified against official returns by Catalist, a Washington, D.C. data management firm.² Catalist maintains a national database of more than 260 million voting age individuals assembled from a wide variety of government and commercial sources. Telephone numbers were called back at least six times before being retired. All together, we conducted 1,531 landline interviews and 364 cell phone interviews. (Data on type of telephone used in the survey are missing for 52 interviews).

National Sample: A (systematic) random sample of 30,000 records drawn using an Nth Name Selection technique and aligned with the Census Region breakdown of the underlying geographic universe. The sampling frame is approximately 100 million records.³

African American Over-sample: Consists of two systematic random samples totaling 25,000 records drawn from the 2008 national voter file after screening out all voters not coded by Catalist as Black. The total population for this over-sample is approximately 15 million records. Catalist models and codes the race of every voter in two ways: 1) using data obtained from a commercial vendor; and 2) directly from state voter files for those states where race self-reporting at the time of registration is observed in accordance with the Voting Rights Act. Those states are: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

Youth Over-sample: Consists of two systematic random samples of voters under the age of 30, totaling 25,000 records drawn from the 2008 national voter file. Age is both directly observed from self-reported birth dates on state voter files and modeled to enhance records with missing data. Age models rely on probabilities of being in each age category based on a variety of variables.

Low-Income Over-sample: Consists of one systematic random sample of 25,000 low-income voters, defined as voters with annual family income of less than \$30,000 a year, drawn from the 2008 national voter file. Catalist obtains modeled family income data from a commercial vendor. The sampling frame is approximately 21 million.

Recent Registrants Sample: Consists of one systematic random sample of 30,000 records drawn from a list of approximately 336,000 individuals in 48 states and the District of Columbia⁴ who were assisted in registering for the first time or in updating their registration records during the 2007-2008 election cycle, and who cast ballots in the 2008 election.

The final results are weighted so that sample demographics match the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008 Current Population Survey November Supplement. The national sample (and Tea Party sub-group) is weighted by age and race; the Black oversample is weighted by age; the Youth over-sample is weighted by gender; and the Low-Income over-sample is weighted by race.



The national survey has a cooperation rate of 25.6 percent (AAPOR Cooperation Rate 1), and a refusal rate of 25.2 percent (AAPOR Refusal Rate 1).⁵ The margin of error for the entire pool of completed interviews is approximately 0.03, or plus or minus 3. Results based on smaller subgroups are subject to larger margins of sampling error. Unfortunately, there are other sources of error in all polls besides sampling error. These include features of survey design such as question wording and question order, weighting, interviewer bias, respondent unavailability, refusal to participate, and deliberate or unconscious false reporting.

Dr. Jiehua Chen and Dr. David Park provided statistical consulting.

Appendix 2 Notes

¹ For more information about Discovery Research Group, see: <http://www.discoveryresearchgroup.com/about-us/>.

² For more information about Catalist, see: <http://catalist.us/aboutus.html>. The 2008 voter file was first purged of individuals who have died since the election.

³ Samples were drawn from all 127 million records, but only those records with phones were selected. Catalist obtains telephone numbers from a variety of sources, including voter files and commercial vendors, and updates numbers through frequent record matching procedures.

⁴ Coverage across these 48 states and D.C. was concentrated in 18 states, and the sample was drawn to mirror the balance across the states.

⁵ The American Association of Public Opinion Research, *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*, 6th ed. (AAPOR, 2009). A table showing final disposition codes for all cases is available upon request.

About The Author

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Lorraine C. Minnite serves as director of research for Project Vote, and previously authored the 2007 Project Vote report *The Politics of Voter Fraud*. For nearly ten years Dr. Minnite taught American and urban politics at Barnard College, and prior to that she was the Associate Director of the Center for Urban Research and Policy at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs. She is the author of *The Myth of Voter Fraud*, published by Cornell University Press (2010), and, with Frances Fox Piven and Margaret Groarke, a co-author of *Keeping Down the Black Vote: Race and the Demobilization of American Voters*, published by The New Press in 2009. Dr. Minnite holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the City University of New York.

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